

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

Thursday, January 13, 8pm | The Mary W. Nelson Memorial Concert
Friday, January 14, 1:30pm
Saturday, January 15, 8pm
Sunday, January 16, 3pm | The Dr. Lawrence H. Cohn Memorial Concert

ANDRIS NELSONS conducting

AUGUSTA READ THOMAS *DANCE FOLDINGS* (2021) (AMERICAN PREMIERE)

LISZT PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 IN A

JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET

{ intermission }

BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN B-FLAT, OPUS 60

Adagio—Allegro vivace

Adagio

Allegro vivace

Allegro ma non troppo

This week's performances of Augusta Read Thomas's *Dance Foldings* are supported in part by income from the Morton Margolis Fund in the BSO's endowment.

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The evening concerts will end about 9:50, the Friday concert about 3:20, and the Sunday concert about 4:50.

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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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 celebrated American composer Augusta Read Thomas has a long association with the BSO, which has commissioned two of the composer's major orchestral works and this week gives the American premiere of her dynamic and colorful *Dance Foldings*. Like much of her music, *Dance Foldings* is energized by the dynamics of bodies in motion—though in this case those bodies are protein molecules. (See the composer's own comments following the program note.) The piece was commissioned by BBC Radio 3 for the 150th anniversary of London's Royal Albert Hall, where it was first performed in August 2021.

The Hungarian pianist-composer Franz Liszt, after some 150 years, is *still* the epitome of the flashy, emotionally extravagant virtuoso, but his compositional aspirations went well beyond sheer fireworks. His two concertos for piano and orchestra, both sketched out around 1839 and completed over a number of years, demonstrate “cyclic form,” in which a thematic idea recurs through many different facets of a piece. In the Concerto No. 2, interconnected themes create a work of many moods, from the dreamy to stormy, reflecting the very soul of the Romantic era.

Beethoven wrote his Symphony No. 4 in 1806, having just completed the second version of his only opera, *Leonore* (later revised as *Fidelio*). The symphonies that bracket No. 4 are heaven-stormers: the groundbreaking *Eroica*, written in 1803, and the similarly innovative and intense Fifth. The apparent extremes of the lyrical and “heroic” expression were continually juxtaposed in Beethoven’s works, sometimes occurring in one and the same piece. As Marc Mandel indicates in his program essay, the good-natured Fourth Symphony exemplifies the lyric perspective, sharing with the Violin Concerto and the Fourth Piano Concerto “a heightened sense of repose, a broadly lyric element, and a more spacious approach to musical architecture.”

Robert Kirzinger

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Augusta Read Thomas ***Dance Foldings* (2021)**

Augusta Read Thomas was born April 24, 1964, in Glen Cove, New York, and lives in Chicago. Her *Dance Foldings* was commissioned by BBC Radio 3 and first performed by BBC National Orchestra of Wales conducted by Ryan Bancroft on August 8, 2021, at the Royal Albert Hall, London, as part of BBC Proms 2021. These are the American premiere performances. The piece is “dedicated with admiration and gratitude to BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Ryan Bancroft, and Lisa Tregale and to The Boston Symphony Orchestra, Andris Nelsons, and Anthony Fogg.” The composer also offers “special thanks to the Sounds of Science Commissioning Club for contributing support to this project.”

The score of *Dance Foldings* calls for a small orchestra of 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, clarinet and bass clarinet, bassoon and contrabassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets (1st may opt for piccolo trumpet), percussion (2 or 3 players: marimba, crotales, vibraphone, finger cymbal; small, medium, large, and extra-large triangles; large suspended cymbal, 2 conga drums, high tom-tom, 2 bongo drums, cabasa, guiro, tambourine, 5 temple blocks, 2 wood blocks), piano (optional, included in these performances), harp, and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses). The duration of the piece is about 13 minutes. 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.

