2022–2023 | 123rd Season

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, January 19, at 7:30
Friday, January 20, at 2:00
Saturday, January 21, at 8:00

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor
Seong-Jin Cho Piano

Farrenc Symphony No. 3 in G minor, Op. 36
I. Adagio—Allegro
II. Adagio cantabile
III. Scherzo: Vivace
IV. Finale: Allegro
First Philadelphia Orchestra performances

Intermission

Brahms Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major, Op. 83
I. Allegro non troppo
II. Allegro appassionato
III. Andante—Più adagio—Tempo I
IV. Allegretto grazioso—Un poco più presto

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 50 minutes.

These concerts are sponsored by **Neal Krouse.**

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featuring Yuja Wang
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Marvel Studios'
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Beethoven for Three
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Symphonie fantastique
May 11–13

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The
Philadelphia
Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

Photos: Pete Checchia, Julia Wesely, Nigel Parry

Jeff Fusco

The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives, a commitment to its diverse communities, and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive future for classical music, and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united to form The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc., reimagining the power of the arts to bring joy, create community, and effect change.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 11th season as the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, in Verizon Hall and community centers, in classrooms and hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. In response to the cancellation of concerts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orchestra launched the Digital Stage, providing access to high-quality online performances, keeping music alive at a time when it was needed most. It also inaugurated free offerings: HearTOGETHER, a podcast on racial and social justice, and creative equity and inclusion, through the lens of the world of orchestral music, and Our City, Your Orchestra, a series of digital performances that connects the Orchestra with communities through music and dialog while celebrating the diversity and vibrancy of the Philadelphia region.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; School Concerts; the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program; and All City Orchestra Fellowships.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 12 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award–winning *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

Music Director

George Etheredge

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is currently in his 11th season as music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Additionally, he became the third music director of New York's Metropolitan Opera in 2018. Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His intensely collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him "phenomenal," adding that "the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better."

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling talents of his generation. He has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000, and in 2017 he became an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He was music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world's most revered ensembles and at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon (DG) in 2018. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 12 releases on that label, including *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3,* which won a GRAMMY Award for Best Orchestral Performance. His upcoming recordings will include projects with The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and the Orchestre Métropolitain, with which he will also continue to record for ATMA Classique. Additionally, he has recorded with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records, and the London Philharmonic for the LPO label.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal's Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick's honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada; Companion to the Order of Arts and Letters of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Montreal; an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres; *Musical America*'s 2016 Artist of the Year; ECHO Klassik's 2014 Conductor of the Year; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; Canada's National Arts Centre Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; the Oskar Morawetz Award; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, the University of Montreal, the University of Pennsylvania, and Laval University.

To read Yannick's full bio, please visit philorch.org/conductor.

