



St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra

stéphane denève : music director

19:20
140th season

Nicholas McGegan, conductor
Seong-Jin Cho, piano

Saturday, February 29, 2020, at 8:00PM
Sunday, March 1, 2020, at 3:00PM

HAYDN
(1732–1809)

Symphony No. 31 in D major, “Hornsignal” (1765)
Allegro
Adagio
Menuet
Moderato molto—Presto

BEETHOVEN
(1770–1827)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major, op. 19 (1787–1795)
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Rondo: Molto allegro
Seong-Jin Cho, piano

INTERMISSION

SCHUBERT
(1797–1828)

Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major, D. 485 (1816)
Allegro
Andante con moto
Menuetto: Allegro molto
Allegro vivace

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

This weekend's concerts are sponsored in part by a generous gift from **Michael Bobroff and Wendy Olk**.

Nicholas McGegan is the **Malcolm W. Martin Guest Conductor**.

Seong-Jin Cho is the **Charles V. Rainwater, III, Guest Artist**.

The concert of Saturday, February 29, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Loren and Ken Ludmerer**.

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

The SLSO is proud to support **Early Music Month**, a national grassroots campaign sponsored by Early Music America designed to raise awareness of early music throughout the North American music community every March.

PROGRAM NOTES

By Tom May

The Many Faces of the Classical Era

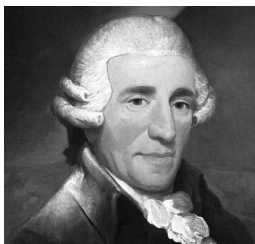
The three composers we encounter on this program are not just among the most familiar names in all of classical music. All three also occupy a particular era and place known as Viennese Classicism (with a capital C in this case to refer to this specific era, as opposed to the catchall phrase “classical music”—but that’s another, complicated story).

In fact, Haydn is credited with helping establish the artistic ideals and traits we identify with Classical style—together with his good and much younger friend, Mozart, and many other peers whose names faded with history. One (but only one) way of looking at Beethoven’s legacy is to see it as stretching those ideals to the limit and moving into uncharted realms. Schubert is often grouped in with an asterisk, since he used the Classical style he inherited for his own purposes and foreshadowed some preoccupations of the first generation of Romantic composers who followed (many of whom adored his music).

These composers even had personal intersections. Beethoven was a private student, though an unhappy one, of Haydn during the decade in which he published the piano concerto we hear. Schubert was a child prodigy who belonged to the same boys’ choir of the Viennese court where Haydn had started out from his provincial village in the 1730s. And Schubert served as a pallbearer at the funeral of his idol, Beethoven, only to die the following year.

Yet their differences are even more remarkable. A problem with taxonomies like “Classical era” is that they can give the impression that compositions assigned to that pigeonhole should sound more or less the same, on some basic level. Yet even in the relatively early works that conductor Nicholas McGegan has chosen from our three composers, their distinctive personalities emerge with stunning clarity.

It’s fascinating to compare how the young Beethoven—represented here by an artist still years away from the devastating originality of the Fifth Symphony—tackles a large-scale Classical format while obviously striving to leave a personal stamp. Schubert confronts a similar challenge in the work we hear and, still a teenager, succeeds in writing something that is unmistakably in his voice.



FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Born March 31, 1732, Rohrau, Austria

Died May 31, 1809, Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 31 in D major, “Hornsignal”

Horn Signaling: Haydn Shows Off the Prince’s Orchestral Hires

It’s fair to say that of these three composers, the life story of Haydn offers the least promising material for big-screen Hollywood treatment. There is little high drama to distill from Haydn’s biography—certainly nothing like the deafness of Ludwig van Beethoven and the suicidal crisis it triggered. And Haydn’s longevity (he died at age 77) stands in stark contrast to Franz Schubert, whose life ended tragically young, his system weakened by years of struggle with syphilis.

Still, as with Beethoven and Schubert, the real drama is to be found in the music. Through his compositions, Haydn expressed a richly creative inner life that never tired of invention. This is a composer who played obsessively and restlessly with musical language and its expectations.

The Symphony No. 31 dates from 1765, which is a few years into his long tenure as music director for a branch of one of the wealthiest families in the Habsburg Empire, the Esterházy, who were of Hungarian nobility. Haydn’s boss at the time, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, was a passionate music lover—not just a listener but an active musician who played the cello and other string instruments. Because of his obsession with music, the Prince kept a small orchestra available for Haydn to work with, and, not surprisingly, it was during these years that the composer produced a large portion of his vast symphonic output.

