

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra  
2017-2018 Mellon Grand Classics Season

January 26 and 28, 2018

RAFAEL PAYARE, CONDUCTOR  
KIRILL GERSTEIN, PIANO

INOCENTE CARREÑO

*Margariteña*

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF  
18

Concerto No. 2 in C minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus

- I. Moderato
  - II. Adagio sostenuto
  - III. Allegro scherzando
- Mr. Gerstein**

Intermission

GUSTAV MAHLER

Symphony No. 1 in D major

- I. Langsam, schleppend
- II. Kräftig bewegt
- III. Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen
- IV. Stürmisch bewegt

## PROGRAM NOTES BY DR. RICHARD E. RODDA

### INOCENTE CARREÑO

*Margariteña*, Symphonic Variations (1954)

**Inocente Carreño was born in Porlamar, Venezuela on December 28, 1919, and died there on June 29, 2016. He composed *Margariteña* in 1954, and it was premiered in Caracas at the Latin American Music Festival in December 1954, with the composer on the podium. These performances mark the Pittsburgh Symphony premiere of the piece. The score calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings. Performance time: approximately 14 minutes**

Inocente Carreño, one of Venezuela's most gifted and influential musicians, was born at Porlamar on the Caribbean island of Margarita in December 1919 and immersed in the culture and music of his homeland by his grandmother and older brother Francis, who became a noted folklorist. Inocente began studying guitar when he was nine, and played with local bands and started composing waltzes, joropos, merengues, boleros, tangos, rumbas and other pieces in traditional popular styles after the family moved to Caracas in 1932. In 1940, he entered the Escuela de Música y Declamación (later the José Angel Lamas School of Music) to study with composer, conductor, ethnomusicologist and founder two years before of the Venezuela Symphony Orchestra, Vicente Emilio Sojo. During his six years at the school, Carreño also became a skilled singer and trumpet and French horn player, began conducting, and established his reputation as a teacher when he was appointed to its faculty in 1945. Following his graduation in 1946, he became a force in the country's musical life, performing traditional Venezuelan and Latin music on guitar with the Trío Caribe, playing horn in the Venezuela Symphony Orchestra, singing and arranging for the choir Orfeón Lamas, teaching at the José Angel Lamas School and several other Caracas institutions, guest conducting most of Venezuela's major orchestras and choruses, winning many composition prizes, and composing in both popular and classical idioms. Carreño was also founding director of the Prudencio Esáa School of Music in Caracas in 1970, Counselor Minister of the permanent delegation of Venezuela to UNESCO in Paris, advisor to the Venezuelan Ministry of Culture, and director of the José Angel Lamas School. He has remained active as a composer and conductor until shortly before his death at age 96 in Porlamar — on January 14, 2011 in Caracas, Carreño led the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra, which has featured his music on their world-wide tours, in the premieres of two new works as part of a concert of his compositions celebrating his 91st birthday.

Carreño composed *Margariteña* in 1954 and premiered the work at the First Latin American Music Festival in Caracas in December that year. (Aaron Copland attended, and reported that the city and the eight concerts were "full of vitality.") The title refers both to the island of Margarita, Carreño's birthplace, and to the Venezuelan song that it takes as its principal subject — *Margarita es una lagrima* ("*Margarita is a Tear*"). The theme is introduced by the solo horn and given a deftly scored working-out by the full orchestra. (The piece is subtitled "Symphonic Variations.") Episodes follow using two other traditional melodies — a muscular treatment of *Canto de Pulon* ("*Song of Pulon*") and a vibrantly rhythmic version of *Canto de Velorio* ("*Song of Velorio*") — punctuated by echoes of the opening measures in the horns. A brief pause leads to a playful treatment of the children's song *Tiguitiguitos* before a sonorous coda based on *Margarita es una lagrima* closes this landmark work of Venezuelan musical nationalism.

### SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

Concerto No. 2 in C minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 18 (1900-1901)

**Sergei Rachmaninoff was born in Oneg (near Novgorod), Russia on April 1, 1873, and died in Beverly Hills, California on March 28, 1943. He composed his Second Piano Concerto from 1900-1901, and it was premiered in Moscow by the Moscow Philharmonic Society Orchestra with**

**Alexander Siloti conducting and Rachmaninoff at the piano on October 14, 1901. The Pittsburgh Symphony premiered the concerto at Syria Mosque with Antonio Modarelli conducting and Walter Gieseeking as soloist on March 18, 1934. The score calls for woodwinds in pairs, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings. Performance time: approximately 33 minutes**

When he was old and as mellow as he would ever get, Rachmaninoff wrote these words about his early years: "Although I had to fight for recognition, as most younger men must, although I have experienced all the troubles and sorrow which precede success, and although I know how important it is for an artist to be spared such troubles, I realize, when I look back on my early life, that it was enjoyable, in spite of all its vexations and bitterness." The greatest "bitterness" of Rachmaninoff's career was the total failure of the Symphony No. 1 at its premiere in 1897, a traumatic disappointment which thrust him into such a mental depression that he suffered a complete nervous collapse.

An aunt of Rachmaninoff, Varvara Satina, had recently been successfully treated for an emotional disturbance by a certain Dr. Nicholas Dahl, a Moscow physician who was familiar with the latest psychiatric discoveries in France and Vienna, and it was arranged that Rachmaninoff should visit him. Years later, in his memoirs, the composer recalled the malady and the treatment: "[Following the performance of the First Symphony] something within me snapped. A paralyzing apathy possessed me. I did nothing at all and found no pleasure in anything. Half my days were spent on a couch sighing over my ruined life. My only occupation consisted in giving a few piano lessons to keep myself alive." For more than a year, Rachmaninoff's condition persisted. He began his daily visits to Dr. Dahl in January 1900. "My relatives had informed Dr. Dahl that he must by all means cure me of my apathetic condition and bring about such results that I would again be able to compose. Dahl had inquired what kind of composition was desired of me, and he was informed 'a concerto for pianoforte.' In consequence, I heard repeated, day after day, the same hypnotic formula, as I lay half somnolent in an armchair in Dr. Dahl's consulting room: 'You will start to compose a concerto — You will work with the greatest of ease — The composition will be of excellent quality.' Always it was the same, without interruption.... Although it may seem impossible to believe," Rachmaninoff continued, "this treatment really helped me. I started to compose again at the beginning of the summer." In gratitude, he dedicated the new Concerto to Dr. Dahl.

The C minor Concerto begins with eight bell-tone chords from the solo piano that herald the surging main theme, announced by the strings. A climax is achieved before a sudden drop in intensity makes way for the arching second theme, initiated by the soloist. The development, concerned largely with the first theme, is propelled by a martial rhythm that continues with undiminished energy into the recapitulation. The second theme returns in the horn before the martial mood is re-established to close the movement. The *Adagio* is a long-limbed nocturne with a running commentary of sweeping figurations from the piano. The finale resumes the marching rhythmic motion of the first movement with its introduction and bold main theme. Standing in bold relief to this vigorous music is the lyrical second theme, one of the best-loved melodies in the entire orchestral literature, a grand inspiration in the ripest Romantic tradition. These two themes, the martial and the romantic, alternate for the remainder of the movement. The coda rises through a finely crafted line of mounting tension to bring the work to an electrifying close.

