

WELCOME TO THE

R E D
V E L V E T
B A L L

WITH

L A N G
L A N G



FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to the St. Louis Symphony's annual gala, the Red Velvet Ball. It's a great party with great music and all for a great cause. Tonight you are supporting the Symphony, helping us to do all that we do—whether it be on the Powell Hall stage, at New York City's Carnegie Hall, at the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, or in classrooms, places of worship, parks, and hospitals throughout the region as part of our Education and Community programs.

Our featured gala artist is the famed pianist Lang Lang. Lang Lang gets invited to the most high-profile gigs: the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics, this year's World Cup concert in Rio, and a jam with Metallica at the Grammy Awards. For all that, I'm looking forward to working with him because he is such a unique talent and deeply musical artist. I'm also happy that this concert includes a solo performance of Bach by Symphony Principal Flute Mark Sparks. You usually see Mark sit center stage with the orchestra, which is appropriate as his singular virtuosity has helped to define the sound and spirit of the St. Louis Symphony for many years. It will be a joy to experience him as soloist again.

A special thank you goes to Red Velvet Ball Co-chairs Lynn and Thriess Britton, as well as Presenting Sponsor World Wide Technology and the Steward Family Foundation. They help make the Gala such a success, and a lot of fun.

Best,

David Robertson

Music Director



FROM THE RED VELVET BALL CO-CHAIRS

Thank you very much for your support of the St. Louis Symphony's sixth annual gala event! We are thrilled to welcome you to Powell Hall for what promises to be an unforgettable performance by internationally-acclaimed piano sensation Lang Lang with our world-renowned St. Louis Symphony and Music Director David Robertson.

Proceeds from the Red Velvet Ball not only sustain the extraordinary artistic quality you will experience tonight, but also strengthen the depth and breadth of the Symphony's impact on our community. Each season, STL Symphony musicians present over 250 free community and education programs—sharing the joy and solace of great music in schools, hospitals, churches, museums, and retirement centers across the region.

We would also like to recognize all those who played a part in making tonight's event possible, including the many wonderful members of the Red Velvet Ball Committee, as well as our Presenting Sponsor, World Wide Technology and the Steward Family Foundation.

Thanks to the support and dedication of friends like you, the St. Louis Symphony is truly our city's cultural jewel. We hope you enjoy tonight's concert and please join us at Powell Hall again soon.

Sincerely,

Thriess and Lynn Britton

Co-Chairs

ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY | 135TH SEASON | 2014-2015

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*Associate Principal
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Assistant Principal

Rebecca Boyer Hall

Nicolae Bica

Deborah Bloom

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***Leave of Absence



DILIP VISHWANATH

CONCERT PROGRAM

October 18, 2014

David Robertson, conductor

Lang Lang, piano

Mark Sparks, flute

RED VELVET BALL

BACH **Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B minor, BWV 1067** (ca. 1720)
(1685-1750)

Ouverture
Rondeau
Sarabande
Bourrée I & II
Polonaise & Double
Menuet
Badinerie

Mark Sparks, flute

TCHAIKOVSKY **Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor** (1874-75)
(1840-1893)

Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso; Allegro con spirito
Andantino semplice
Allegro con fuoco

Lang Lang, piano

Tonight's concert is performed without intermission.

CELEBRATE

BY EDDIE SILVA

How should we celebrate a 135 year relationship with orchestra and community? The St. Louis Symphony would not have begun, grown, thrived, and flourished, without the support of the St. Louis community. Without this orchestra to claim as its own, this community would not be as culturally rich and vibrant. We celebrate with good food and wine, conversation and dancing. We celebrate most especially with music—music that twines two styles of celebration: the intimate and the grand.

J.S. Bach and Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky made music for very distinct audiences, times, and ideals. Bach writes most immediately for the congregants of his church and for his royal patrons. From a small town in Germany come intricate microcosms made for a few to hear. Although in Bach's mind there was no question whom he most fervently desired to please: God.

