

THE CLEVELAND
ORCHESTRA
MIAMI

FRANZ WELSER-MÖST
Music Director

GIANCARLO GUERRERO
Principal Guest Conductor

THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA
Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*
Yefim Bronfman, *piano*

Friday, **January 27**, 2012, at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, **January 28**, 2012, at 8:00 p.m.



Franz Welser-Möst

Music Director
Kelvin Smith Family Endowed Chair
The Cleveland Orchestra

The 2011-12 season marks Franz Welser-Möst's tenth year as Music Director of The Cleveland Orchestra, with a long-term commitment extending to the Orchestra's centennial in 2018. Under his direction, the Orchestra is acclaimed for its continuing artistic excellence, is presented in a series of ongoing residencies in the United States and Europe, continues its championship of new composers through commissions and premieres, and has re-established itself as an important operatic ensemble. Concurrently with his Cleveland

post, Mr. Welser-Möst is General Music Director of the Vienna State Opera.

Under Mr. Welser-Möst's leadership, The Cleveland Orchestra has launched a series of residencies in important cultural locations around the world. These include residencies at Vienna's Musikverein and Switzerland's Lucerne Festival, as well as programs at New York's Lincoln Center Festival and at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. The Orchestra's ongoing activities in Miami, under the name The Cleveland Orchestra Miami, feature multiple weeks of concerts coupled with more than a dozen partnerships across Miami-Dade organizations and educational institutions.

The Cleveland Orchestra has presented thirteen world and fifteen United States premieres under Franz Welser-Möst. These have included the Roche Commissions project in partnership with the Lucerne Festival and Carnegie Hall. In addition, the Daniel R. Lewis Young Composer Fellow program has brought new voices to the repertoire, including Marc-André Dalbavie, Matthias Pintscher, Susan Botti, Julian Anderson, Johannes Maria Staud, Jörg Widmann, and Sean Shepherd.

Franz Welser-Möst has led opera performances each season during his tenure in Cleveland. Following six opera-in-concert presentations, he brought fully staged opera back to Severance Hall with a three-season cycle of Zurich Opera productions of the Mozart-Da Ponte operas. He leads concert performances of Strauss's *Salome* at Severance Hall and at Carnegie Hall during the 2011-12 season.

In addition to his post as General Music Director of the Vienna State Opera, Mr. Welser-Möst maintains an ongoing relationship with the Vienna Philharmonic, where his recent performances have included appearances at the Lucerne Festival and Salzburg Festival, in Tokyo, and in concert at La Scala Milan. Across a decade-long tenure with the Zurich Opera, culminating in three seasons as General Music Director (2005-08), he led the company in more than 40 new productions.

Mr. Welser-Möst's recordings and videos have won international awards and two Grammy nominations. Mr. Welser-Möst has led The Cleveland Orchestra in video recordings of live performances of Bruckner Symphonies Nos. 5, 7, 8, and 9. Together they have released a recording of Wagner's *Wesendonck Songs* with soprano Measha Bruegggosman and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Franz Welser-Möst has been recognized by the Western Law Center for Disability Rights and is an honorary member of the Vienna Singverein. *Musical America* named him the 2003 Conductor of the Year. He is the co-author of *Cadences: Observations and Conversations*, published in a German edition in 2007. ■

John S. and James L. Knight Concert Hall
Sherwood M. and Judy Weiser Auditorium

January 27, 2012

January 28, 2012

The **Musical Arts Association of Miami**
and the **Adrienne Arsht Center** present

The Cleveland Orchestra
Franz Welser-Möst, *conductor*

JOHANNES BRAHMS
(1833-1897)

Piano Concerto No. 2
in B-flat major, Opus 83

1. Allegro non troppo
2. Allegro appassionato
3. Andante
4. Allegretto grazioso

YEFIM BRONFMAN, *piano*

INTERMISSION

SEAN SHEPHERD
(b. 1979)

Wanderlust

1. Prevailing Winds
2. Seagulls on High
3. Bilbao

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906-1975)

Symphony No. 6
in B minor, Opus 54

1. Largo
2. Allegro
3. Presto

These concerts are being recorded for future broadcast on Classical South Florida 89.7 FM.

Saturday evening's concert is being broadcast live on WCLV 104.9 FM Cleveland.

The taking of photographs or any other recording is strictly prohibited.