“To be performed with dancers when feasible,” reads the score to Augusta Read Thomas’s *Dance Foldings*, the title of which already suggests multiple ideas of movement. As she explains in her own program note for the piece (following this program note), those ideas were suggested by an unexpected source: the creation and transformation of protein molecules within the human body. During the two-year span of the pandemic, we’ve encountered public discussions and explanations of cellular and sub-cellular biology more than we perhaps expected. Thomas’s musical reflection and interpretation of some of biology’s processes illustrates, more than anything, humankind’s capacity to find beauty and elegance throughout our experience. (The separation of “arts” and “sciences” for pedagogical purposes doesn’t fully reflect the reality that they’re inextricable and often indistinguishable.)

Augusta Read Thomas experiences music intensely as a physical thing. As she composes, she mirrors the future actions and reactions of the instrumentalist, the conductor, the singer, and the listener by singing, scatting, playing the piano, or dancing, embodying the physical presence of the music she's writing. That activity is transmitted through the notes on the page to the minds and bodies of the players and finally to the audience. The physicality of her music is present not only in its pulses and rhythms but in its timbres and harmonies and in the integrated interaction of multiple layers of activity. Thomas has said, "Because I was a performer for so many years, I have enormous empathy for musicians and am exceedingly mindful of what I am asking artists to play; I care deeply about how the music looks on the page."

The range of Thomas's inspirations mirrors the energetic activity of her music. The hard-science inspiration of *Dance Foldings* is balanced by pieces relating to the other end of the physical spectrum. Many of her pieces are concerned with a cosmology that encompasses not only modern science but its reflections in ritual and spirituality. In her concerto for orchestra *Orbital Beacons*, composed for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra while serving as that ensemble's Mead Composer-in-Residence, she created "acoustic constellations" that parallel the stories of celestial constellations. Such titles as *Astral Canticle*, *Helios Choros* ("Sun God Dancers"), *Selene* (*Moon Chariot Rituals*), and *Galaxy Dances*, to name just a few, attest to the composer's fascination with the ways humankind has sought to find meaning in the heavens, while other works turn our gaze to the earth and the sea. She seems drawn both to the mysteries of these phenomena and their potential for illuminating the grand and awesome order of our universe, and both are reflected in her music. Her frequent invocation of dance (*Galaxy Dances*, *Sun Dance*, *Dance Foldings*) relates these vast and intricate questions back to the direct experience of the body, to the individual. (Her online list of works lists more than two dozen pieces in the category "dance/ballet.")

In *Dance Foldings*, Augusta Read Thomas treats the orchestra by turns as a big band, a percussion ensemble, and a classical orchestra capable of great lyricism. Some of its intricacies can be seen in graphic form in the composer's detailed and colorful doodle outlining the structure of the piece (see top of page), one of many tools the composer uses in working out her ideas about the relation between material and form. In the *Dance Foldings* program note included on the composer's website (augustareadthomas.com), the composer includes links to animated simulations of the processes of protein generation and folding. Both of these are visual metaphors for the balletic musical processes of her piece, but neither determines how the piece actually sounds. The vibrant, syncopated rhythms, exuberant fast solo passages, colorful instrumental combinations, and harmonic intricacies are part of the composer's highly evolved and personal musical language.

The piece begins with a syncopated, percussive line dominated by plucked strings and the piano, an idea that recurs throughout the piece; the composer has it marked "Like chains of amino acids," suggesting strong connectedness within the line. Another recurring idea is a morse-code-like string of repeated pitches, each instance serving to highlight an instrumental timbre and to steer the harmony of the piece to a new realm. These ideas interweave and develop through an ever-changing soundscape that ebbs and flows in density and constantly changes color but maintains the fundamental pulsing life with which it began.