Tchaikovsky is the worldly man, who courts audiences in his native Russia, in the great capitals of Europe, and in the culturally awakening United States. Although many of his Russian contemporaries embrace a nativist aesthetic—Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Balakirev—Tchaikovsky seeks acknowledgment beyond the provincial. He is peripatetic, making temporary homes in Germany, in France, in the U.S., but always returning to Russia. He opens Carnegie Hall. He is one of the most revered artists of the Western world. He writes music that defines romance.

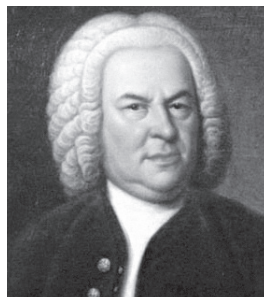
Yet in any dichotomy there is likeness. The atomies of Bach give way to universes. Tchaikovsky's grand, bold gestures are constructed of so many minute schemes and patterns. They both make music that is heavenly. They bring joy. They celebrate life, and the aching desire to know that which may be beyond this life.

This is how we should all celebrate a unique relationship: intimate and grand.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Suite No. 2 in B minor, BWV 1067

THE SOURCE Bach is the source: of Mozart, of Haydn, of Beethoven, of Stravinsky, and so much of what follows in the music known as “classical.” But even



Born

March 21, 1685, Eisenach, Germany

Died

July 28, 1750, Leipzig

First Performance

Unknown

STL Symphony Premiere

November 21, 1911, John Kiburz was soloist, with Enrique Fernandez Arbós conducting

Most Recent

STL Symphony Performance

October 2, 2004, Mark Sparks was soloist, with Nicholas McGegan conducting

Scoring

flute
harpsichord
strings

Performance Time

approximately 20 minutes

that pronouncement narrows the full scope of Bach. From the headwaters that began in small towns in Germany, rivers widen to include bluegrass, rock, jazz, and hip hop. The St. Louis Symphony performs a Family Concert this season called *From Bach to Rock to Hip Hop*. It got its name not because of the clever rhyme scheme, but because it's accurate.

St. Louis Symphony second violinist Becky Boyer Hall began her musical life playing fiddle to folk and bluegrass tunes. She once told me that when she turned to classical, the music that felt most familiar was Bach.

In the jazz world, there are direct links to Bach through figures such as Bud Powell and Dave Brubeck. None other than Duke Ellington made this comparison: "Bach and myself both write with individual performers in mind." He said this while eating a pork chop. Ellington knew how to utilize the extraordinary talents of musicians such as Cootie Williams and Clark Terry, just as Bach must have had an amazing flutist to highlight with his Suite No. 2 in B minor.

You hear in Bach call-and-response, musicians trading riffs, one section has the melody and then another reshapes it, variations on themes that unspool beginning to end. Plus there is always the element of surprise—the music takes off in ways you had not imagined. Bach makes you want to dance as Ellington and Bob Wills do. "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing." There must have been a German equivalent to that phrase.

Bach stays with us. Anthony Tommasini declared him the No. 1 all-time composer in the *New York Times* a couple of years ago. In Nicolas Slonimsky's essential *Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, the J. S. Bach entry leads off: "...supreme arbiter and lawgiver of music, a master comparable in greatness of stature with Aristotle in philosophy and Leonardo da Vinci in art." Slonimsky also reminds us that "Bach" means "stream" in German.

For all that, who is this guy? Bach, the man, is a mystery to us. Was the piece performed this evening composed in Cöthen or Leipzig? You'll discover lots of room for debate about that point, as you will for many particulars of Bach's life. To the question, "Where did all this amazing music come from?"—a prolific 20th-century artist may have the best answer. As Woody Guthrie said about the source of his songs, "I just pick 'em out of the air."

AFLIRTATION The Suite No. 2 in B minor begins with a substantial overture, stately and ceremonious—a nice fit for this evening's festivities. This is known as a "French overture," which reflects one of Bach's many contemporary influences. There are some Italian borrowings in the Suite as well: French-Italian-German fusion. Bach's musical stream is one of crests and turns and swift currents. The strings dig into the dotted rhythms and the rapid upbeats. Bach employs a *ritornello* format, meaning that the principal subject returns again and again, often in a different key. Bach likes to mix it up.

