

ANDRIS NELSONS, RAY AND MARIA STATA MUSIC DIRECTOR  
Boston Symphony Orchestra  
*141st season, 2021–2022*

Thursday, January 6, 8pm  
Friday, January 7, 1:30pm | The Marie L. Audet Gillet Concert  
Saturday, January 8, 8pm | The Fernand Gillet Concert

ANDRIS NELSONS conducting

HK GRUBER *SHORT STORIES FROM THE VIENNA WOODS*, SYMPHONIC SUITE  
(WORLD PREMIERE; COMMISSIONED BY THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA,  
ANDRIS NELSONS, MUSIC DIRECTOR, AND GEWANDHAUSORCHESTER LEIPZIG,  
ANDRIS NELSONS, GEWANDHAUSKAPPELLMEISTER, THROUGH THE GENEROUS  
SUPPORT OF THE NEW WORKS FUND ESTABLISHED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS  
CULTURAL COUNCIL, A STATE AGENCY)

1. Introduktion and Lied von der Wachau (Introduction  
and Song from the Wachau)
2. Walzer-Splitter (Splintered Waltzes)
4. Wie im Fluge (In a flash)
7. Polka infernale (Infernal Polka)

MOZART VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 5 IN A, K.219  
(CADENZAS BY HILARY HAHN)

Allegro aperto—Adagio—Allegro aperto  
Adagio  
Rondeau: Tempo di menuetto  
HILARY HAHN

{INTERMISSION}

PROKOFIEV SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN B-FLAT, OPUS 100  
Andante  
Allegro moderato  
Adagio  
Allegro giocoso

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FRIDAY-AFTERNOON CONCERT SERIES SPONSORED BY THE BROOKE FAMILY

The evening concerts will end about 10:10 and the afternoon concert about 3:40.

First associate concertmaster Tamara Smirnova performs on a 1754 J.B. Guadagnini violin, the “ex-Zazofsky,” and James Cooke performs on a 1778 Nicolò Gagliano violin, both generously donated to the orchestra by Michael L. Nieland, M.D., in loving memory of Mischa Nieland, a member of the cello section from 1943 to 1988.

Todd Seeber performs on an 1835 Kennedy bass, the “Salkowski Kennedy,” generously donated to the orchestra by John Salkowski, a member of the bass section from 1966 to 2007.

Steinway & Sons Pianos, selected exclusively for Symphony Hall.

The BSO's Steinway & Sons pianos were purchased through a generous gift from Gabriella and Leo Beranek.

The program books for the Friday series are given in loving memory of Mrs. Hugh Bancroft by her daughters, the late Mrs. A. Werk Cook and the late Mrs. William C. Cox.

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In consideration of the performers and those around you, please turn off all electronic equipment during the performance, including tablets, cellular phones, pagers, watch alarms, messaging devices of any kind, anything that emits an audible signal, and anything that glows. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please note that the use of audio or video recording devices and taking pictures of the artists—whether photographs or videos—are prohibited during concerts.

### **The Program in Brief...**

The Viennese composer HK Gruber's opera *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, based on Ödön von Horváth's play of the same name, was premiered at the Bregenz Festival in 2014. In 2019 he composed the orchestral suite *Short Stories from the Vienna Woods*, co-commissioned by the BSO and the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig. These performances are the world premiere of four movements of the seven-movement suite. Gruber's eclectic and vibrant style, rich with allusions to popular music and jazz, reflects the humor, anxiety, and humanity of Horváth's portrait of middle-class life in early 1930s Vienna.

Although his main instrument was the keyboard, Wolfgang Mozart played violin in the Salzburg court orchestra and, according to his father Leopold—who literally wrote the book on violin performance—he was a surpassingly fine player. Mozart wrote all five of his violin concertos within the space of about two years in his late teens, dating the fifth and final concerto December 20, 1775. The Concerto No. 5 in A has the sometime-nickname “Turkish,” referring to an interlude in the concerto's finale that strings together several tunes with origins well east of Mozart's homeland.

It was Sergei Prokofiev himself who provided the most useful and concise description of his own musical style, citing four characteristic elements—the classical, the innovative, the motoric, and the lyrical—balanced in different ways in each of his compositions throughout his career. The January 1945 premiere in Moscow of his Fifth Symphony, with the composer conducting, brought him one of the greatest triumphs of his career. Following the first American performances in November 1945 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky, Prokofiev sent Koussevitzky a telegram reading “Happy you conducting American premiere my Fifth Symphony.... Sending sincere friendly greetings you and all members your magnificent orchestra.”

