Friday, July 22, 6pm | Prelude Concert

Florence Gould Auditorium, Seiji Ozawa Hall

MEMBERS OF THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
VICTOR ROMANUL, violin (Thomas, Currier, 1st violin in Brahms)
XIN DING, violin
DANIEL GETZ, viola
MARY FERRILLO, viola
MICKEY KATZ, cello
JESSICA ZHOU, harp

Augusta Read THOMAS	***Incantation* for solo violin** **VICTOR ROMANUL**
Sebastian CURRIER	***Night Time*, for violin and harp** Dusk Sleepless Vespers Nightwind Starlight **VICTOR ROMANUL** and **JESSICA ZHOU**
BRAHMS	**String Quintet No. 2 in G, Op. 111** Allegro non troppo, ma con brio Adagio Un poco allegretto Vivace ma non troppo presto **VICTOR ROMANUL**, violin I; **XIN DING**, violin II **DANIEL GETZ**, viola I; **MARY FERRILLO**, viola II **MICKEY KATZ**, cello

Notes on the program

As **Augusta Read Thomas** (b.1957) composes, she embodies the music she's writing, mimicking the actions and reactions of the instrumentalist, the conductor, the singer, and the listener; by singing, scatting, playing the piano, or dancing. That activity is transmitted through the notes on the page to the minds and bodies of the players and finally to the audience. Thomas has said, "Because I was a performer for so many years, I have enormous empathy for musicians and am exceedingly mindful of what I am asking artists to play; I care deeply about how the music looks on the page." Thomas's artistic inspirations come from many quarters—purely musical, sonic ones, to be sure, but also from such fruitfully overlapping realms as science and mythology. Her many dance-oriented pieces attest to the importance of the body and the individual in her work.

Daniel Barenboim and Pierre Boulez both conducted Thomas's music frequently with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The great cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich was one of her first ardent supporters, and Christoph Eschenbach has regularly conducted her music. The Boston Symphony Orchestra commissioned *Helios Choros II* and Cello Concerto No. 3, *Legend of the Phoenix* (for soloist Lynn Harrell), and this past January the BSO and Andris Nelsons gave the American premiere of her *Dance Foldings*.

Thomas has taught at the Eastman School of Music, Aspen Music Festival, and Northwestern University. For many years she has been University Professor of Composition at the University of Chicago, where she also founded and directs the Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition. She also created the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's acclaimed MusicNow series.

Thomas has been associated with the Tanglewood Music Center as student and faculty member for over thirty years. In 2009 she was director of the TMC's Festival of Contemporary Music. Her *Magic Box* was premiered in 2019 as part of the inaugural festivities for Tanglewood's Linde Center for Music and Learning. *Selene (Moon Chariot Rituals)* was a co-commission to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Tanglewood Music Center in 2015, and later

this summer during the Festival of Contemporary Music, TMC Fellows premiere *Bebop Riddle II*, written in celebration of Ellen Highstein's 25-year tenure as director of the TMC.

Thomas wrote her single-movement, five-minute solo violin work ***Incantation*** (1995) for the violinist Catherine Tait (1953-97), an Eastman School faculty member who was terminally ill with cancer. Tait premiered the piece in Rochester. Thomas describes the piece as reflecting Tait's "generosity of spirit." The music is stately and introspective but also passionate and intense.

Now based in New York City, **Sebastian Currier** (b.1959) was born in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, and grew up in Rhode Island. His parents were classically trained musicians, but he and his brother Nathan, an accomplished composer in his own right, played rock music as kids. Currier studied guitar formally before concentrating on composition, ultimately earning a doctorate in composition from the Juilliard School. He taught at Columbia University for several years and was an Artist in Residence at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, for three years. Currier's work as a composer has been recognized with the Rome Prize, the Berlin Prize, and a Guggenheim Fellowship, among others, and in 2007 he received one of the music world's most significant distinctions, the Grawemeyer Award, for his chamber work *Static*.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra has commissioned three works from Currier. His *Parallel Worlds* for flute and string quartet was a joint commission for the Boston Symphony Chamber Players and for Music Accord for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. The BSO co-commissioned his orchestral work *Divisions* along with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra and the National Orchestra of Belgium. The BSO and the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig co-commissioned his violin-and-orchestra work *Aether* for Baiba Skride, who gave the world premiere with the BSO and Andris Nelsons in May 2019.