Following the overture is a series of dances. The overture is the warmup for the show; then it's "Everybody dance now!" But whether the audience is seated in Cöthen or Leipzig in the 18th century, or in Powell Hall in 2014, listeners are riveted by the virtuosic flute. Bach, the showman, saves the most bravura passages for the finale.

Bach, the "supreme arbiter and lawgiver of music," also likes to wink at the conventions he both creates and breaks. As biographer Martin Geck observes,

“...in the key of B-minor, which Beethoven called the black key, Bach composed... an orchestral work of bright character ending in a flirtation.” Beethoven could do so many things, but he was never much of a flirt.

PYOTR IL'YICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, op. 23

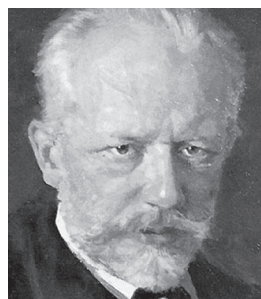
A CHRISTMAS MEMORY You might not be able to name that tune, but you know it: the opening measures to Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto. You know what it feels like too: big soaring emotions, big passions, big desires. “A grandiose tune over crashing chords,” it has been described.

It's that, and it's many other things too. That grandiose tune: Tchaikovsky is borrowing from (or today you'd say “sampling”) a Ukrainian folk song. After all those crashing chords, the concerto settles into the lyricism for which Tchaikovsky is so well known. It doesn't really ever “settle” though—the first movement can sound like two rival orchestras taunting each other. The middle movement is warm and romantic and dance-like. In the middle of it, Tchaikovsky makes use of a contemporary French song, which proves the T. S. Eliot rule: bad artists imitate, good ones steal. The last movement returns to Ukrainian accents with a Cossack dance finale. Time to revel.

The First Piano Concerto is also a beast to play, but as musicologist Jeremy Siepmann observes “Unpianistic it may be, but that's the pianist's problem, not the listener's.” You're in good hands with Lang Lang at the keyboard tonight. It's not a problem to him.

It was a problem to Nikolay Rubinstein, however. Tchaikovsky's close friend, mentor, and one of the renowned piano virtuosos of his day, had nothing good to say about the work when the composer first played it for him on Christmas Eve 1874. In fact, he was insulting. Tchaikovsky recorded Rubinstein's response in a letter:

I played the first movement. Not a word, not a single remark. To understand how stupid, how embarrassed I began to feel, imagine what it is like to prepare a meal for someone who then eats



Born

May 7, 1840, Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia

Died

November 6, 1893, St. Petersburg

First Performance

October 25, 1875, in Boston, Hans von Bülow was soloist, with Benjamin Johnson Lang conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra

STL Symphony Premiere

March 5, 1908, Rudolph Ganz was soloist, with Max Zach conducting

Most Recent

STL Symphony Performance

September 22, 2013, Kirill Gerstein was soloist, with David Robertson conducting

Scoring

solo piano
2 flutes
2 oboes
2 clarinets
2 bassoons
4 horns
2 trumpets
3 trombones
timpani
strings

Performance Time

approximately 32 minutes

in silence.... I fortified myself with patience and played through to the end. Still silence. I stood and asked, "Well?" Quietly at first, but gradually increasing in volume until it had assumed the tone of thundering Jupiter, a torrent of vitriol poured from [Rubinstein's] mouth. My concerto was unplayable and worthless; passages were so clumsy, so fragmented and crudely conceived as to be beyond rescue; the whole was vulgar and badly written; here and there I had stolen from other composers; only one or two pages were worth anything, the rest should be scrapped.

"Any uninformed person hearing this," the composer wrote, "would have concluded that I was a senseless, talentless fool who had the impertinence to submit his scribblings to a great musician." And on Christmas!

Tchaikovsky was known for being thin-skinned, but Rubinstein's tirade hit at his pride, and as possessed with self-doubts as he was—with this concerto he knew he had something. Rubinstein wasn't the only great pianist around, so Tchaikovsky offered it to German music star Hans van Bülow. They took their show to the United States and premiered in Boston in 1875. The concerto was an immediate success, and has been featured in concert halls around the world ever since. One of its early champions: Nikolay Rubinstein, who made it a principal part of his repertoire. Tchaikovsky treasured Rubinstein's interpretations of the work. He also knew that he had a true friend who could admit when he was wrong.

