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Tenth Subscription Program  
of the 116th Season, 2010–2011  
FRI JAN 28, 11 am | SAT JAN 29, 8 pm  
Music Hall

**PAAVO JÄRVI, conductor**  
**ANDRÉ WATTS, piano**  
**JESSICA RIVERA, soprano**  
**MATTHEW WORTH, baritone**  
**MAY FESTIVAL CHORUS, Robert Porco, director**

**JONATHAN HOLLAND**

**Fanfare**

**DEBUSSY**  
(1862–1918)

*Printemps*  
Tres modéré  
Modéré; Allegro

**BEETHOVEN**  
(1770–1827)

**Concerto Number 4 in G Major for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 58**  
Allegro moderato  
Andante con moto—  
Rondo: Vivace

## INTERMISSION

**FAURÉ**  
(1845–1924)

**Requiem, Opus 48**  
Introit and Kyrie  
Offertory  
Sanctus  
Pie Jesu  
Agnus Dei  
Libera me  
In Paradisum

90.9 WGUC broadcast date: March 13, 7:30 pm

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### ■ JONATHAN HOLLAND Fanfare

A program note will be available closer to the concert date.

### ■ CLAUDE DEBUSSY *Printemps*

**TIMING:** *approx. 15 min.*

**INSTRUMENTATION:** 2 flutes (incl. piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, harp, piano 4-hands, cymbals, snare drum, triangle, strings

**CSO SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE HISTORY**

**Premiere:** February 1983, Michael Gielen conducting, was the only other subscription performance of this work

*Debussy was born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France, on August 22, 1862; he died in Paris on March 25, 1918. Printemps was composed in Rome in February of 1887. It was reorchestrated by Henri Büsser in 1913. The first performance was given by the French National Orchestra on April 18, 1913.*

The Prix de Rome is an award given each year by the French Academy of Fine Arts to a promising young composer. This prize, which provides an extended residency in Rome, has been in existence for about a century and a half. Most well-known French composers have received it, although there have been some exceptions. The Prix de Rome has traditionally been given more for academic achievement in composition than for originality. Thus, each year Debussy competed, he had to write a fugue on a given theme and set a given text for chorus and orchestra.

In his student years Debussy had conflicting values. He was eager to acquire a thorough traditional education, but he was skeptical about the ultimate value of the skills that were emphasized. He had written some experimental works that he would not show to his teachers, because

he was sure that the music would be dismissed for its unorthodoxy. He disciplined himself to write “correct” music as well, in part because that was the key to the coveted Prix de Rome. It was not easy for Debussy to suppress his unconventional imagination, and thus he had to try several times before receiving the award.

In 1882 the composer entered the competition but did not get past the semifinals. He had to write a fugue on a theme supplied by Gounod, and a chorus for female voices and orchestra titled *Printemps*. Debussy tried again in 1883. This time he got past the first competition but finished second in the finals. In 1884 he again had to write a fugue (this time on a subject by Massenet) and a chorus, which was again called *Printemps* (although the text was different). He again made the finals, and this time he received the grand prize. He had by now composed two academically correct works called *Printemps*, both of which he later dismissed as boring.

There is a third composition called *Printemps* that Debussy wrote a few years later. It is the only one of the *Printemps* pieces that is performed today. (It should not be confused with the later *Rondes de printemps*.)

Debussy was cynical about the procedure for winning the Prix de Rome. He thought it a waste of time to have to compose in an academic style simply to please those in charge. He ridiculed the conditions for competing, which stipulated a certain time limit for producing the assigned compositions. “They expect you to be full of ideas and inspiration at a given time of the year. If you are not in form that particular month, so much the worse for you. It is a purely arbitrary affair, without any significance as regards the future.”

If Debussy was sarcastic about the procedure by which he earned the Rome prize, he soon had reason to be cynical about the prize itself. On January 27, 1885, the 23-year-old composer left behind his literary and musical friends in Paris, whom he had found intellectually stimulating, to take up residency at the Villa Medici in Rome. There he was supposed to live and work in relative seclusion for three years. When he arrived, he found the living conditions unpleasant and he discovered petty rivalries among the other residents. He felt imprisoned in an artificial environment. Worst of all, he had to send compositions back to Paris.

His first effort was a work called *Zuleima*. Debussy thought he was successfully imitating Italian and French grand opera style, which would be sure to please the stuffy Academy, but his work was condemned as “bizarre, incomprehensible and unperformable.” This critique, as was the custom, was published in the official journal of the Academy.

