



Grant Park Music Festival

Seventy-sixth Season

Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus

Carlos Kalmar, *Principal Conductor*

Christopher Bell, *Chorus Director*

Eleventh Program: The Magic Toy Shop

Friday, July 16, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 17, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

GRANT PARK ORCHESTRA

Julian Kuerti, *Guest Conductor*

ROSSINI
arr. Respighi

La Boutique Fantasque, Ballet in One Act

Overture — Tempo di Marcia

Allegretto — Vivo

Tarantella: Allegro con brio

Mazurka

Lento — Moderato più vivo

Danse Cosaque: Allegretto marcato

Waltz: Allegretto brillante

Can-Can: Allegretto grottesco

Andantino mosso

Valse lente: Andantino moderato

Allegretto moderato

Nocturne: Andantino

Galop: Vivacissimo

Allegro brillante — Prestissimo

Intermission

BRAHMS

Variations on a Theme of Joseph Haydn, Op. 56a

Chorale St. Antoni: Andante

Variation I: Poco più Animato

Variation II: Più Vivace

Variation III: Con moto

Variation IV: Andante

Variation V: Con moto Vivace

Variation VI: Vivace

Variation VII: Grazioso

Variation VIII: Presto non troppo

Finale: Andante

BRITTEN

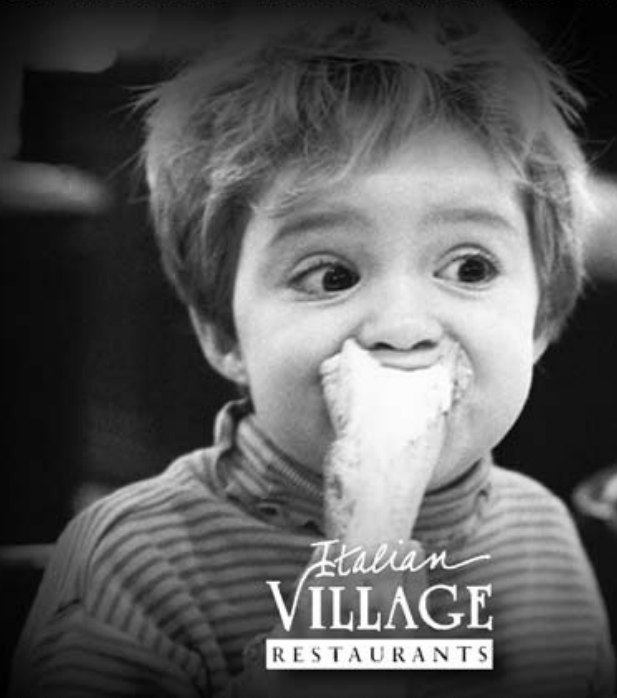
The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra

(*Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell*), Op. 34



As assistant conductor to James Levine at the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Canadian conductor **JULIAN KUERTI** made his BSO subscription debut in March 2008. He returned shortly to the BSO podium on last-minute occasions in July 2008 and November 2008. Julian Kuerti was born in Toronto into one of Canada's most distinguished musical families: his father is famed pianist Anton Kuerti. Julian Kuerti began his instrumental training on the violin. While completing an honors degree in engineering and physics at the University of Toronto, he kept up the violin, performing as concertmaster and soloist with various Canadian orchestras. Mr. Kuerti began his conducting studies in 2000 at the University of Toronto. From 2001 until 2005, Mr. Kuerti studied conducting with Lutz Köhler at the University of the Arts in Berlin. He also trained with David Zinman at the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen in 2004 and with acclaimed Finnish maestro Jorma Panula at the NAC Conductors Programme in Ottawa. In 2005, he was one of two conducting fellows at Tanglewood, where he was mentored by James Levine and Kurt Masur. From 2005 until 2008, Julian Kuerti served as founding Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of Berlin's Solistenensemble Kaleidoskop. He was also Assistant Conductor to Ivan Fischer and the Budapest Festival Orchestra during the 2007-2008 season. During the 2009-2010 season, Julian Kuerti conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood and in Boston, as well as subscription concerts with the orchestras of Montreal, Colorado, Utah, Winnipeg and San Antonio. In spring 2010, he toured Europe with the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg and Bochumer Symphoniker.