*Robert Kirzinger/Marc Mandel*

### **NOTES ON THE PROGRAM**

#### **HK Gruber**

#### ***Short Stories from the Vienna Woods—Symphonic Suite from the opera Tales from the Vienna Woods***

HK (Heinz Karl) Gruber was born in Vienna on January 2, 1943, and lives there. His opera *Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald (Tales from the Vienna Woods)*, based on the Ödön von Horváth play of the same name and with a libretto by Michael Sturminger, was premiered at the Bregenz (Austria) Festival in 2014. The composer arranged his half-hour, seven-movement symphonic suite from the opera, *Short Stories from the Vienna Woods*, in 2019 on a joint commission from the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Andris Nelsons, Music Director, and Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Andris Nelsons, Gewandhauskapellmeister, through the generous support of the New Works Fund established by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Four movements of the suite—nos. 1, 2, 4, and 7—were to have been premiered in Leipzig by the GHO and Nelsons in March 2020, followed by their American premiere in April; those events were postponed by the onset of the pandemic. The present performances of movements 1, 2, 4, and 7 are the world premiere of music from the suite.

The score of *Short Stories from the Vienna Woods* calls for 2 flutes (both doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (2nd doubling E-flat clarinet, 3rd doubling bass clarinet), alto saxophone, tenor saxophone (doubling soprano saxophone), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon (doubling bassoon 3), 4 horns, 3 trumpets (1st doubling flugelhorn), 3 trombones (1st doubling tenor horn), tuba, timpani (doubling large whip), percussion (3 players: vibraphone, xyloimba, marimba, tubular bells, glockenspiel, crotales, cymbals, side drum, large bass drum, large Chinese tam-tam, large suspended cymbal, bass drum with attached cymbals, large splash cymbal, large Chinese cymbal, drum kit, bell plates, tenor drum), harp, piano (doubling honky-tonk piano), and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses). The duration of this four-movement selection is about 17 minutes.

Every moment of HK Gruber's large and varied output of music is theater, whether or not conceived as a formally staged, narrative work. His concert works, no less than his stage works, contain elements of drama and performance that go well beyond traditional constraints. His joy in using familiar musical styles from the jazz and popular realms enables immediate points of connection for the listener, but the freshness of context for these reference points and the composer's sonic imagination take his work far beyond pastiche. Gruber has spent a lifetime immersed in the musically saturated city of Vienna, the city of Mozart and Beethoven, Brahms and Schoenberg. As a child, he was a member of the famous Vienna Boys Choir for several years before a mentor suggested, given the size of his hands, that he should also take up the double bass. He studied bass at the Vienna Hochschule für Musik along with composition and theory. His principal composition teachers included Alfred Uhl, the Schoenberg pupil Erwin Ratz, and Gottfried von Einem, and he was strongly drawn to Igor Stravinsky's music.

Gruber's professional career as a bassist had begun with the Viennese composer/conductor Frederic Cerha's new music ensemble *die reihe*, and he was principal double bass of Vienna's Tonkünstler Orchester before starting his long tenure in the bass section of the Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra. Forty years as a professional double bassist gave him the financial security to compose without the added complications of seeking and fulfilling commissions beyond those projects that really appealed to him. In 2009 he was made an honorary member of the Wiener Konzerthaus, a distinction he shares with such great predecessors as Stravinsky, Pierre Boulez, and Leonard Bernstein.

Like many composers in the 1960s trying to find new avenues outside of the academy and traditional concert hall, in 1967 Gruber, Kurt Schwertsik, and others founded the MOB art & tone ART Group for performing their own work and that of the iconoclastic Argentine composer Mauricio Kagel. Much of its repertoire had strongly irreverent, theatrical leanings under the influence of older German melodrama (via such works as Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*) as well as the performance art of the 1960s-era Fluxus movement and John Cage's "happenings." Gruber's compositional style was indelibly marked by the music of Hanns Eisler and the Kurt Weill/Bertolt Brecht collaborations, especially *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*The Threepenny Opera*).

Gruber has said that playing in an orchestra was the best education a composer could ask for: he was free to consult any of his accomplished colleagues about the nuances of their instruments and could hear from within the ensemble the orchestral strategies employed by composers ranging from Haydn to Stravinsky. In recent years Gruber has himself become a sought-after orchestral conductor, leading many of Europe's important ensembles; in 2009 he was appointed composer/conductor of the BBC Philharmonic. He is a frequent guest of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and for the 2019-2020 season was the orchestra's Gewandhauskomponist (the GHO's resident guest composer).

