Thursday, November 20, 8pm
Friday, November 21, 1:30pm
Saturday, November 22, 8pm
Tuesday, November 25, 8pm
GENNADY ROZHDESTVENSKY conducting

BRAHMS VARIATIONS AND FUGUE ON A THEME BY HANDEL
(ORCH. RUBBRA)

ELGAR CELLO CONCERTO IN E MINOR, OPUS 85

Adagio—Moderato
Allegro molto
Adagio
Allegro, ma non troppo

lynn harrell

{intermission}

TCHAIKOVSKY MANFRED, OPUS 58, SYMPHONY IN FOUR SCENES
AFTER THE DRAMATIC POEM BY BYRON

Lento lugubre—Moderato con moto—Andante
Vivace con spirito
Andante con moto
Allegro con fuoco—Andante con duolo—Tempo primo—Largo

The evening concerts will end about 10:25 and the afternoon concert about 3:55.

Johannes Brahms

Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel (Opus 24), orchestrated by Edmund Rubbra (Opus 47)

JOHANNES BRAHMS was born in Hamburg, Germany, on May 7, 1833, and died in Vienna on April 3, 1897. He composed his Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel for solo piano, Opus 24, in September 1861, when he was twenty-eight years old. The orchestration by EDMUND RUBBRA (who was born in Northampton, England, on May 23, 1901, and died in Gerrards Cross, England, on February 14, 1986) is from 1938.

RUBBRA'S SCORING of Brahms's Handel Variations calls for an orchestra of two flutes (second doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two tenor trombones, bass trombone, timpani, harp, and strings.

When Brahms composed his Variations on a Theme by Handel in 1861, it was his favorite of his works to date, and no wonder: it is manifestly a dazzling piece, a distillation of who and where he was creatively in those years, and no less a prophecy of his future. History would be equally pleased with it. Many musicians and scholars count this among the greatest sets of keyboard variations, in a league with Bach's *Goldberg*s and Beethoven's *Diabelli*s. The latter were, of course, prime models for Brahms, whose creative process always involved long looks over his shoulder.

When he sat down to compose the *Handel* Variations, Brahms had just gotten back on his feet after years of creative searching. His problem had not been, as with most young artists, a struggle to rise from obscurity, but rather a struggle to cope with premature notoriety. In 1853, at age twenty, he had first met the Schumanns, Robert a remarkable composer and also a critic, his wife Clara one of the great pianists of her time. After hearing this obscure music student from Hamburg play a few pieces, the Schumanns concluded on the spot that the boy was a genius. Soon after, Brahms was stunned to read a journal article in which Robert Schumann proclaimed him the great hope of German music, the one and only heir of Beethoven.

That alone would sink most aspiring young composers, but what followed was worse: Robert's plunge into madness and his confinement in an asylum, where he withered away while Brahms and Clara fell into a helpless mutual attraction. When Robert died, Brahms and Clara were free to marry. Instead, Brahms fled back to Hamburg and spent the next years trying to find his way, Schumann's prophecy looming over him like a curse. It did not help that his major effort of those years, the D minor piano concerto, was greeted in Leipzig by a wave of hisses.

If Brahms was cautious and uncertain during that period, he survived it because at heart he was fiercely ambitious and tough as nails. By 1859 he was able to report to Clara Schumann (who remained the love of his life), "I am writing with ever more zest, and there are signs in me which suggest that in time I may produce heavenly things." In 1861 he left Hamburg for a quiet cottage surrounded by nightingales in the suburb of Hamm, and got down to work on some heavenly things. By the time he began the *Handel* Variations in Hamm, he had under his belt the B-flat major string sextet and the G minor and A major piano quartets, his first masterpieces of chamber music. The vibrant and kaleidoscopic variations, another product of that extraordinary outpouring, show off a young composer reveling in the powers he was discovering in himself.

The variations would be dedicated to a "beloved friend," meaning Clara, for her birthday, and they are full of memories of both Schumanns. They equally recall the more distant past, starting with Handel's stately and spirited theme (from a harpsicord suite in B-flat), which Brahms decks out with full Baroque ornamentation. From there he reveals his essential creative personality: using an old form from the periwig days, the music suffused with the past in sound and technique (specifically suffused with Handel, Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, and Schumann), Brahms nonetheless produced a singular work. The great and fruitful paradox of Brahms was to be backward-looking and eclectic, at the same time always inimitably himself and in many ways innovative.

The *Handel* Variations are founded, as is traditional, on the bass and harmony of the theme. Most of the twenty-five variations are under a minute long, forming a series of quick but vivid sketches in style, mood, and color, ending with a rich and expansive fugue. After Handel's stately two phrases the first variation breaks out in a vigorous dance recalling the first variation in Beethoven's *Diabelli*s. Brahms's opening variation could be called a transition, Baroque-ish rather than truly Baroque in style. The second variation is chromatic, Romantic, and purely Brahms. There we find a nutshell demonstration of how Brahms made the past his own.

