GEORGES BIZET (1838-1875)
SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN C MAJOR (1855)
Scored for: pairs of woodwinds, four horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings
Performance time: 27 minutes
First Grant Park Orchestra performance: July 13, 1945, Nikolai Malko, conductor

Georges Bizet lived for only three dozen years, and each of those dozens marked an important phase of his short life. During his first twelve years, little time was devoted to the usual activities of childhood, since Georges, the offspring of two talented musicians, was breathtakingly precocious in musical matters. He was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire at the age of nine and was winning prizes there within a year. He produced his earliest known works, two vocalises for soprano, at twelve.

The second dozen years of Bizet’s life were the happiest he was to know. He studied at the Conservatoire until he was nineteen, garnering awards for piano, organ, fugue and solfeggio, and composing a variety of works. At nineteen, he won the Prix de Rome, which supplied him with a five-year stipend, a residency in Italy and France, and the opportunity to devote himself to composition. He completed several works during that time, establishing a modest reputation as a composer and an excellent one as a pianist. The years of planning, composing and travel came to an end when his prize stipend expired. At the age of 24 he was had to begin making his own living.

After 1863, Bizet gave much of his time to all manner of musical hackwork: private teacher, rehearsal accompanist, music critic, but mostly to transcribing popular pieces of the day for a variety of instruments. “It is maddening to interrupt the work I love for two days in order to write cornet solos. Still, one must live!” he lamented. He planned many works for both opera house and concert hall, but had to abandon most of those because of lack of time. From his later years date the works for which he is mainly remembered: The Pearl Fishers, Jeux d’enfants, the incidental music to L’Arlésienne and Carmen. None of those pieces provided him the success he worked so hard to achieve, however, and he lived in a state of continual frustration that Winton Dean described as “settled melancholy.” Bizet died before he knew that Carmen would make his name famous around the world.

Bizet’s Symphony in C, written in his seventeenth year, is a marvel of early musical maturation that rivals the precocity of Mozart and Mendelssohn. Curiously, the work seems not to have been performed during Bizet’s lifetime. The manuscript became part of his estate after his death and passed into the possession of his wife, who did not fully appreciate her husband’s genius. She bequeathed it to the composer Reynaldo Hahn, and he to the Paris Conservatoire Library, where it gathered dust until Bizet’s first English biographer, D.C. Parker, unearthed it in 1933. It was finally premiered on February 26, 1935 in Basle, Switzerland by Felix Weingartner.

The Symphony in C opens with a movement in traditional sonata form, with a bubbling main theme outlining chordal patterns and a contrasting legato second theme, introduced by the oboe, in longer notes. The slow second movement contains a haunting, bittersweet serenade for oboe followed by a soaring melody for strings. The movement is rounded out by the return of the oboe theme. The concluding two movements are a sprightly scherzo with a rustic-sounding trio, and a vivacious finale, cast, like the first movement, in sonata form.
James MacMillan
(b. 1959)

**STOMP (WITH FATE AND ELVIRA) (2006)**

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

**Performance time:** 5 minutes

**First Grant Park Orchestra performance**

Scottish composer James MacMillan, born in Kilwinning, Ayshire on July 16, 1959, was educated at the University of Edinburgh (B.Mus., 1981) and University of Durham (Ph.D., 1987), where his principal teacher was John Casken. After working as a lecturer at Manchester University from 1986 to 1988, MacMillan returned to Scotland, where he has since fulfilled many important commissions and taught at the University of Edinburgh and Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. In 1993, MacMillan won both the Gramophone Contemporary Music Record of the Year Award and the Classic CD Award for Contemporary Music; he was made a CBE in 2004, given the 2008 British Composer Award for Liturgical Music, and named an Honorary Patron of the London Chamber Orchestra in 2008. In October 2014, MacMillan inaugurated the Cumnock Tryst, a festival of international scope that he organized in his boyhood home in southern Scotland.

