Wednesday, November 11, 2015, at 6:30 (Afterwork Masterworks, performed with no intermission)

**Edo de Waart** Conductor  
**Augustin Hadelich** Violin

**Mozart**  
Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219 *(Turkish)*

**Adams**  
*Harmonielehre*

This violin concerto performance has been enabled by the Paul Ricker Judy Fund.  
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is grateful to WBBM Newsradio 780 and 105.9 FM for its generous support of the Afterwork Masterworks series.

Thursday, November 12, 2015, at 8:00  
Friday, November 13, 2015, at 1:30  
Saturday, November 14, 2015, at 8:00

**Edo de Waart** Conductor  
**Augustin Hadelich** Violin

**Strauss**  
*Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks, Op. 28*  
*Mozart*  
Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219 *(Turkish)*  
Allegro aperto  
Adagio  
Rondo: Tempo di menuetto  

**Adams**  
*Harmonielehre*  
Part 1  
Part 2 The Anfortas Wound  
Part 3 Meister Eckhardt and Quackie

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

This work is part of the CSO Premiere Retrospective, which is generously sponsored by the Sargent Family Foundation.  
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is grateful to 93XRT and RedEye for their generous support as media sponsors 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.
Richard Strauss
Born June 11, 1864, Munich, Germany.
Died September 8, 1949, Garmisch, Germany.

Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks, Op. 28
Performed as part of the CSO Premiere Retrospective

Had Strauss’s first opera, Guntram, succeeded as he hoped, he surely would have gone ahead with his plan to make Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks his second. But Guntram was a major disappointment and Strauss reconsidered. We’ll never know what sort of opera Till Eulenspiegel might have been—the unfinished libretto isn’t promising—but as a tone poem it’s close to perfection.

The failure of Guntram hurt—Strauss wasn’t used to bad reviews or public indifference. Now, more than ever, he refused to give up on his hero, Till Eulenspiegel, an incorrigible prankster with a certain contempt for humanity, who sets out to get even with society. (There was a real Till Eulenspiegel who lived in the fourteenth century.) But Strauss was no longer certain that the opera stage was the best place to tell this story—“the figure of Master Till Eulenspiegel does not quite appear before my eyes,” he finally confessed—and he returned to the vehicle of his greatest past successes, the orchestral tone poem. Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks is arguably his greatest achievement in the form.

Ferruccio Busoni once said that in Till Eulenspiegel Strauss reached a mastery of lightness and humor unrivaled in German music since Haydn. The humor wasn’t so surprising—although some listeners had found the deep seriousness of Death and Transfiguration, Strauss’s previous tone poem, worrisome—but to achieve such transparency with an orchestra of unparalleled size seemed miraculous.

At the time of the premiere of Till Eulenspiegel, Strauss resisted fitting a narrative to his music, but he later admitted a few points of reference. He begins by beckoning us to gather round, setting a warm “once-upon-a-time” mood into which the horn jumps with one of the most famous themes in all music—the daring, teasing, cartwheeling tune that characterizes this roguish hero better than any well-chosen words ever could. The portrait is rounded off by the nose-thumbing pranks of the clarinet.
According to the Memoirs of our founder and first music director, during the summer of 1882, “While in Europe [Theodore] Thomas had, as usual, been on the lookout for musical novelties for coming programs. He had met, in Munich, a young and almost unknown composer, one Richard Strauss, who had recently finished writing a symphony. Thomas secured the first movement of the work, and was so much impressed with it that he requested the young Strauss to let him have the other three movements, promising to bring out the whole work in a concert with the [New York] Philharmonic.” Thomas, music director of the philharmonic from 1877 until 1891, kept his word and gave the premiere of Strauss’s Symphony no. 2 in F minor on December 13, 1884, thus introducing Strauss to America.