After the first group climaxes with the pealing and bravura variation 4, the minor-key No. 5 has a quality of quiet, folklike lyricism. No. 6 recalls the canonic variations in Bach's *Goldberg*s. So each segment has a distinctive voice, from the hunting horns of No. 7 to the grand processional of No. 9 to No. 11, which manages to suggest Robert Schumann in his neo-Baroque vein. The faux-fateful and archaic-sounding No. 13 introduces a little suite of four conjoined variations. Some numbers are paired, like the virtuosic Nos. 15 and 16, the second a kind of quiet answer to the first. Maybe most memorable of the later ones are the lilting *siciliana* of No. 19, recalling that old French Baroque dance, and the scintillating music-box effect of No. 22.

The last variations become steadily more intense and impassioned, building to the long climactic fugue. Here again we see Brahms being old and new at once. He takes up a hoary form complete with traditional devices of augmentation, inversion, and stretto, and makes it utterly fresh. Only the beginning sounds much like a fugue; the rest simply sounds like nothing else. Much of the rhythm is remarkably fluid, floating free of the meter. And no traditional fugue has its quality of moving through a procession of striking textures and moods, all of them recalling the variations. No matter how beautiful he got, Brahms was always mindful of form and unity—as were his gods, the masters of the past.

The idea of orchestrating a Brahms piano work is less of a stretch than for most composers. Eduard Marxsen, his teacher in Hamburg, was noted for his orchestration of Beethoven's entire *Kreuzer* Sonata. Several of Brahms's works went through significant changes of medium as he worked on them. And, of course, his orchestral *Haydn* Variations began life as, and were also published as, a work for two pianos. Meanwhile, early on, Robert Schumann described Brahms's piano writing as "veiled symphonies" because of their big, two-fisted textures. A good deal of his solo piano and chamber music seems to yearn for the orchestra.

Of the composers who have answered that yearning, the most celebrated and/or notorious Brahms transcriber would be Arnold Schoenberg, whose extravagant 1937 orchestration of the G minor piano quartet he ironically but proudly dubbed "Brahms's Fifth." A year later came Edmund Rubbra's transcription of the *Handel* Variations.

Rubbra grew up in a poor but musical family and made his way to the Royal College of Music, from where he went on to a much-honored career as a composer, chamber music performer, critic, and journalist. His 164 opus numbers include eleven symphonies and a good deal of sacred choral music. As a composer Rubbra was, like Brahms, eclectic, historically-minded, tonal, yet still a man of his time.

His approach in transcribing the *Handel* Variations is direct but distinctive. He does not give the music the plush Romantic treatment, on the whole does not try to sound like Brahms—or like Wagner or Elgar—but rather paints the music in lucid, often unmixed colors, with an emphasis on winds and brass, a good deal of soloistic writing, and with relatively few big tuttis. Still, there are some warmly scored interludes, and the concluding fugue winds up with a splendid orchestral peroration.

An historical footnote: In 1863 Brahms played the *Handel* Variations for an older master who was about to become his worst enemy: Richard Wagner. Both men understood that Schumann's famous article had tacitly put forward Brahms as the antidote to the "Music of the Future" agenda championed by Wagner and Liszt, who proposed to bury old forms like sonata and variations. Liszt would eventually declare Brahms a member of "the *posthumous* school" of composition. After Brahms had played the variations, Wagner observed graciously: "One sees what still may be done in the old forms when someone comes along who knows how to use them." Later a drumbeat of print attacks on Brahms by Wagner and his disciples would keep what has been called "The War of the Romantics" raging for much of the later nineteenth century. The meeting of Brahms and Wagner around the *Handel* Variations amounted to the first diplomatic flurry of the war. But as can happen in art unlike the rest of life, this war would turn out a bitter but fruitful conflict that, from the perspective of history, nobody lost and everybody won.

Jan Swafford

JAN SWAFFORD *is an award-winning composer and author whose books include biographies of Johannes Brahms and Charles Ives, and The Vintage Guide to Classical Music. An alumnus of the Tanglewood Music Center, where he studied composition, he teaches at The Boston Conservatory and is currently working on a biography of Beethoven for Houghton Mifflin.*

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE *of the Brahms/Rubbra Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel was a radio broadcast given by Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra from Studio 8-H in New York City's Rockefeller Center on January 7, 1939.*

THESE ARE THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES *of Brahms's "Handel Variations" in Edmund Rubbra's instrumentation.*

## Edward Elgar

## Cello Concerto in E minor, Opus 85

SIR EDWARD ELGAR was born in the village of Broadheath, just outside of Worcester, England, on June 2, 1857, and died in Worcester on February 23, 1934. He wrote the "moderato" theme of the first movement of the Cello Concerto on March 23, 1918 (after returning home from hospital after a tonsillectomy), began concentrated work on the piece that July, and completed it on August 3, 1919. The composer conducted the first performance on October 27, 1919, with the London Symphony Orchestra and soloist Felix Salmond in the Queen's Hall, London. The score is dedicated to Elgar's friends Sidney and Frances Colvin.

IN ADDITION TO THE CELLO SOLOIST, the score calls for an orchestra of two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings.