Yefim Bronfman

Russian-American pianist Yefim Bronfman is regarded as one of the most talented piano virtuosos performing today. His commanding technique and exceptional lyrical gifts have won him consistent acclaim and enthusiastic audiences worldwide. Mr. Bronfman made his Cleveland Orchestra debut in April 1986. This season, from January through May, he is spending four weeks with the Orchestra, performing in Cleveland, Miami, and New York.

Yefim Bronfman was born in 1958 in Tashkent, in the Soviet Union. After moving to Israel with his family in 1973, he worked with Arie Vardi at Tel

Aviv University. Following his family's relocation to the United States in 1976, he studied at the Curtis Institute, Juilliard School, and Marlboro, with Rudolf Firkusny, Leon Fleisher, and Rudolf Serkin. Mr. Bronfman made his international debut in 1975 with the Montreal Symphony, and his New York Philharmonic debut in 1978. In 1991, he returned to Russia for the first time since emigrating, to perform a series of joint recitals with Isaac Stern. That same year, Mr. Bronfman was awarded the Avery Fisher Prize.

As a guest artist, Yefim Bronfman appears with the world's most esteemed ensembles, from North America's major orchestras to those of Amsterdam, Berlin, Dresden, Israel, London, Paris, Vienna, and Zurich, among others. He is a frequent guest at international summer festivals, and has served as artist-in-residence with Carnegie Hall and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and as Artiste Étoile in Switzerland.

A devoted chamber musician, Mr. Bronfman has collaborated with the Cleveland, Emerson, Guarneri, and Juilliard quartets, as well as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has also performed with Emanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, Lynn Harrell, Magdalena Kozena, Yo-Yo Ma, Shlomo Mintz, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Pinchas Zukerman, and many other artists, and presents solo recitals throughout Asia, Europe, and North America. In February, he is performing a recital of Brahms chamber music in Cleveland with principal members of The Cleveland Orchestra.

Mr. Bronfman's recordings are highly praised — his album of Bartók's three piano concertos won a 1997 Grammy, and his album featuring Esa-Pekka Salonen's piano concerto received a Grammy nomination. His discography also includes the complete Prokofiev piano sonatas and concertos, Beethoven's five piano concertos and triple concerto, Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, and sonatas by Bartók, Brahms, and Mozart recorded with Isaac Stern.

For more information, visit www.yefimbronfman.com. ■

INTRODUCING THE PROGRAM

This program features three works from three different centuries, showcasing a range of sounds and emotional currents in orchestral music of the past 150 years. The concert begins with a symphony-sized concerto by Johannes Brahms, with soloist Yefim Bronfman (who is performing Brahms during four weeks with The Cleveland Orchestra this season, in Cleveland, Miami, and New York). The evening continues after intermission with a newer work by a very 21st-century composer, Sean Shepherd, who is the Orchestra's Daniel R. Lewis Young Composer Fellow. And the evening ends with one of Shostakovich's less well-known symphonies, which begins with enigmatic searching and then ends in a blazing burst of energy.



Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major, Opus 83

BY JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

*Composed 1878-81 and premiered on November 9, 1881,
in Budapest, with Brahms as soloist.*

*Scoring: 2 flutes (one doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets,
2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings, plus
the solo piano.*

Performance Time: about 50 minutes

IF ONE COULD choose a handful of works to exemplify why Brahms has captured listeners over the years, those works would include the four-movement Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major, completed in 1881 at the height of his maturity. Here all the elements of Brahms's art come together. There is the joining of the grandly Olympian with the intimately songful. There is the virtuoso command of large-scale musical architecture, for a composer one of the rarest gifts in the world. More subtly, in the Second Piano Concerto one finds on display the singular mysteriousness of Brahms — a music at once powerfully communicative and elusive.

For soloists proposing to master this gigantic concerto, it lives up to one of Brahms's puckish nicknames for it: "the Long Terror." Pianists speak of the exquisite anxiety of stepping onto the stage with the Alpine steepness of the first movement in your head, wondering how you're going to find the place in your mind and fingers to attack it.

For Brahms himself, the Second Piano Concerto was probably, from its first inspiration during a sunny vacation in Italy, one of the most untroubled major efforts of his life. No composer had ever faced greater expectations, starting from the age of twenty when Robert Schumann declared the boyish and beardless student the virtual Messiah of German music. From then on, Brahms had to live with that forbidding prophecy hanging over him. But by the time of the Second Concerto, he had more or less fulfilled Schumann's prophecy and had little left to prove — though he never rested on his laurels. One by one, he had painstakingly mastered most of the traditional genres and produced historic masterpieces in each.

