

# Season 2017-2018

**Thursday, May 10, at 7:30**

**Friday, May 11, at 8:00**

## The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Conductor

**Hélène Grimaud** Piano

**Brahms** Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor, Op. 15

I. Maestoso

II. Adagio

III. Rondo: Allegro non troppo

### Intermission

**Schumann** Symphony No. 4 in D minor, Op. 120

I. Ziemlich langsam—Lebhaft—

II. Romanze: Ziemlich langsam—

III. Scherzo: Lebhaft—

IV. Langsam—Lebhaft—Schneller—Presto

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 40 minutes.

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# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



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# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Jeffrey Griffin



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# Soloist

Mat Hennek/DG



French pianist **Hélène Grimaud** was born in 1969 in Aix-en-Provence, where she began her piano studies. She was accepted into the Paris Conservatory at the age of 13 and in 1987 made her recital debut in Tokyo. That same year Daniel Barenboim invited her to perform with the Orchestre de Paris, marking the launch of her musical career, one highlighted by concerts with most of the world's major orchestras and many celebrated conductors. She made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2000 and has enjoyed many collaborations with her friend Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Ms. Grimaud's recordings have been awarded numerous accolades, among them the Cannes Classical Recording of the Year, the Choc du Monde de la Musique, the Diapason d'Or, the Grand Prix du Disque, the Midem Classical Award, and the ECHO Klassik Award. An exclusive Deutsche Grammophon (DG) artist since 2002, her most recent album, *Perspectives*, is a two-disc personal selection of highlights from her DG catalogue. In addition to performances with The Philadelphia Orchestra, highlights of her current season include appearances with the Gothenburg Symphony, where she is artist in residence; concerts with Valery Gergiev and the Munich Philharmonic; and a multimedia concert project combining piano works with images from *Woodlands*, the latest publication by her partner, fine art photographer Mat Hennek.

Ms. Grimaud has established herself as a committed wildlife conservationist, a passionate human rights activist, and a writer. Between her debut in 1995 with the Berlin Philharmonic under Claudio Abbado and her first performance with the New York Philharmonic under Kurt Masur in 1999, she established the Wolf Conservation Center in New York State. Her love for the endangered species was sparked by a chance encounter with a wolf in northern Florida. Ms. Grimaud is a member of Musicians for Human Rights, a worldwide network of people working in the music field to promote a culture of social change. She is also the author of three books.

Hélène Grimaud's performances with The Philadelphia Orchestra are made possible by a generous gift from Robert Heim and Eileen Kennedy.

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

**1841**

**Schumann**

Symphony  
No. 4

**Music**

Rossini  
Stabat Mater

**Literature**

Browning  
*Pippa Passes*

**Art**

Millet  
*Self Portrait*

**History**

New Zealand  
becomes British  
colony

**1858**

**Brahms**

Piano Concerto  
No. 1

**Music**

Gounod  
*Faust*

**Literature**

Busch  
*Max und Moritz*

**Art**

Frith  
*Derby Day*

**History**

Minnesota  
becomes a state

Johannes Brahms was just 20 years old when in October 1853 he had the life-changing experience of meeting Robert Schumann and his wife, Clara, and spending nearly every day with them for a month. Robert soon arranged the publication of some of his pieces and wrote an influential article hailing the young composer as a genius from whom great things could be expected.

Yet Schumann sadly soon lost his sanity, threw himself in the Rhine, and was institutionalized for the remaining two and a half years of his life. Young Brahms stepped in to help Clara, who was 14 years his senior, raise their seven children and fell deeply in love with her. The intensity of his emotions at this tumultuous time is evident in his first large-scale orchestral work, the passionate Piano Concerto in D minor.

One of the pieces that inspired Brahms's Concerto was Schumann's Symphony No. 4, also in D minor, which likewise has a turbulent opening. Schumann had originally composed the work during his "symphonic year" of 1841, which also included his First Symphony. He was not completely satisfied with his second attempt, the D-minor Symphony, and a decade later revised it. For this reason it is now known as No. 4 and carries a high opus number.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only American orchestra with weekly broadcasts on Sirius XM's *Symphony Hall*, Channel 76, made possible through support from the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation on behalf of David and Sandy Marshall. Broadcasts are heard on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 4 PM.

