

PROGRAM

ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIRST SEASON

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Riccardo Muti Music Director

Pierre Boulez Helen Regenstein Conductor Emeritus

Yo-Yo Ma Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

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Thursday, February 9, 2012, at 8:00

Friday, February 10, 2012, at 1:30

Saturday, February 11, 2012, at 8:00

Riccardo Muti Conductor

Schubert

Entr'acte No. 3 from *Rosamunde*, D. 797

Clyne

Night Ferry

World premiere

Commissioned for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra by the Louise Durham Mead
Fund for New Music

INTERMISSION

Schubert

Symphony No. 9 in C Major, D. 944 (*Great*)

Andante—Allegro, ma non troppo

Andante con moto

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Allegro vivace

The CSO gratefully acknowledges Randy and Melvin Berlin for their generous support of these concerts.

This program is partially supported by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Franz Schubert

Born January 31, 1797, Himmelpfortgrund, northwest of Vienna, Austria.

Died November 19, 1828, Vienna, Austria.

Entr'acte No. 3 from *Rosamunde*, D. 797

Although Schubert never lost his desire to compose operas, the incidental music he provided for *Rosamunde* was his last attempt to find success writing music for the stage. The experience was not a happy one—*Rosamunde* received terrible reviews and closed after two performances—and may have soured Schubert permanently on a career in the theater. But Schubert's music made a favorable impression, even at the premiere, and it still remains in the repertoire, while the play it accompanied was panned, quickly forgotten, and has since been lost.

The synopsis for *Rosamunde*, *Princess of Cyprus* that appeared at the time in the Viennese papers is scarcely promising—a ludicrous tale

of mistaken identity, kidnapping, pirates, poisoned letters, disguises, and shipwrecks, crowned by the figure of Rosamunde, an eighteen-year-old princess, who, although long assumed dead, is united with the prince to whom she has been betrothed since infancy. Somehow, Schubert was inspired to write glorious music.

The project began innocently enough when Josef Kupelweiser, the librettist for Schubert's final opera *Fierrabras*, persuaded the composer to collaborate with Wilhelmina von Chézy, a young poet from Berlin, on a play with incidental music. (The Viennese press reported at one point, without evidence, that they were working on an opera.) Between

COMPOSED

1823, as part of incidental music for *Rosamunde*

FIRST PERFORMANCE

December 20, 1823, Vienna, Austria

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

January 27, 1899, Auditorium Theatre. Theodore Thomas conducting

MOST RECENT

CSO PERFORMANCE

November 1, 1997, Orchestra Hall. Michael Gielen conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, timpani, strings

APPROXIMATE

PERFORMANCE TIME

8 minutes

CSO RECORDING

1984. James Levine conducting. Deutsche Grammophon

several periods of illness—he was hospitalized more than once—and the rush to complete his song cycle *Die schöne Müllerin* in the fall of 1823, Schubert did not get around to writing music for the play until shortly before it was to open, on December 20. (Apparently he did not begin work until sometime in December, since a letter dated November 30 mentions two of his recent operas by name, but not *Rosamunde*.)

As always, and this time by necessity, Schubert worked very quickly (Wilhelmina's memoirs say he wrote the score in five days). He composed the choruses and the one solo aria first so that they could be rehearsed, saving the dances and entr'actes that include some of his best-loved music for last. (The ballet dancers did not get to hear their music until forty-eight hours before the opening.) And when he ran out of time, he borrowed an overture

he had written for the opera *Alfonso and Estrella*, later replacing it with yet another old piece, which is now universally known as the overture to *Rosamunde*. This entire set of incidental music turns out to be a textbook on the advantages of recycling.

The well-known entr'acte in B-flat major that opens this concert is related to two other works in the large Schubert catalog. The lovely lyrical main melody appears in the A minor string quartet, which was probably drafted before *Rosamunde*. (It also shows up, slightly redecorated, in one of the piano impromptus written later.) And the episode in B-flat minor—the second of two interludes—is based on a song, “Der Leidende” (The sufferer), that Schubert wrote in 1816. But the true miracle of this entr'acte is how music of an almost childlike simplicity reveals so much about the complexities of the human heart. ■



Anna Clyne

Born March 9, 1980, London, England.

