

Concert Program for March 16, 17, and 18, 2012

Louis Langrée, conductor
Robert Levin, piano

BEETHOVEN **Symphony No. 1 in C major, op. 21** (1799-1800)
(1770-1827) Adagio molto; Allegro con brio
Andante cantabile con moto
Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace
Finale: Adagio; Allegro molto e vivace

BEETHOVEN **Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major, op. 19** (1794-95)
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Rondo: Molto allegro

Robert Levin, piano

Intermission

BEETHOVEN **Symphony No. 8 in F major, op. 93** (1812)
Allegro vivace e con brio
Allegretto scherzando
Tempo di Menuetto
Allegro vivace

Louis Langrée is the Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin Guest Conductor.

Robert Levin is the Bruce Anderson Memorial Fund Guest Artist.

The concert of Friday, March 16, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mrs. Emily R. Pulitzer.

The concert of Saturday, March 17, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. William A. Sullins, Jr.

These concerts are presented by the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation.

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Louis Langrée

Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin Guest Conductor

The French musician Louis Langrée is Music Director of the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center in New York, a position he has held since 2002, and has recently been appointed Chief Conductor of the Camerata Salzburg. During the 2011-12 season, Langrée conducts three productions at the Wiener Staatsoper (*Eugene Onegin*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *La clemenza di Tito*) and *La*

bohème at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. He will also conduct the Camerata Salzburg at the Mozartwoche and in subscription concerts. His many other orchestral engagements include re-invitations to the symphony orchestras in São Paulo, Detroit, and Baltimore, and also to the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie and Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Last season Langrée made two important debuts in Austria, at Wiener Staatsoper conducting *La bohème* and with the Wiener Philharmoniker at the Mozartwoche in Salzburg. He also made his debuts with the Budapest Festival and Cincinnati symphony orchestras, as well as conducting Camerata Salzburg in Munich, Paris, and Salzburg, and the London Philharmonic at the Royal Festival Hall. In addition, he conducted *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Paris and London with the Orchestre de Paris and returned to the Aix-en-Provence Festival for *La traviata* with the London Symphony Orchestra.

Langrée has worked with many other orchestras in North America, Europe, and further afield, including Pittsburgh, Dallas, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Hallé, Netherlands Philharmonic, Santa Cecilia in Rome, and the Tokyo Philharmonic. He also regularly conducts period instrument orchestras such as the Freiburger Barockorchester, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and Le Concert d'Astrée. Festival appearances have included Wiener Festwochen, BBC Proms, Spoleto, Budapest Spring, and Bucharest Enesco Festival. He has held positions as Music Director of the Orchestre de Picardie (1993-98) and Orchestre Philharmonique de Liège (2001-06).

Langrée was Music Director of Opéra National de Lyon (1998-2000) and Glyndebourne Touring Opera (1998-2003) and has worked regularly at the Metropolitan Opera in New York and the Glyndebourne Festival Opera. He has also conducted at La Scala, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dresden Staatsoper, Grand Théâtre in Geneva, Opéra-Bastille and Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, and the Netherlands Opera in Amsterdam.

Langrée's discography includes recordings for Virgin Classics, Universal, and Naive. Many of these have won awards including Diapason d'Or, Gramophone, and Midem Classical. In 2006 he was appointed Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture.

Louis Langrée most recently conducted the St. Louis Symphony in September 2010.



Robert Levin

Bruce Anderson Memorial Fund Guest Artist

Pianist Robert Levin has been heard throughout the world in recital, as soloist and in chamber concerts. His solo engagements include the orchestras of Atlanta, Berlin, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, Montreal, and Vienna on the Steinway with such conductors as James Conlon, Bernard Haitink, Sir Neville Marriner, Seiji Ozawa, and Sir Simon Rattle.

On period pianos he has appeared with the Academy of Ancient Music, English Baroque Soloists, Handel & Haydn Society, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment with conductors such as Christopher Hogwood, Sir Charles Mackerras, Nicholas McGegan, and Sir John Eliot Gardiner. He has performed frequently at such festivals as Sarasota, Tanglewood, Ravinia, and Bremen. As a chamber musician he has a long association with violist Kim Kashkashian. Levin appears frequently with his wife, pianist Ya-Fei Chuang, in duo recitals and with orchestra. After more than a quarter century as an artist faculty member at the Sarasota Music Festival he succeeded Paul Wolfe as Artistic Director in 2007.