# The Music

## Piano Concerto No. 1



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

Events that would resonate for the rest of his life unfolded quickly in October 1853 for the 20-year-old Johannes Brahms. On the last day of September the young composer showed up at the home of Robert and Clara Schumann in Düsseldorf. Over the coming weeks he played them many of his compositions and they were bowled over by his gifts. Robert arranged for some of the pieces to be published and came out of retirement as a music critic to write one last article, which he finished on October 13; it appeared two weeks later in a leading music journal that he had founded years earlier.

In the article, “Neue Bahnen” (New Paths), Schumann stated that the musical world had been waiting for a great composer since the death of Beethoven more than a quarter century earlier and that he now had appeared fully formed in the person of Brahms, who would “be called upon to give expression to the times in an ideal fashion.” It was a dream review, but one that also created enormous expectations.

Brahms stayed in Düsseldorf a couple weeks more before leaving on November 2. Schumann’s mental health, long a source of concern, was declining and at the end of February 1854 he threw himself into the Rhine. He spent the remaining two and a half years of his life confined to an asylum in Enderich, near Bonn. Clara was pregnant at the time with her seventh child and Brahms, who was 14 years younger and in love with her, moved in to help care for the children. Doctors prohibited Clara from visiting her husband, but Brahms did so frequently. Schumann died in July 1856. Clara had visited him for the first time two days earlier.

**“Veiled Symphonies”** Schumann based his praise of Brahms mainly on piano pieces, as well as some chamber compositions that no longer survive. He, like everyone else, wondered when Brahms would tackle larger orchestral genres. The answer came just a few weeks after Schumann’s suicide attempt when Brahms began composing a sonata for two pianos that he soon decided to turn into a Symphony in D minor.

Brahms wrote three movements in piano score and started orchestrating the first with help from his friends

Joseph Joachim and Julius Otto Grimm. From the relatively little we know of the project, it seems Brahms had conceived it on a large scale. Not long before Schumann's death the solution came to him, literally, in a dream, which he recounted to Clara: "I had used my unfortunate symphony for a piano concerto and was performing it—from the first movement to the scherzo and finale, terribly difficult and grand. I was completely delighted." So he went on to transform the symphony into a piano concerto, thus being able to call upon his experiences as a pianist.

The D-minor Concerto therefore had a long gestation from sonata to symphony to concerto. In Schumann's article, he praised Brahms's piano sonatas, calling them "veiled symphonies." That is even more the case with the two piano concertos, the first of which has a symphonic conception and scope and the second, dating from 1881, that unusually is in four movements.

**"A Flop" in Leipzig** Since Brahms had little orchestral experience—his other three concertos and four symphonies followed more than two decades later—he wanted to try out the piece before unveiling it to the public. He played it through in a reading rehearsal in Hanover in March 1858 with Joachim conducting and after more revisions the two gave the official premiere there in January of the next year. Five days later Brahms played the piece in Leipzig with a different conductor in what turned out to be a fiasco. He wrote to Joachim:

My concerto here has been a brilliant and decisive—flop. First of all I must say that it was really done very well; I played far better than I did at Hanover, and the orchestra was excellent. ... At the conclusion, three pairs of hands tried to clap very slowly, whereupon a perfectly distinct hissing from all sides forbade any such demonstration. ... The failure has made no impression whatever on me. ... In spite of everything the piece will meet with approval once I have improved its form, and my next concerto will be quite different. I believe this is the best thing that could happen to one; it forces one to concentrate one's thoughts and increases one's courage. After all, I am only experimenting and feeling my way as yet.

**A Closer Look** The beginning of the **Maestoso** first movement is one of the most remarkable openings in the concerto literature. Joachim later told Brahms's biographer that it relates to Schumann's jump into the Rhine. The

*Brahms composed his First Piano Concerto from 1854 to 1858.*

*Harold Bauer was soloist in the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of Brahms's D-minor Concerto, in January 1914; Leopold Stokowski conducted. The most recent subscription performances were in December 2013, with pianist H  l  ne Grimaud and Michael Tilson Thomas.*

*The Philadelphians have recorded the Concerto twice: in 1961 for CBS with Eugene Ormandy conducting Rudolf Serkin, and in 1983 for EMI with Riccardo Muti and Alexis Weissenberg.*

*In addition to the solo piano, the work is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately 42 minutes.*

music is loud, dissonant, and almost terrifying with trills and pounding timpani. Despite later tender moments, such as the second theme, this very long and complex movement is incredibly passionate, more so than almost any other work by Brahms; he seems to be working through his anguish over Schumann's suicide attempt and his intense feelings for Clara. The music as well was inspired by Schumann's own Symphony No. 4 in D minor, which in turn looks back to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in the same key.

