

David Robertson, conductor
Emanuel Ax, piano

Saturday, September 23, 2017 at 8:00PM
Sunday, September 24, 2017 at 3:00PM

SMITH

(1750–1836)

arr. Sousa/Damrosch

“The Star-Spangled Banner”

MOZART

(1756–1791)

Le nozze di Figaro Overture, K. 492 (1786)

MOZART

Piano Concerto No. 19 in F major, K. 459 (1784)

Allegro

Allegretto

Allegro assai

Emanuel Ax, piano

INTERMISSION

MOZART

Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-flat major, K. 595 (1791)

Allegro

Larghetto

Allegro

Emanuel Ax, piano

MOZART

Symphony No. 41 in C major, K. 551, “Jupiter” (1788)

Allegro vivace

Andante cantabile

Menuetto: Allegretto

Finale: Molto allegro

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by **Washington University Physicians**.

The concert of Saturday, September 23 is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Mr. Francis M. Austin, Jr. and Virginia V. Weldon, MD**.

The concerts of September 23 and 24 are the **Loren and Ken Ludmerer Endowed Concerts**.

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David Robertson is the **Beofor Music Director and Conductor**.

Emanuel Ax is the **Ann and Lee Liberman Guest Artist**.

ENDURING MAGIC

BY RENÉ SPENCER SALLER

TIMELINKS

1784

The American Revolutionary War ends with the ratification of the Treaty of Paris.

1786

Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, dies.

1788

Robert Burns writes “Auld Lang Syne.”

1791

The Bill of Rights is ratified.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart might be encased in legend, periwigged and unknowable, but his music still touches us, human to human, across the centuries. Listeners raised on *Looney Tunes* and computer games groove to his melodies. So do musicologists, grandmothers, and crib-bound infants. If it's possible to reduce Mozart's undying appeal to a few words, maybe it's this: he's never boring.

The two piano concertos on this program, from 1784 and 1791, expand the interpretive possibilities of their form, but they also delight the ear. Piano Concerto No. 19, in F major, delves into Italian opera and Baroque counterpoint without skimping on keyboard razzle-dazzle. Piano Concerto No. 27, Mozart's last concerto for the keyboard, rejects predictable bravura in favor of a radiant simplicity.

These concertos are sandwiched between one of Mozart's most beloved overtures, to his comic opera *Le nozze di Figaro*, and his final symphony, the 41st, or “Jupiter” (Mozart never sanctioned the sobriquet, but it fits). Completed within two years of each other, these monumental efforts—one brief but never slight, one grand but never grandiose—deliver an undiluted rush of pure Mozartian magic.



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg

Died December 5, 1791, Vienna

Le nozze di Figaro Overture, K. 492

Despite dying at age 35, Mozart managed to compose 41 symphonies and 23 piano concertos, not to mention music in virtually every other genre that existed during his brief life. But more than anything, he longed to be a successful opera composer. When the Salzburg native composed the overture to *Le nozze di Figaro*—mere hours before the premiere—he was 30 years old and basking in the afterglow of recent triumphs in his adopted city of Vienna. He had every reason to hope that his new four-act opera, his first with the Italian librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, would be a hit. And so it was, on nearly every level except the one that mattered most to him at the time: making money.

The libretto is based on *La folle journée, ou le mariage de Figaro* (*The Crazy Day, or The Marriage of Figaro*) by Pierre-Augustin Beaumarchais. The censors in the court of Emperor Joseph II banned the racy, anti-aristocratic drama until 1784, when Mozart first read it. Anyone could see that the fickle opera-loving public was anxious for a sequel to Giovanni Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (not to be confused with Rossini's later “remake”), so Mozart got busy. He began composing the music for *Le nozze di Figaro* in October of 1785, while simultaneously working on several other projects, and barely completed the score by the premiere on May 1, 1786, at Vienna's Burgtheater.

Set in jovial D major, the brief overture conjures up the opera's mood of zany brilliance and pell-mell seduction. Mozart wrote the overture last, but he resisted the temptation to base it on tunes from the opera. On his next two collaborations with Da Ponte, he would use this compilation-style approach. But for *Figaro* he felt the need to create something new. Right away, jolting contrasts remind us that change is the only constant. As Mozart would later do on a much larger scale with Symphony No. 41, he merges fugue and sonata form, delivering mind-bending counterpoint in a package so compact, intense, and organic that its theory-nerd underpinnings barely register.