Augusta Read Thomas has published nearly 150 pieces, with something over a third of these scored for orchestra or large ensemble, the medium that most naturally fits Thomas's acoustic imagination. Her experience writing for orchestra is extensive. During her residency with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, she wrote nine pieces for that ensemble and her music was conducted by both Daniel Barenboim and Pierre Boulez. Other ardent champions of her music have included the great cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich, who as conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra led the premieres of her *Air and Angels* and *Galaxy Dances*, and conductor Christoph Eschenbach, who conducted her music with the National Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, and North German Radio Symphony Orchestra in Hamburg. Her orchestra music has also been commissioned by the Cleveland Symphony, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, and London Symphony Orchestra, among many others. Her *Harvest Drum* was premiered by the Symphony Orchestra of the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, China, a culmination of the composer's residence among China's Miao community.

Thomas's long association with the Boston Symphony Orchestra began when she was a student in the 1980s at the BSO's Tanglewood Music Center; she has since served as a TMC faculty composer and in 2009 was director

of Tanglewood's Festival of Contemporary Music. Her *Magic Box*, commissioned by the BSO, was premiered in 2019 as part of the inaugural festivities for the Tanglewood's new Linde Center for Music and Learning. *Selene (Moon Chariot Rituals)* was a co-commission to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Tanglewood Music Center in 2015. The BSO itself first performed her music in 1997, the cello-and-orchestra piece *Chanson*, composed for Rostropovich's 70th birthday. The orchestra co-commissioned and gave the American premiere of her *Helios Choros II*, led by Ludovic Morlot, and also commissioned her Cello Concerto No. 3, *Legend of the Phoenix*, which was premiered by the BSO and soloist Lynn Harrell with Christoph Eschenbach conducting.

In addition to her intense compositional work, Thomas maintains a well-rounded musical life as a teacher, musical administrator, and citizen. Along with her Tanglewood residencies, she was the youngest tenured professor in the history of the Eastman School of Music and has also taught at the Aspen Music Festival and Northwestern University. For many years she has held the prestigious post of University Professor of Composition at the University of Chicago, where she also founded and directs the Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition; she also created the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's acclaimed MusicNow series. In 2016, Thomas was named Chicagoan of the Year by *The Chicago Tribune*. She is a member of both the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has served on the boards of many composer support organizations, among them the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the Koussevitzky Foundation, and the Conseil Musical de la Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco.

Robert Kirzinger

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

Augusta Read Thomas on her *Dance Foldings*:

In celebration of the diversity and the mission statement of the Royal Albert Hall on the occasion of the venue's 150th anniversary, the BBC Radio 3 commissioned *Dance Foldings* for orchestra for which the commission prompt was to reflect the arts and sciences as they are now. Composers were free to choose their own subject, so long as there was a clear link to the sciences or to other art forms.

The natural world, as explored by scientists, engineers, and physicians in their laboratories and clinics, offers a wealth of opportunities to explore resonance and balance through sound. Few orchestral works attempt to capture the kinetic and emotional content of scientific topics and convey these concepts through abstract, rather than descriptive, music.

The musical materials of *Dance Foldings* for orchestra take as their starting point the metaphors, pairings, counterpoints, foldings, forms, and images inspired by the biological "ballet" of proteins being assembled and folded in our bodies. Online, one can easily find many beautiful animations which show the process of protein folding. Some resemble assembly lines, and many look like ballets; both are extremely suggestive of musical possibilities. For example, proteins are made in cells by linking together amino acids one at a time to make a linear chain, i.e., the primary structure, or unfolded protein, which is akin to a wiggling chain of beads. These chains take musical form as animated, rhythmic, and forward-moving lines of music which unfold with kaleidoscopic sonic variety. An amino acid chain gradually self-organizes into nicely lined up shorter strands of beads forming pleated sheets or helices, nestled next to each other; interconnecting strands form loops crossing over in three dimensions. Musically speaking, those three-dimensional forms are affiliated to counterpoint, harmony, flow, flux, and form. Notated on the score are indications including: "Like Chains of Amino Acids," "An Amino Acid Chain starting to fold and become a protein," "Brass Protein Foldings #1, Like jazz big band meets Stravinsky," and "Another Amino Acid Chain-making Machine."

