

2022–2023 | 123rd Season

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Wednesday, September 28, at 7:00

Opening Night Celebration

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Lang Lang Piano

BalletX

Christine Cox Artistic Director

Coleman *Umoja, Anthem for Unity*, for orchestra

Umoja

Choreography by Tiler Peck

Costume Design by Martha Chamberlain

Lighting Design by Michael Korsch

Featuring: Shawn Cusseaux, Jonah Delgado, Francesca Forcella,
Savannah Green, Jared Kelly, Skyler Lubin, Jonathan Montepara,
Ben Schwarz, Ashley Simpson, and Andrea Yorita

Saint-Saëns Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22

I. Andante sostenuto

II. Allegro scherzando

III. Presto

Dvořák Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88

I. Allegro con brio

II. Adagio—Poco più animato—Tempo I. Meno mosso

III. Allegretto grazioso—Coda: Molto vivace

IV. Allegro ma non troppo

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 15 minutes, and will be performed without an intermission.

We thank the musicians of The Philadelphia Orchestra and Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin for graciously donating their services in support of this event and The Philadelphia Orchestra.

The Tiler Peck co-commission with BalletX is sponsored by **Neal Krouse**.

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM, and are repeated on Monday evenings at 7 PM on WRTI HD 2. Visit www.wrti.org to listen live or for more details.



Thank You!

The Philadelphia Orchestra extends a very special thank you to our 2022 Opening Night Celebration Co-Chairs, Elizabeth Zelov, Alison Young, and Amy Oshiro-Morales; Vice Chair Stacy Stone; the Opening Night Celebration Committee and the Volunteer Committees President Sara Cerato and Immediate Past President Dianne Rotwitt; Board Co-Chairs Ralph W. Muller and Michael Zisman; and our many generous benefactors and volunteers for all their hard work, support, and dedication in creating a spectacular evening to celebrate our 123rd season!

Photo: Jeff Fusco

The Philadelphia Orchestra
Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



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 11 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 11 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; the 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

Oscar Howe/Deutsche Grammophon



Lang Lang is a leading figure in classical music today. As a pianist, educator, and philanthropist, he has become one of the world's more influential and committed ambassadors for the arts in the 21st century. Equally happy playing for billions of viewers at the 2008 Olympic Opening Ceremony in Beijing or for just a few hundred children in the public schools, he is a master of communicating through music. He has performed sold-out concerts all over the world;

formed ongoing collaborations with conductors including Simon Rattle, Gustavo Dudamel, Daniel Barenboim, and Christoph Eschenbach; and played with all the world's top orchestras. He is known for thinking outside the box and frequently steps into different musical worlds. His performances at the GRAMMY Awards with Metallica, Pharrell Williams, and jazz legend Herbie Hancock were watched by millions of viewers.

Lang Lang, who made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2001, began playing the piano at age three and gave his first public recital before he was five. He entered Beijing's Central Music Conservatory at nine and won First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians at 13. He subsequently went to Philadelphia to study with Gary Graffman at the Curtis Institute of Music. He was 17 when his big break came, substituting for André Watts at the Gala of the Century, playing Tchaikovsky's First Concerto with the Chicago Symphony and Mr. Eschenbach. He became an overnight sensation and the invitations started to pour in.

For the past decade Lang Lang has contributed to musical education worldwide. In 2008 he founded the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, aimed at cultivating tomorrow's top pianists, championing music education at the forefront of technology, and building a young audience through live music experiences. He was presented with the 2010 Crystal Award in Davos and was picked as one of the 250 Young Global Leaders by the World Economic Forum. He is also the recipient of honorary doctorates from the Royal College of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, and New York University. In 2011 he was honored with the highest prize awarded by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China and in 2013 was designated by the Secretary General of the United Nations as a Messenger of Peace focusing on global education. In 2016 he was invited to the Vatican to perform for Pope Francis. He has also performed for numerous other dignitaries, including four US presidents and monarchs from many nations. Lang Lang is an exclusive recording artist of Universal Music Group and Deutsche Grammophon.