First Performance May 1, 1786, Burgtheater, Vienna

First SLSO Performance March 4, 1909, Max Zach conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance September 13, 2017 (Forest Park, St. Louis), Gemma New conducting

Scoring 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings

Performance Time approximately 4 minutes

Piano Concerto No. 19 in F major, K. 459

In 1781, at the age of 23, Mozart defied his difficult father and resigned from his post as concertmaster and organist in the court of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. From early childhood, when he toured the continent as a keyboard and violin prodigy, and throughout his teens and early adulthood, when he joined his father as a court musician, he had been a dutiful son. But he was tired of following orders. Eager to compose operas and other large-scale orchestral works, he traded the security of Salzburg for the freedom of Vienna, the epicenter of the German-speaking music world. He married in 1782 and made something of a splash with his German Singspiel *Abduction from the Seraglio*.

Although his dream was to compose a major Italian-language opera, he focused on his career as a pianist-composer during these early Vienna years. This was mostly by necessity. Despite many concert appearances and court commissions, he was chronically short of money. He taught piano, but he seldom charged students who deserved his time. And yet he was astonishingly prolific: between 1784 and 1786, he produced a dozen piano concertos. In 1784 alone, he composed no fewer than six piano concertos, including Piano Concerto No. 19 in F major, which he finished that December.



Mozart at the Keyboard in 1777, unknown artist

Hey Nineteen Like most of Mozart's piano concertos, the 19th contains three movements. It is scored for flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, and strings—a small orchestra by today's standards. Although Mozart wrote some concertos for his students and other keyboard players, he probably intended to perform the 19th himself. Pitched between exuberance and elegance, it requires both technical prowess and a light touch. As with his other Viennese concertos, the F-major concerto balances brilliant piano passages with equally extraordinary orchestration. It exudes confidence, from its intricate but sturdy opening movement, to its pastoral Allegretto center, to its spectacular contrapuntal finale. As he wrote to his father, these Vienna concertos are “a happy medium between what is too easy and too difficult; they are brilliant, pleasing to the ear, and natural without being vapid. There are passages here and there from which connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction, but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned cannot fail to be pleased, although without knowing why.”

First Performance possibly in 1784

First SLSO Performance June 9, 1972, with James Fields as soloist and Amerigo Marino conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance November 22, 2008, with Jeremy Denk as soloist and David Robertson conducting

Scoring flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, and strings

Performance Time approximately 28 minutes

Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-flat major, K. 595

Mozart's last years of life were beset by difficulties, most of them beyond his control. Austria's political conflicts with Turkey had caused an economic depression; his wife, Constanze, was sickly; he had only two piano pupils left; and the new emperor, Leopold II, treated him with contempt. He was forced to crank out work on commission while dashing off desperate letters to patrons and creditors. But despite these stressors, he was firing on all cylinders, producing several of his most glorious achievements. No one knows exactly when Mozart composed his Piano Concerto No. 27, in B-flat major, but it was almost certainly his final contribution to the genre. It received its premiere in 1791, the year of his death, but whether he performed it himself or one of his students enjoyed that distinction is unknown.

Sunlight and Shadow Music scholars sometimes interpret Mozart's later works through biographical or psychoanalytical filters, without much evidence from the score. Some commentators point to his last concerto's pervasive air of "resignation," "subdued gravity," and "sadness." It seems unlikely, however, that anyone would reach this conclusion simply by listening. Direct and intimate, with glistening passagework and mellow woodwinds, Piano Concerto No. 27 brings a soaring lyricism to the transparent textures of chamber music. The orchestration is relatively sparse, without trumpets, timpani, or clarinets. Mozart wrote down his own cadenzas for the first and third movements. Although all three movements are in a major key, they often drift into the minor mode—a bit of musical chiaroscuro.

The opening *Allegro* rolls out a murmuring backdrop against which the first violins eventually propose the first real melody. This tune is peppered with little contrasting flourishes by the winds and horns. When the second theme emerges, also sung by the violins, the winds insinuate themselves like familiars. After this preamble, Mozart introduces the piano, which takes over the melody while the strings inject zippy retorts. The development section subjects unusual harmonic progressions to subtle counterpoint.

