Thursday, November 17, 2016, at 8:00
Friday, November 18, 2016, at 1:30
Saturday, November 19, 2016, at 8:00
Tuesday, November 22, 2016, at 7:30

**Emmanuel Krivine** Conductor
**Denis Kozhukhin** Piano

**Liszt**
*Les préludes*, Symphonic Poem No. 3

**Prokofiev**
Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 16
Andantino
Scherzo: Vivace
Moderato
Finale: Allegro tempestoso

**Dvořák**
Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Allegretto grazioso
Allegro ma non troppo

CSO Tuesday series concerts are sponsored by United Airlines.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is grateful to WBBM Newsradio 780 and 105.9 FM for their generous support as media sponsor of the Tuesday series.

This program is partially supported by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.
Franz Liszt  
Born October 22, 1811; Raiding, Hungary  
Died July 31, 1886; Bayreuth, Bavaria

Les préludes, Symphonic Poem No. 3, after Lamartine

On May 5, 1856, Liszt sent the newly published scores of six of his symphonic poems, including Les préludes, to Richard Wagner. In return, Wagner sent off the original scores to Das Rheingold and Die Walküre, followed by a letter full of kind words for Liszt’s newest efforts. The two composers had been unusually close for many years, each sometimes alone in appreciating what the other was up to, although in the next decade, when Wagner fathered two illegitimate children with Liszt’s daughter Cosima, the relationship was severely strained. But in 1856—Wagner never suspecting that he would one day have to accept Liszt as his father-in-law—they were united in pushing music toward a new frontier. Scholars and musicians have argued over their comparative success ever since, and, although it is Wagner, largely by virtue of an advanced case of self-promotion and a very modern understanding of public relations, who is generally seen as the greater revolutionary, there are those who would agree with the verdict of Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein, who knew them both: “[Liszt] has hurled his lance much farther into the future than Wagner.”

In November 1856, Liszt and Wagner took part in a concert in Saint Gallen, with Wagner conducting the Eroica Symphony and Liszt his own Orpheus and Les préludes. In 1856, Les préludes was new music: it had been finished and first performed only two years before in Weimar. But it was also new in the more important sense of modern, fresh, and novel. That is sometimes hard to accept today, for Les préludes is arguably Liszt’s best-known composition and certainly his most played orchestral work; and because of its fame and familiarity, and all the music that was later conceived in its image, we fail to realize its novelty.

There are a number of common misconceptions about Liszt’s symphonic poems. Liszt did invent the name—the term sinfonische Dichtung (symphonic poem) was used for the first time in 1854—to describe music that did not strictly follow any of the classical forms, and that was, in some way, related to literary or pictorial works. But he did not invent the musical concept, which is a logical outgrowth of the single-movement dramatic overtures of Beethoven, rather than

Above: Portrait of Liszt by Wilhelm von Kaulbach, Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum, Budapest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPOSED</th>
<th>1849–55</th>
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<tr>
<td>FIRST PERFORMANCE</td>
<td>February 23, 1854; Weimar, Germany</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, harp, bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, strings</td>
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<tr>
<td>APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME</td>
<td>16 minutes</td>
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| FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES | January 29 and 30, 1892, Auditorium Theatre. Theodore Thomas conducting  
July 5, 1936, Ravinia Festival. Ernest Ansermet conducting |
| MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES | July 20, 1989, Ravinia Festival. Andrew Litton conducting |
| CSO RECORDINGS | April 8, 2011, Orchestra Hall. Riccardo Muti conducting  
April 17, 2011, Carnegie Hall. Riccardo Muti conducting  
multi-movement program symphonies like Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*. There are precedents as well for Liszt’s important experiments with one-movement forms and for his use of thematic transformation, often in place of a Beethovenian development of material. Schubert’s *Wanderer* Fantasy, which Liszt knew well, played spectacularly, and later arranged for piano and orchestra, anticipates much that is essential to Liszt’s best work. The novelty of Liszt’s symphonic poems is that, like Berlioz in his *Symphonie fantastique*, he took ideas that were in the air and made something unimagined, distinctive, successful, and highly influential. Without *Les préludes* and the rest of the Liszt canon, Smetana’s *Mávást*, Tchaikovsky’s *Romeo and Juliet*, and Strauss’s *Death and Transfiguration* are unthinkable.

