Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
2018-2019 Mellon Grand Classics Season

October 5 and 7, 2018

MANFRED HONECK, CONDUCTOR
JENNIFER JOHNSON CANO, MEZZO-SOPRANO

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN — *Leonore Overture No. 3*, Opus 72a

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN — Symphony No. 88 in G major

I. Adagio — Allegro
II. Largo
III. Menuetto: Allegretto
IV. Allegro con spirito

Intermission

LEONARD BERNSTEIN — Symphony No. 1 for Mezzo-Soprano and Orchestra, "Jeremiah"

I. Prophecy: Largamente
II. Profanation: Vivace con brio
III. Lamentation: Lento

Ms. Cano

IGOR STRAVINSKY — Suite from *The Firebird* (1919 Version)

I. Introduction — The Dance of the Firebird
II. Dance of the Princesses
III. Infernal Dance of the King Kashchei
IV. Berceuse —
VI. Finale

PROGRAM NOTES BY DR. RICHARD E. RODDA

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Leonore Overture No. 3, Opus 72a (1806)

Ludwig Van Beethoven was born in Bonn on December 16, 1770, and died in Vienna on March 26, 1827. Beethoven composed *Leonore Overture* No. 3 in 1806, and it was premiered as the overture to his opera *Fidelio* at the Theater an der Wien in Vienna on March 29, 1806. Previous attempts at completing *Fidelio* had yielded a *Leonore* No. 1 & 2, and a fourth and final attempt was ultimately titled *Fidelio Overture*. The Pittsburgh Symphony first performed the Overture with Frederic Archer at Carnegie Music Hall in April 1896, and most recently performed it with music director Manfred Honeck in February 2011. Leonard Bernstein conducted the overture during his last visit to Pittsburgh in September 1984. The score calls for woodwinds in pairs, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings. Performance time: approximately 15 minutes.

The most visible remnants of the extensive revisions to which Beethoven subjected his *Fidelio* between 1804 and 1814 are the four overtures he composed for the opera. For the first version, written in 1804-1805, Beethoven wrote the Overture in C major now known as the *Leonore No. 1*, utilizing themes from the opera. The composer's friend and early biographer Anton Schindler recorded that Beethoven rejected that first attempt after hearing it privately performed at Prince Lichnowsky's palace before the premiere, so he composed a second C major overture, *Leonore No. 2*, and that piece was used at the first performance, on November 20, 1805. The opera foundered. Beethoven was encouraged by his aristocratic supporters to rework the opera and present it again. The second version, for which the magnificent *Leonore Overture No. 3* was written, was presented in Vienna on March 29, 1806 but met with little more acclaim than its forerunner. In 1814, some members of the Court Theater convinced Beethoven to revive *Fidelio* yet again. The new *Fidelio Overture*, the fourth he composed for his opera, was among the revisions. The *Leonore No. 3* distills the essential dramatic progression of the opera into purely musical terms: the triumph of good over evil, the movement from darkness to light, from subjugation to freedom, is integral to this music.

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Symphony No. 88 in G major (1787)

Franz Joseph Haydn was born in Rohrau, Lower Austria on March 31, 1732, and died in Vienna on May 31, 1809. Haydn composed his Symphony No. 88 in 1787, and it was likely premiered in London in 1789. The Pittsburgh Symphony first performed the symphony with Emil Paur in November 1904, and most recently performed it with music director Manfred Honeck in May 2009. Leonard Bernstein conducted the work at Syria Mosque in January 1950. The score calls for flute, pairs of oboes, bassoons, horns and trumpets, timpani and strings. Performance time: approximately 22 minutes.