The luminous central *Larghetto*, in E-flat major, is deceptively simple. Its main theme returns, almost unchanged, as the second theme of the *Allegro* finale, reinforcing the structural coherence and infusing the overall cheer with a hint of wistfulness. The closing movement's main theme resembles Mozart's contemporaneous song *Sehnsucht nach dem Frühling* (Longing for Spring), with lyrics by Christian Adolf Overbeck: "Come, sweet May, and turn the trees green again/And make the little violets bloom for me by the brook."

First Performance possibly March 4, 1791, Vienna, with Mozart conducting from the piano. If so, this was Mozart's last appearance in a public concert before he took ill in 1791.

First SLSO Performance January 2, 1948, with Robert Casadesus as soloist and Vladimir Golschmann conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance September 19, 2004, with Emanuel Ax as soloist and Leonard Slatkin conducting

Scoring flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, and strings

Performance Time approximately 32 minutes

Symphony No. 41 in C major, K. 551, “Jupiter”

No one knows exactly who came up with the “Jupiter” nickname for Mozart’s final symphony, but it wasn’t the composer himself. Regardless, the Roman god Jupiter is a decent avatar for Mozart’s Symphony No. 41. Who else could personify Mozart’s magisterial four-movement symphony in C but the ruler of thunder, the king of the gods, the divine diplomat?

Miraculously, Mozart managed to crank out his last three symphonies in June, July, and August of 1788. The recent publication of Haydn’s “Paris” symphonies—three of which are in the same keys that Mozart chose for Symphonies 39 through 41—might have given him the idea. Mostly, though, the chronically cash-strapped composer needed some new material to perform, and he hoped that a fresh batch of symphonies might entice potential backers in London.

Obviously, Mozart had no idea that he would be dead in three years, or that he would never write Symphony No. 42. That inconvenient detail doesn’t stop people from interpreting the final symphony as a career-culminating farewell. But Mozart was far more interested in musical juxtaposition than in self-expression, and Symphony 41, in C major, is in many ways an opposing response to its immediate predecessor, in G minor.

A Closer Listen As with the *Figaro* overture, the Allegro vivace immediately announces its intention to mix things up. Martial pomp collides with lyrical sweetness. Violent storms subside in opera-buffa whimsy. Mozart quotes from one of his own recent arias, hilariously out of context, and subverts the fusty high art vs. low art paradigm by subjecting the song to some serious counterpoint.

In the Andante cantabile, low strings caress a dulcet clarinet motive, while the violins sing a sumptuous countermelody. With long singing lines, the slow movement has the quality of an aria. Next, a hint of contrapuntal grandeur to come: a graceful minuet weaves together interlocking melodies based on a theme from the first movement.

The finale, marked Molto allegro, starts with a four-note motive that Mozart, and others, had used before, but it’s only a means to an end: even more extreme counterpoint. Here Mozart combines conventional Classical sonata form with fugue, a high Baroque procedure that fascinated him; he pored over (and occasionally filched) similar fugato-style passages in scores by Joseph and Michael Haydn. The monumental coda melds together five distinct motives, the primary one derived from the earlier four-note plainchant melody.

René Spencer Saller is a writer and music critic living in St. Louis. She has also written for the Dallas *Symphony*, *Illinois Times*, *Riverfront Times*, and *Boston Phoenix*.

First Performance unknown

First SLSO Performance December 30, 1910, Max Zach conducting

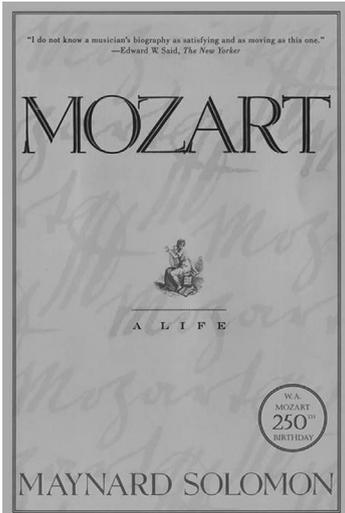
Most Recent SLSO Performance February 11, 2015 (Columbia, Missouri), Steven Jarvi conducting

Scoring flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings

Performance Time approximately 31 minutes

YOU TAKE IT FROM HERE

If this weekend's concerts have inspired you to learn more, here are a few recommended books with which to continue your explorations.



Mozart: A Life
by Maynard Solomon
HarperCollins, 1995

This comprehensive biography is a classic for a reason: It presents the details of the composer's life clearly and knowledgeably.