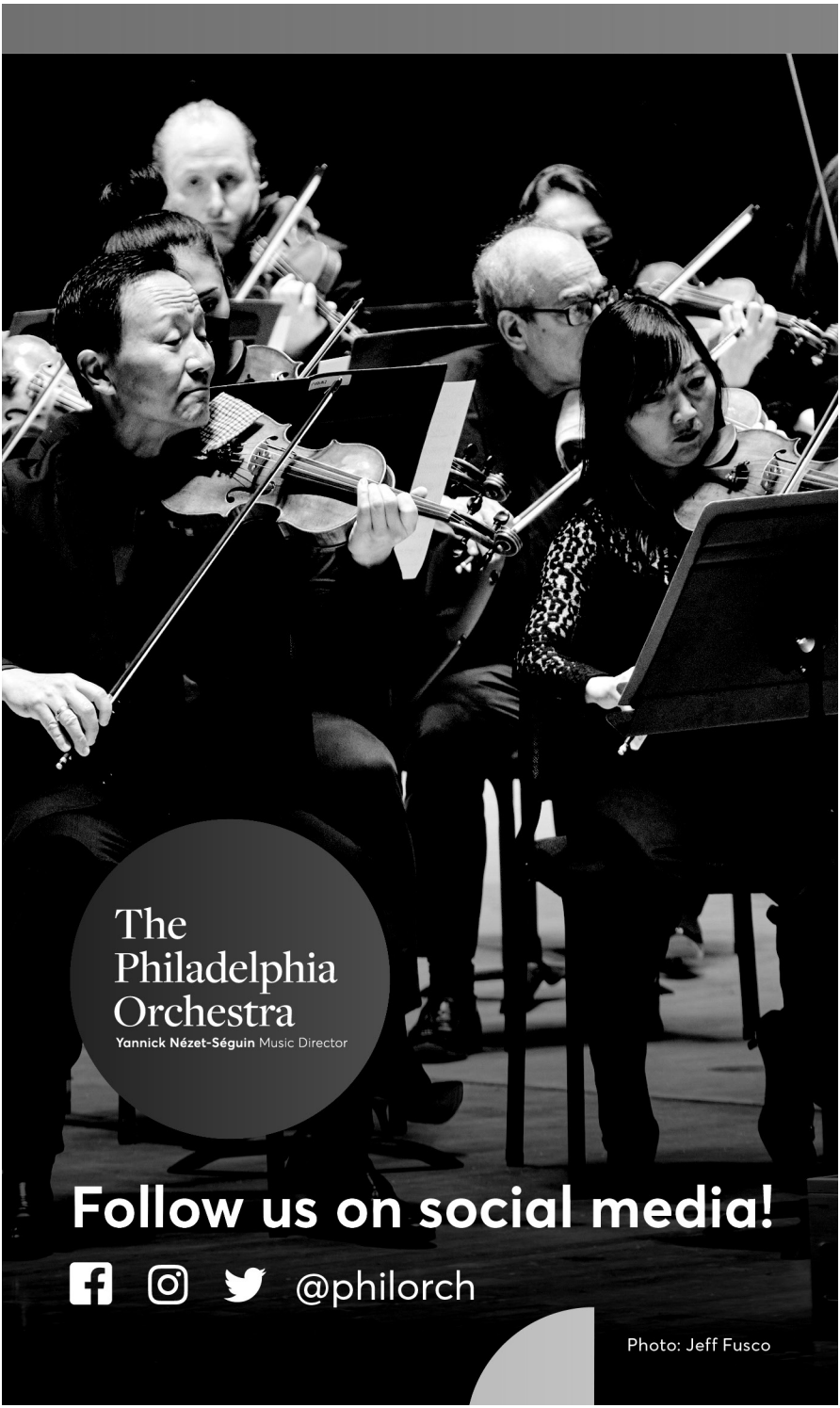
Soloist

Harald Hoffmann

Pianist **Seong-Jin Cho** was brought to the world's attention in 2015 when he won First Prize at the Chopin International Competition in Warsaw. In January 2016 he signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2018. An artist in high demand, he works with the world's most prestigious orchestras including the Berlin, Vienna, and New York philharmonics; the London Symphony; and the Orchestre de Paris. Conductors he regularly collaborates with include Myung-Whun Chung, Gustavo Dudamel, Andris Nelsons, Gianandrea Noseda, Simon Rattle, Santtu-Matias Rouvali, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

In addition to these current performances, highlights of Mr. Cho's 2022–23 season include the Brahms piano concertos at the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Mr. Nézet-Séguin. He returns to the Bavarian Radio Symphony with Zubin Mehta and the Boston Symphony with Mr. Nelsons and performs the world premiere of Thierry Escaich's new Piano Concerto with the Czech Philharmonic and Semyon Bychkov. Mr. Cho embarks on several international tours, including with the London Symphony and Mr. Rattle to Japan and Korea and with the Dresden Staatskapelle and Mr. Chung to Korea. He also performs with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, touring through Germany in spring 2023. Recitals this season include appearances at Carnegie Hall, Walt Disney Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, and the Musikverein in Vienna as well as his recital debut at the Barbican in London.

Mr. Cho's most recent recording is Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 and scherzos with the London Symphony and Mr. Noseda, released in August 2021 for Deutsche Grammophon. His first album, recorded with the same orchestra and conductor, features Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1 and the ballades. His solo album, *The Wanderer,* was released in 2020 and features Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy and piano sonatas by Berg and Liszt. In 2018 he released a Mozart album with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Mr. Nézet-Séguin. Born in 1994 in Seoul, Mr. Cho started learning the piano at age six and gave his first public recital when he was 11. In 2009 he became the youngest-ever winner of Japan's Hamamatsu International Piano Competition. In 2011 he won Third Prize at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow at the age of 17. From 2012 to 2015 he studied with Michel Béroff at the Paris Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique. He is now based in Berlin.