Haydn apparently wrote the Symphonies No. 88 and No. 89 in 1787 on speculation for a foray into the lucrative Parisian music publishing market, and gave the two works to Johann Tost, a violinist in the Esterházy orchestra who was moving to Paris, to sell as best he could. The unscrupulous Tost struck a deal with Jean-Georges Sieber for not two, but three symphonies, the third being a work by Adalbert Gyrowetz that Tost passed off as Haydn's. (Gyrowetz had enormous difficulty later persuading French musicians that this was indeed his music.) When Sieber complained about this shady deal to Haydn, the composer replied without sympathy, "Thus Herr Tost has swindled you; you can claim your damages in Vienna." Whether Sieber, Tost or Haydn continued to peddle the new works to other publishers is unclear from the extant records, but within two years, editions of the Symphonies No. 88 and No. 89 appeared in London, Vienna, Offenbach/Main, Berlin and Amsterdam. Such sordid tales as these were the norm

rather than the exception in the publishing practice of the 18th century, before international copyright laws, when a composer needed almost as much of the mercenary as the genius to make a living.

The Symphony No. 88 opens, as do most of Haydn's late symphonies, with a slow introduction, which serves as a musical foil to the main theme (presented by the violins in quick tempo), a nimble melody whose roots are deeply embedded in the soil of folk song. This jolly little tune soon acquires a bustling rhythmic accompaniment that bounds through the energetic transition and leads to the second theme, a shy motive decorated with drooping, chromatic harmonies in the winds. The rhythmic bustle soon returns to bring the exposition to an inconclusive end on an unexpected silence. The development is concerned with the rhythm as much as the melodic shape of the main theme. (Note the grouping of notes: ta-ta-TA-da-ta-ta-tah.) It was exactly such marvelous working-out of a tiny motive to simultaneously provide thematic unity and variety — almost like a brilliant, wide-ranging sermon on a single Bible verse — that marks the maturity of the symphony as a form. The end of the development section, like that of the exposition, is signaled by an inconclusive halt and a silence that ushers in the recapitulation to recall the themes in slightly embellished versions.

The slow movement is a set of free variations on the lovely hymn tune sung at the beginning by the oboe and solo cello. The theme is gradually enriched as the movement unfolds in a wondrous display of harmonic and orchestral mastery. The third movement paints a colorful scene of peasant life with what Haydn scholar H.C. Robbins Landon termed a "barn-yard richness." The minuet is a robust, stomping village dance; the central trio summons bagpipe drones to accompany a theme of rustic charm. The jovial theme of the finale, pronounced merrily by bassoon and violins, is a country cousin to that of the opening movement. This chipper ditty encounters a wealth of ingenious contrapuntal and harmonic adventures as it scurries along with the perfect balance of naiveté and sophistication that is one of Haydn's most endearing qualities. The Symphony No. 88 is a masterwork of 18th-century music, one of the brightest jewels in Haydn's unparalleled collection.

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

Symphony No. 1 for Mezzo-Soprano and Orchestra, "Jeremiah" (1939, 1942)

Leonard Bernstein was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts on August 25, 1918, and died in New York City on October 14, 1990. He completed his Symphony No. 1, titled "Jeremiah, in 1942, for a composition contest at the New England Conservatory of Music. While the piece did not win, his teacher Fritz Reiner ultimately invited him to premiere it with the Pittsburgh Symphony and mezzo-soprano Jennie Tourel on January 28, 1944. Reiner conducted the first half of the program, and Bernstein conducted the second, which included "Jeremiah" and *Firebird*, the same program heard tonight. Most recently, the Pittsburgh Symphony performed the work with conductor Kirk Muspratt and mezzo-soprano Virginia Dupuy on January 1994. The score calls for piccolo, three flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, piano and strings. Performance time: approximately 25 minutes.