Mozart
by Julian Rushton
Oxford University Press, 2006

Rushton, a widely published music scholar, writes gracefully and concisely, with a minimum of jargon and idle speculation.

Mozart's Women: His Family, His Friends, His Music
by Jane Glover
HarperCollins, 2005

Virginia Woolf's famous formulation was "What if Shakespeare had a sister?" In Mozart's case,

he did. Nannerl, the first child prodigy in the Mozart family, performed to great acclaim until she married, which ended her career forever. Glover, a respected conductor and Mozart scholar, writes sympathetically and perceptively about Nannerl as well as Mozart's wife, Constanze, his sister-in-law Aloisia, and many other women who helped inspire, shape, and support the great composer.

Mozart at the Gateway to his Fortune: Serving the Emperor, 1788–1791
by Christoph Wolff
Norton, 2012

Blurbled by the likes of Yo-Yo Ma, Alfred Brendel, and Nikolaus Harnoncourt, this clear-eyed account of Mozart's last few years raises provocative questions that will enrich your understanding of his so-called "imperial style." Wolff, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, is one of the world's leading experts on Mozart and Bach.

All these books are available from the St. Louis Public Library.

IF YOU LIKED THIS...

If you love the music you hear today, come back next week for more Mozart with Emanuel Ax and David Robertson.



MARIE MAZZUCCO

Emanuel Ax.

MOZART 39

Friday, Sept 29 at 10:30AM

David Robertson, conductor

Emanuel Ax, piano

MOZART *Così fan tutte* Overture, K. 588

MOZART Piano Concerto No. 20, K. 466

MOZART Piano Concerto No. 14, K. 449

MOZART Symphony No. 39, K. 543

MOZART 40

Saturday, Sept 30 at 8:00PM

Sunday, Oct 1 at 3:00PM

David Robertson, conductor

Emanuel Ax, piano

MOZART *Don Giovanni* Overture, K. 527

MOZART Piano Concerto No. 16, K. 451

MOZART Piano Concerto No. 17, K. 453

MOZART Symphony No. 40, K. 550



MARIE MAZZUCCO

Emanuel Ax most recently appeared with the SLSO in April 2015.

EMANUEL AX

Whitaker Guest Artist

Born in Poland, Emanuel Ax moved to Winnipeg with his family when he was a young boy. A winner of the Young Concert Artist Award, Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition, Michaels Award, and the Avery Fisher Prize, he is now also a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Always a committed exponent of contemporary composers, with works written for him by John Adams, Christopher Rouse, Krzysztof Penderecki, Bright Sheng, and Melinda Wagner already in his repertoire, the 2016–17 season featured two newly commissioned works. With the New York Philharmonic conducted by Alan Gilbert, January brought the world premiere of HK Gruber's Piano Concerto, followed in March by the European premiere with the Berlin Philharmonic and Simon Rattle. As a regular visitor to the world's leading orchestras, he has recently performed with the orchestras of Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Toronto, Seattle, Milwaukee, and Detroit.

As a Sony Classical exclusive recording artist since 1987, his recent releases include Mendelssohn trios with Yo-Yo Ma and Itzhak Perlman, Strauss' *Enoch Arden* narrated by Patrick Stewart, and discs of two-piano music by Brahms and Rachmaninoff with Yefim Bronfman. In 2015 Deutsche Grammophon released a duo recording with Perlman of Sonatas by Fauré and Strauss which the two artists presented on tour during the 2015–16 season. A frequent and committed partner for chamber music, he has worked regularly with Young Uck Kim, Cho-Liang Lin, Yo-Yo Ma, Edgar Meyer, Peter Serkin, Jaime Laredo, and the late Isaac Stern.

Ax resides in New York with his wife, pianist Yoko Nozaki. They have two children together, Joseph and Sarah. He holds honorary doctorates of music from Yale and Columbia universities.



