

**2025–2026 | 126th Season**  
**Marian Anderson Hall**

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, March 12, at 7:30

Saturday, March 14, at 8:00

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Conductor

**Marc-André Hamelin** Piano

**Weber** Overture to *Der Freischütz*

**Liszt** Piano Concerto No. 2 in A major

Adagio sostenuto assai—Allegro agitato assai—Un poco più mosso—

Allegro moderato—Allegro deciso—Marziale, un poco meno allegro—Allegro animato

## Intermission

**Beach** Symphony in E minor, Op. 32 (“Gaelic”)

I. Allegro con fuoco

II. Alla siciliana—Allegro vivace

III. Lento con molto espressione

IV. Allegro di molto

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 50 minutes.

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM and are repeated on Monday evenings at 7 PM on WRTI HD 2. Visit [www.wrti.org](http://www.wrti.org) to listen live or for more details.



## The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives, a commitment to its diverse communities, and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive and inclusive future for classical music. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united. Today, The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts brings the greatest performances and most impactful education and community programs to audiences in Philadelphia and beyond.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 14th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is esteemed by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community. In addition to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today's composers, Yannick and the Orchestra are committed to performing and recording the works of previously overlooked composers.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, throughout the community, over the airwaves, and online. The Kimmel Center has been the ensemble's home since 2001, and in 2024 Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center was officially rededicated as

Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community programs connect, uplift, and celebrate nearly 40,000 Philadelphians and 250 schools from diverse communities annually, through inclusive arts education and vibrant engagement that reflect our city's voices and expand access to creative opportunities. Students, families, and other community members can enjoy free and discounted experiences with The Philadelphia Orchestra through programs such as the Jane H. Kesson School Concerts, Family Concerts, Open Rehearsals, PlayINs, and Our City, Your Orchestra community concerts.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it became the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a now-five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange through music.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 15 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award-winning *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org).

# Music and Artistic Director



Landon Nordeman

Canadian-born conductor and pianist **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** is currently in his 14th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. An inspired leader, Yannick is both an evolutionary and a revolutionary, developing the mighty “Philadelphia Sound” in new ways. His collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* has said that under his baton the Orchestra is “at the top of its considerable form”; the Associated Press has called it “a premier orchestra at its peak”; and the *New York Times* wrote, “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.”

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling and sought-after talents of his generation. He became the third music director of New York’s Metropolitan Opera in 2018. In addition, he has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. In 2017 he became the third-ever honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He served as music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles and at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick has shown a deep commitment to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today’s composers and by performing and recording the music of underappreciated composers of the past, including Florence Price, Clara Schumann, William Dawson, Lili Boulanger, Louise Farrenc, and William Grant Still. In 2018 he signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 15 releases on that label, including *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*, which won a GRAMMY® Award for Best Orchestral Performance in 2022.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal’s Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductors, most notably Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada; Companion to the Order of Arts and Letters of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Montreal; an Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres; *Musical America’s* 2016 Artist of the Year; ECHO KLASSIK’s 2014 Conductor of the Year; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; Canada’s National Arts Centre Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; the Oskar Morawetz Award; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, the University of Montreal, the University of Pennsylvania, Laval University, and Drexel University.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit [philorch.org/conductor](http://philorch.org/conductor).

# Soloist



Benjamin Lalwega

Pianist **Marc-André Hamelin** is acclaimed worldwide for his unrivaled consummate musicianship. He continues to amass praise for his brilliant pianism in the great works of the repertoire, and for his intrepid exploration of the rarities of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. He regularly performs around the globe with the leading orchestras and conductors of our time and gives recitals at major concert venues and festivals worldwide. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 1986 at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center.

