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

Thursday, May 25, 2017, at 8:00
Saturday, May 27, 2017, at 8:00
Tuesday, May 30, 2017, at 7:30

Jesús López-Cobos Conductor
Inon Barnatan Piano

Turina
Danzas fantásticas, Op. 22
Exaltación
Ensueño
Orgía

Gershwin
Concerto in F for Piano and Orchestra
Allegro
Adagio—Andante con moto
Allegro agitato
INON BARNATAN

INTERMISSION

Dvořák
Symphony No. 6 in D Major, Op. 60
Allegro non tanto
Adagio
Scherzo (Furiant): Presto
Finale: Allegro con spirito

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Franke for their generous gift in support of the Thursday evening performance.

CSO Tuesday series concerts are sponsored by United Airlines.

The program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.
Above: Joaquín Turina, 1914

It was only after Joaquín Turina moved to Paris at the age of twenty-two that his decision to abandon medicine for music began to pay off. Although he had become known in Seville as a fine pianist, the failures in Madrid of his first large compositions—a zarzuela and two operas—were major setbacks, and even with the encouragement and influence of Manuel de Falla, Turina clearly had not yet found his voice as a composer. In Paris, he quickly became part of a rich and sophisticated musical circle. He studied piano with Moritz Moszkowski, a great artist in the Chopin-Liszt tradition and one of the most sought-after teachers in Paris. He began composition lessons with Vincent d’Indy, who was one of the founders of the city’s important Schola Cantorum. And he became friends with both Ravel and Debussy, the two biggest names in French music.

At first, Turina was largely under the spell of the great European musical tradition and its major forms. His first published composition is a piano quintet, composed in 1907 and modeled on the landmark quintet by César Franck; it was followed by a string quartet. Turina is the only one of the well-known quartet of contemporary Spanish colleagues—along with Albéniz, Granados, and Falla—to write a symphony. But even so, his music is suffused with the spirit, the rhythms, and the colors—and even the specific instrumental sounds—of his native Spain. The symphony is a Sinfonía sevillana. The string quartet is subtitled de la guitarra, because its thematic material uses the notes of the guitar’s open strings. It was Albéniz who first suggested Turina embrace his musical heritage; after a performance of the piano quintet, he invited Turina and Falla out for drinks to make his case. “We were three Spaniards gathered together in that corner of Paris,” Turina later remembered, “and it was our duty to fight bravely for the national music of our country.

The Danzas fantásticas began life as piano music. Turina composed these three dances for piano in 1919, four years after he returned to Spain, and orchestrated them a few months later. He introduced them to the public in February 1920 in their brilliant orchestral guise, rather than in their original form. (He premiered the piano version in June of that year.) All three dances are indebted to the music of his native Andalusia, but also to La orgía (The orgy), a novel published in 1919 by the now-forgotten Sevillian writer, José Más y Laglera. Turina inscribed lines from the novel atop each of the dances.

Exaltación (Exaltation), a lively triple-meter dance related to the Aragonese jota, is headed by these words drawn
from Más: “It seemed as if the figures in that incomparable picture were moving inside the calyx of a flower.” In Ensueño (Reverie, fantasy), based on the traditional Basque zortziko in 5/8 meter, “the guitar’s strings sounded the lament of a soul helpless under the weight of bitterness.” The final dance, Orgía (Orgy), is an intense brand of flamenco, interrupted by a powerful lyrical outburst. “The perfume of the flowers merged with the odor of manzanilla,” Más writes, “and from the bottom of raised glasses, full of wine incomparable as incense, joy flowed.”

Phillip Huscher

George Gershwin
Born September 26, 1898; Brooklyn, New York
Died July 11, 1937; Hollywood, California

Concerto in F for Piano and Orchestra

In 1919, when George Gershwin scored his first big hit with the song “Swanee,” and the arch-modernist Arnold Schoenberg was developing the twelve-tone system, it seemed unlikely that these two men would ever cross paths; but, in fact, they actually became friends. Each recognized that the other had made an indelible impact on twentieth-century music. In 1937, when Gershwin died of a brain tumor at the age of thirty-eight, Schoenberg wrote:

Music to him was the air he breathed, the food which nourished him, the drink that refreshed him. Music was what made him feel, and music the feeling he expressed. Directness of this kind is given only to great men, and there is no doubt that he was a great composer.

