Riccardo Muti conductor
Mathieu Dufour flute

Rota
Music from Il Gattopardo (The Leopard)
Title Music
Journey to Donnafugata
Angelica and Tancredi 1
Angelica and Tancredi 2
The Prince’s Dreams
Tancredi’s Departure
Love and Ambition
The Rigged Vote
Finale

First Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances

Ibert
Flute Concerto, Op. 37
Allegro
Andante
Allegro scherzando
MATHIEU DUFOUR

INTERMISSION

Tchaikovsky
Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64
Andante—Allegro con anima
Andante cantabile con alcuna licenza
Waltz: Allegro moderato
Finale: Andante maestoso—Allegro vivace

This concert series is generously sponsored by Alexandra and John Nichols.
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When Giuseppe di Lampedusa was diagnosed with lung cancer in April 1957, he had been trying to find a publisher for his historical novel *Il Gattopardo* (The leopard) for nearly a year. He died in Rome that July—he received a rejection letter from Einaudi, one of Italy’s leading publishing houses, only days before—not knowing that *The Leopard* would eventually become the best-selling novel in Italian history, achieve iconic status in modern Italian literature, and become an award-winning film directed by Luchino Visconti.

The music from the Visconti film that opens this concert was written by Nino Rota, no doubt the only film composer who could have done justice to this great Italian epic, set in the 1860s, when the middle classes formed a unified and democratic Italy. Lampedusa’s novel tells the story of the dying Sicilian aristocracy—and in particular of the family of Don Fabrizio Corbera, prince of Salina—during the Risorgimento as Giuseppe Garibaldi, the leader for Italian unification, and his forces swept through Sicily. Visconti’s film is a powerful study in the transformation of a people (“If we want things to stay the same, everything will have to change,” the young Tancredi says to his uncle, Don Fabrizio), political upheaval, and mortality. Rota’s score captures the volatile mixture of revolution and nostalgia for a dying world that lies at the heart of *The Leopard*.

Rota, like all the great film composers of his day, was a serious, classically trained musician who wrote substantive music for the concert hall as well. He already had composed an opera and a ballet before he turned fifteen. He studied with Alfredo Casella at the

**Nino Rota**
Born December 3, 1911, Milan, Italy.
Died April 10, 1979, Rome, Italy.

**Music from Il Gattopardo (The leopard)**

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**COMPOSED**
1963, for Luchino Visconti’s film *Il Gattopardo*
These are the first CSO performances

**INSTRUMENTATION**
three flutes and piccolo, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, celesta, strings

**APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME**
24 minutes
Conservatory of Santa Cecilia in Rome, and then came to the U.S. in 1930 on a scholarship from the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where he worked with future CSO music director Fritz Reiner. Rota returned to Italy in 1932 and earned a degree in literature in Milan before he began teaching music. From 1950 until his death nearly three decades later, he was director of the conservatory in Bari, where a young Riccardo Muti became one of his students.

Although Rota composed concertos, ballets, symphonies, theater music, and operas, it is the scores he composed for more than 150 movies that will long keep his music alive. Rota is best known in the U.S. for his music for Francis Ford Coppola's first two landmark Godfather films in the mid-seventies (Rota won the Academy Award in 1975 for The Godfather: Part II). He also scored Franco Zeffirelli's two Shakespeare films, The Taming of the Shrew and Romeo and Juliet in the late sixties. But at the heart of Rota's career are his collaborations with two of Italian cinema's greatest directors, Federico Fellini and Luchino Visconti. Rota worked in partnership with Fellini for three decades, scoring several films that are considered classics today, including La strada, La dolce vita, 8½, and Juliet of the Spirits.

