

Thursday, October 16, 8pm  
Friday, October 17, 1:30pm  
Saturday, October 18, 8pm | SPONSORED BY COMMONWEALTH  
WORLDWIDE CHAUFFEURS  
TRANSPORTATION

JAMES LEVINE conducting

TCHAIKOVSKY SYMPHONY NO. 6 IN B MINOR, OPUS 74, PATHÉTIQUE

Adagio—Allegro non troppo  
Allegro con grazia  
Allegro molto vivace  
Adagio lamentoso—Andante  
{ INTERMISSION }

KIRCHNER THE FORBIDDEN

(BSO 125TH ANNIVERSARY COMMISSION/WORLD PREMIERE;  
COMMISSIONED BY THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA,  
JAMES LEVINE, MUSIC DIRECTOR, THROUGH THE GENEROUS  
SUPPORT OF THE ARTHUR P. CONTAS FUND FOR THE  
COMMISSIONING OF NEW WORKS)

SCHUMANN PIANO CONCERTO IN A MINOR, OPUS 54

Allegro affettuoso  
Intermezzo: Andantino grazioso  
Allegro vivace  
MAURIZIO POLLINI

MAURIZIO POLLINI'S APPEARANCES THIS WEEK ARE SUPPORTED BY THE ELFERS FUND  
FOR PERFORMING ARTISTS, ESTABLISHED IN HONOR OF DEBORAH BENNETT ELFERS.

The evening concerts will end about 10:10 and the afternoon concert about 3:40.

### Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

#### Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Opus 74, "Pathétique"

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY was born at Votkinsk, Vyatka Province, on May 7, 1840, and died in St. Petersburg on November 6, 1893. He composed the Sixth Symphony between February 16 and August 31, 1893. The first performance took place in the Hall of Nobles, St. Petersburg, on October 28 that year with Tchaikovsky conducting, nine days before his death. The second performance, with Eduard Nápravník conducting, took place twenty days later in the same hall, as part of a concert given in memory of the composer.

THE SYMPHONY IS SCORED for three flutes (third doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, bass drum, tam-tam, and strings.

During Tchaikovsky's last years, his reputation grew enormously outside of Russia, but he was left prey to deepening inner gloom, since his countrymen rarely recognized his genius. He had, moreover, been shattered by the sudden breaking-off of the strange but profoundly moving epistolary relationship that he had carried on for fourteen years with Nadezhda von Meck, whose financial assistance and understanding had sustained him through difficult times. Though they never met face to face, their relationship was one of the strongest, in its emotional depth, that either of them was ever to experience. She, for unknown reasons, decided to end the correspondence decisively in October 1890; Tchaikovsky never fully recovered from the blow. Another reason for his depression was an old but continuing concern—the constant fear that his homosexuality might become known to the

public at large or to the authorities (which would lead to terrible consequences, since homosexuality was regarded as a crime that might involve serious legal ramifications, including banishment and the loss of his civil rights).

Tchaikovsky was also concerned that he was written out. In 1892 he began a symphony and had even partly orchestrated it when he decided to discard it entirely. (Completed by a Russian musicologist some fifty years ago, it was then performed as Tchaikovsky's "Seventh Symphony"; the composer's self-critical view was right.) But a trip to western Europe in December brought a warm reunion: he visited his old governess, whom he had not seen for over forty years. The two days he spent with her, reading over many letters from his mother and his brothers and sisters, not to mention some of his earliest musical and literary work, carried him off into a deep nostalgia. As the composer wrote to his brother Nikolai, "There were moments when I returned into the past so vividly that it became weird, and at the same time sweet, and we both had to keep back our tears."

The retrospective mood thus engendered may have remained even though he returned to Russia at low ebb: "It seems to me that my role is finished for good." Yet the recent opportunity to recall his childhood, when combined with his fundamentally pessimistic outlook, may well have led to the program for the work that suggested itself to him and captured his attention on the way home. Within two weeks of writing the foregoing words, Tchaikovsky was hard at work on what was to become his masterpiece. Home again, he wrote in mid-February to a nephew that he was in an excellent state of mind and hard at work on a new symphony with a program—"but a program that will be a riddle for everyone. Let them try and solve it." He left only hints: "The program of this symphony is completely saturated with myself and quite often during my journey I cried profusely." The work, he said, was going exceedingly well. On March 24 he completed the sketch of the second movement—evidently the last to be outlined in detail—and noted his satisfaction at the bottom of the page: "O Lord, I thank Thee! Today, March 24th, completed preliminary sketch well!!!"

The orchestration was interrupted until July because he made a trip to Cambridge to receive an honorary doctorate (see photo on page 43), an honor that he shared with Saint-Saëns, Boito, Bruch, and Grieg (who was ill and unable to be present). He was presented for the degree with a citation in Latin that appropriately singled out the "*ardor fervidus*" and the "*languor subtristis*" of his music. When he returned home he found that the orchestration would be more difficult than he expected: "Twenty years ago I used to go full speed ahead and it came out very well. Now I have become cowardly and unsure of myself. For instance, today I sat the whole day over two pages—nothing went as I wanted it to." In another letter he noted, "It will be...no surprise if this symphony is abused and unappreciated—that has happened before. But I definitely find it my very best, and in particular the most sincere of all my compositions. I love it as I have never loved any of my musical children."