Protein folding is essential to life, and form dictates function. Proteins have primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary structures, and this makeup naturally falls into manifold musical possibilities with distinctive materials, sonorities, rhythms, counterpoint, and inner-life.

No matter what the external inspiration, Music must work as music. As such, I create music that is organic and, at every level, concerned with transformations and connections, which should be played so that the interconnectivity of the different rhythmic, timbral, and pitch syntaxes are made explicit and are then organically allied to one another with characterized phrasing of rhythm, color, harmony, counterpoint, tempo,

breath, keeping it alive — continuously sounding spontaneous. All of this, hopefully, working toward the fundamental goal: to compose a work in which every musical parameter is nuanced and allied in one holistic gestalt.

If I listen carefully, the piece I am composing has its own inner life and will tell me what it next needs. The music I create is passionate, involving risk and adventure, such that a given musical moment might seem like a surprise right when you hear it but, only a millisecond later, seems inevitable. One of my main artistic credos has been to examine small musical objects—a chord, a motive, a rhythm, a color, an energy field, a harmonic space—and explore them from every possible perspective. The different perspectives reveal new musical elements, which I then transform and which in turn become the musical development.

Although highly notated, precise, carefully structured, soundly proportioned, and while musicians are elegantly working from a nuanced, specific text, I like my music to have the feeling that it is organically being self-propelled—on the spot. As if we listeners are overhearing a captured improvisation.

Dance Foldings is an example of the many synergies between science (nature) and music. I previously composed *Helix Spirals* for string quartet to commemorate the Meselson-Stahl DNA replication discovery of 1958. Since DNA is the blueprint for making the proteins of any organism, protein construction, folding and animation is a natural next project.

Augusta Read Thomas

Franz Liszt **Piano Concerto No. 2 in A**

Franz (Ferenc) Liszt was born in Raiding, Hungary, on October 22, 1811, and died in Bayreuth, Germany, on July 31, 1886. He began composing his Piano Concerto No. 2 in 1839 (having begun No. 1 also around that time); he then put both concertos aside and reworked them in 1849, though he continued to revise the Piano Concerto No. 2 until 1861 (having played the premiere of No. 1 in 1855). The Piano Concerto No. 1 was published in 1857, No. 2 in 1863. The first performance of the Piano Concerto No. 2 took place at the Weimar Court Theatre on January 7, 1857, with Liszt conducting and his pupil Hans Bronsart von Schellendorf as soloist.

In addition to the solo piano, the score of Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 2 calls for an orchestra of 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses). The concerto is about 20 minutes long.

Liszt's two piano concertos are standard works in the virtuoso's repertoire, yet they are not at all what one might have expected of the world's greatest pianist. ("Greatest" is arguable, of course, but with no recordings of his playing to prove or disprove the point, he occupies that throne unchallenged.) He lived a long, full life, gave innumerable concerts all over Europe, and composed an immense body of music. He was centrally involved in the great surge of music-making that marked his lifetime, and in the heated debates that surrounded himself, his pupils, and his friends, particularly his son-in-law Wagner. Yet he left only two concertos, both short and compact, and was reluctant to perform either of them himself. Both works gave him endless trouble and were constantly revised; both have generated adverse criticism; both have won passionate admirers and been promoted by world-class performers.

Liszt's concert world was very different from that of today. There was no clear distinction between a recital and an orchestral concert, since most concerts involved solo pianists, solo vocalists, instrumental soloists, a chorus, and an orchestra in a variety of configurations and an equal variety of styles. Overtures, songs, solos, symphonies, and concertos were often inserted on programs without much apparent planning, and there was always room for a spontaneous change of plan. Liszt is credited with launching the novel idea of a solo recital, in which only he took part, but he also figured frequently in the mixed type of program in which an orchestra (or a chorus) was available to accompany him if needed.

He liked the glamour of a solo appearance, undoubtedly, and often replaced the solo vocalist with whom other pianists would share the stage by performing operatic fantasies for piano alone. His solo performances were much more often of transcriptions and elaborations of familiar music by other composers (Mozart, Weber, Rossini, Verdi, etc.) than of true piano solos by himself or by others.