Night Ferry

On the wall of her studio in the Fine Arts Building—the historic 1885 haven for artists located just two blocks south of Orchestra Hall—Anna Clyne has taped seven painted panels that read like an EKG of her new orchestral work, *Night Ferry*. Clyne is used to composing her pieces “in order,” that is, starting at the beginning and writing through to the end, but with *Night Ferry*, she worked in an entirely new way—“painting” a section of the piece and then writing the corresponding music, shifting back and forth from one medium to the other as she moved from the opening to the final measures.

Clyne’s studio itself is a self-portrait of the artist at work. It is strewn with things she loves—an antique folding chair (a flea-market find); fresh flowers (she worked as a florist in New York City); a recently purchased copy of *Savage Beauty*, the book of Alexander McQueen designs—as well as musical mementos: Stravinsky’s

compositional chart for *Agon*; copies of several portraits of Schubert pinned to the wall; a Tibetan singing bowl she picked up at a street fair (she put three in the percussion for *Night Ferry*); a note she jotted down on May 15, 2011, when Riccardo Muti spoke at the CSO’s Youth in Music festival, quoting Mohammed Ali: “Music is the heartbeat of the universe.”

As she was writing her new piece for the Chicago Symphony, Clyne was keenly aware that Muti would be conducting the first performances. She knows how much care and detailed study he lavishes on the preparation of any score, new or old, and she particularly responds to the “way he brings the quality of the human voice to instrumental music.” (A note on her studio wall was a daily reminder “to sing.”) She found herself writing musical gestures she knew he would bring to life. (When they spoke by telephone several times over the Christmas holiday, after she had

COMPOSED

2011

These are the world premiere performances.

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

20 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and english horn, one clarinet, bass clarinet and E-flat clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and

tuba, timpani, percussion (glockenspiel, vibraphone, marimba, bass drum, snare drums, suspended sizzle cymbals, Tibetan singing bowls, tam-tam, crotales), harp, piano, strings

sent him the finished score, they sang phrases back and forth to each other.)

When Muti first suggested that she write something that would complement Schubert’s music, since her piece would be premiered in the middle of a Schubertian program, Clyne began to read about the great Viennese composer. In the process, she was intrigued to learn

canvas as well. For a composer who has long thrived on collaborating with others—choreographers, filmmakers, visual artists—Clyne suddenly found that she was, as she put it, collaborating with herself—painting and composing in a back-and-forth interior dialogue.

Although Clyne is a highly visual person, she would be the first to tell you she is not a painter.



Section I
[0–3 mins]
mm. 1–95

Section II
[3–6 mins]
mm. 96–192

Night Ferry’s first two canvas panels

that, like many creative figures, he suffered from a form of bipolar disease. From there, she began to envision a piece about darkness and light. Uncharacteristically, she began with a title, *Night Ferry*, drawn from Seamus Heaney. Clyne intentionally put Schubert’s own music far from her mind, because, when she starts a new work, she likes to begin with a blank slate. In this case, she began with a blank

But the process of making visual representations of her music became the heart of the composition method for this piece. One of the first things Clyne put on the wall was her own thumbprint—a personal starting point that was quickly joined by everything from cutouts of Schubert’s eyes to a quotation from Berlioz, another composer who suffered from severe depression: “Shakespeare himself



Clyne in her studio, working on the canvas panels that represent *Night Ferry*.

never described this torture; but he counts it, in *Hamlet*, among the terrible of all the evils of existence.”

We have learned a great deal about depression since the time of Schubert and Berlioz. Cyclothymia, the form of depression Schubert is thought to have suffered from, wasn't identified until 1877, and it has only received serious attention much more recently. We know that it often leads to great artistic outbursts. What the American writer Andrew Solomon said about his own creative highs, in his National Book Award-winning *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression*—“I have clarity and can

see patterns in my work, and I can write loads of publishable material in one night”—could easily refer to Schubert and his famously manic bursts of productivity.