Leonard Bernstein had already accumulated a formidable series of accomplishments by the time he wrote his "Jeremiah" Symphony at the age of 24. Born in 1918 to a Russian Jewish family who had settled in Massachusetts, he attended the prestigious Boston Latin School as a youth and took piano lessons from Helen Coates (whose influence on his life he recognized by dedicating to her his 1954 book, *The Joy of Music*) and Heinrich Gebhard (a pupil of Leschetizky). In 1935, Bernstein enrolled at Harvard, where he studied with some of the country's most distinguished pedagogues: Tillman Merritt (theory), Walter Piston (counterpoint and fugue) and Edward Burlingame Hill (orchestration). After his graduation in 1939, he was accepted at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia (on the recommendation of the celebrated Greek conductor Dimitri Mitropoulos) to polish his already impressive piano technique with Isabelle Vengerova and further his skills in conducting (with Fritz Reiner) and composition (Randall Thompson). He spent the summers of 1940 and 1941 at Tanglewood, where he became a student and protégé of Sergei Koussevitzky, music director of the Boston Symphony, and eventually his assistant. In the autumn of 1942, Bernstein moved to New York City, working for a short time for Harms Publishing Company arranging popular pieces for piano under the pseudonym Lennie Amber (Bernstein means "amber" in German). A year later, he was chosen by Artur Rodzinski as his conducting assistant with the New York Philharmonic, and on November 14, 1943, took over a concert for the ailing guest conductor

Bruno Walter on very short notice. The national broadcast of the program went ahead as scheduled, and the 25-year-old Bernstein was instantly famous. The rest of his career is now legend.

Late in 1942, just as his career was shifting into overdrive, Bernstein decided that writing a large symphonic piece would not only help establish him as a concert composer but also might give him opportunities to appear as a conductor with a number of orchestras. He learned that the New England Conservatory of Music was just then sponsoring a composition contest, and that Koussevitzky, his chief mentor, would be a judge. The competition became the spur for Bernstein to create his Symphony No. 1. Three years before, he had sketched a *Lamentation* for voice and orchestra on a biblical text from *Jeremiah*, and in the spring of 1942, he set down some ideas for the opening movement of a symphony. With the contest's New Year's Eve deadline looming close, he reworked the earlier music as the symphony's outer movements, and inserted between them a scherzo, completing the piano score in ten days and the orchestration (with the help of a small coterie of friends, working round the clock, serving as scribes and copyists under his direction) in just three. The score was finished too late for delivery by mail, so Bernstein, true to form, got on the train to Boston and handed in the work in person two hours before midnight. Though the omens all seemed good for another Bernstein triumph, Koussevitzky did not care for the "Jeremiah" Symphony, and the work did not win the competition. A year later, however, Fritz Reiner, his teacher at Curtis and then music director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, arranged for Bernstein to premiere the composition with his orchestra on January 28, 1944 with mezzo-soprano Jennie Tourel. Both Symphony and conductor drew raves from the critics: "unusual profundity of thought and a clear manner of expression and presentation"; "we have rarely heard music of modern vintage of such honest and absorbing expression"; "[in conducting,] his cues are clean, his demands from the orchestra are within reason, his careful molding of phrase and line, admirable...." Koussevitzky invited Bernstein to make his long-sought Boston Symphony debut with the "Jeremiah" Symphony the following month, and Bernstein introduced the work to New York in March at a Carnegie Hall concert with the Philharmonic to benefit a Palestine relief agency. The "Jeremiah" Symphony won the New York Music Critics Circle Award for the best new American work of the season. Bernstein recorded the score with the St. Louis Symphony for RCA Victor shortly thereafter, his first of three recordings of the work.

In a 1994 biography of the composer, Meryle Secrest gave the following background about the historical Jeremiah: "Jeremiah, son of a priestly family, preached in Jerusalem from 628 to 586 B.C. under Josiah and his successors. He lived during a transitional period when the old Assyrian empire, of which Israel was a part, was crumbling and being replaced by the neo-Babylonian empire; there were periodic invasions of his country. His preachings centered around the sins of idolatry and false worship, and predicted that Jerusalem and its temple would be destroyed unless there was a real commitment to reform and a return to the spirit of religion, not merely adherence to its rituals. Tradition has it that he was by temperament introspective and reticent, but felt compelled to condemn what he considered to be the evils of the age. He made some powerful enemies and was imprisoned several times. Jeremiah's message contained a new emphasis on the importance of a personal relationship with God, and his confessions contain dialogue with the Deity that question divine judgment, and even accuse God of having betrayed him."