As music director, Haydn was expected to produce a wide range of compositions for the court, and further into his tenure, he also was tasked with managing music for the church. Having an orchestra at his disposal—what we today would call a chamber ensemble, the core of the today’s full-scale symphony orchestra—allowed Haydn to experiment boldly with the emerging genre of the symphony. This freedom came at a cost: the main Esterházy estate was located in an isolated corner of the Empire, far from the distractions and delights of Vienna. In his loneliness, Haydn relied increasingly on where his imagination carried him musically.

Though he is sometimes credited as the inventor of the symphony, that claim is not exactly accurate. Haydn drew on a variety of existing symphonic prototypes, like the overture which had originated in the theater to set the mood before an opera began. But his writing for this medium was so compelling that Haydn defined the familiar Classical shape of the symphony that in turn was the starting point for composers like Beethoven and Schubert.

Several of Haydn’s symphonic experiments resulted from very practical realities his musicians had to deal with. (His job extended to what we might call orchestra management and support of his players.) The Esterházy orchestra boasted

a large horn section (four players) at the start of Haydn's tenure, but had recently lost two of these.

It took some persuasion on the composer's part, but when the Prince at last hired replacements for the horn vacancies, Haydn wrote this symphony to show off the new section in all its glory—and to justify the new expenditure. Hence the nickname “Hornsignal”—no fewer than 31 of Haydn's symphonies carry nicknames, most often as the result of music publishers trying to come up with a memorable tag to market them. And Haydn's symphonies would eventually become highly sought after and even pirated across Europe.

Listening Guide

The horn carries symbolic associations from its history as an instrument used during hunting or to signal traveling coaches. J.S. Bach also uses it to represent divine kingship in some of his sacred works. Haydn starts this symphony with the striking sound of the four horns all playing a kind of military fanfare. The first movement also includes echoing patterns that recall the arrival of coachmen during a journey. The return of the military fanfare in the last part of this movement is particularly effective.

After such an extroverted start, the slow movement provides a relaxed contrast. The plucked notes in the low strings suggest the atmosphere of a serenade, and the concertmaster gets a spotlight. But the horns have not been forgotten—later in this movement, they play an important role. And they come to the fore in the central part of the ensuing minuet. In this passage, Haydn almost anticipates a similar move by Beethoven in his later *Eroica* Symphony, which also brings the three horns into the foreground at the corresponding point.

Another comparison with the *Eroica*—a game-changing symphony that would be composed nearly four decades later—can be found in Haydn's final movement. Like Beethoven in the *Eroica* finale, Haydn makes the unusual choice to turn to a theme and variations form for this last movement. The theme itself is straightforward, but in his seven variations, savor how cleverly Haydn spotlights each section of the orchestra—naturally, including the horns, the focus of the fourth variation. The whole work reaches a sparkling conclusion with an echo of the opening fanfare.

First performance: 1765, at one of the Esterházy palaces, Haydn most likely conducted from within the violin section

First and most recent SLSO performance: November 3, 1973, Alexander Schneider conducting

Scoring: flute, 2 oboes, bassoon, 4 horns, strings

Performance time: Approximately 25 minutes



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Born December 16, 1770, Bonn, Germany

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major, op. 19

Beethoven's Underrated Second Piano Concerto

Beethoven learned much about composing symphonies from Haydn. When it came to piano concertos, however, his model was Mozart, who elevated the Classical era piano concerto to new heights. Beethoven's own career closely paralleled Mozart's during his first decade in Vienna. Like Mozart, who pioneered the way, Beethoven rejected the old model of aristocratic patronage that Haydn had relied on.

Beethoven did get major support from patrons, but it was for the most part on his terms, from admirers he had beguiled through his extraordinary gifts as a pianist. He was famous for his improvisations at the keyboard. One of his students, Carl Czerny, later recalled the charismatic impact these made: "There was something wonderful in his expression in addition to the beauty and originality of his ideas and his spirited style of playing them."

Mozart had also made his name as a freelancer by dazzling fans as a keyboard artist. That is the reason Mozart channeled so much creative energy into the piano concertos of his Vienna period, which rank among his finest compositions overall. Beethoven followed suit. By writing piano concertos, both Mozart and Beethoven could synthesize their creative personalities as performers and composers.