Though Tchaikovsky was eager to begin an opera at once, the Sixth Symphony was to be the last work he would complete. The premiere on October 28 went off well despite the orchestra's coolness toward the piece, but the audience was puzzled by the whole—not least by its somber ending. Rimsky-Korsakov confronted Tchaikovsky at intermission and asked whether there was not a program to that expressive music; the composer admitted that there was, indeed, a program, but he refused to give any details. Five days later Tchaikovsky failed to appear for breakfast; he complained of indigestion during the night, but refused to see a doctor. His situation worsened, and in the evening his brother Modest sent for medical help anyway. For several days Tchaikovsky lingered on, generally in severe pain. He died at three o'clock in the morning on November 6.

Though it is generally believed that Tchaikovsky's death was the result of cholera brought on by his drinking a glass of unboiled water during an epidemic, the extraordinarily expressive richness of the Sixth Symphony, and particularly that of its finale, has inspired a great deal of speculation regarding the composer's demise. It has even been suggested—in accordance with a theory advocated by the Russian musicologist Aleksandra Orlova and then taken up by the English Tchaikovsky scholar David Brown in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980)—that Tchaikovsky poisoned himself fearing denunciation to the Tsar as a homosexual by a duke with whose nephew he had struck up a friendship. Other writers have asserted that the music was composed because of the composer's premonitions of impending death. For now, as Roland John Wiley writes in the revised

New Grove (2001): “The polemics over his death have reached an impasse...We do not know how Tchaikovsky died.”

As to the composer’s alleged “premonitions of impending death,” one finds from a perusal of his letters that, until the last few days, he was clearly in better spirits than he had enjoyed for years, confident and looking forward to future compositions. The expressive qualities of the Sixth Symphony follow from his two previous symphonies, which are also concerned in various ways with Fate. The Fourth and Fifth symphonies had offered two views of man’s response to Fate—on the one hand finding solace in the life of the peasants, on the other struggling to conquest, though through a somewhat unconvincing victory. In the Sixth Symphony, Fate leads only to despair.

Tchaikovsky never did reveal a formal program to the symphony, though a note found among his papers is probably an early draft for one:

The ultimate essence of the plan of the symphony is LIFE. First part—all impulsive passion, confidence, thirst for activity. Must be short. (Finale DEATH—result of collapse.) Second part love; third disappointments; fourth ends dying away (also short).

In the end, all of this (and any possible elaborations of it) remained the composer’s secret. The title that it now bears came only the day after the first performance, when the composer, having rejected “A Program Symphony” (since he had no intention of revealing the program) and Modest’s suggestion of “Tragic,” was taken with his brother’s alternative suggestion, “Pathetic.” Modest recalled his brother’s reaction: “‘Excellent, Modya, bravo, *Pathetic!*’ and before my eyes he wrote on the score the title by which it has since been known.” The title gives a misimpression in English, where “pathetic” has become a debased slang word, almost totally losing its original sense of “passionate” or “emotional,” with a hint of its original Greek sense of “suffering.” In French it still retains its significance. And the symphony is, without a doubt, the most successful evocation of Tchaikovsky’s emotional suffering, sublimated into music of great power.

The slow introduction begins in the “wrong” key but works its way around to B minor and the beginning of the Allegro non troppo. The introduction proves to foreshadow the main thematic material, which is a variant of the opening figure in the bassoon over the dark whispering of the double basses. The great climax to which this builds is a splendid preparation for one of Tchaikovsky’s greatest tunes, a falling and soaring melody that is worked to a rich climax and then dies away with a lingering afterthought in the clarinet. An unexpected orchestral crash begins the tense development section, which builds a wonderful sense of energy as the opening thematic material returns in a distant key and only gradually works round to the tonic. The romantic melody, now in the tonic B major, is especially passionate.

The second movement is quite simply a scherzo and Trio, but it has a couple of special wrinkles of its own. Tchaikovsky was one of the great composers of the orchestral waltz (think of the third movement of the Fifth Symphony); here he chose to write a waltz that happens to be in 5/4 time! According to the conservative Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick: “This disagreeable meter upsets both listener and player.” But the odd rhythmic twist is more than compensated for by the extraordinary grace of the music.

The third movement is a brilliant march, beginning with rushing busy triplets that alternate with a crisp march melody that bursts out into a climactic full orchestral version, a momentary triumph. That triumph comes to a sudden end with the beginning of the final movement, which bears the unprecedented marking “Adagio lamentoso.” The first theme is divided between the two violin parts in such a way that neither first nor second violin part alone makes sense, but when played together they result in a simple, expressive, descending melody. The second theme, a more flowing Andante, builds to a great orchestral climax exceeded only by the climax of the opening material that follows. This dies away and a single stroke of the tam-tam, followed by a soft and sustained dark passage for trombones and tuba, brings in the “dying fall” of the ending, the second theme descending into the lowest depths of cellos and basses.

Ultimately, of course, Tchaikovsky's farewell vision is a somber one, congruent with his own pessimistic view of life. But it is worth remembering—especially given all the stories that whirl around the composer—that his art, and especially the *Pathétique* Symphony, was a means of self-transcendence, a way of overcoming the anguish and torment of his life. It has sometimes been assumed in the past that Tchaikovsky chose to revel in his misery; but in the Sixth Symphony, at least, he confronted it, recreated it in sound, and put it firmly behind him.