Currier composed his 2007 violin concerto *Time Machines* at the request of violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, who premiered it with the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert and has since performed it throughout the world. Currier has also written several smaller works for Mutter. He is especially noted for his chamber music, in large part because performers have found his work so satisfying and sympathetic to perform. He has written for such diverse groups as the American Brass Quintet, Ying and Cassatt string quartets, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, and the University Wind Ensemble of the University of Louisville, among many others. Currier has also worked extensively with the Berlin Philharmonic and its individual musicians, particularly the orchestra's principal harp Marie-Pierre Langlamet, for whom he wrote the harp concerto *Traces*. It was for Langlamet and violinist Jean-Claude Velin that he wrote ***Night Time***; they premiered it at the Berlin Philharmonie in 2000. The composer writes,

The five short movements of *Night Time*—Dusk, Sleepless, Vespers, Nightwind, and Starlight—share a sense of quietude, introversion, intimacy, and subdued restlessness. The instrumental ensemble itself, violin and harp, suggested to me right from the start a series of nocturnal moments, where a sense of isolation, distance and quiet thoughtfulness would prevail throughout otherwise thematically contrasting movements. From the distant murmuring sounds in Dusk to the disquiet of the pizzicato ostinato and muted chords in Sleepless, from the contemplative lyricism of Vespers to the rushing passage work in Nightwind, and in the hypnotic figurations of Starlight there is an affinity with a phrase of a Wallace Stevens poem that I set in another work, *Vocalissimus*: "in the distances of sleep.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) composed his G major string quintet, Opus 111, at the request of his friend the violinist Joseph Joachim, who wanted a companion piece for the F major quintet, Opus 88. He completed the bulk of the creative work in Bad Ischl in the summer of 1890, when he was 57 years old, and sent the score off to his publisher with a letter saying, "With this note you can take leave of my music, because it is high time to stop." He was to live until April 1897, but fortunately for all of us, his intentions changed suddenly when, in March 1891, he heard the playing of a clarinetist named Richard Mühlfeld, which inspired two of his finest chamber works (the clarinet quintet and clarinet trio) and also broke the block on his creative juices, so that he produced another ten works before finally laying down his pen for good.

Nonetheless, the G major quintet has an air of farewell about it. Perhaps Brahms's autumnal mood was partly generated by the fact that he began this quintet with material originally sketched for a fifth symphony, but the idea of creating a "Fifth"—with the daunting example of Beethoven behind him—was evidently too much; there would be no further Brahms symphonies. And to carry the Beethoven connection one step further, it is likely that Brahms

was influenced, too, by the opus number his quintet would carry, for Opus 111 was the number of Beethoven's last piano sonata, thereby carrying further intimations of finality. In any event, the use of the string ensemble is especially kaleidoscopic in color, showing that Brahms in no way stood still between his earliest works for string ensemble and this last one.

The quintet begins with a clearly symphonic gesture in the cello under tremolos in the upper parts, a bold melody that dips and soars with the *brio* called for in the movement's tempo designation. The development aims at a powerful and exciting climax, but it is also filled with extraordinary moments of quiet which appear suddenly without reducing the energy or overall tension. When Brahms returns to G for the recapitulation, the cello utters its first phrase, as in the opening of the work, but soon the violin takes over and the entire passage is reconsidered in a different scoring. The coda withdraws from this energetic level and follows a pensive course derived from a lyrical version of the cello's opening gesture.

The slow movement opens with a melody in the first viola that evokes gypsy airs in its exotic decorative turns. Soon after, the violins add a delicate touch. These two tiny ideas Brahms develops with exceptional resourcefulness, bringing them through a wideranging series of moods and astonishingly varied textures.

Lovers of the Third Symphony will feel a kinship between that work's third movement and the corresponding movement of this quintet, with its exquisite yearning. Such a movement is normally a moment of repose in the overall form of a large work, but here it also retains a degree of tension. The finale brings out—for the last time in Brahms's output—that wonderfully vigorous "Gypsy" spirit that banishes care with a terrific show of energy, here shaped into a compact and effective fusion of rondo and sonata forms, an inventive path leading between major and minor modes, with a wild Gypsy dance to close.

Notes by ROBERT KIRZINGER (Thomas, Currier) and STEVEN LEDBETTER (Brahms)

Composer and writer Robert Kirzinger is the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Director of Program Publications

Steven Ledbetter, a freelance writer and lecturer on music, was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998.