Gershwin’s true greatness was in the natural way he closed the gap between commercial and serious music, and he was talented enough to succeed brilliantly in both worlds. As Schoenberg once noted, surely with a touch of envy, Gershwin was the rare composer “whose feelings actually coincide with those of the ‘average man in the street.’ ”

After the success of “Swanee,” Gershwin had a steady stream of hits (and made the kind of money that is unheard of in the classical music business), but he was determined to write serious

Above: Gershwin, photographed by Edward Steichen, 1927

COMPOSED
July 22–November 10, 1925

FIRST PERFORMANCE
December 3, 1925, New York City. The composer as soloist

INSTRUMENTATION
piano, two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, slapstick, xylophone, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME
32 minutes

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES
June 14, 1933, Auditorium Theatre. The composer as soloist, William Daly conducting (Chicago World’s Fair: A Century of Progress International Exposition)
July 25, 1936, Ravinia Festival. The composer as soloist, William Daly conducting
March 15 and 16, 1945, Orchestra Hall. Oscar Levant as soloist, Désiré Defauw conducting

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES
November 16, 17, and 18, 2006, Orchestra Hall. Wayne Marshall as soloist, Paavo Järvi conducting
July 11, 2010, Ravinia Festival. Orion Weiss as soloist, James Conlon conducting

CSO RECORDING
1976. Lorin Hollander as soloist, James Levine conducting. CSO (From the Archives, vol. 18: A Tribute to James Levine)
music that was equally popular. He even asked Ravel and Stravinsky for lessons. Ravel declined; when Stravinsky learned that Gershwin earned $100,000 a year, he allegedly suggested that Gershwin give him lessons instead.

For all their jazzy rhythms, bluesy harmonies, and big Broadway melodies, Gershwin’s most important—and beloved—works are written in the traditional European forms. *An American in Paris* is really a tone poem for orchestra (Gershwin gives it that subtitle on the first page of the orchestral manuscript), and *Porgy and Bess* is an opera. The most classical of all Gershwin’s works is the Concerto in F for piano and orchestra, written in the form established by Mozart and Beethoven. It was commissioned by the conductor Walter Damrosch, who, astonished by the originality and brilliance of *Rhapsody in Blue*, immediately asked Gershwin for a concerto “proper.”

Gershwin’s first biographer, Isaac Goldberg, claimed that after accepting Damrosch’s

“HE IS THE MUSIC OF AMERICA”

George Gershwin appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra twice, and on both occasions he was soloist in his Concerto in F and *Rhapsody in Blue*.

In conjunction with *A Century of Progress International Exposition*—the world’s fair held in Chicago to celebrate the city’s centennial—several concerts were given at the Auditorium Theatre under the auspices of the Chicago Friends of Music. The first concert of the series, on June 14, 1933, was a celebration of American music; during the first half of the program, second music director Frederick Stock led the Orchestra in Henry Hadley’s *In Bohemia* Overture and Deems Taylor’s *Through the Looking-Glass* Suite. After intermission, Gershwin and his frequent collaborator William Daly took the stage for the thirty-four-year-old composer’s Concerto in F, *An American in Paris*, and *Rhapsody in Blue*.

“The most exciting concert of many a day was given last night at the Auditorium,” wrote Mrs. Henry Field in the *Herald & Examiner*. “[Gershwin’s] success was tremendous. Elegant, clean-cut, in white tie and tails, [following the concert he hosted] a most amusing party at the College Inn . . . . One hears much about George Gershwin, but certainly to meet him is even more charming that his reputation has it—and that is saying something. He wore a white gardenia boutonniere . . . and was delighted that Chicago had given him a more than cordial welcome . . . and when a young lady said she liked his concerto better than his rhapsody, he had one of those very pleased looks.”

