Philadelphia Youth Orchestra
Louis Scaglione • Music Director
Presents

PHILADELPHIA YOUTH ORCHESTRA
KIMMEL CENTER CONCERT SERIES
Louis Scaglione • Conductor

Sunday • November 17 • 2013 • 3:00 p.m.
Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts
Verizon Hall
**Philadelphia Youth Orchestra Kimmel Center Series**

**Philadelphia Youth Orchestra**  
Louis Scaglione • Conductor

The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts • Verizon Hall  
Sunday, November 17, 2013 • 3:00 p.m.

**PROGRAM**

**Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55 – Eroica**  
Ludwig van Beethoven

I. Allegro con brio  
II. Marcia funebre: Adagio assai  
III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace  
IV. Finale: Allegro molto

**INTERMISSION**

**Tableaux d'une Exposition**  
Modest Mussorgsky

Promenade  
1. Gnomus  
2. Il vecchio castello  
3. Tuileries  
4. Bydlo  
5. Ballet des poussins dans leurs coques  
6. Samuel Goldenberg und Schmuyle  
7. Limoges – Le Marché  
8. Catacombe – Sepulcrum Romanum, Cum mortuis in lingua mortua  
9. La Cabane sur des pattes de poule – Baba Yaga  
10. La grande porte de Kiev

**La Valse**  
Maurice Ravel

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Latecomers will not be seated until an appropriate time in the concert.  
The use of photographic and recording equipment is strictly prohibited.  
As a courtesy to the performers and fellow concert-goers,  
please disconnect all cell phones prior to the performance.
Philadelphia Youth Orchestra • 2013–2014

Violin I
Austin Haley Berman
  Concertmaster
Mike Congzhou Sha
Helenmarie Vassiliou
Jason Frederic Herrmann
Daniel J. Kim
Allan W. Wang
Keoni Bolding
Jason C.S. Vassiliou
Patrick Fei
Daniel Joseph Angstadt
Asher Edward Wulfman
Clare Sooyeon Choi
Asher Samuele Goldfinger
Samuel W. Wang
May Wang
Daniel H. Jang
Nathan H. Lowman
Sean Alexander Bennett
Daniel Liu
Grace Lee
Ethan Zhao
Michelle Cheng
Austina Carolyn Lin
Marius Sebastian Sander

Violin II
Bartholomew Frederick Shields *
  Viola
Joseph Burke *
  Puneth Prapanasad
Franco L. Yugga
Michael A. Flynn
Inez J. Yu
Akinola O. Sogunro
Grace Chu
Lauren Marie Gaston
Kyan Shaun Littlejohn
Andrew David Michie
Phoebe Hu
Sarah S. Jang
Saagar Subash Asnani

Viola
Maria Terese Dell’Orefice
  Philip R. Johnson
  Tristan D. Maidment
  H.A. Isaac Linton
  Elizabeth Carmen Morgan
  Dennis Woo
  Andrew Z. Guo
  Jeffrey Chang
  Lawrence Weizhong Feng
  Kyle Joseph Michie
  Dagny Moll Barone
  Brian Monroe Moser
  Vilme Joselin
  Anita Tenjarla
  Mei Mei McDowell
  Albert Chang
  Caroline Dwyr Jones
  Alem Ballard
  Annelie Lauren Althouse
  Ayyay Kuchibotla
  Caleb Siyuan Wang
  Luke Kyungchon Kim
  Abigail Y. Hong

Violoncello
Bartholomew Frederick Shields *
  Anne Catherine Lin
  Edward Pyun
  Elizabeth Y. Lee
  Andrew Ge
  Noah Gabriel Diggs
  Chad Matthew Porreca
  Daniel J. Kim
  Eunice D. Ju
  Daniel T. Kim
  Geana Florence Snart
  Michael Li
  Seujung An
  Janis Dawn Bates
  Eunteeak An
  Sonia Kim
  Cindy Yeo
  Richard Ni

Double Bass
Patrick Paul Nugent *
  Troy Rudy
  Markus Steven Lang
  Bennett Todd Norris
  Nova M. Friedman
  Vincent Luciano
  Matthew Christopher Troiani
  Olivia Rae Steinmetz

Flute/Piccolo
Zahra Osman Ahmed
  Jodie Barasatian *
  Lavi Ben-Dor
  Girim Angela Choi
  Hyerin Kim

Oboe/English Horn
Nina Haijin Cheng
  Claudia Kassner
  Alexander N. Kim
  Jonathan S. Cohen *
  Tanavi Prabhu

Clarinet/Bass Clarinet
Gareth Thomas Haynes
  David Kim *
  Matthew No
  Justine Zhang