By the late 1960s Gruber had achieved recognition as both a composer and as a cabaret-style actor and singer, parallel pursuits that led such works as his *Frankenstein-Suite* (1970) and his "musical spectacle" *Gomorra* (first version 1976). He rewrote the former in 1978 as the orchestral "Pan-Dämonium" *Frankenstein!!*, which was premiered by Simon Rattle (just 23 at the time) and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic with the composer himself as "chansonnier." Suddenly he found himself with an international hit on his hands. *Frankenstein!!* has been performed hundreds of times all over the world in both orchestral and chamber versions and has also been staged. Most performances, including one by the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra led by Gunther Schuller in August 1980, have featured the composer as soloist. In addition to *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, further dramatic works include the opera *Der Herr Nordwind* (*Lord Northwind*, 2005), composed for the Zurich Opera house, and the music theater works *Expulsion from Paradise* and *Gloria, a Pig Tale*. His music's exuberance and theatricality have made him popular for instrumental soloists as well; not surprisingly, concertos dominate his orchestral catalog. These include his trumpet concerto *Aerial*, written for Håkan Hardenberger; his Cello Concerto, premiered by Yo-Yo Ma and Boston Musica Viva at Tanglewood; his Piano Concerto, composed for Emanuel Ax and the New York Philharmonic, and two percussion concertos, *into the open...* for Colin Currie, and *Rough Music*, for Gerald Fromme.

*Tales of the Vienna Woods*, Opus 325, is one of the most famous waltzes by the Waltz King, Johann Strauss II, one of those pieces that even today, more than 150 years after it was written, epitomizes an optimistic, opulent,

comfortable Vienna, the Vienna of social climbing and prosperity. By 1931, in the interwar period in which the Croatia-born Hungarian-Austrian novelist and playwright Ödön von Horváth (1901-1938) wrote his celebrated *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, he could readily invoke Strauss's waltz to represent a longed-for past in the face of the dark present and uncertain future the Viennese middle class faced as fascism, economic despair, and intolerance swept through Europe. Although little known in the U.S., Horváth was one of the most important German-language playwrights of interwar Europe, on a par with Bertolt Brecht. (There are at least half a dozen filmed versions of *Tales from the Vienna Woods*.)

It was the Vienna-born writer and director Michael Sturminger who in 2005 suggested Horváth's play to HK Gruber as the basis of an opera. The play's use of sharply drawn, almost caricatured roles, its ambivalent mix of bourgeois and working-class cultural perspectives, and its thematically pertinent references to Strauss's waltzes and other music had already prepared the ground; as Gruber has said, "For me it is still Horváth who is the composer of the opera because his words are already music for me" (from an interview with Steph Power for *Wales Arts Review*). The opera was ultimately commissioned by the Bregenz Festival in 2011; Sturminger served as librettist and director, and the work was premiered at Bregenz in July 2014. It has since been staged in Berlin and Vienna.

The opera's delightfully named suite *Short Stories from the Vienna Woods*, completed in 2019, was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig as part of the Andris Nelsons-led BSO/GHO Alliance, a partnership that includes musician exchanges, joint concerts and tours, and co-commissions. Although the original commission called for a piece of some fifteen minutes' length, Gruber overdelivered, creating a half-hour, seven-movement suite from which conductors can choose all or some of the movements. The score stipulates only that a performance must begin with the first, "Introduction and Song from the Wachau," and end with the last, "Polka infernale."

The suite's "Introduction and Song from the Wachau" is taken nearly verbatim from the opera's opening, in which after an upbeat orchestral prologue the soprano in the central role of Marianne sings the "Song of the Wachau," the lyrics of which are taken from Horváth's play. In the suite the soprano melody is played at first by solo trumpet. The movement's increasingly active second part is from Act II. "Splintered Waltzes" brings together waltz fragments from later in Act I, depicting a picnic in the Vienna Woods to celebrate Marianne's engagement to the butcher Oskar. In the event, other couplings become more prominent. Story 4, "In a flash," has music from the end of Act I and the city-evoking opening of Act II, including a moment in which an unseen schoolgirl practices a Strauss waltz, poorly, on an upright piano. A similar musical image triggers the finale, "Polka infernale," corresponding to a busy "reconciliation" quartet that unsatisfactorily, and misleadingly, suggests stability among the characters' relationships. The infernal polka's presto tempo is unrelenting despite abrupt silences and sharp fortissimo chords. The movement's dense final bars also conclude the opera. While these episodes are directly connected to the opera's story line, their fundamentally musical character—in particular their elements of dance and song—translate well to the concert stage, free of their original contexts.