Levin studied piano with Louis Martin and composition with Stefan Wolpe in New York. He worked with Nadia Boulanger in Fontainebleau and Paris while still in high school, afterward attending Harvard. Upon graduation he was invited by Rudolf Serkin to head the theory department of the Curtis Institute of Music, a post he left after five years to take up a professorship at the School of the Arts, SUNY Purchase, outside of New York City. In 1979 he was Resident Director of the Conservatoire américain in Fontainebleau, France, at the request of Nadia Boulanger, and taught there from 1979 to 1983. From 1986 to 1993 he was professor of piano at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany. President of the International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he is Dwight P. Robinson, Jr. Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University.

In addition to his performing activities, Robert Levin is a noted theorist and Mozart scholar. In August 1991 Levin's completion of the Mozart Requiem was premiered by Helmuth Rilling at the European Music Festival in Stuttgart, Germany. His completion of the Mozart Mass in C minor, K. 427, commissioned by Carnegie Hall, was premiered by Rilling in New York in January 2005 and in Europe two months later.

Robert Levin most recently performed with the St. Louis Symphony in November 2009.

Beethoven the Classicist

BY PAUL SCHIAVO

Ideas at Play

Beethoven's music is widely cherished not only for its intrinsic beauty but also for its expansive spirit. Especially during the decade beginning in 1804, Beethoven created a new style and scale of musical expression, one whose fervor, heroic bearing, and originality mirrored the humanistic ideals of the young 19th century. The unprecedented music set forth in his Third and Fifth symphonies, the "Emperor" Piano Concerto, the opera *Fidelio*, the "Appassionata" Piano Sonata, and other major pieces of this period have long seemed not just an advance over the work of Beethoven's predecessors but the unaccountable manifestation of a singular genius.

That view of Beethoven's achievement is certainly accurate, but it does not account for the full range of his musical development. The composer came of age at the end of the 18th century, a time when Mozart and Haydn were the brightest stars in the musical firmament. The young Beethoven idolized Mozart and studied with Haydn, and he began his journey as a composer by assimilating their manner of writing, a manner we think of as music's Classical style. Accordingly, his earliest symphony and concerto, both of which are performed during this concert, show debts of influence to his great forebears, their original touches notwithstanding.

More strikingly, Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 shows the composer reclaiming something of the Classical style years after he had left it for more innovative conceptions. But here the matter is more complex, for while returning to certain outward features of an older symphonic idiom, the inner workings of this piece reflect much of the gains Beethoven had made in the years before he composed it.

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 1 in C major, op. 21

Born: Bonn, December 16, 1770 **Died:** Vienna, March 26, 1827 **First performance:** April 2, 1800, at the Burg Theater, in Vienna; the theater's orchestra was directed by its concertmaster and usual conductor, Giacomo Conti **STL Symphony premiere:** November 5, 1926, Rudolph Ganz conducting **Most recent STL Symphony performance:** May 4, 2003, Joseph Swensen conducting **Scoring:** Two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings **Performance time:** Approximately 26 minutes

In Context 1799-1800 *Napoleon crowns himself as emperor of France; Spain cedes Louisiana Territory to France in secret treaty; Austria declares war on France*

Because his nine symphonies constitute his best-known body of music, it is somewhat surprising that Beethoven turned to this genre relatively late in his career. Although only 29 years of age when he completed his First Symphony, in the spring of 1800, the composer already had several



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dozen mature works to his credit, including some ten or twelve piano sonatas, half a dozen string quartets, two piano concertos, and a growing list of songs, variations, and miscellaneous pieces.

Beethoven's hesitation in the area of orchestral composition was in no way due to lack of interest or ambition. The composer had, in fact, begun a symphony in the mid-1790s but eventually abandoned it, using its themes in several other works. The orchestra was, at that time, a far less familiar medium to Beethoven than was the keyboard, which figures so prominently in his early music. Moreover, he was surely mindful of the imposing standards set by Franz Joseph Haydn in his late symphonies, which were then enjoying considerable popularity and admiration throughout Europe. And so Beethoven approached symphonic composition cautiously, carefully preparing a successful debut in the field that would see his most conspicuous triumphs.

Beethoven's First Symphony is related to Haydn's mature symphonies in terms of form, style, and proportions, but the resemblances should not obscure the original traits of this work. The unusual but completely successful turns of harmony with which it begins, the expanded role of the woodwinds, and the great energy of the outer movements offer a prospective glimpse of Beethoven's mature symphonic style.