Their friendship blossomed, and, as a result, Thomas introduced several of Strauss’s tone poems to Chicago audiences, including the U.S. premiere of Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks on November 15, 1895. The reviewer for the Chicago Record reported:

Strauss’s rondo is a tour de force, astonishing at every measure, irresistibly droll, full of quaint medieval quips and cranks, teeming with clever mimicry and brilliant instrumental pantomime, and, above all, a masterpiece of orchestral art. The intricacy of the score is extraordinary, the ingenious devices resorted to for effect amazing, and the humor and wholesome buffoonery of the piece unique. Nothing could have been chosen better to illustrate the immense resources of the young composer and the fertility of his genius. What is more, the piece gave the Orchestra an opportunity to display its consummate training, and it may be said that music never was played in Chicago with finer technical nicety or with more of the spirit of a composer.

Thomas also led the Orchestra in the U.S. premiers of Also sprach Zarathustra on February 5, 1897; Don Quixote on January 6, 1899; and Ein Heldenleben on March 9, 1900. Strauss himself led Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks when he guest conducted the Orchestra on April 1 and 2, 1904.

Frank Villella is the director of the Rosenthal Archives. For more information regarding the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s anniversary season, please visit cso.org/125moments.
From there the music simply explodes, as the orchestra responds to Till’s every move. When he dons the frock of a priest, the music turns mock-serious; when he escapes, down a handy violin glissando, in search of love, Strauss supplies sumptuous string harmonies Don Juan would envy. Rejected in love, Till takes on academia, but his cavalier remarks and the professors’ ponderous deliberations (intoned by the bassoons and bass clarinet) find no common ground. Till departs with a Grosse Grimasse (Strauss’s term) that rattles the entire orchestra, and then slips out the back way, whistling as he goes.

After a quick review of recent escapades—a recapitulation of sorts—Till is brought before a jury (the pounding of the gavel is provided by the $fff$ roll of the side drum). The judge’s repeated pronouncements do not quiet Till’s insolent remarks. But the death sentence—announced by the brass, falling the interval of a major seventh, the widest possible drop short of an octave—silences him for good. It’s over in a flash.

Then Strauss turns the page, draws us round him once again, and reminds us that this is only a tone poem. And with a smile, he closes the book.

### Wolfgang Mozart

**Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg, Austria.**

**Died December 5, 1791, Vienna, Austria.**

#### Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219 (Turkish)

Wolfgang had a little violin that he got as a present in Vienna . . .” So begins one of the most celebrated anecdotes about the young Mozart, a child in everything but musical talent. Johann Andreas Schachtner, a friend of the family, continues:

We were going to play trios, Papa [Leopold] playing the bass with his viola, Wenzl the first violin, and I was to play the second violin. Wolfgang had asked to be allowed to play the second violin, but Papa refused him this foolish request, because he had not yet had the least instruction in the violin, and Papa thought he could not possibly play anything. Wolfgang said, “You don’t need to have studied in order to play second violin,” and when Papa insisted that he should go away and not bother us any more, Wolfgang began to weep bitterly and stamped off with his little violin. I asked them to let him play with me. Papa eventually said, “Play with Herr Schachtner, but so softly that we can’t hear you, or you will have to go.” And so it was. Wolfgang played with me. I soon noticed with astonishment that I was quite superfluous. I quietly put my violin down, and looked at your Papa; tears of wonder and comfort ran down his cheeks at this scene.

Schachtner places the evening in January of 1763; Wolfgang turned seven that month. It astonished even Leopold, who never could be said to have underestimated his son’s talent. The full range of Mozart’s abilities still amazes.
us today, even though we know he played the clavier, with grace and fluency, at four; began to compose at five; and went on to write music of an emotional depth and cerebral level often at odds with his age and behavior and comprehensible only as the work of absolute genius.

A month after Wolfgang played with Herr Schachtner, Mozart performed on both violin and harpsichord in concert for the Salzburg court. From then on he played second fiddle to no one. Often during the 1770s, Mozart appeared as a violin soloist in Salzburg, Vienna, Augsburg, and Munich. In 1777, he wrote home to his father from Munich, “I played as if I were the greatest fiddler in all of Europe.” Leopold wrote back that if he would only apply himself, he might indeed sound like the first violinist of Europe, and pointed out that “many people do not even know that you play the violin, since you have been known from childhood as a keyboard player.” Shortly after that, Wolfgang dropped the violin in favor of the keyboard for concertizing—and the viola for playing chamber music—partly to spite his father, who had made his name as a violinist and who had published an influential and popular treatise on violin playing the year his son was born. Wolfgang rightly knew that he was the more precious product of 1756.