The composer could not tolerate living at the Villa Medici. He resolved to leave—escape as he put it—before the end of his three years. In February of 1887 he hastily

wrote another work, so that he could not be accused of having produced only one composition during his two years in Rome. That piece was his third work named *Printemps*. His intention, according to a letter to his friend Emile Baron, was “to express the slow and painful genesis of beings and things in Nature, then their gradual blossoming, and finally the vivid joy of being reborn into some new life.”

The Academy received the music (actually, only the piano reduction, as the orchestral score had been burned accidentally at the bindery) with mixed feelings. The practicality of writing in F-sharp major (a key with seven sharps) was questioned. Also the work was criticized for its unusual medium—orchestra plus wordless chorus that hums.

The official report was again published:

“Certainly Mr. Debussy does not transgress through dullness or triteness. On the contrary; he shows a rather overly pronounced taste for the unusual. His feeling for musical color is so strong that he is apt to forget the importance of accuracy of line and form. *He should beware of this vague impressionism, which is one of the most dangerous enemies of artistic truth.* The first movement of Mr. Debussy’s symphonic work is a kind of prelude—an adagio. Its dreamy atmosphere and its studied effects result in confusion. The second movement is a bizarre, incoherent transformation of the first, but the rhythmic combinations make it somewhat clearer and more comprehensible. The Academy awaits and expects something better from such a gifted musician as Mr. Debussy.” [Italics added.]

It is evident from the music, if not from this report, that Debussy had had his fill of composing to academic standards and was beginning to follow his natural inclination toward impressionistic color. He had also had his fill of Rome. After sending in the score of *Printemps*, he submitted his resignation and left for Paris.

The piano score of *Printemps* was published in 1904. In 1913 Debussy wanted to reconstruct the orchestration of what then seemed to him one of his first acceptable works. As he was suffering from cancer, he was unable to complete many of his projects. Several times other composers had to help him. So it was that his friend Henri Büsser orchestrated *Printemps*. Büsser wrote the score for orchestra alone, without voices. The piece was first heard 26 years after it had been written.

### *keynote*

The finished piece, although quite attractive and enjoyable, is in some ways rather curious. The sounds of Debussy’s impressionism are unmistakable—wisps of melody, motivic repetition, fluid tempos, coloristic added notes—although they are less pervasive than in later pieces. The underlying harmonic structure is more solid,

less vague, than in his subsequent music. The impressionistic scoring, with innumerable marvelous sonorities, shows a thorough knowledge of Debussy's imaginative orchestrations. Yet, as skillful as the instrumentation is, it is not as magical as what Debussy would no doubt have accomplished himself: he was one of the truly great orchestrators of all time. It would be interesting to know to what extent he supervised Büsser's work. It would be even more interesting to have a glance at Debussy's original orchestration, done before he had mastered impressionistic scoring.

Consider, for example, the use of an orchestral piano played by two performers. It is atypical for Debussy, yet at times it is a truly inspired timbre. The opening unison of flute and piano, for example, is wonderfully inventive. In other places, however, the piano seems to do what Debussy would more normally ask harps to do; yet there is a harp in Büsser's orchestra. There is a lot of piano writing, and some conductors omit a good deal of it when performing *Printemps*.

—Jonathan D. Kramer

## ■ LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN Concerto Number 4 in G Major for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 58

**TIMING:** approx. 34 min.

**INSTRUMENTATION:** solo piano, flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings

### CSO SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE HISTORY

**Premiere:** January 1905, Frank Van der Stucken conducting, Josef Hofmann, piano

**Most Recent Performances:** January 2009, Paavo Järvi conducting; Radu Lupu, piano

Beethoven was born on December 16, 1770 in Bonn, Germany; he died on March 26, 1827 in Vienna. He composed the Fourth Piano Concerto in 1805–1806. He was soloist at the first performance, which took place at the palace of his patron Prince Lobkowitz in March 1807.

Beethoven worked on the G Major Concerto at about the same time he was composing several other large pieces, including the opera *Fidelio*, the Triple Concerto, the *Appassionata* Sonata, the *Razumovsky* Quartets and the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies. This flood of masterworks is truly astonishing, especially when one realizes how many of them are pathbreaking. Beethoven was expanding his musical language at an amazing rate.