Bassoon/Contra Bassoon
Rebecca Gayle Krown *
  Miles Joseph Shore
  Zachary Spector
  Lauren Milewski

French Horn
Libby B. Ando
  Gregory G. Greene *
  Mary McGahey
  Jeremy Middleman
  Lawrence Jay Robinson

Trumpet
Nathan Peter Korsen
  James K. McAloon, Jr.
  Lucas Ty Ranieri *
  Di Yue

Trombone
Jeremy Cohen
  Thomas Lelache
  Jeffrey A. Sharoff
  James B. Tobias *

Tuba
Carolyn Marie Tillstrom *

Percussion
Tyler J. Heffron
  William James Higgins
  William Samuel Markowitz
  Ryan M. McHenry
  Amanda Liu
  David W. Lu *
  Jonathan Michael Tomaro

Harp
Elizabeth Bawley *
  Helen Gerhold *

Piano/Celeste
Christine Yeji Kim *

* Section Leader
+ Guest Musician
Winds, brass, percussion
rotate seating
The unrivaled status of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra is forged by its exceptional leadership. Maestro Louis Scaglione is the President and Music Director of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra organization and has extensive experience as a musician, educator, conductor and executive. He oversees all of the organization’s programs, and is principal conductor of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra and the Philadelphia Young Artists Orchestra ensembles.

Maestro Scaglione and PYO

Through his leadership, Maestro Scaglione has grown and transformed a youth orchestra created in 1939 as an all-volunteer organization into a nationally recognized, professionally managed institution. His tenure began in 1997 when Joseph Primavera, who served as Philadelphia Youth Orchestra’s Music Director for 51 years, appointed Maestro Scaglione as Conductor of the Philadelphia Young Artists Orchestra. In 1999, Maestro Scaglione was named Associate Conductor of the PYO organization and he became the organization’s first Executive Director in 2001. In 2003, his title was changed to President and he became the organization’s fifth Music Director, President, and CEO after Maestro Primavera retired in 2005.

Maestro Scaglione has taken the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra on several international concert tours, with destinations including The 1998 World Youth Music Forum in Moscow; the Czech Republic and Italy in 2000; and China in 2002. In 2004, the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra performed in eastern and central Europe. In 2007, Maestro Scaglione conducted the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra during its tour of Brazil, where they performed to sold-out venues in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Maestro Scaglione has also arranged musical collaborations for the orchestras with such accomplished soloists as William dePasquale, former Co-Concertmaster of The Philadelphia Orchestra; Gloria dePasquale, cellist, The Philadelphia Orchestra; Michael Ludwig, former Associate Concertmaster of The Philadelphia Orchestra; Ellen dePasquale, former Associate Concertmaster, The Cleveland Orchestra; pianists David Pasbrig and Kenneth Drake; vocal soloists Michelle Johnson, Laura Heimes, Serena Benedetti, Phyllis Lewis-Hale, Richard Zuch, Todd Thomas, Brian Chu, Sandra Carney, James Longacre, Steven Brenfleck, and Monica Ziglar; leading jazz artists Regina Carter, Diane Monroe and John Blake, Jr; and internationally renowned soloists Sarah Chang (violinist), and Susan Starr (pianist).

Philanthropy

Philanthropy is paramount to Maestro Scaglione. For the past 17 years, many performances from the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra organization have helped raise funds for charitable organizations such as Reach Out and Read at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia; MANNA (Metropolitan AIDS Neighborhood Nutritional Alliance); the Voices for Children Foundation; St. James School, Philadelphia; and the Youth Work Foundation of The Union League of Philadelphia.

Professional Affiliations, Appointments and Honors

Because of his work with the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra program, Maestro Scaglione was elected by his peers in 2006 to serve as Chairman of the Youth Orchestra Division Board of the League of American Orchestras, and served on the League’s Board of Directors concurrent with his chairmanship.

In addition, Maestro Scaglione is Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of Encore Series, Inc., the presenter of The Philly Pops; The Archbishop’s Cabinet, Archdioceses of Philadelphia; and Treasurer of Studio Incamminati. Most recent appointments also included Director of The Union League of Philadelphia; and Vice Chairman of The Youth Work Foundation of The Union League of Philadelphia.