Steven Ledbetter

STEVEN LEDBETTER *was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998 and now writes program notes for other orchestras and ensembles throughout the country.*

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE *of the “Pathétique” Symphony took place on March 16, 1894, at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, with Walter Damrosch conducting.*

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCES *of the “Pathétique” Symphony were led by Emil Paur on December 28 and 29, 1894, subsequent BSO performances being given by Paur, Wilhelm Gericke, Karl Muck, Max Fiedler, Pierre Monteux, Serge Koussevitzky, Richard Burgin, Charles Munch, Ferenc Fricsay, Robert Shaw, Erich Leinsdorf, David Zinman, Seiji Ozawa, Michael Tilson Thomas, Christoph Eschenbach, Leonard Bernstein, Yuri Temirkanov, Mariss Jansons, Mstislav Rostropovich, Semyon Bychkov, Kurt Masur, Hans Graf (the most recent Tanglewood performance, on July 30, 2005), and Robert Spano (the most recent subscription performances, in October 2007).*

Leon Kirchner

“The Forbidden”

LEON KIRCHNER was born on January 24, 1919, and lives in New York City. His orchestral work “The Forbidden” was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, James Levine, Music Director, through the generous support of the Arthur P. Contas Fund for the Commissioning of New Works, and is a BSO 125th anniversary commission. These are the world premiere performances. This work is the third in a triptych of pieces by the same name: the first for solo piano (aka Piano Sonata No. 3; 2003), and the second for string quartet (String Quartet No. 4; 2006).

“THE FORBIDDEN” IS SCORED for two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, two trombones, bass trombone, tuba, percussion (four players suggested: I. vibraphone, snare drum, crotales; II. xylophone, snare drum, bass drum, tom-toms, glockenspiel; III. chimes, timpani, piano (doubling celesta), and strings. The duration of the piece is about fourteen minutes (in a single movement).

Leon Kirchner's music entered the repertoire of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1960, when the composer himself—at age forty-one—conducted his Toccata for strings, solo winds, and percussion, which had been premiered by the San Francisco Symphony in 1956. Also in 1956 he was soloist in the first performances of his own Piano Concerto No. 1 with the New York Philharmonic; the Philharmonic had premiered his Sinfonia in 1952. He had begun making a name for himself by the late 1940s, not only as a composer but also as a thoughtful interpreter, as pianist and conductor, of the music of Mozart, Schubert, and others, as well as his own pieces.

Kirchner studied composition with Ernst Toch, Roger Sessions, and Ernest Bloch, among others. His aesthetic was indelibly shaped by his encounters with Schoenberg, with whom he studied music theory at UCLA in the 1930s and in whom he recognized a surpassingly erudite and brilliant musical mind. Although influenced by Schoenberg's twelve-tone compositional technique, Kirchner has never been a strict adherent to any system; his music incorporates methods and materials of his myriad musical loves, from Bach to Stravinsky. His is, fundamentally, a deeply personal voice,

almost invariably of great energy and intensity. Kirchner's role as an educator has had a big impact on generations of musicians, beginning at the University of Southern California and including positions at Mills College (Oakland, CA) and, most importantly, Harvard, where he joined the faculty in 1961, remaining until his retirement in 1989. At Harvard he carried further Schoenberg's completist educational interests, establishing an innovative course combining performance and analysis as well as founding and directing the Harvard Chamber Orchestra. Among the beneficiaries of this instruction who have gone on to become champions of his music are Yo-Yo Ma and the pianist Joel Fan.

Kirchner's music has been recognized with a Naumburg Award (for his Piano Concerto No. 1) and the Pulitzer Prize (for the String Quartet No. 3 with tape, 1967), among other citations. Though he has written comparatively little music for orchestra, that part of his output has impressive provenance. In addition to giving the premieres of his Sinfonia and Piano Concerto No. 1, the New York Philharmonic commissioned and premiered his *Music for Orchestra*. The Philadelphia Orchestra commissioned his *Music for Cello and Orchestra* for Yo-Yo Ma. The Boston Symphony commissioned and premiered his orchestra-and-voice "duo-drama" *Of things exactly as they are*; his *Music for Orchestra II* was commissioned by the New England Conservatory. Other major works include his 1960 Concerto for Violin, Cello, Ten Winds, and Percussion, commissioned for a Fromm Foundation concert at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art that also included the premiere of Elliott Carter's Double Concerto and Milton Babbitt's *Vision and Prayer*. The 1970s were dominated by the composition of his opera *Lily*, based on Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*. Of his chamber works, Kirchner's four string quartets, spanning 1949 to 2007, are a significant addition to the repertoire. The Boston Symphony commissioned his *Music for Twelve*, a *Brandenburg*-like miniature concerto for orchestra, for the Boston Symphony Chamber Players on the occasion of the BSO's centennial. There are also a handful of works for solo piano for such performers as Leon Fleisher and Peter Serkin, and three sonatas (so called), the most recent being Piano Sonata No. 3, *The Forbidden*.