Artists

Violinist **Victor Romanul**, who holds the BSO's Bessie Pappas Violin Chair, has been performing professionally since he was 7. An active recitalist, teacher, and soloist, he has performed throughout the world. As a soloist, he was named in "Best of Boston" in 1997 by the *Boston Globe*. Mr. Romanul recently completed a three-year tenure as concertmaster of the Ars Poetica Chamber Orchestra, based in Detroit and made up of outstanding players from major U.S. orchestras. He has given master classes throughout the country at many schools, including Northwestern, Columbia, Oberlin, and SUNY Stony Brook. As a professor of violin at Boston Conservatory, he has taught violin, chamber music, and pedagogy. He has served as a coach for the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra and the New England Conservatory Preparatory orchestras. He served as the BSO's assistant concertmaster from 1993 to 1995 and from 1981 to 1986 was associate concertmaster of the Pittsburgh Symphony. Mr. Romanul studied with Ivan Galamian, Joseph Silverstein, and Jascha Heifetz. As a member of the Boston Artists Ensemble and the Boston Conservatory Chamber Players, he has performed frequently at music festivals throughout New England. Recent career highlights have included performances of Beethoven's Violin Concerto with the Boston Pops and the New Hampshire Symphony, a three-concert series of the ten Beethoven violin sonatas at the Goethe Institute in Boston, performances of Bach's sonatas and partitas for solo violin in one recital, a recital of the complete solo sonatas of Eug`ene Ysaÿe, during the 2006-07 season, recitals around the country featuring solo violin music of Paganini, Sauret, Ernst, Wienawski, Vieuxtemps, and Ysaÿe.

A native of China, violinist **Xin Ding** joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra in January 1999; before that she served as concertmaster for the China Youth Symphony Orchestra and China Chamber Orchestra, and performed in a number of New England orchestras. Her gifts as a chamber musician were recognized early when she won the gold prize at the National String Quartet Competition in China. She was featured on national Chinese television and accompanied Chinese government delegations to promote culture exchanges in many countries. Her continuing involvement in chamber music has included a quartet tour of China with BSO colleagues in 2007, concerts with BSO colleagues in Boston and at Tanglewood, and summers as visiting artist at the International Musical Arts Institute in Fryeburg, Maine. As a member of the Milton String Quartet, she performed concerts in support of

children's charities in China and around the world. Teaching also plays a major role in her life: she was a faculty member of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing; was named Studio Teacher of the Year by the American String Teachers Association of Massachusetts in 2007; and in 2011 was invited to judge the first-ever Greater Boston Chinese Repertoire Violin Competition. The oldest child of a musical family, Ms. Ding studied piano and violin with her mother and at age 10 was one of six young violinists selected nationwide to enter the primary school of Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She received her bachelor's degree from China's Central Conservatory of Music and in 1996 arrived in the U.S., where she continued her studies in Houston and Boston before earning an Artist's Diploma from the Longy School of Music in Cambridge. Her principal teachers were Zhenshan Wang, Fredell Lack, and Eric Rosenblith.

Daniel Getz joined the viola section of the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the start of the 2013-14 season. Raised in Bethesda, MD, Mr. Getz began studying violin at age 8 and switched to the viola at 16, studying with National Symphony violist Mahoko Eguchi. He received his bachelor of music degree in 2011 from the New England Conservatory, where he was a student of Kim Kashkashian, and in 2013 earned his master of music degree at the Juilliard School as a student of Heidi Castleman and Robert Vernon. Daniel Getz has performed the Bartók, Walton, and Stamitz viola concertos as a soloist with various orchestras in his hometown. He also frequently performs chamber music concerts in the greater Boston area and in the Berkshires with other members of the BSO. Mr. Getz teaches viola and chamber music at the New England Conservatory Preparatory School. Prior to joining the BSO, he performed as a substitute with the orchestra as well as with the New York Philharmonic. An alumnus of the Tanglewood Music Center, he has also participated at the Aspen Music Festival, Kneisel Hall, and the Perlman Music Program.

Violist **Mary Ferrillo** joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra in September 2019. An active freelancer, she was previously offered a position with the Rochester Philharmonic and has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, and Rhode Island Philharmonic. She was a regular substitute violist with both the BSO and the Boston Pops Orchestra for several years. Ferrillo spent three summers (2012-2014) as a Fellow of the Tanglewood Music Center, where she received the 2014 Maurice Schwartz Prize by Marion E. Dubbs. She returned to Tanglewood as a member of the New Fromm Players in 2016 and 2017, premiering works by John Harbison, Joseph Phibbs, Kui Dong, and Marc Neikrug, among others. She has also performed at the Spoleto Festival USA, Japan's Pacific Music Festival, the National Orchestral Institute, and the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival. As a chamber musician, she performs frequently in the Boston and Berkshire areas in concerts actively combining contemporary and classical repertoire to create engaging and unique programs. At the University of Pennsylvania's 2018 "Rochberg @ 100" celebration, she performed Rochberg's Seventh String Quartet with other Tanglewood colleagues alongside the Daedalus Quartet. Ferrillo earned her bachelor of music degree at the University of Maryland–College Park with Katherine Murdock. She received her master's degree from the New England Conservatory, studying with Roger Tapping and Edward Gazouleas. She went on to work with Gazouleas at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. Other teachers and mentors have included BSO assistant principal viola Cathy Basrak, Robert Vernon, Michael Tree, and Carol Rodland.