*Robert Kirzinger*

*Composer and writer Robert Kirzinger is the BSO's Director of Program Publications.*

## **Wolfgang Amadè Mozart**

### **Violin Concerto No. 5 in A, K.219**

Joannes Chrisostomus Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart—who began calling himself Wolfgango Amadeo about 1770 and Wolfgang Amadè in 1777 (he used "Amadeus" only in jest)—was born in Salzburg, Austria, on January 27, 1756, and died in Vienna on December 5, 1791. Based on evidence gleaned from the autograph manuscripts, Mozart wrote his first violin concerto in 1773 and nos. 2-5 over the course of 1775. No. 5 was completed December 20 of that year. We have no information about the first performances of any of the five concertos, but we do know that Mozart at some point played each of them, even if he likely composed them with other Salzburg-based violinists in mind (e.g., the Salzburg concertmaster Antonio Brunetti). Mozart provided for cadenzas—virtuosic, often improvised passages for the soloist—near the end of each movement. Hilary Hahn performs her own cadenzas in these concerts.

In addition to the violin soloist, the scores of all five concertos call for 2 oboes, 2 horns, and strings, (except the slow movement of No. 3, which calls for flutes rather than oboes).

The year 1756 was very important in the life of Leopold Mozart (1719-1787) both personally and professionally. In January, his son Wolfgang Amadè Mozart was born, and as Leopold later said, he was “a miracle which God let be born in Salzburg.” Six months after the birth of his son, Leopold published his *Essay on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*. Leopold was in a unique position to write such a work. Not only was he an excellent violinist and teacher, but he had also been in the service of the Prince-Bishop of Salzburg since 1740, serving as composer and assistant *maestro di cappella*. The book was published in Augsburg, Leopold’s hometown, but quickly made its way throughout Europe. Soon the treatise was in such high demand that it was translated into Dutch, French, and English. Leopold himself expanded and reissued the work in 1770 and again in 1787, the year of his death.

Leopold’s text is important even today. It deals not only with violin technique but addresses performance practice, composition, and aesthetics, thereby presenting a complete picture of the 18th-century musician. Through it, we get a glimpse of Leopold’s comprehensive teaching style, which sheds light on Wolfgang’s development as a musician and a young man. Leopold was his son’s most important teacher, advising him on everything—literature, mathematics, philosophy, religion, and of course music. Indeed, when Leopold realized how formidable Mozart’s talent was, he put aside his own career and devoted himself to educating his son.

When Wolfgang was a boy, he traveled with his family throughout Europe, where his father showcased his son’s enormous talents. Mozart is often depicted as playing the piano or harpsichord, but what is sometimes forgotten is his extraordinary accomplishment as a string player. Although he preferred to play the viola, and later featured it in some of his most impressive chamber works (the string quintets K.174, 515, and 516, which add an extra viola to the string quartet), he was a distinguished violinist. In 1777 he wrote to his father, “I played as if I were the finest fiddler in all Europe,” to which his father replied, “You yourself do not know how well you play the violin.” Strong praise indeed from Leopold, who usually had nothing but scorn for other violinists!

When Mozart and his father returned from two trips to Italy in the late 1760s and early 1770s, Mozart found himself back in Salzburg without the opera commissions or a permanent position in Italy he had so desired. It was then that he turned his attention to instrumental composition, writing many of his famous serenades (including the *Serenata notturna*, K.239; *Haffner*, K.250, and *Posthorn*, K.320), his first original piano concerto (K.175), and the violin concertos.

Mozart’s compositional development in the concerto genre can be traced through an examination of these five concertos. Although they were all written within a mere two years of each other, one can clearly see in them Mozart’s progression from a competent composer indebted to the past, to a master of the genre, experimenting with innovative techniques such as abrupt shifts in tone, texture, and passion within a single movement. Perhaps these techniques are traceable in part to his father’s precept that a good performer should be able to move without effort from the “mournful to the merry...in a word, he must play everything in such a way that he will himself be moved by it.” Mozart’s concertos move seamlessly between extremes of emotion and passion; and when experiencing a good performance, the audience should too. Even at such a young age—he was only 19 when he wrote the last of these concertos—Mozart proved he was not only the master of the concerto but the master of the violin. He fully realized in these pieces not only the dramatic possibilities in the dialogue between soloist and orchestra but the real elegance and power of the violin, the possibilities of which he first learned from his father.