Mr. Hamelin's 2025–26 season spans North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia, with a dynamic mix of orchestral, recital, and chamber music engagements. He opened the season with a tour of Australia and Asia, featuring concerto and recital appearances with the Sydney Symphony under Donald Runnicles; concerto engagements with the Wuxi, Ningbo, and Shenzhen symphonies; and solo recitals in Adelaide, Xiamen, and Shenzhen. In addition to these current performances, North American highlights this season include appearances with the San Diego Symphony and Thomas Guggeis; the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and Jaime Martin; and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra on tour. Recital highlights include Chicago Symphony Presents, the San Francisco Symphony, Chamber Music Pittsburgh, the Gilmore Piano Festival, Keyboard Concerts in Fresno, and the Soka Performing Arts Center. European appearances include Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Bavarian State Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski and Joseph Marx's *Piano Concerto* with the Tonkünstler Orchestra and Fabien Gabel. Chamber music highlights include the Chausson *Concerto for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet* with Augustin Hadelich and members of the Boston Symphony and the Franck *Piano Quintet* with the Juilliard String Quartet for the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society.

An exclusive recording artist for Hyperion Records, Mr. Hamelin has released 92 recordings of a broad range of solo, orchestral, and chamber repertoire. In October 2025 Hyperion released *Found Objects / Sound Objects*, a recording of contemporary works. Recent acclaimed recordings include Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata and Sonata No. 3, as well as the Dvořák and Florence Price quintets with the Takács Quartet. Also a noted composer, Mr. Hamelin has written more than 30 works. Many, including his *Études* and *Toccata* on "L'homme armé"—commissioned by the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition—are published by Edition Peters. He performed the *Toccata* in 2023 on NPR's *Tiny Desk* alongside works by C.P.E. Bach and William Bolcom. His most recent composition, *Mazurka*, was commissioned by the Library of Congress to celebrate 100 years of concerts and premiered in April 2024. He is the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the German Record Critics' Association, eight Juno Awards, 11 GRAMMY nominations, and the Paul de Hueck and Norman Walford Career Achievement Award from the Ontario Arts Foundation. He is also an Officer of the Order of Canada, a Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Québec, and a member of the Royal Society of Canada. Born in Montreal, he lives in the Boston area with his wife, Cathy Fuller, a producer and host at Classical WCRB.

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

1821

**Weber**

Overture to *Der Freischütz*

**Music**

Mendelssohn  
Sinfonia No. 7

**Literature**

Scott  
*Kenilworth*

**Art**

Constable  
*Hay Wain*

**History**

Bolívar defeats  
Spanish

1857

**Liszt**

Piano  
Concerto No. 2

**Music**

Brahms  
Serenade No. 1

**Literature**

Thackeray  
*The Virginians*

**Art**

Millet  
*The Gleaners*

**History**

Indian mutiny  
against British rule

1894

**Beach**

“Gaelic” Symphony

**Music**

Debussy  
*Prelude to the  
Afternoon of a Faun*

**Literature**

Kipling  
*The Jungle Book*

**Art**

Munch  
*Vampire*

**History**

Bureau of  
Immigration  
created

Carl Maria von Weber’s *Der Freischütz* was a signal work in the emerging musical Romanticism of the 1820s and its celebrated Overture provides a marvelous distillation of the opera’s varied moods and themes. Weber evokes folklife in the forest through his use of horns and employs other effects to convey the supernatural world in which the opera’s hero forges magic bullets with which he hopes to win a shooting contest and gain the hand of his beloved.

At age 10 Franz Liszt moved to Vienna from his native Hungary in order to study with Antonio Salieri and Carl Czerny. During this time he was taken to meet Beethoven, a memory he cherished for the rest of his life. In the decades that followed Liszt emerged as the greatest piano virtuoso of the century and his compositions for the instrument broke new ground, as is readily apparent in his dazzling Second Piano Concerto.

American composers began writing symphonies in the 19th century but without much success. Antonín Dvořák, the great Czech composer, was recruited to come to America and help. His “New World” Symphony proved both inspiring and controversial, sparking intense debate among leading composers. Amy Beach, a fabulously talented musician, agreed with some of Dvořák’s agenda, but felt it best to look to sources in English, Scottish, and Irish folk songs. The Boston Symphony Orchestra triumphantly premiered her “Gaelic” Symphony in 1896, the first major symphony by an American woman.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world with three weekly broadcasts on SiriusXM’s *Symphony Hall*, Channel 76, on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 4 PM.