## GUSTAV MAHLER

Symphony No. 1 in D major (1883-1888, revised 1892-1893)

**Gustav Mahler was born in Kalischt, Bohemia on July 7, 1860, and died in Vienna on May 18, 1911. He composed his First Symphony in from 1883-1888, and revised it further from 1892-1893. Mahler himself conducted the Orchestra of the Royal Opera for the premiere in Budapest on November 20, 1889. The Pittsburgh Symphony premiered the work at Syria Mosque with William Steinberg on January 4, 1952. The score calls for two piccolos, four flutes, four oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, three clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, seven horns, four trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings. Performance time: approximately 58 minutes**

Though he did not marry until 1902, Mahler had a healthy interest in the opposite sex, and at least three love affairs touch upon the First Symphony. In 1880, he conceived a short-lived but ferocious

passion for Josephine Poisl, the daughter of the postmaster in his boyhood home of Iglau, and she inspired from him three songs and a cantata after Grimm, *Das klagende Lied* ("Song of Lamentation"), which contributed thematic fragments to the gestation of the Symphony. The second affair, which came early in 1884, was the spark that actually ignited the composition of the work. Johanne Richter possessed a numbing musical mediocrity alleviated by a pretty face, and it was because of an infatuation with this singer at the Cassel Opera, where Mahler was then conducting, that not only the First Symphony but also the *Songs of the Wayfarer* sprang to life. The third liaison, in 1887, came as the Symphony was nearing completion. Mahler revived and reworked an opera by Carl Maria von Weber called *Die drei Pintos* ("The Three Pintos," two being impostors of the title character) and was aided in the venture by the grandson of that composer, also named Carl. During the almost daily contact with the Weber family necessitated by the preparation of the work, Mahler fell in love with Carl's wife, Marion. Mahler was serious enough to propose that he and Marion run away together, but at the last minute she had a sudden change of heart and left Mahler standing, quite literally, at the train station. The emotional turbulence of all these encounters found its way into the First Symphony, especially the finale, but, looking back in 1896, Mahler put these experiences into a better perspective. "The Symphony," he wrote, "begins where the love affair [with Johanne Richter] ends; it is based on the affair which preceded the Symphony in the emotional life of the composer. But the extrinsic experience became the occasion, not the message of the work."

The Symphony begins with an evocation of a verdant springtime filled with the natural call of the cuckoo (solo clarinet) and the man-made calls of the hunt (clarinets, then trumpets). The main theme, which enters softly in the cellos after the wonderfully descriptive introduction, is based on the second of the *Songs of a Wayfarer*, *Ging heut' Morgen übers Feld* ("I Crossed the Meadow this Morn"). This engaging, folk-like melody, with its characteristic interval of a descending fourth, runs through much of the Symphony to provide an aural link among its movements. The first movement is given over to this theme combined with the spring sounds of the introduction in a cheerful display of ebullient spirits into which creeps an occasional shudder of doubt.

The second movement, in a sturdy triple meter, is a dressed-up version of the Austrian peasant dance known as the *Ländler*, a type and style that finds its way into most of Mahler's symphonies. The simple tonic-dominant accompaniment of the basses recalls the falling fourth of the opening movement, while the tune in the woodwinds resembles the *Wayfarer* song. (Note particularly the little run up the scale.) The gentle trio, ushered in by solo horn, makes use of the string glissandos that were so integral a part of Mahler's orchestral technique.

The third movement begins and ends with a lugubrious, minor-mode transformation of the European folk song known most widely by its French title, *Frère Jacques*. It is heard initially in an eerie solo for muted string bass in its highest register, played above the tread of the timpani intoning the falling-fourth motive from the preceding movements. The middle of the movement contains a melody marked "*Mit Parodie*" (played "*col legno*" by the strings, i.e., tapping with the wood rather than the hair of the bow), and a simple, tender theme based on another melody from the *Wayfarer* songs, *Die zwei blauen Augen* ("The Two Blue Eyes"). The mock funeral march of this movement was inspired by a woodcut of Moritz von Schwind titled *How the Animals Bury the Hunter* from his *Munich Picture Book for Children*.

The finale, according to Bruno Walter, protégé and friend of the composer and himself a master conductor, is filled with "raging vehemence." The stormy character of the beginning is maintained for much of the movement. Throughout, themes from earlier movements are heard again, with the hunting calls of the opening introduction given special prominence. The tempest is finally blown away by a great blast from the horns ("Bells in the air!" entreats Mahler) to usher in the triumphant ending of the work, a grand affirmation of joyous celebration.