

2023–2024 | 124th Season

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, February 29, at 7:30

Friday, March 1, at 2:00

Saturday, March 2, at 8:00

Nathalie Stutzmann Conductor

Haochen Zhang Piano

Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 73 ("Emperor")

I. Allegro

II. Adagio un poco mosso—

III. Rondo: Allegro

Intermission

Beethoven Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92

I. Poco sostenuto—Vivace

II. Allegretto

III. Presto—Assai meno presto—Presto

IV. Allegro con brio

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 45 minutes.

These concerts are sponsored by **Ralph and Beth Johnston Muller**.

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The
Philadelphia
Orchestra

24 | SEASON
25

MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN



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Photos: Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Photo by Landon Nordeman; violinist Davyd Booth at Tattooed Mom. Photo by Jessica Griffin; Principal Tuba Carol Jantsch at Philadelphia's Magic Gardens. Photo by Neal Santos; Principal Bass Joseph Conyers at Cherry Street Pier. Photo by Kriston Jae Bethel; Principal Harp Elizabeth Hainen on Broad Street. Photo by Neal Santos.

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The Philadelphia Orchestra

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Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 12th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. 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.

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Principal Guest Conductor

Jeff Fusco



Nathalie Stutzmann began her role as The Philadelphia Orchestra's principal guest conductor with the 2021–22 season; she holds the Ralph and Beth Johnston Muller Chair. The three-year contract will involve a regular presence in the Orchestra's subscription series in Philadelphia and at its summer festivals in Vail, Colorado, and Saratoga Springs, New York. She made her Philadelphia Orchestra conducting debut in 2016. She is also music director of the Atlanta Symphony, only

the second woman in history to lead a major American orchestra.

Ms. Stutzmann made her debut at the 2023 Bayreuth Festival with Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. The 2022–23 season also saw her acclaimed debut at the Metropolitan Opera with productions of both Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and *Don Giovanni*. During the 2023–24 season, she leads the Atlanta Symphony in 12 programs spanning some of her favorite core repertoire from Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms, and Ravel through to the large symphonic forces of Mahler, Strauss, and Tchaikovsky, along with a Bruckner festival marking the composer's 200th anniversary and a West Coast tour. As a guest conductor, Ms. Stutzmann makes her debut with the Swedish Radio Symphony and returns to the London Symphony for Bruckner's *Te Deum* and his Seventh and Ninth symphonies. She conducts Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* at the Teatro Regio Torino and returns to Bayreuth in summer 2024. Throughout the season she will have a strong presence at the Philharmonie Paris, where she will appear with the Orchestre de Paris and the Orchestre de Capitoile de Toulouse; she also chaired the jury for the La Maestra Conducting Competition.

Ms. Stutzmann was awarded the 2023 Opus Klassik "Concerto Recording of the Year" for her recording of the Glière and Mosolov harp concertos with Xavier de Maistre and the WDR Sinfonieorchester on Sony. Her recording of the complete Beethoven piano concertos with Haochen Zhang and The Philadelphia Orchestra for the BIS label was released in 2022. She is an exclusive recording artist for Warner Classics/Erato.

Ms. Stutzmann began her studies in piano, bassoon, and cello at a very young age, and she studied conducting with the legendary Finnish teacher Jorma Panula. As one of today's most esteemed contraltos, she has made more than 80 recordings and received the most prestigious awards. Recognized for her significant contribution to the arts, she was named Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, France's highest honor, and a Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government.

Soloist

Benjamin Ealovega



Haochen Zhang made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut as a winner of the Orchestra's Albert M. Greenfield Student Competition in 2006 and his subscription debut in 2017, the same year he received the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, which recognizes the potential for a major career in music. Since winning the gold medal at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2009, he has appeared with many of the world's leading festivals and orchestras, including the China

Philharmonic with Long Yu at the BBC Proms; the Munich Philharmonic with Lorin Maazel in a sold-out tour in Munich and China; the Sydney Symphony and David Robertson in a tour to China; and the NDR Hamburg and Thomas Hengelbrock in a tour of Tokyo, Beijing, and Shanghai. In 2019 he joined Yannick Nézet-Séguin and The Philadelphia Orchestra for tours of China and Japan.