Professional Studies

Maestro Scaglione’s professional studies as a conductor have taken him to the Oregon Bach Festival in Eugene, Oregon; the Internationale Bachakademie and the Europäische Musikfest in Stuttgart, Germany; the Classical Music Seminar in Eisenstadt, Austria; and master classes at the conservatory in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Maestro Scaglione graduated with honors from The University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Science in Music Education and holds a Master of Music degree from Temple University. His scholarship and academic excellence have been duly recognized by the top honor societies in the country including the Golden Key National Honor Society, Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society in Education, and Pi Kappa Lambda Honor Society in Music.
Philadelphia Youth Orchestra Organization

Louis Scaglione
President & Music Director

The Philadelphia Youth Orchestra is the Tri-State region’s premier youth orchestra organization for gifted, young, classical musicians and one of the oldest and most highly regarded youth orchestra organizations in the United States. For over 74 years, the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra organization has been providing professional-caliber musical experiences to young instrumentalists, thrilling discriminating audiences in the Greater Philadelphia region and across the globe.

The organization has five programs: Philadelphia Youth Orchestra (PYO), Philadelphia Young Artists Orchestra (PYAO), Bravo Brass, Philadelphia Region Youth String Music (PRYSM), and Tune Up Philly, an after-school program modeled after Venezuela’s El Sistema.

Ranging in age from 6 to 21 years, the musicians of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra organization are selected by competitive audition and come from a seventy-plus-mile radius of Philadelphia encompassing nearly 20 counties within Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. Through advanced orchestra repertoire, students are challenged to perform at professional levels, to strive for advanced musicianship and to achieve superior technical, musical, and personal application.

Former PYO musicians currently hold chairs in most of the top twenty professional orchestras in the United States, with 15 PYO alumni currently serving in The Philadelphia Orchestra. Recent alumni credit the PYO organization in helping them gain admittance to some of the best universities, colleges, and conservatories in the United States.

Philadelphia Youth Orchestra

The Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, the organization’s flagship ensemble, is credited as one of the best in the nation with more than 100 highly skilled, young classical musicians. Unmatched repertoire and concerts in Verizon Hall at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts make this ensemble incomparable. Fourteen international concert tours since 1981 have offered hundreds of talented young musicians the opportunity to perform in many of the world’s great concert halls, where their performances have often been judged comparable to those of professional orchestras. PYO was established in 1939 and is led by PYO organization President and Music Director, Maestro Louis Scaglione.

Philadelphia Young Artists Orchestra

The Philadelphia Young Artists Orchestra is PYO’s sister orchestra, offering symphonic experience and orchestral training to younger classical music students, linking repertoire and theory, and providing the context to learning the standard orchestral repertoire. For over a decade, PYAO has raised money through performances to support organizations including Reach Out and Read at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and the Youth Work Foundation of The Union League of Philadelphia. PYAO was established in 1996 under a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts and is currently conducted by Maestro Louis Scaglione.

Bravo Brass

Bravo Brass is a youth brass ensemble that was created in 1997 to provide advanced musical education and performance opportunities to talented high-school brass students in the Tri-State region. It is the only ensemble of its kind in the area and one of few in the country.

Bravo Brass offers repertoire that challenges advanced brass students to improve their individual and ensemble playing skills. The Bravo Brass teaching faculty, led by Maestro Paul Bryan, Associate Dean of the Curtis Institute of Music, provides valuable musical training through side-by-side rehearsals.

PRYSM

PRYSM (Philadelphia Region Youth String Music) is a string music education program created in 2007 to offer a unique introduction and preparation for string students to acquire and build skills. PRYSM and PRYSM Young Artists provide string ensemble and sectional master class instruction for intermediate and beginning students. Graduates of PRYSM have matriculated successfully into other PYO organization ensembles. The program is directed by Gloria dePasquale, current cellist for and member of the board of directors and executive board of The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Tune Up Philly

Tune Up Philly’s mission is to nurture children in economically disadvantaged and vulnerable neighborhoods by keeping them engaged in success through weekday out-of-school hours music instruction. The PYO organization believes that music education is a powerful vehicle for children to master skills and acquire valuable tools for cooperative learning, teamwork, academic success and to build self-esteem.

The program launched in 2010 at St. Francis de Sales School in southwest Philadelphia. The second year of the program commenced in October 2011 at the People for People Charter School in North Philadelphia, part of the School District of Philadelphia. Tune Up Philly is directed by Delia Raab-Snyder with Paul Smith, Associate Director; and several professional teaching artists serving as faculty.

PYO Organization Leadership

The 2013/2014 Season is Maestro Louis Scaglione’s 17th anniversary with the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra organization. He was appointed the PYO organization’s Music Director in 2005, joined the artistic staff in 1997 as Conductor of the PYAO and was appointed Associate Conductor of PYO in 1999. In addition to his work as a member of the artistic staff, Maestro Scaglione was appointed President of the PYO organization in 2004, having served as the program’s Executive Director for three years.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: Bonn, Germany, 16 December 1770
Died: Vienna, Austria, 26 March 1827

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 55, Eroica

The Eroica Symphony is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, three horns, two trumpets, timpani, and divided strings.

