Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Riccardo Muti Zell Music Director
Yo-Yo Ma Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

Thursday, June 9, 2016, at 8:00
Friday, June 10, 2016, at 1:30
Saturday, June 11, 2016, at 8:00

Christoph von Dohnányi Conductor
Martin Helmchen Piano

Mozart
Symphony No. 25 in G Minor, K. 183
Allegro con brio
Andante
Menuetto
Allegro

Beethoven
Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Rondo: Molto allegro

INTERMISSION

Mozart
Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551 (Jupiter)
Allegro vivace
Andante cantabile
Allegretto
Molto allegro

These performances are generously sponsored by the Randy L. and Melvin R. Berlin Family Fund for the Canon.

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Wolfgang Mozart
Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg, Austria.
Died December 5, 1791, Vienna, Austria.

Symphony No. 25 in G Minor, K. 183

This is the earliest work by Mozart to have secured a place in the modern orchestral repertory. It is sometimes known as Mozart’s “little” G minor symphony, in deference to the sublime later symphony in the same key, no. 40.

In the nineteenth century, it was little known and rarely performed. That changed in the following century, and, with the popularity of the movie *Amadeus*, which uses its dramatic first movement in ways that would surely surprise the composer, this symphony has achieved a familiarity nearly equal to that of its more famous counterpart.

This work was Mozart’s first symphony in a minor key, and he would only write one other (the previously mentioned no. 40). G minor is a key that inspired some of Mozart’s most moving music, including Pamina’s poignant “Ach ich fühls” from *The Magic Flute* and a deeply expressive string quintet that is one of the landmarks of chamber music. Its choice for this symphony was clearly suggested by Haydn’s Symphony no. 39 in G minor, with which it shares a number of other similarities, including the unusual scoring for four horns. (Mozart never again called for more than two horns in his symphonies.)

Mozart, who was not yet eighteen, wrote this symphony near the end of a busy year. He and his father had spent part of the summer of 1773 in Vienna, where Mozart dashed off many pages of relatively unimportant music and heard a number of Haydn’s works. After he returned to Salzburg in September, Mozart began this G minor symphony and his first efforts in two forms that he would ultimately make entirely his own—the string quintet and the piano concerto. With this symphony in particular, Mozart made the first decisive step from wunderkind to great composer, from entertainer to artist.

Romantic myth always gets attached to works in minor keys, and much has been read into this symphony. Yet there is nothing in Mozart’s life at the time to justify the exceptional nature of this music—other than his readiness to probe deeper into the human heart, or the experience of discovering Haydn’s own G minor symphony. With this piece, we can begin to chart the ways Mozart will move away from the more strictly defined parameters of Haydn’s art, even though these two great composers would continue to learn from and to influence each other.

The opening of this symphony is probably the earliest music that sounds wholly Mozartean to our ears—not the charming, finely crafted, yet slightly anonymous music of the period, but something utterly individual,
music that leaps from the page and lodges in our memories. The essence of the first measures—as in the later G minor symphony—is rhythm: urgent, repeated, syncopated notes. It is instantly effective, establishing both mood and momentum. A second theme, in B-flat major, provides contrast as well as a glimpse of the generic musical world Mozart was quickly leaving behind.

The Andante is the only movement in the symphony that does not begin with jagged octaves. Here we have a gracious dialogue between muted violins and bassoons. Mozart paints a picture of eighteenth-century gentility, yet there is boldness in the details. The stern and sober minuet that follows is decidedly not for dancing. Its middle-section trio, however, is friendly, out-of-doors music for winds alone—the sort Mozart often wrote for social functions. The finale restores the tension and turbulence of the first movement (the use of four horns also lends a special sound to this music) and stays in the minor mode to the bitter end.

### Ludwig van Beethoven
Born December 16, 1770, Bonn, Germany.  
Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria.

### Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19

Although it is known as no. 2, the B-flat piano concerto is the earliest of Beethoven’s five well-known works in the great classical form. In fact, it’s not even the composer’s first attempt at writing a concerto for himself. When he was only fourteen, Beethoven composed a piano concerto in E-flat, and, although only the solo part has survived, it clearly reveals that the teenage Beethoven thought himself a great virtuoso. (The concerto was reconstructed and performed for the first time in 1943.) But, sometime over the next six years, Beethoven wisely shelved that score and began a new piano concerto in B-flat, over which he struggled on and off for several more years until he felt it was ready for the public. The teenage show-off had become a perfectionist.

In 1792, the year Beethoven left Bonn and settled in Vienna, he wrote out a fresh copy of this concerto, perhaps to show his new teacher, Joseph Haydn, whom he would soon dismiss, leaving neither man with kind words for the other. At the first chance to play the work in public, Beethoven evidently dropped the original finale (discovered among his papers after his death). But, the concerto’s final movement is a restoration of the tension and turbulence of the first movement (the use of four horns also lends a special sound to this music) and stays in the minor mode to the bitter end.

