

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



**PLAYBILL**

January 2013  
*The Inaugural Season*

# Season 2012-2013

Thursday, January 24, at 8:00  
Friday, January 25, at 2:00

The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Conductor

**Wagner** *Siegfried Idyll*

## Intermission

**Bruckner** Symphony No. 7 in E major

I. Allegro moderato

II. Adagio: Sehr feierlich und sehr langsam—  
Moderato—Tempo I—Moderato—Tempo I

III. Scherzo: Sehr schnell—Trio: Etwas  
langsamer—Scherzo da capo

IV. Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht schnell

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 50 minutes.

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Jessica Griffin



Renowned for its distinctive sound, beloved for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for an unrivaled legacy of “firsts” in music-making, The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has cultivated an extraordinary history of artistic leaders in its 112 seasons, including music directors Fritz Scheel, Carl Pohlig, Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy, Riccardo Muti, Wolfgang Sawallisch, and Christoph Eschenbach, and Charles Dutoit, who served as chief conductor from 2008 to 2012. With the 2012-13 season, Yannick Nézet-Séguin becomes the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Named music director designate in 2010, Nézet-Séguin brings a vision that extends beyond symphonic music into the

vivid world of opera and choral music.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra nurtures an important relationship not only with patrons who support the main season at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts but also those who enjoy the Orchestra’s other area performances at the Mann Center, Penn’s Landing, and other venues. The Philadelphia Orchestra Association also continues to own the Academy of Music—a National Historic Landmark—as it has since 1957.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador for Philadelphia and for the United States. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, today The Philadelphia

Orchestra boasts a new partnership with the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center while also enjoying a three-week residency in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., and a strong partnership with the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival.

The ensemble maintains an important Philadelphia tradition of presenting educational programs for students of all ages. Today the Orchestra executes a myriad of education and community partnership programs serving nearly 50,000 annually, including its Neighborhood Concert Series, Sound All Around and Family Concerts, and eZseatU.

For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org).

# Music Director



**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** became the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra with the start of the 2012-13 season. Named music director designate in June 2010, he made his Orchestra debut in December 2008. Over the past decade, Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most exciting talents of his generation. Since 2008 he has been music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic and principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic, and since 2000 artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain. He has appeared with such revered ensembles as the Vienna and Berlin philharmonics; the Boston Symphony; the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia; the Dresden Staatskapelle; the Chamber Orchestra of Europe; and the major Canadian orchestras. His talents extend beyond symphonic music into opera and choral music, leading acclaimed performances at the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, London's Royal Opera House, and the Salzburg Festival.

Highlights of Yannick's inaugural season include his Carnegie Hall debut with the Verdi Requiem, two world and one U.S. premiere, and performances of *The Rite of Spring* in collaboration with New York-based Ridge Theater, complete with dancers, video projection, and theatrical lighting.

In July 2012 Yannick and Deutsche Grammophon announced a major long-term collaboration. His discography with the Rotterdam Philharmonic for BIS Records and EMI/Virgin includes an Edison Award-winning album of Ravel's orchestral works. He has also recorded several award-winning albums with the Orchestre Métropolitain for ATMA Classique. In addition, his first recording with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Mahler's Symphony No. 5, is available for download.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied at that city's Conservatory of Music and continued studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini and with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. In 2012 Yannick was appointed a Companion of the Order of Canada, one of the country's highest civilian honors. His other honors include Canada's National Arts Centre Award; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier, the highest distinction for the arts in Quebec; and an honorary doctorate by the University of Quebec in Montreal.

To read Yannick's full bio, please visit [www.philorch.org/conductor](http://www.philorch.org/conductor).

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

**1870**

**Wagner**

*Siegfried Idyll*

**Music**

Tchaikovsky

*Romeo and*

*Juliet*

**Literature**

Verne

*Twenty*

*Thousand*

*Leagues Under*

*the Sea*

**Art**

Corot

*La Perle*

**History**

First Vatican

Council

**1882**

**Bruckner**

Symphony

No. 7

**Music**

R. Strauss

Horn Concerto

No. 1

**Literature**

Stevenson

*Treasure Island*

**Art**

Cézanne

*Self-Portrait*

**History**

World Exhibition

in Moscow

Richard Wagner wrote the *Siegfried Idyll* as a birthday gift for his new wife, Cosima (who was Franz Liszt's daughter), and on Christmas morning 1870 conducted a chamber ensemble version of the piece on the staircase of their house. "Suddenly I heard music, and what music!" Cosima noted in her diary. "When it had died away, Richard came in with the five children and gave me the score of his symphonic birthday composition." Named for their first son, Siegfried, Wagner weaved into the work quotations from his monumental *Ring of the Nibelung*, which he was composing at the time.