That sonata was the first of three different takes on the same piece, the present orchestral work being the third. The history of the trilogy is a little complicated. As early as fall 2001, BSO Artistic Administrator Anthony Fogg and James Levine—then recently announced as the BSO's future music director—had talked of commissioning an orchestra work from Kirchner, one of a few "wish-list" composers that Levine wanted to work with. The decision was finalized in 2002, its having been decided for logistical purposes (mostly having to do with the composer's schedule) that Kirchner would orchestrate a planned solo piano sonata. The Sonata No. 3 was commissioned by the Joel Fan Foundation for a consortium of pianists, completed in 2003, and premiered by Fan himself in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on November 11, 2006. Between the completion of the sonata and the orchestral version, *The Forbidden* morphed into a string quartet, requested by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and commissioned for the Orion String Quartet. The premiere of the quartet actually preceded that of the sonata, taking place in August 2006 at the La Jolla (CA) Music Society Summerfest. The premiere of the orchestral version of *The Forbidden*, which ultimately became one of the commissions for the BSO's 125th anniversary, had originally been scheduled for January 2006, but logistics, again, forced its postponement. So here we are.

The precedent for such a transformation can be found in the work of composers throughout history, including Bach, Mozart, Schumann, Mahler, Stravinsky, and Copland, etc., etc., who made a practice of recycling, reconfiguring, recontextualizing their own music. (All kinds of artists do this, of course—the short story becomes a play, the painting a print, and so on.) Kirchner has taken this tack on several occasions. His *Music for Orchestra II* grew out of a short piece he had written in 1988 to celebrate the 70th birthday of Leonard Bernstein; his Piano Trio No. 2 is based on *Music for Cello and Orchestra*. Like the String Quartet No. 4, the orchestral version of *The Forbidden* has the same linear structure and contains almost the same harmonic and melodic materials as the Sonata No. 3.

Those materials, as Kirchner has described the piece, are a reconciliation of the tonal language of the past (his beloved predecessors from Bach to Mahler) and new possibilities made imperative by the work of Schoenberg. As the composer explains below, the title "*The Forbidden*" is an allusion to Thomas Mann's 1947 novel *Doctor Faustus*, in which the composer Adrian Leverkühn (a fictional

doppelgänger of Schoenberg) accepts a bargain with the devil, his soul for a period of unparalleled success as a composer.

A few different motifs are audible throughout the fourteen-minute, one-movement piece, characteristically transformed in tempo or register or, in the case of this orchestral score, timbre. These include scale figures, hemiola (clear two-against-three or the reverse), an off-the-beat syncopated figure, and triadic arpeggiation. The sonority of the diminished-seventh chord—functionally invaluable in tonal music—is ubiquitous and lends the work a late-Romantic harmonic hue. Rhythmically, Kirchner builds rubato and brio into his gestures, and although there are metrical shifts throughout, the effect is one of an always forward-moving fluidity (as in Chopin). The intensity this engenders is partly alleviated by a slower central section, a series of episodes set off by frequent tempo changes and pauses between phrases. At one point here, the orchestral score is marked “*Gesangvoll mit innigster Empfindung*” (“Songful, with innermost feeling”), an indication tellingly borrowed from Beethoven’s Opus 109 piano sonata. One of the most interesting and poetic aspects of the orchestral score is the retained presence of piano, at first quite prominent but gradually almost completely excised from the texture. The original gestures are not merely transferred (however imaginatively) from piano to orchestra but reimagined (even as each figure keeps its essential identity) for a new and expanded expressive purpose.

Robert Kirzinger

#### HERE IS COMPOSER LEON KIRCHNER’S NOTE ON “THE FORBIDDEN”:

During my student days, I had the privilege of studying theory, analysis and composition with Arnold Schoenberg, one of the great masters of the structure and function of “the theoretical” in music of past centuries, in its “process” in the works of Beethoven, Brahms, Haydn, Bach, Mozart, Mahler, Bruckner, Debussy, etc. And yet he was the master of what is, unfortunately, often called the twelve-tone “system.” “Twelve tone what?” “System?” He disliked the implications of this word and substituted “technique” (twelve-tone technique).

His works have lost neither their communicative power nor their singular formal structure. As stated by Paul Rosenfeld in the early 1920s, Schoenberg is “one of the exquisites among musicians....Since Debussy no one has written daintier, frailer, more diaphanous music. The solo cello in Serenade is beautiful as scarcely anything in the new music is beautiful.”

I remember as well, Schoenberg himself in a class I attended saying: “One can still write a masterpiece in C major, given the talent for composition.”

However, the Devil has appeared.

Composition itself has grown too difficult, desperately difficult. Where work and sincerity no longer agree, how is one to work? But so it is, my friend—the masterpiece, the structure in equilibrium, belongs to traditional art, emancipated art disavows it. The matter has its beginnings in your having no right of command whatsoever over all former combinations of tones. The diminished seventh, an impossibility; certain chromatic passing notes, an impossibility. Every better composer bears within him a canon of what is *forbidden*, of what forbids itself, which by now embraces the very means of tonality, and thus all traditional music....The diminished seventh is right and eloquent at the opening of Opus 111. It corresponds to Beethoven’s general technical niveau, does it not? ...The principle of tonality and its dynamics lend the chord its specific weight. Which it has lost—through historical process no one can reverse.

