



Grant Park Music Festival

Seventy-sixth Season

Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus

Carlos Kalmar, *Principal Conductor*

Christopher Bell, *Chorus Director*

Tenth Program: Petrushka

Wednesday, July 14, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.

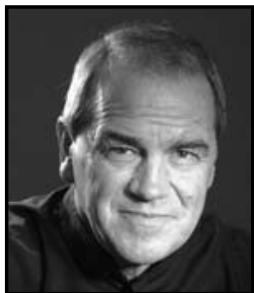
Jay Pritzker Pavilion

GRANT PARK ORCHESTRA

Hans Graf, *Guest Conductor*

Alban Gerhardt, *Cello*

- TCHAIKOVSKY *The Tempest*, Fantasy-Overture after Shakespeare, Op. 18
- TCHAIKOVSKY *Variations on a Rococo Theme* for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 33
ALBAN GERHARDT
- STRAVINSKY *Petrushka*, Ballet in Four Tableaux (1947 Version)
The Shrove-Tide Fair
Petrushka's Room
The Moor's Room
The Shrove-Tide Fair Towards Evening



The distinguished Austrian conductor **HANS GRAF**, known for his wide range of repertoire and creative programming, is one of today's most highly respected musicians. Mr. Graf was named Music Director of the Houston Symphony in 2000 and began his tenure with that orchestra in September 2001. Prior to his appointment in Houston, he was Music Director of the Calgary Philharmonic, Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine and Mozarteum Orchestra. Hans Graf is a frequent guest with all of the major North American orchestras. His recent and upcoming guest engagements include appearances with the orchestras of Cleveland, Philadelphia, New York, Los

Angeles, San Francisco, Saint Louis, Cincinnati, Detroit, Atlanta and Washington, D.C., among others. Internationally, Hans Graf conducts in the foremost concert halls of Europe, Japan and Australia, and has appeared with the Vienna Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, as well as with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphony Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Orchestra and Rotterdam Philharmonic. He has also participated in such prestigious European festivals as the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Bregenz, Aix-en-Provence, Orange and Savonlinna; he appeared at the Salzburg Festival for twelve consecutive seasons. Hans Graf has recorded for the EMI, Orfeo, CBC, Erato, Capriccio and JVC labels. He has been awarded the Chevalier de l'ordre de la Legion d'Honneur by the French government for championing French music around the world as well as the Grand Decoration of Honor in Gold for Services to the Republic of Austria.

Since making his debut as a cello soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic and conductor Semyon Bychkov in 1991, **ALBAN GERHARDT** has appeared with more than 160 orchestras worldwide. Highlights of Mr. Gerhardt's North American engagements include those with the Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic (at both Disney Hall and the Hollywood Bowl), National Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony and Toronto Symphony. Among his appearances worldwide are London's BBC Symphony, Bergen Philharmonic, China Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Sydney Symphony and New Japan Philharmonic, as well as



the Chamber Orchestra of Europe for the opening of the Schumann Festival in Düsseldorf. An active recording artist, Alban Gerhardt received the Midem Classic Award in 2006 for his Hyperion debut CD of concertos by Enescu, Dohnányi and d'Albert. He won ECHO Classics Prizes for his MDG Gold recording of Rubinstein's First Cello Concerto and for his Harmonia Mundi CD of Brahms' sonatas with pianist Markus Groh. His other solo and concerto recordings are issued on the EMI, Chandos and Oehms Classics labels. Mr. Gerhardt plays on a magnificent cello made by the 18th-century Venetian instrument maker Matteo Goffriller.



THE TEMPEST, FANTASY-OVERTURE AFTER SHAKESPEARE, OP. 18 (1873)

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

The Tempest is scored for woodwinds in pairs plus piccolo, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion and strings. The performance time is eighteen minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed this Symphony on July 29, 1936, Robert Sanders conducting.

“For several days after hearing your *Tempest*, I was in a delirium from which I could not emerge.” With these excited words in a letter of December 1876 began the fruitful but strange relationship between Peter Tchaikovsky and Nadezhda von Meck, the sensitive, music-loving widow of a wealthy railroad baron. Tchaikovsky had established himself during the preceding three years as a leading voice in Russian music with the premieres of his Second and Third Symphonies, *The Tempest*, the Piano Concerto No. 1, *Francesca da Rimini*, the String Quartets Nos. 2 and 3 and the operas *The Oprichnik* and *Vakula the Smith*, but he still could not afford to quit his irksome job teaching at the Moscow Conservatory to devote himself entirely to composition. His boss at the Conservatory, the brilliant pianist Nikolai Rubinstein, approached Mme. von Meck with the suggestion that perhaps she might commission a new work that would help to ease Tchaikovsky’s financial position, and he played for her a piano version of *The Tempest* to support his petition. The music struck to the core of her being, and she not only began to correspond with Tchaikovsky but offered him such generous financial support that he was able to leave the Conservatory — a result Rubinstein certainly had not desired. Mme. von Meck became not just Tchaikovsky’s artistic patroness but also the sympathetic sounding-board for reports on the whole range of his activities — emotional, musical, personal. Though they never met, her place in Tchaikovsky’s life was enormous and beneficial.