The
Philadelphia
Orchestra
Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director
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Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1847
Farrenc
Symphony No. 3

Music
Liszt
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2
Literature
Brontë
Jane Eyre
Art
Courbet
The Cellist, Self-Portrait
History
Mormons found Salt Lake City

1881
Brahms
Piano Concerto No. 2

Music
Borodin
String Quartet No. 2
Literature
James
The Portrait of a Lady
Art
Böcklin
The Isle of the Dead
History
Vatican archives opened to scholars

Opportunities for women composers to write and hear their large-scale works in performance were extremely rare in the 19th century, for which reason few undertook writing symphonies or operas. An exception was Louise Farrenc, an outstanding French composer, pianist, scholar, and conservatory professor whose mid-century career was relatively successful even if still limited due to her gender and the musical fashions of the time in France. In the 1840s she wrote three symphonies that although unpublished were performed—we hear her immediately attractive Third on this concert.

Johannes Brahms's Second Piano Concerto was dubbed a "symphony with piano obbligato" by Eduard Hanslick, the powerful Viennese music critic and ardent supporter. While the four-movement structure points toward the genre of the symphony, the hallmark of concertos—the interaction between soloist and ensemble—is unforgettably established at the opening when a lyric horn melody is gracefully answered by the piano, leading into a dazzling keyboard cadenza.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world with three weekly broadcasts on SiriusXM's *Symphony Hall,* Channel 76, on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 4 PM.

The Music

Symphony No. 3

Louise Farrenc
Born in Paris, May 31, 1804
Died there, September 15, 1875

As happens so often in the history of music, family connections can play a significant role in building a career. Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, among others, basically continued the family business, often one stretching back generations. Such circumstances long benefited prominent women musicians, which helps to explain why Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn, respectively wife and sister of eminent composers, are among the best known from the 19th century. In the early 20th Nadia and Lili Boulanger were raised in a prominent musical household.

Louise Farrenc, born Jeanne-Louise Dumont in 1804, came from a distinguished family of painters and sculptors that had worked for the French royal family for generations. Her musical gifts as a pianist were evident at a young age. She studied with Ignaz Moscheles, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, and Antonín Reicha, all eminent figures at the time, and her career began to take off. At age 17 she married the 10-year-older Aristide Farrenc, who had been a flutist at the Théatre Italien and taught at the Paris Conservatory. In the 1820s he started a prominent publishing company and was particularly passionate about early "pre-Bach" music. Aristide published some of his wife's piano compositions, one of which earned an especially enthusiastic review from Robert Schumann.

Symphonic Achievements in France In the mid-1830s Farrenc started to write orchestral music with two overtures. Berlioz commented in a review that one of them was "well written and orchestrated with a talent rare among women." Today this seems a sexist observation but at the time it registered the limited options available to women composers. While women performers, especially singers, enjoyed chances for success, opportunities for composers were far less frequent, particularly when it came to pieces that required many musicians to perform. It was much more viable to write domestic music, such as songs and keyboard works, than symphonies or operas. Moreover, all composers learn by trial and error, which means that the opportunity to hear one's music in actual time and space is what helps nurture more polished products.

Some years before Farrenc died at age 71 in 1875, the prominent critic and music historian François-Joseph Fétis, an ardent supporter who admired her seriousness

of purpose, praised her musical gifts but lamented that her attraction to large-scale instrumental music was frustrated by restricted opportunities and commented that for the public "the only standard for measuring the quality of a work is the name of its author." He believed these factors explained why Farrenc's major pieces were so soon forgotten "when in any other time her works would have brought her great esteem." Moreover, musical culture in mid-century France centered on grand opera and salon music, both of the virtuoso and sentimental variety. When it came to significant orchestral and chamber music, neither men nor women fared well.

Farrenc's three symphonies date from 1841, 1845, and 1847 and although unpublished were all performed at the time, thus giving her opportunities to hear them. The Symphony No. 3 in G minor, Op. 36, received its premiere at the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire in November 1849 with the other major piece on the program being Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. One critic questioned the wisdom of the pairing but praised Farrenc as a composer "who, without scholastic pedantry, reveals—alone among her sex throughout musical Europe—genuine learning united with grace and taste." The Third Symphony, her final orchestral work, was subsequently performed again in Paris as well as in Geneva and Brussels.

In 1842 Farrenc was appointed professor of piano at the Conservatory, the only woman in such a prominent position. She taught there for 30 years and had many distinguished students (including her talented daughter, Victorine, who, had she not died so young, might have furthered the family's artistic legacy). Farrenc's compositional activities shifted to chamber music with pieces that won her the widest praise as she had more scope for originality. In addition to her career as a pianist, composer, and teacher she aided her husband as a scholar with a massive project of keyboard music spanning some 300 years called *Le Trésor des pianistes*.