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Photo: PeteCzechchia

# The Music

## Overture to *Der Freischütz*

Carl Maria von Weber

Born in Eutin, near Lübeck, November 18, 1786

Died in London, June 5, 1826



Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* was written (perhaps created is the better word) in 1818 and is just one famous manifestation of the burgeoning Romantic interest in the Gothic, grotesque, and supernatural evident in so much of the literature, art, and music of the time. Opera, with its combination of story, staging, and sound, provided the perfect medium to explore these themes. This no doubt was one reason Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz* (The Freeshooter) immediately captured the imagination of

audiences in Europe and beyond, beginning with its premiere in June 1821 at the newly built Schauspielhaus in Berlin. Weber did not have a comparable success in the remaining five years of his life, although the later overtures to his *Euryanthe* and *Oberon* became repertory standards. In these operas, and in less familiar compositions, his masterful orchestration and compelling evocation of mood helped to usher in a new Romantic sensibility in music.

**Romantic Gothic** Weber was born after, but died before, Beethoven (like Mozart, he died in his 30s), and his music looks both backward and forward. *Der Freischütz* profoundly influenced Hector Berlioz, Richard Wagner, and other later Romantics; indeed, Berlioz made a performing version of the opera in the late 1830s, with newly composed recitatives replacing the original dialogue. Weber, of course, was himself subject to influences. The supernatural had been a part of opera ever since its invention in the early 17th century, where a *deus ex machina* saved many an ending. *Zauberoper* (magic opera) was all the rage in Mozart's time, with his about the enchanted flute being the only one that remains regularly performed today.

The early Romantics added darker, more sinister elements to their Gothic stories, which had musical consequences for what audiences heard at the opera. Louis Spohr's *Faust* (1813) and E.T.A Hoffmann's *Undine* (1816) provided operatic models for Weber, who had his librettist Friedrich Kind adapt a ghost story from a recent collection by Johann Apel and Friedrich Laun for *Freischütz*. His opera effectively evoked the weirdly supernatural, especially in the famous Wolf's Glen Scene that ends the second act. At the urging of the evil Kaspar, Max, the opera's protagonist, goes to a scary woods at midnight to forge magic bullets that make the "freeshooter" hit any mark. Max hopes they will enable him to win a shooting contest the next day and with it the hand of his beloved, Agathe. The demon Samiel appears and Max makes a pact with the devil.

**A Closer Look** The *Freischütz* Overture is a study in contrasts, between the natural and supernatural, light and dark, slow and fast, major and minor. It begins with a slow introduction that is initially mysterious and then evokes a natural scene with hunting horns before turning to Samiel's darker realm—throughout the opera he is associated with the sound of a diminished seventh chord, typically punctuated with funereal drum strokes. The following *molto vivace* draws upon two of the main arias in the work, one by Max that exclaims the “powers of darkness are weaving around me!” and the other from the end of Agathe's great scene in Act II where she proclaims, “All my pulses are beating, and my heart pants wildly, full of sweet enchantment at [Max's] approach!” The rousing coda anticipates the final moments of the opera with its great choral conclusion: “Whoever is pure of heart and guiltless in life may, childlike, trust in the gentleness of the Father!”