MacMillan’s compositions, many of which incorporate traditional Scottish elements and bear some stamp of either his religion (Catholicism) or his politics (socialism). Of his creative personality, MacMillan wrote, “I respect tradition in many forms, whether cultural, political or historical, and in keeping up a continuous, delicate scrutiny of old forms, ancient traditions, enduring beliefs and lasting values one is strengthened in one’s constant, restless search for new avenues of expression. Therefore, in ideological

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Martyn Brabbins is Music Director of the English National Opera, which recently extended his contract by two seasons to 2022. An inspirational force in British music, Mr. Brabbins has had a busy opera career since his early days at the Kirov and more recently at La Scala, Bayerische Staatsoper, and regularly in Lyon, Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Antwerp. He is a popular figure at the BBC Proms and with most of the leading British orchestras, and regularly visits top international orchestras such as the Royal Concertgebouw, DSO Berlin and Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony. Known for his advocacy of British composers, he has also conducted hundreds of world premieres across the globe. He has recorded over 120 CDs to date, including prize-winning discs of operas by Korngold, Birtwistle and Harvey. He was Associate Principal Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra 1994-2005, Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Flemish Philharmonic 2009-2015, Chief Conductor of the Nagoya Philharmonic 2012-2016, and Artistic Director of the Cheltenham International Festival of Music 2005-2007. He is currently Visiting Professor at the Royal College of Music and Music Director to the Huddersfield Choral Society alongside his duties at ENO, and has for many years supported professional, student and amateur music-making at the highest level in the UK.

Stephen Hough combines a distinguished career as a pianist with those of composer and writer. Since taking First Prize at the 1983 Naumburg Competition in New York, Mr. Hough has performed with many of the world’s major orchestras and given recitals at the most prestigious concert halls. He was the first classical performer to be awarded a MacArthur Fellowship. He was awarded Northwestern University’s 2008 Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano, won the Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumentalist Award in 2010, and in January 2014 was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth in the New Year’s Honors List. Many of Mr. Hough’s catalogue of over fifty albums have garnered international prizes, including the Deutsche Schallplattenpreis, Diapason d’Or, Monde de la Musique, several Grammy nominations, eight Gramophone Magazine Awards (including “Record of the Year” in 1996 and 2003), and the Gramophone “Gold Disc” Award in 2008, which named his complete Saint-Saëns piano concertos as the best recording of the past thirty years. His 2012 recording of the complete Chopin Waltzes received the Diapason d’Or de l’Année, France’s most prestigious recording award. His 2005 live recording of the Rachmaninoff piano concertos was the fastest-selling recording in Hyperion’s history, while his 1987 recording of the Hummel concertos remains Chandos’ best-selling disc to date. Mr. Hough’s most recent releases, all for Hyperion, include Grieg’s Lyric Pieces; a recording of his Mass “Missa Mirabilis” with the Colorado Symphony and Andrew Litton; a recital disc with Steven Isserlis including Mr. Hough’s Sonata for Cello and Piano (Les Adieux); a solo recital of Scriabin and Janáček; and the Dvořák and Schumann concertos with the CBSO and Andris Nelsons. Mr. Hough has composed works for orchestra, choir, chamber ensemble and solo piano, several on commissions from the musicians of the Berlin Philharmonic, Gilmore Foundation, Genesis Foundation, London’s National Gallery, Wigmore Hall, Le Musée de Louvre and Musica Viva Australia, among others. He is also a noted writer and holds faculty appointment at London’s Royal Academy of Music, Royal Northern College in Manchester and Juilliard.

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Scored for: pairs of woodwinds, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion and strings

Performance time: 5 minutes

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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)
Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37 (1797-1803)
Scored for: pairs of woodwinds, horns and trumpets, timpani and strings
Performance time: 34 minutes
First Grant Park Orchestra performance: August 11, 1950, Erich Leinsdorf, conductor, with Zadel Skolovsky as soloist