Only for twenty of his seventy-six years did Elgar enjoy the simultaneous benefits of fame and creative abundance. For the first forty-two years he was unknown in the wider world, and for the last fourteen his muse was in retirement, if not quite still. The work that closed this twenty-year period of high creativity was the Cello Concerto, completed in the summer of 1919. A year later, with the death of his beloved wife Alice, Elgar withdrew more and more from public life and wrote no more masterpieces.

His slow progress toward national recognition was no doubt due to the fact that he grew up far from London and did not study with someone who could have helped him on his way. He was largely self-taught and did not at all match people's notion of a typical composer, expected in those days to be an aesthete in the manner of Oscar Wilde, or at least a foreigner. A friend who had played under his direction described him as "a very distinguished-looking English country gentleman, tall, with a large and somewhat aggressive moustache, a prominent but shapely nose and rather deep-set but piercing eyes. It was his eyes perhaps that gave the clue to his real personality: they sparkled with humour, or became grave or gay, bright or misty as each mood in the music revealed itself. He looked upstanding, and had an almost military bearing. He was practical to a degree, he wasted no time. The orchestra, it is almost needless to say, adored him."

Until the success of the *Enigma Variations* in London in 1899, he was regarded as a provincial composer, which indeed he was, composing mostly for the regional festivals that flourished in late Victorian England. Then the great works appeared in steady succession: *The Dream of Gerontius*, *Sea Pictures*, the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, *In the South*, the Introduction and Allegro for strings, the First Symphony, the Violin Concerto, the Second Symphony, *Falstaff*, and a group of three chamber works composed toward the end of the war: the Violin Sonata, the String Quartet, and the Piano Quintet. These three works were composed at Brinkwells, the house in Sussex where the Elgars moved in 1917. It was odd that Elgar should live anywhere but in his beloved West Country, but this house brought him respite from the constant anxieties of the war, and is readily associated with the leaner, more reflective style that the Cello Concerto perfectly illustrates. A letter written at this time describes his routine: "I rise about *seven* work till 8-15 – then dress, breakfast – pipe (I SMOKE again all day!) work till 12-30 lunch (pipe) – rest an hour – work till tea (pipe) – then work till 7-30 – change, dinner at 8. Bed at 10 – every day practically goes thus...We go for lovely walks...the woods are full of flowers, wonderful..."

On September 26, 1918, with the war still on, Elgar's wife's diary recorded "wonderful new music, real wood sounds & other lament wh. shd. be in a war symphony." But this was to be a concerto, not a symphony, and as it neared completion the following summer, Elgar described it as "a real large work & I think *good* & alive." The Cello Concerto was completed in August 1919 and first performed in the Queen's Hall, London, on October 26 of that year with Felix Salmond as the soloist and Elgar himself conducting. In the cello section of the orchestra (the London Symphony Orchestra) was a future conductor, John Barbirolli, then aged nineteen, who was later to conduct an historic recording of the work with Jacqueline du Pré. On that first night Elgar had been given too little rehearsal time, and the main impression was of orchestral incompetence. Ernest Newman reported that the orchestra "made a lamentable public exhibition of itself." Later the work came to be recognized as one of the handful of supreme concertos for the instrument. In 1928 Elgar conducted a recording of the work with Beatrice Harrison as the soloist. The original soloist, Salmond, moved to the United States in 1922, and after a brief spell teaching at the Juilliard School he was head of the cello department at the Curtis Institute from 1925 to 1942. Among his pupils were Bernard Greenhouse and Leonard Rose.

We may discern in the Cello Concerto a sentiment of resignation and even of despair generated from within by that strong vein of melancholy that had always been an inescapable element of Elgar's music, and from without by the desolating impact of the Great War. But the Cello Concerto is not a threnody, nor even, so far as we can tell, a deliberately planned swansong. It is reflective, playful, tearful, and energetic by turns, like all his best music, and we underestimate the work if we attach too much to its autumnal character. Many of its pages might have been summoned into existence by the Wand of Youth.

Unlike the traditional concerto it has four movements, not three. Brahms's Second Piano Concerto had expanded the form to four movements and taken on mighty symphonic proportions, but Elgar here has four movements not for length and weight but for diversity and contrast. The movements are all concise, especially when compared to the expansive landscape of the Violin Concerto's three movements. As in his two symphonies, the two central movements, a scherzo and a slow movement, offer a complete contrast in momentum and temper. The declamatory opening of the work recurs truncated at the beginning of the scherzo and in full, this time with marvelously valedictory effect, at the end of the finale.

After a declamatory opening for the soloist, the first movement's gentle lilt is far removed from any pomp or circumstance. Over the meandering first theme Elgar wrote in his sketchbook: "very full, sweet and sonorous," and although the whole orchestra tries to give it breadth, it ends as it began, bleak and bare. The scherzo that follows is in 4/4 time with bustling sixteenths reminiscent of the

Introduction and Allegro for strings of many years earlier. There is a brief expressive phrase offered here and there in contrast, but lightness prevails.