Anton Bruckner revered Wagner above all other composers and was deeply influenced by his operas. Both the reverence and the influence are apparent in his magnificent Seventh Symphony, which prominently features four so-called Wagner tubas—a brass instrument that is a cross between a French horn and a tuba. Wagner died while the Symphony was being composed and Bruckner added a lamenting chorale intoned by the brass as a coda to the Adagio: "In memory of the immortal and dearly beloved Master who has departed this life."

# The Music

## *Siegfried Idyll*



**Richard Wagner**  
**Born in Leipzig, May 22,**  
**1813**  
**Died in Venice, February 13,**  
**1883**

“Our first Christmas Eve,” wrote Cosima Wagner in her diary in 1870, “and I have given nothing to Richard and had nothing from him.” What Cosima hadn’t known was that for several weeks her husband worked in secret on a splendid new composition to “thank” his new wife for the birth of their first son, Siegfried. Wagner had rehearsed the piece with a little orchestra of 15 musicians in private, and on Christmas Day he placed them on the steps of their living room and played the “world premiere,” as it were, of the *Siegfried Idyll*. “Suddenly I heard music, and what music!” Cosima wrote. “When it had died away, Richard came in with the five children and gave me the score of his symphonic birthday composition.” Everyone wept. After breakfast the chamber orchestra (which included the great conductor Hans Richter playing the trumpet) reassembled and played the piece a second time, then a third.

**A 19th-Century Soap Opera** This emotional moment was a long time in coming. After years of somewhat undisciplined romantic philandering, Wagner had finally found the woman of his life’s dreams. Unfortunately, like Mathilde Wesendonk before her, Cosima von Bülow was the wife of another man—in this case of the prominent conductor Hans von Bülow, who among other things had led the premiere of Wagner’s opera *Die Meistersinger* in 1868. (She was also the daughter of one of Wagner’s closest friends, Franz Liszt.) Winning her hand was not simple—in fact it was downright messy. Cosima had already borne the composer two daughters, Isolde and Eva, and when she became pregnant with Siegfried she finally decided to leave Bülow. (Wagner’s first wife, Minna, died in Dresden in 1866.) Cosima moved into Tribschen, the composer’s lovely Swiss villa, in late 1868, and their son Siegfried was born in June 1869. On August 25, 1870, the couple married, and in November Wagner—in the midst of composing *Götterdämmerung*—wrote out the score to the *Idyll* in a swift, single gesture, completing it on December 4.

“*Tribschen Idyll* with Fidi-Birdsong and Orange Sunrise,” he inscribed the score, “presented as a symphonic birthday greeting to his Cosima by her Richard, 1870.”

Wagner composed the Siegfried Idyll in 1870.

Fritz Scheel presented the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the piece, in November 1904. Most recently it was conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch here, in February 1995.

The scored calls for flute, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, two horns, trumpet, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 18 minutes.

Cosima's birthday was December 24. "Fidi" was the couple's nickname for little Siegfried, and his "birdsong" is the trumpet-call heard toward the end of the piece, which Richter rendered with gusto. The "orange sunrise" is apparently an allusion to the curious play of light on the wallpaper on the day Cosima gave birth to Siegfried, a memory of silent rapture ("the beautiful, fiery glow," Cosima wrote) as the couple shared the bliss of love fulfilled.

Wagner said that he could have described every note of the *Idyll* programmatically. If there was indeed a "story" here, however, the composer never put it to paper—though he did later inscribe the score with a flowery poem of his own authorship, a dedication to Cosima that was printed in the first edition:

It was your will, noble and sacrificing,  
that found the proper meaning for my work,  
consecrated by you into an enraptured quietude,  
which grew and gave us strength;  
the world of heroes, was now magically turned to idyll,  
ancient scenes of a distant homeland—  
and there a joyous call broke out from my song:  
"A son is there!" he who must be called Siegfried.

For him and you I now raise up this music in thanks.  
What nobler form could gratitude for love-deeds take?  
In our private chambers, we fostered it:  
this quiet joy that now takes the form of music.  
What proves true for us, this unwavering rapture,  
is also true for our son, noble Siegfried;  
with your grace, all these things are now fulfilled,  
as we silently enjoy this musical joy.