While never lacking in enemies, by his forties Brahms was generally under-

stood to be the supreme concert composer of his generation. (His great rival Wagner dominated the operatic stage — which is a prime reason why Brahms, despite years of dreaming about opera, finally stayed away from the stage.) When he began the Second Piano Concerto, he already had imposing concertos for piano and violin already under his belt, and he was writing for his own instrument, where he always felt most comfortable.

Already in the First Piano Concerto, the essential elements of the Brahmsian concerto were in place. The scale and style are symphonic as much as concerto-like, with the soloist less the heroic voice of Romantic concertos, more a participant in a symphonic dialogue. All that carried into the Violin Concerto of 1878. Meanwhile, as Brahms scholar Michael Musgrave writes, the virtually orchestral style of the keyboard writing in the Second Piano Concerto has only one precedent in the literature, and that is Brahms's own First Piano Concerto.

The formal approach of these concertos is also particular to them. In many movements of his symphonies, especially the finales, Brahms produced innovative variations on traditional formal models. One finds less of that in the concertos. All the finales have touches of his trademark “gypsy”-style finale, which he never used in his symphonies. (After a youthful collaboration with a Hungarian violinist, Brahms created his *Hungarian Dances*, which for years he played for friends and at parties. When finally published, they made a sensation.) So while the concertos are unusual in their overall approach, their formal outlines are relatively conservative — more or less the traditional concerto sonata form for the first movements, rondo for the last, A-B-A for the slow movements.

The B-flat concerto begins with one of the most beautiful movements of Brahms's output, its expressive import without any of his familiar touches of tragedy or fatalism. The piano textures range from massive to diaphanous, interwoven with rich orchestral textures. The piano steadily changes roles, its music moving from long unaccompanied solos to lacy filigree accompanying the orchestra. While there are towering proclamations and moments of drama, the overall tone is lofty and magisterial. The opening horn call reminds us of Brahms's love of the outdoors, of climbing Alpine peaks.

Next comes the movement Brahms described to a friend as a “tiny, tiny wisp of a scherzo.” When Brahms said things like that, he was usually joking; the D-minor scherzo (the only movement to depart from B-flat major) is immense, dark-toned, and impassioned, with a touch of gypsy tone. Brahms's only explanation for the scherzo was another a joke — the opening movement was so “harmless,” he said, that he needed a strong contrast for the second. The scherzo brings to the concerto a new emotional gravitas and a relentless rhythmic drive. In fact, this scherzo was originally drafted for the Violin Concerto. He may have jettisoned it because that work needed the opposite — something lighter.

The slow movement begins with one of those sighing, exquisite cello melodies that Brahms invented and owned. Here is one of the innovations of the Second Piano Concerto: a slow movement in which the first section is dominated by a solo cello; only in the middle does the piano come to the fore, spinning out languid quasi-improvisatory garlands. Now the scoring is intimate, chamber-like — another kind of contrast to the first movement.

The concerto comes to rest on a rondo finale of marvelous lightness, whimsy, and dancing rhythms, again with gypsy touches, answering the monumental first two

movements and the gently wandering embroidery of the third. Donald Francis Tovey caught the effect of the finale in programmatic terms: “We have done our work — let the children play in the world which our work has made safer and happier for them.” For the listener, the charm of the finale is its glittering instrumental colors and its ravishing melodies. The characteristic finale of 18th-century concertos and symphonies has been called a “last dance.” The ending of Brahms’s Second Concerto follows that old pattern, and is among the dancing-est.

—Jan Swafford © 2012



Wanderlust

BY SEAN SHEPHERD (b. 1979)

Composed 2007-09 and premiered in May 2009 by The Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Oliver Knussen.

Scoring: 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, english horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, a large battery of percussion, harp, piano (doubling celesta), and strings.

Performance Time: about 10 minutes

The composer has written the following comments about this work:

IN RECENT YEARS, I’ve been a well-treated vagabond, and relished every minute of it. Time spent — in places like Berlin, a picture-perfect fishing village on the French Mediterranean Coast, London and the Eastern Shores of Britain, Los Angeles, and a small town in upstate New York overlooking a waterfall — has drawn forth the kinds of realizations that extended travel often does, namely: a.) people and places are all different, and b.) people and places are all the same. I am also distinctly aware of what this phase in life in which I find myself bears: a palpable sense of rootless-ness, which contradicts and battles the opposite inclination: a desire to sink roots.