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**LA BOUTIQUE FANTASQUE, BALLET IN ONE ACT (1857-1868;
arranged in 1919)**

Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868)

**Orchestrated and Arranged by Ottorino Respighi
(1879-1936)**

La Boutique Fantasque is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta and strings. The performance time is approximately 43 minutes. This is the work's first performance by the Grant Park Orchestra.

Ottorino Respighi, born on July 9, 1879 into the family of a piano teacher in Bologna, was introduced to music by his father and progressed so rapidly that he began his professional training in violin, piano and composition at age thirteen at the city's respected Liceo Musicale; his principal teacher was the school's director, Giuseppe Martucci, then Italy's leading composer of orchestral music. Respighi was granted a leave from the Liceo in 1900 to play as a violist with the orchestra of the St. Petersburg Opera, and he took advantage of his time in Russia to arrange what he called "a few, but for me very important" lessons with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, whose brilliant orchestral technique would prove to be a lasting influence. Respighi returned to Bologna the following year to complete his degree and then went to Berlin to study violin and composition with Max Bruch. After spending another season in St. Petersburg, he settled in Bologna in 1903, earning his living as a free-lance violinist and receiving his earliest notice as a composer — some of his violin and piano pieces were published in 1904; his first opera, *Re Enzo* ("King Enzo"), was given a student production at the Liceo in 1905; Rodolfo Ferrari conducted the *Notturmo* on an orchestral concert at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in 1908 — and becoming active as an editor and arranger of music from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Respighi was back in Berlin in 1908, teaching piano at a private school there, befriending such musical luminaries as Busoni, Kreisler, Caruso, Paderewski and Bruno Walter, and promoting his work so effectively that the renowned conductor Arthur Nikisch included his transcription of Monteverdi's *Lamento d'Arianna* on a Philharmonic concert. Deeply impressed by a performance of Richard Strauss' three-year old *Salome* that he attended in Berlin, Respighi went home to Bologna in 1909 and wrote his own operatic "tragic poem in three acts," *Semirâma*, set in ancient Babylon; it was premiered in Bologna in 1910. Performances of the *Notturmo* and excerpts from *Semirâma* in Rome in 1912 (and frustration at being unable to land a regular teaching appointment at Bologna's Liceo Musicale) led him to accept a post on the faculty of Rome's Santa Cecilia Academy in 1913. He found his first great success, and his musical voice, with the opulent tone poem *The Fountains of Rome* and the first set of *Ancient Airs and Dances* in 1917. He was appointed director of the Conservatory of the Santa Cecilia Academy in 1923, but found the administrative duties too intrusive on his creative work and resigned from the position three years later, though he did continue teaching privately for several years. Respighi began touring internationally with a visit to Prague in 1921 and he thereafter traveled extensively throughout Europe and North and South America to conduct and occasionally appear as piano soloist in his works; he made four trips to the United States between 1925 and 1932. His burgeoning career began to take a toll on his health, however, and a heart murmur was diagnosed in 1931. Like Gustav Mahler after a similar diagnosis of heart disease, Respighi nevertheless carried on with his demanding schedule and by 1935 he had pretty well worn himself out. He died of a heart attack in Rome on April 18, 1936; he was 56.

