

David Robertson, conductor
Christian Tetzlaff, violin

Friday, April 27, 2018 at 10:30AM
Saturday, April 28, 2018 at 8:00PM

JÖRG WIDMANN Violin Concerto (2006)
(b. 1973)

Christian Tetzlaff, violin

INTERMISSION

BRUCKNER
(1824–1896)

Symphony No. 4 in E-flat major, “Romantic” (1878–1880 edition)
Bewegt, nicht zu schnell
Andante quasi Allegretto
Scherzo: Bewegt
Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2017/2018 Classical Series is presented by **World Wide Technology**, **The Steward Family Foundation**, and **Centene Charitable Foundation**.

The concert of Saturday, April 28 is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Dr. and Mrs. Philip Needleman**.

These concerts are supported in part by an award from the **National Endowment for the Arts**.

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

Christian Tetzlaff is the **Carolyn and Jay Henges Guest Artist**.

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

DAZZLING BY DESIGN

BY RENÉ SPENCER SALLER

TIMELINKS

1880 The first cash register is patented in Dayton, Ohio.

2006 The St. Louis Cardinals defeat the Detroit Tigers in five games, winning the World Series.

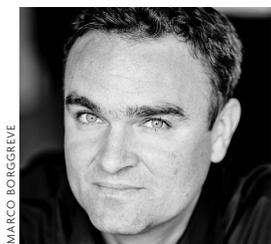
Born 149 years apart, the composers on this program share certain traits and talents. The Austrian composer Anton Bruckner worked as a cathedral organist, earning a strong regional reputation for his virtuosic playing and brilliant improvisations. The German composer Jörg Widman, who turns 45 this year, is also a virtuoso clarinetist and a sought-after soloist. Bruckner, from his early 40s onward, served as a professor of theory at the Vienna Conservatory. Widmann, for his part, has been teaching at the university level for the past 17 years.

Bruckner's and Widmann's respective sound worlds offer compatible pleasures. Widmann's Violin Concerto, which opens this concert, and Bruckner's Symphony No. 4 in E-flat major, "Romantic," which closes it, boast a wide range of rhythmic and motivic innovations. All these dazzling details serve the overall design. Both pieces present a visionary and dynamic harmonic language coupled with intense personal expression. Like Bruckner, who re-imagined Wagnerian opulence for a purely symphonic setting, Widmann shows a special genius for orchestration. Beyond highlighting the soloist's technical proficiency, his Violin Concerto reveals the kaleidoscopic possibilities of the contemporary symphony orchestra.

One important difference between Bruckner and Widmann is that Widmann found success fairly early, whereas Bruckner was a late bloomer who didn't enter his maturity as a composer until midlife. Bruckner's Fourth Symphony was his first major composition to earn acclaim almost from its inception. The enthusiastic response to his revised Fourth's 1881 premiere came as a huge relief to its 57-year-old author. Four years earlier, his Third Symphony, which was inscribed with a dedication to Richard Wagner, went nightmarishly awry at its Vienna premiere. Bruckner, an anxious and inexperienced conductor, was attempting to lead openly hostile musicians who seemed determined to humiliate

him. As his publisher Theodor Rättig later recalled, “When the audience had fled the hall and the players had left the platform, the little group of pupils and admirers stood around the grieving composer, attempting to console him, but all he could say was, ‘Oh, leave me alone; people want nothing to do with me.’”

As Bruckner’s first real success (and his last popular triumph until the groundbreaking Seventh Symphony), the Fourth Symphony brought much-needed validation. He would work it over numerous times, sketching out a fanciful “Romantic” program only to disavow most of the extramusical content just a few years later.