Although Mozart wrote music for solo violin throughout his career—sonatas, sets of variations, mini-concertos embedded within orchestral serenades—the centerpiece of this output is the set of five concertos he composed in the mid-1770s in Salzburg and no doubt designed to perform himself. It used to be assumed that these five works were written in the span of just eight months—the earliest is dated April 14, 1775; the last December 20, 1775. But recent scholarship suggests that the last two digits of those dates were tampered with more than once, first adjusting them to read 1780, and then to 1775. It now seems likely that the last four do date from 1775, but the first concerto may have been written as early as 1773. In any event, all five concertos are early Mozart—they predate his first significant piano concerto, in E-flat major (K. 271), by more than a year—but they aren’t immature works in any sense. In Mozart’s hands—hands that enriched and transformed nearly every form they touched—even these five works composed in a relatively short span of time demonstrate growth in his understanding of the concerto. The last three, which mark an advance over the more decorative first two, have long been part of the repertory, and the concerto performed on this week’s concerts, the so-called Turkish—the last of the five—is one of Mozart’s most popular works.

Leopold Mozart (1719–1787). The frontispiece to the first edition of his Violin School, 1756

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<tr>
<th>COMPOSED</th>
<th>MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES</th>
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<tr>
<td>autograph score dated December 20, 1775</td>
<td>July 6, 2007, Ravinia Festival. Pinchas Zukerman as soloist, James Conlon conducting</td>
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<th>FIRST PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES</th>
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<td>unknown</td>
<td>March 17 &amp; 18, 1916, Orchestra Hall. Maud Powell as soloist, Frederick Stock conducting</td>
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| | INSTRUMENTATION |
| | solo violin, two oboes, two horns, strings |

| | APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME |
| | 31 minutes |

| | CSO RECORDING |
| | 1961. Erica Morini as soloist, George Szell conducting. VAI (video) |
The A major concerto derives its nickname from the finale, which is a rondo designed around a surprise—an episode of Turkish music that interrupts the orderly proceedings with its brash and fiery evocations of Eastern melodies. In fact, Mozart knew nothing of real Turkish music. Here, as in The Abduction from the Seraglio and the celebrated Rondo “alla turca” from the A major piano sonata, he was merely imitating what he had learned second-hand from his friend Michael Haydn, who actually had worked in Turkey. The “Turkish” episode from the A major concerto is even second-hand Mozart: he had already used the theme in his ballet Jealousy in the Harem of 1772.

The first two movements of the Turkish Concerto are more conventional in design—Mozart follows the broad outlines of sonata form in the first movement and the da capo aria in the second (the Adagio bears a striking resemblance to Belmonte’s aria “O wie ängstlich, o wie feurig” in The Abduction from the Seraglio). There’s nearly an embarrassment of melody in both movements. “New ideas succeed each other in blissful insouciance of each other and of any strict formal pattern,” H.C. Robbins Landon, the devoted Mozart scholar, once wrote. The entire concerto is generously proportioned. “If I have time,” Wolfgang wrote to his father in 1778, “I shall rearrange some of my violin concertos, and shorten them. In Germany we rather like length, but, after all, it is better to be short and good.” Mozart, however, was alone in thinking he had provided too much of a good thing.