Dancers



Arena Molina Sosa

BalletX, Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet, commissions choreographers from around the world to create dance that expands the vocabulary of classical dance for all audiences. Founded in 2005 by Christine Cox and Matthew Neenan, BalletX is led by Ms. Cox, whose tenure as artistic and executive director has produced over 100 world premiere ballets by nearly 60 choreographers, a record that has put Philadelphia on the map as an international destination for

contemporary ballet. The company made its Philadelphia Orchestra debut this past July at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in upstate New York.

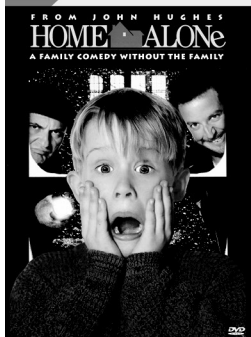
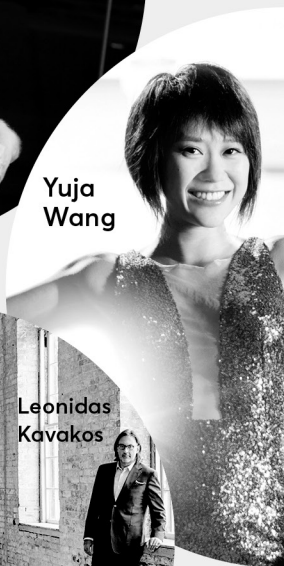
BalletX has grown to reach audiences nationwide through performance seasons at the Wilma Theater; free pop-ups across Philadelphia; and extensive touring to such prestigious venues as the Vail Dance Festival, the Joyce Theater, the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, New York City Center, the Laguna Dance Festival, the Bermuda Festival, the Belgrade Festival, and many more. BalletX has reached more than 2,000 Philadelphia public school students through its in-school dance education program, Dance eXchange, and countless patrons through its engagement initiative, the X-Process, featuring open rehearsals and talkbacks with renowned choreographers and guest artists.

BalletX put down even deeper roots in the spring of 2018 with the opening of its first-ever home—a 5,000-square-foot studio and administrative headquarters named the Center for World Premiere Choreography. Situated at 1923 Washington Avenue, between Philadelphia's Graduate Hospital and Point Breeze neighborhoods, the Center was designed by local firm ISA, and recently earned an impressive AIA Merit Award for Interiors. BalletX's distinctive contribution to the American dance community has been recognized and supported in recent years by generous grants from the William Penn Foundation, the Wyncote Foundation, the Shubert Foundation, the Jerome Robbins New Essential Works (NEW) Program, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, and PECO, among many others.

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Dvořák

Symphony

No. 8

Music

Tchaikovsky

The Sleeping

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Ballantrae

Art

Gauguin

The Yellow

Christ

History

London Dock

Strike

The Opening Night Concert of The Philadelphia Orchestra's 123rd season begins with Valerie Coleman's vibrant *Umoja, Anthem for Unity*. She originally composed the piece for women's chorus, then arranged it as a woodwind quintet, and in 2019 the Philadelphians gave the world premiere of a full orchestral version. *Umoja*, which means unity in Swahili, calls upon Afro-Cuban, jazz, and classical styles and shines forth in all its colorful brilliance, complemented by a new collaboration with BalletX.

Camille Saint-Saëns composed five piano concertos, of which the second emerged as the most popular. Philadelphia favorite and Curtis Institute graduate Lang Lang returns to Verizon Hall for this dazzling work.

Antonín Dvořák won initial fame in his mid-30s with his beloved Slavonic Dances, works whose nationalist mood, sparkle, and color quickly captured the imagination of audiences well beyond the Czech lands. But he wanted to be seen as more than a colorful nationalist. He aspired to join the ranks of the great composers who were viewed as universal (even if most were German) and his eternally fresh Symphony No. 8 magnificently shows this ambition. Dvořák conducted the premiere in Prague and it was soon taken up by leading conductors across Europe.