### Composed
1790–95, revised 1801

### First Performance
March 29, 1795, the composer as soloist

### First CSO Performances
March 12 & 13, 1926, Orchestra Hall. Harold Samuel as soloist, Frederick Stock conducting  
July 11, 1946, Ravinia Festival. Leon Fleisher as soloist, William Steinberg conducting

### Most Recent CSO Performances
July 15, 2010, Ravinia Festival. Jorge Federico Osorio as soloist, James Conlon conducting  
November 11 & 13, 2010, Orchestra Hall. Jonathan Biss as soloist, Antonio Pappano conducting

### Instrumentation
Solo piano, flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, strings

### Cadenzas
By Beethoven

### Approximate Performance Time
30 minutes

### CSO Recordings
1983. Alfred Brendel as soloist, James Levine conducting. Philips
death and now known as the Rondo, WoO 6) and wrote a new one. He also revised the slow movement. This is probably the concerto he played at the charity concert on March 29, 1795—his first official public appearance in this great music capital—although by then he had written another one, in C major—the one we know as no. 1. (Beethoven’s old friend Franz Gerhard Wegeler recalls that the composer finished the finale at the very last moment, while suffering from a bad stomachache, but the evidence suggests that he was remembering a different performance and a different concerto.)

Beethoven continued to work on the B-flat score. He sketched, and then discarded, a new slow movement in D major. For a performance in Prague in 1798, he brushed up both the outer movements and added a coda to the Adagio. Still, he was dissatisfied. In fact, when he wrote to the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel in 1801, Beethoven hadn’t a good thing to say about either of his piano concertos:

I wish to add that one of my first concertos, and therefore not one of the best of my compositions, is to be published by Hofmeister, and that Mollo is to publish a concerto which, indeed, was written later, but which also does not rank among the best of my works in this form.

In truth, both of these concertos reflect Mozart’s influence—in their design, in the balance of piano and orchestra, and in the piano writing itself—but, from the day he arrived in Vienna, Beethoven was impatient to establish himself as a new force to be reckoned with, not as the next Mozart. Moreover, by 1801 he had already completed another concerto—the Third—that decisively broke away from the classical model and pointed in a completely new direction. That was the composer Beethoven wanted the power brokers at Breitkopf to notice. Nonetheless, he thought both of his first concertos fit to print, and they were published that year, in the “wrong” order—the C major concerto in March, and the earlier one in B-flat major in December.

For all its classical decorum, there’s something explosive and rebellious about Beethoven’s earliest piano concerto. In the very opening orchestral tutti, for example, Beethoven swerves unexpectedly into D-flat major, at the same time pulling back from fortissimo to pianissimo to emphasize the jolt, in a way that is quite un-Mozartean. Once the piano enters, we are in the presence of a new personality. By all accounts, the young Beethoven was a thrilling performer of a very different sort than Mozart—the newspaper reports praise his power, “unheard-of bravura and facility,” and sheer intensity of feeling—and his concertos reflect these musical sensibilities, as well as his new style of piano playing.

Mozart’s shadow still falls across the elegantly designed first movement, despite evidence of the subversive young Beethoven in the details. The bold and lovely slow movement (revised for the 1795 premiere) is one of his earliest attempts to display both his true originality and the range of his emotional compass. The finale is light and witty, with a wonderful syncopated theme that the pianist finally “corrects,” putting the off-beat material on the beat shortly before the ending. The boisterous spirit of Vienna’s new self-appointed musical king is apparent in every measure.
Ironically, it’s Mozart’s last three symphonies rather than the famous requiem that remain the mystery of his final years. Almost as soon as Mozart died, romantic myth attached itself to the unfinished pages of the requiem left scattered on his bed; a host of questions—who commissioned the work?; who finished it?; was Mozart poisoned?—inspired painters, novelists, biographers, librettists, playwrights, and screenwriters to heights of imaginative re-creation. We now know those answers: the requiem is unfinished, but not unexplained.

The final symphonies, on the other hand—no. 39 in E-flat, the “great” G minor (no. 40), and the Jupiter (no. 41)—continue to beg more questions than we can answer. Even what was once the most provocative fact about these works—that Mozart never heard them—is now doubtful. We no longer believe that Mozart wrote these three great symphonies for the drawer alone—that goes against everything we know of his working methods. But we don’t know what orchestra or occasion he had in mind. Apparently a series of subscription concerts was planned for the summer of 1788, when Mozart entered the three symphonies in his catalog, but there’s no evidence that the performances took place. It’s likely that the works were conceived as a trilogy, with publication in mind (symphonies often were printed in groups of three), but they weren’t published during Mozart’s lifetime.