Such pieces could equally call for orchestral support, so we find among his works a handful of arrangements for piano solo and orchestra: fantasies on Beethoven's *Ruins of Athens*, on Berlioz's *Lélio*, on Hungarian folk melodies, and arrangements of Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* and Weber's *Polonaise brillante*. One of his favorite works was Weber's *Konzertstück* for piano and orchestra. In this context a traditional piano concerto in three movements had less appeal for him; in fact, it was almost unthinkable. Since he wrote both a *Malédiction* and a *Totentanz* (notice the demonic titles) for piano and orchestra, we should perhaps think of his two piano concertos, both in a similar continuous single movement, as tone poems without titles, as concert-pieces or fantasies, rather than concertos in the traditional sense.

Liszt's overriding purpose is to integrate the concerto into a single movement, as he did also in his masterly B minor sonata for solo piano. The Piano Concerto No. 2, like the First, unfolds in a series of episodes using recurrent themes that are adapted to different speeds and different surroundings to provide variety and contrast. Sections of a dreamy, amorous character thus rub shoulders with energetic or martial music and passages of swashbuckling virtuosity, all sharing the same handful of melodic shapes and giving the impression of free improvisation, the art at which Liszt excelled.

The main theme is always recognizable from the beautiful sequence of chords under a gently falling melody. This appears in many different forms, sometimes speeded up, and even, toward the end, in military dress. The second main theme appears first as an agitated figure that provides an excellent illustration of the way in which Liszt can change the personality of the music while retaining its melodic outline. It soon appears in the strings in this more expressive form.

The whole work can be divided into seven or eight sections, but these are not movements in the traditional sense, and the real number of sections is arguable since one often leads without much of a break into another. By no means should all of the music be attributed to these melodic roots; there are new themes (such as the aggressive second section, with its furious handfuls in the piano's left hand) and fanciful wanderings which allow the piano to explore the full range of the instrument and the limits of the player's technique. There is no formal cadenza, but once the heavy brass and percussion join in, there is no respite for the soloist until the very end.

This Second Concerto, like the First, was drafted in 1839, when Liszt was living in Italy and about to embark on a decade of frantic touring and concert-giving and laying the ground for the legendary reputation that followed him for the rest of his life. But for a man so formidably confident in his stage appearances, Liszt was rarely satisfied with his own compositions. He was an obsessive reviser, subjecting most of his major works to years of rethinking and alteration. In view of the huge number of compositions and arrangements that he left, he must have found time amid the touring, teaching, and conducting to work patiently, refining works that had been in his mind for many years. The two concertos reappeared on his desk in the 1850s, when he was settled in Weimar and no longer constantly on the road. The First Concerto reached completion in 1855 and was first performed then, with Liszt himself as soloist and Berlioz as conductor. The Second was first played two years later, not by Liszt himself, but by his brilliant pupil Hans Bronsart von Schellendorff, to whom it was dedicated. He was still not satisfied with it, and so it was not published until a few more years and many more hours of work had been devoted to it. It appeared in Liszt's concerts several times in the last years of his life, but he never played the solo part himself.

A Third Piano Concerto was reconstructed from scattered Liszt manuscripts by the scholar Jay Rosenblatt and first performed in Chicago in 1990. It too dates from 1839, but it seems that unlike its two siblings it never emerged from draft and was simply forgotten; indeed, its manuscripts may have already been dispersed when Liszt returned to the other two. In a single continuous movement, it belongs snugly with the others, but has yet to be accepted as a standard weapon in the virtuoso pianist's abundant arsenal.

Hugh Macdonald

Hugh Macdonald taught music at the universities of Cambridge and Oxford and was Professor of Music at Glasgow and at Washington University in St Louis. He has written books on Scriabin and Berlioz and was general editor of the 26-volume New Berlioz Edition. His books on musical subjects include Beethoven's Century, Music in 1853, and Bizet.