Highlights of Mr. Zhang's 2023–24 season include a United States tour with the Atlanta Symphony and Nathalie Stutzmann; a debut with the Melbourne Symphony; performances with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia; a tour of Asia with the Chamber Orchestra of Paris; and extensive recital and orchestral performances throughout China. In recent seasons he debuted with the New York Philharmonic and the Lucerne Festival Orchestra; performed with the Filarmonica della Scala, the NHK Symphony, and the Staatskapelle Berlin; and played with the Dover Quartet at the Kennedy Center. He has given extensive recital and concerto tours in Asia with performances in China, Hong Kong, and Japan. In October 2017 he appeared at Carnegie Hall with Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts Orchestra, followed by his recital debut at Carnegie's Zankel Hall.

In 2019 Mr. Zhang released his debut concerto album on BIS Records: Prokofiev's Second Concerto and Tchaikovsky's First Concerto with the Lahti Symphony and Dima Slobodeniouk. His debut solo album—works by Schumann, Brahms, Janáček, and Liszt—was released by BIS in 2017. These were followed by the complete Beethoven concertos with The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ms. Stutzmann and a solo album of Liszt's Transcendental Etudes. He is also featured in Peter Rosen's award-winning documentary *A Surprise in Texas*, chronicling the 2009 Van Cliburn Competition. Mr. Zhang is frequently invited by chamber music festivals in the United States and collaborates with such colleagues as the Dover, Shanghai, Tokyo, and Brentano quartets. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, he studied under Gary Graffman. He was previously trained at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and the Shenzhen Arts School, where he was admitted in 2001 at the age of 11 to study with Dan Zhaoyi.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1809

Beethoven

"Emperor"
Concerto

Music

Spontini

Fernand Cortez

Literature

Irving

Rip van Winkle

Art

Constable

Malvern Hill

History

Napoleon

annexes Papal

States

1812

Beethoven

Symphony
No. 7

Music

Weber

Piano Concerto

No. 2

Literature

Brothers

Grimm

Fairy Tales

Art

Géricault

The Charging

Chasseur

History

U.S. declares

war on Britain

Beethoven composed his first four piano concertos as enticing vehicles with which he could dazzle audiences and display his abundant talents both as a performer and composer. But by the time he wrote his last concerto in 1809 deafness had forced a retreat from public performance; another pianist was enlisted to give the premiere. In the mighty Fifth Concerto, later known as the "Emperor," Beethoven continued to challenge the expectations of his time by creating virtuoso music of real substance.

Beethoven premiered his Seventh Symphony in 1813 at the height of his popular fame and success. He was generally recognized as Europe's greatest composer and in this work, unveiled as victory in the Napoleonic wars was close at hand, he brilliantly captured the celebratory spirit of the time. Richard Wagner famously described the work as "the apotheosis of the dance." During Beethoven's life it was his most successful symphony, especially the miraculous second movement that one critic called "the crown of instrumental music."

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.

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Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

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Photo: Jeff Fusco

The Music

Piano Concerto No. 5 ("Emperor")

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born in Bonn, probably December 16, 1770

Died in Vienna, March 26, 1827



As Mozart had discovered some two decades earlier, piano concertos offered the ideal vehicle with which to display both performing and composing gifts, including those of improvisation in the unaccompanied cadenza sections heard near the end of certain movements. Beethoven wrote far fewer keyboard concertos than the two dozen of his model Mozart, although his involvement goes beyond the five canonic works most familiar today. In 1804–05 he wrote his "Triple" Concerto

for piano, violin, and cello, and he later made a piano arrangement of his Violin Concerto. What we might call Beethoven's Piano Concerto "No. 0" in E-flat, his true first concerto, he composed as a young man in his native Bonn and although only the piano part survives with some instrumental cues, an orchestration has been reconstructed; a few available recordings of this curiosity give a good idea of how the fledgling composer sought to emulate Mozart.

These works span the first half of Beethoven's public career, taking him from the time of his first fame as a piano virtuoso to the point where he was generally recognized as the greatest living composer in Europe. There is some poetic justice, therefore, in the fact that he composed his last concerto, the so-called "Emperor," in 1809, the year that Haydn died. For even though Haydn had not composed in years, proper reverence was due to Beethoven's former teacher as long as he was alive.