MARCO BORGREVE

JÖRG WIDMANN

Born June 19, 1973, Munich

Now Lives Munich and Freiburg

Violin Concerto

The prolific composer Jörg Widmann studied both clarinet and composition at the Academy of Music in Munich and later at the Juilliard School; among his professors were Wolfgang Rihm, Wilfried Hiller, Hans Werner Henze, and Heiner Goebbels. In 2001, Widmann began teaching clarinet at the Freiburg Staatliche Hochschule für Musik; in 2009 he became a professor of composition as well. Last year he was granted a chair at the Barenboim-Said Akademie in Berlin. His compositions have garnered many awards, including the Paul Hindemith Prize, the Arnold Schoenberg Prize, the Elise L. Stoeger Prize of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Music Award of the Heidelberger Frühling, and the GEMA German Music Authors Award. Widmann has served as composer in residence of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Salzburg Festival, the Lucerne Festival, the Cologne Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Vienna Konzerthaus.

Widmann wrote the Violin Concerto in 2006, when he was 33 years old.

The Junge Deutsche Philharmonie (Young German Philharmonic) premiered it in 2007, and its dedicatee, Christian Tetzlaff, performed the solo part as he does with the SLSO this week. Just over a decade later, the German virtuoso navigates its many challenges with a steely precision that sets off its passionate turbulence. Widmann’s writing for violin is idiomatic but intense, rich in contrasts, from the

First Performance September 17, 2007, Essen, Christian Tetzlaff as soloist with Manfred Honeck conducting the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie

First SLSO Performance this week

Scoring solo violin, 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets (2nd doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons (2nd doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, percussion (glockenspiel, vibraphone, vibra-slap, crotales, 2 bass drums, medium tam-tam, low tam-tam, high cymbal, medium cymbal, low cymbal), harp, celesta, and strings

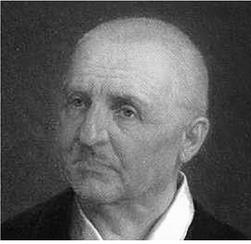
Performance Time approximately 27 minutes

darkly throbbing lower register to the penetrating harmonics at the upper reaches of audible range. Tetzlaff, who considers Widmann's Violin Concerto to be one of the greatest contemporary examples of the genre, described it in a 2013 interview with *The New York Times* as "a half-hour of slow music, dense and romantic, devastatingly beautiful at times."

A Closer Listen

Stylistically, the single-movement Violin Concerto suggests the angular experimentalism of Alban Berg, his distinctive blend of Romantic lyricism and rigor. But the work isn't simply a throwback to familiar forms and procedures: Widmann's extensive training as a clarinetist and his years of performance experience enhance the work's strong dramatic appeal.

In 2007, the same year that Tetzlaff and the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie debuted the Violin Concerto, Pierre Boulez led the Vienna Philharmonic in the premiere of Widmann's *Armonica* for orchestra, which includes the piercing tones of the glass harmonica. The Violin Concerto conjures up some similarly startling sonorities, but these sounds rely on the soloist's technique and intonation, not on the unfamiliar voice of a novel instrument. For 25 or so minutes, the violinist plays almost without pause. Although the Violin Concerto consists of one long movement, Widmann organizes the thematic material into several distinct sections, through which the violent and visceral collide with the tender and expressive. After an expansive introduction by the solo violin, the orchestra joins in, almost hesitant at first and then more assertive. High shimmering harp punctuates the churning polyphonic textures of divided strings. The solo violin erupts in a series of cadenzas, aria-like in their emotive urgency. Amid long chromatic lines and yearning meditations, there are bittersweet asides and angry outbursts. At the end, the piece fades into an almost palpable silence, suspended in the memory of sound.



ANTON BRUCKNER

Born September 4, 1824, Ansfelden, Austria

Died October 11, 1896, Vienna

Symphony No. 4 in E-flat major, “Romantic”

For most of his life, Anton Bruckner was badly underestimated. His worldly Viennese contemporaries ridiculed him as a rural church organist with no apparent signs of cleverness. But despite his unfashionable accent and gauche manners, Bruckner was no simpleton. His music, which reflects his dual roles as church organist and composer of symphonies, revels in paradox: it's massive and nuanced, dense and subtle, ancient and modern. Intricate polyphony is draped in Wagnerian orchestration. An expansive tone poem morphs into an elaborate fugue. Before our very ears, musical forms adapt and evolve in a state of transcendent flux.

