



St. Louis Symphony  
Orchestra

stéphane denève : music director

19:20  
140th season

Stéphane Denève, conductor  
Jean-Yves Thibaudet, piano

Saturday, January 18, 2020, at 8:00PM  
Sunday, January 19, 2020, at 3:00PM

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**WAGNER**

(1813–1883)

*Siegfried Idyll* (1870)

**LISZT**

(1811–1886)

Piano Concerto No.2 in A major, S.125 (1861)

Adagio sostenuto assai—Allegro agitato assai

Allegro moderato

Allegro deciso—Marziale un poco meno allegro

Allegro animato

Jean-Yves Thibaudet, piano

INTERMISSION

**ANNA CLYNE**

(b. 1980)

*This Midnight Hour* (2015)

**R. STRAUSS**

(1864–1949)

*Der Rosenkavalier Suite* (1910)

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The 2019/2020 Classical Series is presented by **The Steward Family Foundation** and **World Wide Technology**.

These concerts are presented by **Steinway Piano Gallery**.

Jean-Yves Thibaudet is the **Jean-Paul and Isabelle Montupet Artist-in-Residence**.

The concert of Saturday, January 18 is the **Joanne and Joel Iskiwitch Concert**.

The concert of Saturday, January 18, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Carolyn and Jay\* Henges**.

The concert of Sunday, January 19, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Mr. and Mrs.\* Richard G. Engelsmann**.

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

# PROGRAM NOTES

By Tim Munro

## Titans

Without Franz Liszt, there would have been no Richard Wagner: Wagner absorbed Liszt's musical voice, and Liszt was a passionate early Wagnerian. These near-contemporaries shared a personal connection: *Siegfried Idyll* was Wagner's birthday present for his new wife, Liszt's daughter Cosima.

The two men were worshipped and reviled like gods. They turned music's dial, experimenting with form, with genre, with music itself. Their followers turned them (and composers that followed) into unimpeachable geniuses.

Without Wagner and Liszt, there would have been no Richard Strauss: He learned his trade from Liszt's orchestral poetry, from Wagner's all-embracing operas. But Strauss was too practical to touch the heights of Liszt- and Wagner-mania.

Far away, in Brooklyn, New York, Anna Clyne's musical poetry speaks with a very different voice. But Clyne breathes some of the same musical air, composing moments as intimate as Wagner, as luminous as Strauss.



## RICHARD WAGNER

**Born** May 22, 1813, Leipzig, Germany

**Died** February 13, 1883, Venice, Italy

## *Siegfried Idyll*

Picture it: Christmas Day, 1870, in a mansion on a Swiss lake. Cosima Wagner, celebrating her birthday, wakes to the sound of music. She first thinks she is dreaming, but as the music rises in volume, she realizes it is the sound of musicians in her house.

Her husband, Richard, has assembled an orchestra of fifteen to play a newly composed "symphonic birthday greeting." After the music ends, Richard comes into Cosima's room. He "put into my hands the score of his [new piece]," writes Cosima. "I was in tears, but so, too, was the whole household."

Richard called the new work *Tribschen Idyll*, after the name of their Swiss home. It was an extraordinary gift from a man not known for his generosity, and it remained a shared, private joy until, years later, Cosima and Richard agreed to sell the work, now renamed *Siegfried Idyll*.

## A Peaceful Idyll

Richard's life had been tumultuous, dominated by political strife, financial ruin, and vicious personal conflicts. Then he and Cosima von Bülow (née Liszt) fell in love.

At the time, both were married to other people, and Richard's and Cosima's affair became a public scandal, causing pain to their partners.

By 1870, all impediments had been removed, and the two were married. An idyll is a peaceful scene, and indeed this was a time of harmony for the couple. Richard later said that this year had been the happiest year in his life.

### A Personal Idyll

*Siegfried Idyll* is a tiny, intimate thing—surprising from the creator of the 15-hour cycle of operas known as *The Ring of the Nibelungen*. It's also very personal: on the printed score, Wagner writes, "Fidi-Birdsong and Orange Sunrise," after his son Siegfried's nickname, "Fidi," and the orange sun that warmed a wall of his bedroom.