Perhaps the greatest confusion about Liszt’s works has to do with the relationship between the music and the program—that is, which came first. In most cases, it was the music. *Les préludes* had a previous life as an overture to an unpublished choral work, *Les quatre éléments* (The four elements), and Lamartine’s poem was only unearthed when Liszt decided to make something of his overture and needed a title and general game plan to accompany it. All the musical themes in *Les préludes* came from the four pieces of the choral work, and they have more to do with earth and water than with Lamartine’s war and peace. Still, Lamartine’s title has served very nicely over the years, and, as long as we do not try to read too much into Liszt’s music, neither Liszt nor Lamartine suffers.

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The music is conceived in three large paragraphs with a brief introduction. The first paragraph contains most of the material for the work, including an important, flowing melody for cellos and second violins; the second begins tempestuously but dissolves into a genial, pastoral mood (and introduces a new theme); the final section is a triumphant reworking (marked *marziale*) of the first. The whole is tightly knit and wisely paced, and Liszt’s trademark transformation of themes is particularly effective.

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**Sergei Prokofiev**

Born April 23, 1891; Sontsovka, Ukraine

Died March 5, 1953; Moscow, Russia

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**Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 16**

Prokofiev wrote his first two piano concertos while he was still a student at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. He was an unusually precocious young musician—he composed his first piano piece at the age of five, and at nine he was playing sonatas by Beethoven. By the time he was admitted to the conservatory in 1904, at the age of thirteen, he had already written two operas, a symphony, a violin sonata, and several piano pieces. Prokofiev quickly grew bored and disillusioned with the stodgy school atmosphere; he was an unusually rebellious student, and he did poorly in his classes with Rimsky-Korsakov and Liadov, the two most distinguished teachers at the conservatory. With his first two piano concertos, Prokofiev began to assert his musical personality and to distance himself from the prevailing reactionary tastes.

Prokofiev’s First Piano Concerto, completed in 1912, helped to establish his reputation as an *enfant terrible*; it was reviewed by the leading critics in both Saint Petersburg and Moscow, who carped about its superficial bravura and exhibitionistic, “acrobatic” technique. The second piano concerto Prokofiev began later that same year.
year was, in part, an attempt to compose a work of greater depth, although it requires even greater virtuosity. (Prokofiev had become a pianist of exceptional brilliance and power during his conservatory days, and he wrote both works to perform himself.)

The composer played the complex, wide-ranging solo part of his Second Piano Concerto at its premiere in September 1913, in the out-of-the-way town of Pavlovsk, near Saint Petersburg. The concert drew curious music lovers from throughout the surrounding area, and the critic for the *Saint Petersburg Gazette* noted that his fellow passengers on the train to Pavlovsk were talking of nothing but Prokofiev. Here is part of his review, proudly reprinted by Prokofiev in his *Brief Autobiography*:

On the platform appeared a youth looking like a Peterschule student. It was Sergei Prokofiev. He sat down at the piano and appeared to be either dusting the keyboard or tapping it at random, with a sharp dry touch. The public did not know what to make of it. Some indignant murmurs were heard. One couple got up and hurried to the exit: “Such music can drive you mad!” The hall emptied. The young artist ended his concerto with a relentlessly discordant combination of brasses. The audience was scandalized. The majority hissed. With a mocking bow, Prokofiev sat down again and played an encore. “The hell with this futurist music!” people were heard to exclaim. “We came here for pleasure. The cats on the roof make better music!”

