

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra  
2015-2016 Mellon Grand Classics Season

May 6 and 8, 2016

MANFRED MARIA HONECK, CONDUCTOR  
DANIIL TRIFONOV, PIANO

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN      Symphony No. 93 in D major  
I.    Adagio — Allegro assai  
II.   Largo cantabile  
III.  Menuetto: Allegro  
IV.  Presto ma non troppo

FRANZ LISZT              Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major for Piano and Orchestra  
I.    Allegro maestoso  
II.   Quasi adagio — Allegretto vivace  
III.  Allegro marziale animato  
          *Played without pause*  
**Mr. Trifonov**

Intermission

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY    Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Opus 36  
I.    Andante sostenuto  
II.   Andantino in modo di canzona  
III.  Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato  
IV.  Finale: Allegro con fuoco

## PROGRAM NOTES BY DR. RICHARD E. RODDA

### FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Born 31 March 1732 in Rohrau, Lower Austria; died 31 May 1809 in Vienna

#### Symphony No. 93 in D major (1791)

PREMIERE OF WORK: London, 17 February 1792; Hanover Square Rooms; Franz Joseph Haydn, conductor

PSO PREMIERE: 23 February 1951; Syria Mosque; Guido Cantelli, conductor

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 22 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION: pairs of flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns and trumpets, timpani and strings

When Haydn first arrived there, in 1791, London was one of the world's great cities of music. In addition to considerable activity at the traditional performance sites of church and court, London boasted a rich public musical life: the city had nurtured opera since well before Handel settled there in 1710; it regularly enjoyed public concerts, including the "Bach-Abel Concerts" produced from 1765 and 1782 by Johann Christian Bach (Sebastian's youngest son) and Carl Friedrich Abel and the series run after 1786 by Johann Peter Salomon, who had enticed Haydn to visit London following the death of Prince Nicolaus Esterházy in September 1790; it kept busy a knowledgeable band of critics to report in the press on all important musical events; and it was home to a large and faithful body of discriminating patrons, both aristocratic and middle class, who eagerly supported a wide variety of worthwhile undertakings. Within a week of Haydn's landing in England on New Years' Day 1791, the *Public Advertiser* published a schedule detailing the wealth of music available in the city during the first six months of the year: Sunday — The Noblemen's Subscription, held every week in a different house; Monday — The Professional Concerts (Salomon's chief rival); Tuesday — opera; Wednesday — "ancient music" (i.e., Corelli, Vivaldi, Handel, etc.) at rooms in Tottenham Street; Thursday — concerts of music and dance at the Pantheon and programs by the Academy of Ancient Music; Friday — Salomon's concerts at the Hanover Square Rooms; Saturday — opera.

For Salomon's 1792 concerts, which ran from February 17th to May 18th, Haydn composed four new symphonies — Nos. 93, 94 ("Surprise"), 97 and 98. The Symphony No. 93 was written during the fall of 1791, and Haydn tailored it carefully to the local taste after having observed his London patrons at close range the previous spring, weaving numerous crowd-pleasing effects into the music with his peerless technical mastery. The Symphony opens with a bold, *fortissimo*, unison summons from the entire ensemble immediately answered by a hushed, lyrical motive from the violins, a beginning whose effect on the audience, wrote the eminent Haydn scholar H.C. Robbins Landon, "would have been electrifying." So memorably melodic is the main theme of the movement's quick-tempo sonata form that it was fitted with English words by Catherine Winkworth in the 1830s as the hymn *Come My Soul, Awake, 'Tis Morning*. A bustling transition leads to the second theme, a legato melody supported by a delicate, music-box accompaniment (which comes delightfully close to a barnyard cackle when it is taken over by the bassoons for the flute's repetition of the theme). Considerable drama is built up in the development section around a tiny fragment common to both first and second themes until the music abruptly breaks off, apparently uncertain how to continue. After a few tentative attempts, oboe and violins try a bit of the second theme, but it is in the wrong key and the wrong place to begin a proper recapitulation, so the orchestra carries on with the development. Things soon get righted, however, everyone is allowed a big breath, and the recapitulation commences according to late-18th-century formal requirements. One of Haydn's innumerable subtle details is worth noting in the movement's closing pages: the bassoon gets to play a suave obbligato to the second theme's return, perhaps in atonement for its somewhat ungracious treatment the first time that melody was heard.