JAY FRAM

DAVID ROBERTSON

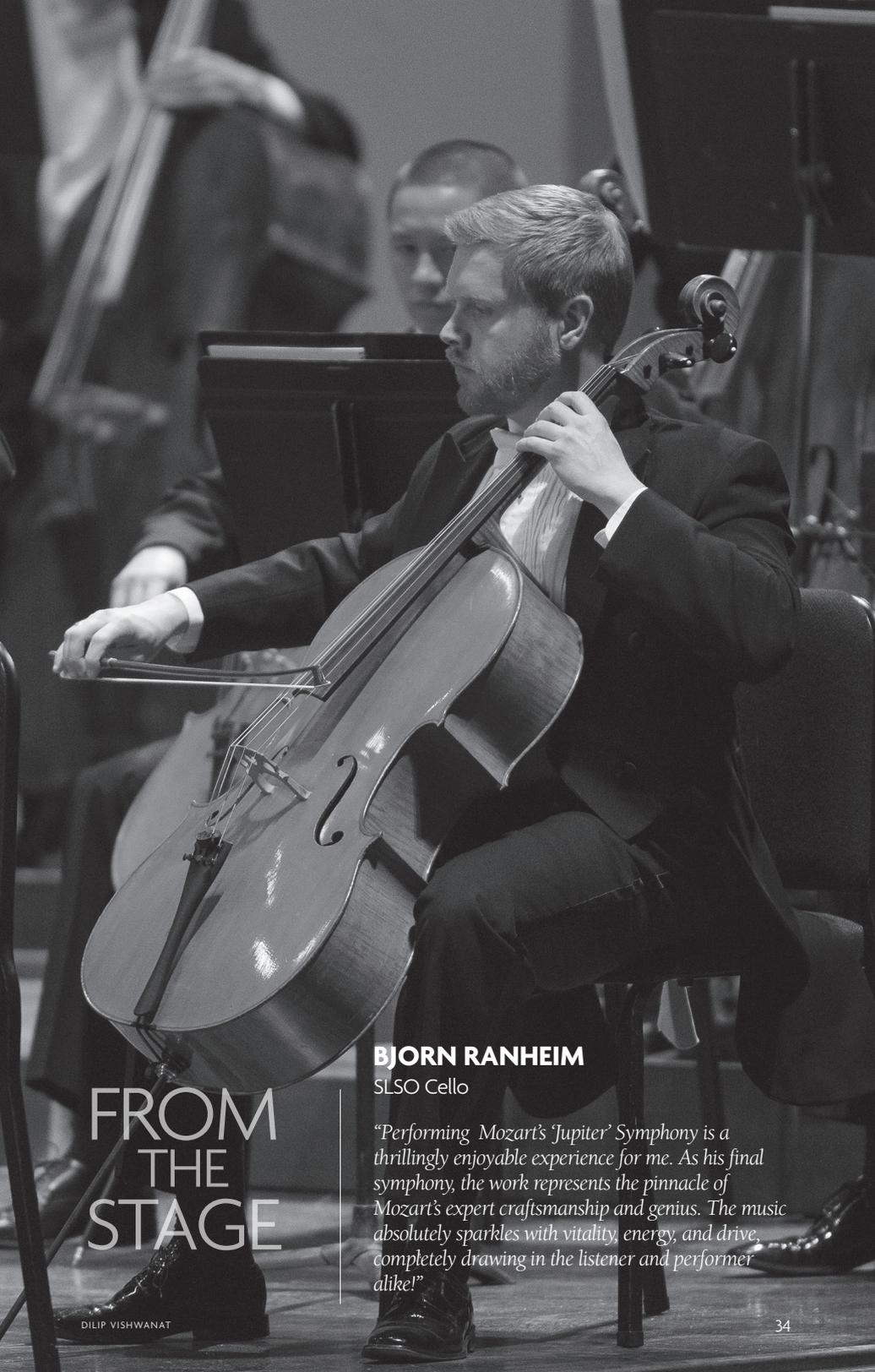
Beofor Music Director And Conductor

A compelling communicator and innovative programmer with a vast symphonic and operatic repertoire, David Robertson is currently in his 13th and final season as music director of the storied 139-year-old St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. He also serves as chief conductor and artistic director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in Australia and has previously been principal guest conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and music director of the Orchestra National de Lyon and the Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris.

As music director of the SLSO, Robertson has solidified the orchestra's standing as one of the nation's most enduring and innovative. His established relationships with artists and composers is deeply rooted, and is evidenced by the orchestra's strong relationship with composer John Adams. Their 2014 release of *City Noir* (Nonesuch Records)—comprising works by Adams performed by the SLSO with Robertson—won the Grammy Award for best orchestral performance.