Beethoven's last piano concerto (he abandoned work on a later Sixth Concerto in D major) is the only one he did not write for his own use as soloist. By 1809 his hearing had deteriorated to such an extent that he rarely played piano in public and could hardly have negotiated the challenges of this extraordinarily demanding piece. No longer performing concertos himself, he now finally got around to writing cadenzas for his earlier ones. Those of the "Emperor" are built into the fabric from the beginning.

What's in a Name? The nickname "Emperor," like many others attached to Beethoven's music (e.g. the "Moonlight" Sonata), has no authority with the composer. While there is a definite militaristic flavor at moments in the Concerto, similar gestures can be found in all his previous ones as well. In this case, the

associations were more current: Napoleon's troops had staged their second siege of Vienna in May 1809. The loud mortar fire continued through the summer and caused Beethoven particular distress because of his hearing. In July he wrote to his publisher: "Let me tell you that since May 4th I have produced very little coherent work, at most a fragment here and there. The whole course of events has in my case affected both body and soul. I cannot yet give myself up to the enjoyment of the country life which is so indispensable for me. ... What a destructive, disorderly life I see and hear around me, nothing but drums, cannons, and human misery in every form."

In other respects, however, Beethoven's fortunes, literally and figuratively, were rising. In March 1809 he had been granted an annuity contract from three of his generous aristocratic patrons who pledged their support for the rest of his life. Free for the first time from financial cares (at least for the time being: war eventually brought a severe devaluation of the currency and bankrupted some supporters), Beethoven's professional fame was reaching its summit. He finished the "Emperor" Concerto late in the year and dedicated it to his student, patron, and friend Archduke Rudolph. A semi-public premiere took place at the palace of his patron Prince Lobkowitz in January 1811, followed by a performance in Leipzig in November, both times with soloists other than Beethoven. A critic in Leipzig noted that the Concerto caused such enthusiasm "that [the audience] could hardly content itself with the ordinary expressions of recognition." Still, many contemporaries considered it too difficult. "The immense length of the Concerto," wrote the same critic, "robs it of the impact that a product of this gigantic intellect would otherwise have upon its hearers."

A Closer Look Beethoven opens the Concerto (**Allegro**) in a way like no other: It is not so much the unusual ploy of having the piano appear at the beginning (something he had already done in his Fourth Concerto), but rather that the piano essentially plays virtuoso cadenza-like material, music that traditionally belongs at the end rather than the beginning. After three opening flourishes alternating between orchestra and piano, the ensemble states a vigorous first theme. In the coloristic **Adagio**, the piano emerges from the extremes of its register, pianissimo, to state a melody with the quality of a hymn. For the finale Beethoven forges ahead without a break into the **Allegro** in which the piano first presents the buoyant theme.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Beethoven composed the E-flat major Piano Concerto in 1809.

The Concerto was first performed by The Philadelphia Orchestra with Constantin von Sternberg as soloist and Fritz Scheel conducting, in March 1903 during the Orchestra's first cycle of the complete Beethoven symphonies. The Fifth was last performed on subscription concerts in February 2020, with pianist Daniil Trifonov and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

The piece has been recorded by The Philadelphia Orchestra three times: in 1950 with Rudolf Serkin and Eugene Ormandy for CBS; in 1958 with Eugene Istomin and Ormandy for CBS; and in 2021 with Haochen Zhang and Natalie Stutzmann for BIS.

The score calls for an orchestra of solo piano, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Beethoven's Fifth Concerto runs approximately 40 minutes in performance.



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Photos: Jeff Fusco, Bowie Verschuuren



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The Music

Symphony No. 7

Ludwig van Beethoven



Beethoven called his Seventh Symphony “one of my most excellent works” in a letter to Johann Peter Solomon in London (the same Solomon who, some 20 years prior, had brought Haydn to the English capital and who, like Beethoven, was a native of Bonn). The composer may well be forgiven for this lavish self-praise: Even after the revolutionary accomplishments of the Fifth and Sixth symphonies, he had clearly found a new approach to symphonic composition—one

in which he had no need of a spoken or unspoken program such as the “fate” or “nature” associations in the earlier works in order to project a high level of dramatic energy. In many ways, the Seventh marks the culminating moment of Beethoven’s so-called “heroic period,” but it manages to be “heroic” without evoking any hero in particular.