**A Closer Look** Bits of motifs from the *Ring of the Nibelung* are woven seamlessly into the texture of the *Idyll*, as well as the melody of a cradle-song Wagner had composed on New Year's Eve 1868, "Schlaf, Kindchen, schlafe." The latter is heard prominently a few minutes into the piece, played by solo oboe.

Wagner's "chamber" performance of the *Idyll* had been dictated, quite simply, by the width of the staircase at Tribschen; in subsequent years the composer performed the work with full orchestra. Throughout his life it remained for him a favorite among his own works.

—Paul J. Horsley

# The Music

## Symphony No. 7



**Anton Bruckner**  
**Born in Ansfelden, Austria,**  
**September 4, 1824**  
**Died in Vienna, October 11,**  
**1896**

The celebrated violinist Fritz Kreisler, who at a young age briefly studied with Anton Bruckner in Vienna, remarked that he was a “combination of genius and simpleton. He had two coordinates—music and religion. Beyond that he knew almost nothing.” Such a familiar image of Bruckner has proved difficult to move beyond because this most unglamorous of Romantic composers did indeed lead an unassuming life devoted principally to God and music, passions that he combined in astounding ways in his towering Masses and magnificent symphonies.

Posterity desires to know about the lives of great composers because of the fruits of their creativity, even if the creators themselves did not do much else of interest. Biographers are therefore at pains to construct engaging stories and strongly tempted to make their subjects have fascinating lives. With relatively rare exceptions, however, this is a stretch. Composers spend most of their time composing, which leaves little opportunity to do other things. Casting Bruckner’s life as uneventful has proved to have its own sort of perverse fascination. His struggles were with common depression, including a nervous breakdown in 1867, not with the hearing loss or madness that help make the biographies of Beethoven and Schumann captivating. Bruckner did not have a notorious wife, like his younger colleague Mahler, nor did he shed his provincial upper-Austrian roots; he retained his regional dialect and attire even after moving to Vienna. Although he rarely traveled, trips to France and England around 1870 convinced some that he was the greatest organist and improviser of his day.

**The Path to the Seventh Symphony** Bruckner dedicated many years to learning his craft. In the 1850s, already in his 30s, he meticulously studied counterpoint with the noted Viennese theorist Simon Sechter (with whom Schubert had sought counsel in the last weeks of his life). Sechter forbade free composition and for years Bruckner ceased his original work to hone his contrapuntal technique. In 1868 he finally moved to Vienna, where he remained for the rest of his life. He spent most of the year teaching at the Conservatory and the University of Vienna, as well as privately, and he also played the organ at the Court Chapel.

Although respected as a professor, continuing Sechter's tradition of training, Bruckner's compositional achievement took longer to be recognized. This was due in part to the musical politics of the time and to the perception of some, advocated by the powerful critic Eduard Hanslick, that he was moving music in the wrong direction. Hanslick, a fervent supporter of Brahms and Dvořák, opposed what he perceived as the Wagnerian agenda at work in Bruckner's symphonies. He considered the Seventh "unnaturally presumptuous, diseased, and pernicious." But while Hanslick lamented "importing Wagner's dramatic style into the symphony," exactly this was applauded by others, such as the brilliant young composer Hugo Wolf. Perhaps more unexpected was the response of the "Waltz King," Johann Strauss, Jr., who sent Bruckner a telegram after the first Vienna performance of the Seventh: "Am entirely shaken, it was one of the greatest experiences of my life."

Bruckner's compositional legacy consists primarily of sacred vocal works and symphonies, although he wrote a variety of smaller pieces, including a fine String Quintet. His three great masses came relatively early, and when he turned to writing symphonies many of their spiritual aspects were transferred to the orchestral realm. A flowing cello line in a symphonic slow movement may seem as if it set words from the Mass—a Benedictus, for example. Bruckner did on a few occasions quote his sacred music within symphonies, and there is an allusion to his *Te Deum* in the adagio of the Seventh Symphony, a work composed at the same time. When we consider as well that Bruckner was a master organist, another crucial element of his musical style can be identified in his deployment of the instrumental choirs of the orchestra. His symphonies are often likened to "gothic cathedrals of sound."