Duration: 47 minutes

Parallel Events of 1804

- New Jersey becomes last northern state to abolish slavery
- Thomas Jefferson is nominated for President
- Aaron Burr fatally shoots Alexander Hamilton
- Lewis & Clark Expedition begins
- Napoleon Bonaparte is crowned emperor of France
- American novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne and farmer equipment manufacturer John Deere are born
- Philosopher Immanuel Kant dies

About the Composer

Beethoven once described himself as someone “who did everything badly except compose music,” and yet he aroused intense personal devotion not only by his music but by his personality, rough and ill-mannered, violent and wrong-headed though his actions often were. The nature of his personality and the fact he was virtually uneducated, gave his musical utterance a simplicity and a sincerity that are without parallel among the great composers. It is these qualities, combined with a strong sense of humanity and an inexhaustible power of striving for the ideal, that have earned him his unique place in affections of music-lovers of all types.

Determined to survive as a free-lance musician, Beethoven eventually ended his career as a performer for full time composing due to the gradual onset of incurable deafness. Dedicating himself mainly to composition from the early 1800s, he supported himself partly by public concerts, in which he presented his works and his skill as an improviser, and partly through dedication fees, sales of publications, and generous gifts from patrons.

Like his musical idol, Handel, Beethoven best represented his own musical era, its most valid embodiment, and at the same time contributed to the overall progression of music in technique and artistic form. Unlike Handel (and even Mozart), however, Beethoven did not have the luxury of speed and instantaneous perfection in his composing; several drafts, versions, and edits were made to most of his works. Certain pieces were often started, interrupted by other projects, and finished much later, at times, several years later. Beethoven’s large output of works in all genres includes much occasional music, some of which is rather mediocre.
Yet in every genre there are works of the greatest mastery; and the finest of them are unmatched in originality and expressiveness. His works include one opera (Fidelio), incidental music (Egmont, The Ruins of Athens), two ballets, nine symphonies, two mass settings (Missa in C and Missa Solemnis), oratorios, including Christ on the Mount of Olives, and other choral works, five piano concertos, a violin concerto, string quartets and quintets, chamber music with winds, sonatas for violin and cello, piano trios, thirty-two piano sonatas, many variation sets for piano, works for solo and duet piano, dance sets, concert arias and songs, and canons.

The Father of Romanticism

What chiefly distinguishes Beethoven from his predecessors, is his uncanny personal connection to his art. Recognized as the father of the Romantic Era in music (the period between 1820 and the early 1900’s), Beethoven’s biography is best told and understood by gaining an insight to his works, particularly his symphonies, string quartets, and Missa Solemnis.

With Romanticism, the art and the artist are inseparable. This has become the driving force that most music has thrived on for the past two centuries, whereby music strives to attain the unattainable, the ideal, the larger than life qualities.

This is not to suggest that Beethoven surrendered the structures and forms established by Haydn and Mozart; rather, Beethoven has become the link between the era of form and reason (Classical era, 1750-1820) and the Romantic era of emotion over reason and “art for art’s sake.”

Beethoven’s own personal ideas, hopes, and faith, or lack thereof, are represented in his symphonic output. He wrestled with his own fate in Symphony No. 5: strove to obtain ideal heroism in Symphony No. 3; and held true to the notion that the city of man can and should be equal to the city of God in Symphony No. 9.

About the Eroica

Late in his career, Beethoven confessed that his greatest and favorite of all his symphonies was, without question, the Eroica.

On May 18, 1804 the Senate of the newly formed French Republic declared Napoleon Bonaparte emperor. On that same date, ironically, Beethoven’s Third Symphony was completed with the title Bonaparte.

The Third Symphony took shape not out of a particular commission or request, but because Beethoven’s hopes of obtaining a position with the Imperial Court in Vienna were destroyed in addition to the composer’s growing loss of his hearing. Beethoven wrote that “I have cursed my Creator and my existence.” It was this frustration with his career and refusal to accept his fate of deafness that seemed to propel Beethoven into a miraculous period of creativity. Beethoven scholar Maynard Solomon suggests that “Beethoven’s crisis and his extraordinary creativity were somehow related, and the former may have been the necessary precondition for the latter.”