Did Mozart ever hear them? Even if the projected subscription series of 1788 never took place, Mozart did tour Germany the following year, conducting concerts for which we have only sketchy details. “A Symphony,” for example, was advertised for the program at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on May 12. And back home in Vienna, no less a musical big shot than Antonio Salieri conducted concerts on April 16 and 17, 1791, featuring a “grand symphony” by Mozart. The fact that the G minor symphony exists in two versions—with and without clarinets—argues that Mozart revised the score for a specific performance.

Mozart, who didn’t expect the C major symphony performed at these concerts to be his last, never called it the Jupiter. According to an entry in the British publisher Vincent Novello’s diary, Mozart’s son Franz Xaver reported that the London impresario Johann Peter Salomon gave the work its nickname after the most powerful of the Roman gods. The title first appeared in print for a performance in Edinburgh on October 20, 1819. When Muzio Clementi’s popular piano arrangement of the score was published in 1823, the cover announced “Mozart’s celebrated Symphony, ‘The Jupiter,’ ” and depicted the god himself regally sitting atop billowing clouds. In Germany, well into the nineteenth century, it was simply known as the symphony with the fugue at the end, just as Mozart’s Prague was called the symphony without a minuet.

**Wolfgang Mozart**

**Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551 (Jupiter)**

**COMPOSED**
Completed August 10, 1788

**FIRST PERFORMANCE**
Date unknown

**FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES**
February 3 & 4, 1893, Auditorium Theatre. Theodore Thomas conducting

July 15, 1937, Ravinia Festival. Hans Kindler conducting

**MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES**
July 13, 2002, Ravinia Festival. Peter Oundjian conducting

June 18, 2013, Orchestra Hall. Riccardo Muti conducting

**APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME**
34 minutes

**CSO RECORDINGS**
1954. Fritz Reiner conducting. RCA

1978. Sir Georg Solti conducting. CSO (From the Archives, vol. 6: Mozart)

1981. James Levine conducting. RCA

**INSTRUMENTATION**
flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings
This great C major symphony was celebrated long before Clementi introduced its splendors to the parlors of countless eager amateur pianists. (Many surely struggled with the finale, which juggles more ideas at a fast speed than the average two hands can coordinate.) Joseph Haydn, who owed the existence of his last twelve (and most popular) symphonies to the same Salomon who named this symphony, knew the work and admired it excessively.

The nickname itself suggests that the Jupiter Symphony was accepted as the summit of instrumental music within a few years of its composition. At least until 1808, when Beethoven premiered his Fifth Symphony in the same key, it could safely be mentioned as the C major symphony, without danger of confusion. (Beethoven’s begins in C minor and only ends in the major.) Schumann, who wrote at length about many pieces he admired, thought it “wholly above discussion,” like the works of Shakespeare; Mendelssohn and Wagner both modeled youthful symphonies on it.

Salomon’s nickname probably was suggested by the majesty and nobility of the first movement, which includes the brilliant sound of trumpets and drums and features stately dotted rhythms in the opening measures (C major was the traditional key for ceremonial music in the eighteenth century). But the movement, cast in conventional sonata form, is also light and playful. Mozart starts the recapitulation in the wrong key (the subdominant) as an inside joke and quotes the music of a lighthearted aria he recently had written to a text presumably by Lorenzo da Ponte: “You are a bit innocent, my dear Pompeo,” a bass sings to an inexperienced lover, “Go study the ways of the world.” Like Don Giovanni, this movement is dramma giocoso—the quintessentially Mozartean mixture of the serious and the comic.

The Andante, with muted strings to counter the noonday brilliance of the opening movement, exposes the darkness that often is at the heart of Mozart’s music. This is a world of poignant contemplation, yearning, and distress. It’s as heart wrenching as Pamina’s great aria from The Magic Flute and even more remarkable for being in a major key. The minuet and trio are unusually rich and complicated, both musically and emotionally, for all their plain, traditional dance forms.

The finale, which includes a famous fugue at the end, is as celebrated as any single movement of eighteenth-century music. It begins innocently enough, with an innocuous do-re-fa-mi theme, and turns into a tour de force of classical counterpoint. Five themes are presented, developed, and restated; then, at the end, in the great, miraculous coda, they’re brought together in various combinations (and sometimes upside-down) in a dazzling display of perfect counterpoint. With these two minutes of music, Mozart shifts the center of gravity from the beginning of the symphony to the end, anticipating Beethoven, Brahms, and countless other composers who owe him so much else in this field. Mozart can’t have known that this work would bring his own symphonic career to an end, but he couldn’t have found a more spectacular and fitting way to crown his achievements, and, at the same time, to point the way to the future.

Phillip Huscher has been the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1987.