For the slow movement Elgar indulges unashamedly in the yearning phrases and sliding harmony that breathe nostalgia and tranquility. This is not a lament but a private world of sweetness so direct and complete that it requires no development or expansion. For all its heartrending beauty, the movement is short, and its half-close leads directly into the finale. Here, after another declamatory start, the movement settles into a sturdy rhythm which proceeds in a businesslike and oddly impersonal fashion right through to the closing pages. Then, as if yielding to some fatal destiny, Elgar adds an epilogue in slow tempo as passionate as anything he had ever written, full of drooping phrases and desperate gestures, like a dying man reaching up for help. There is asperity too, in the harmony, and the music slides inevitably into a brief memory of the slow movement followed by the work's opening statement and a brief energetic (and surely ironic) close.

Hugh Macdonald

HUGH MACDONALD *is Avis Blewett Professor of Music at Washington University in St. Louis and principal pre-concert speaker for the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. General editor of the New Berlioz Edition, he has written extensively on music from Mozart to Shostakovich and is a frequent guest annotator for the BSO. His latest book is Beethoven's Century: Essays on Composers and Themes, in the series of Eastman Studies on Music (University of Rochester Press).*

WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE *of Elgar's Cello Concerto was given by the Saint Louis Symphony with Vladimir Golschmann conducting and soloist Max Steindel on January 19, 1934.*

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCE *of Elgar's Cello Concerto was conducted by Charles Munch with soloist Maurice Eisenberg on April 12, 1955, subsequent BSO performances featuring Jacqueline du Pré (with Daniel Barenboim conducting), Zara Nelsova (William Steinberg), Ralph Kirshbaum (Myung-Whun Chung), Yo-Yo Ma (with Jeffrey Tate, André Previn, and John Williams), Lynn Harrell (with Tate and Neville Marriner), and Mischa Maisky (Yan Pascal Tortelier). The most recent subscription performances were Lynn Harrell's, in January 2003 with Neville Marriner (Harrell having previously performed it with Jeffrey Tate at Tanglewood in 1996). The most recent Tanglewood performance was Yo-Yo Ma's, on August 16, 2003, with John Williams.*

## Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

## "Manfred," Opus 58, Symphony in four scenes after the dramatic poem by Byron

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY was born at Kamsko-Votkinsk, Vyatka Province, Russia, on May 7, 1840, and died in St. Petersburg on November 6, 1893. He composed the "Manfred" Symphony between April and October 1885, completing it on October 4 that year. The first performance was on March 23, 1886, in Moscow, at a concert of the Russian Musical Society under the direction of Max Erdmannsdorfer.

THE SCORE OF "MANFRED" calls for an orchestra of three flutes (third doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, bass drum, triangle, tam-tam, tambourine, tubular chime, two harps, organ, and strings.

Like many other creative artists in Russia and elsewhere, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky found in the works of English romantic writer Lord Byron a provocative source of inspiration. Poet, adventurer, revolutionary, politician, genius, millionaire, aristocrat, beauty, and highly energetic bisexual, Byron (1788-1824) was a leading cultural celebrity of the nineteenth century. Almost as famous for his glamorous and controversial lifestyle as for his poems (on such fictional characters as Childe Harold, Manfred, and Don Juan), Byron fashioned what came to be known as the "Byronic hero," a symbol of an entire age and worldview. With intense sexual magnetism and a fondness for exotic locales, these restless, nomadic, enigmatic, and burnt-out destructive loners possess some dark secret in the past that torments and propels them in an endless and unsuccessful quest for inner peace. Emerging out of the cynicism and dashed hopes of the post-Napoleonic era, Byron's despairing anti-heroes reject social norms and believe in nothing but the satisfaction of their own unbridled free will and appetites. (See the related article beginning on page 29 of this program book.)

In his personal life, Byron titillated and scandalized English high society by carrying on numerous affairs with married ladies. One of them, the writer Lady Caroline Lamb, famously called him "Mad-bad and dangerous to know." According to numerous sources, however, he was no less fond of male bed partners, especially in Mediterranean climes; one recent biographer claims that the love of his life was "an impoverished choirboy." That Byron had a club-foot and was frequently overweight did not appear to detract from his sex appeal.

Persistent rumors of sodomy, and of an incestuous relationship with his half-sister Augusta Leigh—a liaison that is believed to have produced a child—finally forced the poet to flee England (and his wife) in 1816. Shortly afterwards, stimulated by a trip to Switzerland, Byron wrote the "dramatic poem" *Manfred*, set in and around a gloomy gothic castle in the Alps and drawing heavily on recent autobiographical experiences. Composed in verse in three acts, *Manfred* traces the attempts of the title hero to come to terms with his troubled past, especially his apparently incestuous relationship with the "lady Astarte": "I loved her, and destroy'd her." Desperately seeking answers from various religious and supernatural sources, Manfred finds some solace in the vitality of his memories before he finally expires, declaring "'tis not so difficult to die."