Program Notes

There are very few defining moments in musical history that drastically altered the future of music. Within this one work, music was changed virtually overnight. From the outset of two opening chords of the Third Symphony Beethoven broke open the formal structures of the Classical period of Mozart and Haydn and forever changed the course of music. Musicologist Matthew Naughtin explains, that “Beethoven resoundingly set music free from its subservient and utilitarian role as entertainment for the aristocracy and ceremonial window-dressing for the Church, and proved that it was capable of carrying much more serious emotional and intellectual freight.” The Eroica was Beethoven’s artistic creed where the art and the artist were forever linked. Music would never be thought of again as merely commissions, but they were emotional and intellectual creative outlets for composers to voice their thoughts, opinions, and, for Beethoven – ideals.

Beethoven originally intended the Third Symphony to pay homage to Napoleon Bonaparte, the general who had led the struggle for freedom in France and who, for many Europeans, embodied liberty, equality, and justice. Beethoven identified with and admired Bonaparte, who had begun life as a lowly commoner; had fought for freedom and justice, and had exhibited courageous leadership in restoring order in post-Revolutionary France. Beethoven, however, despised Napoleon’s megalomania, arrogance, and obsession with military victory and conquest. Upon hearing the news that Napoleon was to become emperor, Beethoven flew into a rage, screaming that “Is Napoleon, too, nothing more than an ordinary human being? Now he, too, will trample on all the rights of man and indulge only his ambition. He will exalt himself above all others and become a tyrant!”

While the title of the Third Symphony immediately changed from Bonaparte to Eroica (Latin for “heroic”), not a single note of music was altered. Beethoven-the-Romantic attempted to suggest ideals in music that were indeed unachievable; in this case the ideal hero was too ideal to be truly embodied by anyone, even Napoleon. The Eroica Symphony also had the subtitle that read “composed to celebrate the memory of a great man.” Napoleon was certainly not dead, but the image that Beethoven had of the newly crowned emperor was no longer. So while the inspiration for the ideal hero did not measure up, Beethoven’s ideal hero prevailed artistically.

Musically, the Eroica is one Beethoven’s longest works (the major criticism it received at the time of the premiere). The traditional slow introduction of the Classical symphony is replaced by two E-flat major chords that abruptly and unceremoniously burst from the orchestra. The lower strings introduce the opening theme of the first movement and the orchestra builds creating a feeling of restless instability that leads into a softer second theme played by the winds. The main themes (exposition) transition into the second part of the movement (development section) that is equally heroic in both dimension and style. Then Beethoven uses a climatic series of crashing dissonant chords and a melancholy theme in a minor key played by the oboe. After the development, Beethoven brings the movement to a close with an enormous coda section that uses a wealth of thematic resources.

The somber funeral march of the second movement is introduced by the strings until an episode of hope intersects. The original mood returns with rumblings of the basses and an expressive fugue (imitative) ensues. The second movement in many ways is the emotional centerpiece of the
entire Eroica. It is in this movement that the first signs of Romanticism surface. Naughtin suggests that the second movement explores “an emotional palette that ranges from deepest grief and despair through nostalgic yearning and noble acceptance to triumphant joy and back again.” The traditional third movement minuet is replaced by a faster moving triple meter movement—a scherzo (Italian for “joke”), but a scherzo has none of the courtly grace (or aristocratic associations) that comes with the traditional minuet. Beginning with the rustling whisper in the strings and building to a robust, peasant dance coupled with horn calls in the Trio section, the third movement is no less original than the opening two.

For the final movement, Beethoven calls on a melody that he used in three other works: his music for the ballet The Creatures of Prometheus (1801), a piano contra dance of the same year, and the Variations and Fugue on a Theme from Prometheus for piano solo. After a brief storm at the opening of the Finale, Beethoven introduces a simple accompaniment line using plucking strings that evolve into a set of eleven complex variations on a theme and then extended closing section.

Solomon captures the importance of the Eroica best: “It is a portrait of the artist as a hero, stricken by deafness, withdrawn from mankind, conquering his impulses to suicide, struggling against fate, hoping to find, as the composer himself says ‘but one day of pure joy.’” Two centuries later, the effect of the Eroica has not diminished. It continues to astonish with its visions for political peace, and all the while remind us that Beethoven was far more than a composer.

**Program Notes**

**Modeste Mussorgsky**

*About the Composer*

More so than composition or piano playing, Modeste Mussorgsky perfected the art of heavy drinking, which ruined his health, musical career, and eventually his own life. In his short 42 years, the composer completed only one of his compositions – his opera, *Boris Godunov*. Most of Mussorgsky’s contemporaries considered the clumsy, half-educated, and illiterate Mussorgsky to be undisciplined, lacking any musical knowledge, and degraded the world-respected Russian tradition in music that was quickly emerging.

While Mussorgsky could have had a successful career as a pianist and a composer, he spent most of his life working as a government clerk and part-time accompanist. Most of his works were never finished because he would abandon them for drinking. It is known that he attempted to write two piano sonatas (which have disappeared), a symphony that was considered mediocre at best, nearly a half a dozen songs (also vanished), and several unfinished operas.