Wagner was at work on Act Three of the *Ring's* third opera, *Siegfried*, when he wrote *Siegfried Idyll*. The *Idyll* borrows a melody from the opera: as Brünnhilde is saved by the heroic Siegfried, she falls for him.

Like Richard and Cosima, Brünnhilde's and Siegfried's love is powerful. "I always am," Brünnhilde sings, "always in sweet yearning bliss." Like Richard and Cosima, their love causes deep pleasure and deep pain.

**First performance:** December 25, 1870, in Lucerne, Switzerland

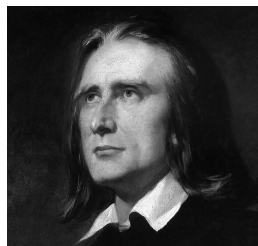
**First SLSO performance:** October 5, 1894, Alfred Ernst conducting

**Most recent SLSO performance:** December 7, 2014, Steven Jarvi conducting

**Scoring:** flute, oboe, 2 clarinets, bassoon, 2 horns, trumpet, strings

**Performance time:** Approximately 18 minutes

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### FRANZ LISZT

**Born** October 22, 1811, Raiding, Austria

**Died** July 31, 1886, Bayreuth, Germany

## Piano Concerto No. 2 in A major

Franz Liszt was a mess of contradictions. He generated Beatles-level adulation, yet delighted in the esoteric. He took minor religious orders, yet carried on dozens of high-profile love affairs. He was cosmopolitan, traveling throughout the cultural capitals of Europe, yet remained loyal to his native Hungary.

Liszt's music reflects these contradictions. He wrote splashy piano showpieces as well as giant experimental symphonies. He showed respect for the music of his forebears, but also pushed music into unknown, experimental realms.

### A Long Time Coming

The Second Piano Concerto was quickly sketched by a twenty-something composer during his first explosion of fame. But it ultimately took him some two

decades to complete. The score went on a long journey with the composer himself, shifting as he himself shifted.

It journeyed with him as he attempted to balance the refined classical forms of the 18th century with the freedom of the 19th. Liszt called the Second Piano Concerto a “symphonic concerto.” It contained the whole world of a conventional symphony, but he trimmed the fat, fitting four movements into one unbroken statement. “New wine demands new bottles,” he declared.

It journeyed with him as he attempted to move away from splashy virtuosity, towards musical experimentation. As a pianist, Liszt was criticized for a theatrical performing style, with facial contortions and physical gestures. In the Second Piano Concerto, there are passages of show-stopping brilliance for the soloist, but the orchestra is an equal partner.

He also ditched the combat between soloist and orchestra. Instead, the piano supports the work of the orchestra, acting as a sort of symphonic third-base coach.

**First performance:** January 7, 1847, in Weimar, Germany, Franz Liszt conducting, with Hans Bronsart von Schellendorff as soloist

**First SLSO performance:** January 7, 1910, Max Zach conducting, with Tina Lerner as soloist

**Most recent SLSO performance:** March 4, 2006, Stanisław Skrowaczewski conducting, with Ewa Kupiec as soloist

**Scoring:** 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, strings

**Performance time:** Approximately 21 minutes

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JENNIFER TAYLOR

## ANNA CLYNE

**Born** March 9, 1980, London, United Kingdom

### *This Midnight Hour*

Anna Clyne's music is radiant, beautiful. Where some composers have an impulse to create tightly controlled puzzles, Clyne rejoices in music that glows like the embers of a fire.

Clyne had a humble upbringing: raised on a housing estate in England, music did not figure heavily in her early life. Later, she learned the cello, and came relatively late to composition. But once she began writing music, her personal voice emerged quickly.

Clyne's creative inspiration comes from many places. She might paint a series of canvases, or project the shape of handwriting on a wall. Her studio is often covered with a potpourri of hand-written notes, photographs, and art works. Clyne

will often find herself, late at night, listening to a draft of her piece while pacing or dancing.