“We may put by forever explanation, *apologia*, and *réserve* in writing about American music after hearing George Gershwin and his compositions last night at the Auditorium. Gershwin is American music translated in terms of audacity, humor, wit, cleverness, spontaneity, vitality, and overwhelming naturalness. Nothing like his Concerto in F has ever been heard in the symphonic world, and if it is not the very essence of Americanism, I do not know my profession nor the art it serves,” wrote Herman Devries in the *Chicago Tribune*. “Gershwin vibrates to the tune of a people and is animated by its own pulse beat. . . . He is the music of America.”

Gershwin and Daly appeared once more with the Orchestra at the Ravinia Festival on July 25, 1936, for a gala concert during the festival’s first season. A capacity crowd—by some estimates over 8,000 people, many climbing trees for a glimpse of the performers—packed the park to hear an all-Gershwin concert that again featured the Concerto in F and *Rhapsody in Blue* with the composer as soloist, along with Daly leading *An American in Paris* and a suite from *Porgy and Bess*.

“All attendance records for all time at Ravinia Park were broken last night,” wrote the social reporter for the *Herald & Examiner*. “Throngs, seeking vantage points in the area delegated to general admission tickets, began arriving hours before the music was scheduled to begin. . . . As a result, some of the richest and most influential of the Lake Forest blue-bloods were making frantic but ineffectual efforts for several days to secure the reserved spots.”

Claudia Cassidy, writing in the *Journal of Commerce*, reported that Gershwin was “more than ever a cross (in appearance and talent) between Horowitz and Astaire; he made his Concerto in F an American’s version of the Rachmaninov Third, boiling with the surge of modernity in the curve of brilliant orchestra. Even the *Rhapsody* took second place . . . .”

“Ravinia went wild last night,” added Edward Barry in the *Chicago Tribune*. Gershwin and Daly “made out a good case for the immense cleverness of style which is built upon bizarre metrical schemes, arresting melodic sequences, and hold, intelligently employed harmonics. . . . The Chicago Symphony Orchestra brought all of its virtuosity in the pat descriptiveness and shrilling brilliance of *An American in Paris*, falling easily into its idiom with the versatility of accomplished musicians. Following its cleverly stylized whoopee came the F major piano concerto, in which Gershwin himself played the solo part. The touch of a master.”

Frank Villella is the director of the Rosenthal Archives.
commission, Gershwin went out to buy a book on musical form to see how a concerto was constructed. (Gershwin may have wanted a refresher course, but he was far from untrained; for several years he had studied harmony, orchestration, and musical form with Edward Kilenyi.) But Gershwin had talents no other American composer at the time could touch: he possessed a phenomenal gift for melody and a natural feeling for dramatic pacing that no textbook could ever teach him, and he seemed to know innately what audiences would like, remember, and want to hear again.

In the first movement, Gershwin’s lively, abundant ideas and classical sonata form are sometimes an uneasy fit (the development section, in particular, is mostly variation and vamping). But the material is inspired throughout, and Gershwin, like a great actor or comedian, has an uncanny knack for timing. The slow central movement combines song form with the classically defined rondo. It is really a big blues number for piano, with a wonderfully sultry solo for the muted trumpet. The third movement is a brief rondo that reprises themes from the earlier movements and ends, in the best Broadway fashion, with a “grandioso” return of the main theme of the opening movement.

The Concerto in F stands as one of the high points in the merger of European sensibilities with the freedom, rhythmic excitement, and bravado of jazz and American musical theater—a new tradition fostered alike by the Europeans Stravinsky and Milhaud (both of whom scooped Gershwin in their efforts, but could not match his success) and the Americans Copland and Bernstein. The true significance of Gershwin’s achievement was too little appreciated at the time. Only a week before his death, Gershwin complained to a friend about the indifference he encountered in Hollywood: “I had to live for this?” he asked. “That Sam Goldwyn should say to me: ‘Why don’t you write hits like Irving Berlin?’ ” But few composers were as widely loved during their lifetime as Gershwin. His premature death came as a shock to the American public—the novelist John O’Hara said, “I don’t have to believe it if I don’t want to”—and it was recognized, even then, as an incalculable loss to American music.