A native of Israel, **Mickey Katz** joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra in September 2004 and currently occupies the Stephen and Dorothy Weber Chair in the BSO's cello section; before joining the BSO he was principal cellist of Boston Lyric Opera. Mr. Katz has distinguished himself as a solo performer, chamber musician, and contemporary music specialist. His numerous honors include the Presser Music Award in Boston, the Karl Zeise Prize from the BSO at Tanglewood, first prizes in the Hudson Valley Philharmonic Competition and the Rubin Academy Competition in Tel Aviv, and scholarships from the America Israel Cultural Foundation. A passionate performer of new music, he premiered and recorded Menachem Wiesenberg's Cello Concerto with the Israel Defense Force Orchestra and has worked with composers Elliott Carter, György Kurtág, John Corigliano, Leon Kirchner, and Augusta Read Thomas in performing their music. A Tanglewood Music Center Fellow in 2001, he was invited back to Tanglewood in 2002 as a member of the New Fromm Players, an alumni ensemble-in-residence that works on challenging new pieces and collaborates with young composers. An active chamber musician, he has performed in important venues in the United States, Europe, and Israel, and has participated in the Marlboro Festival and Musicians From Marlboro tour, collaborating with such distinguished players as Pinchas Zukerman, Tabea Zimmermann, Kim Kashkashian, and Gilbert Kalish. A graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, he completed his mandatory military service in Israel as a part of the "Distinguished Musician Program," playing in the Israel Defense Force String Quartet, performing throughout Israel in classical concerts and in many outreach and educational concerts for soldiers and other audiences.

Born in Beijing, China, BSO principal harp **Jessica Zhou** joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the fall of 2009, occupying the Nicholas and Thalia Zervis Chair. In 2001, Ms. Zhou became the first and only Chinese harpist ever to win top prizes in three of the most prestigious harp competitions in the world, including the Prix du Jury at the 3rd Concours International de Harpe Lily Laskine in Deauville, France; fourth prize in the USA International Harp Competition, and second prize at the 14th International Harp Contest in Israel. Also that year she was winner of the 2001 Pro Musicis International Award, leading to her critically acclaimed New York debut in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. She is a two-time winner of the Anne Adams Award National Harp Competition sponsored by the American Harp Society, which presented her in recitals in Boston, Hartford, New York City, San Diego, Mexico, and Taipei, Taiwan, where she also served as Chairman of the Jury in the First Taiwan National Harp Competition. As soloist with orchestra, Ms. Zhou has performed with the Israel Philharmonic, the Mainly Mozart Festival Orchestra in San Diego, the New York City Opera Orchestra, and the Geneva Chamber Orchestra, where she gave the world premiere of Haim Permont's Double Harp Concerto during the 2002 World Harp Congress. Her appearances as concerto soloist with the BSO include performances with her colleague, BSO principal flute Elizabeth Rowe, of Mozart's C major concerto for flute and harp in January 2016 at Symphony Hall, in August 2016 at Tanglewood, and in November 2017 in Tokyo's Suntory Hall during the BSO's Japan tour with Andris Nelsons conducting. As a chamber musician, Jessica Zhou has performed on numerous occasions with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, as well as with the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, Boston Chamber Music Society, Caramoor Music Festival, Mainly Mozart Festival, North Country Chamber Players, and the Pacific Music Festival in Japan, where she premiered Christopher Rouse's *Compline* for harp, clarinet, flute, and string quartet. From 2004 until she joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra, she was principal harpist of New York City Opera. Other orchestral appearances have included the New York Philharmonic, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and Moscow Chamber Orchestra, and she toured Japan with the London Symphony Orchestra. Jessica Zhou is a graduate of the Interlochen Arts Academy, where she studied with Joan Holland. A faculty member at the Tanglewood Music Center, Boston University, and the New England Conservatory of Music, she holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School, where she was a student of Nancy Allen.