The final concerto, the Violin Concerto No. 5 in A, K.219, is the most daring. It begins with the orchestral exposition, yet when the soloist enters it is with an expressive Adagio, completely different in tone and feeling. The effect is almost as if the soloist has begun playing the second movement rather than continuing the first. After the initial surprise, however, the soloist again plays Allegro, but this time with a new theme. The innovation here is that Mozart restates the original orchestral theme as the accompaniment to the new melody. Because the unexpected Adagio section occurs so close to the opening, when the movement does come to a close we are left questioning if the Adagio music will recur before the first movement ends. It does not. Instead, Mozart continues on to the middle movement, the longest and most elaborate of the three. Several years later, Antonio Brunetti, then concertmaster of the Salzburg court orchestra, advised Mozart that he found this movement too long and “studied.” Mozart ultimately wrote a new Adagio for him, K.261. The final movement is a Rondeau composed in

the style of a minuet. The contrasting middle section, often called the “Turkish section,” is filled with dramatic percussive effects with the cellos and basses instructed to “*coll’arco roverscio*” (hit the strings with the wood of the bow, not the hair), as well as being given forceful chromatic passages. After the rousing interlude, however, the movement ends again with the most graceful of minuet gestures.

*Elizabeth Seitz*

*Elizabeth Seitz is a faculty member at the Boston Conservatory, a frequent guest speaker for the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Boston Lyric Opera, and a musicologist whose interests range from Mozart, Schubert, and Mahler to Falla and Tito Puenté.*

The first BSO performance of Mozart’s Violin Concerto No. 5, K.219, took place in Providence, Rhode Island, on December 31, 1907; Carl Wendling was soloist with conductor Karl Muck, the same performers then repeating the work as the season continued, in Buffalo and Troy, New York, and Cambridge. The next BSO performance was in a single Symphony Hall subscription concert, on December 15, 1930, with soloist Anton Witek and conductor Richard Burgin. The most recent BSO performance at Symphony Hall was September 30, 2011, featuring Anne-Sophie Mutter as both soloist and conductor; she performed all five Mozart concertos in two evenings with the BSO. The most recent BSO performance took place at Tanglewood on August 1, 2021, with Alan Gilbert conducting and Stefan Jackiw as soloist.

### **Sergei Prokofiev**

#### **Symphony No. 5 in B-flat, Opus 100**

Sergei Sergeievich Prokofiev was born in Sontsovka, Ekaterinoslav district, Ukraine, on April 27, 1891, and died at Nikolina Gora, near Moscow, on March 5, 1953. He composed most of the Symphony No. 5 during the summer of 1944 at a composers’ retreat in Ivanovo, Russia, and completed it in Moscow that autumn. Prokofiev himself conducted the premiere performance at the Moscow Conservatory on January 13, 1945, with the State Symphonic Orchestra of the USSR. Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra gave the first American performances in November 1945.

The score of Prokofiev’s Symphony No. 5 calls for 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes and English horn, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, and bass clarinet, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, cymbals, tambourine, snare drum, wood block, bass drum, tam-tam, harp, piano, and strings.

Though he never returned to his native country after the Revolution and though he became an ardent American patriot, the legendary Boston Symphony music director Serge Koussevitzky maintained a profound inner identity as a Russian and as such sympathized passionately with the Soviet Union’s war effort against the Germans. For this reason, his performances here—often they were American premieres—of the important wartime compositions of Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Prokofiev were acts of commitment that went beyond the ordinary range of professional responsibility, ambition, and rivalry with colleagues. Aware of the material difficulties under which Russian composers labored, he regularly arranged to have shipments of music paper sent from Boston to the Soviet Composers’ Union, and it gave him particular pleasure to discover that the score of Prokofiev’s Fifth Symphony, whose manuscript is now in the Boston Public Library, was written on paper that had made the long round-trip from a store on Boylston Street in Boston.

Prokofiev and Koussevitzky, moreover, had known each other a long time. They had certainly known about each other as far back as 1908 when the 34-year-old Koussevitzky, then the world’s leading virtuoso on the double bass and already on the way to his even more important careers as conductor and publisher, repeatedly rejected for publication the scores submitted by the teenage composer. Soon the relationship became more positive. In 1914, Koussevitzky invited Prokofiev to play his Piano Concerto No. 1 at a concert in Moscow, an event that marked the beginning of more than thirty years’ devoted sponsorship on the part of the conductor. Between 1916 and 1937, Koussevitzky published many works by Prokofiev, including the *Visions fugitives*, the Third and Fourth piano sonatas, the *Scythian Suite*, the Dostoyevsky opera *The Gambler*, the ballet *Chout*, the *Lieutenant Kijé* Suite, and several books of songs. In addition he frequently invited Prokofiev to Boston: the composer appeared with the Boston Symphony as piano soloist in 1926 (Concerto No. 3), 1930 (Concerto No. 2), 1932-33 (Concerto No. 5), and 1937 (Concerto No. 3), and in 1938 he not only played his First Concerto but conducted

the suite from his ballet *Chout*, the Suite No. 2 from the *Romeo and Juliet* ballet, and the American premiere of *Peter and the Wolf*.

