

# GRANT PARK ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS

**Carlos Kalmar** Artistic Director and Principal Conductor

**Christopher Bell** Chorus Director



Wednesday, July 26, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

## BRAHMS PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1

### **Grant Park Orchestra**

**Carlos Kalmar** Conductor

**Stephen Hough** Piano

### **Brahms**

Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15

Maestoso

Adagio

Rondo: Allegro non troppo

STEPHEN HOUGH

### **Kodály**

*Dances of Galánta*

### **Brahms**

Three Hungarian Dances

No. 1 in G Minor

No. 3 in F Major

No. 6 in D Major

This concert is supported by a grant from  
The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation.

Piano provided by  
Steinway Piano Galleries of Chicago.

Tonight's concert is being broadcast live on 98.7WFMT  
and streamed live at [wfmt.com](http://wfmt.com).



**STEPHEN HOUGH** has distinguished himself as a true polymath, not only securing a reputation as an insightful concert pianist, but also as a writer and composer. In 2001, he was the first classical performing artist to win a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. His other notable distinctions include Northwestern University's 2008 Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano, Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumentalist Award in 2010, and appointment as a Commander of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth in 2014.

Stephen Hough has appeared with most of the major European and American orchestras and regularly plays recitals in prominent venues and concert series around the world. His recent engagements include recitals in Chicago, Hong Kong, London, New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Paris, Boston, San Francisco, Washington's Kennedy Center and Sydney; performances with the Czech, London and Los Angeles Philharmonics, the Chicago, Boston, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Montreal, Detroit and Toronto symphonies, and the Cleveland, Philadelphia, Minnesota, Budapest Festival and Russian National Orchestras; and a performance televised worldwide with the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle. Mr. Hough is also a regular guest at such festivals as Aldeburgh, Aspen, Blossom, Edinburgh, Hollywood Bowl, Mostly Mozart, Salzburg, Tanglewood, Verbier and BBC Proms.



**Johannes Brahms** (1833-1897)

### **PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 IN D MINOR, OP. 15 (1854-1859)**

**Scored for:** pairs of woodwinds, four horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings

**Performance time:** 44 minutes

**First Grant Park Orchestra performance:** July 29, 1959; Theodore Bloomfield, conductor; Gary Graffman, piano

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In 1854, Brahms set out to produce a symphony in D minor as his first major orchestral work, and, to that end, he sketched three movements in short score. The first movement was orchestrated, but Brahms was not satisfied with the result, and he decided to transform his short score into a sonata for two pianos, but this still did not fulfill his vision — the ideas were too symphonic in breadth to be satisfactorily contained by just pianos, yet too pianistic in figuration to be completely divorced from the keyboard. He was stuck. In 1857, the composer Julius Otto Grimm, a staunch friend, suggested that his 24-year-old colleague try his sketch as a piano concerto. Brahms thought the advice sound, and he went back to work. He selected two movements to retain for the concerto and put aside the third, which emerged ten years later as the chorus “Behold All Flesh” in *The German Requiem*. Things proceeded slowly but steadily and only after two more years of work was the Piano Concerto No. 1 ready for performance.

The Concerto's stormy first movement follows the Classical model of double-exposition form, with an extended initial presentation of much of the important thematic material by the orchestra alone ("first exposition"). The soloist enters and leads through the "second exposition," which includes a lyrical second theme, not heard earlier, played by the unaccompanied piano. The central section begins with the tempestuous main theme, a Romantic motive filled with snarling trills and anguished melodic leaps. The recapitulation enters on a titanic wave of sound. The lovely second theme returns (played again by the solo piano), but eventually gives way to the foreboding mood of the main theme.

The *Adagio* is a movement of transcendent beauty, of quiet, twilight emotions couched in a mood of gentle melancholy — of "something spiritual" in Clara Schumann's words. The main theme of the rondo-form finale is related to the lyrical second subject of the opening movement by one of those masterful strokes that Brahms used to unify his large works. Among the episodes that separate the returns of the rondo theme is one employing a carefully devised fugue that grew from Brahms' thorough study of the music of Bach. After a brief, restrained cadenza, the coda turns to the brighter key of D major to provide a stirring conclusion to this Concerto, a work of awesome achievement for the 26-year-old Brahms.



**Zoltán Kodály** (1882-1967)

***DANCES OF GALANTA* (1933)**

**Scored for:** pairs of woodwinds plus piccolo, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, percussion and strings

**Performance time:** 16 minutes

**First Grant Park Orchestra performance:** July 6, 1949;  
Nikolai Malko, conductor

Kodály devoted his career to preserving and nurturing the musical culture of his native Hungary, collecting indigenous songs and dances and devising a system of music education based on Hungarian folksong and utilizing its stylistic components in his compositions. When the Budapest Philharmonic commissioned him to write a work for its 80th anniversary, Kodály dipped once again into his inexhaustible folk treasury for melodic material, turning to some books of Hungarian dances published in Vienna around 1800 that contained music "after several Gypsies of Galánta," his childhood home. The *Dances of Galánta* that he based them on follow a structure of alternating slow and fast sections. The introduction consists of a series of instrumental solos. The first dance, a slow one begun by the solo clarinet, displays a restrained Gypsy pathos. The quicker second dance, for solo flute, is based on a melody circling around a single pitch in halting rhythms. The first dance returns in the full orchestra as a bridge to a spirited tune first heard in the oboe. The finale is a brilliant whirlwind of music.



**Johannes Brahms** (1833-1897)

### **THREE HUNGARIAN DANCES (1869)**

**Scored for:** pairs of woodwinds plus piccolo, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion and strings

**Performance time:** 9 minutes

**First Grant Park Orchestra performance:** August 6, 1935; Leo Kopp, conductor

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The special affection that Brahms retained throughout his life for Gypsy fiddlers and their music blossomed in such Gypsy-inspired compositions as the finale of the Violin Concerto, the closing movement of the G minor Piano Quartet (Op. 25), the *Zigeunerlieder* (“Gypsy Songs”), and, especially, the *Hungarian Dances*. The themes of most of these *Dances* were not original with Brahms. He collected them, thinking — as did almost everyone else at that time — that the melodies were folk tunes, and he clearly stated that they were arrangements. Such a precaution, however, did not exempt Brahms, one of the most honest and forthright of all the great composers, from being accused of plagiarism by the Hungarian violinist Ede Reményi, with whom he had toured early in his career. Reményi disingenuously claimed that Brahms had stolen the tunes from him, and when that tale was easily exploded, Reményi issued a list of the composers of the melodies in an interview printed in 1879 by the *New York Herald*, forcing Brahms’ publisher, Simrock, to distribute a pamphlet defending Brahms on the basis of the *Dances* being arrangements for piano, four hands, that were never intended to be passed off as original work — Brahms did not even give them an opus number. (When Brahms sent the score to Simrock, he wrote, “I offer them as genuine Gypsy children which I did not beget, but merely brought up with bread and milk.”) Despite this *petite scandale*, the *Hungarian Dances* proved to be among the most popular of Brahms’ works during his lifetime.

The Dance No. 1 in C minor was based on the *Isteni Czãrdas* by Sárközy. The Dance No. 3 (F major) has been traced to the *Tolnai Lakadalmas* (“Wedding Dance”) by J. Rizner. Dance No. 6 (D major), modeled on A. Nittinger’s *Rózsa Bokor*, was orchestrated by the conductor Albert Parlow (1822-1888).

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