Friday, July 22, 8pm

Koussevitzky Music Shed

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
KARINA CANELLAKIS conducting

WAGNER	**Prelude to *Lohengrin*, Act 1**
CHOPIN	**Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Opus 21** Maestoso Larghetto Allegro vivace **EMANUEL AX**, piano
	{Intermission}
RACHMANINOFF	***Symphonic Dances*, Opus 45** Non allegro Andante con moto (Tempo di valse) Lento assai—Allegro vivace

Notes on the program

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)
Prelude to Act I of *Lohengrin*

Composition and premiere: Wagner wrote the scenario in 1845 for *Lohengrin* after immersing himself in the Grail legends, completed a sketch of the opera in summer 1846, and finished the full score in spring 1848. The opera's first performance was conducted by Franz Liszt in Weimar, Germany, on August 28, 1850. The Boston Symphony Orchestra first performed music from *Lohengrin*—Lohengrin's "In fernem Land," sung by tenor Charles R. Adams—in January 1882, George Henschel conducting. The orchestra first played the Act I Prelude on March 15, 1884. Serge Koussevitzky led the BSO in the first Tanglewood performance on August 12, 1939; Gianandrea Noseda led the BSO in the most recent Tanglewood performance on August 13, 2004.

In 1843, after the success of *Rienzi* and *The Flying Dutchman* in Dresden, Wagner was appointed conductor of the Royal Saxon Court. He remained there until his involvement in the May 1849 insurrection in Dresden resulted in his flight to Switzerland and political exile from Germany. During that exile, in 1850, Franz Liszt—who twenty years later would become Wagner's father-in-law—conducted the premiere of *Lohengrin* in Weimar. Wagner did not see a performance of the opera until May 15, 1861, in Vienna, by which time *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, much of *Siegfried*, and all of *Tristan und Isolde* had been completed.

Lohengrin is one of Wagner's two important operas-cum-swan. In *Lohengrin*, the first, the hero arrives and departs via a swan-drawn boat. In *Parsifal*, the second, the swan's role is considerably less plummy: it is killed early in Act I by the foolish young hero destined to become a Knight of the Grail and, ultimately, Lohengrin's father. In the opera that bears his name, Lohengrin champions the heroine, Elsa of Brabant, on the condition that she never ask his name; but in the final act she asks the forbidden question. In the final scene, it is to a reworking of music from the Act I Prelude that Lohengrin reveals his identity—as a Knight of the Grail who happens also to be Parsifal's son.

At the beginning of the opera, the music of the first-act Prelude represents the Grail itself. In his own programmatic elucidation, Wagner himself described this musical depiction of the Grail's approach from the sky in a vision, to "pour out light like a benediction" upon the beholder, consecrate him to its service, and then rise again "to the ethereal heights...having made pure once more the hearts of men by the sacred blessing of the Grail." Wagner's amazing skill at orchestration is evident right from the start of the Prelude, which begins with violins alone, in a striking configuration that will recur in the closing measures: four solo violins detach themselves from the rest, which are themselves divided into four equal parts. Woodwinds join the texture one-quarter of the way into the piece; the brass and lower strings enter halfway through. But even as tension and volume build, the music remains movingly spiritual. Following the climax, the serenity of the opening is restored.

MARC MANDEL

Marc Mandel joined the staff of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1978 and managed the BSO's program book from 1979 until his retirement as Director of Program Publications in 2020.

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Opus 21

Composition and premiere: Chopin wrote his Piano Concerto No. 2 in 1829 in Warsaw and was soloist in the premiere, also in Warsaw, on March 17, 1830. The first BSO performance was on March 3, 1883, Georg Henschel conducting and Adele Margulies, soloist. Lilian Kallir was soloist in the first Tanglewood performance on July 24, 1966; Erich Leinsdorf conducted the BSO. Garrick Ohlsson gave the most recent Tanglewood performance on August 5, 2017 (having played the Concerto No. 1 the previous evening), with the BSO led by Hans Graf.

Chopin composed his two piano concertos within a year of each other, having barely finished his formal studies. He had begun composition work at age twelve with Jozef Elsner, director of the Warsaw Conservatory, in 1822. His talent as a pianist was recognized even earlier: he made his first public appearance as a pianist in February 1818, a month before his eighth birthday, playing a concerto of Adalbert Gyrowetz. Even at that time he was constantly improvising little pieces, polonaises and the like. Elsner attempted to teach him the traditional classical forms, but eventually recognized that Chopin possessed such gifts that it was useless to impose an outside taste on them.

Chopin never composed a piece that did not include the piano, and the bulk of his works are for piano solo. Despite his years of piano studies, he never became academic in the technical mechanics of performing, and his boundless imagination soon came up with new sonorities and devices that set him apart. Warsaw was something of a musical backwater, but visiting celebrities gave him some sense of the larger musical world. In 1828 he heard the virtuoso (and Beethoven familiar) Johann Hummel perform, and he quickly adopted the decorative elegance of that composer in his ensuing works. The following year he heard Nicolò Paganini, who had such a powerful influence on instrumental music of the 1830s and 1840s by demonstrating the degree of virtuosic proficiency that might be possible.