Weber described the distinctive mood he intended for the work:

There are in *Der Freischütz* two principal elements that can be recognized at first sight—hunting life and the rule of demonic powers as personified by Samiel. So when composing the opera I had to look for suitable tone colors to characterize those elements. ... The tone color of the scoring for the forest and hunting life was easy to find: the horns provided it. ... The most important part, to my mind, is in Max's words “the powers of darkness are weaving around me!” for they showed me what chief characteristic to give to the opera. I had to remind the hearer of those “dark powers” by means of tone color and melody as often as possible. ... I gave a great deal of thought to the question of what was the right principal coloring for this sinister element. Naturally it had to be a dark, gloomy color—the lowest register of the violins, violas, and basses, particularly the lowest register of the clarinets, which seem especially suitable for depicting the sinister, then the mournful sound of the bassoon, the lowest notes of the horns, the hollow roll of drums or single hollow strokes on them.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

*Christopher H. Gibbs is James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College and has been the program annotator for The Philadelphia Orchestra since 2000. He is the author of several books on Schubert and Liszt, and the co-author, with Richard Taruskin, of The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition.*

*Weber composed Der Freischütz from 1817 to 1821.*

*The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Overture to Der Freischütz were in November 1902; Fritz Scheel conducted. The most recent subscription performances were in April 2019, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin on the podium.*

*The Philadelphia Orchestra recorded the Freischütz Overture with Eugene Ormandy in 1946 for CBS.*

*The score calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings.*

*The Overture runs approximately 10 minutes in performance.*

# The Music

## Piano Concerto No. 2

**Franz Liszt**

**Born in Raiding (Doborján), Hungary, October 22, 1811**

**Died in Bayreuth, July 31, 1886**



The almost supernatural power of the musical virtuoso evokes images of a pact with the devil. More than one 19th-century critic thought Niccolò Paganini possessed by demonic powers, and around the time Franz Liszt turned 20 he witnessed the great Italian violinist dazzle audiences in Paris with his technical prowess. What the young Liszt heard—and saw—inspired not only his own new piano compositions, which broke ground in “transcendental” technique, but also provided a concrete model of what a solo virtuoso could do with his career. It did

not take long before critic after critic dubbed Liszt the “Paganini of the Piano” and likewise invoked allusions to demonic powers. (The connections made to Paganini were perhaps to be expected, as the violin had traditionally been the devil’s instrument, but Liszt seems to have expanded the instrumental possibilities for satanic possession.)

For 10 years, beginning in 1838, Liszt led what was essentially the 19th-century version of the life of a touring rock star. (Ken Russell’s 1975 movie *Lisztomania* shrewdly cast the Who’s Roger Daltrey in the title role.) He published mainly solo piano works and enjoyed a brilliant social life hobnobbing with Europe’s artistic, cultural, and political elite. But by the late 1840s, Liszt decided to settle down and prove himself as a composer by writing more substantial pieces. He took the leading musical position in Weimar, which, although something of a backwater, had historically been the city of Goethe and Schiller. Liszt turned primarily to writing orchestral, and later still, religious music. Abandoning the devilish life of the performer, he took minor religious vows in 1865 and became the Abbé Liszt.

**Piano with Orchestra** Liszt’s responsibilities in Weimar as conductor of the orchestra made continual demands for fresh orchestral music and this may have prompted him to look back to sketches for various earlier works featuring piano and orchestra. Having chiefly composed virtuosic solo piano music up to this time, Liszt initially lacked confidence in writing for orchestra and therefore employed the assistance of more skilled orchestrators, although the degree of their involvement has often been exaggerated. He began composing a series of symphonic poems in which he quickly mastered a delicate but rich orchestral palette and eventually became a skilled and imaginative orchestrator himself.

Although some compositions are lost or were never finished, Liszt wrote 17 works for piano and orchestra. There are entirely original pieces, such as two numbered concertos, while others are based on pre-existing music, including a fantasy on themes from Berlioz’s

*L'elio*, another one drawn from Beethoven's *Ruins of Athens*, a Polonaise brillante based on a theme by Carl Maria von Weber, and the best known: *Totentanz*, a set of variations on the medieval chant "Dies irae" (Day of Wrath).