PERMISSION When the first movement concludes, you will want to applaud. Of course you will. Tchaikovsky wrote it that way. You can be sure the Bostonians were on their feet cheering von Bülow on a night in October 1875. Tchaikovsky was a great entertainer. He knew audiences. A big opening movement with high drama, charming lyricism, and dazzling piano virtuosity that will make them stand up and shout.

He also figured the soloist, conductor, and orchestra can use some time to take their collective breaths.

So you have permission to applaud after the first movement finale: from Tchaikovsky, from David Robertson, from Lang Lang, from the orchestra, and, for what it's worth, from me.

DAVID ROBERTSON

BEOFOR MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

A passionate and compelling communicator with an extensive orchestral and operatic repertoire, American conductor David Robertson has forged close relationships with major orchestras around the world. In fall 2014, Robertson launches his 10th season as Music Director of the 135-year-old St. Louis Symphony. In January 2014, Robertson assumed the post of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in Australia.

To celebrate his decade-long tenure with the St. Louis Symphony in 2014-15, Robertson will showcase 50 of the orchestra's musicians in solo or solo ensemble performances throughout the season. Other highlights include a concert performance of Verdi's *Aida* featuring video enhancements by S. Katy Tucker (one of a series of such collaborations during the season), and a return to Carnegie Hall with a program featuring the music of Meredith Monk. In 2013-14, Robertson led the St. Louis Symphony in a Carnegie Hall performance of Britten's *Peter Grimes* on the Britten centennial that Anthony Tommasini, in the *New York Times*, selected as one of the most memorable concerts of the year, and in the spring Nonesuch Records released a disc of the orchestra's performances of two works by John Adams: *City Noir* and the Saxophone Concerto.

Robertson is a frequent guest conductor with major orchestras and opera houses around the world. In his inaugural year with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, he led the ensemble in a seven-city tour of China in June 2014. He also led the summer 2014 U.S. tour of the National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America, a project of Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute, in cities including Boston and Chicago, culminating in a concert at Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. In the fall of 2014, David Robertson conducts the Metropolitan Opera premiere of John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer*.



MICHAEL TAMMARO

David Robertson conducts the Symphony's annual New Year's Eve Celebration concert again this season



LANG LANG

If one word applies to Lang Lang, to the musician, to the man, to his worldview, to those who come into contact with him, it is “inspiration.” It resounds like a musical motif through his life and career. He inspires millions with open-hearted, emotive playing, whether it be in intimate recitals or on the grandest of stages. He forms enduring musical partnerships with the world’s greatest artists, from conductors such as Daniel Barenboim, Gustavo Dudamel, and Sir Simon Rattle, to artists from outside of classical music—among them dubstep dancer Marquese “nonstop” Scott and jazz titan Herbie Hancock. Thanks to his Sony ambassadorship, he brought Prokofiev’s Piano Sonata No. 7 to the soundtrack of the multi-million-selling computer game *Gran Turismo 5* and 6! And he builds cultural bridges between East and West, frequently introducing Chinese music to Western audiences, and vice versa.

Lang Lang most recently performed with the St. Louis Symphony in November 2000.

Learn more about the artist at: langlang.com, facebook.com/langlangpiano, and twitter.com/lang_lang

Yet he never forgets what first inspired, and continues to inspire him. Great artists, above all the great composers—Liszt, Chopin, and the others—whose music he now delights in bringing to others. Even that famous old *Tom and Jerry* cartoon, “The Cat Concerto,” which introduced him, as a child, to the music of Liszt—and that childlike excitement at the discovery of music now surely stays with him and propels him to what he calls “his second career,” bringing music into the lives of children around the world, both through his work for the United Nations as a Messenger of Peace focusing on global education and through his own Lang Lang International Music Foundation. As he inspires, he is inspired. As he is inspired, he inspires others. It is this quality, perhaps, that led the *New Yorker* to call him “the world’s ambassador of the keyboard.”

For further information visit langlang.com/langlangfoundation.org. Lang Lang is an Exclusive Recording Artist of Sony Music.