Robertson is devoted to supporting young musicians and has worked with students at festivals in Aspen, Tanglewood, Lucerne, at the Paris Conservatoire, the Juilliard School, Music Academy of the West, and the National Orchestra Institute. In 2014 he led the USA Coast to Coast tour of the National Youth Orchestra of Carnegie Hall.

Musical America's conductor of the year in 2000, Robertson is the recipient of numerous honorary doctorates. He was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2010 and awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordres des Arts et des Lettres in 2011. He is married to pianist Orli Shaham and has four children.



FROM THE STAGE

BJORN RANHEIM

SLSO Cello

“Performing Mozart’s ‘Jupiter’ Symphony is a thrillingly enjoyable experience for me. As his final symphony, the work represents the pinnacle of Mozart’s expert craftsmanship and genius. The music absolutely sparkles with vitality, energy, and drive, completely drawing in the listener and performer alike!”

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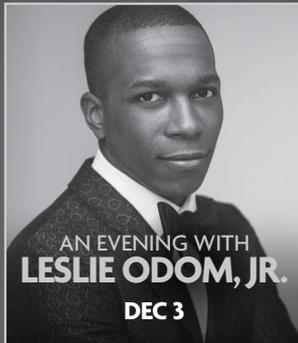
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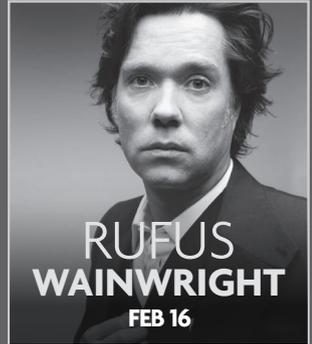
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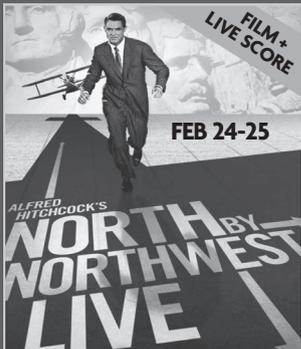
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DAVID ROBERTSON | MUSIC DIRECTOR

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Allegra Lilly, harp

Erik Harris, bass

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Joo Kim, violin

Dr. Dawn Hui, violin

Shannon Farrell Williams, viola

Yin Xiong, cello

Sunday, October 8, 2017, at 2:00pm

St. Francis Xavier College Church

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Ben Finane, Editor-in-Chief and Publisher of *Listen: Life with Music & Culture*, shares excerpts from *Listen* magazine's interviews with distinguished artists. Visit Steinway.com/Listen.

*Born in the small Chinese town of Shenyang, **Lang Lang** began piano at age three, gave his first public recital at five, entered Beijing's Central Music Conservatory at nine, and went on to study at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. His inevitable big break came in 1999 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the Ravinia Gala as a last-minute substitute for André Watts, where he played Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto.*

Ben Finane: As you become a more mature player, are there certain composers with whom your relationship has changed?

Lang Lang: Absolutely. Every composer is different from when I was a kid, or even a teenager. We're growing with their music. Especially composers like Bach, Brahms, late Beethoven — they have a huge impact on me as I get older.

BF: Why is that?

LL: I don't know. Their music is timeless. I mean, I see Mozart and Chopin differently, too, but somehow I think that late Beethoven sonatas, Brahms concertos, the Bach Goldberg Variations, when you're aging, learning more, they seem more affecting. I think so. And in a natural way, not forced. Not 'Okay, today you need to play Goldberg Variations.' No, it's that gradually you get more mature.

BF: You had some hard times in your childhood as a soloist. When I spoke to pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard, he said he was grateful to begin his career with Pierre Boulez and the Ensemble Intercontemporain because it saved him from what he termed 'the poisonous life of a soloist.' But you certainly seem to be a very social being now. Does the life of a soloist remain difficult for you?

LL: When I was living in Beijing, it was more of a conservatory and conservative lifestyle, with a focus solely on piano. But when I came to Curtis, Gary Graffman opened me up — socializing, going to tea every week, talking to people, expressing my feelings on music and life, to be a person who's more communicative rather than just someone who sits at home practicing every day. I really like it. As human beings, we cannot just lock ourselves in the practice room twenty-four hours a day. There's nothing wrong with practicing, but we also need to go out. Just to be healthy as a person, as a normal, regular... guy. [*Laughs.*]