Bernstein found in the writings of the ancient prophet an expression of what he called "the crisis of our century, a crisis of faith." Several of Bernstein's pivotal works — *Jeremiah, The Age of Anxiety*, *Kaddish*, *Mass* — confront the issue of what resolution, or renewal, or at least comfort, can be found after faith is shattered, as symbolized in the "Jeremiah" Symphony by the destruction of the Temple following the prophet's warnings. Bernstein explained the work's expressive progression: "The intention is not one of literalness, but of emotional quality. Thus the first movement (*Prophecy*) aims only to parallel in feeling the intensity of the prophet's pleas with his people; and the scherzo (*Profanation*) to give a general sense of the destruction and chaos brought on by the pagan corruption within the priesthood and the people. The third movement (*Lamentation*), being a setting of poetic text, is naturally a more literary conception. It is the cry of Jeremiah, as he mourns his beloved Jerusalem, ruined, pillaged and dishonored after his desperate efforts to save it. The faith or peace that is found at the end of *Jeremiah* is really more a kind of comfort, not a solution. Comfort is one way of achieving peace, but it does not achieve the sense of a new beginning, as does the end of *The Age of Anxiety* or *Mass*."

Concerning the thematic sources of the work, the composer noted, "The Symphony does not make use to any great extent of actual Hebrew thematic material. The first theme of the scherzo is paraphrased from a traditional Hebrew chant, and the opening phrase of the vocal part in the *Lamentation* is based on a liturgical cadence still sung today in commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. Other resemblances to Hebrew liturgical music are a matter of emotional quality rather than of the notes themselves." In a preface to the corrected 1992 edition of the score, however, Jack Gottlieb, the composer's long-time associate and spokesman, found richer resonances of traditional Jewish musical

practices in the Symphony than Bernstein indicated: “Actually, the composer was not aware that there was more influence of liturgical motives upon the music than he consciously knew. This is certainly a testament to his upbringing as a Jew both in the synagogue and at home, particularly through the example of his father, Samuel [to whom the score is dedicated].

“The opening theme of the first movement (*Prophecy*),” Gottlieb continued, “is derived from the High Holy Days liturgy, heard for the first time as part of the *Amidah* (‘*standing*’) prayers, or eighteen blessings. This compilation of fixed benedictions, recited at all services, Sabbath or holiday, with varying interpolations, probably constitutes the second most important Jewish prayer after the monotheistic creed of *Sh’ma Yisrael* (‘*Hear, O Israel*’). This theme nourishes the growth of the entire movement.

“The scherzo (*Profanation*) theme from the second movement that Mr. Bernstein refers to is based on cantillation motives used during the chanting of the Bible on the Sabbath, especially the *Haftara* (‘*concluding*’) portion. The motives are well-known to those who chant Bible passages in preparation for Bar Mitzvah.

“In the third movement (*Lamentation*), the ‘liturgical cadence’ the composer mentions is a sequence of motives derived from the *kinnot* (‘*dirges*’) chanted on *Tisha B’Av* (the Ninth Day of the month of Ab), an observance of mourning for the lost Temple. These *kinnot* are, of course, sung to the words of the biblical *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, and Mr. Bernstein uses motives as chanted by Ashkenazic (‘Germanic’) Jews. Other subconscious sources include various penitential modes, as well as free cantorial improvisation. Significantly, the conclusion of the *Lamentation* recalls the *Amidah* theme from the first movement, indicating that the foreboding prophecy has been fulfilled.”