By 1803, Emanuel Schikaneder, the colorful character who figured so prominently in the closing pages of Mozart's life as the librettist and producer of The Magic Flute, had taken over the management of Vienna's Theater-an-der-Wien. His house was locked in a fierce competitive battle with the court-sponsored Kärntnertortheater, run by Baron Peter von Braun. When von Braun hired the distinguished Luigi Cherubini as resident composer, Schikaneder felt obliged to counter with his own music master, and he approached Beethoven with an offer. Beethoven, who had felt the need to write for the stage for some time, accepted gladly — especially since the job carried free lodgings in the theater as part of the compensation. He and Schikaneder dutifully plowed through a small library of possibilities for an operatic subject, but none inspired Beethoven until he took up work on Fidelio late in 1803. In the meantime, Beethoven took advantage of his theatrical connection to put some of his instrumental works on display. Since opera was forbidden in Catholic countries during Lent at that time, the Theater-an-der-Wien was available for concerts in the early spring, and Beethoven scheduled such an event during April 1803. It had been fully three years since he last presented a concert entirely of his own orchestral music, and he had several scores that were awaiting their first presentations, including the Second Symphony, the oratorio Christ on the Mount of Olives and the Third Piano Concerto. He programmed all of these and also tossed in the First Symphony, which had been premiered at his concert three years earlier.

Beethoven proceeded enthusiastically with plans for the concert, working right up to the last minute putting finishing touches on the new compositions. (His pupil Ferdinand Ries found him in bed writing trombone parts for the oratorio only three hours before the rehearsal began.) He had just a single rehearsal on the concert day for this wealth of unfamiliar music, and, with his less-than-adept players, it is little wonder that it went poorly. The public and critical response to the concert was lukewarm, undoubtedly due in large part to the inadequate performance. Beethoven, however, was delighted to have played his music for the Viennese public, and he was well on his way to becoming recognized more for his ability as a composer than as a pianist.

The Third Concerto’s first movement opens with the longest introductory orchestral tutti in Beethoven’s concertos. The strings in unison present the main theme; the lyrical second theme is sung by violins and clarinet in a contrasting major mode. The closely reasoned development section grows inexorably from thematic fragments heard in the exposition. The recapitulation begins with a forceful restatement of the main theme by the full orchestra. The second movement is a nocturne of tender sentiments and quiet moods. Though analysis reveals its form to be a three-part structure (A—B—A), it is in spirit simply an extended song — a marvelous juxtaposition of hymnal tranquility and sensuous operatic love scene. The traditional, Classical rondo was a form of simple, high spirits meant to send the audience away in a bubbling mood. Mozart, in his incomparable late concertos, had begun to explore the emotional depth possible with the rondo, and in this Third Concerto, Beethoven continued that search. He incorporated elements of sonata design into the finale to lend it additional weight, even inserting a fugal passage in the second episode. Only in the closing pages is the dark world of C minor abandoned for a vivacious romp through C major to close this wonderful work of Beethoven’s early maturity.

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)
Symphony No. 2, A London Symphony (1912-1914)
Scored for: piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings
Performance time: 44 minutes
First Grant Park Orchestra performance: July 6, 1983, Gerhardt Zimmermann, conductor

Though Ralph Vaughan Williams was a man of distinguished pedigree — his mother was a member of the Wedgwood pottery family and Charles Darwin was his great-uncle — he spent much time investigating the musical ways of the English common people. As a young man, he devoted many months to troop through provincial hamlets and villages collecting folksongs with his colleagues Gustav Holst and George Butterworth, and from 1904 to 1906, he edited a new version of the English Hymnal. In those vernacular songs and in the great traditions of Elizabethan music just being rediscovered in the early 20th century, Vaughan Williams recognized a wealth of models and inspiration that could serve as the bases for a distinctly English compositional idiom. “Have we not all about us forms of musical expression which we can take and
terms, my works express the timeless truths of Roman Catholicism alongside a fierce social commitment. And musically one can hopefully sense the depths of times past integrating with attempts at innovation."