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

Umoja, Anthem for Unity

Valerie Coleman

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1970

Now living in New York City



Originally a simple song arranged for women's choir, Valerie Coleman's *Umoja* is joyful. *Umoja* means "unity" in Swahili. It is the first principle of the African Diaspora holiday Kwanzaa and represents family, community, and harmonious living captured in the African proverb "I AM because WE ARE." Coleman reflects, "The work embodies a sense of 'tribal unity' through the feel of a drum circle, the sharing of history through traditional 'call and response' form, and the repetition of a

memorable sing-song melody." In 1999 she rearranged the piece for woodwind quintet for her chamber music group Imani Winds, "with the intent of providing an anthem that celebrated the diverse heritages of the ensemble itself." *Umoja* is a word that applies to Coleman's vision of classical music: "We have the opportunity to let people know that classical music is an all-inclusive thing."

Early Exposure Coleman was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1970. She says about where she was raised, "You know, I grew up in Muhammad Ali's neighborhood, the west end of Louisville. And that is about as inner-city as any inner-city can get." Her mother introduced her to classical music while she was still in the womb. Coleman recounts, "She would play Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, the 'Pastoral' Symphony, to me all the time. And so that's how it all began." A precocious child, Coleman started notating music in elementary school. She began formal musical studies at the age of 11 and by the age of 14 had already composed three complete symphonies. In high school she earned the opportunity to study flute and composition at Tanglewood, later receiving a double degree in composition/theory and flute performance at Boston University.

Coleman moved to New York City, where she received a master's in flute performance from the Mannes College of Music and founded Imani Winds, for which she has composed many works, including her *Afro-Cuban Concerto* for wind quintet and orchestra, encore pieces, and arrangements of spirituals. In 2002 Chamber Music America selected *Umoja* as one of its "Top 101 Great American Works," and in 2005 she was nominated with Imani Winds for a GRAMMY® Award for Best Classical Crossover Album. A sought-after teacher, she is currently a member of the flute, composition, and ensemble faculties at Mannes as the Clara Mannes Fellow for

Music Leadership. Prior to that appointment, she served on the faculty at the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami as assistant professor of performance, chamber music, and entrepreneurship and in the 2021–22 season led a year-long residency at the Juilliard School in its Music Advancement Program through the American Composers Forum. She has also been named to the Metropolitan Opera/Lincoln Center Theater New Works dual commissioning program.

Varied Influences Coleman describes her compositional process as a “very intuitive one,” though “never an easy one,” which requires “digging deep.” Sometimes she begins with a poem, a painting, or a biography of a unique, great person. For instance, her *Portraits of Josephine*, a ballet suite in eight movements for chamber ensemble, celebrates the life of entertainer Josephine Baker. Coleman is inspired by the creativity of Wayne Shorter’s improvisations and Mozart’s flute concertos. The poetry of Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou have also led her to compose. She has a love for Paris and mentions the paintings of Matisse as revelatory backdrops. Her compositional process begins with what she calls a “kernel,” a topic that is “impactful,” and she strives to “listen for the soul” of her idea. She uses the metaphor of cooking to describe how composing for the Imani Winds was like being a “cook in the kitchen.” One of her goals in composing is to create a shared experience.

A Closer Look In her orchestral version of *Umoja*, which was commissioned by The Philadelphia Orchestra, rearranged almost two decades after the original, Coleman expands on the short and sweet melody. She writes:

It begins with sustained ethereal passages that float and shift from a bowed vibraphone, supporting the introduction of the melody by solo violin. Here the melody is a sweet singing in its simplest form, with an earnestness reminiscent of Appalachian style music. From there, the melody dances and weaves throughout the instrument families, interrupted by dissonant viewpoints led by the brass and percussion sections, which represent the clash of injustices, racism, and hate that threatens to gain a foothold in the world today. Spiky textures turn into an aggressive exchange between upper woodwinds and percussion, before a return to the melody as a gentle reminder of kindness and humanity. Through the brass-led ensemble tutti, the journey ends with a bold call of unity that harkens back to the original anthem.

Umoja has many versions, which Coleman characterizes as “like siblings to one another,” each with a unique voice that is informed by her ever-evolving perspective. For the composer “this version honors the simple melody that ever was but is now a full exploration into the meaning of freedom and unity. Now more than ever, *Umoja* has to ring as a strong and beautiful anthem for the world we live in today.”