Night Ferry is Clyne's largest orchestral work to date. (The first two painted panels, representing the opening six minutes of the pieces, are reproduced on page 5. At the far left is the big, black, turbulent wave that was the starting image for

the piece, both visually and musically.) This is the first of her works to be performed by the Chicago Symphony since she became one of our Mead Composers-in-Residence last season.

Clyne was born in London and raised in the U.K.—she wrote and performed her first fully notated piece for flute and piano at the age of eleven—and she also has lived and worked in Edinburgh, Ontario, and New York City. She holds degrees from Edinburgh University and the Manhattan School of Music. Clyne is now a full-time Chicagoan. Her comments on *Night Ferry* begin on the following page.

Anna Clyne on *Night Ferry*

I come to ferry you hence
across the tide
To endless night, fierce fires
and shramming cold.

—Dante

To those who by the dint of
glass and vapour,
Discover stars, and sail in the
wind's eye

—Byron

Night Ferry is music of voyages, from stormy darkness to enchanted worlds. It is music of the conjurer and setter of tides, the guide through the “ungovernable and dangerous.” Exploring a winding path between explosive turbulent chaoticism and chamber lyricism, this piece weaves many threads of ideas and imagery. These stem from Riccardo Muti’s suggestion that I look to Schubert for inspiration, as *Night Ferry* will be premiered with the Entr’acte no. 3 from *Rosamunde* and his Symphony no. 9 (*Great*).

The title, *Night Ferry*, came from a passage in Seamus Heaney’s “Elegy” for Robert Lowell, an American poet who, like Schubert, suffered from manic-depression:

You were our Night Ferry
thudding in a big sea,
the whole craft ringing
with an armourer’s music
the course set wilfully across
the ungovernable and dangerous

More specifically, Schubert suffered from cyclothymia, a form of manic-depression that is characterized by severe mood swings, ranging from agonizing depression to hypomania, a mild form of mania characterized by an elevated mood and often associated with lucid thoughts and heightened creativity. This illness sometimes manifests in rapid shifts between the two states and also in periods of mixed states, whereby symptoms of both extremes are present. This illness shadowed Schubert throughout his adulthood, and it impacted and inspired his art dramatically. His friends report that in its most troublesome form, he suffered periods of “dark despair and violent anger.” Schubert asserted that whenever he wrote songs of love, he wrote songs of pain, and whenever he wrote songs of pain, he wrote songs of love. Extremes were an organic part of his makeup.

In its essence, *Night Ferry* is a sonic portrait of voyages; voyages within nature and of physical, mental, and emotional states.

I decided to try a new process in creating this work—simultaneously painting the music whilst writing it. On my wall, I taped seven large canvases, side by side, horizontally, each divided into three subsections. This became my visual timeline for the duration of the music. In correlation to composing the music, I painted from left to right, moving forward through time. I painted a section, then composed a section, and vice versa, intertwining the two in the creative process.

The process of unraveling the music visually helped to spark ideas for musical motifs, development, orchestration, and, in particular, structure. Similarly, the music would also give direction to color, texture, and form. Upon the canvas, I layered paint; charcoal; pencil; pen; ribbon; gauze; snippets of text from Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*; fragments of Gustav Doré's illustrations for this wonderfully evocative poem; and a selection of quotes from artists afflicted with, and blessed by, this fascinating illness.

The first text written on the canvas, to the far left side, in the bottom left corner reads "from a slow and powerful root . . . somewhere on the sea floor." These are a couple of lines, quoted out of order, from Rumi's poem "Where Everything Is Music." Copied below is a passage from this beautiful poem, in translation by Coleman Barks. His words unite the profound depth, power, and parallels of nature and the human existence as conveyed in Heaney's image of Lowell as a "Night Ferry."

We have fallen into the place
where everything is music . . .

This singing art is sea foam.
The graceful movements come
from a pearl
somewhere on the ocean floor.