Mussorgsky’s aim in composition was naturalism and the avoidance of the popular Romantic creed “art for art’s sake.” Consequently, his orchestrations and his harmonies had a roughness to them. Finding it increasingly difficult to deal with the external world, Mussorgsky developed a defensive self-mockery and a bizarre sense of humor. He was overly romantic in that he was morbid, introspective, over-sensitive, and plagued with an inner demon, his drinking, that destroyed his life. Perhaps Mussorgsky was no different than other great Romantic artists stricken with their turmoil—Beethoven and his deafness, Schumann and his insanity, poet John Milton and his blindness, Tchaikovsky and his bouts of depression and sexual confusion, and Brahms and his loneliness, to name a few.

It was Mussorgsky’s colleague, roommate, and close friend Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov that salvaged the music and legacy of Mussorgsky. Convinced that his friend’s awkwardness and illiteracy obscured his genius, Rimsky-Korsakov rewrote most of Mussorgsky’s works, including the opera *Boris Godunov*. Rimsky-Korsakov painted over the raw, overly harsh sounds of Mussorgsky’s original orchestrations, making them more accessible to most audiences. Today, however, it is becoming more popular to perform some of the original harsh orchestrations of Mussorgsky.

*About the Work*

In 1874, Mussorgsky was immersed in composing his huge opera *Khovanshchina* when he received word of a memorial art exhibit of works by the artist and architect Victor Hartmann, who had died a year earlier. Organized by the Russian music critic, Vladimir Stassov, the exhibit was promoted by Stassov and Mussorgsky in memory of their artist friend who had died somewhat unexpectedly at the age of 39. Hartmann’s works included architectural drawings and pictures of scenes that interested Russians throughout the world.
After visiting the gallery where Hartmann's works were displayed, Mussorgsky resolved to pay his own tribute by writing a set of piano pieces inspired by the drawings. Referring to the composition as Hartmann, Mussorgsky wrote to Stassov saying that “My Hartmann is boiling… Sounds and ideas fill the air; and I can barely scribble them down fast enough.” Mussorgsky worked with remarkable speed (uncanny for Mussorgsky) and completed the lengthy set of variations for solo piano on 22 June 1874.

The finished work represented ten of Hartmann's images, a format which might have made for a loose suite of unrelated movements. To unite the independent musical ideas, Mussorgsky wrote a prelude that appears throughout the work. Using this unifying theme, titled “Promenade,” Mussorgsky imagines himself “roving through the exhibition – now leisurely, now briskly – in order to come close to a picture that has attracted my attention, and at times sadly thinking of my departed friend.” The “Promenade” not only ties the whole work together, but it also forms the subject of the suite, incorporating Mussorgsky's own personality and, as the composer states, is “my own physiognomy and peeps out through the work.”

An uneven rhythm serves as the chief characteristic of the “Promenade,” and the “Promenade” becomes the energetic statement that interjects in between the various movements, appearing five times in various guises.

The opening “Promenade” is broken off abruptly by a confrontation with Hartmann’s drawing of a nutcracker in the form of a gnarled, little bow-legged creature, and malevolent old gnome. According to the exhibit organizer, Victor Stassov, the gnome represents “a child plaything, fashioned, after Hartmann’s design in wood, for the Christmas tree at the Artists’ Club.”

Ravel’s choice of instrumentation was inspirational and somewhat unorthodox at the time as well for example, the presentation of the mournful melody of “The Old Castle” by the alto saxophone is as effective as unexpected; and the folk tune heard in “Bydlo” (whose title refers to a three-wheeled cattle cart) is both ponderous and lyrical using the high register of the tuba. It was through this orchestration, and through Koussevitzky’s frequent and brilliant performances, that Mussorgsky’s music mirrors the gruesome gnome’s movement with awkward, limping sounds.

Several of Hartmann’s works in the 1874 exhibit were fantastic and bizarre, which fascinated and appealed to Mussorgsky, and influenced which of Hartmann’s works would appear in Pictures at an Exhibition. Mussorgsky did not attempt to be strictly faithful to the visual model in every instance, but he took liberties to underscore the personal nature of his ties with Hartmann and his feelings on the loss of his friend. The use of the Promenade, which introduces the suite, incorporates Mussorgsky’s own personality and, as the composer states, is “my own physiognomy and peeps out through the work.”

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It is something in the style of the fabled Nutcracker; the nuts being insert into the gnome’s mouth. The gnome accompanies his droll movements with savage shrieks.” Mussorgsky’s music mirrors the gruesome gnome’s movement with awkward, limping sounds.