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MARK SPARKS

Mark Sparks is Principal Flute of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. He has appeared as soloist with the St. Louis Symphony numerous times, most recently on the Orchestra's 2013 California Tour in performances of Christopher Rouse's Flute Concerto, with David Robertson conducting. Recognized for his colorful tone, spirited phrasing, and charismatic style (described by the *Denver Post* as "mesmerizing"), he is a dynamic orchestral artist, soloist, chamber musician, and teacher, and has performed in many of the world's most prestigious venues.

He has made guest appearances with numerous top ensembles including the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago, Dallas, Cincinnati, Minnesota, Pittsburgh, and Bergen Norway orchestras, and was a member of the Baltimore, San Antonio, Memphis, Canton, Ohio, and Caracas Venezuela orchestras before his appointment to the St. Louis Symphony in 2000.

Sparks can be heard as solo recording artist on the Summit and AAM labels, with various orchestras on the Sony, Telarc, Nonesuch, and Decca labels, and has recently released his third solo recording, *French Album*, a collaboration with St. Louis pianist Peter Henderson.

A dedicated teacher, Sparks frequently coaches for top orchestral training programs, including the New World Symphony and the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan. In summer 2014 he was a member of the coaching faculty of Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra. Starting in January, he joins the faculty of Chicago's DePaul University. Sparks is also a faculty member of the Aspen Music Festival and School, and is Principal Flutist of the Aspen Chamber Symphony.

Born in the U.S. in 1960, Mark Sparks graduated with honors from the Oberlin Conservatory as a student of Robert Willoughby. He is an alumnus of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra.



DILIP VISHWANATH

Mark Sparks has recently completed and performed arrangements of Bruch's Romanza and Fauré's Elegie for Flute and Piano.



**THROUGH MUSIC I WANT CHILDREN TO see
a DIFFERENT DIMENSION OF LIFE.
I WANT TO SHOW THEM HOW MUSIC
can HELP THEM achieve THEIR DREAMS.**

- Lang Lang

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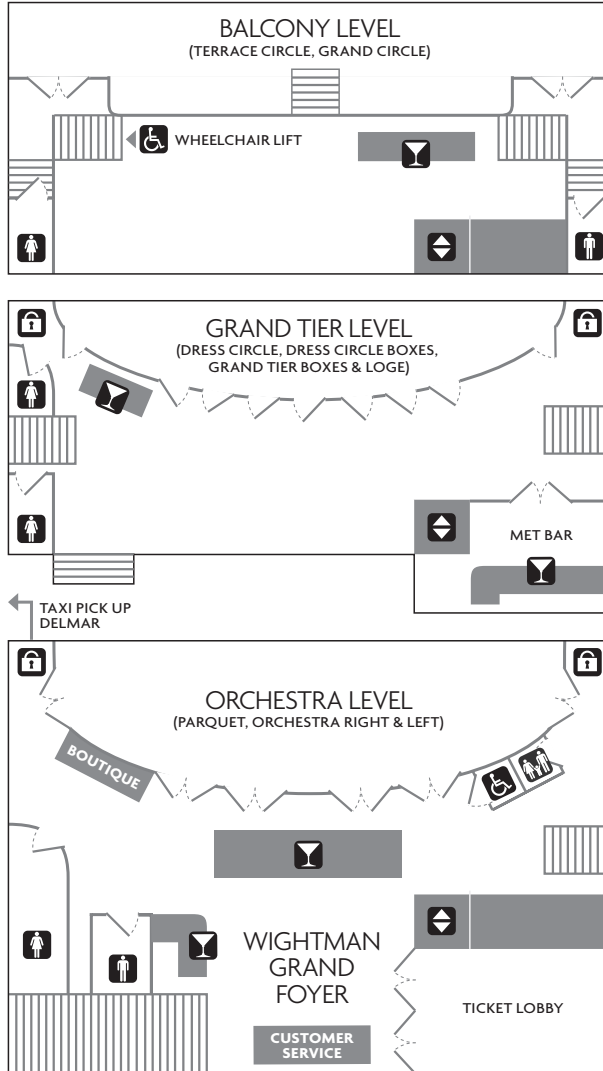
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