Nearly seventy years later, in late 1884, Tchaikovsky read *Manfred* during a trip to Switzerland. By this time, he was a well-established composer both in Russia and abroad, having completed (among other works) four symphonies, three orchestral suites, the operas *Eugene Onegin, The Maid of Orleans*, and *Mazeppa*, and the ballet *Swan Lake*. It was Tchaikovsky's colleague and admirer Mily Balakirev who urged him to read *Manfred*, for he was hoping that Tchaikovsky would compose a new programmatic symphony inspired by Byron's drama, imitating the model of Hector Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*.

During a celebrated trip to Russia in 1867-68, Berlioz had dazzled Balakirev and other Russian composers when he conducted this 1834 work, for orchestra and viola solo, based on Byron's *Childe Harold*. Under the spell of *Harold in Italy*, the influential critic Vladimir Stasov had even sketched out a four-movement program for a *Manfred* symphony that Balakirev later reworked and gave to Tchaikovsky. At first resistant, Tchaikovsky gradually warmed to Balakirev's suggestion, and wrote what was in fact his fifth symphony in the course of five months in the spring and summer of 1885 while living in a rented house in the village of Maidanovo, near Klin, where he would settle permanently a few years later.

Tchaikovsky already knew of Byron, who exerted a well-documented influence on Russian 19th-century writers. Alexander Pushkin's novel in verse *Eugene Onegin* (which Tchaikovsky had transformed into an opera) responded wittily to Byronic models. Pechorin, the narcissistic hero of

Mikhail Lermontov’s seminal 1840 novel *A Hero of Our Times*, combined features of the Byronic hero with those of the Russian high-society “superfluous man.” And besides Berlioz’s *Harold in Italy*, Tchaikovsky was no doubt aware of numerous other musical compositions already inspired by Byron, including the ballet *Le Corsaire* (1856) by French composer Adolphe Adam, whose works enjoyed considerable popularity in Russia. (In 1848, Giuseppe Verdi made an opera, *Il corsaro*, out of the same poem.).

Whether Tchaikovsky, a homosexual whose inclinations apparently caused him strong feelings of guilt and conflict, knew of Byron’s extensive homosexual experiences is impossible to say. But the composer, still recovering from his disastrous marriage in 1877 to a mentally unbalanced woman and often feeling intense loneliness, would likely have found a soul mate in the cursed, alienated character of Manfred. In particular, Manfred’s terrible secret of incest with Astarte—the reason for his gloomy despair and hopelessness—must have resonated deeply in Tchaikovsky. Having long harbored strong sexual feelings for his own nephew Vladimir Davydov, Tchaikovsky could have identified closely with the “self-condemn’d” Manfred, who declares himself “a living lie.”

Once he started composing the symphony, Tchaikovsky became deeply involved emotionally with the project, as he wrote in a letter of August 1, 1885. “Now I can’t stop. The symphony’s come out enormous, serious, difficult, absorbing all my time, sometimes wearying me in the extreme; but an inner voice tells me that I’m not laboring in vain, and that this will perhaps be the best of my symphonic compositions.”

In his programmatic musical setting of Byron’s poem, Tchaikovsky used Balakirev’s detailed dramatic and musical plan as a point of departure, but also made significant changes, reversing the order of the second and third movements and changing the scheme of keys. In the score, each of the four movements (Tchaikovsky labels them “scenes”) is preceded by a short descriptive passage. In the first movement (“Lento lugubre”—slow and mournful), Manfred roams the Alps, tormented by regret and seeking oblivion. In the second (Vivace con spirito), the scherzo movement, an Alpine witch appears to Manfred “in the rainbow of a waterfall’s spray.” The third (Andante con moto) is a pastorale, a scene of the “simple, poor, carefree life of the mountain dwellers.” The fourth and longest (Allegro con fuoco) takes place in the underworld kingdom of the spirit Ariman, amid an infernal orgy. Manfred summons the ghost of his beloved Astarte and is forgiven before he dies—a significant departure from the Byron original, which includes no mention of forgiveness.

In composing the *Manfred* Symphony, Tchaikovsky developed further the organizational principle he had used so effectively in his Fourth Symphony—the use of a recurring “fate” motif (in the Fourth, a fanfare for brass and winds) as a central unifying structural and emotional idea. Here, the two fertile themes associated with the character of Manfred are introduced and developed in the first movement and reappear at climactic moments in each of the following three. The first Manfred motif, his *idée fixe* (on the model of Berlioz’s *Harold in Italy*), is played in the opening bars by the bass clarinet and bassoons, a descending lugubrious five-bar phrase conveying resignation, accompanied by detached hammer-blow chords (fate, perhaps?) in the lower strings. The second related motif is more impassioned, even hysterical, beginning with a falling seventh (from C-sharp to D-sharp) that then rises in parallel waves. Manfred’s sorrow resounds in the first motif, his fruitless quest in the second.

The influence of another composer whose music Tchaikovsky knew well but professed to dislike—Richard Wagner—seems evident in the way these two musical ideas (leitmotifs) subsequently develop into a psychological epic/drama reminiscent of the orchestral music of the *Ring* cycle. (Tchaikovsky had reviewed the first full performance of the *Ring* at Bayreuth in 1876 for a Russian newspaper.) The lady Astarte also has a seductive lyrical theme, introduced by the first violins *con* *sordino* (with mutes) in the middle of the first movement and recalled at a climactic moment in the final movement, when Manfred encounters her ghost.