The “Promenade” returns in a more wistful mood, leading to a water-color painting of a medieval castle where a troubadour sings a melancholy ballad on a lute. While the Il vecchio castello (The Old Castle) was not one of Hartmann’s works included in the exhibition, it presumably refers to one of several architectural watercolors created during a trip Hartmann took to Italy. The “Promenade” leads into a wispy little scherzo, the Tuileries, which reminds listeners of the perspective feeling of children. Mussorgsky presents a lively, high-spirited game and chase to portray the children playing and quarreling on a path in Tuileries Gardens in Paris. Both Mussorgsky and Ravel have tapped into the playfulness of children in other works: Mussorgsky in his song-cycle L’Enfant et les sortileges, Ravel in his Mother Goose Suite and L’Enfant et les sortileges.

Mussorgsky explained to Stassov that Hartmann’s picture Bydlo (Polish for “cattle”) representations ox-drawn wagon with enormous wheels, but added that “the wagon is not inscribed on the music.” Instead, Mussorgsky’s powerful and ponderous music gives appropriate weightiness to the huge beasts drawing the cart. Based on the ballet Trilby, Hartmann’s Ballet of the Chicks in their Shells is a sketch of a costume design for one of the scenes in the ballet that was choreographed by the renowned Marius Petipa. In the scene of the ballet, children dance as baby canaries try to break out of their shells. Preceded by a tenuous, fluttery statement of the “Promenade,” first in the woodwinds and then in the strings, Mussorgsky creates a silly depiction of the scene that seems right out of Saint-Saëns’ Carnival of the Animals.
Mussorgsky combined Hartmann’s sketches of two men in the Sandomierz ghetto, one obviously well-to-do and full of himself, the other just as clearly little more than a beggar. “Samuel” Goldenberg and Schmuyle has quotation marks around the pretentious German form of the rich man’s name (actually the same name as the poor man’s Yiddish name), and was originally regarded as being so blatantly anti-Semitic that Stassov altered the title before Mussorgsky’s score was published, changing the title to “Two Polish Jews, One Rich, and the Other Poor.” By whatever title, the movement is more of a broad-based study in contrasts between pomposity and self-importance versus timidity and subservience. In Mussorgsky’s inventive setting, the two characters are in conversation and seem to be quarreling. Ravel depicts the more pompous one by exaggerated, sweeping gestures of the strings and the more obsequious character by a bizarre trumpet solo.

Women gossiping at The Marketplace at Limoges is the focus of the next work in the parade of Hartmann’s pictures. Mussorgsky captures the scene in another light, frenzied scherzo that is complimentary to the earlier movement of children playing in the Paris garden. Mussorgsky jots some imagination in the margin of his manuscript to capture the gossip. “Great news! Monsieur de Puissangeout has just recovered his cow…Mademoiselle de Remboursac has just acquired a beautiful new set of teeth, while Monsieur de Pantaleon’s nose, which is in his way, is as much as ever the color of a peony.” Interestingly, Ravel omits the “Promenade” that originally preceded The Marketplace at Limoges.

With a great whirl wind by Ravel’s orchestration, Mussorgsky plunges directly into The Catacombs, Sepulchrum romanum (Roman Graves). Hartmann’s sketch shows a view of the artist, lantern in hand, examining the ancient Roman catacombs in Paris, where he sees several skulls. In his piano score, Mussorgsky wrote the title in faulty Latin, in which he tried to explain (in even worse Latin) the heading of the ghostly procession, Mussorgsky plunges directly into With a great whirl wind by Ravel’s orchestra. Without pause, the music takes us to a grand finale in a massive hymn of Thanksgiving. The Great Gate of Kiev is an architectural sketch Hartmann submitted in a competition held by the city of Kiev to erect a monument in order to commemorate Tsar Alexander II’s escape from assassination. Even though the gates were never built, Hartmann’s design of tinted brick seems to pale in comparison with Mussorgsky’s vision for the finale. Mussorgsky favored this sketch above the others and drew from it the inspiration for some of his most powerful music. The “Promenade” returns in a majestic and jubilant ending section where the spirit of almost liturgical chants is evoked, suggesting a phantom chorus intoning a Russian hymn of praise to the glorious heroes of times past.

Between Mussorgsky and Ravel, Pictures at an Exhibition is far more than a musical depiction of a walking tour through a museum, but a musical exhibition in its own right that ranges from sublime to colossal, built from a century of musical expertise.
Program Notes

About the Composer

There are very few composers who have the true gift of orchestrating a piece of music like a painting—complete with invention, craft, precision, and perfection of color. Maurice Ravel, one of the most quintessentially French composers, possessed the rare ability to express the ultimate goal of any artistic language—to capture the inexplicable or inexpressible through the delicate balance of craft and inspiration.