So once again theory and practice had gone their separate ways, guided by “historical process.” In this case the Devil sells a new theory to a composer of genius, Adrian Leverkühn (presumably Arnold Schoenberg) in Thomas Mann’s great novel, *Dr. Faustus*. But even in the great ones such as Palladio, Schoenberg, et al., their theories hardly begin to “cover” their works. The most recent example is the dethroned theorist, Derrida: “No piece of writing is exactly what it seems”; it is “laden with ambiguities, contradictions.” One can speculate interestingly on the reversal in Palladio’s heavenly

derangement of his theories in his actual works, not in his drawings, leaving us with the overwhelming impression that something of greatest importance is missing in his theories.

I decided not to take the Devil's advice. I pursued further this intricate and profound connection between past and present, and, utilizing what I have learned concerning the characteristic elements of contemporary music, I experimented with the idea that Schoenberg tossed out: "One can write a masterpiece in C." Whether this is possible or not, it is certainly a worthy trial, a pursuit that Schoenberg revealed in pieces like the Chamber Symphony Opus 38, particularly its second and final movement. It is a seductive idea, one that I have been pursuing of late, to reveal possibly one of the ways that necessary intimacies between the past and present keep the art of music alive and well.

Leon Kirchner

Robert Schumann

Piano Concerto in A minor, Opus 54

ROBERT SCHUMANN was born in Zwickau, Saxony, on June 8, 1810, and died at Endenich, near Bonn, on July 29, 1856. In mid-May of 1841 he composed a "concert fantasy" in A minor for piano and orchestra. Four years later, beginning in late May 1845, he reworked the fantasy into the first movement of his piano concerto, completing the second movement on July 16 and the finale on July 31 that same year. Clara Schumann was soloist for the first performance of the concerto on December 4, 1845, in Dresden, with Ferdinand Hiller conducting.

IN ADDITION TO THE SOLO PIANO, the score of Schumann's piano concerto calls for two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Clara Schumann, *née* Wieck, was a celebrated keyboard artist from her youth, and she was renowned through her long life (1819-96) for her musical intelligence, taste, sensibility, warm communicativeness, and truly uncommon ear for pianistic euphony. She was a gifted and skilled composer, and Brahms, who was profoundly attached to her when he was in his early twenties and she in her middle thirties—and indeed all his life, though eventually at a less dangerous temperature—never ceased to value her musical judgment.

Robert and Clara's marriage, though in most ways extraordinarily happy, was difficult, what with his psychic fragility and her demanding and conflicting roles as an artist, an artist's wife, and a mother who bore eight children in fourteen years. They met when Clara was nine and Robert—then an unwilling and easily distracted, moody, piano-playing law student at the University of Leipzig—came to her father, the celebrated piano pedagogue Friedrich Wieck, for lessons. It was in 1840, after various familial, legal, psychological, and financial obstacles, that they married. Most of Schumann's greatest piano works come from the difficult time preceding their marriage. 1840 became his great year of song.

Clara Schumann was ambitious for her thirty-year-old husband and urged him to conquer the world of orchestral music as well. He had actually ventured into that territory a few times, making starts on four piano concertos and writing a rather jejune symphony in G minor, but he had not yet met with success. He now went ahead and produced a superb Concert Fantasy with Orchestra for Clara, as well as writing two symphonies: the first version of the D minor (now known almost exclusively in its revised form of 1851 and listed as No. 4) and the *Spring* (listed as No. 1). He could interest neither publishers nor orchestras in the one-movement Concert Fantasy, and so he expanded it into a full-length three-movement concerto. In doing so he revised the original Fantasy, making choices, as almost always he was apt to do whenever he had second thoughts, in the direction of safety and conventionality. (One can only guess whether the revisions reflect Schumann's own musical convictions or responses to the urgings of the more conservative Clara.) The full-dress, three-movement concerto was introduced by Clara in Dresden in December 1845.\*

In 1839, Robert had written to Clara: “Concerning concertos, I’ve already said to you they are hybrids of symphony, concerto, and big sonata. I see that I can’t write a concerto for virtuosi and have to think of something else.” He did. Now, in June 1845, while the metamorphosis of the Concert Fantasy was in progress, Clara Schumann noted in her diary how delighted she was at last to be getting “a big bravura piece” out of Robert (she meant one with orchestra), and to us, even if it is not dazzling by Liszt-Tchaikovsky-Rachmaninoff standards, the Schumann concerto is a satisfying occasion for pianistic display, while of course being also very much more than that. (On the other hand, compared to the concertos by Thalberg, Pixis, and Herz that Clara had played as a young prodigy, Schumann’s concerto, considered strictly as bravura stuff, is tame by comparison.)

Schumann’s “something else” was noticed. Most of the chroniclers of the first public performances, along with noticing how effective an advocate Clara was for the concerto, were also attuned to the idea that something new—and very pleasing—was happening in this work. Many of them noted as well that the concerto needs an exceptionally attentive and sensitive conductor. F.W.M., who reviewed the first performance in Leipzig on New Year’s Day 1846 for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, wrote that the many interchanges between solo and orchestra made the first movement harder to grasp at first hearing than the other two. One thing that strikes us about this first movement—but perhaps only in a very good performance—is how mercurial it is, how frequent, rapid, and sometimes radical its mood-swings are. Or, to put it another way, how Schumannesque it is.