There's nothing straightforward about Bruckner's Fourth, including its date of completion. For Bruckner, a self-doubting perfectionist, no composition was ever truly finished. All told, there are approximately three dozen different versions of Bruckner's nine symphonies. Maybe these multiple versions exist not because the composer was indecisive but rather because he saw his music as mutable, subject to change over time. Musicologists argue about the authenticity of various editions of Bruckner's nine symphonies and speak of “the Bruckner Problem”—shorthand for the vexed debates about the relative virtues and drawbacks of the different revisions. Some editions include “corrections” that Bruckner never saw, much less sanctioned; other editions reflect changes that he made because he was insecure and possibly too receptive to suggestions from others.

Bruckner composed the original version of his Symphony No. 4 between January and November of 1874, but that original iteration was never performed or published during his lifetime. He continued to tinker with it for another 14 years. Bruckner researchers have identified at least seven authentic versions and revisions of the Fourth Symphony. This week's SLSO performance uses the 1878–1880 version, edited by the musicologist Leopold Nowak, which is the version most commonly performed and recorded today.

After one especially productive rehearsal of the Fourth, Bruckner gave the conductor, Hans Richter, a coin and urged him to buy himself a beer to celebrate.

First Performance February 20, 1881, Vienna, Hans Richter conducting

First SLSO Performance January 10, 1913, Max Zach conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance March 4, 2006, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski conducting

Scoring 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings

Performance Time approximately 1 hour 10 minutes

(Richter was charmed by the gesture and kept the money as a keepsake.) On February 20, 1881, Richter presided over the first performance, in Vienna. It was the first premiere of a Bruckner symphony not to be conducted by Bruckner himself, and it was also his first unqualified success. After years of enduring hisses and insults, the composer finally heard real applause. He basked in the unaccustomed warmth. To his delight and astonishment, he was called out for a bow after each movement.

The Composer Speaks

In a letter to the conductor Hermann Levi dated December 8, 1884, Bruckner supplied a vivid, if abbreviated, program: “In the first movement, after a full night’s sleep, the day is announced by the horn, 2nd movement song, 3rd movement hunting trio, musical entertainment of the hunters in the wood.”

Six years later, in another letter, he expanded on the program somewhat: “In the first movement of the ‘Romantic’ Fourth Symphony the intention is to depict the horn that proclaims the day from the town hall! Then life goes on; in the *Gesangsperiode* [the second motive] the theme is the song of the great tit [a bird] Zizipe. 2nd movement: song, prayer, serenade. 3rd: hunt, and in the Trio how a barrel-organ plays during the midday meal in the forest.” Yet when asked years later to elaborate on the meaning of the finale, Bruckner confessed, “I’ve quite forgotten what image I had in mind.”

Bruckner’s 1878–1880 revision has the following tempo markings for each of the four movements: “Bewegt, nicht zu schnell” (With motion, not too fast); “Andante quasi Allegretto”; “Scherzo: Bewegt” (with motion); and “Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell” (With motion, but not too fast).

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*.



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Anton Bruckner in his studio, c. 1890.



DAVID ROBERTSON

Beofor Music Director and Conductor

David Robertson—conductor, artist, thinker, and American musical visionary—occupies some of the most prominent platforms on the international music scene. A highly sought-after podium figure in the worlds of opera, orchestral music, and new music, Robertson is celebrated worldwide as a champion of contemporary composers, an ingenious and adventurous programmer, and a masterful communicator whose passionate advocacy for the art form is widely recognized. A consummate and deeply collaborative musician, Robertson is hailed for his intensely committed music making.

Currently in his valedictory season as music director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and his fifth season as chief conductor and artistic director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, he has served as artistic leader to many musical institutions, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre National de Lyon, and, as a protégé of Pierre Boulez, the Ensemble Intercontemporain. With frequent projects at the world's most prestigious opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Bayerische Staatsoper, Théâtre du Châtelet, the San Francisco Opera, and more, Robertson returned to the Met in 2018 to conduct the premiere of Phelim McDermott's new production of *Così fan tutte*.