In 1829, Chopin finished his formal studies and visited Vienna, where he attracted a great deal of attention, especially for works like *Krakowiak*, the exotic Polish character of which was new to that city. When he returned home, he began work on his F minor piano concerto (published as No. 2, though it was the first to be composed). His progress was reported in a series of letters to his friend Titus Woyciechowski, to whom he mentions one of his recent romantic passions, which apparently inspired some of this music (remember, he was only 19). One such passion was Constantia Gladkowska, a vocal student at the Warsaw Conservatory, whom Chopin describes as "my ideal, whom I have served faithfully, though without saying a word to her, for six months; whom I dream of, in whose memory the Adagio of my concerto has been written, and who this morning inspired me to write the little waltz [later published as Opus 70, No. 3, in D-flat] I am sending you."

By October, Chopin had written a draft of the finale and had showed part of the concerto to his former teacher Elsner, who praised the Adagio for its originality. The composer played the premiere in a concert he gave on March 17, 1830, presenting a number of his works for the first time; it was such a success that the program was repeated five days later. A few months later he wrote his other concerto, in E minor (published as No. 1), and in November 1830 that he left Poland, never to return.

Not Beethoven or Mozart but Hummel was the major composer whose concertos provided a basic model for Chopin, along with those of Ferdinand Ries, Gyrowetz, and Ignaz Moscheles—concertos by keyboard virtuosos written to display their own technical prowess. But for all of Chopin's youth and relative inexperience, his concertos are extraordinary in that special way that makes all of his best music personal and immediately identifiable.

The first movement begins with a marchlike orchestral theme pensively presented in the strings and then taken over by the full orchestra. This opening presents a variety of ideas that seem for the most part inspired by the stereotypes and standard gambits of any number of classical concertos. But when the soloist enters, after an atmospheric preparation, with a figure that descends through four-and-a-half octaves, Chopin's personality takes over and, from this point on, the piano part directs the course of the movement. While obviously influenced by the decorative art of Hummel and Moscheles, Chopin's highly ornamental writing is far more expressive, far more poignant. He turns the appoggiatura and the suspension—devices done to death by the naive and superficial treatment of lesser composers—to new uses through his harmonic originality. From the standpoint of form, the first movement is as

simple and straightforward as we might expect a student work to be; it is the content that proclaims the budding master.

The slow movement already reveals the genius of the composer. Elsner was right to praise its originality, which reveals itself in the extraordinary freedom with which Chopin has decorated the simple formal ABA outline, with an effective dramatic contrast in the middle section and a lavish outpouring of lyrical intensity. The finale is related to that Polish country dance, the mazurka, that Chopin made so wonderfully his own. The traditional mazurka was in triple time accompanied by strong accents on the second or third beat. The mazurkas that Chopin wrote for solo piano were mostly in three-part song form. This concerto movement is a rondo with several sharply contrasting themes in mazurka style, closing with a virtuosic and dramatic coda.

STEVEN LEDBETTER

Steven Ledbetter, a freelance writer and lecturer on music, was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Symphonic Dances, Opus 45

Composition and premiere: Rachmaninoff wrote his *Symphonic Dances* during summer and fall of 1940, mostly at Orchard Point, Long Island, New York. The score is dedicated to Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, who gave the first performance on January 3, 1941, in Philadelphia. The first BSO performances of *Symphonic Dances* were led Seiji Ozawa in October 1974. Gunther Schuller led the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra in the first Tanglewood performance, on July 6, 1981; the BSO's first Tanglewood performance was led by Charles Dutoit on August 10, 1991. Andris Nelsons led the BSO in the most recent Tanglewood performance on July 12, 2014.

Almost alone among the major Russian composers of his era—Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, Glazunov, Prokofiev—Sergei Rachmaninoff didn't write a single ballet. It's not that he wasn't interested; there were several proposals in the mid-1910s, but nothing came of them. Highly self-critical and something of a loner, Rachmaninoff may have been temperamentally unsuited to deal with the messy collaborative conditions necessary for the creation of a new dance piece. Even so, Rachmaninoff's atmospheric and emotionally rich music has attracted numerous choreographers. His *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* was set to dance several times, during the composer's lifetime by his friend Mikhail Fokine (as *Paganini* for Colonel de Basil's Ballets Russes in London in 1939) and afterwards by Leonid Lavrovsky (for the Bolshoi in 1960). In the 1953 Hollywood feature *The Story of Three Loves*, directed by Vincente Minnelli and Gottfried Reinhardt, Moira Shearer (of *Red Shoes* fame) performs a ballet choreographed by Frederick Ashton to the *Paganini Variations*—and then drops dead. Other symphonic and piano works by Rachmaninoff have been staged by such choreographers as Walter Gore, Christian Holder, Ben Stevenson, Riccardo Duse, and Patrice Montagnon.