The Music In the First Symphony's opening measures—a series of yearning chords searching unsuccessfully for resolution in the home key of C major—we find Beethoven characteristically avoiding harmonic routine in favor of something novel and unexpected. The slow introduction thus begun eventually leads to the main body of the movement, a spirited Allegro. With its statement, “development,” and reprise of two contrasting themes, this portion of the symphony adheres closely to Classical-period sonata form, but the extended coda passage that closes the movement is another of the composer's innovative touches.

It is interesting that Beethoven established the character of his symphonic slow movements, which are quite distinct from those of his concertos, in his very first work of this type. Whereas the concertos generally offer devout Largos, the symphonies, except the “Eroica,” are given graceful music more in the spirit of serenades. The Andante cantabile here sets the tone for similar movements in the succeeding symphonies.

Beethoven calls the third movement a minuet, but it is closer in character to the boisterous scherzos that henceforth would be standard features of his symphonies. The finale, like the first movement, begins with a prefatory passage in slow tempo. Here Beethoven teases us, offering tantalizing fragments of the movement's principal theme. Each repetition adds another note until, having stretched the joke as far as he dare, the composer breaks at last into the principal Allegro portion of the movement.

Ludwig van Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major, op. 19

First performance: probably March 29, 1795, in Vienna; Beethoven played the solo part and most likely conducted from the piano **STL Symphony premiere:** October 23, 1948, with William Kapell as soloist, Vladimir Golschmann conducting **Most recent STL Symphony performance:** April 18, 2008, Joseph Kalichstein was soloist, with Carlos Kalmar conducting **Scoring:** Solo piano with an orchestra of flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, and strings **Performance time:** Approximately 28 minutes



Beethoven

In Context 1794-95 *Napoleon begins rise to power with rout of counterrevolutionaries in streets of Paris; Haydn's Symphony No. 99 in E flat premieres; Beethoven debuted as a pianist*

Beethoven composed his Piano Concerto in B flat, op. 19, in the winter of 1794-95 and performed it on the occasion of his first public appearance in Vienna in March of that year. Although we know this work as his Second Piano Concerto, it preceded by several years the Piano Concerto No. 1, op. 15, which was only *published* first. Beethoven remained dissatisfied with the earlier work for some time, and his periodic efforts to perfect it caused the delay in its appearance. In 1801 he offered it to the publishing firm of Hoffmeister for a small sum because, he said, "I do not consider it one of my best concertos."

Beethoven needn't have slighted the piece so. The B-flat concerto is a beautiful and skillfully executed composition. In style and spirit it is close to the concertos of Mozart and Haydn, yet it clearly bears the stamp of Beethoven's compositional thinking.

The Music The first movement opens with an orchestral exposition of a lively subject composed of two contrasting motifs: a virile, almost martial figure followed by a more lyrical phrase sung by the first violins. Although there is a Mozartian grace and elan to this theme, Beethoven uses it in his own manner. He quickly strays from the confines of B-flat major, touching briefly on some stormy minor-key harmonies before coming to rest on three full chords. Here we should expect a second theme, and while the composer indeed produces this, he still manages to throw in a surprise. For instead of being an entirely fresh contrasting melody, the new idea is actually a rephrasing of the second, lyrical motif of the opening subject. With the entrance of the piano, the orchestra assumes a supporting role as further developments are initiated by the soloist.

The second and third movements are typical of Beethoven's concerto format, which is quite fully formed in this work. The Adagio conveys that same serenity of spirit we find in the First, Third, and Fifth Piano Concertos, and in the Violin Concerto. The finale, by contrast, is a buoyant movement with a dance-like principal theme announced by the piano in the opening measures. This idea recurs several times over the course of the movement, alternating with other subjects and developmental passages, thereby creating a classic rondo pattern.

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 8 in F major, op. 93

First performance: February 27, 1814, at the Schönbrunn, in Vienna; Beethoven was the nominal conductor, though reports indicate that the orchestra largely ignored his ungainly gestures and followed the principal violinist instead **STL**
Symphony premiere: February 21, 1907, Alfred Ernst conducting **Most recent STL Symphony performance:** January 5, 2003, Emmanuel Krivine conducting
Scoring: Two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings **Performance time:** Approximately 25 minutes



Beethoven

In Context 1812 Napoleon's forces begin retreat from Moscow; Jacques-Louis David paints portrait of Napoleon; Grimm Brothers publish first collection of folk tales

On February 27, 1814, a distinguished audience filled the large Redoutensaal ballroom in the Schönbrunn, Vienna's Imperial palace, to hear a concert of Beethoven's music, the third such event the composer had presented in as many months. We can assume that most of those in attendance had high expectations, for a notice advertising the concert had promised "a new symphony not yet heard."