Respighi had an abiding interest in the music of earlier times, and he edited many works by such venerable composers as Monteverdi, Frescobaldi, Tartini and Vitali for publication and based his three sets of *Ancient Airs and Dances* (1917, 1924, 1932) and *The Birds* (1927) on Italian, French and English lute and keyboard pieces of the 16th, 17th and early 18th centuries. Respighi did not limit his historical expeditions to just ancient sources, however, but also demonstrated a particular fondness for the music of his recent Italian predecessor Gioacchino Rossini, dead only a decade when Respighi was born in 1879. In 1919, for Diaghilev's Ballet Russe, Respighi arranged a ballet titled *La Boutique Fantasque* ("The Fantastic Toyshop") from the extensive miscellany of miniatures

that Rossini concocted during his last years, a little-known body of work that is one of the most curious repertoires in all of music. After dazzling Europe with no fewer than 39 operas between 1808 and 1829, Rossini abruptly stopped composing at the hardly advanced age of 37. Except for a little volume of vocal entertainment pieces called *Les Soirées Musicales* jotted down between about 1830 and 1835, he thereafter retired completely from creative activity, traveling extensively in Italy and France, and growing increasingly alarmed about the deteriorating state of his health. In 1855, he finally settled in Paris, and the following summer was ordered by his French doctors to seek relief at the baths in Wildbad, Kissingen and Baden. The treatment succeeded, and he moved into a new apartment in central Paris in the autumn of 1856 with a renewed invigoration for life and work, though he maintained a strict daily regimen of walking, rest, dining and receiving visitors. The only variation in his schedule came on Saturday evenings, when he hosted one of the most popular salons in the city — invitations to his *soirées samedi* were among the most eagerly sought by artists and socialites from all over Europe. At his gathering of April 15, 1857, Rossini amazed the crowd by presenting to his devoted wife, Olympe, his first new composition in 22 years, a series of six different settings of a poem by Metastasio appropriately titled *Musique Anodine* (“*Music to Soothe Pain*”). From that date until he died eleven years later, Rossini again composed with real enjoyment, devising some 180 little pieces for solo piano and for various combinations of accompanied voices which he smilingly called his *Péchés de Vieillesse* — “*Sins of My Old Age*.” Though a tiny fraction of these musical transgressions are serious in tone (*A Funeral Ode for Meyerbeer*, *A Deep Sleep*, *A Caress for My Wife*), most are deliberately humorous or satirical or even grotesque in both title and content. There are, among many others, a whole series of pieces named for various desserts and hors-d’oeuvres, a tongue-in-cheek programmatic number about *A Little Pleasure Trip in the Train* (Rossini hated trains), a *Little Castor Oil Waltz*, *An Abortive Polka* and *A Hygienic Prelude for Morning Use*. These delicious *morceaux* were eagerly served to the guests at his Saturday soirées, but he refused to have them published, and after his death they were preserved in thirteen manuscript volumes in the archive of his works in his native Pesaro. It was from the Pesaro collection that Respighi culled the material for *La Boutique Fantasque*.

The ballet tells of a shop that trades in elaborate mechanical dolls in a Mediterranean resort town. Two vacationing families — one American, one Russian — are shown a variety of the shop’s amazing wares, each of which performs a characteristic dance (tarantella, cossack, mazurka, waltz, galop, etc.), but both families are taken with the same pair of can-can dancers, the shopowner’s favorite creations. It is agreed that each family will take one, and that they will return the next day to pick up their purchases. After the shop is shuttered that evening, the dolls lament the separation of the can-can dancers and hide them away. The Americans and Russians are furious that their dolls cannot be found when they return, and start to tear up the shop. The other dolls drive them off and bring the can-can dancers out of hiding, much to the delight of the shopkeeper, who not only gets to keep his prize toys but also the money of the departed customers.



VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF JOSEPH HAYDN, OP. 56A (1873) Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Brahms’ Haydn Variations is scored for woodwinds in pairs plus piccolo and contra-bassoon, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, triangle and strings. The performance time is approximately seventeen minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed the Haydn Variations on August 10, 1937, Ebba Sundstrom conducting.