**The Influence of Wagner** Bruckner wrote his Symphony No. 1 at age 41, although it was surrounded by two unnumbered ones never performed during his lifetime. The Seventh Symphony we hear today was the first one to score a great critical and popular success; it was the most often performed during his lifetime and remains so today. Bruckner began composing it in September 1881 and worked steadily for the next two years. Crucial to this period was his ever-deepening engagement with Wagner's music, the transforming influence on him since the early 1860s. (He dedicated his Third Symphony to Wagner.)

In July 1882 Bruckner traveled to Bayreuth to attend the premiere of *Parsifal*, Wagner's last opera. Not long

*Bruckner's Seventh Symphony was composed between 1881 and 1883.*

*Leopold Stokowski conducted the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Seventh Symphony, in January 1925. During the 1980s, it became a favorite of Klaus Tennstedt, who led three separate presentations of it. The Orchestra's most recent performances of the work were in February 2006, with Simon Rattle on the podium. Some of the other conductors who have led the Symphony with the Orchestra include Eugene Ormandy, Claudio Abbado, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Wolfgang Sawallisch, and Christoph Eschenbach.*

*The Philadelphians recorded the Seventh in 1968 with Ormandy for RCA.*

*The score calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, four Wagner tubas (two tenor, two bass), tuba, timpani, percussion (cymbals, triangle), and strings.*

*The Symphony runs approximately 65 minutes in performance.*

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afterward he had a premonition, as he would later inform the conductor Felix Mottl: "One day recently I came home and felt very sad. The thought crossed my mind that before long the Master would die, and then the C-sharp-minor theme of the *Adagio* came to me." Wagner died on February 13, 1883, and when Bruckner learned of this he added a moving coda to the movement, using four so-called Wagner tubas in a mournful chorale. He noted in the score this was "In memory of the immortal and dearly beloved Master who has departed this life." Arthur Nikisch conducted the first performance of the Symphony with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra on December 30, 1884; its success was only surpassed 10 weeks later when Hermann Levi conducted the work in Munich.

**A Closer Look** Many of Bruckner's symphonies, including his last three, open using the same effective compositional strategy, with a spacious melody that unfolds over a hushed string tremolo. The precedent is Beethoven's Ninth, the symphony that most influenced Bruckner. The Seventh's **Allegro moderato** offers the most expansive of these openings as the cellos, doubled initially by solo French horn, lushly intone a broad theme consisting of an arpeggiated E-major chord that generates many of the musical ideas that follow in the work.

Bruckner's slow movements are the heart and soul of his symphonies, again using the comparable section of Beethoven's Ninth as inspiration. None of Bruckner's is more profound and deeply moving than the **Adagio** of the Seventh (marked "Very solemn and very slow"), with its added homage to Wagner at the end. Although Bruckner made both major and minor revisions to most of his symphonies, the Seventh remained relatively untouched. One point on which the composer apparently wavered was the climatic cymbal crash and triangle roll near the end of the movement; it is included in the version edited by Leopold Nowak that the Philadelphians perform today.

The **Sehr schnell scherzo** returns us to the ABA form of the Classical era but greatly expanded in length—an urgent start with a prominent trumpet solo leads to a relaxed Trio before a repeat of the first section. The opening theme of the **Finale (Bewegt, doch nicht schnell)** is related to the principal one of the first movement, beginning softly and rapidly building excitement; a hymn-like second theme and dramatic third one follow. The Symphony is capped off in the blazing coda with a return of the initial arpeggiated melody with which the entire work so memorably began.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# Musical Terms

## GENERAL TERMS

**Arpeggio:** A broken chord (with notes played in succession instead of together)

**Cadence:** The conclusion to a phrase, movement, or piece based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression, or dissonance resolution

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

**Chorale:** A hymn tune of the German Protestant Church, or one similar in style

**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

**Contrapuntal:** See counterpoint

**Counterpoint:** A term that describes the combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

**Da capo:** Repeated from

the beginning

**Legato:** Smooth, even, without any break between notes

**Meter:** The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

**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.).

**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 in triple time, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts.

**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.

**Tonic:** The keynote of a scale

**Tremolo:** In bowing, repeating the note very fast with the point of the bow

**Trio:** See scherzo

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

**Adagio:** Leisurely, slow

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Bewegt:** Animated, with motion

**Feierlich:** Solemn, stately

**Langsam:** Slow

**Langsamer:** Slower

**Moderato:** A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

**Schnell:** Fast

## TEMPO MODIFIERS

**Doch nicht zu:** But not too

**Etwas:** Somewhat

**Sehr:** Very

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