Like many other French artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Ravel was fascinated by Spanish culture, for Ravel’s mother was Basque and spent most of her youth in Madrid. The influence from the exotic lifestyles of Spain balanced well with Ravel’s love of precision, sense of symmetry, order, and perfection that came from his father’s engineering background.

As a student of Gabriel Fauré, the true predecessor of the musical impressionist era of Debussy, Ravel learned the intricate and rich colors of harmony and orchestration at the Paris Conservatoire. Yet despite his seemingly perfect orchestral works, Ravel did not want to be recognized for his dazzling precision of technique; for Ravel that meant a dry, detached, and artificial rather than warmly human and inspired image.

What Ravel wanted his peers and audience to remember was that his technique was merely a means to an end, and his music reveals all the tenderness and human emotion that lies inside the very private composer. Ravel proclaimed that “music made only with technique and intellect loses its special quality as the expression of human feeling. Music should always be first emotional and only after that intellectual.”

Ravel, who never married, remained a reserved and emotionally quiet man. Accordingly, any account of his life, to a large extent, is a list of external events. He suffered a tragic end for he was stricken with severe insomnia and anxiety, and rapidly lost the ability of certain physical movements (known today as Pick’s disease) which prevented him from composing.

Ironically, the composer who kept most of his inner emotions trapped inside himself became trapped artistically from expressing any of his musical ideas. Upon listening to his own music the year he died, Ravel said in tears: “I’ve still so much music in my head.”

Ravel, in addition to orchestrating several other composers’ works (such as Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition), is best known for his two operas, L’Heure espagnole and L’enfant et les sortilèges, the ballet Daphnis et Chloé (considered his best work), two piano concerti, two violin sonatas, a string quartet, a piano trio, several solo piano works and songs, and orchestral works including La Valse, Rapsodie Espagnole, Schéhérazade, and the very popular Boléro.

Program Notes

About the Work

As with so many artists, World War I drastically rocked the life, outlook, and emotional well-being of Ravel. As a loyal Frenchmen, Ravel served as a truck and ambulance driver on the front line in battle. In addition to physical injuries, he suffered a prolonged depression over the brutality he witnessed. Every aspect of European life was forever changed because of the “war to end all wars.” As the “Roaring 20s” emerged with overly optimistic, escapist entertainment, many artists first needed to express an emotional cleansing.

Ravel’s La Valse is one of most poignant post-War works that demonstrates the collapse of European innocence. Originally composed for two pianos, La Valse was first performed at the private residence of French painter Misia Sert for world-renowned choreographer Serge Diaghilev, and composers Francis Poulenc and Igor Stravinsky. Ravel hoped that Diaghilev (who had set other music of Ravel’s to dance) would produce La Valse as a ballet. “A masterpiece, but not a ballet,” said Diaghilev. “It’s a portrait of a ballet—a painting of a ballet.” In addition, he said it would be too expensive of a production. Stravinsky did not say a word, and Ravel simply picked up his music and left. He never forgave Diaghilev, and the two never collaborated again.

In April 1920, the two piano version of La Valse made its first public performance, and seven weeks later the orchestral version of the work premiered in Paris. Ravel actually began sketching music of La Valse in 1906 as a tribute to waltzes (what Ravel referred to as “useless occupation” of social dancing) and homage to “Waltz king” Johann Strauss. Waltzes not only were the most popular form of dance and entertainment prior to the World War I, but they symbolized Vienna as the mecca of cultural life. As every facet of life changed after the war, so did the entire concept of La Valse. Ravel now called the work “a kind of apotheosis of the Viennese waltz, which is now mingled in my mind with a fantastic whirl of destiny.”

While the principal theme of La Valse strongly resembles a Strauss waltz, a sense of demise and melancholy slow permeate the work as it progresses (or perhaps digresses). The flowing joyousness of a traditional Viennese waltz easily sweeps the naïve pre-War world back into the present; however, without fail, the panache and courtly past relentlessly crumbles within itself. Ravel explains in his preface to the score:

Viennese waltz rhythm. Drifting clouds allow a restricted vision of waltzing couples. The clouds gradually disperse and we see an immense room filled with a whirling crowd. As the rhythm becomes clear, the scene takes on more illumination, until the light of the chandeliers bursts forth. It takes place in an imperial court about 1855.

In the end, Ravel’s “fantastic whirl of destiny” wonderfully, thrillingly, horrifically, and tragically collapses, and along with it the innocence of Europe.
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