Prokofiev's Third and Fourth symphonies had been byproducts of the composer's works for the theater, the former using material from the opera *The Flaming Angel*, the latter from the ballet *The Prodigal Son*. Not since the Second Symphony of 1924 had Prokofiev set out to write a symphony from scratch when, in the summer of 1944, he began a work "glorifying the human spirit...praising the free and happy man—his strength, his generosity, and the purity of his soul." The composer also remarked that he thought of the score as "[crowning] a great period of my work." When he returned to the U.S.S.R. for good in 1933 after a fifteen-year stay in the West, Prokofiev had radically bent his style to suit the imperatives of Soviet theories of art, and, no doubt, to answer some inner needs of his own. His music became more mellifluous, less biting, and surely less inclined to humor, and it can seem downright self-conscious in its concern not to rub the wrong way. Such popular Prokofiev scores of the 1930s as the Violin Concerto No. 2 and the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* impressively demonstrate the possibilities of his new manner.

Discussion of the evolution of Prokofiev's later style has, not surprisingly, become mired in politics. Soviet critics, notably his more or less official biographer, Israel Nestyev, tend to imply that the composer only found himself after he came home; Western critics, especially if they are politically conservative, are inclined to deplore the softening of Prokofiev's music from the '30s on. Prokofiev had little to say about any of this: unlike Shostakovich, he didn't even repudiate his own earlier music. It may be, though, that his statement about the Fifth Symphony as a work that "crowns a great period" refers to what a musician might perceive regardless of political context, which is that here the composer has absolutely mastered his style, speaking his chosen language without self-consciousness, discomfort, compromise, and foreign accent. Even in the 19th century, good composers could be baffled by the question of how to confront the sonata style defined by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, how to get at its substance and not just its shell. Here, in the Fifth Symphony, the 53-year-old Prokofiev takes on the challenge with the confidence, the freshness of approach, and the skill of a master.

He begins with a fairly slow movement in richly developed sonata form, picking up from Beethoven (String Quartet in F, Opus 59, No. 1, first movement) and Brahms (Symphony No. 4, first movement) the device of seeming to embark upon a formal repeat of the exposition, only to have a dramatic turn of harmony reveal that in fact the development has begun. The scherzo brings back a touch of the old Prokofiev, the wry humorist from whom Shostakovich learned so much. An Adagio at once somber and lyrical is followed by an exuberant finale. From the symphony's first page with its tart octaves of flute and bassoon, to the coda of the finale, with that daring scoring for solo strings, piano, harp, and percussion, all of this is most brilliantly worked out for the orchestra.

*Michael Steinberg*

*Michael Steinberg was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1976 to 1979, and after that of the San Francisco Symphony and New York Philharmonic. Oxford University Press has published three compilations of his program notes, devoted to symphonies, concertos, and the great works for chorus and orchestra.*

### **To Read and Hear More...**

For a complete BSO performance history of any piece on the program, readers are encouraged to visit the BSO Archives' online database, "HENRY," named for BSO founder Henry Lee Higginson, at [archives.bso.org](http://archives.bso.org).

The publisher of HK Gruber's music is Boosey & Hawkes, whose website features a wealth of information about the composer ([www.boosey.com/composer/hk+gruber](http://www.boosey.com/composer/hk+gruber)), including a short video interview/documentary, "HK Gruber on HK Gruber," illuminating his vibrant personality. The site also includes up-to-date biographical information and works list. Though out of date, a 2001 article on Gruber by David Murray and Sigrid Wiesmann in the *New Grove Dictionary* includes useful background information. Although a recording of his opera *Tales from the Vienna Woods* is not yet available, Gruber's music is well represented on disc and through streaming services. Recordings of Gruber's famous *Frankenstein!!* featuring the composer as chansonnier include those by the Salzburg Camerata

Academica led by Franz Welser-Möst (EMI) and by the BBC Philharmonic, featuring Gruber as both vocalist and conductor (Chandos).