The first American performance of Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 2 was given in Boston at the Music Hall on October 5, 1870, with soloist Anna Mehlig and Theodore Thomas conducting.

The first Boston Symphony performances of Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 2 were given by Georg Henschel with soloist Carl Baermann on February 22 and 23, 1884. The most recent BSO performance was Yefim Bronfman's at Tanglewood on August 5, 2016, Giancarlo Guerrero conducting; the most recent subscription series performances were Simon Trpčeski's with Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos in April 2011.

Ludwig van Beethoven **Symphony No. 4 in B-flat, Opus 60**

Ludwig van Beethoven was baptized in Bonn (then an independent electorate) on December 17, 1770, and died in Vienna on March 26, 1827. He composed his Fourth Symphony during the summer and early fall of 1806, leading the first performance, a private one, at the Vienna town house of Prince Franz Joseph von Lobkowitz in March 1807 (the *Coriolan* Overture and Piano Concerto No. 4 also receiving their premieres on that occasion), and conducting the first public performance on April 13, 1808, in Vienna at the Burgtheater.

Beethoven's Fourth Symphony is scored for 1 flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses).

The works Beethoven completed in the last half of 1806—the Fourth Symphony, the Violin Concerto, and the Fourth Piano Concerto among them—were finished rather rapidly by the composer following his extended struggle with the original version of his opera *Fidelio*, which had occupied him from the end of 1804 until April 1806. The most important orchestral work Beethoven had produced before this time was the *Eroica*, in which he had overwhelmed his audiences with a forceful new musical language reflecting both his own inner struggles in the face of impending deafness and his response to the political atmosphere surrounding him. The next big orchestral work to embody this “heroic” style—with a striking overlay of defiance as well—would be the Fifth Symphony, which had begun to germinate in 1804, was worked out mainly in 1807, and was completed in 1808.

In the meantime, however, a more relaxed sort of expression began to emerge, emphasizing a heightened sense of repose, a broadly lyric element, and a more spacious approach to musical architecture. The Fourth Symphony, the Violin Concerto, and the Fourth Piano Concerto share these characteristics to varying degrees, but it is also important to realize that these works, though completed around the same time, do not represent a unilateral change of direction in Beethoven's approach to music, but, rather, the emergence of a particular element that appeared strikingly at this time. Sketches for the Violin Concerto and the Fifth Symphony in fact occur side by side, and that the two aspects—lyric and aggressive—of Beethoven's musical expression are not entirely separable is evident also in the fact that ideas for both the Fifth and the *Pastoral* symphonies appear in the *Eroica* sketchbook of 1803-04. These two symphonies—the one strongly assertive, the other gentler and more subdued—were not completed until 1808, two years after the Violin Concerto. And it appears that Beethoven actually interrupted work on his Fifth Symphony so that he could compose the Fourth in response to a commission from the Silesian Count Franz von Oppersdorff, whom he had met through Prince Carl von Lichnowsky, one of his most important patrons during the early years in Vienna and the joint dedicatee, together with Count Razumovsky, of the Fifth and Sixth symphonies.

So Beethoven's Fourth Symphony partakes successfully and wonderfully of both these worlds, combining a relaxed and lyrical element with a mood of exuberantly aggressive high spirits. The key is B-flat, which suggests—insofar as we can describe the effects of different musical keys—a realm of spaciousness, relaxation, and warmth, in contrast, for example, to the “heroic” E-flat of the Third Symphony and *Emperor* Concerto, the “defiant” C minor of the Fifth, and the “heaven-storming” D minor of the Ninth.

