

ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIXTH SEASON

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Riccardo Muti Zell Music Director

Yo-Yo Ma Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

Thursday, December 8, 2016, at 8:00

Friday, December 9, 2016, at 1:30

Saturday, December 10, 2016, at 8:00

Neeme Järvi Conductor

Vadim Gluzman Violin

Glazunov

Concert Waltz No. 1 in D Major, Op. 47

Prokofiev

Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major, Op. 19

Andantino

Scherzo: Vivacissimo

Moderato

VADIM GLUZMAN

INTERMISSION

Sibelius

Suite from *Karelia*, Op. 11

Intermezzo

Ballade

Alla marcia

Sibelius

Symphony No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 82

Tempo molto moderato—Allegro moderato—Presto

Andante mosso, quasi allegretto

Allegro molto—Misterioso

These violin concerto performances have been enabled by the Paul Ricker Judy Fund.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is grateful to 93XRT FM for its generous support as media sponsor of the Classic Encounter series.

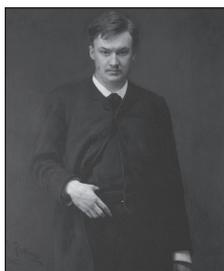
This program is partially supported by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Alexander Glazunov

Born August 10, 1865; Saint Petersburg, Russia

Died March 21, 1936; Neuilly-sur-Seine, near Paris, France

Concert Waltz No. 1 in D Major, Op. 47



Glazunov is perhaps better known for completing Borodin's works and for teaching Shostakovich than for his own music. (He also made news the night he conducted the disastrous premiere of Rachmaninov's First Symphony while drunk—

or so Rachmaninov's wife later claimed.)

Glazunov himself was a formidable young talent. After he began composition lessons with Rimsky-Korsakov in 1880, his teacher remarked that "his musical development progressed not by days but by hours." His First Symphony, completed two years later (he was just seventeen), was "young in inspiration but already mature in technique and structure," according to Rimsky-Korsakov. Igor Stravinsky, who was born the year of Glazunov's First Symphony, eventually became a great admirer of his music—he particularly envied the perfection of his form and the purity of his counterpoint—and he even arranged one of his string quartets for piano. (He showed his version to Glazunov, who called it unmusical.)

Glazunov's catalog is filled with works large and small, from eight symphonies to occasional

pieces that are smaller but not lesser in terms of polish and accomplishment. The first of his two concert waltzes, composed in 1893, was presented to Rimsky-Korsakov along with an edition of his *Chopiniana*, an orchestration of several pieces by Chopin that he had prepared the previous year (that score is the basis of the ballet we know as *Les sylphides*). The process of looking through Chopin's piano output in order to select a polonaise, a nocturne, a mazurka, and a tarantella for *Chopiniana* may well have inspired Glazunov to turn his attention to the waltz, one form he did not pick. The waltz had enjoyed great and unexpected popularity since Chopin's day in the hands of the Strauss dynasty. Johann Strauss, Jr., had spent many summers at the resort town of Pavlovsk, south of Saint Petersburg, and his music spread throughout Russia. Glazunov's own waltz—a so-called concert waltz, because, unlike the Strauss family products, it was not designed for dancing—is his footnote to a grand tradition. It has the color, the charm, and the long chain of irresistible melodies of the best Strauss waltzes. But it also has the orchestral brilliance he learned from Rimsky-Korsakov and the lyricism of his contemporary Tchaikovsky—the Viennese salon redecorated in grand Russian style. ■

Above: **Portrait of Glazunov by Ilya Repin, 1887. State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia**

COMPOSED

1893

FIRST PERFORMANCE

date unknown

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and piccolo, one oboe and english horn, three clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion, harp, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