Phillip Huscher

Antonín Dvořák
Born September 8, 1841; Nelahozeves, Bohemia
Died May 1, 1904; Prague, Bohemia

Symphony No. 6 in D Major, Op. 60

Antonín Dvořák has had a curiously ambiguous reputation. From his time to the present, he has been about as popular with listeners as it is possible to be. Meanwhile, critics from his time onward were skeptical. To many, Dvořák appeared too narrowly nationalistic, too naive, too conventional, too pretty, too popular, too much fun to be really, seriously good. He was not “profound.” He did not “stand in the great line of historical evolution.” In the slow movement of the New World Symphony he committed the misdemeanor of writing—in a symphony, no less—a hit tune.

In the last decades, Dvořák’s critical reputation has ascended roughly to the degree that concepts like “profound” and “historical evolution” have descended. Perhaps there’s a take on him that transcends the romantic shibboleths of the past, or those of the present age that worship hit tunes. As should be evident, Dvořák is not as simple, naive, direct, and so forth, as he appears. He raises issues. As with many artists

Above: Dvořák, ca. 1881
of the highest rank, as soon as generalizations about him are attempted, they tend to fall apart. Perhaps one definition of genius is just that quality: with this person, everything is yes and no.

The ambiguity begins with Dvořák’s life story, which, on the surface, is a rags-to-riches saga. He was born the eldest of nine children in the Bohemian village of Nelahozeves, his father a butcher and innkeeper. That part of the myth is true: he came from the vicinity of nowhere, and from nobody. The boy spent most of his youth as an apprentice butcher with an inexplicable yen for music. He started studying on his own, and finally convinced his father to let him take up music as a trade.

The Prague Organ School made Dvořák a professional. He spent the early part of his career performing in a dance band, playing viola in orchestras, and trying to compose. It was a time, he later wrote, of “hard study, occasional composing, much revision, a great deal of thinking, and very little eating.” Over the years, he wrote stacks of music and threw most of it out. He studied only “with God, with the birds, and the trees—and myself.”

He was in his forties when all of it—the poverty, the struggle to raise himself by his bootstraps—paid off. In 1873–74, Dvořák wrote the Third and Fourth symphonies with surging confidence and skill. In 1874, he sent fifteen pieces to the Austrian State Stipendium competition, which awarded funding to indigent artists living in the Austrian empire. In 1875, and for three years after, Dvořák won the prize. In those years, he was red hot. He composed the Fifth Symphony in six weeks, the opera Vanda in three months, the E major serenade for orchestra, and a number of other pieces.

The leading judge for the state competition was Johannes Brahms. In a letter of November 1877, leading music critic and Brahms friend Eduard Hanslick wrote Dvořák and suggested, “The sympathy of an artist as important and famous as Brahms should not only be pleasant but also useful to you, and I think you should write to him.”

Dvořák did as ordered. He found Brahms already an enthusiast for his talent and supremely able to make things happen. Immediately, Brahms sold his own publisher, Simrock, on Dvořák. In turn, Simrock suggested to Dvořák that he do as Brahms had done, write some nationalistic dances. Dvořák perused Brahms’s famous Hungarian Dances and composed his own Slavonic Dances. As the Hungarians had done for Brahms, the Slavonics did for Dvořák: they flew off the shelves and took their composer’s name around the world.

Occasionally, Brahms would groan about Dvořák’s sloppy voice-leading and other technical sins, but more often he voiced a kind of astonished pleasure. He raved to Simrock that the prize-winning Moravian Duets were “merry, fresh, piquant, pretty”; of two string quartets, “The best that a musician must have, Dvořák has”; of the Wind Serenade, “A more lovely, refreshing impression of real, rich, and charming creative talent you can’t easily find.” As is often noted, the things that most dazzled Brahms about Dvořák were the qualities in which Brahms felt himself deficient: the freshness of the Czech-accented voice, the sense of effortlessness, the lack of self-consciousness, the unpretentious charm.