For a composer who occupies such a preeminent position in the world’s orchestral concert halls, it took Brahms some time to find his *métier*. His first work with orchestra, the stormy D minor Piano Concerto of 1854, ran aground on the shoals of adverse criticism and audience bewilderment, and discouraged him from further attempts at a major orchestral composition for many years. (The charming Serenades in D major and A major date from 1857, but they did not broach the serious symphonic tradition of the masters which, as Brahms said of Beethoven, always hovered just over his shoulder.) The earliest sketches for the Symphony No. 1 date from 1855, but these lay dormant for years at a time. As Brahms neared his fortieth year he did not have a single work in the orchestral repertory.

For his conducting positions with various choral societies during the 1860s, Brahms produced a large number of vocal works, and some of the most important (*German Requiem*, *Alto Rhapsody*, *Schicksalslied*) were fitted with orchestral accompaniments that show Brahms' growing ability to handle large instrumental forces. They bolstered his confidence as an orchestrator, but he was still reluctant to bring his First Symphony to conclusion. Another work, a smaller piece, was needed as a final confirmation that he was ready to stand on Beethoven's plateau as a symphonist. He wrote that work — the *Variations on a Theme of Haydn* — and it turned out to be one of the greatest independent orchestral compositions of the 19th century.

The seed for the *Haydn Variations* was sown in November 1870 when Karl Ferdinand Pohl, librarian for Vienna's Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, ran across some unpublished manuscripts in his research for a biography of Haydn. Pohl assumed that these works, a set of six *Feldpartiten* (open-air suites for wind instruments), were by Haydn, and, knowing of Brahms' interest in old music, he invited the composer to have a look at the scores. Brahms was especially interested in a movement of the *Partita* in B-flat that took as its theme a melody labeled "*Choral St. Antoni*." The idea for a set of variations based on this sturdy tune apparently sprang to his mind immediately, and he copied the theme into his notes before he left Pohl's study. He did not begin actual composition of the work until more than two years later, however, but when he did, he produced it in two separate versions — the present one for orchestra and another, identical musically, for two pianos. The two were apparently written simultaneously, and he pointed out that one was not a transcription of the other, but that they were to be thought of as two independent works. The piano version was finished by August 1873, when he played it with Clara Schumann, and published in November. The premiere of the orchestral incarnation in November received enthusiastic acclaim from critics and audiences alike, and it marked the beginning of Brahms' international reputation as an orchestral composer. During the next fifteen years, he produced all the symphonic works that continue to assure his name among the musical giants.

Though Brahms did not know it, the theme he copied out of Pohl's manuscript was probably not by Haydn at all. Considerable musicological spelunking has been done to unearth the true source of the tune, but there is still no definitive explanation of its origin. The late H.C. Robbins Landon, who literally spent a lifetime in Haydn research, wrote that the whole series of works in the *Partita* manuscript "is spurious and ... not one note was by Haydn. One of his students, perhaps Pleyel, was probably the real author." It has been suggested that the melody was an old Austrian pilgrims' song, though conclusive evidence has never been brought forth to support this theory. We may never know for sure.

The *Haydn Variations* consists of a theme followed by eight variations and a finale. The scoring of the theme for wind choir preserves the reedy timbre of the original *Partita*, which called for two oboes, three bassoons, two horns and serpent. (This last is an obsolete bass wind instrument so called because of its S-curve shape. A marvelous example exists in the collections of Yale University that has an elaborately painted snake's head complete with a red, flapping, forked metal tongue that wags as the instrument is played. The hollow, breathy sound of this specimen makes it abundantly clear why the serpent fell into disuse.) To best appreciate the *Haydn Variations*, it is important to recognize the structure of its opening theme, with its irregular five-measure phrases and repeated sections. The eminent British musicologist Sir Donald Tovey made this point incisively: "In music, as in all art that moves in time, the listener should fix his attention on some element that pervades the whole, not upon some guess as to the course of events. In a set of classical variations the all-pervading element is the shape of the whole theme." The eight variations that follow preserve the theme's structure, though they vary greatly in mood: thoughtful, gentle, martial, even frankly sensual, this last being Brahms' rarest musical emotion.

