



We celebrate Beethoven's 250th birthday
& Isaac Stern's centennial in 2020.

SCHUMANN'S "RHENISH" BEETHOVEN'S FOURTH PIANO CONCERTO

Friday and Saturday, March 20-21, 2020 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, March 22, 2020 at 2 p.m.

HELZBERG HALL, KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

JOHANNES DEBUS, *guest conductor*

ERIC LU, *piano (Underwritten by the Almy Legacy Fund)*

BARBER

Essay No. 2 for Orchestra, op. 17

BEETHOVEN

Concerto No. 4 in G Major for Piano and Orchestra,
op. 58

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Rondo: Vivace

Eric Lu, *piano*

INTERMISSION

R. SCHUMANN

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, op. 97, "Rhenish"

- I. Lebhaft
- II. Scherzo: Sehr mässig
- III. Nicht schnell
- IV. Feierlich
- V. Lebhaft

The 2019/20 season is generously sponsored by
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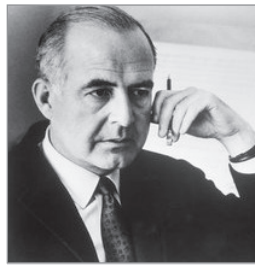
SAMUEL BARBER (1910–1981)

Essay No. 2 for Orchestra, op. 17 (1942) 11 minutes

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, field drum, tam-tam, suspended cymbals and strings.

During the time Samuel Barber composed his Violin Concerto (1940), he also worked on his Second Essay for Orchestra. Barber completed the Second Essay on March 15, 1942. The following day, Barber shared the score with conductor Bruno Walter, who was interested in featuring American works in his concerts with the New York Philharmonic. Walter and the New York Philharmonic performed the world premiere of the piece at New York's Carnegie Hall on April 16, 1942. A month later, Eugene Ormandy conducted it with the Philadelphia Orchestra. The work soon received further performances by several prominent orchestras, further solidifying Barber's reputation in the United States and indeed, throughout the world.

The Second Essay's arresting opening measures feature the flute, and then the bass clarinet, introducing a wide-ranging sweet and expressive theme over hushed accompaniment by the bass drum. The melody is soon developed by other winds and finally the strings as the music builds to a radiant climax. The violas sing the second principal theme, which is then developed in energetic fashion by the orchestra. A sforzando chord by the entire ensemble heralds a vibrant fugue, based upon a playful theme launched by the clarinet. The fugue reaches a hushed, mysterious resolution. The Second Essay concludes with a majestic chorale transformation of music from the work's opening section.



The premiere and subsequent performances of this dynamic work helped to establish Barber as one of America's leading young composers.



Beethoven was the soloist for the world premiere of his Fourth Piano Concerto.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Concerto No. 4 in G Major for Piano and Orchestra, op. 58 (1806) 34 minutes

Solo piano, flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings.

Beethoven completed the score of this concerto in 1806, and first performed it during a March 1807 private concert at the palace of his patron, Prince Joseph Lobkowitz. The first public performance took place at the Vienna Theater-an-der-Wien on December 22, 1808. In addition to

the Fourth Piano Concerto, the concert, sponsored by Beethoven, included the world premieres of the composer's Fifth and Sixth symphonies and "Choral Fantasy," as well as four movements from his Mass in C and the soprano aria "Ah! Perfido."

Still, the benefit concert (known as an Akademie) was far from a resounding success. The meager rehearsal time was insufficient for a program of such length and difficulty. During the premiere of the "Choral Fantasy," the orchestra was forced to stop in the middle of the work and begin a section over again. Further, the audience endured this taxing winter performance in an unheated theater.

Perhaps the Fourth Piano Concerto fared as well as any piece on the program. Beethoven was the soloist, and, according to German musician Johann Reichardt, "He played ... with astounding cleverness and in the fastest possible tempi. [The second movement], a masterly movement of beautifully developed song, he sang on this instrument with a profound melancholy that moved me."

The Fourth Piano Concerto is a miraculous blend of haunting lyricism, expressive virtuosity and formal innovation. As British musicologist Sir Donald Francis Tovey observed, "Beethoven has now well and truly laid the foundations of his concerto form and is free to raise the edifice to heights undreamt of in earlier music."

The concerto is in three movements, the first movement by far the longest of the three. Instead of the traditional purely orchestral introduction, the soloist immediately introduces the first principal theme. The brief second movement is in the form of a dialogue between the strings and piano. Franz Liszt compared this episode to “Orpheus taming the wild beasts with his music.” The finale follows without pause. Beethoven presents a remarkable variety of moods and instrumental colors throughout. After a cadenza and series of trills, there is a moment of repose before the soloist and orchestra dash headlong into an up-tempo finish.



Schumann wrote the “Rhenish” Symphony during one of his periods of remarkable creativity.

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1853)

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, op. 97, “Rhenish” (1850) 31 minutes

2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings.

The “Rhenish” Symphony was written during one of Robert Schumann’s legendary periods of intense creativity. Between the remarkably brief span of October 10 and 24, 1850, Schumann composed his beautiful Cello Concerto. The “Rhenish” occupied Schumann between November 2 and December 9 of the same year. Schumann conducted the highly successful premiere, which took place in Düsseldorf, Germany, on February 6, 1851.