—Aaron Beck

Umoja was originally composed for women's choir in 1997 and was arranged for wind quintet in 1999; it has since been arranged for numerous other instrumental groups. The orchestral version was created in 2019.

The Philadelphia Orchestra gave the world premiere performances of the work in September 2019.

The score calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, trombone, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, crash cymbals, glockenspiel, marimba, ride cymbal, snare drum, suspended cymbal, tambourine, temple blocks, triangle, vibraphone, xylophone), harp, piano, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 14 minutes.

The Music

Piano Concerto No. 2

Camille Saint-Saëns

Born in Paris, October 9, 1835

Died in Algiers, December 16, 1921



When Carnegie Hall opened in 1891, Tchaikovsky was brought over from Russia as a featured guest celebrity with the program book calling him one of the three greatest living musicians. The other two were Johannes Brahms and Camille Saint-Saëns. Admiration for Saint-Saëns was also widespread across Europe and England. Cambridge University gave him an honorary doctorate in 1893, and Oxford followed suit. His reputation now rests on relatively few works, such as one of his cello

concertos, some of those for piano (especially the Second Concerto we hear tonight), the "Organ" Symphony, the opera *Samson and Delilah*, and the ever-popular *Carnival of the Animals*.

Saint-Saëns started his career as an astounding prodigy and remained prodigious in many respects throughout his long life. The prolific composer was also active as a pianist, organist, conductor, teacher, editor, and writer on a wide range of topics, not limited to music. He made his Paris concert debut in the Salle Pleyel at age 10, performing concertos by Beethoven and Mozart. On that occasion he not only played his own cadenzas for the Mozart but also performed everything from memory, an uncommon feat at the time. In the early 1870s, he was instrumental in the founding of the Société Nationale de Musique, which sought to support French music against German dominance.

Saint-Saëns composed in nearly every genre, not only symphonies, concertos, and chamber music, but also 13 operas (only *Samson* remains securely in the repertoire), and he was the first significant composer to write a film score (*L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise*, 1908). On a lark for a private occasion, he quickly wrote what may be his most beloved composition, *Carnival of the Animals*, but forbade complete public performances of that delicious parody of musical styles. Saint-Saëns remained active as a pianist until shortly before his death at age 86. He made trips to America in 1906 and 1915, playing his last piano concerto, the Fifth, with The Philadelphia Orchestra on his initial visit.

An Eclectic Composer Admired by a disparate array of composers, including Rossini, Berlioz, and Liszt, Saint-Saëns was essentially a conservative figure who nevertheless sought to integrate progressive Romantic trends within Classical limits.

In many works he placed unabashedly tuneful content within innovative formal structures that employed advanced methods of transforming themes. The Second Piano Concerto begins with what sounds like a Baroque improvisation in the style of Bach (a critic noticed and the composer admitted that the opening was based on improvisations playing organ in a Paris church). By the end of the Concerto the musical flavor is more carefree, inviting the quip that the piece begins with Bach and ends with Offenbach. Such eclecticism is one of the composer's hallmarks.

Liszt, to whom Saint-Saëns dedicated the "Organ" Symphony, praised him for the Second Concerto, which he said he "enthusiastically applauds. ... The form is innovative and a most felicitous choice. The interest builds throughout the three movements and you showed the keyboard effects to good advantage without sacrificing any compositional principles." The Concerto came out of a request by another great virtuoso of the time, the Russian Anton Rubinstein. In 1868 Rubinstein presented a series of concertos in Paris in which his friend Saint-Saëns appeared as conductor. At one point Rubinstein thought it would be fun to switch roles—for him to conduct and Saint-Saëns play. According to the French composer's own account, he wrote the G-minor Concerto in less than three weeks and the two premiered the work in the Salle Pleyel in May. Saint-Saëns was not pleased with the performance, although the second movement scherzo enjoyed an immediate success. He would play the work many more times in the decades to come, as would Rubinstein, Liszt, and a host of other noted pianists. Bizet arranged the Concerto for solo piano, which further helped to spread its fame in an era before recordings.