Clara Schumann noted in her diary the delicacy of the way the piano and orchestra are interwoven, and among the pianist’s tasks is sometimes to be an accompanist—the lyric clarinet solo in the first movement is the most prominent example. And to be a good accompanist means to be a superlative musician: intuitive, alert, ever listening. The pianist gets a grand, wonderfully sonorous cadenza at the end of the first movement, but above all the Schumann concerto is a work of conversation both intimate and playful—whether in the almost whimsically varied first movement, the confidences exchanged in the brief middle movement, or in the splendidly energized finale.

Michael Steinberg

MICHAEL STEINBERG *was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1976 to 1979, and after that of the San Francisco Symphony and New York Philharmonic. Oxford University Press has published three compilation volumes of his program notes, devoted to symphonies, concertos, and the great works for chorus and orchestra.*

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE *of Schumann’s Piano Concerto was given by the Philharmonic Society of New York on March 26, 1859, at Niblo’s Garden, with Sebastian Bach Mills as soloist under the direction of Carl Bergmann.*

THE FIRST BOSTON PERFORMANCE *of Schumann’s Piano Concerto took place on November 23, 1866, in a Harvard Musical Association concert, with soloist Otto Dresel and Carl Zerrahn conducting at the Boston Music Hall. Georg Henschel led the first Boston Symphony performances in October 1882 with pianist Carl Baermann. The orchestra has since played the concerto with the following pianists and conductors: Anna Steiniger-Clark, Adele aus der Ohe, Baermann, Antoinette Szumowska, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Fanny B. Zeisler, Ernest Schelling, and Harold Bauer (all under Wilhelm Gericke’s direction); Steiniger-Clark, Rafael Joseffy, Carl Faelten, Ignace Jan Paderewski, and Constantin Stern (under Arthur Nikisch); aus der Ohe and Joseffy (under Emil Paur); Germaine Schnitzer, Olga Samaroff, Max Pauer, Norman Wilks, George C. Vieh, Josef Hofmann, Paderewski, Carl Friedberg, and Szumowska (under Karl Muck); Wilks (under Otto Urack); Schelling (under Ernst Schmidt); Bauer, Benno Moiseiwitsch, Blanche Goode, Samaroff, Raymond Havens, Felix Fox, Constance McGlinchee, and Eugene Istomin (under Pierre Monteux); Alfred Cortot, Irene Scharrer, Jesús María Sanromá, Myra Hess, Martha Baird, Eunice Norton, and Gladys Gleason (under Serge Koussevitzky); Hofmann, Istomin, Jeanne-Marie Darré, and Theodore Lettvin (Richard Burgin); Nicole Henriot, Rudolf Serkin, Clifford Curzon, Van Cliburn, and Istomin (Charles Munch); Lettvin and Malcolm Frager (Erich Leinsdorf); Claude Frank (Thomas Schippers); Christoph Eschenbach*

(Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos and Michael Tilson Thomas); Alicia de Larrocha (Karel Anšerl and Neville Marriner); Michael Roll and Claudio Arrau (Colin Davis); Emil Gilels (Seiji Ozawa); Misha Dichter (Kazuyoshi Akiyama); Claudio Arrau (Colin Davis); Martha Argerich and Imogen Cooper (Ozawa); Leif Ove Andsnes (Roberto Abbado); Héléne Grimaud (Jeffrey Tate); Nelson Freire (Hans Graf), Radu Lupu (Christoph von Dohnányi), Andreas Haefliger (Jens Georg Bachmann), and Garrick Ohlsson (the most recent subscription performances, under Daniele Gatti, in March 2008; and the most recent Tanglewood performance, with Shi-Yeon Sung conducting, on July 20, 2008).

\* -The Fantasy in its original form was not heard again until the summer of 1967, when the late pianist Malcolm Frager played it at a reading rehearsal with the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf conducting. The following summer, also at Tanglewood but with the Boston Symphony, Frager and Leinsdorf gave the Fantasy its first public performance, this time using it as the first movement of the piano concerto. Frager was a fervent champion of the original version of the first movement, playing it whenever he could persuade a conductor to let him do so.

### To Read and Hear More...

The essay on Leon Kirchner in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, expanded for the *New Grove II* (2001), is by the late musicologist Alexander Ringer, whose 1957 *Musical Quarterly* article on Kirchner gained important recognition for the composer. A current source of information on the composer and his works is the website of his publisher, G. Schirmer ([www.schirmer.com](http://www.schirmer.com)), which contains a biography and list of works. Multimedia information specifically about *The Forbidden*, including sound and score excerpts and excerpts from an interview with the composer, can be found on the “SchirmerNew WebNotes” pages of the site (currently to be found at the address <http://schirmer.com/Default.aspx?tabId=2584>). Joel Fan’s recording of the solo piano *The Forbidden* (aka Piano Sonata No. 3, the first version of the present orchestral work) is on a disc with performances by a jaw-dropping assemblage of stellar pianists: the Piano Sonata No. 1 is played by Leon Fleisher, Interlude I by Peter Serkin, Five Pieces for Piano by Max Levinson, Interlude II by Jonathan Biss, and Sonata No. 2 by Jeremy Denk (Albany Troy). The string quartet version of *The Forbidden* (String Quartet No. 4) was recorded along with the three other Kirchner quartets by the Orion String Quartet, for whom the piece was commissioned (also on the Albany Troy label). Other recordings of Kirchner’s work include the Boston Symphony Chamber Players’ performances of his *Music for Twelve*, the Concerto for Violin, Cello, Ten Winds, and Percussion, and the Piano Trio No. 1 (Nonesuch, on a disc with the Five Pieces for piano played by the composer). Yo-Yo Ma has recorded two pieces written for him by Kirchner: *Triptych* for violin and cello (Sony Classical, with violinist Lynn Chang) and *Music for Cello and Orchestra*, with David Zinman and the Philadelphia Orchestra (also Sony Classical). The Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio commissioned, premiered, and recorded his Piano Trio II (Arabesque). A disc of chamber music is recently available from Naxos. Also of interest, but good luck finding it since it seems to be out of the catalogue, is a two-disc release celebrating Kirchner’s eightieth birthday (1999) that includes the first three quartets, his Piano Concerto No. 1, a piece for soprano and ensemble from his opera *Lily*, and other works (Music & Arts, various artists).