A Closer Look Farrenc adopts the early Romantic approach of the time in her four-movement Third Symphony, which brings to mind better-known symphonies from the first half of the 19th century. Some parts may sound like Schubert's early ones—fair enough, except that since none of his were published or performed at the time it would have been impossible for her to have encountered them. What Farrenc would have known, and some critics mentioned in reviews, were those of Felix Mendelssohn. In any case, not many symphonies were being written in mid-century France by anyone; the charming early efforts of composers like Camille Saint-Saëns and Charles Gounod, like Farrenc, were derivative of German models written in the wake of Beethoven's revolutionary contributions to the genre. Only Berlioz was pioneering radical new directions.

Farrenc's Third Symphony opens with the oboe slowly and softly intoning a brief **Adagio** introduction that leads to a unison theme in the strings for

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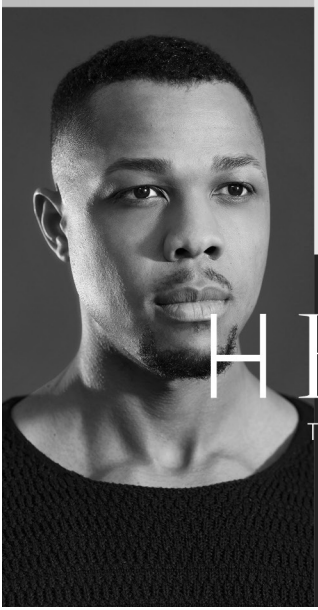
Photos: Jeff Fusco, Bowie Verschuuren



HEAR
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a vibrant and freshly alive **Allegro**. Amid a soft accompaniment, the solo clarinet opens the lyrical second movement (**Adagio cantabile**), an aria for orchestra. The following intense Scherzo (**Vivace**) may bring those of Mendelssohn to mind. There follows a soloistic middle section highlighting the woodwinds before the return of the opening material. The Finale (**Allegro**), beginning with a bold string theme in unison, is at times unexpectedly intense, far from the typically light last movements of contemporaries. The key of the Symphony is G minor, the same as Mozart's famous one, No. 40, to which Farrenc seems to nod. The stormy coda remains in the minor concluding with three loud chords.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Louise Farrenc composed her Third Symphony in 1847.

These are the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work.

The score calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and trumpets; timpani; and strings.

Performance time is approximately 35 minutes.

The Music

Piano Concerto No. 2

Johannes Brahms
Born in Hamburg, May 7, 1833
Died in Vienna, April 3, 1897

When Robert Schumann endorsed the young Johannes Brahms as the rightful heir to Beethoven, it was a double-edged sword. While it was flattering to be regarded as the savior of German music, Brahms was intimidated by the pressure to write new works worthy of Beethoven's legacy. Brahms was in his 40s before he could bring himself to complete a symphony "after Beethoven," as he put it, and even then he worried it would not be good enough. But in the meantime, he had composed a number of other orchestral works, some symphonic in conception if not explicitly in name, and many of them undeniably successful with the public.

Anxiety about a Second Piano Concerto In 1878, with two actual symphonies under his belt, Brahms began composing his Piano Concerto No. 2. But this new project was also rife with potential apprehensions and insecurities. His First Piano Concerto, composed 20 years earlier, was initially a demoralizing failure. It had been his first orchestral work to be performed publicly, and the backlash at the premiere had stung the composer deeply. The time lag between the two concertos is often interpreted as evidence that Brahms, chronically self-critical, was reluctant to place himself again in a vulnerable position with his audience, especially on the piano, his own instrument.

By the time Brahms completed the Second Concerto three years later, in 1881, he seemed to have overcome any lingering anxieties. At its premiere in Budapest, with the composer as soloist, the new Concerto was an immediate triumph, and Brahms continued to play it dozens of times around Europe to great acclaim in the ensuing years.

"The Long Terror" It was typical of Brahms to outwardly disparage some of his major compositions by referring to them as little more than trifles or bon-bons. He once described his somber Fourth Symphony, for example, as "a bunch of polkas and waltzes." It was no different with this new concerto. To one friend he referred to the nearly hour-long work as nothing more than "some little piano pieces." To another he spoke of it as "a tiny, tiny piano concerto with a tiny, tiny wisp of a scherzo." He once claimed the second-movement scherzo was a necessity because the first movement was "too simplistic." By the same token,

Brahms occasionally (and intentionally) overstated a work's gravity and referred to this Concerto in particular as "the long terror." While it is unquestionably long—longer than any concerto anyone had written to that point—neither the overall geniality of the Piano Concerto No. 2 nor its technical demands (formidable as they may be) come close to qualifying it as a "terror."