Clyne wrote the piece for the Orchestre national d'Île de France. She was impressed by the cellos and double basses of that orchestra, and her first idea, which opens the work, makes full use of the sound of these low string sections.

Clyne's work evokes a mysterious journey of a woman in the hour after midnight. It draws inspiration from two poems: "Harmonie du soir" by Charles Baudelaire, "in particular his mention of a 'melancholic waltz,'" says Clyne. "The piece draws on folk-like melodies, creating this slightly warped waltz melody."

It also draws inspiration from a very short poem from Juan Ramón Jiménez: "Music, a naked woman, running mad through the pure night." Clyne found this image powerful, and she translates it "into music with very fast, accelerating rhythms, very condensed textures."

Clyne says the musical character of *This Midnight Hour* "ranges from playful to more ominous, to full of energy. It also ranges from passages that are almost like chamber music, to a full orchestral tutti."

At times, she writes for the orchestra like a giant accordion, having the strings tuned slightly apart, "to create this dissonance." She has also experimented with dividing the large string section into many parts, creating a texture of greater richness and complexity.

**First performance:** November 13, 2015, Enrique Mazzola conducting the Orchestre national d'Île-de-France

**First SLSO performance:** This weekend's concerts

**Scoring:** piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, crotales, slap stick, suspended cymbal, sizzle cymbal, tam tam, vibraphone, strings

**Performance time:** Approximately 12 minutes

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## RICHARD STRAUSS

**Born** June 11, 1864, Munich, Germany

**Died** September 8, 1949,  
Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

### *Der Rosenkavalier* Suite

Picture it: an old baron is visiting Vienna to propose to an eligible young lady. He, lecherous; she, innocent. As a lark, a dashing young count is sent to present the baron's engagement rose to the young lady. The two immediately fall in love. Hijinks ensue.

*Der Rosenkavalier* could easily have become a one-dimensional farce. Instead, it reaches below the surface, exposing deeper veins: the pain of love, the march of time, the horror of sexual predation.

#### Collaborators

They were quite the pair. The composer: Richard Strauss, the pragmatist and creator of bold works for orchestra. The librettist: Hugo von Hofmannsthal, the heady intellectual and young star in German-language theater.

They first worked together on the opera *Elektra*, set in a pitch-dark world of murder and revenge. Hofmannsthal wanted to turn away from such "intolerable erotic screaming," to something lighter, fluffier. So they turned their sights on an operatic rom-com.

*Der Rosenkavalier* was planned as a Mozartian comedy of manners. As Hofmannsthal worked on the libretto, Strauss reminded him, "Don't forget that the audience should also laugh! Laugh, not just smile or grin..."

#### The Music

Strauss' *Rosenkavalier* is a cloak of pure velvet. This fantasy world of wealth and privilege is sewn in rich musical fabric, but Strauss doesn't miss an opportunity to capture the sexual undertones of the work in music of steamy highs.

His score is also packed to the brim, with waltzes. "Try and think of an old-fashioned Viennese waltz," Hofmannsthal wrote to Strauss. "Sweet and saucy—which should pervade the whole of the last act."

The standard orchestral suite from *Der Rosenkavalier* takes excerpts from the opera and removes the voices. Stéphane Denève has reshuffled the order of this suite, so the experience more closely matches the shape of the drama.

#### The Suite

The opera is set in the homes of Austrian aristocracy in the 18th century. Marie Thérèse von Werdenberg ("the Marschallin") is the wife of a high ranking military officer. She is carrying on an affair with a seventeen-year-old, Count Octavian Rofrano.

**Overture:** Horns whoop, winds trill, strings swirl: these are the sounds of the Marschallin and Octavian fully engrossed in each other. As the curtain rises, the two lie in bed together, singing of their love.

[As a joke, the Marschallin asks Octavian to deliver an engagement rose to Sophie Faninal on behalf of the Marschallin's cousin, Baron Ochs, who, Strauss wrote at the time, is "the worst kind of stupid oaf."]