The *Largo*, another testament to Haydn's remarkable inventiveness even after having written nearly a hundred such works over more than three decades, is a formal hybrid of rondo and variation that takes as its theme an elegant melody initiated by a solo quartet before being taken over by bassoon and strings. The episodes separating the theme's returns, freely based on its motives, are expressive, harmonically adventurous and colored with the sonorities of the winds. This formal alternation of refrain and episode continues to what would seem to be the movement's climax, the first time everyone in the

orchestra gets to participate in the theme, but this magnificent sonority apparently so overwhelms the ensemble that it dissolves into uncertain gestures and silences. An outrageous *fortissimo* expostulation issued from depths of the bassoons restores resolve and moves the movement to a satisfying close. The audience at the premiere demanded the encore of both the first and second movements.

The *Menuetto*, with its catchy rhythms and rambunctious energy, is more rustic than courtly. The wind and drum fanfares of the central trio, which are perfectly balanced by gracious phrases from the strings, may have been Haydn's tribute to the British love of pomp and ceremony.

The finale is largely a developmental fantasy on the motive — a leap upward followed by a quick run back down the scale — that launches the movement. The only significant contrast is provided by a passage for oboe and bassoon whose character suggests the second theme of a sonata form, though its placement and the movement's proportions do not. This infectious movement, like the earliest ones, has several spots where it appears to get stuck only to recover with aplomb and good humor, qualities that bring to mind critic Bernard Jacobson's pithy summation of this incomparable composer: "A lack of appreciation for Haydn is a species of the inability to enjoy the good things in life."

## FRANZ LISZT

Born 22 October 1811 in Doborján, Hungary (now Raiding, Austria); died 31 July 1886 in Bayreuth, Germany

### Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major for Piano and Orchestra (1839-1849, revised in 1853)

PREMIERE OF WORK: Weimar, 17 February 1855; Weimar Court Orchestra; Hector Berlioz, conductor; Franz Liszt, soloist

PSO PREMIERE: 2 January 1903; Carnegie Music Hall; Victor Herbert, conductor; Mark Hambourg, soloist

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 21 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION: woodwinds in pairs plus piccolo, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion and strings

Liszt sketched his two piano concertos in 1839, during his years of touring the music capitals of Europe, but they lay unfinished until he became court music director at Weimar in 1848. The first ideas for the E-flat Concerto appeared in a notebook as early as 1830, but the score was not completed, according to a letter from Liszt's eventual son-in-law, the pianist-conductor Hans von Bülow, until June 1849; it was revised in 1853. The premiere was part of a week of gala concerts honoring the music of Hector Berlioz at the Grand Ducal palace in Weimar, thus allowing the French composer to conduct while Liszt played. A memorable evening!

Liszt required of a concerto that it be "clear in sense, brilliant in expression, and grand in style." In other words, it had to be a knockout. While it was inevitable that the E-flat Concerto would have a high degree of finger-churning display, it was not automatic that it should also be of fine musical quality — but it is. Liszt undertook an interesting structural experiment in the Concerto by fusing the substance of the concerto form with the architecture of the symphony. ("Music is never stationary," he once pronounced. "Successive forms and styles can only be like so many resting places — like tents pitched and taken down again on the road to the Ideal.") Though the work is played continuously, four distinct sections may be discerned within its span: an opening *Allegro*, built largely from the bold theme presented immediately at the outset; an *Adagio* that grows from a lyrical, arched melody initiated by the cellos and basses; a vivacious, scherzo-like section enlivened by the glistening tintinnabulations of the solo triangle; and a closing *Allegro marziale* that gathers together the motives of the preceding sections into a rousing conclusion. Of the finale, Liszt wrote, "It is only an urgent recapitulation of the earlier subject matter with quickened, livelier rhythm, and contains no new motive.... This kind of *binding together* and rounding off of a whole piece at its close is somewhat my own, but it is quite maintained and justified from the standpoint of musical form."

## PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Born 7 May 1840 in Votkinsk, Russia; died 6 November 1893 in St. Petersburg

## Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Opus 36 (1877-1878)

PREMIERE OF WORK: Moscow, 22 February 1878; Russian Music Society Orchestra; Nikolai Rubinstein, conductor

PSO PREMIERE: 1 November 1900; Carnegie Music Hall; Victor Herbert, conductor

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 45 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION: pairs of woodwinds plus piccolo, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion and strings

The Fourth Symphony was a product of the most crucial and turbulent time of Tchaikovsky's life — 1877, when he met two women who forced him to evaluate himself as he never had before. The first was the sensitive, music-loving widow of a wealthy Russian railroad baron, Nadezhda von Meck, who became not only the financial backer who allowed him to quit his irksome teaching job at the Moscow Conservatory to devote himself entirely to composition, but also the sympathetic sounding-board for reports on the whole range of his activities — emotional, musical, personal. Though they never met, her place in Tchaikovsky's life was enormous and beneficial.

The second woman to enter Tchaikovsky's life in 1877 was Antonina Miliukov, an unnoticed student in one of his large lecture classes at the Conservatory who had worked herself into a passion over her professor. Tchaikovsky paid her no special attention, and had quite forgotten her when he received an ardent love letter professing her flaming and unquenchable desire to meet him. Tchaikovsky (age 37), who should have burned the thing, answered the letter of the 28-year-old Antonina in a polite, cool fashion, but did not include an outright rejection of her advances. He had been considering marriage for almost a year in the hope that it would give him both the stable home life that he had not enjoyed in the twenty years since his mother died, as well as to help dispel the all-too-true rumors of his homosexuality. He believed he might achieve both these goals with Antonina. He could not see the situation clearly enough to realize that what he hoped for was impossible — a pure, platonic marriage without its physical and emotional realities. Further letters from Antonina implored Tchaikovsky to meet her, and threatened suicide out of desperation if he refused. What a welter of emotions must have gripped his heart when, just a few weeks later, he proposed marriage to her! Inevitably, the marriage crumbled within days of the wedding amid Tchaikovsky's searing self-deprecation.

It was during May and June that Tchaikovsky sketched the Fourth Symphony, finishing the first three movements before Antonina began her siege. The finale was completed by the time he proposed. Because of this chronology, the program of the Symphony was not a direct result of his marital disaster. All that — the July wedding, the mere eighteen days of bitter conjugal farce, the two separations — postdated the actual composition of the Symphony by a few months. What Tchaikovsky found in his relationship with this woman (who by 1877 already showed signs of approaching the door of the mental ward in which, still legally married to him, she died in 1917) was a confirmation of his belief in the inexorable workings of Fate in human destiny.

After the premiere, Tchaikovsky explained to Mme. von Meck the emotional content of the Fourth Symphony: "The introduction [blaring brasses heard immediately in a motto theme that recurs throughout the Symphony] is the kernel of the whole Symphony. This is Fate, which hinders one in the pursuit of happiness. There is nothing to do but to submit and vainly complain [the melancholy, syncopated shadow-waltz of the main theme, heard in the strings]. Would it not be better to turn away from reality and lull one's self in dreams? [The second theme is begun by the clarinet.] But no — these are but dreams: roughly we are awakened by Fate. [The blaring brass fanfare over a wave of timpani begins the development section.] Thus we see that life is only an everlasting alternation of somber reality and fugitive dreams of happiness. The second movement shows another phase of sadness. How sad it is that so much has already *been* and *gone*! And yet it is a pleasure to think of the early years. It is sad, yet sweet, to lose one's self in the past. In the third movement are capricious arabesques, vague figures which slip into the imagination when one has taken wine and is slightly intoxicated. Military music is heard in the distance. As to the finale, if you find no pleasure in yourself, go to the people. The picture of a folk holiday. [The finale employs the folk song *A Birch Stood in the Meadow*.] Hardly have we had time to forget ourselves in the happiness of others when indefatigable Fate reminds us once more of its presence. Yet there still *is* happiness, simple, naive happiness. Rejoice in the happiness of others — and you can still live."