Perhaps, instead, the most accurate indication of the composer's regard for this new work is its dedication to Eduard Marxsen, Brahms's first composition teacher. It seems to suggest that Brahms, now in his late 40s, had finally written a work he considered worthy to bear his old teacher's name.

A Closer Look The epically scaled first movement (**Allegro non troppo**) is the most expansive concerto movement Brahms ever wrote. The simple main theme is introduced first by the horn, followed by responses from the piano, which almost immediately launches into a solo cadenza even before the orchestral exposition has begun. After an intense development section on this theme, the recapitulation returns to the hushed intimacy of the movement's opening. The coda also eases to a whisper before rising into a short but full-flamed conclusion.

In D-minor, the "tiny wisp of a scherzo" that follows (**Allegro appassionato**) is actually the Concerto's most dramatic and tumultuous movement. The stormy ocean waves of the main theme, closely related to the Scherzo from Brahms's earlier D-major Serenade, bring orchestra and piano together in a swirling dialog before a haunting unison melody introduces a calmer passage. This scherzo is also cast in a type of sonata-allegro form, with the traditional development section replaced by an unexpected shift to D-major in a brief but triumphant trio. An altered reprise of the main themes rounds out the movement.

The **Andante** third movement opens with a solo cello melody, gently accompanied by light orchestral scoring. (Brahms may have been influenced here by Clara Schumann's youthful Piano Concerto, in which the Andante is scored for only piano and cello.) The lilting 6/4 meter unfolds at such a slow tempo that the cross-rhythms—one of Brahms's style thumbprints—are so gentle as to be nearly imperceptible. The solo piano embellishes the ravishing cello theme but never plays it verbatim, subtly shifting the piano's role to a more accompanimental, chamberistic character. The development section (**Più adagio**) slows almost to a standstill before the solo cello returns with a restatement of the main theme that gradually winds its way back to B-flat major. At the conclusion, the piano reprises material from the middle section in this home key.

The light and playful finale (**Allegretto grazioso**) also blends sonata-allegro features into its overarching rondo form. The tripping rhythmic motifs and transparent scoring at the start suggest Mendelssohn or even Saint-Saëns, while the gypsy-flavored first episode evokes the character of Brahms's earlier Hungarian Dances. The deftness of orchestral touch and congenial interplay of motifs (even the suggestion of birdcalls) dispel any lingering drama from the

previous movements and bring the Concerto to a conclusion that is at once grand and supremely gratifying.

—Luke Howard

Brahms composed his Second Piano Concerto from 1878 to 1881.

Richard Buhlig was the soloist and Carl Pohlig the conductor in the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the B-flat Concerto, in November 1907. The most recent performances on a subscription concert were in November/December 2018, with pianist Emanuel Ax and Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Some of the great pianists who have performed it in Philadelphia include Olga Samaroff, Vladimir Horowitz, Arthur Rubinstein, Rudolf Serkin, Claudio Arrau, Van Cliburn, Gary Graffman, Maurizio Pollini, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Alfred Brendel, André Watts, Leif Ove Andsnes, and Yefim Bronfman.

The Orchestra has recorded the work five times, all with Eugene Ormandy: in 1945, 1956, and 1960 with Serkin for CBS; in 1965 with Eugene Istomin for CBS; and in 1971 with Rubinstein for RCA.

The score calls for solo piano, two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

The Second Concerto runs approximately 50 minutes in performance.

Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Aria: An accompanied solo song (often in ternary form), usually in an opera or oratorio

Cadenza: A passage or section in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a movement or composition

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Coda: A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

Cross-rhythm: The simultaneous use of conflicting rhythmic patterns or accents

Development: See sonata form

Exposition: See sonata form

Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Obbligato: Literally "obligatory." An essential instrumental part that is not to be omitted.

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

Recapitulation: See sonata form

Rondo: A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

Scherzo: Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts. Also an instrumental piece of a light, piquant, humorous character.

Sonata form: The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

Ternary: A musical form in three sections, ABA, in which the middle section is different than the outer sections

Trio: See scherzo

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegretto: A tempo between walking speed and fast

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Appassionato: Passionately

Cantabile: In a singing style, lyrical, melodious, flowing

Grazioso: Graceful and easy

Presto: Very fast

Vivace: Lively

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Non troppo: Not too much

Più: More

Un poco: A little

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