When he began composing what became his *Symphonic Dances* in 1940—while recovering at a luxurious Long Island waterfront estate from an exhausting season that had included forty-one concert appearances—Rachmaninoff had in mind another possible collaboration with Fokine, a follow-up to *Paganini*. Fokine even lived nearby. So inspired was Rachmaninoff that he managed to complete the piano score in a matter of weeks.

Rachmaninoff played fragments for Fokine. The choreographer responded with a letter. "Before the hearing I was a little scared of the Russian element that you had mentioned, but yesterday I fell in love with it, and it seemed to me appropriate and beautiful." Fokine admitted that he found the waltz rhythm of the second movement problematical, however: "The valse rhythm seems to disturb you, to handicap you…. The thought of dancing is a side issue. If the joy of creating dances to your music is again given me, I should not at all feel the need for this rhythmic support." But the collaboration Rachmaninoff so strongly desired with Fokine on *Symphonic Dances* never materialized, for reasons that remain unclear, and Fokine's death on August 22, 1942, brought an end to the possibility. (Rachmaninoff himself had less than a year to live.)

Symphonic Dances was Rachmaninoff's last major orchestral work, and one of only four (with *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, the Third Symphony, and the Fourth Piano Concerto) that he had composed since leaving Russia forever in 1917, at the age of 44. All were given their premieres by the Philadelphia Orchestra. The music is optimistic in personality, with a strong rhythmic drive, energy, and a pungent harmonic language that at moments recalls Stravinsky or Prokofiev. The prominent use of the alto saxophone in the first movement's glowing, lyrical second theme seems informed by jazz. Rachmaninoff, who tinkered endlessly with the scores of the Third

Symphony and Fourth Piano Concerto, and considered *Symphonic Dances* (according to his sister-in-law Sofia Satina) "his best composition."

Symphonic Dances suggests a symphony in three movements. The first (Non allegro) opens with a snap: a strong rhythmic pulse announced quietly first in the violins on insistently repeated eighth-notes, then taken up by the other strings and the timpani. Over this infectious toe-tapping foundation, the woodwinds sing a jaunty tune, followed by a highly punctuated series of chords that recall the shape of the tune of the *Dies irae* from the Requiem Mass, a motif Rachmaninoff used in several major orchestral works, including the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. The mood changes, leading to the introduction of one of the composer's most seductive melodies, given to the alto saxophone. After this haunting central episode, the main themes return in a recapitulation section, with further references to the *Dies irae* motif, a unifying idea for the entire work.

The Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)—builds the strongest link to the world of dance. This is waltz stutters as it begins in fragmentary rhythm, then switches between 6/8, 3/8, and 9/8 meter. Rachmaninoff adds the marking "*Tempo rubato*" at several strategic points, so the waltz tempo ebbs and flows, recalling other modernist deconstructions of the waltz form, especially Ravel's *La Valse* of 1920.

The *Dies irae* motif obsessively dominates the final movement (Lento assai—Allegro vivace). Another pointed religious reference is made to the music Rachmaninoff himself wrote for the ninth section ("*Blagosloven yesi gospodi*"—"Blessed be the Lord") of his *All-Night Vigil*, completed in 1915 during World War I. This comes from an ancient Orthodox liturgical chant and acts as an affirmative counterpoint to the pessimism of the message of the *Dies irae*. These two ideas intertwine in colorful and dramatic variations. Just before the coda, where the chant tune reappears, Rachmaninoff wrote in the score the word "*Alliluya*," followed by a citation of the *alliluya*s from the *All-Night Vigil*. In the *Vigil*, the *alliluya*s mark the end of the narration of Christ's Resurrection. So at a time when the world was plunging into the terrible darkness of World War II, Rachmaninoff seems to be telling us that life will conquer death. At the end of the score, he wrote, "I thank Thee, Lord," an expression of gratitude for a remarkable life of creativity.