Though officially known as the Piano Concerto No. 2, the work we hear is the first that Beethoven completed. Some of this concerto can be traced back to his teenage years in Bonn. Much like a painting in progress over several years, Beethoven kept revising this score during his first decade in Vienna, whenever new opportunities for performance arose. He even abandoned an earlier version of the Rondo finale at one point and wrote an entirely new movement.

But Beethoven did not want to publish it until the work we know as the Concerto No. 1 had appeared in print. Why? The First Concerto is a more self-consciously ambitious work, a more overt declaration of independence. It thus makes a more powerful first impression. Still, the Second Concerto expresses elements of Beethoven's keyboard poetry that were essential to the way he defined himself during these formative years of his career. Even after publishing it, Beethoven continued to tinker, adding an extensive new cadenza for the first movement as late as 1809.

Listening Guide

The opening movement is spacious and starts with a theme that speaks the language of the Classical period with beautiful fluency. The piano later enters and takes charge with real diplomacy, uncovering new possibilities in the material presented by the orchestra—and tempts the ensemble to try out a brand-new

theme. The orchestration is relatively minimal—no clarinets, trumpets, or timpani—which allows for intimate dialogue between the soloist and orchestra.

The first movement of a Classical concerto can strike a wide variety of poses: grandstanding heroism, for example, or, as Beethoven does here, a kind of comic panache, flowing with gentle melody and perhaps even a touch of subversive wit at convention—such as the piano obediently ceding the spotlight back to the orchestra after its big cadenza. Here, the soloist grants the other players a very abbreviated final say, as if they had almost forgotten, lost in the brilliance of invention during the cadenza.

The cliché of Beethoven as a keyboard-smashing firebrand is impossible to square with the profoundly introspective Adagio. This is just the sort of rapt, drawn-out musical dream Czerny likely had in mind in the description noted above: Beethoven as the weaver of spells.

In the first two movements, Beethoven signs his own name over Mozart's concerto archetype. The teasing, tricky shape of the finale's theme, however, is close in spirit to the vigorous humor Beethoven clearly admired in Haydn. The piano soloist and orchestra collude to bring this comedy to a witty conclusion.

First performance: March 29, 1795, in Vienna, at the Burgtheater, the composer as conductor and soloist

First SLSO performance: October 23, 1948, Vladimir Golschmann conducting with William Kapell as soloist

Most recent SLSO performance: January 21, 2017, Andrey Boreyko conducting with Till Fellner as soloist

Scoring: solo piano, flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, strings

Performance time: Approximately 28 minutes



FRANZ SCHUBERT

Born January 31, 1797, Vienna, Austria

Died November 19, 1828, Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major, D. 485

Classical Nostalgia and Schubert's Fifth Symphony

Schubert represents the third generation of our three composers—yet he outlived Beethoven by just one year. If Haydn or Beethoven had also died at 31, the quality and variety of Schubert's total output might well have surpassed both of theirs.

Schubert was only 18 in 1815, his most-prolific year, during which he underwent a tremendous outburst of creative energy. Although the originality of his genius had already shown itself in his art songs, by 1816 Schubert was increasingly

exploring large-scale instrumental forms. He completed his Fourth Symphony in C minor in April 1816 and, less than half a year later, was already at work on the vastly different Fifth.

At this point in his career, Schubert looked to Mozart and Haydn as models. The Fifth Symphony in B-flat major looks pointedly backward—above all, to his beloved Mozart. Yet this symphony betrays Schubert's own personality as a supreme melodist and is a wonderfully ingratiating work—music of spring-like freshness.

Beethoven would eventually take Mozart's place as his musical hero, but in a diary entry from 1816, Schubert referred to Beethoven as an example of a kind of exhibitionist defiance of the Classical style he had grown up with. He describes Beethoven as displaying “that eccentricity which joins and confuses heroism with howling...”

The Fourth, known as the “Tragic,” is filled with turbulent emotion, for which Schubert had used his largest orchestra to date. In contrast, the Fifth Symphony—which has no nickname—is scaled back to chamber-like dimensions. Schubert asks for a single flute and pairs of oboes and bassoons for his woodwinds, omitting clarinets; similarly, there are no trumpets or percussion.

Listening Guide

A mere few breaths are enough to raise the curtain before presenting the sun-kissed main theme. It sets sail with an upward motion that instantly gives away the optimistic spirit of this symphony. According to the Schubert expert Brian Newbould, the music has a Mozartean character of “melody reign[ing] supreme,” leaving an impression that “one could sing through from beginning to end...”