Rota first worked with Luchino Visconti in 1954 on Senso, adapting music by Anton Bruckner to be used on the soundtrack. Although Rota subsequently wrote original scores for several Visconti films, their collaboration on Il Gattopardo was unique. Visconti’s first idea was to find a big nineteenth-century symphony that could be taken apart and used throughout the film in bits and pieces in order to have music that would match the grandeur, seriousness, and deeply philosophical nature of the novel. He and Rota exhaustively scoured the great orchestral repertoire, but nothing satisfied Visconti until Rota sat at the piano one day and began to play a portion of a symphony he had written as a young man and put away long ago, before he had even orchestrated it. This abandoned score became the “symphony” that runs throughout Visconti’s film. Like Visconti’s sumptuous visual style, which uses color and texture to suggest magnificent nineteenth-century paintings brought to life, Rota’s score becomes a grand symphony from an earlier time. Although the studio cast Burt Lancaster as the prince without consulting Visconti, The Leopard became one of Visconti’s greatest triumphs and won the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1963. Today, The Leopard is recognized as a landmark—Martin Scorsese recently called it “one of the greatest visual experiences in cinema”—and it has even achieved cult status among designers, who revere its look (“It’s so rich, it’s like a tiramisu,” American decorator Charlotte Moss recently told The New York Times). Rota’s contribution to the film’s success was widely acknowledged at the time, but now, played apart from the film and returned to the concert hall, where Rota first envisioned it, the music
reveals unexpected substance and even symphonic depth.

Throughout the film, Rota’s score brilliantly supports Visconti’s flair for capturing atmosphere and mood, creating a sense of place and instantly defining character. The dramatic opening music seems inseparable from the parched Sicilian setting itself (“This violence of landscape,” Lampedusa writes, “this cruelty of climate, this con-

tinual tension in everything . . . all these things have formed our character.”). The music that accompanies the journey to the family’s summer house at Donnafugata mirrors the prince’s shifting emotions as he anticipates returning to “his palace, with its many-jetted fountains, its memories of saintly forebears, the sense it gave him of everlasting childhood.” The melody Rota writes for the romance between Tancredi and Angelica—the kind of big theme that is easy to mimic and almost impossible to compose—is a perfect counterpart to their blossoming passion, which is central to the novel’s narrative. (The entrance of the breathtaking Angelica—a stunning Claudia Cardinale in Visconti’s film—is a game-changing moment—“Tancredi could even feel the veins pulsing in his temples,” wrote Lampedusa—and it is cinematic, even in the novel: “She was moving slowly, making her wide white skirt rotate around her, and emanating from her whole person was the invincible calm of a woman sure of her beauty.”)

Throughout the score, the lyrical beauty and harmonic richness of Rota’s music uncannily mirrors the complexity of Visconti’s portrait of a dying world—for as the old order is overturned, a new Italy is born.
Jacques Ibert is buried among the cypress and chestnut trees in Paris’s Passy Cemetery, in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower. His grave isn’t far from those of Gabriel Fauré and Claude Debussy. Fate hasn’t been particularly kind to Ibert, especially outside his native France, and since he died in 1962, his music has nearly slipped from the repertoire. He is revered neither as a polished master such as Fauré nor as a modern visionary like Debussy. The fact that he never belonged to any stylistic “school,” such as the flippant, headline-grabbing Les six of his friends Honegger and Milhaud, has made it harder to categorize him—and easier to lose sight of him on the congested roadmap of twentieth-century music. As a result, he’s often thought of as a peripheral figure, and even his best work is sometimes unfairly dismissed as slight or superficial.

But Ibert is a true original, and he was a composer of substance from the start. He first attracted attention in 1922 with his three-movement orchestral piece inspired by *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, Oscar Wilde’s poem about the execution of a convicted murderer from a nearby cell during his own incarceration on morals charges—a work that’s entirely at odds with Ibert’s reputation for light music. His only string quartet, composed twenty years later, reflects the turmoil and trauma of World War II.