Dvořák’s foundation in his native Czech music is only half the story, then. As a composer of large pieces, he was firmly in the Austro-German symphonic tradition. When Dvořák reached his maturity with the Fifth Symphony, part of what made it possible was getting an infatuation with Wagner out of his system and striking out on his

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<th>COMPOSED</th>
<th>August–October 1880</th>
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<tr>
<td>FIRST PERFORMANCE</td>
<td>March 25, 1881; Prague, Bohemia</td>
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<td>INSTRUMENTATION</td>
<td>three flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, strings</td>
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<td>APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME</td>
<td>41 minutes</td>
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<td>FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES</td>
<td>March 4 and 5, 1892, Auditorium Theatre. Theodore Thomas conducting</td>
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<td>July 15, 1972, Ravinia Festival. István Kertész conducting</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 6, 7, 8, and 11, 2003, Orchestra Hall. Sir Andrew Davis conducting</td>
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own. Now he’d gotten Brahms into his system. The models of Brahms and Wagner would mingle creatively in his work for the rest of his life. Among the fruits of that were the extraordinary last symphonies: the Sixth with its echoes of Brahms and Beethoven; the Seventh, his most somber and tragic (i.e., Brahmsian); the rustic and irresistible Eighth; and the New World, one of the most beloved of all symphonies.

His Symphony no. 6 in D major, op. 60, was composed for Hans Richter and the Vienna Philharmonic after the orchestra’s successful airing in 1879 of Dvořák’s Third Slavonic Rhapsody. It was intended for a premiere in 1880, but the orchestra rebelled at doing a Czech work two years in a row—not the only time Dvořák experienced this kind of treatment in Vienna. The symphony finally had its premiere in Prague; the Vienna Philharmonic never played it until 1943. Elsewhere, the Sixth proved one of Dvořák’s first international successes among his large works.

The symphony itself shows the complexity of his integration of Czech national music and German models. From the simplest perspective, the Sixth is a testament to the German side of his roots, and to his champion Brahms in particular. Among other things, starting with its key, in the Sixth there are echoes of the mood and material of Brahms’s Second Symphony.

All four movements of the Sixth are expansive. The first establishes a tone both magisterial and tuneful, though later in the movement and throughout the symphony there will be stern and declamatory moments. There has been a long-going debate about the material in the piece. Some have called the robust D major opening theme a Czech folk song, but any German listener of the time would have heard that it echoes a familiar German tune—the Grossvatertanz (Grandfather’s dance) that Robert Schumann wielded memorably in his piano works Papillons and Carnaval. That theme is put through familiar paces in sonata form, changing character from grand to stern; there is the usual gently contrasting second theme. The development is entirely Germanic, taking mainly the first theme in increasingly dramatic directions before a resplendent recapitulation.

The second movement, a rondo (A–B–A–C–A–B–A) with extensive variations in the repeats of material, has another clear influence—the slow movement of Beethoven’s Ninth. The tone is less inward than the model in Beethoven, the main theme yearningly lyrical, the intervening sections ranging from quiet to aggressive. At times, Dvořák’s treatment of his main theme recalls Brahms’s surging cello melodies.

It is with the third movement that his nationalism takes center stage—it is a scherzo in the style of a furiant, a driving Czech dance that leaps between a two-beat and three-beat articulation. Brilliant, intense, and a quite new voice for a symphonic scherzo, it was the hit of the symphony from the beginning; at the premiere in Prague it was encored. The quiet scherzo takes motifs from the same theme in a gentle direction.

It is perhaps the finale that most overtly recalls Brahms’s Second, beginning with a quietly flowing and expansive Brahmsian theme. Again we are in orthodox sonata form—exposition, development, recapitulation, coda—with a second theme contrasting, but in this case more vigorous in rhythm. Dvořák skips the usual repeat of the exposition and goes right into a boisterous and dramatic development. After a straightforward recapitulation, we arrive at a coda of mounting excitement dominated by pealing brass.

The myth of Dvořák paints him as an ingenious folksy composer, but he was a great deal more than that. The value of his music is not in qualities the nineteenth century most admired: the heroism of Beethoven, the magical quality of Mozart, the exalted and ponderous craftsmanship of Brahms. Perhaps the depth of Dvořák—if we listen to him closely—is partly in the way he stretches beyond the categories in which both his critics and admirers have tried to contain him. That, again, may be a handy definition of genius.

Jan Swafford

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