The second movement shows Schubert inventively mixing lyrical beauty with a sense of harmonic adventure (by shifting to keys that, in the context of Classical language, were rather unexpected). The composer's Mozart idolatry comes to the fore in the third movement, which pays homage to the corresponding movement of Mozart's great G minor Symphony—and thus, very surprisingly, shifts to the minor key. In the spirited finale, Schubert recalls to us the first movement's breezy cheerfulness—but by this point it seems tinged with nostalgia for an era of Classical perfection that has already vanished.

First performance: October 17, 1841, in Vienna, at the Theater in der Josefstadt, Michael Leitemayer conducting

First SLSO performance: January 5, 1946, Vladimir Golschmann conducting

Most recent SLSO performance: December 4, 2011, Ward Stare conducting

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

Performance time: Approximately 27 minutes

Notes by Thomas May

Thomas May is a freelance writer, critic, educator, and translator whose work has been published internationally. He contributes to the programs of the Lucerne Festival as well as to The New York Times and Musical America.



NICHOLAS MCGEGAN

Malcolm W. Martin Guest Conductor

As he embarks on his sixth decade on the podium, Nic McGegan—long hailed as “one of the finest baroque conductors of his generation” (*The Independent*) and “an expert in 18th-century style” (*The New Yorker*)—is recognized for his probing and revelatory explorations of music of all periods. The 2019/2020 season marks the final year of his 34-year tenure as Music Director of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale. He is Principal Guest Conductor of the Pasadena Symphony.

Best known as a baroque and classical specialist, McGegan’s approach—intelligent, infused with joy and never dogmatic—has led to appearances with many of the world’s major orchestras.

His 19/20 guest appearances in North America include his return to the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Houston, Baltimore, New Jersey, and Pasadena Symphonies. He also resumes his long tradition of concerts at the Hollywood Bowl with an all-Mozart program in fall 2019, and rejoins the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra later in the season for a program of Rameau, Mozart, and Schubert. Abroad, McGegan leads the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and makes guest appearances with the Szczecin and Wrocław Philharmonics. Summer festivals include Aspen and La Jolla. Finally, McGegan visits the Juilliard School to conduct multiple concerts in New York and takes one of those programs, Handel’s *Rinaldo*, abroad to Göttingen.

McGegan’s prolific discography includes more than 100 releases spanning five decades. Having recorded over 50 albums of Handel, McGegan has explored the depths of the composer’s output with a dozen oratorios and close to twenty of his operas. Under its own label, Philharmonia Baroque Productions (PBP), Philharmonia has recently released acclaimed albums of Handel, Scarlatti, Vivaldi, Brahms, Haydn, Beethoven, and more. McGegan’s latest release with PBO is Handel’s rarely performed *Joseph and his Brethren*.

McGegan is committed to the next generation of musicians, frequently conducting and coaching students in residencies and engagements at Yale University, the Juilliard School, Harvard University, the Colburn School, Aspen Music Festival and School, Sarasota Music Festival, and the Music Academy of the West.

English-born, McGegan was educated at Cambridge and Oxford. He was made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) “for services to music overseas.” Other awards include the Halle Handel Prize; the Order of

Merit of the State of Lower Saxony (Germany); the Medal of Honour of the City of Göttingen; and a declaration of Nicholas McGegan Day by the Mayor of San Francisco in recognition of his work with Philharmonia.

Nicholas McGegan has served regularly as a guest conductor with the SLSO since 1986.



SEONG-JIN CHO

Charles V. Rainwater, III, Guest Artist

With an overwhelming talent and innate musicality, Seong-Jin Cho is rapidly embarking on a world-class career and considered one of the most distinctive artists on the current music scene. His thoughtful and poetic, assertive and tender, virtuosic and colorful playing can combine panache with purity and is driven by an impressive natural sense of balance.

Seong-Jin Cho was brought to the world's attention in 2015 when he won the First Prize at the Chopin International Competition in Warsaw. This same competition launched the careers of world-class artists such as Martha Argerich, Maurizio Pollini, and Krystian Zimerman.