In the second movement, Tchaikovsky displays the light fantastic touch heard in *Swan Lake* to evoke the world of Alpine fairies, flitting about in string pizzicato. In the Trio section in D major, a simple tune for strings and harp is subjected to ingenious variations, in a manner familiar from the three orchestral suites. In the pastoral third movement, in G major, Tchaikovsky features the oboe in the first serene section, interrupted by a powerful reappearance of the Manfred material and then fading into a tolling bell sounding across the mountain valleys.

Tchaikovsky deviates significantly from the Byron original in his finale. The last act of the poem is set mostly within Manfred's castle, with only a suggestion of the appearance of demons and spirits; the symphony gives us a full-scale witches' sabbath, with a stomping demonic march perhaps modeled on the final infernal movement of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*. In response to Manfred's pleas, Astarte reappears, her theme resplendently accompanied by extensive dreamy glissandi in the two harps. But she disappears and Manfred's despair returns in full force.

This is where Byron's poem ends, but Tchaikovsky appends a more affirmative conclusion. The key switches from the prevailing B minor to C major as the organ enters under liturgical-sounding chords in the full orchestra. Following a statement of the *Dies irae* theme, heralding the death of Manfred, the orchestra returns to the tragic B-minor home key and gradually fades away, delivering a message not of triumph, but exhaustion.

Harlow Robinson

HARLOW ROBINSON *is Matthews Distinguished University Professor of History at Northeastern University and the author of Russians in Hollywood, Hollywood's Russians: Biography of an Image; Sergei Prokofiev:A Biography; and The Last Impresario: The Life, Times and Legacy of Sol Hurok. His articles, essays, and reviews have appeared in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Opera News, Symphony, Playbill, and other publications.*

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE *of Tchaikovsky's "Manfred" Symphony was given by Theodore Thomas and the Philharmonic Society of New York on December 3, 1886, at the Metropolitan Opera House.*

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCE *of "Manfred" was given by Wilhelm Gericke in April 1901, subsequent BSO performances being led by Gericke, Max Fiedler, Pierre Monteux, Eugene Goosens, William Steinberg, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Michael Tilson Thomas (the most recent subscription series, in December 1983), and Seiji Ozawa (the orchestra's most recent Tanglewood performance, on August 4, 1996, and then a single subscription performance on April 8, 1997, followed by a performance four days later at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.).*

## To Read and Hear More...

Important additions to the Brahms bibliography in recent years have included Jan Swafford's *Johannes Brahms: A Biography* (Vintage paperback); *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters* as selected and annotated by Styra Avins (Oxford); *The Compleat Brahms*, edited by conductor/scholar Leon Botstein, a compendium of essays on Brahms's music by a wide variety of scholars, composers, and performers, including Botstein himself (Norton); and Walter Frisch's *Brahms: The Four Symphonies* (Yale paperback). Also relatively recent is Peter Clive's *Brahms and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, which includes a chronology of the composer's life and works followed by alphabetical entries on just about anyone you might think of who figured in Brahms's life (Scarecrow Press); this follows Clive's earlier, similar books, *Mozart and his Circle* (Yale University Press) and *Beethoven and his World* (Oxford University Press). The Brahms entry in the 2001 New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians is by George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch; the entry in the 1980 Grove was by Heinz Becker. Important older biographies include Karl Geiringer's *Brahms* (Oxford paperback; Geiringer also wrote biographies of Haydn and Bach) and *The Life of Johannes Brahms* by Florence May, who knew Brahms personally (originally published in 1905, this shows up periodically in reprint editions). Malcolm MacDonald's *Brahms* is a very good life-and-works volume in the "Master Musicians" series (Schirmer). Denis Matthews's *Brahms Piano Music* in the series of BBC Music Guides includes detailed consideration of the *Handel* Variations (University of Washington paperback). Donald Francis Tovey's essay on the *Handel* Variations is among his *Essays in Musical Analysis* (Oxford paperback).

"Modern" recordings of the Brahms/Rubbra *Handel* Variations include Vladimir Ashkenazy's with the Cleveland Orchestra, made in 1992 (London), and, issued the same year, Neeme Järvi's with the London Symphony Orchestra (Chandos). A recording of Toscanini's American premiere broadcast from 1939 with the NBC Symphony Orchestra has circulated on compact disc (dellArte). For Brahms's original piano version, good choices include recordings of varying vintage by Claudio Arrau (Philips), Emanuel Ax (Sony), Idil Biret (budget-priced Naxos), Leon Fleisher (Sony), Julius Katchen (Decca), Steven Kovacevich (Philips), Rudolf Serkin (Sony), and Solomon (Testament, a CD reissue of a 1942 recording).