John Adams

Harmonielehre
In a quarter of a century, John Adams grew from minimalist upstart to grand statesman of American music. (His storied name makes him a shoe-in to inherit the “president of American music” title Virgil Thomson bestowed on Copland.) He has been celebrated as “An American Master” in the biggest festival Lincoln Center has ever devoted to a living composer; in 2004, he became the first recipient of the Nemmers Prize in Music Composition from Northwestern University. Today, every major new work by Adams draws a flurry of attention—On the Transmigration of Souls, which he wrote to honor the victims of the 9/11 attacks, won the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for music—and each time one of his operas is produced, it is a big cultural event. (In Chicago, Lyric Opera has produced Doctor Atomic, while Chicago Opera Theater has staged both Nixon in China and A Flowering Tree.) Of all his purely orchestral works, it is Harmonielehre, which is performed at this week’s concerts, that has come the closest to achieving great-American-novel status (the immensely popular Short Ride in a Fast Machine being ineligible because of its four-minute length).
Since its premiere in 1985, Harmonielehre has become something of a cult classic, appearing as background music (to represent the “modern era”) in Civilization IV, the highly successful 2005 strategy computer game, and even as a cell phone ringtone (at one point the choice of New Yorker music critic Alex Ross).

Adams was reared on music of all kinds. His father played clarinet—the instrument his young son would take up as well—and his mother sang with big bands. “In the house where I grew up, we had Mozart and we had Benny Goodman on the record player, and I was not raised to think there was a difference between them,” he once said. Adams began to write music early on—when he was thirteen, the New Hampshire State Mental Hospital Orchestra in his hometown of Worcester played his Suite for String Orchestra. In 1965, he went to Harvard, where he studied composition with Schoenberg disciple Leon Kirchner. While at Harvard, he played clarinet in the orchestra for the American premiere of Schoenberg’s opera Moses and Aron in Boston, which was his first hands-on experience with the composer whose famous harmony treatise would lend its title, Harmonielehre, to his own first large-scale symphonic work.

As a composer, Adams was attracted not to the thorny complexities and atonal musical landscape of Schoenberg and his followers, but to the stripped-down purity of musical minimalism. He became a convert in 1974, when he heard Steve Reich and Musicians perform Reich’s landmark Drumming. Adams’s own early works, such as the softly undulating Shaker Loops of 1978, used what he found most appealing in the minimalist vocabulary, but from the start he was trying to say more complicated things. By the time of his breakthrough work, Harmonium, premiered in 1981, he famously quipped that he was a “minimalist who is bored with minimalism.”

His next scores, his first opera Nixon in China and Harmonielehre, drew a great deal of attention. Particularly after Nixon, which raised eyebrows because its subjects were famous living people and its music sounded unlike anything that had hit the stage of an opera house, Adams was a celebrity, a condition for which he, like most composers, was quite unprepared. (He was featured in People magazine alongside Dolly Parton and Indira Gandhi.)

In these and in his increasingly high-profile later works, Adams has enriched the minimalist vocabulary almost beyond recognition, even though he continued to view minimalism as “the only really interesting stylistic development” in the musical world at the end of the twentieth century. “It is responsible for a revolution in music.” As he said in a 1992 interview,

Minimalism was a wonderful shock to Western art music. It was like a bucket of fresh spring water splashed on the grim and rigid visage of serious music. I can’t imagine how stark and unforgiving the musical landscape would be like without it. But I think that as an expressive tool the style absolutely had to evolve and become more complex.

Harmonielehre was perhaps the earliest of Adams’s scores to suggest the direction his music would eventually take. Written after a distressingly fallow period, and in some ways a rejection of the neon brightness of works like his rollicking Grand Pianola Music, Harmonielehre mixes minimalist patterning and deep emotion in new ways. It’s the first score in which he tapped into one of his most vivid memories—of driving in his car, listening to excerpts from Wagner’s Götterdämmerung on the radio, and being thunderstruck by “the simplicity and power of the emotions in the piece.” At the time, he remembers thinking that that was what he wanted to accomplish in his own composition. Harmonielehre was not only the answer to that quest, but the gateway to a new chapter in music.