11 minutes

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES

November 13 and 14, 1896, Auditorium Theatre. Theodore Thomas conducting

MOST RECENT

CSO PERFORMANCE

January 14, 1961, Orchestra Hall. John Weicher conducting

CSO RECORDING

1941. Frederick Stock conducting. Columbia

Sergei Prokofiev

Born April 23, 1891; Sontsovka, Ukraine

Died March 5, 1953; Moscow, Russia

Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major, Op. 19



Pablo Picasso, Arthur Rubinstein, Nadia Boulanger, and the great dancer Anna Pavlova were all in the audience on October 18, 1923, when Sergei Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto was premiered in Paris. So too was Joseph Szigeti, the

young violinist who took up the new concerto the following year and quickly established it as one of Prokofiev's finest scores. That October evening also marked Igor Stravinsky's debut as a conductor, when he led the premiere of his neoclassical Octet for Winds. Both works are now classics, but Stravinsky's went over better that night with the new-music crowd who had come to hear the latest from the avant-garde. (The evening was part of the Concerts Koussevitzky series organized by the conductor of the notorious *Rite of Spring* premiere in Paris ten years earlier.)

The composer and critic Georges Auric, who was in the celebrity-packed audience, called Prokofiev's new work a "concerto for dilettantes," dismissing it as old-fashioned, picturesque, and—reaching for his harshest adjective—"Mendelssohnian." But three days later, when it was performed in Moscow by the young all-star duo of Nathan Milstein and Vladimir Horowitz

(playing the orchestral part on the piano), it was a triumph. And the next year, after Szigeti performed the concerto for the first time, under Fritz Reiner at a new-music festival in Prague, and toured Europe with it, the piece quickly took its place in the repertory. Szigeti identified with the score so completely, as he admitted to Prokofiev, that in rehearsals he often told the conductor how it should go, as if he had composed it himself. (Szigeti played the concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in March 1944, under the baton of Hans Lange.)

Although Prokofiev's concerto was modern music in 1924, it wasn't exactly new. It began life in 1915 as a one-movement concertino for violin and orchestra, and over the next two years it grew into this three-movement concerto. Despite world events at the time, this was the most richly productive chapter in Prokofiev's career, and in 1917 alone he finished not only the violin concerto, but also composed his first symphony (the one we know as the *Classical*) and two piano sonatas, and began the Third Piano Concerto, which would eventually be premiered here in Orchestra Hall. Prokofiev apparently had trouble concentrating on music while demonstrators filled the streets; in 1917, he wrote to his close, lifelong friend Nikolai Miaskovsky that he had "fallen into a depression" and was spending a lot of time watching the stars through his new telescope.

Above: Prokofiev, ca. 1918

COMPOSED

1916–17

FIRST PERFORMANCE

October 18, 1923; Paris, France

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, tuba, timpani, snare drum, tambourine, harp, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

22 minutes

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES

March 26 and 27, 1926, Orchestra Hall. Cecilia Hansen as soloist, Frederick Stock conducting

July 23, 1987, Ravinia Festival. Frank Peter Zimmermann as soloist, Gennady Rozhdestvensky conducting

MOST RECENT

CSO PERFORMANCES

July 29, 2000, Ravinia Festival. Lisa Batiashvili as soloist, Christoph Eschenbach conducting

April 10 and 11, 2008, Orchestra Hall. Vadim Repin as soloist, Valery Gergiev conducting

CSO RECORDING

1983. Shlomo Mintz as soloist, Claudio Abbado conducting. Deutsche Grammophon

Prokofiev finished orchestrating the concerto during the summer of 1917, at the same time the *Classical* Symphony was taking shape. The premiere of the concerto was scheduled for that autumn in Saint Petersburg, but it was called off because of the war. In 1918, Prokofiev decided to leave Russia for the United States, where he hoped to find more opportunities to have his music played, but he was soon disillusioned with the American response to his music. In Chicago, where, in 1921, he unveiled his opera *The Love for Three Oranges* and his Third Piano Concerto (which he played with the Chicago Symphony), he encountered “less understanding than support.” And in New York he found neither. Prokofiev moved to Germany and finally, in the fall of 1923, settled in Paris, where Koussevitzky immediately organized the premiere of the violin concerto. Major violinists weren’t

yet interested in the piece, so Koussevitzky asked his Paris concertmaster, Marcel Darrieux, to play the work that Szigeti would soon make famous.