Some of these works date back to the mid-1830s, although most assumed their final form only in the later Weimar years. Liszt completed a version of his First Piano Concerto in E-flat in 1849, which he revised in 1853 and 1855 before publication. The successful premiere took place in Weimar in February 1855, with the composer at the piano and no less a musician than his friend Berlioz on the podium. Sketches for the A-major Concerto we hear today also date back to the 1830s, and this Concerto likewise went through many revisions before its publication in the early 1860s. Liszt conducted the premiere in Weimar in January 1857 with the dedicatee—the composer's young pupil Hans von Bronsart—as soloist.

**A Closer Look** Central to Liszt's revolutionary concept of "cyclic" music is the transformation or metamorphosis of a single theme, so that throughout a piece it gradually evolves into something completely new, shedding layers of "musical skin" each time it emerges in a fresh form. Elements of this technique are found throughout Western music—from the motto Mass of the Renaissance to symphonies of Haydn that bring thematic elements of the first movement into later movements. But Liszt's immediate models are to be found in the music of Beethoven and Schubert. The latter's "Wanderer" Fantasy for piano—a long piece based on a single theme—made such a deep impression that Liszt fashioned his own arrangement of it for piano and orchestra (thus producing the closest thing to the Schubert Piano Concerto that Schubert himself never wrote). In many of his works for piano and orchestra Liszt was clearly experimenting with form, trying to write something more substantial than just a virtuoso showpiece. The title "Concerto symphonique" on a manuscript of the A-major Concerto gives an indication of his ambition.

The Second Piano Concerto is cast in several fluidly interwoven sections of contrasting character that are played in a continuous gesture. The work's two main themes, which are obliquely related, are both heard early on. The principal theme appears at the outset, in the first clarinet, accompanied by clarinet, flutes, and bassoons (**Adagio sostenuto assai**); a pianistic elaboration and cadenza follow. The second theme emerges from the latter cadenza (**Listesso tempo**). Tension then builds to a scherzo-like **Un poco più mosso**, with strings in unison sounding a resolute transformation of the second theme; in the subsequent **Allegro moderato**, the strings present a new version of the latter, and usher in a florid piano elaboration. The potency of the following march (**Marziale, un poco meno allegro**), which borders on bombast, is necessary in order to re-establish, with unmitigated assertiveness, the pre-eminence of the first theme. The work concludes with a dashing and gloriously pianistic transfiguration of the main theme in all of its guises.

—Paul J. Horsley/Christopher H. Gibbs

*Paul J. Horsley is performing arts editor for The Independent in Kansas City. Previously he was program annotator and musicologist for The Philadelphia Orchestra and music and dance critic for The Kansas City Star.*

*Liszt composed his Second Piano Concerto from 1839 to 1861.*

*Richard Buhlig was the pianist in the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Concerto, in January 1908 with*

*Carl Pohlig conducting. The work's most recent appearance on subscription concerts was in April 2022, with Jean-Yves Thibaudet as pianist and Stéphane Denève on the podium.*

*The Philadelphia Orchestra has recorded Liszt's Second Concerto twice: in 1959 for CBS with Philippe Entremont and Eugene Ormandy, and in 1970 for RCA with Van Cliburn and Ormandy.*

*The work is scored for an orchestra of three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (cymbals), and strings, in addition to the solo piano.*

*Performance time is approximately 22 minutes.*

# The Music

## Symphony in E minor (“Gaelic”)

Amy Beach

Born in Henniker, New Hampshire, September 5, 1867

Died in New York City, December 27, 1944



European composers began to write serious symphonies in the 18th century and it is unsurprising that a century later American composers also wanted to pursue this prestigious genre. They faced challenges, however, with respect to rigorous musical training, polished orchestras that could perform such pieces, and suitable venues where audiences would come to hear them. There is a largely forgotten repertoire of late- 19th-century American symphonies, some of them excellent, by composers such as George Bristow, John

Knowles Paine, George Chadwick, and Horatio Parker.