Beethoven actually begins the first movement with an Adagio introduction in a mysteriously pianissimo B-flat *minor*, and the mystery is heightened as the music moves toward B-*natural*, via the enharmonic interpretation of G-flat to F-sharp, until trumpets and drums force the music back to B-flat, and to the major mode, of the Allegro vivace. (This same gambit will be repeated on a larger scale as the music of the Allegro moves from the development into the recapitulation, at which point, once again, the timpani will play a crucial role in telling us where we belong—this time with an extended drumroll growing through twenty-two measures from a pianissimo rumble to a further nine measures of thwacking fortissimo.) Once the Allegro is underway, all is energy and motion, with even the more seemingly relaxed utterances of the woodwinds in service to the prevailing level of activity. One more word about the first movement: one wants the exposition-repeat here, not just for the wonderful jolt of the first ending’s throwing us back to the home key virtually without notice, but also for the links it provides to the end of the introduction and the beginning of the coda.

The E-flat major Adagio sets a *cantabile* theme against a constantly pulsating accompaniment, all moving at a relaxed pace that allows for increasingly elaborate figuration in both melody and accompaniment as the movement proceeds. The second theme is a melancholy and wistful song for solo clarinet, all the more effective when it reappears following a fortissimo outburst from the full orchestra. The scherzo, another study in motion, is all ups and downs. Beethoven repeats the Trio in its entirety following the scherzo *da capo* (a procedure he will follow again in the third movement of the Seventh Symphony). A third statement of the scherzo is cut short by an emphatic rejoinder from the horns.

The whirlwind finale (marked “Allegro ma non troppo,” “Allegro, but not too...”; the speed is built into the note values, and the proceedings shouldn’t be rushed by an overzealous conductor) is yet another exercise in energy, movement, and dynamic contrasts. Carl Maria von Weber, who didn’t much like this symphony when he was young and it was new, imagined the double bass complaining: “I have just come from the rehearsal of a Symphony by one of our newest composers; and though, as you know, I have a tolerably strong constitution, I could only just hold out, and five minutes more would have shattered my frame and burst the sinews of my life. I have been made to caper about like a wild goat, and to turn myself into a mere fiddle to execute the no-ideas of Mr. Composer.” Beethoven’s approach in this movement is wonderfully tongue-in-cheek and no-holds-barred: the solo bassoon, leading us into the recapitulation, is asked to play “*dolce*” (“sweetly”) when he’s probably thankful just to get the notes in, and only at the very end is there a brief moment of rest to prepare the headlong rush to the final cadence.

Marc Mandel

Marc Mandel joined the staff of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1978 and managed the BSO’s program book from 1979 until his retirement as Director of Program Publications in 2020.

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.

Augusta Read Thomas’s website, augustareadthomas.com, is the most comprehensive source for information on the composer and her works. Her extensive discography can also be found there. Wikipedia also provides a useful capsule overview of the composer’s career. G. Schirmer—now Wise Music Classical—was Thomas’s publisher until 2015; her current publisher is Nimbus Music Publishing. Among recordings of the composer’s orchestral music, of particular note is an album including her *Words of the Sea* in a performance by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Pierre Boulez’s direction, along with other large ensemble works.

A relatively recent addition to the Franz Liszt bibliography is *Franz Liszt* by Oliver Hilmes, translated from the German by Stewart Spencer (Yale University Press, 2016). Useful English-language biographies include Derek Watson’s compact *Liszt* in the Master Musicians series (Schirmer paperback) and Alan Walker’s Liszt biography in three volumes—*Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years (1811-1847)*, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years (1848-1861)*, and *Franz Liszt: The Final Years (1861-1886)* (Knopf). Walker also wrote the Liszt article in the 2001 edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Also worth noting is Kenneth Hamilton’s 2007 *After the Golden*

Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance, an engaging history of the piano recital from the time of Liszt into the 20th century (Oxford University Press).

Jean-Yves Thibaudet recorded the two Liszt piano concertos with Charles Dutoit and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra (Decca). The Boston Symphony Orchestra under Seiji Ozawa recorded Liszt's two piano concertos and *Totentanz* with soloist Krystian Zimerman (Deutsche Grammophon). Other noteworthy pairings of the two concertos include Daniel Barenboim's with Pierre Boulez and the Staatskapelle Berlin (Deutsche Grammophon), Nelson Freire's with Michel Plasson and the Dresden Philharmonic (Berlin Classics), Emanuel Ax's with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Philharmonia Orchestra (Sony), and Alexandre Kantorow's with Jean-Jacques Kantorow and the Tapiola Sinfonietta (BIS).