Another critic wrote that the concerto left its listeners “frozen with fright, hair standing on end.” With a major scandal under his belt (in that most scandal-packed year of premieres, this concerto coming only four months after Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*), Prokofiev now felt that he truly was on the threshold of fame. His career advanced quickly. Immediately after graduation from the conservatory in 1914—the recipient of the coveted Rubinstein Prize—he left Russia and later met the hottest names in European music circles, Igor Stravinsky and Sergei Diaghilev. Prokofiev was bowled over by Stravinsky’s music, and *The Rite of Spring* had a lasting impact on his own development as a composer (a debt Prokofiev never publicly admitted). In London, Prokofiev played his Second Piano Concerto for Diaghilev, who at first considered choreographing it but then asked him to write a new ballet score (the ill-fated *Ala and Lolli*, later revised as the *Scythian Suite*, followed by a second commission, *The Tale of the Buffoon*).

In 1918, Prokofiev talked an official into issuing him a passport with no expiration date, and he set off for the United States. Remembering that he had once met a friendly Chicagoan named Cyrus McCormick, Jr., in Petrograd, Prokofiev traveled to Chicago, which seemed unusually welcoming and receptive to his music. Frederick Stock invited him to play his First Piano Concerto and to conduct the *Scythian Suite* with the Chicago Symphony, and the Chicago Opera agreed to produce *The Love for Three Oranges*. Stock invited Prokofiev back to play the world premiere of his new Third Piano Concerto in 1921.

**COMPOSED**
1912–13, lost in 1918, and reconstructed in 1923

**FIRST PERFORMANCE**
September 5, 1913; Pavlovsk, outside Saint Petersburg, Russia. The composer as soloist

Revised version: May 8, 1924; Paris, France. The composer as soloist

**INSTRUMENTATION**
solo piano, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, bass drum, snare drum, field drum, cymbals, tambourine, strings

**APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME**
31 minutes

**FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES**
February 28 and March 1, 1930, Orchestra Hall. The composer as soloist, Eric DeLamarter conducting

July 26, 1960, Ravinia Festival. Malcolm Frager as soloist, Walter Susskind conducting

**MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES**
July 22, 2006, Ravinia Festival. Joyce Yang as soloist, James Conlon conducting

October 24, 25, and 26, 2013, Orchestra Hall. Kirill Gerstein as soloist, Semyon Bychkov conducting
When Prokofiev came to this country in 1918, he left the score of his Second Piano Concerto in his Petrograd apartment, where it eventually was used by the new tenants as fuel “to cook an omelet,” as the composer’s friends later informed him. In 1923, then living in Paris, Prokofiev decided to reconstruct the score from memory. “I have so completely rewritten the Second Concerto that it might almost be considered the Fourth,” he wrote to a friend that year. But in his autobiography, he claimed that he had merely made “the contrapuntal development slightly more complicated, the form more graceful—less square,” and that he “improved” both the piano and orchestral parts. We’ll never know how different the original 1913 concerto is from the one he introduced in Paris in May 1924. By then, in a city used to being at the center of the avant-garde, it caused little stir.

The Second Piano Concerto has four movements, unconventionally arranged—the last three offer little variety of tempo and there’s no “slow movement” at all. The first movement begins with a delicate, expansive lyrical theme in the piano; it’s the only one of its kind in the work. Prokofiev ingeniously transforms much of the standard development and recapitulation sections into a monumental, unabashedly virtuosic cadenza for solo piano (he marks the climax “colossale”). By the time the orchestra reenters, the movement is practically over.

The scherzo is a fleet perpetuum mobile for the pianist, playing nonstop sixteenth notes in unison octaves throughout. (The orchestra adds terse, colorful comments, but stays out of the soloist’s way.) The subsequent intermezzo, which doesn’t offer the relief its title traditionally suggests, is a fierce and sometimes grotesque march over a repeating bass line. The finale is more of a battle between piano and orchestra, the former resorting to full-fisted chords to gain the upper hand. Prokofiev makes room for a leisurely interlude with a simple folklike melody and another florid cadenza before the “relentlessly discordant” chords that left the Pavlovsk audience, apparently unaccustomed to healthy harmonic daring, frozen with fright.