A new impetus came in the 1890s when a visionary American philanthropist, Jeannette Thurber, invited the eminent Czech composer Antonín Dvořák to serve as the director of a new music conservatory in New York City. Thurber was not only interested in someone to lead her school, but also in a figure who could make a lasting contribution to enhancing American musical life. She hoped for operas and symphonies. The greatest fruit of Dvořák’s three years here was his last symphony, the famous Ninth, “From the New World,” which premiered at Carnegie Hall in December 1893. Dvořák discussed his thinking about the Symphony in interviews as well as in an article he wrote for *The New York Herald*. He advised American composers to do as the Czechs had done and employ the native sources, notably African American spirituals and music by Native Americans, and observed that “all of the great musicians have borrowed from the songs of the common people.”

**How to Write an American Symphony** Dvořák’s article sparked considerable debate, especially after it was reprinted in the *Boston Herald*. In follow-up articles, 10 leading composers weighed in, including Paine, Chadwick, and Parker, with favorable and dissenting responses. The longest reply came from the youngest composer: Amy Beach, who argued that

Without the slightest desire to question the beauty of the Negro melodies of which [Dvořák] speaks so highly, or to disparage them on account of their source, I cannot help feeling justified in the belief that they are not fully typical of our country. ... The songs with which we are familiar have been written by Stephen Foster and other song composers of our own race. ... We of the North should be far more likely to be influenced by the old English, Scotch, or Irish songs, inherited with our literature from our ancestors.

Beach's more potent response came not in words, but rather in music—the “Gaelic” Symphony that we hear performed tonight.

**From Amy Cheney to Amy Beach** Amy Marcy Cheney was born to an affluent family in New Hampshire in 1867, to parents “of very old New England colonial stock” (as they were described in the Boston Symphony program note for the “Gaelic” Symphony premiere). They encouraged her prodigious musical skills—perfect pitch, extraordinary memory, piano virtuosity, and compositional gifts—but only to a degree. They disapproved, for example, of her studying at a European conservatory, as most American men did at the time, and instead hired private local teachers for piano. She worked on music theory with a professor from Wellesley College. Compositionally, Beach was largely self-taught and learned counterpoint and orchestration by translating Paris Conservatory textbooks. The Boston Symphony program note for the “Gaelic” Symphony remarks that

For the last fourteen years she has made a systematic practice of studying analytically all the best works performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, before, during, and after the performance; she was advised to this course by [BSO conductor] Mr. William Gericke. In this an unusually accurate memory, as well as her keen ear for absolute pitch, was of great aid to her.

In 1884, at age 17, Beach performed Chopin's F-minor Piano Concerto with the orchestra, the first of many appearances with that ensemble. The following year she married Henry Harris Aubrey Beach, a socially prominent Boston surgeon 24 years her senior. He encouraged her composing, notably of large-scale pieces such as her impressive Mass (1892), but limited a performing career to occasional charity events. Her compositions began to appear under the name “Mrs. H.H.A. Beach” and garnered considerable attention, including in Europe. Their marriage lasted an apparently happy 25 years until the doctor's death in 1910, after which she started to concertize again, now under the name Amy Beach. She lived a long life, dying in New York in 1944 at age 77.

When Beach boldly injected herself into the heated debates about how to write a truly American symphony it was with the added complication of being a woman. For centuries, women had played significant roles as performers, patrons, muses, and as composers, but usually in small-scale forms. Songs, piano and chamber music, and religious pieces were easier to perform and publish. There is little incentive to write an opera or symphony without serious prospects for prominent performances. But Beach's long ties to the Boston Symphony eased her way and they triumphantly premiered the “Gaelic” Symphony in October 1896, giving it three performances that season and three more the next. Chadwick wrote to Beach that her work was “full of fine things, melodically, harmonically, and orchestrally, and mighty well built besides,” and that from now on she was, as far as he was concerned, “one of the boys.” Other leading orchestras played the work as well, including The Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski in 1915 (with the composer in attendance) and 1919.