The kinds of journeys that *Wanderlust* (a wonderful concept-word generally known as “love of travel”) concerns itself with occur not just geographically, but through time. Each movement reflects a broad span. *Prevailing Winds* evokes my thoughts on a more distant past — the cool expansive windy desert of Northern Nevada (my home until age 18) drenched in sun and sagebrush, my ever-so-rooted family, my innocence in the wide world. Distant memories and impressions are fragmented and piled up upon themselves and continue to swirl around the orchestra in various guises, and often reappear. In essence, I sought to relay many thoughts, memories, visions, and emotions (all distant, many vague) into a single abstract object — and what resulted is a kind of musical kaleidoscope: ever changing and circling, but only around itself.

In contrast, *Seagulls on High* reflects my thoughts on a specific time and place, one much closer to the present. The first version of this music had a quick incubation in Aldeburgh, the coastal town in Suffolk, England, where Benjamin Britten made his home. The title refers most directly to the enormous resident birds that kept me

company with a truly glorious cacophony in the early morning hours of the summer sunrise outside my cottage on Aldeburgh High Street. The music, however, makes its roots known elsewhere. In the cold beaches and dark, roiling waves, in the reeds and lowlands and coastal plains under grey, unsettled skies, I came to understand Britten's special, conflicted penchant for melancholy, and many of the saddest tunes from his opera *Peter Grimes* and from *Serenade* rolled through my head as I wrote in a small room in the Snape Maltings, the concert hall he built. *Seagulls on High* was never intended as direct homage or a kind of compositional tourism, but in the end, a nod to a hero while staying in his place of choice was inevitable.

Bilbao is somehow the simplest and most obtuse movement, both referentially and musically. The word alone conjures for so many Frank Gehry's spectacular, terribly intricate, and downright funky designs for the Guggenheim Museum built in the 1990s, and the urban renewal brought about by its auspicious opening in this down-trodden port city in Northern Spain. Since I have never been to Bilbao, this music is somehow about the future, of seeing this building that has captured my imagination since I was 15 or 16 years old, of visiting a place that was saved by art. But, considering the prospect of a return to the home of my Basque ancestry, this music is also somehow about the notion of a past so deep, it may be lost already. That both the future and the distant, ancestral past have an existence based only in reflection, I knew the piece would end with a question mark. Perhaps appropriately, the path the music took in getting there is still a genuine mystery to me.

—Sean Shepherd

SEAN SHEPHERD's "kaleidoscopic use of orchestral color" (*New York Times*) has earned him admiration and recognition across the United States and Europe. He is currently serving as The Cleveland Orchestra's Daniel R. Lewis Young Composer Fellow. He is the seventh composer to hold this post, in a program that began in 1998. As part of this fellowship, he is writing a new work that will be premiered by the Orchestra during the second season of his two-year tenure, in 2013. *Wanderlust* was premiered by The Cleveland Orchestra in 2009 and is being given encore performances this month. Shepherd is also continuing his post as the first-ever composer-in-residence of the Reno Philharmonic, his hometown orchestra, which has plans to perform two new works by the composer.

Sean Shepherd's honors and recognitions include being the winner of the 2009 triennial Benjamin H. Danks Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. He was also the 2008 Deutsche Bank Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin and a first-prize winner in the 2005 International Lutosławski Award. The New York Philharmonic premiered his new work *These Particular Circumstances* in 2010.

Shepherd is a 2004 graduate of the Juilliard School, where he earned his master's degree as a student of Robert Beaser. He holds degrees in composition and bassoon performance from Indiana University, where his teachers included Claude Baker and David Dzubay in composition and Kim Walker for bassoon. He is currently completing a doctorate at Cornell University as a student of Roberto Sierra and Steven Stucky. For further information, visit www.seanshepherd.com



Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Opus 54

BY DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

Composed 1937-39 and premiered on November 5, 1939, in Leningrad (today's St. Petersburg), with Evgeny Mravinsky conducting the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra.

Scoring: 3 flutes (third doubling piccolo) 3 oboes (third doubling english horn), 4 clarinets (third doubling e-flat clarinet and fourth doubling on bass clarinet), 3 bassoons (third doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, tam-tam, and xylophone), harp, celesta, and strings.

Performance Time: about 30 minutes

SHOSTAKOVICH began composing his Symphony No. 6 shortly after the triumphant premiere of his Fifth Symphony. The appearance of that work, in the autumn of 1937, had marked a critical juncture in Shostakovich's difficult career as a Soviet artist. During the late 1920s and early '30s, Shostakovich had established himself as one of his nation's most imaginative and resourceful composers, and also, it seemed, an exemplary "socialist" musician. Apparently a sincere supporter of the Soviet regime, Shostakovich had no objection to composing large-scale hymns to the Revolution, and he did just that in his Second and Third Symphonies (to give two notable examples), respectively titled "To October" and "May Day."