Text: The Lamentations of Jeremiah

Chapter 1:1-3

Echa yashva vadad ha-ir	How doth the city sit solitary,
Rabati am	That was full of people!
Hay’ta k’almana;	How is she become as a widow!
Rabati vagoyim	She that was great among the nations,
Sarati bam’dinot	And princess among the provinces,
Hay’ta lamas.	How is she become tributary!
Bacho tivkeh balaila,	She weepeth sore in the night,
V’dim’ata al lecheya;	And her tears are on her cheeks;
En la m’nachem	She hath none to comfort her
Mikol ohaveha;	Among all her lovers;
Kol reeha bag’du va,	All her friends have dealt treacherously with her,
Hayu la l’oy’vim.	They are become her enemies.
Galta Y’huda meoni,	Judah is gone into exile because of affliction,
Umerov avoda;	And because of great servitude;
Hi yashva vagoyim,	She dwelleth among the nations,
Lo matsa mano-ach;	She findeth no rest.
Kol rod’feha hisiguha	All her pursuers overtook her
Ben hamitsarim	Within the narrow passes.

Chapter 1: 8

Chet chata Y’rushalyim	Jerusalem hath grievously sinned.
(Echa yashva vadad ha-ir	How doth the city sit solitary
... k’almana.)	... a widow.

Chapter 4: 14-15

Na-u ivrim bachutsot	They wander as blind men in the streets,
N’go-alu badam,	They are polluted with blood,
B’lo yuchlu	So that men cannot
Yig’u bilvushehem.	Touch their garments.

Suru tame kar'u lamo,	Depart, ye unclean! they cried unto them,
Suru, suru al tiga-u ...	Depart, depart! touch us not

Chapter 5: 20-21

Lama lanetsach tishkachenu ...	Wherefore dost Thou forget us forever,
Lanetsach taazvenu ...	And forsake us for so long a time? ...
Hashivenu Adonai elecha ...	Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord ...

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Suite from *The Firebird* (1919 Version) (1909-1910)

Igor Stravinsky was born in Oranienbaum, near St. Petersburg on June 17, 1882, and died in New York City on April 6, 1971. He composed his ballet *The Firebird* in 1909-1910, and arranged the suite heard today in 1919. The ballet was premiered at the Paris Opéra under Gabriel Pierné on June 25, 1910, and the Pittsburgh Symphony first performed the music at Syria Mosque under Antonio Modarelli on March 29, 1935. A then 25-year-old Leonard Bernstein conducted *Firebird* on his debut program in January 1944. The score calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, celesta and strings. Performance time: approximately 19 minutes

The story of Stravinsky's deals with the glittering Firebird and the evil ogre Kashchei, who captures maidens and turns men to stone if they enter his domain. Kashchei is immortal as long as his soul, which is preserved in the form of an egg in a casket, remains intact. The plot shows how Prince Ivan wanders into Kashchei's garden in pursuit of the Firebird; he captures it and exacts a feather before letting it go. Ivan meets a group of Kashchei's captive maidens and falls in love with one of them. The princesses return to Kashchei's palace. Ivan breaks open the gates to follow them, but he is captured by the ogre's guardian monsters. He waves the magic feather and the Firebird reappears to smash Kashchei's vital egg; the ogre expires. All the captives are freed and Ivan and his Tsarevna are wed.

Stravinsky drew three concert suites from *The Firebird*. The 1919 suite includes six scenes from the complete score. The first two, *Introduction* and *The Dance of the Firebird*, accompany the appearance of the magical creature. The *Round Dance of the Princesses* uses the rhythm and style of an ancient Russian dance called the *Khorovod*. The *Infernal Dance of King Kashchei*, the most modern portion of the score, depicts the madness engendered by the appearance of the Firebird at Kashchei's court after the revelation to Ivan of the evil ogre's vulnerability. The haunting *Berceuse* is heard when the thirteenth princess, the one of whom Ivan is enamored, succumbs to a sleep-charm that saves her from the terrible King while Ivan destroys Kashchei's malevolent power. The *Finale*, initiated by the solo horn, confirms the life-force that had been threatened by Kashchei.

— Dr. Richard E. Rodda