The first-night audience was expecting something brash and startling, like Prokofiev’s first two piano concertos, instead of the “softening of temper,” as Prokofiev put it, of this richly melodic score. Prokofiev would later cite the opening of this concerto as a perfect example of his “lyric line.” Soaring and rhapsodic (he marks it *sognando*, or dreaming), it’s the



Joseph Szigeti

essence of Prokofiev’s signature lyricism—and the opposite of Stravinsky’s fashionable, biting neoclassicism of the time. (Just for the record, Stravinsky always claimed that he liked Prokofiev’s concerto—as late as 1970, Robert Craft mentions his listening to a recording of the work with pleasure. But Prokofiev, however, had doubts about Stravinsky’s back-to-the-eighteenth-century works of the 1920s: “Bach, but with pockmarks,” he called them.)

Prokofiev turns the conventional concerto design inside out, with two slow, lyrical movements surrounding a faster one. The violinist takes the lead from the start, spinning a long, seamless melody (the theme of the original concertino) that grows into more urgent music (marked *narrante*, as in relating or recounting), which continues to gain momentum and force. The movement dramatically changes character, and Szigeti was particularly drawn to the concerto’s “mixture of fairy-tale naiveté and daring savagery in lay out and texture.” The movement ends back where it began, in a hushed dream world, but this isn’t so much a recapitulation as a brief, fond memory.

The short scherzo is full of Szigeti’s “savagery,” but it’s also touched by humor and an impish delight that may have provoked Auric’s “Mendelssohnian” comment. The beginning of the finale makes the transition back to the expansive and lyrical style that dominated the first movement. There are also moments of energy and drama before the pace ultimately slows to make way for the return of the concerto’s opening theme. The serene and rapturous ending is crowned by chains of trills in the violin that shimmer like the stars Prokofiev studied through his telescope. ■

Jean Sibelius

Born December 8, 1865; Tavastehus, Finland

Died September 20, 1957; Järvenpää, Finland

Suite from *Karelia*, Op. 11



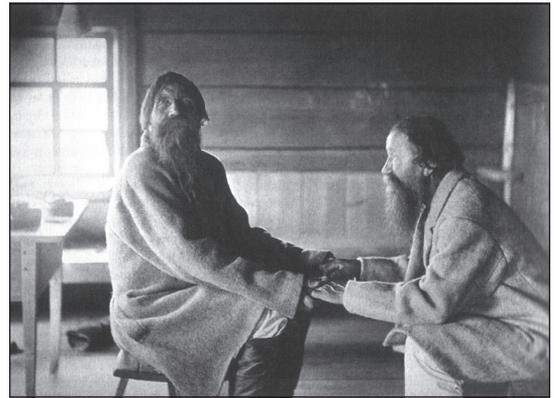
When Sibelius was just seven years old, his family made the forward-looking decision to transfer him from a popular Swedish-language preparatory school to the brand-new, first-ever Finnish language grammar school. (Until it was founded, Swedish and

Latin were the standard languages of the Finnish school system.) There, he came in contact for the first time with the Finnish folk poetry collections—the *Kalevala* and the *Kanteletar*—finding the source for much of the music that would one day make him famous—and label him, somewhat unfairly, as a nationalistic composer.

Although Sibelius didn't truly master Finnish till he was in his twenties, this exposure to the sounds and rhythms of the language fired his imagination at an early age and sparked his ongoing project of reading and re-reading these poetry collections that had been compiled by Elias Lönnrot in the first half of the nineteenth century. By 1891, Sibelius's interest was so consuming that he made a special trip to hear Larin Paraske, a well-known runic singer, perform episodes from the *Kalevala*, carefully observing the inflections of her singing in ways that would influence his own musical style.