At first, Ibert hoped to be an actor, and even after he switched to the study of music, his passion for drama gave his own works an unmistakably theatrical quality. At the Paris Conservatory, he studied with Émile Pessard, who had

**COMPOSED**
1932–33

**FIRST PERFORMANCE**
1934, Paris. Marcel Moyse, flute

**FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE**
December 13, 1951, Orchestra Hall. Julius Baker, flute, with Rafael Kubelík conducting

**MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCE**
January 15, 2005, Orchestra Hall. Mathieu Dufour, flute, with Daniel Barenboim conducting

**INSTRUMENTATION**
solo flute, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, one trumpet, timpani, strings

**APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME**
19 minutes
taught Ravel, and then in Gédalge’s classes, where he met Honegger and Milhaud. During World War I, Ibert interrupted his studies to serve as a nurse and stretcher-bearer on the front lines. His big career break came in 1919, when he won the coveted Prix de Rome (on his first try, unlike Berlioz) for his cantata *Le poète et la fée* (The poet and the fairy). (Many years later, after he had established himself as a composer, he served as director of the French Academy in Rome for more than two decades, which put him back in residence at the Villa Medici, where he had lived as a scholarship prizewinner.)

If Ibert is difficult to pigeonhole as a composer, that’s largely his own doing, for he wrote a wide range of music in many genres and for many purposes—from background music for a Paris festival of water and light to cadenzas for Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto. Under the influence of his lifelong love for the theater, he wrote seven operas and five ballets, as well as scores for radio dramas and incidental music for many plays, including his own take on *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. (He turned his uproarious score for Labiche’s classic farce, *An Italian Straw Hat*, into a divertissement, one of his most often-played works.) He was a natural to write music for film, which he did throughout his career. In 1948, he scored Orson Welles’s *Macbeth*, and four years later he provided the opening circus ballet sequence (based on the Pagliacci tale) for Gene Kelly’s *Invitation to the Dance*, Hollywood’s first all-dance film.

To his credit, Ibert was never a slave to the popular “isms” of the time. “All systems are valid,” he said simply, “provided that one derives music from them.” Far from being an angry outsider, Ibert enjoyed standing apart from the crowd, and he cherished his eclecticism. “I want to be free,” he said, “independent of the prejudices which arbitrarily divide the defenders of a certain tradition and the partisans of a certain avant-garde.”

The flute concerto Ibert began in 1932 is one of his most effective works, composed at a time of rich creativity in Parisian artistic circles. In the early 1930s, this was the city of Pierre Bonnard’s shimmering, mosaic-like canvases and Picasso’s classic *Bather with Beach Ball*; of Jean Genet’s *Intermezzo* and Gertrude Stein’s *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. Stéphane Grappelli, the jazz violinist, was appearing at Hotel Claridge’s, and the gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt played his first concerts at the Hot Club de France. Henri Cartier-Bresson’s classic photograph, *Behind the Gare Saint Lazare: Man Jumping a Puddle*, captures the “decisive moment” in which an event is about to take place. (Today it’s his most often reproduced image.) The legendary flutist Marcel Moyse began teaching at the Paris Conservatory in 1932, the year he asked Ibert to write him this flute concerto.

Like Cartier-Bresson’s celebrated image, the opening of Ibert’s flute concerto is coiled energy frozen in a “decisive moment” of music. Once the action begins, the flute carries
the music forward, headlong, in a breathless string of sixteenth notes. The first movement is mostly fleet and high-spirited—even when the flute has a lyrical second theme, the pace doesn’t slacken. The music is brilliant, jumpy, and restless. The slow middle movement comes from a different emotional world: the flute now sings a gentle, twisting reverie over muted string harmonies. After a full-out climax, the flute weaves magical arabesques around its theme, now in the strings. The finale is saucy, even jazzy—particularly when it alternates measures of four beats and three beats. Ibert asks everything of his soloist, from daredevil leaps and racing scales to tongue-twister melodies and rhapsodic ornamented tunes, and then writes a mini-mad scene of a cadenza for good measure. The ending is swift and explosive—the “decisive moment” fully realized.