**A Closer Look** Beach embarked on her first and only symphony in 1894, almost immediately after hearing the Boston premiere of Dvořák's “New World,” also in E minor,

on which it was obviously modeled. Beach, however, uses very different folk materials. She drew from a collection of Irish songs that had appeared in 1841 in a Dublin magazine. The first movement (**Allegro con fuoco**) begins turbulently and mysteriously and uses one of Beach's own art songs, "Dark is the Night," about a sea storm, as well as the folk tune "Connor O'Reilly of Clounish." The lively coda will return to open the last movement.

The following (**Alla siciliana**) was the audience favorite and employs the Irish folk song "The Little Field of Barley." Prominent use of the oboe is suggestive of bagpipes. The long slow movement (**Lento con molto espressione**) features the lullaby "The Lively Child" and "Which Way Did She Go?" as the central theme. Beach said the final movement (**Allegro di molto**) "tries to express the rough, primitive character of the Celtic people, their sturdy daily life, their passions and battles, and the elemental nature of the processes of thought and its resulting action." The motivic material returns to that of the first movement and again her song "Dark is the Night."

—Christopher H. Gibbs

*Amy Beach composed her "Gaelic" Symphony from 1894 to 1896.*

*The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Symphony were in February 1915, with Leopold Stokowski conducting. The only other appearance of the work on an Orchestra program was in January 1919, again with Stokowski.*

*The score calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (triangle), and strings.*

*The Symphony runs approximately 41 minutes in performance.*



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**PHILADELPHIA  
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Yannick Nézet-Séguin  
Music & Artistic Director

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# Musical Terms

**Aria:** An accompanied solo song (often in ternary form), usually in an opera or oratorio

**Cadenza:** A passage or section in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a movement or composition

**Chord:** The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

**Chromatic:** Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

**Coda:** A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

**Counterpoint:** The combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

**Diatonic:** Melody or harmony drawn primarily from the tones of the major or minor scale

**Diminished interval:** A perfect or minor interval contracted by a chromatic semitone

**Diminished seventh chord:** A chord formed from a diminished triad with added diminished seventh, for example B—D—F—A-flat

**Fantasy:** A composition free in form and more or less fantastic in character

**Harmonic:** Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

**Harmony:** The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

**Meter:** The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

**Octave:** The interval between any two notes that are seven diatonic (nonchromatic) scale degrees apart

**Op.:** Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output

**Oratorio:** Large-scale dramatic composition originating in the 16th century with text usually based on religious subjects. Oratorios are performed by choruses and solo voices with an instrumental accompaniment, and are similar to operas but without costumes, scenery, and actions.

**Polonaise:** A Polish national dance in moderate triple meter

**Recitative:** Declamatory singing, free in tempo and rhythm. Recitative has also sometimes been used to refer to parts of purely instrumental works that resemble vocal recitatives.

**Scale:** The series of tones which form (a) any major or minor key or (b) the chromatic scale of successive semi-tonic steps

**Scherzo:** Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts.

**Semitone:** The smallest interval of the modern Western tone system, or 1/12 of an octave

**Siciliana:** A Sicilian dance in 6/8 meter and fairly slow

**Symphonic poem:** A type of 19th-century symphonic piece in one movement, which is based upon an extramusical idea, either poetic or descriptive

**Ternary:** A musical form in three sections, A-B-A, in which the middle section is different than the outer sections

**Tonic:** The keynote of a scale

**Triad:** A three-tone chord composed of a given tone (the "root") with its third and fifth in ascending order in the scale

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

**Adagio:** Leisurely, slow

**Agitato:** Excited

**Alla siciliana:** In the style of a siciliana

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Animato:** Lively, animated

**Con fuoco:** With fire, passionately, excited

**Con molto espressione:** With much feeling

**Deciso:** Bold, forceful

**Lento:** Slow

**Marziale:** Martial, military

**Moderato:** A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

**Più mosso:** Faster

**Sostenuto:** Sustained

**Vivace:** Lively

## TEMPO MODIFIERS

**Assai:** Much

**Di molto:** Very, extremely

**Meno:** Less

**Molto:** Very

**Un poco:** A little

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