John Adams on Harmonielehre

Harmonielehre is roughly translated as “the book of harmony” or “treatise on harmony.” It is the title of a huge study of tonal harmony, part textbook, part philosophical ruminations, that Arnold Schoenberg published in 1911, just as he was embarking on a voyage into unknown waters, one in which he would more or less permanently renounce the laws of tonality. My own relationship to Schoenberg needs some explanation. Leon Kirchner, with whom I studied at Harvard, had himself been a student of Schoenberg in Los Angeles during the 1940s. Kirchner had no interest in the
serial system that Schoenberg had invented, but he shared a sense of high seriousness and an intensely critical view of the legacy of the past. Through Kirchner, I became highly sensitized to what Schoenberg and his art represented. He was a “master” in the same sense that Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms were masters. That notion in itself appealed to me then and continues to do so. But Schoenberg also represented to me something twisted and contorted. He was the first composer to assume the role of high priest, a creative mind whose entire life ran unfailingly against the grain of society, almost as if he had chosen the role of irritant. Despite my respect for and even intimidation by the persona of Schoenberg, I felt it only honest to acknowledge that I profoundly disliked the sound of twelve-tone music. His aesthetic was to me an overripening of nineteenth-century individualism, one in which the composer was a god of sorts, to which the listener would come as if to a sacramental altar. It was with Schoenberg that the “agony of modern music” had been born, and it was no secret that the audience for classical music during the twentieth century was rapidly shrinking, in no small part because of the aural ugliness of so much of the new work being written. It is difficult to understand why the Schoenbergian model became so profoundly influential for classical composers. Composers like Pierre Boulez and György Ligeti have borne both the ethic and the aesthetic into our own time, and its eminence in present-day university life and European musical festivals is still potent. Rejecting Schoenberg was like siding with the Philistines, and freeing myself from the model he represented was an act of enormous will power. Not surprisingly, my rejection took the form of parody... not a single parody, but several extremely different ones. In my Chamber Symphony, the busy, hyperactive style of Schoenberg’s own early work is placed in a salad spinner with Hollywood cartoon music. In The Death of Klinghoffer, the priggish, disdainful Austrian Woman describes how she spent the entire hijacking hiding under her bed by singing in a Sprechstimme to the accompaniment of a Pierrot-like ensemble in the pit. My own Harmonielehre is parody of a different sort in that it bears a “subsidiary relation” to a model (in this case a number of signal works...
from the turn of the century like *Gurrelieder* and the Sibelius Fourth Symphony), but it does so without the intent to ridicule. It is a large, three-movement work for orchestra that marries the developmental techniques of minimalism with the harmonic and expressive world of fin de siècle late romanticism. It was a conceit that could only be attempted once. The shades of Mahler, Sibelius, Debussy, and the young Schoenberg are everywhere in this strange piece. This is a work that looks at the past in what I suspect is “postmodernist” spirit, but, unlike *Grand Pianola Music* or *Nixon in China*, it does so entirely without irony.

The first part is a seventeen-minute inverted arch form: high energy at the beginning and end, with a long, roaming “Sehnsucht” section in between. The pounding E minor chords at the beginning and end of the movement are the musical counterparts of a dream image I had shortly before starting the piece. In the dream I’d watched a gigantic supertanker take off from the surface of San Francisco Bay and thrust itself into the sky like a Saturn rocket. At the time (1984–85), I was still deeply involved in the study of C.G. Jung’s writings, particularly his examination of medieval mythology. I was deeply affected by Jung’s discussion of the character of Anfortas, the king whose wounds could never be healed. As a critical archetype, Anfortas symbolized a condition of sickness of the soul that curses it with a feeling of impotence and depression. In this slow, moody movement entitled The Anfortas Wound, a long, elegiac trumpet solo floats over a delicately shifting screen of minor triads that pass like spectral shapes from one family of instruments to the other. Two enormous climaxes rise up out of the otherwise melancholy landscape, the second one being an obvious homage to Mahler’s last, unfinished symphony.

The final part, Meister Eckhardt and Quackie, begins with a simple berceuse (cradle song) that is as airy, serene, and blissful as The Anfortas Wound is earthbound, shadowy, and bleak. The Zappaesque title refers to a dream I’d had shortly after the birth of our daughter Emily, who was briefly dubbed “Quackie” during her infancy. In the dream, she rides perched on the shoulder of the medieval mystic Meister Eckhardt as they hover among the heavenly bodies like figures painted on the high ceilings of old cathedrals. The tender berceuse gradually picks up speed and mass (not unlike The Negative Love movement of *Harmonium*) and culminates in a tidal wave of brass and percussion over a pedal point on E-flat major.

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