Schumann wrote to his publisher that the “Rhenish” Symphony “perhaps mirrors here and there something of Rhenish life.” However, Schumann ultimately chose to delete any specific Rhenish allusions in the score, such as his original “Morning on the Rhine” title for the second movement. Schumann explained, “One should not show his heart to the people, for the general impression of a work of art is more effective. Then the listener will at least not set up any absurd connections in his mind.”

Of course, our knowledge of the background of this great symphony does afford us a glance into the composer's "heart." But that insight in no way detracts from the splendor of the "Rhenish," perhaps Schumann's finest symphony. It is a work of abundant energy, beauty and melodic inspiration. As with any extraordinary composition that contains programmatic elements, the "Rhenish" Symphony remains a staple of the repertoire not as a result of any extra-musical considerations, but because of its musical value.

The "Rhenish" Symphony is in five (rather than the traditional four) movements. The first movement begins in the grandest manner, with the full orchestra announcing the exuberant principal subject. The second movement, originally titled "Morning on the Rhine," is based upon the *ländler*, a rustic dance in 3/4 meter. A subdued and elegant slow-tempo movement follows. Schumann's original subtitle for the fourth movement was "In the style of an accompaniment to a solemn ceremony." While that description was later deleted, it seems clear the music was inspired by the great Cathedral of Cologne and Archbishop von Geissel's investiture there as cardinal, witnessed by the composer and his wife Clara. The finale returns to the joyous mood of the symphony's opening movement. A triumphant restatement of music from the previous movement leads to the "Rhenish" Symphony's thrilling final bars.

Kansas City Symphony
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JOHANNES DEBUS IS MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE CANADIAN

Opera Company (COC), appointed immediately following his stunning 2008 debut. His 2019/20 season includes performances of *Rusalka*, *Hänsel und Gretel* and *The Flying Dutchman*.

Recent highlights include his debuts with the Seattle, Oregon and Milwaukee symphonies, Santa Fe Opera conducting *Jenůfa*, ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra and Bilbao Orkestra Sinfonikoa. He also returns to the Frankfurt Radio, Toronto, Kansas City and San Diego symphonies, the Metropolitan Opera conducting *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and the Bregenz Festival conducting the Austrian premiere of Goldschmidt's *Beatrice Cenci* with the Vienna Symphony.

Debus conducts regularly at the Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, Staatsoper unter den Linden Berlin and Frankfurt Opera. He also has appeared in new productions at English National Opera and Opéra National de Lyon. He made his debut at the BBC Proms with Britten's *Sinfonia* in 2014 and conducted a new production of *The Tales of Hoffmann* at the 2015 Bregenz Festival.

As guest conductor, Debus has appeared at multiple international festivals including the Biennale di Venezia and Schwetzingen festivals, Festival d'Automne in Paris, Lincoln Center Festival, Ruhrtriennale, Suntory Summer Festival and Spoleto Festival. He also has conducted the Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra in London.

Debus graduated from the Hamburg Conservatoire before being engaged as répétiteur and subsequently Kapellmeister by Frankfurt Opera, where he acquired an extensive repertoire ranging from Mozart to Thomas Adès. At home in both contemporary music and the core repertoire, he has conducted a wide range of world premieres and works of the 20th and 21st centuries. He has collaborated with internationally acclaimed ensembles such as Ensemble Intercontemporain, Ensemble Modern, Klangforum Wien and Musikfabrik. He enjoys an ongoing relationship with the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. ■



BOSTON NATIVE ERIC LU ENTERED THE CURTIS INSTITUTE

of Music in 2013 as an Anderson and Daria Pew Fellow and studies with Jonathan Biss and Robert McDonald.

Lu has performed with orchestras around the world, including: the Minnesota Orchestra, Boston Civic and New Jersey symphony orchestras; the National, Rzeszow, Kielce, Xiamen, Qatar and Arthur Rubinstein philharmonics; l'Orquestra Clasica Santa Cecilia; Sinfonietta Cracovia; Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra; Staatskapelle Halle; and the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, with which he toured Japan and South Korea. He has given recitals at Carnegie Hall in New York, Jordan Hall in Boston, Auditorio Nacional in Madrid, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Warsaw Philharmonic Concert Hall, Taipei National Concert Hall and Beijing Concert Hall, among many others. Festival appearances include the "Chopin and His Europe" festival in Warsaw, the International Chopin Piano Festival in Duszynki-Zydrój, Poland and the Nohant Festival Chopin.



Lu has won first prize in multiple competitions, including the 2018 Leeds International Piano Competition, the 2017 International German Piano Award (where he also received the audience prize), the 2015 U.S. National Chopin Piano Competition, the 2014 Moscow International Chopin Competition for Young Pianists, the 2013 Minnesota International e-Piano Junior Competition and the 2010 Ettlingen International Piano Competition in Category A. In 2015, he won the Tabor Foundation Piano Award at the Verbier Festival and fourth prize at the International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw, becoming one of the youngest laureates in the history of the competition. Lu's debut album, a recording from the Chopin Competition, was released by the Fryderyk Chopin Institute in Warsaw. His second album was released by the Genuin Classics label in April 2018.

Lu's teachers have included Dorothy Shi, A. Ramon Rivera, Alexander Korsantia and Dang Thai Son. ■