Poems reach up like spindrift
and the edge
of driftwood along the beach,
wanting!

They derive
from a slow and powerful root
that we can't see

In addition to the above, I also found inspiration from the extraordinary power of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Maestro Muti's baton, and also the unique voices of the individual musicians within the orchestra. Writing for an orchestra is usually an anonymous endeavor, but I am in the fortunate position of knowing the musicians and their musical voices through this residency. I found myself not writing solely for the instruments, but for the specific musicians of the CSO. Thank you to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for this wonderful opportunity. ■



Franz Schubert

Symphony No. 9 in C Major, D. 944 (Great)

When Franz Schubert died at the age of thirty-one, the legal inventory of his property listed three cloth dress coats, three frock coats, ten pairs of trousers, nine waistcoats, one hat, five pairs of shoes, two pairs of boots, four shirts, nine neckerchiefs and pocket handkerchiefs, thirteen pairs of socks, one sheet, two blankets, one mattress, one featherbed cover, and one counterpane [bedspread]. “Apart from some old music besides,” the report concluded, “no belongings of the deceased are to be found.”

Some old music, as it turned out, referred to a few used music books and not to his manuscripts. Those were with his dear friend Franz von Schober, who later entrusted them to Schubert’s brother Ferdinand. No one, it appears,

quite understood their value. In late 1829, Ferdinand sold countless songs, piano works, and chamber music to Diabelli & Co.—who took its time publishing them—leaving the symphonies, operas, and masses to sit untouched on his shelves at home. Finally, in 1835, he enlisted the help of Robert Schumann, then editor of the prestigious *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. The paper ran a list of “Franz Schubert’s larger posthumous works” available for sale. There was little response.

On New Year’s Day 1837, Robert Schumann found himself in Vienna and thought to go to the Währing Cemetery to visit the graves of Beethoven and Schubert, whose stones were separated by only two others. On his way home, he remembered that Ferdinand still lived in Vienna and decided to pay

COMPOSED

1825–26

FIRST PERFORMANCE

March 21, 1839,
Leipzig, Germany. Felix
Mendelssohn conducting

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

December 18,
1891, Auditorium
Theatre. Theodore
Thomas conducting

MOST RECENT

CSO PERFORMANCE

April 25, 2009,
Orchestra Hall. Bernard
Haitink conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes, two oboes, two
clarinets, two bassoons, two
horns, two trumpets, three
trombones, timpani, strings

APPROXIMATE

PERFORMANCE TIME

50 minutes

CSO RECORDINGS

1940. Frederick Stock
conducting. Columbia

1977. Carlo Maria
Giulini conducting.
Deutsche Grammophon

1983. James Levine conduct-
ing. Deutsche Grammophon

him a visit. Here is Schumann's own famous account:

He [Ferdinand] knew of me because of that veneration for his brother which I have so often publicly expressed; told me and showed me many things. . . . Finally, he allowed me to see those treasured compositions of Schubert's which he still possesses. The sight of this hoard of riches thrilled me with joy; where to begin, where to end! Among other things, he drew my attention to the scores of several symphonies, many of which have never as yet been heard, but were shelved as too heavy and turgid.

There, among the piles, lay a heavy volume of 130 pages, dated March 1828 at the top of the first sheet. The manuscript, including the date and a number of corrections, is entirely in Schubert's hand, which often appears to have been flying as fast as his pen could go. The work, a symphony in C, Schubert's last and greatest, had never been performed.

Robert Schumann was a thoughtful, perceptive man, and an unusually astute judge of music—he was among the very first to appreciate Schubert's instrumental writing—but it's difficult to know if even he, at first, understood the significance of his discovery. His well-known written account comes years later, after the symphony's first performances, but on that first day of 1837, in Ferdinand's study

in a Viennese suburb, he must have been simply dumbstruck.

He knew a work of genius when he saw one, however, and he quickly sent it off to the director of the Gewandhaus concerts in Leipzig, where Mendelssohn conducted the first performance on March 21, 1839. There, in Schumann's words, it “was heard, understood, heard again, and joyously admired by almost everyone.”