MacMillan provided the following pretty much inscrutable information about Stomp: “The dark, brooding cloud of fate that had been hovering over St. Petersburg lifted and drifted west to Sweden, where it made an amorous encounter with a young tigrope walker, Elvira Madigan. They eloped and headed west again, ending up at a céilidh in Kilkenney, or Kilmarnock, or somewhere...” First, a céilidh (KAY-lee) is a Scottish social gathering with traditional folksongs and instrumental music, dancing and storytelling. Second, Stomp was commissioned for a concert on March 3, 2007 marking the 25th Anniversary of the Barbican Centre, home of the London Symphony Orchestra and one of the city’s most important concert venues — it was given in the presence (as the Brits phrase it) of Her Majesty the Queen — that also included Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 21, K. 467 with Mitsuko Uchida as soloist and Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony, all conducted by Sir Colin Davis. Third, Mozart’s Concerto No. 21 was used as background music for a popular 1967 Swedish film titled Elvira Madigan, based on the 19th-century story of a Danish tigrope dancer who left the circus to run away with a married Swedish military officer. Their situation became so desperate that the officer shot first Elvira and then himself. The town where they died together maintains a memorial to their love at their mutual gravesite. And, lastly, critics from London’s Times summarized Stomp’s strangely interlocked references: “An irreverent deconstruction of the two big works on the concert — Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony and Mozart’s Elvira Madigan Piano Concerto — Stomp went through all sorts of wacky distortions before being whisked, céilidh-style, into a punch-drunk jig of delight”;

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purify and raise to the level of great art?” he asked. “The lilt of the chorus at a music-hall joining in a popular song, the children dancing to a barrel-organ, the rousing fervor of a Salvation Army hymn, the cries of street pedlars. Have all these nothing to say to us?” He contended that “every composer cannot expect to have a world-wide message, but he may reasonably expect to have a special message for his own people.” With this no-nonsense view of nationalism and a vast knowledge of his country’s musical heritage, it is not surprising that Vaughan Williams produced some of the most characteristically English music ever written.

In both matter and manner, *A London Symphony*, Vaughan Williams’ earliest, large purely instrumental score, is one of the seminal works of his musical nationalism. Such a piece was first suggested to him in 1911 by George Butterworth, a young composer of great promise who was killed five years later in the First World War. Perhaps inspired by Monet’s impressionistic London scenes and H.G. Wells’ novel *Tono-Bungay* (in which the Thames is seen as the symbol of the entire country), as well as by the river view from his home in Cheyne Walk, Vaughan Williams chose to make the subject of the piece the city of London, where he had lived since his marriage to Adeline Fisher in 1897. At first, he thought the work might be a symphonic poem, perhaps a counterpart to Delius’ *Paris* of 1899, but by 1912, he had settled on a symphony in the traditional four movements, and that same year was able to play through the first two movements at an upright piano on a visit to his friend in Cambridge, the composer Cecil Armstrong Gibbs. The work was finished in early 1914, and premiered on March 27 at the Queen’s Hall, London, conducted by Geoffrey Toye at a concert of new music. Though the performance was an excellent success, the composer was dissatisfied with the new Symphony, and he extensively revised the score for a performance by the conductor-composer Albert Coates in 1920 (when the work was first published), and again (before a second edition was printed), in 1936. (H.C. Colles noted that the Symphony was “like London itself, in that the builders will not let it alone.”) *A London Symphony* (it was Vaughan Williams’ second work in the genre, but he never formally gave it a number — only his Eighth and Ninth Symphonies bear that distinction) established its composer as a major figure in British music, and served to spread his reputation abroad. It is said to have been one of his own favorites among his works.

For his 1920 performance of *A London Symphony*, Albert Coates supplied a detailed program for the music with enough topographical specificity to throw any Anglophile into fits of longing. The first movement, he noted, portrays “daybreak by the river. Old Father Thames ... deep and thoughtful, shrouded in mystery. ‘Big Ben’ solemnly strikes the half-hour. Suddenly one is in the Strand in the midst of morning traffic.... Then one turns off the Strand into the quiet little streets known as the Adelphi, haunted principally by beggars and ragged street-urchins. We return to the Strand, and are once again caught up in the bustle and life of London.” Coates went on to place the second movement in “Bloomsbury. Dusk is falling. It is the damp and foggy twilight of a late November day.... In front of a pub, an old musician plays the fiddle. In the distance is heard the street cry, ‘Sweet lavender; who’ll buy sweet lavender?’” Coates said the third movement represents “all the noises of Saturday night in the very poor quarters on the south side of the Thames, when these slums resemble a street fair, heard while one sits across the River.” The finale deals with “a ‘Hunger March’ — a ghostly marching past of those who are cold and hungry and unable to get work.... The Symphony ends as it began, with old Father Thames flowing calm and silent, as he has flowed through the ages, the keeper of many secrets, shrouded in mystery.”

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