Among the most important studies of Elgar and his music is Michael Kennedy's *Portrait of Elgar* (Oxford). Kennedy is also the author of *The life of Elgar* in the series "Musical lives" (Cambridge University paperback) and of the compact BBC Music Guide on *Elgar Orchestral Music* (University of Washington paperback). Another big biography is Jerrold Northrop Moore's *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford). Moore has also edited *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime* (Oxford) and produced a discography of Elgar's work as a conductor, *Elgar on Record: The Composer and the Gramophone* (out of print). The recent and expensive *Edward Elgar, Modernist* by J.P.E. Harper Scott, published in 2006, is described as "the first full-length analytical study of Edward Elgar's music" ("Music in the 20th Century," volume 20, Cambridge University Press). From 2007, and much more affordable, is *Edward Elgar and his World*, a compilation of essays derived from the Bard Music Festival and edited by Byron Adams (Princeton University paperback). Diana McVeagh's Elgar article from The New Grove (1980) was included in *The New Grove Twentieth Century English Masters* along with those on Britten, Delius, Holst, Tippett, Vaughan Williams, and Walton (Norton paperback). McVeagh's article was retained, with some revisions, for the 2001 edition of Grove. Ian Parrott's *Elgar* is part of the "Master Musicians" series (Dent). Much older books include recollections by the violinist W.R. Reed in *Elgar As I Knew Him* (Oxford) and by two of the composer's friends: *Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation* by Mrs. Richard Powell, the "Dorabella" of Elgar's *Enigma* Variations (Methuen), and *Edward Elgar: The Record of a Friendship* by Rosa Burley, headmistress of the school where he taught for a while (Barrie & Jenkins). Volumes of correspondence include Percy M. Young's *Letters of Edward Elgar and Other Writings* (Geoffrey Bles) and *Letters to Nimrod: Edward Elgar to August Jaeger, 1897-1908* (Dennis Dobson), both published in England. Michael Steinberg's program note on the Cello Concerto is in his compilation volume *The Concerto–A Listener's Guide* (Oxford paperback).

Lynn Harrell recorded Elgar's Cello Concerto with Lorin Maazel and the Cleveland Orchestra (London/Decca). Elgar's own 1928 recording of his Cello Concerto with Beatrice Harrison and the New Symphony Orchestra has been reissued on compact disc (worth seeking is EMI's "Great

Recordings of the Century" release, which paired it with Elgar's 1932 recording of his Violin Concerto with Yehudi Menuhin). The composer's earlier recording, from not long after the 1919 premiere, was with the original soloist, Felix Salmond, and the London Symphony Orchestra. Also of note is Pablo Casals's 1945 recording with Adrian Boult and the BBC Symphony Orchestra (EMI "Great Artists of the Century"). A recent release features Daniel Müller-Schott with André Previn and the Oslo Philharmonic (Orfeo). Other recordings feature (listed alphabetically by soloist) Jacqueline du Pré, either live in 1970 with Daniel Barenboim and the Philadelphia Orchestra (Sony) or in her famous 1965 studio account with John Barbirolli and the London Symphony Orchestra (EMI), Ralph Kirshbaum with Alexander Gibson and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (Chandos), Steven Isserlis with Richard Hickox and the London Symphony Orchestra (Virgin Classics), Yo-Yo Ma with André Previn and the London Symphony Orchestra (Sony), and Truls Mørk with Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (Virgin Classics).

David Brown's *Tchaikovsky*, in four volumes, is the major biography of the composer (Norton); *Manfred* is discussed in the third volume, "The Years of Wandering: 1878-1885." More recently Brown has produced *Tchaikovsky: The Man and his Music*, an excellent single volume (512 pages) on the composer's life and works geared toward the general reader (Pegasus Books). It was Brown who provided the article on Tchaikovsky for the 1980 edition of The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. The article in the revised New Grove (2001) is by Roland John Wiley. Though out of print, John Warrack's *Tchaikovsky* is worth seeking both for its text and for its wealth of illustrations (Scribners). For whatever reason, Warrack's *Tchaikovsky Symphonies and Concertos* in the series of BBC Music Guides does not include discussion of *Manfred* (University of Washington paperback). Byron's *Manfred* can be found easily in the paperback *Lord Byron: Selected Poems* (Penguin Classics, also including, among other things, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, the inspiration for Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*).

Recordings of Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* include Mariss Jansons's with the Oslo Philharmonic (Chandos), Kurt Masur's with the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig (Warner Classics), Mikhail Pletnev's with the Russian National Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon), Mstislav Rostropovich's with the London Philharmonic (EMI), and Michael Tilson Thomas's with the London Symphony Orchestra (Sony). Arturo Toscanini's famous 1949 recording with the NBC Symphony Orchestra (RCA) alters details of the orchestration and excises about one-quarter of the finale, as is also the case with his several NBC broadcasts that have circulated.