Major modern biographies of Mozart include Maynard Solomon's *Mozart: A Life* (Harper Perennial), Robert Gutman's *Mozart: A Cultural Biography* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/Harvest), and frequent BSO contributor Jan Swafford's recent *Mozart: The Reign of Love*, published in a paperback edition this month (Harper). Peter Gay's *Mozart* is a concise, straightforward introduction to the composer's life, reputation, and artistry (Penguin paperback). John Rosselli's *The life of Mozart* is one of the compact composer biographies in the series "Musical Lives" (Cambridge paperback). Christoph Wolff's *Mozart at the Gateway to His Fortune: Serving the Emperor, 1788-1791* takes a close look at the realities, prospects, and interrupted promise of the composer's final years and debunks persistent myths about his decline (Norton). Also of interest is Julian Rushton's *Mozart: His Life and Work*, in the "Master Musicians" series (Oxford). Notes by Michael Steinberg on Mozart's violin concertos 3, 4, and 5 are in his compilation volume *The Concerto—A Listener's Guide* (Oxford paperback). Donald Francis Tovey's notes on Mozart's violin concertos in D major and A major (No. 4, K.218, and No. 5, K.219, respectively) are among his *Essays in Musical Analysis* (Oxford paperback).

Hilary Hahn recorded Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5 in A with Paavo Järvi and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen (Deutsche Grammophon, on a disc with Vieuxtemps's Concerto No. 4). Recordings of the complete five-concerto cycle include Anne-Sophie Mutter's in the dual role of soloist and conductor with the London Philharmonic Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon), Pamela Frank's with David Zinman and the Tonhalle Orchestra (Arte Nova), Arthur Grumiaux's with Colin Davis and the London Symphony Orchestra (Philips), soloist/conductor Gidon Kremer's, recorded live with the Kremerata Baltica (Nonesuch), Itzhak Perlman's with James Levine and the Vienna Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon), Henryk Szeryng's with Alexander Gibson and the New Philharmonia Orchestra (Philips), and soloist/conductor Christian Tetzlaff's with the German Chamber Philharmonic Bremen (Virgin Classics).

The important modern study of Prokofiev in English is Harlow Robinson's *Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography*, published originally in 1987 and reprinted in 2002 with a new foreword and afterword by the author (Northeastern University Press). Robinson's book avoids the biased attitudes of earlier writers whose viewpoints were colored by the "Russian"-vs.- "Western" perspectives typical of their time, as reflected in such older volumes as Israel Nestyev's *Prokofiev* (Stanford University Press) and Victor Seroff's *Sergei Prokofiev: A Soviet Tragedy* (Taplinger). More recently Robinson produced *Selected Letters of Sergei Prokofiev*, newly translating and editing a volume of previously unpublished Prokofiev correspondence (Northeastern University Press). *Sergey Prokofiev* by Daniel Jaffé is in the well-illustrated series "20th-Century Composers" (Phaidon paperback). Michael Steinberg's *The Symphony—A Listener's Guide* includes his program notes on Prokofiev's symphonies 1 (*Classical*), 5, and 6 (Oxford University Press). *Prokofiev by Prokofiev: A Composer's Memoir* is an autobiographical account covering the first seventeen years of Prokofiev's life, through his days at the St. Petersburg Conservatory (Doubleday). Also worth noting is *Sergey Prokofiev Diaries*, translated by Anthony Phillips, in three volumes (Cornell University Press).

There are two Boston Symphony Orchestra recordings of Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5, both made originally for RCA: with Serge Koussevitzky conducting, from 1946, and with Erich Leinsdorf conducting, from 1963. Among the many other recordings of Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony are those by Marin Alsop with the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra (Naxos), Leonard Bernstein with the New York Philharmonic (Sony), Valery Gergiev with the London Symphony Orchestra (Philips) or live with the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra (Mariinsky), Mariss Jansons with the Concertgebouw Orchestra (RCO), Vassily Petrenko with the Oslo Philharmonic (Lawo Classics), Gennady Rozhdestvensky with the Leningrad Philharmonic (BBC Legends, a monaural concert performance), and Tugan Sokhiev with the Deutsche Symphonieorchester Berlin (Sony).

*Marc Mandel/Robert Kirzinger*



## ARTISTS

### **Andris Nelsons**

*Ray and Maria Stata Music Director, endowed in perpetuity*

The 2021-2022 season is Andris Nelsons' eighth as the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Ray and Maria Stata Music Director. In summer 2015, following his first season as music director, his contract with the BSO was extended through the 2021-2022 season. In February 2018, he was also named Gewandhauskapellmeister of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig. In October 2020, the BSO and GHO jointly announced extensions to Mr. Nelsons' contracts. His contract with the BSO was extended until 2025, and his GHO contract until 2027. An evergreen clause in his BSO contract reflects a mutual intention for long-term collaboration beyond the years of the agreement. In fall 2019, Mr. Nelsons and the BSO hosted the Gewandhausorchester in historic concerts at Symphony Hall that included performances by the GHO as well as concerts featuring the players of both orchestras together.