The composer set himself to the task in the Fourth Concerto of replacing the virtuosically conceived concerto of the classical period with a more lyrical genre. Most previous concertos had been composed to display the skills of some pianist, often the composer. There were certainly musically significant works of this type, despite the tendency toward superficiality

of showpieces, but Beethoven's Fourth was the first concerto completely to overthrow virtuosity in favor of pure artistic expression.

### keynote

The concerto is often called an original work for quite another reason: the piano starts alone. There was a precedent in Mozart's K. 271, but even that piece has a brief *tutti* before the piano enters. The significance of Beethoven's idea lies not in the mere novelty of beginning with a solo but rather in the consequences of such an opening. The typical classical concerto begins with a long orchestral exposition that prepares for the entrance of the solo instrument. The orchestral texture comes to need contrast, and the soloist provides it. The usual means of achieving this sense of expectancy is for the music to remain in the tonic key long enough almost to suggest monotony, which the solo entrance subsequently dispels. The situation is entirely different in the G Major Concerto, however. After the opening phrase on the piano, the solo instrument falls silent for the remaining orchestral *tutti*. Thus the orchestral music must justify a re-entrance rather than an entrance. The piano opening is left unresolved, so to speak, and the resulting tension is relieved only by the reappearance of the solo. Given this new strategy, Beethoven no longer felt that the *tutti* had to remain in one key. The orchestral exposition in this concerto is therefore unusually developmental and tonally unstable. Because of the innocent simplicity of the opening solo, we subconsciously equate the piano with stability. We await the piano's return to resolve the tension of the orchestra's tonal instability.

What seems a mere detail in the concerto's opening becomes a significant force in the entire piece. Beginning with piano alone followed by orchestra alone suggests dialogue. This implication is fulfilled in the slow movement, which is entirely a conversation by alternation. Such a procedure is reminiscent of the texture, though hardly the spirit, of the baroque concerto. The piano and orchestra almost never play together, until the final measure. Such a procedure might produce fragmentation in the hands of a lesser composer, but Beethoven avoids this pitfall by varying the lengths of each statement in the dialogue. Notice how the movement proceeds, in a very general sense, from long statements to short and back again to long.

The finale, which follows the slow movement without pause, continually tries to establish the wrong key as tonic (Beethoven used this same device in the finale of the Second *Razumovsky* Quartet, written at about the same time). It also deals with dialogue, although not in as single-minded a fashion as the *andante*. The culmination of the dialogue process occurs in the cadenza, where two different textures in the solo piano alternate—the

dialogue goes on, but now it is between the solo instrument and itself, while the orchestra remains silent.

Placing such a strategic event as the culminating solo dialogue in the cadenza shows how far Beethoven had come from the virtuosic piano concerto of his predecessors. The cadenza is traditionally the place where the soloist displays technical prowess. In earlier concertos it has little structural function but rather acts as if in parentheses: after the soloist finishes showing off, the piece gets underway again. Thus Mozart and others traditionally left the cadenza for the soloist to improvise or write, so little did it matter to the concerto's structure what music the cadenza contained.

But Beethoven, reluctant to leave any part of his mature compositions to chance, wrote out the cadenzas for use in the G Major Concerto (he did, however, provide two different alternatives for the first movement).

The virtuosity of these cadenzas is largely absent elsewhere in the concerto. Although a greater percentage of bravura passage work might have been expected from the finest pianist of his day composing a concerto for his own use, Beethoven sought to transcend the display concerto of the classical period. The serene and reflective mood of this work tends to preclude pianistic acrobatics, and thus the concerto is unique for its time.

—Jonathan D. Kramer

## ■ GABRIEL FAURÉ Requiem, Opus 48

**TIMING:** *approx. 36 min.*

**INSTRUMENTATION:** *SATB chorus, SB soloists, 2 flutes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, harp, organ, strings*

### CSO SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE HISTORY

**Premiere:** *These performances are the CSO subscription premiere of the Requiem*

*Fauré was born on May 12, 1845 in Pamiers, Ariège; he died on November 4, 1924 in Paris. He composed the Requiem in 1887–1888 and revised it in 1893. The composer led the work's premiere, on January 16, 1888 in Paris.*