The subject for *The Tempest*, an “orchestral fantasy-overture after Shakespeare” (not to be confused with the overture *The Storm*, Op. 76 of 1864, inspired by a play of Ostrovsky), was suggested to Tchaikovsky early in 1873 by Vladimir Stasov, the influential journalist and philosophical shepherd to the musical wing of the Russian nationalist movement. When Tchaikovsky expressed interest in the idea, Stasov worked out a detailed literary plan for the piece, which the composer streamlined and used as a preface to the score: “*The sea — The magician Prospero sends Ariel to raise a tempest, which wrecks Ferdinand’s boat — The magic island — First timid feelings of love between Miranda and Ferdinand — Ariel — Caliban — The lovers give themselves up to the spell of passion — Prospero renounces his magic power and leaves the island — The sea.*” (Stasov supplied a similar outline for the *Manfred Symphony* a dozen years later.) Tchaikovsky wrote the work in eleven days in August 1873 “without any effort, as though moved by some supernatural force” at the country estate near Kiev of his friend Count Vladimir Vasilyev-Shilovsky, whose brother Konstantin was to help write the libretto for *Eugene Onegin* the following year. *The Tempest* was premiered to much acclaim by the Moscow branch of the Russian Musical Society under Nikolai Rubinstein’s direction on December 19th, and the composer himself conducted it on several occasions, but he later came to feel that it was not up to the standard of his two other symphonic fantasies, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Francesca da Rimini*. Though Tchaikovsky’s ultimate judgment relegated *The Tempest* to the fringes of the repertory, the work still displays the same mastery of orchestration, the melodiousness, the tone-painting and the sincerity of expression that are the hallmarks of his better-known creations.

VARIATIONS ON A ROCOCO THEME FOR CELLO AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 33 (1876)

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky’s Rococo Variations is scored for pairs of woodwinds and horns, and strings. The performance time is eighteen minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed this work on August 6, 1940, Hans Lange conducting. Edmund Kurtz was the soloist.

Tchaikovsky was far from happy with his teaching duties at the Moscow Conservatory, which left him less time for composing than he wished. One of the positive aspects of the job, however, was that he was able to meet some fine musicians in the course of his work, one of whom was the

sonorously named German professor of cello at the school, Wilhelm Carl Friedrich Fitzenhagen. Fitzenhagen, like Tchaikovsky, was rather shy and introverted, and a nice friendship sprang up between them; it was for Fitzenhagen that Tchaikovsky composed his *Rococo Variations*.

The style of the *Rococo Variations* may be traced to Tchaikovsky's reverence for Mozart, whom he called "the greatest of all composers" and even "the Christ of music." Tchaikovsky's interest in the Salzburg master extended beyond mere matters of musical technique, however, to other of the sensitive composer's concerns, especially the sense of social dislocation caused by his homosexuality, as John Warrack noted in his study of the composer: "The rococo represented for Tchaikovsky a world of order and balance that seemed hopelessly lost. He is by no means the only Romantic composer to feel an ache for the rejected classicism — it is, indeed, one of the typically contradictory ingredients of Romanticism. But in him the reaction was as usual acutely personal, a dramatization of his sense of being cut off from a once-familiar security and delight. He was often to find in his music occasion for what he frankly regarded as escape from his real situation of unhappiness to which the world had no answer. In these *Variations* he turned again to the rococo for consolation." This is a work of deliberate grace, charm and elegance that plumbs no great emotional depths nor reveals any of those melancholy corners of Tchaikovsky's soul that were to be exposed in the Fourth Symphony, composed only a few months later. "The *Variations*," according to Edward Garden, "were from a world of happy make-believe where the frustrations and terrors of the present existence could be forgotten for a time in the contemplation of the past."

The theme of the *Variations*, original with Tchaikovsky, is prefaced by a subdued introduction. After a brief, vaguely Oriental interlude for double reeds that looks forward to the nationality dances in *The Nutcracker*, the cello presents the first of the seven variations. The opening two variations are decorated versions of the theme, each ending with a strain for double reeds. Variation 3 presents a long-breathed *cantabile* in a new key and tempo. The fourth variation resumes the earlier tempo, and includes some dazzling, airborne scale passages that exploit fully the tone, agility and range of the solo instrument. The next variation allots the cello a trilled accompaniment to the theme, played by the flute; a cadenza closes this section. The penultimate variation slips into a minor mode that both balances the preceding tonalities and creates a good foil to the virtuosic closing variation that immediately follows. When the redoubtable Franz Liszt heard the *Rococo Variations* at a concert in Wiesbaden in 1879, his comment could not have been more cogent or more apposite: "This," he pronounced, "is indeed music!"