The facts argue that it was hardly “joyously admired,” and that perhaps it was understood only by Schumann and Mendelssohn. In his boundless enthusiasm, Schumann fails to mention that it was extensively cut for the performance, but he is surely right in wondering how long it “might have lain buried in dust and darkness” if it weren't for his efforts.

Still, it was slow to conquer. When just the first two movements were programmed in Vienna later that year, an aria from *Lucia di Lammermoor* was wedged between them to soften the blow of so much serious music. Performances planned for Paris and London in the early 1840s were canceled after irate orchestra members refused to submit to its difficulties. The symphony reached London in 1856, but in odd installments: the first three movements were played one week and movements two through four the next.

Eventually, though, Schumann's verdict reigned, and he was recognized not only for his fortuitous discovery, but for his sharp-sighted assessment. Schumann spoke, famously, of the symphony's

“heavenly length,” the very quality many contemporary listeners found trying, trusting only Beethoven to stretch their patience. Schumann had an answer for that, too, insisting that Schubert “never proposed to continue Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, but, an indefatigable artist, he continually drew from his own creative resources” Like Beethoven, but in his own quite individual way, Schubert was forging ahead into music’s dark unknown. Schumann demands our sympathies:

All must recognize that it reveals to us something more than beautiful song, mere joy and sorrow, such as music has always expressed in a hundred ways; it leads us into regions which—to our best recollection—we had never before explored.

The passage of time has helped audiences embrace both Schumann’s enthusiasm and the extensiveness of Schubert’s concept. Time and research also have put the work in its proper slot among Schubert’s 998 compositions—the final count of Otto Erich Deutsch, whose indispensable catalog (1950) assigns a D number to each work. And we now know something that even Deutsch didn’t realize: this is the supposedly lost symphony of 1825 (which Deutsch assigns number 849), sketched at Gmunden on a summer outing. Later, when Schubert wrote out the full score in fair copy, he dated the manuscript March 1828. To that, later

generations added a subtitle, *Great* (to distinguish it from the shorter sixth symphony, also in C major), and Deutsch a number, 944.

As for the music, many earlier writers, including Schumann and Donald Tovey, have written eloquently and at considerable—if not heavenly—length of this symphony’s greatness. Today the music more easily speaks for itself. Schubert’s broad canvas is no longer thought oversized, and his peerless, ineffable way with a melody can carry the new listener through many difficulties. (Schumann is particularly reassuring in this regard: “the composer has mastered his tale, and . . . in time, its connections will all become clear.”)

The first movement begins with an *Andante* of such weight and nobility that it’s inadequately described as an introduction. That bold—yet quiet—opening horn call has a marked influence on many of the *allegro* themes to come, and then returns, at the movement’s end, loudly proclaiming its success. The entire *Allegro* reveals a sweeping rhythmic vitality unparalleled in Schubert’s work.

The slow movement sings of tragedy, which later raised its voice in Schubert’s *Winterreise* song cycle and surfaces again and again in the music of his last years. Seldom has Schubert’s fondness for shifting from the major to the minor mode carried such weight; here each hopeful thought is ultimately contradicted, gently but decisively. There’s a sublime moment when the horn, as if from the distance, quietly

calls everything into question with the repeated tolling of a single note. And then later, Schubert, like Gretchen in one of his most famous songs, builds inexorably to a climax so wrenching that everything stops before sputtering back to life.

The scherzo and its lovely trio midsection, with their wealth of dance tunes, remind us that Schubert would gladly improvise dance music for others, while he, with his poor eyesight and unfortunate height (barely five feet) sat safely at the piano all night.

Schubert launches his finale with the kind of energetic, fearless music

that appears to charge onward with only an occasional push from the composer. But Schubert, like Mozart, is a master of deceptive simplicity, luring unsuspecting performers into countless pitfalls and allowing generations of listeners to cherish the image of the brilliant composer—all inspiration and no sweat. ■

Phillip Huscher is the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.