It is one of the ironies of music history that some of the greatest sacred works have been composed by men who cared little for religion. Mozart paid scant attention to the faith after he left Salzburg, preferring the humanistic philosophies of Freemasonry; Beethoven was a theist who thought conventional religion stifled full realization of the deity; Verdi refused to set foot in a church for any religious services and would wait outside in a carriage for his wife Giuseppina on Sunday mornings; and Gabriel Fauré, though he held some of Paris' most prestigious musical positions as a church organist and wrote one of the most perfect of all sacred compositions, was an avowed agnostic. Upon reading a manifesto of faith in an important Catholic journal, Fauré wrote, rather

condescendingly, "How nice is this self-assurance! How nice is the naiveté, or the vanity, or the stupidity, or the bad faith of the people for whom this was written, printed and distributed." Emile Vuillermoz, in his biography of the composer, explained that "only his natural courtesy and his professional conscience allowed him to carry out his duties as an organist with absolute correctness, and with the least amount of hypocrisy to write a certain number of religious works. ... The Requiem is, if I dare say so, the work of a disbeliever who respects the beliefs of others." Rather than a testament of dogmatic faith, then, Fauré's Requiem is a work to console and comfort the living—music, according to Vuillermoz, "to accompany with contemplation and emotion a loved one to a final resting place."

Fauré began his career as an organist and church musician in 1866 at Rennes and four years later went to Clignancourt, a suburb north of Paris. In 1871, he was appointed organist at the Church of Saint-Honoré Eylau, and in the following years he became assistant to Widor at Saint-Sulpice and frequently substituted for Saint-Saëns at the Madeleine. When Saint-Saëns left that post in 1877 to give his full attention to composing and concertizing, he was succeeded by Théodore Dubois, who named Fauré as his assistant. Fauré became chief organist at the Madeleine in 1896, when Dubois assumed directorship of the Paris Conservatoire. Fauré had contributed an occasional piece of service music as part of his duties at various churches, but the Requiem was his first large-scale work in any form. He said that it was begun in 1887 "just for the pleasure of it," though the impulse to set the ancient text of the Catholic Mass for the Dead quite likely came from the passing of his father in 1885 and of his mother two years later. The score was completed early in 1888 and was first heard, under the composer's direction, at the Madeleine in Paris as part of a memorial service for Joseph Le Soufaché, one of the parishioners. This first version contained only five movements (Introit et Kyrie, Sanctus, Pie Jesu, Agnus Dei and In Paradisum), and was scored for a modest ensemble of divided violas and cellos, basses, harp, timpani and organ, with a part for solo violin in the Sanctus. Fauré prepared a new version of the score for a subsequent performance in 1893 that contained two additional movements (Offertorium, composed in 1889, and Libera me, originally written in 1877 as an independent composition for baritone and organ) and expanded the orchestration to include horns and trumpets. In preparation for the work's publication by Hamelle in 1900, it was re-scored for full orchestra to make it available for concert as well as liturgical performances, though the orchestration was probably done not by Fauré but by his student Jean-Jules Roger-Ducase. This final version was first heard at the Trocadéro Palace in July of 1900 conducted by Paul Taffanel.

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Unlike the grand, dramatic, sometimes tumultuous settings of the Mass for the Dead by Berlioz and Verdi, Fauré's Requiem is intimate in scale and consoling in content. Fauré, perhaps under the influence of the Cecilian Movement, which sought a personal, uncomplicated and direct manner of religious expression, chose to omit the text of the Dies irae, the searing Medieval poem that so chillingly paints the terrors of the "Day of Wrath"—the Last Judgment. The composer's pupil and friend Charles Koechlin believed that "the indulgent and fundamentally good nature of the master had as far as possible to turn from the implacable dogma of eternal punishment." The composer himself wrote, "It has been said that my Requiem does not express the fear of death; someone has even called it a lullaby of death.

But it is thus that I see death: as a happy deliverance, an aspiration toward happiness above...." In a letter of April 3, 1921 to René Fauchois, he further explained, "Everything I managed to entertain in the way of religious illusion I put into my Requiem, which moreover is dominated from beginning to end by a very human feeling of faith in eternal rest." The grace, restraint and calm Hellenic beauty that characterize Fauré's best music find their perfect realization in this work, about which the celebrated pedagogue Nadia Boulanger said, "Nothing purer or clearer in definition has been written. No external effect alters its sober and rather severe expression of grief, no restlessness troubles its deep meditation, no doubt stains its gentle confidence or its tender and tranquil expectancy."

—Richard E. Rodda