PETRUSHKA, BALLET IN FOUR TABLEAUX (1911)
Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Petrushka is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta, piano and strings. The performance time is 34 minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed Petrushka on August 10, 1955, Joseph Rosenstock conducting.

Stravinsky burst meteor-like onto the musical firmament in 1910 with the brilliant triumph of his first major score for the Ballet Russe, *The Firebird*. Immediately, Serge Diaghilev, the enterprising impresario of the troupe, sought to capitalize on this success by commissioning Stravinsky to write a second score as soon as possible. Stravinsky was already prepared with an idea that had come to him even before finishing *The Firebird*. "I saw in imagination a solemn pagan rite," he recalled in his *Autobiography* of 1936. "Sage elders, seated in a circle, watched a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring. Such was the theme of *Le Sacre du printemps*." Diaghilev was as excited about this vision as was Stravinsky, and he sent the composer off to write the score with all possible haste. Stravinsky continued the story in his *Autobiography*:

"Before tackling *The Rite of Spring*, which would be a long and difficult task, I wanted to refresh myself by composing an orchestral piece in which the piano would play the most important part — a sort of *Konzertstück*. In composing the music, I had a distinct picture of a puppet, suddenly endowed with life.... Having finished this piece, I struggled for hours to find a title which would

express in a word the character of my music and, consequently, the personality of this creature. One day I leaped for joy, I had indeed found my title — *Petrushka*, the immortal and unhappy hero of every fair in all countries. Soon afterwards, Diaghilev came to visit me. He was much astonished when, instead of the sketches of the *Sacre*, I played him the piece I had just composed and which later became the second scene of *Petrushka*. He was so pleased with it that he would not leave it alone, and began persuading me to develop the theme of the puppet's sufferings and make it into a whole ballet.”

Though his progress on the score was interrupted by a serious bout of “nicotine poisoning,” Stravinsky finished the work in time for the scheduled premiere on June 13, 1911. The production was a triumph, though it appeared that at the last minute it might be scuttled by a costumer who refused to let things proceed until he was paid. The till being temporarily empty, Diaghilev went to the box of the redoubtable Misia Sert to ask for her help. She was, as always, ready with assistance, but the curtain was delayed half an hour while her driver was sent to retrieve the necessary funds. When the performance finally began, the music of Stravinsky and the dancing of Nijinsky captivated the audience. The illustrious thespian Sarah Bernhardt was so moved by the depth and subtlety of Nijinsky's portrayal of the love-sick puppet that she said, with no little envy, “I am afraid, I am afraid — because I have just seen the greatest actor in the world.”

The uniformly laudatory writings about *Petrushka* agree on the daring, influential modernity of Stravinsky's musical style and his exquisite technical control. They speak of the integration of plot and music and the brilliant characterizations. They praise the stunning orchestral effect. Lawrence Gilman's summation is typical. “Stravinsky's score,” he wrote, “is a masterpiece, a thing of fascinating gaiety and wit and beauty. The rhythmic and instrumental ingenuity of the work is beyond praise. And so is the slyness of its humor, the fidelity and vividness of its characterization. But there is much more than slyness and vividness in this music: there is astringent melancholy, a deep piteousness, a bitter, straining passion. There is the sense of compassion for all unshapely and broken and frustrate things, a half-mocking tenderness for the poor creatures galvanized by the inscrutable, irresponsible Charlatan. These things are not stressed by the music — there is no hint in it of sentimental musing or rich, romantic grief; they are most subtly contained within the exuberant vivaciousness of the score. Yet they are inescapable, if one listens with more than half an ear.”

Tableau I. *St. Petersburg, the Shrove-Tide Fair*. Crowds of people stroll about, entertained by a hurdy-gurdy man and dancers. The Showman opens the curtains of his little theater to reveal three puppets — Petrushka, the Ballerina and the Blackamoor. He charms them into life with his flute, and they begin to dance among the public.

Tableau II. *Petrushka's Cell*. Petrushka suffers greatly from his awareness of his grotesque appearance. He tries to console himself by falling in love with the Ballerina. She visits him in his cell, but she is frightened by his uncouth antics, and flees.

Tableau III. *The Blackamoor's Cell*. The Blackamoor and the Ballerina meet in his tent. Their love scene is interrupted by the arrival of Petrushka, furiously jealous. The Blackamoor throws him out.

Tableau IV. *The Fair*. The festive scene of Tableau I resumes with the appearance of a group of wet-nurses, a performing bear, Gypsies, a band of coachmen and several masqueraders. At the theater, Petrushka rushes out from behind the curtain, pursued by the Blackamoor, who strikes his rival down with his sword. Petrushka dies. The Showman assures the bystanders that Petrushka is only a puppet, but he is startled to see Petrushka's jeering ghost appear on the roof of the little theater.

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