The finale is constructed as a passacaglia on a recurring five-measure ostinato derived from the bass supporting the theme. This fragment, repeated many times in the low strings before it migrates into the higher instruments, generates both an irresistible rhythmic motion and a spacious solidity as the finale progresses. It leads inexorably to the spine-tingling moment when (after a minor-mode episode) the original theme bursts forth triumphantly in the strings as the woodwinds strew it with ribbons of scales.



THE YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO THE ORCHESTRA (VARIATIONS AND FUGUE ON A THEME OF PURCELL), OP. 34 (1946)

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

The Young Person's Guide is scored for piccolo plus woodwinds in pairs, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings. The performance time is approximately eighteen minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed The Young Person's Guide on August 13, 1948, Nicolai Malko conducting.

Henry Purcell was much on Benjamin Britten's mind in 1945. November 21st was the 250th anniversary of Purcell's death, and Britten paid homage to the great Restoration composer in two works written for a concert commemorating the event. One was the song cycle *Holy Sonnets of John Donne*, heavily influenced in its structure and word setting by the music of Purcell. The other was the Second String Quartet, whose finale is a *Chacony* ("Chaconne") modeled on Purcell's splendid examples of that form. It was also in 1945 that Britten and tenor Peter Pears began work on their performing editions of Purcell's songs. (Britten may have felt a further kinship with Purcell at the time in that *Peter Grimes* had premiered earlier that year to praise naming it the greatest English opera since *Dido and Aeneas*.) When Britten was commissioned the following year to compose a piece demonstrating the instruments of the orchestra, he chose to base the work on a theme from the music of Purcell.

Early in 1946, the British Ministry of Education approached Britten with a request to compose music for a film they were preparing to introduce the orchestra to children, and he agreed to the project. He cast his work in the form of a series of variations with a concluding fugue based on the hornpipe from Purcell's incidental music to *Abdelazar, or The Moor's Revenge* (1695), and gave it the dual title of *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* and *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell*. (He is said to have preferred the former.) The film, titled simply *The Instruments of the Orchestra*, was first shown on November 2, 1946, but Britten's music had already been heard in a concert by the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Malcolm Sargent on October 15th.

Though inscribed to children, there is nothing childish about the work, which is probably Britten's most-often performed composition. *The Young Person's Guide* is music of brilliant craftsmanship that not only serves the didactic purpose for which it was intended, but also stands sturdily on its own as a piece of abstract music. As one of the small number of independent sets of orchestral variations, it is a worthy successor to the works in that genre by Brahms, Dvořák, Reger, Dohnányi and Elgar. Britten's *Guide* is constructed in three large sections. The first presents the full orchestra and then "the four teams of players," as the instrumental choirs are called in the preface to the score: woodwinds, brass, strings and percussion. The work's second section is a series of variations presenting the instruments individually. In these variations, Britten not only found a mode of expression well suited to the character of each instrument, but he also devised consistently ingenious commentaries on Purcell's melody. First the woodwinds are heard — brilliant arabesques for flutes and piccolo, a bittersweet strain for oboes, a nimble duet for clarinets, and a jocular march with a lyrical obbligato for bassoons. (In the original film, and for many performances, a spoken commentary introduces each variation and gives a word about the nature of each instrument.) The strings are next. A dashing *polonaise* for violins, warm, romantic melodies for violas and then cellos, a wide-ranging variation for double basses, and an accompanied cadenza for harp. The variations are rounded out by the brasses — horns, trumpets, trombones with tuba — and a goodly sampling of percussion instruments. The concluding section of the *Guide* is a fugue whose theme is loosely based on Purcell's melody, with each of the instruments joining the fugue in the order in which it was introduced in the variations. Just as the fugue seems about to burst from its own complexity, Purcell's original theme is recalled in a gloriously majestic proclamation by the brass while the rest of the orchestra continues the fugue as accompaniment. This masterful essay on orchestral tone color comes to a rousing close with a splash of percussion and a full-throated cadence from the assembled instruments.

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