A Closer Look The soloist begins, unaccompanied by the orchestra, with a Bachian keyboard toccata, but soon displays a brilliant Romantic virtuosity (**Andante sostenuto**). After about a minute, the full orchestra roars a brief but powerful response. The two forces now established—soloist and ensemble—they are continuous partners for the rest of the movement, with the keyboard taking the lead in establishing the themes and never dropping out even when the orchestra becomes more prominent. A lengthy cadenza near the end leads to a return of the opening Bachian/Lisztian material (presented this time with a modest instrumental accompaniment), and a final statement of the orchestral roar to conclude.

The timpani announce the start of the delightful second movement (**Allegro scherzando**), a romp in a distinctive 6/8 meter that achieves the lightness and charm of a Mendelssohnian scherzo. The pianist plays a brief vamp that leads to violas, cellos, and bassoons presenting a delicious second theme. The playful character continues through to a sparkling coda.

Two bounding measures from the depths of the piano usher in the finale (**Presto**). Saint-Saëns did not label the movement a tarantella—the breathless dance one performs to keep from dying when bitten by a tarantula—but that is the feeling of this energetic, perpetual-motion finale. A middle section has the pianist

playing repeated trills against a slower moving and more subdued orchestral accompaniment, but soon the energy returns and does not abate until the brilliant movement is over.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Saint-Saëns composed his Second Piano Concerto in 1868.

Harold Bauer was the first to play the Concerto with the Orchestra, in February 1902; Fritz Scheel conducted. Since then a number of pianists have performed the work, including Arthur Rubinstein, Olga Samaroff, William Kapell, Yefim Bronfman, and most recently, André Watts, in September 2003, with Christoph Eschenbach.

The Orchestra has recorded the Second Piano Concerto twice: in 1964 for CBS with Philippe Entremont and Eugene Ormandy and in 1969 for RCA with Rubinstein and Ormandy.

The score calls for solo piano, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, percussion (optional cymbals), and strings.

The Concerto runs approximately 24 minutes in performance.

The Music

Symphony No. 8

Antonín Dvořák

Born in Nelahozeves, Bohemia, September 8, 1841

Died in Prague, May 1, 1904



Antonín Dvořák is justly hailed as the quintessential Czech composer and undoubtedly proud nationalist sentiment was central to his self-definition, music, and success. Yet he was far from provincial: He actively sought an international reputation and brilliantly achieved one. In 1874 the young composer applied for an Austrian state stipend to benefit needy young artists. He was awarded a grant and the next year, when Johannes Brahms joined the jury, won again, as

he did in later years. Early success gradually led to international fame, especially after Brahms recommended him to his own German publisher, Fritz Simrock, who published his Moravian Duets and Slavonic Dances. While these small pieces proved a “goldmine,” Dvořák wanted to move on to bigger works—symphonies, concertos, and operas—that would be judged as part of the great Western tradition, not merely as a colorful local phenomenon.

An International Career Dvořák succeeded best in this regard with his symphonies but the confusion surrounding their numbering points to the fitful progress of his career. He initiated some of the problems himself because he thought his First Symphony, which he wrote in a matter of weeks at age 24, had been forever lost after he sent it off to a competition in Germany. (It was only discovered 20 years after his death.) In 1881 Simrock released what is known today as the effervescent Sixth Symphony in D major as No. 1, and four years later the brooding Seventh Symphony in D minor as No. 2. The success of these and other pieces led the publisher to request ever more music from Dvořák, who responded with unpublished compositions written years earlier, including his Fifth Symphony from 1875 that was released as No. 3 in 1888.