Cho signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon and already recorded three albums which won impressive critical acclaim worldwide. The first one was released in 2016 featuring Chopin's Piano Concerto No.1 with the London Symphony Orchestra and Gianandrea Noseda and the Four Ballades. A solo Debussy recital was then released in 2017, followed in 2018 by a Mozart album featuring sonatas and the D minor concerto with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Yannick Nézet-Séguin. A fourth recording will be released in March 2020.

An active recitalist, he performs in many of the world's most prestigious concert halls such as the main stage of Carnegie Hall as part of the Keyboard Virtuoso series, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw in the Master Pianists series, Berlin Philharmonie Kammermusiksaal (Berliner Philharmoniker concert series), Konzerthaus Vienna, main hall of Frankfurt's Alte Oper, Laeiszhalle Hamburg, Tonhalle Düsseldorf, Helsinki's Musikkitalo, Suntory Hall, Walt Disney Hall Los Angeles, Munich's Prinzregententheater, Liederhalle Stuttgart, Washington's Kennedy Center, La Roque d'Anthéron Festival, Verbier Festival, Gstaad Menuhin Festival, Rheingau Festival among several other venues.

Recent and upcoming orchestral appearances include performances with the Berlin Philharmonic and Simon Rattle, Gewandhaus Orchester and Antonio Pappano, London Philharmonic with Robin Ticciati, New York Philharmonic and Jaap van Zweden on tour, Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin on tour, Los Angeles Philharmonic with Gustavo Dudamel, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra with Mariss Jansons, Mahler Chamber Orchestra with Jakub Hrůša, Hong Kong Philharmonic with Jaap van Zweden, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra with Manfred Honeck, Boston Symphony Orchestra with Hannu Lintu, London

Symphony Orchestra with Gianandrea Noseda, Staatskapelle Dresden with Myung-Whun Chung, Finnish Radio Orchestra with Hannu Lintu.

In the 2020/2021 and 21/22 seasons, Cho will tour with the London Symphony Orchestra and Gianandrea Noseda, Munich Philharmonic and Valery Gergiev, London Philharmonic Orchestra and Ed Gardner, Luxembourg Philharmonic and Gustavo Gimeno, and the Budapest Festival Orchestra and Ivan Fischer. He will make his subscription debut with the New York Philharmonic and Marek Janowski, will return to Carnegie Hall with the National Symphony Orchestra and Noseda, and play again with the Berlin Philharmonic and Ivan Fischer in Berlin, the Philadelphia Orchestra and Christoph Eschenbach, and the WDR Sinfonieorchester and music director Cristian Măcelaru.

Cho will also be artist in residence at Frankfurt's Alte Oper and play recitals on the main stage of Vienna's Konzerthaus, at the Cologne Philharmonie, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Duke Performances in Durham, North Carolina, Victoria Hall Geneva, Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall Manchester, and Verbier Festival. In September 2020 he will play Beethoven's 5 Concertos in one weekend with Marek Janowski and the Dresdner Philharmonie to celebrate the Beethoven year.

Born in 1994 in Seoul, Seong-Jin Cho started learning the piano at 6 and gave his first public recital at age 11. In 2009, he became the youngest-ever winner of Japan's Hamamatsu International Piano Competition. In 2011, he won Third Prize at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow at the age of 17. In 2012, he moved to Paris to study with Michel Béroff at the Paris Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique from which he graduated in 2015. He is now based in Berlin.

This is Seong-Jin Cho's debut with the SLSO.



First Time Here? Welcome!

Whether it's your very first visit or your first time back since a grade school field trip, welcome to Powell Hall and to your St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. We're happy you're here!

An incredible thing about symphonic music is that you don't need to be an expert to feel its powerful impact. Even so, here are some insider tips to help you feel in tune. Relax and enjoy the experience. This is *your* SLSO.

What should I expect?

Classical concerts last approximately two hours with a 20-minute intermission.

Movies and other Live at Powell Hall events typically have one intermission in the middle of the program.

The Program Notes in the center of this Playbill have a list of pieces to be performed and provide interesting background on the composers and artists.

See the Audience Information page in the back of this Playbill for more FAQs and helpful tips.

When do I clap?

For classical concerts, tradition is to wait until an entire piece is finished before clapping. Keep in mind there may be multiple movements in one piece. Look to the conductor for cues and, if you're unsure, wait until you hear everyone else begin to applaud.

Food & Drink

Non-iced beverages purchased on site in SLSO Keep Cups may be taken into the auditorium for all performances.

All concessions purchased on site may be taken into the auditorium for select performances when indicated by signage.

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