Brahms told Clara that the second-movement **Adagio** was "a lovely portrait of you." In the manuscript he wrote words from the Latin Mass: "Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini" (Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord). For the final Rondo (**Allegro non troppo**) Brahms calls upon the Hungarian style, as he did in many other compositions as well. His close friend and advisor Joachim, who was Hungarian, had recently written his Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 11, known as the "Hungarian," that greatly influenced Brahms in this early effort.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Music Director



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# The Music

## Symphony No. 4



**Robert Schumann**  
**Born in Zwickau, Saxony,**  
**June 8, 1810**  
**Died in Endenich (near**  
**Bonn), July 29, 1856**

Late in May 1841, Clara Schumann noted in the shared diary that she and her husband, Robert, instituted just after their September 1840 wedding: "Sometimes I hear D-minor melodies resounding wildly in the distance." Those sounds were emanating from Schumann's room, where he was hard at work at the keyboard on a symphony in D minor that would keep him occupied until October of the same year. Well before he undertook this project, Clara would have had ample opportunity to eavesdrop on his labors. (In fact, Schumann's working habits interfered with her own musical efforts; while composing he preferred that Clara refrain from practicing the piano.)

In some ways the D-minor Symphony is the most radical achievement of Schumann's aptly named "symphonic year." Although its compact, "many-movements-in-one" form was not without precedent—Schubert had adopted a similar approach in his "Wanderer" Fantasy for piano—never before had this strategy been applied so rigorously in a symphonic work. The extreme concision of Schumann's musical language was probably a source of bewilderment for much of the audience who first heard the D-minor Symphony in December 1841. The critical reactions, however, were decidedly mixed. According to a brief notice in the leading local newspaper, the new work was "full of clever ideas" and displayed a genuine "power of invention," but another critic found it deficient in both "content and form." Both Schumann's inability to find a publisher for the Symphony and the less than wholehearted enthusiasm of the critics probably influenced his decision to set the work aside—at least for the time being.

**The D-minor Symphony Reincarnated** When Schumann revisited the D-minor Symphony after a decade-long hiatus in December 1851, he had already been serving for a year as municipal music director in Düsseldorf. Some of the changes in the 1851 revision of the Symphony—such as Schumann's substitution of German for the original Italian tempo indications—are more or less cosmetic. Others, however, are considerably more substantive. The newly composed transitions into the second and final sections, and the motivic additions in

the concluding fast section, go a long way toward making the musical argument even tighter than it was in the 1841 version. But by far the most controversial of Schumann's alterations involved his treatment of orchestral sonority. The thicker scoring of the 1851 version has been the object of harsh criticism. When Vincent d'Indy claimed that "no useful lessons can be learned about orchestration from the study of Schumann's scores," he probably had the D-minor Symphony in mind. Moreover, the more somber hues of the later version have often been interpreted as signs of Schumann's deteriorating mental state and of the depression that finally engulfed him.

These opinions do not hold up well. First, there is no indication that Schumann's audiences were in the least disturbed by the later orchestration of the D-minor Symphony. In fact a reviewer of a performance during the May 1853 Lower Rhine Festival praised it for its "simplicity, clarity, and freshness." Second, the dark coloring of many passages was specifically intended to make the effect of solemn grandeur that Schumann often invoked when writing in the key of D minor, and hardly represents an all-pervasive tendency in his later music. Third, not every passage is uniformly scored. On the contrary, the lighter textures of the middle sections—the Romanze and the Trio of the Scherzo, in particular—provide a foil to the fuller scoring of the opening and close. Finally, Schumann himself viewed the second incarnation of the Symphony as the definitive one, invariably referring to the 1841 version in his later correspondence as a "sketch." Indeed, Brahms's publication of the original version in 1891 nearly cost him his life-long friendship with Clara Schumann, who considered his editorial effort to be a betrayal of her husband's wishes.