Piotr Tchaikovsky
Born May 7, 1840, Viatka, Russia.
Died November 18, 1893, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64

Ten years passed between Tchaikovsky’s Fourth and Fifth symphonies—a decade which saw his international reputation grow as he finished Eugene Onegin and three other (less successful) operas, the Violin Concerto, the 1812 Overture, the Serenade for Strings, a second piano concerto, the Manfred Symphony, the A minor piano trio, and the Capriccio italien. As he began this symphony, Tchaikovsky feared his muse was exhausted. “I am dreadfully anxious to prove not only to others, but also to myself, that I am not yet played out as a composer,” he said at the time. In the spring of 1888, Tchaikovsky had recently moved into a new house outside of Moscow, and as he was beginning this symphony, he found great joy working in his garden; he wrote to his patroness, Nadezhda von Meck, that when he was “past composing” he might devote himself to growing flowers. Work on the new symphony was often rough going. “The beginning was difficult,” he reported midsummer, “now, however, inspiration seems to have come.” He later complained, “I have to squeeze it from my dulled brain.” But by the end of the summer, when four months of intensive work had brought him to the last measures of the symphony’s finale, he admitted that “it seems to me that I have not blundered, that it has turned out well.”

Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony had been his answer to Beethoven’s Fifth: it’s a symphony of triumph over fate, and he explained its
meaning in detailed correspondence with Mme von Meck. For his next symphony, Tchaikovsky again turned to the theme of fate, although this time he gave away little of the work’s hidden meaning. As a motto theme, Tchaikovsky picked a phrase from Glinka’s *A Life for the Tsar* which accompanies the words “turn not into sorrow.” Before he began composing, he sketched a program for the work in his notebook, labeling the theme as “complete resignation before Fate,” and describing the first movement as “doubts . . . reproaches against xxx.” That xxx, like the cryptic Z that appears elsewhere in the same pages, refers, almost without doubt, to the homosexuality he dared not admit. (It remained a well-kept secret during his life. His friends didn’t know what to make of the disastrous match that publicly passed for a marriage—lasting only weeks and driving the composer to attempt suicide—or of his one satisfying relationship with a woman, Nadezhda von Meck, whom he never met in fourteen years and couldn’t bring himself to speak to the one time they accidentally passed on the street.)

The symphony opens with an introduction in which the motto theme is played quietly by the clarinet (it returns later in the most dramatic form). The Allegro also begins with a gently moving theme in the clarinet, doubled by the bassoon. (Tchaikovsky launches this E minor melody from the lower C, rising a third to E, rather than from the lower fourth, B—the more predictable start, and the way many listeners incorrectly remember it.) This ultimately leads to the remote key of D major, where the violins introduce a lovely sighing theme, delicately scored at first, then blossoming to encompass the full orchestra. The development section travels through many harmonic regions, but presents very little actual development, because Tchaikovsky’s themes are full melodies, not easily dissected.

The Andante presents one of Tchaikovsky’s most beloved themes, a horn melody so poignant...
and seductive that it tempts many listeners to overlook the eloquent strands the clarinet and oboe weave around it. The opening bars of quiet sustained chords begin in B minor and then swing around to D major—that unexpected tonal territory from the first movement—before the hushed entry of the horn. The lyrical flow is halted by the motto theme, first announced by the full orchestra over a fierce timpani roll midway through, and once again just before the end.

The third movement is a minor-key waltz; a livelier trio, with playful runs in the strings, also sounds uneasy, suggesting something sinister on the horizon. Perhaps it’s the fateful motto theme, which sounds quietly in the low winds just before the dance is over. The finale opens with the motto, fully harmonized and in the major mode. This furiously driven movement often has been derided as overly bombastic, formulaic, and repetitive, although it has many delicate touches, including a high, singing theme in the winds. The tempo never eases, not even in the one moment of repose that is marked pianissimo and lightly scored. The motto theme sweeps through, once at a brisk speed, and then, near the end, leading a magnificent march. It’s the main melody of the first movement, however, that comes rushing in to close the symphony.

Tchaikovsky conducted the first performance of the symphony in Saint Petersburg in November 1888 and introduced the work in Europe on a concert tour in early 1889. In Hamburg he met Brahms, who postponed his departure in order to hear his Russian colleague’s latest symphony; Brahms liked what he heard, except for the finale.

Tchaikovsky was far from written out. Before he even finished this symphony, he began the fantasy overture Hamlet, and a few weeks later, he started work on a new ballet about a sleeping beauty who is awakened with a prince’s kiss.

Phillip Huscher is the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.