Marc Mandel

## Guest Artists

### Gennady Rozhdestvensky

Born in Moscow in 1931, Gennady Rozhdestvensky studied piano with Lev Oborin and conducting with his father, Nikolaï Anosov, at the Moscow Conservatoire. While still a student there, he made his debut at age twenty with Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* at the Bolshoi Theatre. He had a long-term relationship with the Bolshoi, serving as principal conductor from 1964 to 1970; in 2000 he was appointed general music director. At the Bolshoi, he has conducted more than thirty operas and ballets, including the world premiere of Khachaturian's *Spartacus* and the Russian premiere of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. From 1956 on, he toured regularly with the Bolshoi ballet in Europe, Asia, and America. For many years, Mr. Rozhdestvensky also headed the Moscow Radio Orchestra. He became the first Soviet conductor to be appointed principal conductor of foreign orchestras, including London's BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, and the Stockholm Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. In the 1970s, as head of the Moscow Chamber Opera, he revived Shostakovich's "lost" opera, *The Nose*, and conducted Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. At the same time, he founded the Ministry of Culture Orchestra, with which he gave hundreds of concerts in Russia and abroad and recorded over 200 works, among them the complete symphonies of Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Glazunov, and Bruckner, as well as works by Schnittke, Denisov, and Gubaidulina. Gennady Rozhdestvensky has also conducted in many prestigious European theaters, including the Royal Opera House–Covent Garden (*Boris Godunov* and *The Nutcracker*), the Paris Opera (*The Queen of Spades*), and La Scala (*The Tale of Tsar Saltan* and *The Flying Dutchman*). He has also participated in dozens of world premieres of new or newly found works, some of which were dedicated to him, by composers such as Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Tavener, Schnittke, and Shchedrin. In 2001 he led the first performance of the original version of Prokofiev's *The Gambler* at the Bolshoi Theatre. One of the most recorded conductors of all time, Gennady Rozhdestvensky is represented in the current catalogue by well over 400 records comprising 786 different works. He is the recipient of both the French Legion of Honor and the Japanese Order of the Rising Sun, and is an Honorary Member of the Stockholm and British Academies. For more than thirty years, Professor Rozhdestvensky has held the Chair of Conducting at the Moscow Conservatoire. He regularly leads master classes in various countries; in 2006 the first Gennady Rozhdestvensky International Competition for Conductors took place in Bulgaria; and he is the subject of two recent films ("Red Button" and "Gennady Rozhdestvensky: Conductor or Conjurer?") by the distinguished French filmmaker Bruno Monsaingeon. Gennady Rozhdestvensky made his Boston Symphony Orchestra debut in March 1978 and has returned to lead the orchestra on numerous occasions in Symphony Hall and at Tanglewood, most recently for two subscription programs—including music of Suk, Martinu, Dvorák, Glazunov, Sibelius, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich—in February 2004.

Lynn Harrell

A distinguished soloist, chamber musician, recitalist, conductor, and teacher, cellist Lynn Harrell performs regularly with the major ensembles of Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Ottawa, Pittsburgh, and the National Symphony. In Europe he has appeared with the orchestras of London, Munich, Berlin, Zurich, and Israel and collaborates regularly with such noted conductors as Levine, Marriner, Masur, Mehta, Previn, Rattle, Slatkin, Temirkanov, Tilson Thomas, and Zinman. He has also toured extensively to Australia and New Zealand as well as the Far East, including Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. In the summer of 1999 Mr. Harrell was featured in a three-week "Lynn Harrell Cello Festival" with the Hong Kong Philharmonic. In recent seasons he has particularly enjoyed collaborating with violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter and pianist André Previn; in January 2004 the trio performed the Beethoven Triple Concerto with Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic. Summer music festivals represent an important part of Lynn Harrell's life: he appears regularly at the Verbier Festival in Switzerland, the Aspen and Grand Tetons festivals, and the Amelia Island Festival. Highlights of his extensive discography include the Bach cello suites (London/Decca), the world premiere recording of Victor Herbert's Cello Concerto No. 1 with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields led by Marriner (London/Decca), the Walton Concerto with Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (EMI), and the Donald Erb Concerto with Slatkin and the Saint Louis Symphony (New World). Together with Itzhak Perlman and Vladimir Ashkenazy, he was awarded two Grammy Awards—for the Tchaikovsky Piano Trio and for the complete Beethoven piano trios (both Angel/EMI). Most recently he has recorded Tchaikovsky's *Rococo* Variations for cello and orchestra, Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No. 2, and Prokofiev's *Symphony-Concerto* for cello and orchestra with Gerard Schwarz and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (Classico). As an educator, Lynn Harrell held the International Chair for Cello Studies at, and was later head of, the Royal Academy in London, and was artistic director of the orchestra, chamber music, and conductor training program at the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute. He has also given master classes at the Verbier and Aspen festivals and in major metropolitan areas throughout the world. Since the start of the 2002-03 academic year he has taught cello at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Lynn Harrell was born in New York to musician parents. He began his musical studies in Dallas and proceeded to the Juilliard School and the Curtis Institute of

Music. The recipient of numerous awards, including the first Avery Fisher Award, he plays a 1720 Montagnana and makes his home in Santa Monica, California. Mr. Harrell made his Boston Symphony debut in November 1978 and has since appeared frequently with the orchestra in Boston and at Tanglewood, most recently in October 2006 (Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No. 1) in Boston and in July 2007 at Tanglewood (Tchaikovsky's *Rococo* Variations and *Pezzo capriccioso*).