The circumstances around the publication of Dvořák’s next symphony, the one we hear tonight, marked the turning point in his relationship with Simrock. The German publisher, who had undoubtedly helped build the Czech’s career, was understandably much more interested in releasing the small goldmine pieces aimed for domestic consumption than he was in big, costly symphonies. It was what we now know as the Eighth Symphony in G major, Op. 88, that caused a permanent break and was in the end released as Symphony No. 4 by Vincent

Novello in England. There is a good bit of poetic justice in this because England was increasingly embracing Dvořák's music. He travelled there frequently and in 1891 was awarded an honorary doctorate from Cambridge, on which occasion the Eighth Symphony was performed. America extended this fame even further when Dvořák was recruited to run the National Conservatory. His next and final Ninth Symphony ("From the New World") dates from the three years Dvořák lived and taught in New York City during the early 1890s.

Dvořák composed the Eighth Symphony in just over two months in the late summer of 1889 at his country home in Vysoká, some 40 miles south of Prague. The dedication explains a recent honor bestowed on the composer: "To the Bohemian Academy of Emperor Franz Joseph for the Encouragement of Arts and Literature, in thanks for my election." Dvořák toyed with the idea of premiering the work in Russia for a tour Tchaikovsky had arranged (he opted for the Sixth Symphony instead) and conducted the first performance himself in Prague's Rudolfinum in February 1890. The next success came when one of his great advocates, the celebrated conductor Hans Richter, led the piece in London and Vienna. About the latter performance, he informed Dvořák: "You would certainly have been pleased with his performance. All of us felt that it is a magnificent work, and so were all enthusiastic. Brahms dined with me after the performance and we drank to the health of the unfortunately absent 'father' of [the Symphony]. ... The success was warm and heartfelt."

A Closer Look The G-major Symphony is one of Dvořák's freshest works, often projecting a pastoral character appropriate to the radiant Bohemian countryside in which he wrote it. The piece begins with a solemn and noble theme stated by clarinets, bassoons, horns, and cellos that will return at key moments in the movement (**Allegro con brio**). Without a change in tempo this introductory section turns to the tonic major key as a solo flute presents the principal folk-like theme that the full orchestra soon joyously declaims. The **Adagio** is particularly pastoral and traverses many moods, from a passionate beginning to the sound of bird calls, the happy music-making of village bands, and grandly triumphant passages.

While Dvořák often wrote fast scherzo-like third movements, this Symphony offers a more leisurely **Allegretto grazioso** with a waltz character in G minor. In the middle is a rustic major-key trio featuring music that will return in an accelerated duple-meter version for the movement's coda. Trumpets proclaim a festive fanfare to open the finale (**Allegro ma non troppo**), which then unfolds as a set of variations on a theme stated by the cellos. The theme looks back to the flute melody of the first movement and undergoes a variety of variations with wonderful effects along the way, including raucous trills from the French horns and virtuoso flute decorations.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Dvořák's Eighth Symphony was composed in 1889.

The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the piece took place in January 1955, with Thor Johnson on the podium. Most recently on subscription it was played in February 2018, under the baton of Cristian Măcelaru.

The Orchestra has recorded the Eighth twice: in 1977 with Eugene Ormandy for RCA and in 1989 with Wolfgang Sawallisch for EMI.

The Symphony is scored for two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes (II doubling English horn), two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 35 minutes.

Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

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

Chromatic: Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

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

Dissonance: A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

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.

Perpetual motion: A musical device in which rapid figuration is persistently maintained

Scale: The series of tones which form (a) any major or minor key or (b) the chromatic scale of successive semi-tonic steps

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.

Tarantella: A Neapolitan dance in rapid triple time

Toccata: Literally "to touch." A piece intended as a display of manual dexterity, often free in form and almost always for a solo keyboard instrument.

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

Trill: A type of embellishment that consists, in a more or less rapid alternation, of the main note with the one a tone or half tone above it

Trio: A division set between the first section of a minuet or scherzo and its repetition, and contrasting with it by a more tranquil movement and style

Tutti: All; full orchestra

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegretto: A tempo between walking speed and fast

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Animato: Lively, animated

Con brio: Vigorously, with fire

Grazioso: Graceful and easy

Meno mosso: Less moved (slower)

Presto: Very fast

Scherzando: Playfully

Sostenuto: Sustained

Vivace: Lively

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Ma non troppo: But not too much

Molto: Very

Più: More

Poco: Little, a bit



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