Robert Kirzinger

David Brown’s *Tchaikovsky*, in four volumes, is the major biography of the composer (Norton); the *Pathétique* Symphony is discussed extensively in the last volume, “The Final Years: 1885-1893” (Norton). More recently Brown has produced *Tchaikovsky: The Man and his Music*, an excellent single volume (512 pages) on the composer’s life and works geared toward the general reader (Pegasus Books). It was Brown who provided the article on Tchaikovsky for the 1980 edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. The article in the 2001 revised *New Grove* is by Roland John Wiley. Though out of print, John Warrack’s *Tchaikovsky* is worth seeking both for its text and for its wealth of illustrations (Scribners). Warrack is also the author of the short volume *Tchaikovsky Symphonies & Concertos* in the series of BBC Music Guides (University of Washington

paperback). Daniel Felsenfeld's *Tchaikovsky: The Man and his Music*, in the recent series "Unlocking the Masters" (each volume of which includes a book plus musical examples on CD), features the *Pathétique* Symphony among the works excerpted on the disc (Amadeus Press). Anthony Holden's *Tchaikovsky* is a single-volume biography that gives ample space to the theory, now largely discounted, that Tchaikovsky did not die of cholera but committed suicide for reasons having to do with his homosexuality (Bantam Press). Alexander Poznansky's *Tchaikovsky's Last Days: A Documentary Study* also takes a close look at this question (Oxford). Other useful books include *Tchaikovsky: A Self-Portrait* by Aleksandra Orlova, which draws upon the composer's letters, diaries, and other writings (Oxford); *The Life and Letters of Tchaikovsky* by the composer's brother Modest as translated by Rosa Newmarch (Vienna House paperback), and *Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Letters to his Family: An Autobiography*, annotated by Percy M. Young and translated by Galina von Meck, the granddaughter of Tchaikovsky's patron Nadezhda von Meck (Stein and Day). Valuable if you can find it is *The Diaries of Tchaikovsky*, translated and edited by Wladimir Lakond (Norton, out of print). Also useful are David Brown's chapter "Russia Before the Revolution" in *A Guide to the Symphony*, edited by Robert Layton (Oxford paperback) and Hans Keller's chapter on Tchaikovsky's symphonies in *The Symphony*, edited by Robert Simpson (Pelican paperback). Michael Steinberg's program notes on Tchaikovsky's Fourth, Fifth, and *Pathétique* symphonies are in his compilation volume *The Symphony—A Listener's Guide* (Oxford paperback).

James Levine recorded Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony in 1984 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (RCA). The Boston Symphony Orchestra recorded the *Pathétique* under Seiji Ozawa in 1986 (Erato), under Charles Munch in 1962 (RCA), under Pierre Monteux in 1955 (also RCA), and under Serge Koussevitzky in 1930 (originally RCA; for a while available on the "78s" CD label). Relatively recent recordings of the *Pathétique* include Daniele Gatti's with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Harmonia Mundi) and Antonio Pappano's with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra of Rome (EMI). Other recordings include—alphabetically by conductor—Claudio Abbado's with the London Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon) and Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Sony Classical), Leonard Bernstein's with the New York Philharmonic (Sony Classical), Valery Gergiev's with the Kirov Orchestra (Philips), Kurt Masur's with the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig (Warner Classics), Evgeny Mravinsky's with the Leningrad Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon "Originals"), and Mikhail Pletnev's with the Russian National Orchestra (Virgin Classics). Igor Markevitch's first-rate traversal of the Tchaikovsky symphonies with the London Symphony Orchestra offers excellent value as well as fine performances (Philips "Duos," with the symphonies 1-3 in one two-disc volume and 4-6 in another). Noteworthy monaural recordings include Guido Cantelli's with the Philharmonia Orchestra, from 1952 (Testament), Wilhelm Furtwängler's powerful concert performance, from 1951 in Cairo, with the Berlin Philharmonic (Archipel), and Arturo Toscanini's commercial recording with the Philadelphia Orchestra, from 1942 (RCA).