Perhaps the high hopes the public held for this work had something to do with the general disappointment in the music. Or perhaps it was the fact that the new piece followed the expansive Seventh Symphony on the program. In any event, the debutante work met with a cool reception. One reviewer noted that the audience "was not sufficiently gratified after the performance, and the applause which it received was not accompanied by that enthusiasm which distinguishes a work which gives universal delight."

It would be easy to shake our heads, to lament the shortsightedness of that first audience and presume the superiority of our own musical wisdom. But we should not judge too harshly the Viennese music-lovers of Beethoven's day. For all they admired the composer, they could not keep pace with his development. In 1804 they had been startled when Beethoven shattered their assumptions about symphonic demeanor with the broad scope and powerful music of his Third Symphony, the aptly named *Sinfonia eroica*, or "Heroic Symphony." The four symphonies that followed confirmed, each in its own way, the expanded scale and bold gestures which the "Eroica" had brought to symphonic composition.

But just when much of his public was coming to accept his grand vision, Beethoven presented a composition that appeared to return to the relatively restrained language and modest dimensions of the symphony as conceived by the previous generation of Austrian composers. Here was a work more brief and lightly scored than any of his recent symphonies, its scale and general sonority reminiscent of the 18th century. More important, the overall tone seemed to be a kind of droll humor. This Eighth Symphony seemed in many ways a renunciation of his heroic achievements of the preceding decade, an inexplicable regression.

Even had this assessment been entirely correct, it need not have come as such a surprise. Beethoven, the heir of Haydn and Mozart, retained a

lifelong respect for the accomplishments of his great predecessors, and a work modeled on their symphonies would have been an appropriate and legitimate tribute. But the Eighth Symphony is not really in the Classical-period style. It is, despite superficial resemblances in matters of formal clarity and melodic grace, a composition of the 19th century and unmistakably by Beethoven. The loud tutti passage that opens the symphony is more sonorous than anything even Haydn would have ventured, while the good-natured humor of the second movement's Allegretto is far removed from the sublime meditations that form the slow movements of Mozart's mature symphonies. Although Beethoven returns to a minuet for his third movement after the more modern scherzos of his several previous symphonies, its quite symphonic character distinguishes this portion of the work from the more casual dance movements written by his predecessors. And who but Beethoven could have created the bustling finale, with its startling juxtaposition of duple and triple rhythms and its famous extension of the final cadence?

In short, the Eighth Symphony follows the formal outline of the Classical-period symphony but fills this with Beethoven's expanded power and range of musical invention. Hector Berlioz placed the work in proper perspective when he noted: "Naïveté, grace, gentle joy ... do not exclude grandeur in the form of art which reproduces them. This symphony, then, seems wholly worthy of those that preceded and followed, and is more remarkable because it is in no way like them."

The Music The first movement appears straightforward in its statement, "development," and reprise of several distinct themes but features some audacious harmonic dislocations (accomplished so deftly, however, that we are apt hardly to notice them.) Beethoven further explores his ideas not only in the exploratory central passage, where the initial motif of the principal theme is tossed about the orchestra, but in the thematic recapitulation and in the long coda passage that concludes the movement.

The ensuing Allegretto has become well known in connection with a little vocal canon that Beethoven wrote around the time he composed the Eighth Symphony, honoring his friend Johann Maelzel, the inventor of the metronome. The canon employs a variant of this movement's principal theme, whose stream of steady sixteenth-notes has therefore been taken to be an onomatopoeic reference to the ticking of Maelzel's musical timepiece. Be that as it may, the movement is more notable for its humor, the mock-naïve first subject, unexpected forte outbursts, sudden shifts of the melodic line from upper to lower registers, and occasional doubling of rhythmic speeds all being traditional devices of Italian *opera buffa*. The abrupt ending offers another touch of humor.

The third movement is a minuet. Its outer sections convey a robust, almost *pesante* quality (echoes of Haydn and, of course, the younger Beethoven), whereas the central episode includes prominent roles for the horn and clarinet. The finale is as rhythmically intricate as anything Beethoven ever composed and manages to be both dramatic and humorous.