The fifteenth music director in the orchestra's history, Andris Nelsons made his BSO debut at Carnegie Hall in March 2011, his Tanglewood debut in July 2012, and his BSO subscription series debut in January 2013. He has led the orchestra on three European tours and one of Japan; a scheduled February 2020 tour to East Asia was canceled due to the COVID-19 emergency. In the pandemic-affected 2020-2021 BSO season, Mr. Nelsons led the BSO in six of the fifteen concerts streamed as part of the orchestra's BSO NOW virtual season recorded in Symphony Hall. The diverse repertoire ranged from Beethoven symphonies and music of Schumann and Brahms to several recent works by leading young American composers. His BSO repertoire in the 2021-2022 season ranges from favorites by Rachmaninoff and Sibelius to world and American premieres of BSO-commissioned works by HK Gruber, Jörg Widmann, Unsuk Chin, and Kaija Saariaho. This season also marks the culmination of Mr. Nelsons' multi-season joint project with the BSO and GHO to perform and record major works of Richard Strauss, to be released by Deutsche Grammophon.

Andris Nelsons and the BSO's ongoing series of recordings of the complete Shostakovich symphonies for Deutsche Grammophon, so far encompassing ten of the fifteen symphonies, has earned three Grammy Awards for Best Orchestral Performance and one for Best Engineered Album. The latest installment, featuring symphonies nos. 1, 14, and 15 and the Chamber Symphony, Op. 110a, was released in June 2021. Future releases will explore the composer's concertos for piano, violin, and cello, and his monumental opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. Mr. Nelsons' other recordings with the BSO include the complete Brahms symphonies for the BSO Classics label and a Naxos release of recent American works commissioned and premiered by the orchestra. Under an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon, he has also recorded the complete Beethoven symphonies with the Vienna Philharmonic (released in 2019) and is recording the Bruckner symphonies with the GHO.

Mr. Nelsons frequently leads such orchestras as the Berlin Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and appears with such opera companies as the Bayreuth Festival and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Born in Riga in 1978 into a family of musicians, Andris Nelsons began his career as a trumpeter in the Latvian National Opera Orchestra before studying conducting. He was Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (2008-2015), Principal Conductor of Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie in Herford, Germany (2006-2009), and Music Director of the Latvian National Opera (2003-2007).

### **Hilary Hahn**

Three-time Grammy Award-winning violinist Hilary Hahn is renowned for her musicality, expansive interpretations of an incredibly varied repertoire, and organic connections with her audience. Her creative approach to music-making and her commitment to sharing her experiences with a global community have made her a fan favorite. Ms. Hahn is a prolific recording artist and commissioner of new works, and her 21 feature recordings have received every critical prize in the international press. This season, as Virtual Artist-in-Residence with the Philharmonic Society of Orange County, she gave the world premiere of her newly composed cadenza to Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5 (the cadenza she plays in the present BSO performances). She performed the concerto with the Houston and Dallas symphony orchestras; in Dallas, she delivered the keynote speech of the Second Annual Women in Classical Music Symposium. She also performed the Dvořák Violin Concerto with both the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra. In March 2021, Deutsche Grammophon

released Ms. Hahn's twenty-first album, *Paris*, recorded with Mikko Franck and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. *Paris* features the world-premiere recording of Einojuhani Rautavaara's Two Serenades, written for her and completed posthumously by Kalevi Aho. In 2018-19, before her season-long sabbatical in 2019-20, she premiered the Two Serenades and Lera Auerbach's Sonata No. 4, *Fractured Dreams*, also written for her. Ms. Hahn's commitment to her fans manifests in many educational initiatives. In 2021 she taught three masterclasses during a virtual residency with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, two of which were open to the public. A former Suzuki student, Ms. Hahn released new recordings of the first three books of the Suzuki Violin School in 2020. Her Instagram-based practice initiative, #100daysofpractice, has helped to demystify the typically grueling and isolating practice process; fellow performers and students have contributed more than 600,000 posts under the hashtag. An avid and early blogger, Hahn hosts on her website original writings dating back to 2002. Her Bring Your Own Baby concerts, developed over recent residencies in Vienna, Seattle, Lyon, and Philadelphia, create opportunities for parents of infants to share their enjoyment of live classical music with their children in a nurturing, welcoming environment. Always free and offered on an infant-friendly schedule, they build on her history of performances in unconventional venues such as community dance workshops, yoga studios, and knitting circles. Hilary Hahn made her BSO debut in February 2003 performing Edgar Meyer's Violin Concerto. With the orchestra since then she has performed Dvořák's Violin Concerto (in August 2006 for her Tanglewood debut and again in October 2017, her most recent Symphony Hall performances), Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 (March 2010), and Sibelius's Violin Concerto (at Tanglewood in August 2010). In July 2019 she made her Tanglewood recital debut.