**The presentation of the rose.** Octavian enters with the engagement rose to the magical sound of the celesta and the song of a solo oboe. Octavian, the rose-bearer ("*Der Rosenkavalier*"), and Sophie, the wife-to-be, lock eyes, falling immediately for one another.

**Waltzes.** A sequence of waltzes depict the awful Baron Ochs. According to Strauss, Ochs "is a member of the gentry, if somewhat countrified. He is at heart a cad, but outwardly still presentable enough so that [Sophie's father] does not refuse him at first sight."

**Trio.** A miracle of beauty. At the end of the opera, Baron Ochs is outwitted, and the main trio of characters gather: the Marschallin accepts that Octavian is leaving her; Octavian and Sophie finally express their love for each other. Strauss writes that the Marschallin should sing this ending not "with the sentimentality of a tragic farewell to life, but with Viennese grace and lightness half weeping, half smiling."

**First performance:** October 5, 1944, in New York, Artur Rodzinski conducting

**First SLSO performance:** November 15, 1946, Vladimir Golschmann conducting

**Most recent SLSO performance:** April 20, 2013, Ward Stare conducting

**Scoring:** 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (3rd doubling E-flat clarinet), bass clarinet, 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, rattle, snare drum, tambourine, triangle, 2 harps, celesta, strings

**Performance time:** Approximately 22 minutes

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## JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET

Jean-Paul and Isabelle Montupet Artist-in-Residence

For more than three decades, Jean-Yves Thibaudet has performed world-wide, recorded more than 50 albums, and built a reputation as one of today's finest pianists. From the start of his career, he delighted in music beyond the standard repertoire, from jazz to opera, which he transcribed himself to play on the piano. His profound professional friendships crisscross the globe and have led to spontaneous and fruitful collaborations in film, fashion, and visual art.

Thibaudet expresses his passion for education and fostering young musical talent as the first-ever Artist-in-Residence at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, where he makes his home. The school has extended the residency for an additional three years and has announced the Jean-Yves Thibaudet Scholarships to provide aid for Music Academy students, whom Thibaudet will select for the merit-based awards, regardless of their instrument choice.

In 2019/2020, Thibaudet renews many longstanding musical partnerships. As the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra's Artist-in-Residence, he will play four programs with the SLSO conducted by long-time friend and collaborator Stéphane Denève. He will tour a program of Schumann, Fauré, Debussy, and Enescu with violinist Midori, followed by the complete Beethoven sonatas for piano and violin. Thibaudet will give the world premiere of Aaron Zigman's *Tango Manos* concerto for piano and orchestra with the China Philharmonic, and will go on to perform it with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and the San Francisco Symphony. Zigman composed the score for the 2016 film *Wakefield*, for which Thibaudet was the soloist. A noted interpreter of French music, Thibaudet performs works by Ravel, Saint-Saëns, Connesson, and Debussy around the world. As one of the premiere interpreters of Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*, Thibaudet will perform the piece in his hometown as Artist-in-Residence of the Orchestre National de Lyon. He also brings along his passion for Gershwin, performing the *Concerto for Piano in F Major* in Lyon as well as Houston, Los Angeles, Boston, New York, Naples, Tokyo, and at the Bad Kissingen Sommer Festival, where he is Artist-in-Residence.

Thibaudet's recording catalogue has received two Grammy nominations, the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik, the Diapason d'Or, the Choc du Monde de la Musique, the Edison Prize, and Gramophone awards. He was the soloist on the Oscar-winning and critically acclaimed film *Atonement*, as well as *Pride and*



*Prejudice, Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, and *Wakefield*. His concert wardrobe is designed by Dame Vivienne Westwood. In 2010 the Hollywood Bowl honored Thibaudet for his musical achievements by inducting him into its Hall of Fame. Previously a Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, Thibaudet was awarded the title Officier by the French Ministry of Culture in 2012.



Stéphane Denève and Jean-Yves Thibaudet at Powell Hall in September.



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Most of all, experience the reward of working with other SVA members as we share our love of the SLSO with the St. Louis community.

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