The manuscript sources for the D-minor Symphony indicate that it took Schumann several attempts to arrive at a suitable name for the revised work. According to the autograph title page, he planned on calling it a "Symphonic Fantasy for large orchestra." By the time that the firm of Breitkopf and Härtel published the score in 1853, three of Schumann's symphonies were already in print, hence the designation as Symphony "No. 4" and the high opus number (Op. 120). The first edition also includes a rather unwieldy subtitle; after listing each of the Symphony's main sections, the publisher—perhaps on Schumann's instruction—added the phrase *in einem Satze* (in one movement). If nothing else, the complicated story of the work's title indicates that Schumann's Fourth

*Schumann composed the Fourth Symphony in 1841 and revised it in 1851.*

*The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Symphony were in February/March 1902; Fritz Scheel conducted. Yannick Nézet-Séguin led the most recent subscription performances, in March 2018.*

*The Orchestra has recorded the Fourth Symphony twice: in 1978 for RCA with James Levine, and in 2003 with Wolfgang Sawallisch, on the Orchestra's own label.*

*The score calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings.*

*The Symphony runs approximately 30 minutes in performance.*

is no ordinary symphony. And to be sure, the freedom of its overall conception is more suggestive of a “symphonic fantasy” than of a symphony in the “Classical” mold.

**A Closer Look** Each of the Fourth Symphony's principal sections (or movements) dovetails neatly one into the next, and the resultant continuity is further enhanced by an intricate web of motivic relationships. Much of the Symphony's melodic substance derives from two ideas, both in the minor mode: a languid, sinuous line first presented in the slow introduction by middle-register strings and bassoons, and the propulsive theme of the ensuing fast section (**Ziemlich langsam—Lebhaft**). A third idea also plays an important role in the work's unfolding plot: a martial fanfare for winds and brass introduced at the central climax of the fast section.

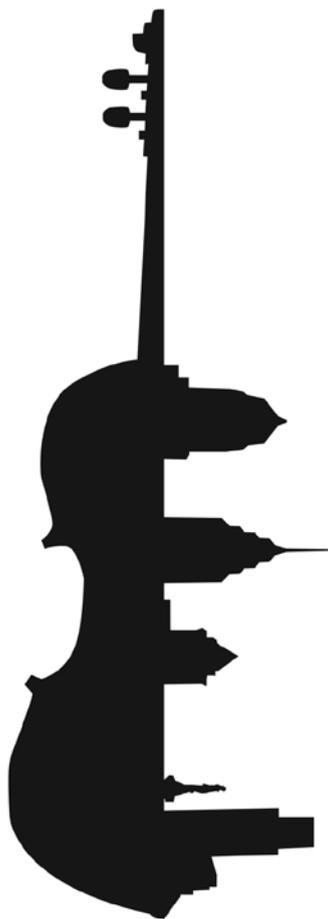
The **Romanze (Ziemlich langsam)** opens with a melancholy tune for solo oboe and cello accompanied by pizzicato strings (at one point, Schumann even toyed with the idea of adding a guitar to the texture), but immediately thereafter we hear an extended reminiscence of the languid music of the slow introduction. Transformed from the minor into the major mode, this idea in turn supports the florid arabesques in the violin solo that follows.

In the **Scherzo (Lebhaft)** we sense Schumann's desire to knit together the strands of the musical narrative, for it alternates with a Trio based on the florid violin solo of the Romanze. Gradually intensifying allusions to the theme of the fast section usher in the finale (**Langsam—Lebhaft—Schneller—Presto**), which Schumann frames with statements of the earlier fanfare theme. Turning emphatically to the major mode, the music traces a wide arc from melancholy to triumph, a process capped off by the boisterous coda. Although the principal ideas of the Symphony alternate in rapid succession, they clearly embody the “inner spiritual bond” that Schumann, in his role as music critic, identified as the essence of symphonic composition.

—John Daverio

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



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# Musical Terms

## GENERAL TERMS

**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

**Chord:** The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

**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

**Fantasy:** A composition free in form and more or less fantastic in character

**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

**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.

**Pizzicato:** Plucked

**Romance:** a title for epico-lyrical songs or of short instrumental pieces of sentimental or romantic nature, and without special 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 in triple time, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts. Also an instrumental piece of a light, piquant, humorous character.

**Sonata:** An instrumental composition in three or four extended movements contrasted in theme, tempo, and mood, usually for a solo instrument

**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

**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:** See scherzo

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

**Adagio:** Leisurely, slow

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Langsam:** Slow

**Lebhaft:** Animated, lively

**Maestoso:** Majestic

**Presto:** Very fast

**Schneller:** Faster

## TEMPO MODIFIERS

**Non troppo:** Not too much

**Ziemlich:** Rather, quite

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