HARLOW ROBINSON

Harlow Robinson is an author, lecturer, and Matthews Distinguished University Professor of History, Emeritus, at Northeastern University. His books include *Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography*, *The Last Impresario: The Life, Times and Legacy of Sol Hurok*, and *Russians in Hollywood, Hollywood's Russians*. He has contributed essays and reviews to *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Symphony*, *Musical America*, and *Opera News*, and program essays to The Boston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Aspen Music Festival, and Metropolitan Opera.

Guest Artists

Karina Canellakis

Internationally acclaimed for her emotionally charged performances, technical command, and interpretive depth, Karina Canellakis regularly appears with the top orchestras of North America, Europe, the UK, and Australia. She is chief conductor of Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and principal guest conductor of both the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin (RSB). In the 2022-23 season, Canellakis looks forward to debuts with the New York Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. After starting her season at the BBC Proms, she also returns to the Orchestre de Paris, the Boston and Dallas symphony orchestras, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. As principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, she leads an extensive German tour with the orchestra and soloist Daniil Trifonov. She also returns to Berlin for concerts with the RSB and presents modern pieces as well as well-known masterpieces at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and TivoliVredenburg in Utrecht as chief conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. Having had great success with Leoš Janáček's *Kat'a Kabánova*, she brings Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* to the stage of the Concertgebouw in April 2023. She has conducted such critically acclaimed operatic productions as Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, *The Magic Flute*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*, David Lang's *the loser*, and Peter Maxwell Davies's *The Hogboon*. Canellakis was encouraged to pursue conducting by Sir Simon Rattle while she was a member of the Berlin Philharmonic's Orchester-Akademie as a violinist. In addition to appearing frequently as soloist with various North American orchestras, she has played regularly in the Chicago Symphony and appeared as

guest concertmaster of the Bergen Philharmonic. She spent many summers performing at the Marlboro Music Festival. She plays a 1782 Mantegazza violin on generous loan from a private patron. Karina Canellakis was a Conducting Fellow of the Tanglewood Music Center in 2014. She made her Boston Symphony Orchestra conducting debut in August 2021 at Tanglewood.

Emanuel Ax

Born in modern-day Lvov, Poland, Emanuel Ax moved to Winnipeg, Canada, with his family when he was a young boy. Ax made his New York debut in the Young Concert Artists Series and in 1974 won the first Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Tel Aviv. In 1975 he won the Michaels Award of Young Concert Artists, followed four years later by the Avery Fisher Prize.

Like many artists around the world, Ax responded creatively to the disruptions of COVID-19. He hosted "The Legacy of Great Pianists," part of the online Live with Carnegie Hall highlighting legendary pianists who have performed there. Last September, he joined cellist Yo-Yo Ma in a series of surprise pop-up concerts for essential workers in multiple venues throughout the Berkshires community. With the resumption of concert activity last summer, he appeared in the reopening weekend of Tanglewood both with the Boston Symphony and in a Beethoven trio program with partners Leonidas Kavakos and Yo-Yo Ma. Concerts with the Colorado, Pacific, Cincinnati, and Houston symphonies as well as Minnesota, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and Cleveland orchestras followed throughout the 2021-22 season. A committed exponent of contemporary composers, Ax has received works written for him by John Adams, Christopher Rouse, Krzysztof Penderecki, Bright Sheng, and Melinda Wagner. More recently, he has added HK Gruber's Piano Concerto and Samuel Adams' *Impromptus*.

Ax has been a Sony Classical exclusive recording artist since 1987, his most recent recording being Brahms Trios with Yo-Yo Ma and Leonidas Kavakos. He has received Grammy Awards for the second and third volumes of his cycle of Haydn's piano sonatas. He has also made a series of Grammy-winning recordings with cellist Yo-Yo Ma of the Beethoven and Brahms sonatas for cello and piano. In the 2004-05 season Ax contributed to an International Emmy Award-Winning BBC documentary commemorating the Holocaust that aired on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. In 2013, Ax's recording *Variations* received the Echo Klassik Award for Solo Recording of the Year (Nineteenth Century Music/Piano).

Emanuel Ax resides in New York City with his wife, pianist Yoko Nozaki. They have two children together, Joseph and Sarah. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and holds honorary doctorates of music from Skidmore College, New England Conservatory of Music, Yale University, and Columbia University. Emanuel Ax made his BSO debut at Tanglewood in August 1978 and has since been a frequent guest performer with the BSO, in recital, and in chamber music programs here. His most recent Tanglewood appearances before this summer were with the BSO and Andris Nelsons in Beethoven's *Emperor* Concerto in and in an all-Beethoven chamber music program with Leonidas Kavakos and Yo-Yo Ma in July 2021. This summer he curated and performs in three "Pathways from Prague" chamber music concerts focusing on works of Dvořák and Janáček (July 7 and 14, August 12).