Sibelius's first major composition was the expansive *Kullervo* symphony that was based on

the *Kalevala*, and it was such a success in 1892 that, from that point on, Finland looked no farther for its greatest composer. With Sibelius suddenly acclaimed for the distinctly "Finnish" cast of his music, it was inevitable that he would be commissioned to write political and patriotic music. In 1893, Sibelius was contacted by the Viipuri Student Corporation of the University of Helsinki for a series of tableaux on the history of Karelia, the wooded land directly east of Finland, stretching from the White Sea at its northeast corner to the Gulf of Finland on the southwest. An independent state until the seventeenth century, Karelia was first annexed



Brothers Poavila and Triihvo Jamanen reciting folk poetry in Uhtua (formerly Kalevala, now Republic of Karelia, Russia). Photo by I.K. Inha, 1894

Above: **Photo of Sibelius by Paul Heckscher, 1890**

COMPOSED

1893

timpani, tambourine, bass drum, cymbals, strings

August 8, 1937, Ravinia Festival. Fritz Reiner conducting (*Alla marcia* only)

FIRST PERFORMANCE

November 13, 1893; Helsinki, Finland. Sibelius conducting

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

14 minutes

November 5, 1949, Orchestra Hall. Tauno Hannikainen conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba,

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES

November 19 and 20, 1915, Orchestra Hall. Frederick Stock conducting (Overture only)

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES

March 24, 25, and 26, 2011, Orchestra Hall. Charles Dutoit conducting

by Sweden, then taken over by Russia in 1721. (Finland itself was ceded to Russia in 1809.) For the pageant, Sibelius wrote eight musical numbers depicting various incidents in the Karelian saga; he later picked three to form a concert suite.

The opening Intermezzo, which originally depicted a procession of Karelians paying honor to a Lithuanian prince, is a won-

derfully atmospheric march, emerging from out of the distance, coming closer, and then receding again. (The mysterious opening, with horn calls over quiet string tremolos, is almost Brucknerian in its effect.) The Ballade was written to represent the deposed Karl Knutsson, a fifteenth-century king, as he listens to a minstrel at Viipuri castle. The final number, originally titled “March on an Old Motif,” is a stirring call to battle. ■

Jean Sibelius

Symphony No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 82



On the evening of his fiftieth birthday, Jean Sibelius conducted the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra in the world premiere of his Fifth Symphony. The eagerly awaited new work had been commissioned as the centerpiece of a concert

organized in Sibelius's honor as Finland's greatest composer. The audience reception that night was enthusiastic—in response to the occasion, perhaps, more than the symphony. Sibelius had pushed himself to get the score done in time (he was still making changes during the final rehearsal), and his relief at meeting the deadline quickly gave way to a growing dissatisfaction with the music itself.

No other composition gave Sibelius as much trouble as his Fifth Symphony. He mentioned the work for the first time in his diary as early as 1912. In late September 1914, he jotted these words in a notebook: “In a deep valley again. But I already begin to see dimly the mountain that I shall certainly ascend. . . . God opens his door for a moment and his orchestra plays the Fifth Symphony.” But God's orchestra would have to wait another five years for Sibelius to finish the score. Sibelius was normally a prodigious worker, juggling several compositions at once, but this symphony became the consuming project of the wartime years.

The original version of the Fifth Symphony—the one Sibelius introduced on his fiftieth birthday—was divided into four separate movements. (The manuscript has been lost and the score pieced together from the surviving orchestral parts.) Almost immediately after the premiere, Sibelius realized that this was a structural miscalculation, since the second movement, a scherzo, was based on the same material as the first. He then compressed the two into a single sonata-form structure, with the scherzo serving as a recapitulation that sheds new light on familiar matters. In its revised form, the Fifth Symphony was introduced on December 14, 1916—one year and six days after the premiere. But Sibelius was still dissatisfied and recalled the work again. (Only the double bass part from the 1916 version survives.)