John Daverio's *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"* provides absorbing and thoroughly informed consideration of the composer's life and music (Oxford paperback). Daverio also provided the Schumann entry for the revised (2001) New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians; his last book, *Crossing Paths: Perspectives on the Music of Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, intriguingly examines aspects of Schumann's life and music in relation to the other two composers (Oxford University Press). John Worthen's recently published *Robert Schumann: The Life and Death of a Musician* offers detailed treatment of the composer's life based on a wealth of contemporary documentation (Yale University Press). Gerald Abraham's article on Schumann from the 1980 edition of *The New Grove* was reprinted in *The New Grove Early Romantic Masters 1—Chopin, Schumann, Liszt* (Norton paperback). Eric Frederick Jensen's *Schumann* is a relatively recent addition to the Master Musicians Series (Oxford). Hans Gál's *Schumann Orchestral Music* in the series of BBC Music Guides is a useful small volume about the composer's symphonies, overtures, and concertos (University of Washington paperback). Michael Steinberg's note on Schumann's Piano Concerto is in his compilation volume *The Concerto—A Listener's Guide* (Oxford paperback). Donald Francis Tovey's note on the concerto is among his *Essays in Musical Analysis* (Oxford paperback). The chapter "The Concerto after Beethoven" in *A Guide to the Concerto*, edited by Robert Layton, includes some discussion by Joan Chissell of Schumann's Piano Concerto (Oxford paperback). Peter

Ostwald's *Schumann: The Inner Voices of a Musical Genius* is a study of the composer's medical and psychological history based on surviving documentation (Northeastern University Press).

Maurizio Pollini has recorded the Schumann Piano Concerto with Claudio Abbado and the Berlin Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon). The Boston Symphony Orchestra recorded the concerto in 1980, with soloist Claudio Arrau and conductor Colin Davis (Philips). Noteworthy accounts among the many other recordings of the piece include (listed alphabetically by soloist) Leif Ove Andsnes's with Mariss Jansons and the Berlin Philharmonic (EMI), Martha Argerich's with Alexandre Rabinovich-Barakovsky and the Orchestra della Svizzera italiana (EMI), Leon Fleisher's with George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra (Sony Classical), Stephen Kovacevich's with Colin Davis and the BBC Symphony Orchestra (Philips), Murray Perahia's with Claudio Abbado and the Berlin Philharmonic (Sony Classical) or with Colin Davis and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (Sony Classical), Maria João Pires's with Claudio Abbado and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe (Deutsche Grammophon), and fortepianist Andreas Staier's with Philippe Herreweghe and the period-instrument Orchestre des Champs-Élysées (Harmonia Mundi). Among historic issues, Dinu Lipatti's 1948 recording with Herbert von Karajan and the Philharmonia Orchestra still holds a special place despite dim, dated sound (EMI).

Marc Mandel

### Guest Artist

#### Maurizio Pollini

Maurizio Pollini was born in 1942 and studied with Carlo Lonati and Carlo Vidusso. After winning first prize in the 1960 Warsaw Chopin Competition, he went on to establish an international career of the greatest importance, performing in the world's major concert halls and working with the most distinguished orchestras and conductors, including Böhm, Celibidache, Karajan, Abbado, Boulez, Chailly, Mehta, Sawallisch, and Muti. Mr. Pollini was awarded the Vienna Philharmonic Ehrenring in 1987 after performing the Beethoven concertos in New York, the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize in Munich in 1966, the "A Life for Music—Arthur Rubinstein" Prize in Venice in 1999, and the Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli Prize in Milan in 2000. In 1995 he opened the Pierre Boulez Festival in Tokyo. In the same year and then in 1999 he devised and performed in his own concert series at the Salzburg Festival, doing the same in New York at Carnegie Hall (in 1999-2000 and 2000-01), in Paris for la Cité de la Musique (in 2002), in Tokyo (also in 2002), and in Rome at the Parco della Musica (in 2003). The programs for these series included both chamber and orchestral performances and mirrored his wide musical tastes from Gesualdo and Monteverdi to the present. In summer 2004 he was the "Artist Etoile" at the International Festival Lucerne, performing in recital and in orchestra concerts conducted by Claudio Abbado and Pierre Boulez. Maurizio Pollini's repertoire ranges from Bach to contemporary composers (including premiere performances of works by Manzoni, Nono, and Sciarrino) and includes the complete Beethoven sonatas, which he has performed in Berlin, Munich, Milan, New York, London, Vienna, and Paris. He has recorded works from the classical, romantic, and contemporary repertoire to worldwide critical acclaim. His recordings of Schoenberg's complete piano works and of works by Berg, Webern, Manzoni, Nono, Boulez, and Stockhausen are a testament to his great passion for music of the twentieth century. His recent recording of Chopin's Nocturnes was received with the greatest enthusiasm by audience and critics alike: in 2007 he was awarded a Grammy for the best Instrumental Soloist Performance and the Disco d'Oro, and in 2006 he received Germany's Echo Award as well as France's Choc de la Musique, Victoires de la Musique, and Diapason d'or de l'Année. His most recent recording, Mozart piano concertos with the Vienna Philharmonic, was released in April 2008. Mr. Pollini made his Boston Symphony debut in 1970 and has performed concertos of Bartók, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Mozart, Prokofiev, and Schoenberg with the orchestra—the Prokofiev Third Concerto (with which he made his BSO debut), Mozart A major concerto, K.488, the Brahms First, the Bartók First, the Schoenberg concerto, the Chopin F minor, and the Brahms D minor also being played with the orchestra in New York. An all-Mozart program performed here with Mr. Pollini as both conductor and pianist in March 1985 included the A major concerto, K.414, the Symphony No. 34, and the G major concerto, K.453. His most recent BSO appearances were in March 1990, when he played Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.

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