During his 13-year tenure with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Robertson has solidified the orchestra's standing as one of the nation's most enduring and innovative. His established and fruitful relationships with artists across a wide spectrum is evidenced by the orchestra's ongoing collaboration with composer John Adams. The 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 the recipient of numerous musical and artistic awards, and in 2010 was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.



GIORGIA BERTAZZI

Christian Tetzlaff most recently appeared with the SLSO in April 2014.

CHRISTIAN TETZLAFF

Carolyn And Jay Henges Guest Artist

Equally at home in classical, romantic and contemporary repertoire, Christian Tetzlaff sets the standard with his interpretations of the concertos by Beethoven, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Berg, and Ligeti, and is renowned for his innovative chamber music projects and performances of Bach's solo repertoire.

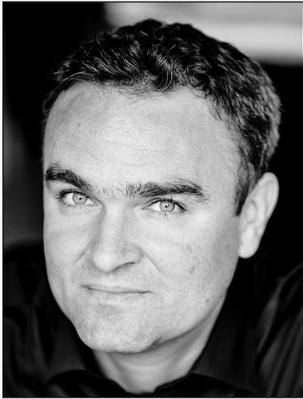
Highlights of the 2017/2018 season included Birtwistle's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra with Sir Simon Rattle and the London Symphony Orchestra for their season opening concert; touring with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski to the George Enescu Festival and Musikfest Bremen playing Berg's Violin Concerto; and a return to Wigmore Hall for a new residency, including a duo recital with Lars Vogt, performances with the Tetzlaff Quartett, and with Jörg Widmann.

Elsewhere in Europe he appeared with Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and in North America with the Montreal and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras.

Last season Tetzlaff played with the London Symphony Orchestra, joined Robin Ticciati with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra on a tour of East Asia and for an appearance at the BBC Proms in London, performed with Leif Oves Andsnes at the Edinburgh International Festival, and toured the United States with Lars Vogt.

Born in Hamburg in 1966, Tetzlaff studied at the Lübeck Conservatory with Uwe-Martin Halberg and in Cincinnati with Walter Levin. He has been artist-in-residence with the Berlin Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, and hr-Sinfonieorchester. He plays a violin by the German maker Peter Greiner and teaches at the Kronberg Academy near Frankfurt.

YOU TAKE IT FROM HERE



MARCO BORGREVE

JÖRG WIDMANN

joergwidmann.com

Widmann's homepage, in German and English, with a biography and a list of works and recordings.

"A Guide to Jörg Widmann's Music"

***The Guardian*: goo.gl/cxWPqL**

A detailed survey and discussion of Widmann's works with further links to online recordings.

ANTON BRUCKNER

Anton Bruckner

"The Stone Carver"

by Alex Ross

***The New Yorker*, August 1, 2011:**

newyorker.com/magazine/2011/08/01/the-stone-carver

Alex Ross reviews a 2011 Bruckner festival at Lincoln Center. Although he doesn't cover the Fourth Symphony specifically, Ross offers many invaluable insights into the brilliant paradox of Bruckner, "the outwardly humble Austrian organist and professor who possessed a musical imagination of frightening intensity." On the enigma's misunderstood and unfairly maligned music, Ross writes: "Bruckner, with his vast, slow-moving structures and relentlessly somber tone, can seem impassive, even inhuman. He has always aroused as much distrust as love."

Bruckner: Symphony No. 4, "Romantic"

by Stephen Johnson

BBC Radio 3: bbc.co.uk/programmes/b015nf94

In this fascinating 22-minute program, commentator Stephen Johnson examines Bruckner's Fourth in granular detail, identifying its signature sounds and influences. Johnson also discusses the controversies surrounding Bruckner's music, including his posthumous connection with the Nazis. (Bruckner died in 1896, long before Hitler's rise to power, but his music was embraced by the Third Reich.) Among other insights, Johnson notes that Bruckner, as a longtime cathedral organist, was steeped in ancient church music. Even better, Johnson offers plenty of musical snippets to support his analysis.



FROM THE STAGE

ROGER KAZA

principal horn

“Bruckner’s Fourth is an epic journey the audience will love. It evokes forests and fields and the bucolic Austrian countryside.”

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