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

 Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88

On August 12, 1893, Antonín Dvořák conducted his G major symphony at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. According to the printed booklet prepared for Bohemian Day at the fair, the Exposition Orchestra consisted of the Chicago Orchestra (as it was then known) “enlarged to 114 men.” The G major symphony was listed as no. 4, which is how it was known during the composer’s lifetime, although we now number it the eighth of Dvořák’s nine symphonies. In fact, to the late nineteenth century, Dvořák was the composer of just five symphonies; only with the publication of his first four symphonies in the 1950s did we begin to use the current numbering. By now, even generations of music lovers who grew up knowing this genial G major symphony as no. 4 have come to accept it as no. 8.

By the time he came to Chicago, Dvořák had already conducted this symphony several times, always to an enthusiastic response—first in Prague and then in London, Frankfurt, and Cambridge, when he received an honorary doctor
of music degree there in 1891. (“Nothing but ceremony, and nothing but doctors,” he remembered. “All faces were serious, and it seemed to me as if no one knew any other language but Latin.”) The Chicago reception, capped by “tremendous outbursts of applause,” according to the Tribune, was equally positive.

In the 1880s and ’90s, Dvořák was as popular and successful as any living composer, including Brahms, who had helped promote Dvořák’s music early on and had even convinced his own publisher, Simrock, to take on this new composer and to issue his Moravian Duets in 1877. Dvořák proved to be a prudent addition to the catalog, and the Slavonic Dances he wrote the following year at Simrock’s request became one of the firm’s all-time best sellers. Dvořák was then insulted and outraged, when, in 1890, Simrock offered him only a thousand marks for his G major symphony (particularly since the company had paid three thousand marks for the last one), and he gave the rights to the London firm of Novello instead. (At least he did not follow the greedy example set by Beethoven and sell the same score to two different publishers.)

Dvořák’s G major symphony is his most bucolic and idyllic—it is, in effect, his Pastoral—and like Brahms’s Second or Mahler’s Fourth, it stands apart from the composer’s other works in the form. Like the subsequent New World Symphony, composed in a tiny town set in the rolling green hills of northeast Iowa, it was written in the seclusion of the countryside. In the summer of 1889, Dvořák retired to his country home at Vysoká, away from the pressures of urban life and far from the demands of performers and publishers. There he realized that he was ready to tackle a new symphony—it had been four years since his last—and that he was eager to compose something “different from the other symphonies, with individual thoughts worked out in a new way.”

Composition was remarkably untroubled. “Melodies simply pour out of me,” Dvořák said at the time, and both the unashamedly tuneful nature of this score and the timetable of its progress confirm the composer’s boast. He began his new symphony on August 26; the first movement was finished in two weeks, the second a week later, and the remaining two movements in just a few days apiece. The orchestration took only another six weeks.

The first movement is, as Dvořák predicted, put together in a new way. The opening theme—pointedly in G minor, not the G major promised by the key signature—functions as an introduction, although, significantly, it is in the same tempo as the rest of the movement. It appears, like a signpost, at each of the movement’s crucial junctures—here, before the exposition; later, before the start of the development; and finally, to introduce the recapitulation. Dvořák is particularly generous with melodic ideas in this movement. As Leoš Janáček said of this music: “You’ve scarcely got to know one figure before a second one beckons with a friendly nod, so you’re in a state of constant but pleasurable excitement.”

The second movement, an adagio, alternates C major and C minor, somber and gently merry music, as well as passages for strings and winds. It is a masterful example of complexities and contradictions swept together in one great
paragraph. The central climax, with trumpet fanfares over a timpani roll, is thrilling.

The third movement is not a conventional scherzo, but a lilt- ing, radiant waltz marked Allegretto grazioso—the same marking Brahms used for the third movements of his second and third symphonies. The main theme of the trio was rescued from Dvořák’s comic opera The Stubborn Lovers, where Toník worries that his love, Lenka, will be married off to his father.

The finale begins with a trumpet fanfare and continues with a theme and several variations. The theme, introduced by the cellos, is a natural subject of such deceptive simplicity that it cost its normally tuneful composer nine drafts before he was satisfied. The variations, which incorporate everything from a sunny flute solo to a determined march in the minor mode, eventually fade to a gentle farewell before Dvořák adds one last rip-roaring page to ensure the audience enthusiasm that, by 1889, he had grown to expect.

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