One way in which Beethoven achieved this was by having each of the four movements dominated by a single recurrent rhythmic figure, while creating an endless diversity of melodic and harmonic events against a backdrop of those continually repeated dance rhythms. There is a strong drive propelling the music forward creating constant excitement; at the same time, harmony, melody, dynamics, and orchestration are all full of the most delightful surprises, making for interesting turns in the musical “plot.”

A Closer Look In the first movement (**Poco sostenuto—Vivace**), we see how the predominant rhythm gradually emerges during the transition from the slow introduction to the fast tempo. The introduction is the longest Beethoven ever wrote for a symphony. It presents and develops its own thematic material, linked to the main theme of the Allegro section in a passage consisting of multiple repeats of a single note—E—in the flute, oboe, and violins. Among the many unforgettable moments of this movement, let us single out just two: the surprise oboe solo at the beginning of the recapitulation and the irresistible, gradual crescendo at the end that culminates in a fortissimo statement of the movement’s main rhythmic figure.

The second-movement **Allegretto** in A minor was the section in the Symphony that became the most popular from the day of its premiere, when it had to be

repeated. The main rhythmic pattern of this movement was used in Austro-German church litanies of the 18th and 19th centuries. The same pattern is so frequent in the music of Franz Schubert that it is sometimes referred to as the "Schubert rhythm." The Allegretto of Beethoven's Seventh combines this rhythm with a melody of rare expressive power. The rhythm persists in the bass even during the contrasting middle section in A major. Yet the movement opens and ends on a single long-held chord. In an influential essay on Beethoven's symphonies, Hector Berlioz described this chord as a "mournful cry" that leaves "the listener in suspense ... thereby increasing the impression of dreamy sadness."

The third-movement scherzo (**Presto**) is the only one of the Symphony's movements where the basic rhythmic patterns are grouped in an unpredictable, asymmetrical way. The joke (which is what the word scherzo means) lies in the fact that the listener may never know what will happen in the next moment. Only the trio returns to regular-length periods, though there are some harmonic and rhythmic irregularities that, according to Berlioz, always took the public by surprise. Beethoven expanded the traditional scherzo-trio-scherzo structure by repeating the trio a second time, followed by a third appearance of the scherzo. At the end Beethoven leads us to believe that he is going to start the trio over yet another time. But we are about to be doubly surprised: first when the by-now familiar trio melody is suddenly transformed from major to minor, and second when, with five quick tutti strokes, the movement abruptly ends, as if cut off in the middle.

In the fourth-movement **Allegro con brio**, the exuberant feelings reach their peak as one glorious theme follows another over an almost entirely unchanging rhythmic pulsation as the dance reaches an unprecedented level of intensity. It is a movement of which even Donald Francis Tovey, the most celebrated British musical essayist of the first half of the 20th century, had to admit: "I can attempt nothing here by way of description." Fortunately, the music speaks for itself.

—Peter Laki

Beethoven composed his Seventh Symphony from 1811 to 1812.

Fritz Scheel conducted the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Symphony, in March 1903. The most recent subscription performance was in November 2021, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin on the podium.

The Orchestra has recorded the work five times: in 1927 for RCA with Leopold Stokowski; in 1944 and 1964 for CBS with Eugene Ormandy; and in 1978 and 1988 for EMI with Riccardo Muti. A live recording with Christoph Eschenbach from 2006 is also currently available as a digital download.

The Symphony is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 35 minutes.

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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

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

Dynamics: The varying and contrasting degrees of loudness

Harmonic: Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

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

Legato: Smooth, even, without any break between notes

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.

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.

Timbre: Tone color or tone quality

Tutti: All; full orchestra

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegretto: A tempo between walking speed and fast

Allegro: Bright, fast

Con brio: Vigorously, with fire

Mosso: Moved

Presto: Very fast

Sostenuto: Sustained

Vivace: Lively

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Assai: Much

Meno: Less

Un poco: A little

DYNAMIC MARKS

Crescendo: Increasing volume

Fortissimo (ff): Very loud

Pianissimo (pp): Very soft

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Yannick Nézet-Séguin
Music and Artistic Director

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