These and other compositions by the youthful Shostakovich were widely admired, even though they often explored the new tonal language being pioneered by such Western modernists as Stravinsky, Berg, and Hindemith. As a result, Shostakovich's career flourished. His concert works were readily and widely performed, and he regularly received commissions for choral pieces, theater music, and film scores. But with Stalin's consolidation of power in the 1930s, the liberal artistic climate that had prevailed during the first decade or so of Soviet rule gave way to a new conservatism that demanded optimistic and easily accessible art. Modernist complexity in music was especially frowned upon, even when this was ventured by one of the brightest stars in the Soviet Union's artistic firmament.

For Shostakovich, matters reached a crisis in 1936. In February of that year, the official Communist Party newspaper, *Pravda*, denounced his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, which had enjoyed tremendous enthusiasm with audiences, as "a confused stream of sounds," "cacophony," and "musical chaos." One week later, a second *Pravda* review attacked his ballet *The Limpid Stream*.

The effect of this critical about-face on Shostakovich's status was dramatic. Within days, the composer fell from his position as one of Soviet Russia's most esteemed young artists to that of cultural pariah. In the face of such criticism, which unmistakably had the imprimatur of high levels of the Soviet government, Shostakovich withdrew his Fourth Symphony, then in rehearsal, and retreated to the privacy of his study. Nearly two years passed before he again brought a major work before the public.

When he did, it was with a work, the Fifth Symphony, that used an accessible

style and presented an apparently optimistic tone to gladden the hearts of Party officials. Whether that style and tone were meant ironically, and whether or not the symphony embodied serious artistic compromises, have been widely and heatedly debated. In any event, the Fifth Symphony's triumphant first performance, in November 1937, saved Shostakovich's career.

The composer then announced that his next symphony would be an epic tribute to Lenin, complete with soloists and large chorus. It is difficult to see this announcement as anything other than an obvious move by Shostakovich to safeguard himself at what must have seemed to him still a perilous moment. Although he had publicly supported the Revolution and had previously composed works to honor it, the *Pravda* attacks of the preceding year had proven that he could not take his safety for granted. Announcing his intention to write another patriotic composition would have been an easy way to deflect any lingering suspicion on the part of the Party's cultural guardians.

As it happened, however, Shostakovich never finished his "Lenin" Symphony. Instead, he produced a very personal work, one in which political or representative elements are entirely absent.

Because it was so different from what the composer had originally announced, this Sixth Symphony was accorded a cool critical reception when it appeared, in 1939. (And this despite an enthusiastic audience response at the work's premiere, in Leningrad, in November of that year. The listeners even demanded an encore of the finale movement.) Nevertheless, it has been almost universally accepted as a strong musical statement, and a worthy companion to Shostakovich's other symphonies.

The symphony commences with a lengthy *Adagio* in place of a more customary fast opening. While unusual, Shostakovich's decision to open his work with a slow movement is by no means unique in the symphonic literature. The most notable precedents are provided by a composer often cited as an influence on Shostakovich, Gustav Mahler — in particular, his Symphonies Nos. 9 and 10. Shostakovich himself would use this gambit again in several of his later symphonies.

The composer builds this movement from two themes. The first, after an initial statement involving the full orchestra, gives rise to contrapuntal discourse. A second subject, haunting and funereal, is announced by the English horn over ominous "heartbeats" in the timpani. Like the initial theme, it receives extensive treatment, at length arriving at a passage of deathly stillness in which a flute soliloquizes over a motionless drone in the low strings. Eventually we return to the opening idea, though there is a brief but significant reference to the second theme just before the movement ends.

After the brooding introspection of this opening, nothing could provide so startling a contrast as the rollicking second-movement *Allegro* that follows. Prominent roles for alto clarinet and xylophone help impart a sardonic tone to this scherzo-like movement, a quality encountered often in Shostakovich's music.

The third-movement finale proves equally energetic. Its character is that of a sprightly galop, not unlike the last movement of Prokofiev's "Classical" Symphony. Shostakovich held this movement in unusually high regard. "It is the first time I ever wrote such a successful finale," he reportedly told two of his close friends. One of those confidants concurred, telling the composer: "If Mozart and Rossini had lived in the 20th century and had collaborated in writing the finale to a symphony, it would have turned out like this."

—Paul Schiavo © 2012