Sibelius was now working at a higher level of self-criticism; every day he formulated and refined ideas that would contribute not only to his Fifth, but to his Sixth and Seventh symphonies as well. In a letter dated May 20, 1918, he commented that “it looks as if I may come out with all three symphonies at the same time.” He continued: “The Fifth Symphony in a new form—practically composed anew—I work at it daily.” The next month he wrote to Axel Carpelan, a longtime source of spiritual and financial aid, that he had finished the Fifth at last, though that proved premature. Finally, on November 24, 1919, Sibelius introduced the

Above: **Photo of Sibelius by Norwegian-born photographer Carl Daniel Nyblin, 1913**

Fifth Symphony in the form we know today. The Sixth didn't appear until 1923; the Seventh came out a year later. Sibelius gave up on sketches for an eighth symphony. After completing *Tapiola*, his last composition, in 1926, he withdrew into a thirty-year silence as tantalizing as the famous long pauses that divide the final chords of the Fifth Symphony. At the moment he died, on September 20, 1957, in a retirement home in Järvenpää, the orchestra in nearby Helsinki was performing his Fifth Symphony.

No two of Sibelius's seven symphonies are alike. (The predominant family trait, it seems, is that each symphony is most different from the preceding one.) All seven offer individual approaches to the central questions of symphonic thought; each one inhabits a world all its own. The very sounds that open the Fifth Symphony—quietly unfolding horn calls over a timpani roll—mark it as distinctly as the racing heartbeat that starts Mozart's G minor symphony or the heroic E-flat chord in the first measure of Beethoven's *Emperor* Concerto. (Ironically, in the original version of Sibelius's symphony, this motto comes only at the end of the first musical paragraph.)

The shape of the first movement, which began life as two, is wholly original. The seam doesn't show—it's very cannily woven, and the surrounding material has been completely recomposed; at the movement's end, one wonders how music that began in such a genial and leisurely mood grew, imperceptibly, to such a dizzying frenzy. The entire structure is taut and concentrated, forging musical phrases, sentences, and, finally, entire paragraphs out of a few opening words—the reverse of normal

symphonic development. There are few passages in music as thrilling and suspenseful as the second half of this movement, with its pace growing steadily faster and faster (essentially an *accelerando* sustained over five minutes), like a Hitchcock chase.

The slow movement is a set of variations that takes its subject not from the opening wind theme, but from an insistent rhythmic pattern (two groups of five quarter notes, divided by a quarter rest) introduced by the low strings. Sibelius writes several quite different melodies, all sharing the same rhythm. Throughout the movement, the urgently rhythmic music and spacious, lazy wind chords coexist, almost oblivious of each other. The music draws its strength and peculiar character from the union of two such seemingly incompatible forces.

The finale is grand, physical, and visionary. It has an extraordinary sense of great speed and stasis at the same time, and suggests music from different spheres moving together through space. Sibelius begins with a rush of furious activity in the strings. A swaying horn theme begins to toll. Strands of melody pass by. Everything moves toward a great climax, which is achieved by a monumental slowing of the tempo and a melodic tangle followed by a great silence. On the last page of the score, Sibelius writes six large chords with wide-open spaces around them. We hang on each one, uncertain of the next. They are like the final lines of a great book that has kept us up all night and holds us spellbound to the very last word. ■

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

COMPOSED

1914

FIRST PERFORMANCES

December 8, 1915; Helsinki, Finland.
The composer conducting

December 14, 1916, revised version

November 24, 1919, final version

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets,
two bassoons, four horns, three
trumpets, three trombones,
timpani, strings

**APPROXIMATE
PERFORMANCE TIME**

31 minutes

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES

July 2, 1937, Ravinia Festival. Sir Ernest
MacMillan conducting

January 16 and 17, 1941, Orchestra
Hall. Frederick Stock conducting

**MOST RECENT
CSO PERFORMANCES**

July 6, 2002, Ravinia Festival.
Christoph Eschenbach conducting

May 14, 15, and 16, 2009, Orchestra
Hall. Osmo Vänskä conducting

May 17, 2009, Orchestra Hall. Osmo
Vänskä conducting (Beyond the Score)