Jan Caeyers's *Beethoven, A Life*, written with collaboration from Beethoven-Haus Bonn, was published in 2020 to mark the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth (University of California Press, translated by Brent Annable). Frequent BSO program note contributor Jan Swafford's *Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph* is the most recent major general biography (Mariner Books); also relatively recent is former Harvard professor Lewis Lockwood's *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (W.W. Norton & Co.). Maynard Solomon's *Beethoven* is still the most influential modern book about the composer (Schirmer). Edmund Morris's *Beethoven: The Universal Composer* is a first-rate compact biography aimed at the general reader (Harper Perennial paperback, in the series "Eminent Lives"). *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, revised and updated by Elliot Forbes (Princeton paperback) is important as the first major researched biography of the composer.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra recorded the complete cycle of Beethoven symphonies with Erich Leinsdorf conducting between 1962 and 1969; the recording of No. 4 is from 1966. With Charles Munch conducting, the BSO can be heard *and* seen playing Beethoven's Fourth Symphony in an April 1961 telecast from Sanders Theatre available on DVD, paired with a November 1959 Munch/BSO telecast of Beethoven's Fifth (ICA Classics). Noteworthy Beethoven symphony cycles of varying vintage include (alphabetically by conductor) Claudio Abbado's with the Berlin Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon), Daniel Barenboim's with Staatskapelle Berlin (Warner Classics), Herbert Blomstedt's with the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig (Accentus), John Eliot Gardiner's with the period-instrument Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique (Deutsche Grammophon Archiv), Bernard Haitink's live with the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO Live), Philippe Herreweghe's with the Royal Flemish Philharmonic (PentaTone), Simon Rattle's with the Berlin Philharmonic (Berlin Philharmonic Recordings), and Osmo Vänskä's with the Minnesota Orchestra (BIS).

Robert Kirzinger/Marc Mandel

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).

Jean-Yves Thibaudet

For more than three decades, Jean-Yves Thibaudet has performed worldwide, 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 for piano. His professional friendships crisscross the globe and have led to spontaneous and fruitful collaborations in film, fashion, and visual art. Passionate about education and fostering young musical talent, Mr. Thibaudet is the first-ever artist-in-residence at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, where he lives. In 2017, the school announced the Jean-Yves Thibaudet Scholarships to provide aid for students at its Music Academy, whom Mr. Thibaudet selects for the merit-based awards, regardless of their instrument. As a recording artist, Mr. Thibaudet has garnered many awards and recognitions: two Grammy

nominations, the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik, the Diapason d'Or, the Choc du Monde de la Musique, the Edison Prize, and Gramophone and Echo awards. He is the soloist on Wes Anderson's 2020 film *The French Dispatch*; his playing can also be heard in *Pride and Prejudice*, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, *Wakefield*, and the Oscar-winning film *Atonement*. In 2010 the Hollywood Bowl inducted him into its Hall of Fame. Previously a Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, he was awarded the title Officier by the French Ministry of Culture in 2012. In 2020 he was named Special Representative for the promotion of French Creative and Cultural Industries in Romania. He is co-artistic director, with Gautier Capuçon, of the Festival Musique et Vin au Clos Vougeot. Jean-Yves Thibaudet made his BSO debut at Tanglewood in August 1992 and was artist-in-residence with the BSO during the 2017-18 subscription season. His BSO appearances have included works for piano and orchestra by D'Indy, Franck, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Grieg, Gershwin, Liszt, Khachaturian, Saint-Saëns, Shostakovich, Beethoven, Bernstein, and Bach. His most recent appearances with the orchestra were in March 2018 at Symphony Hall (and Carnegie Hall in April) as soloist in Bernstein's Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety*, under Andris Nelsons, and at Tanglewood this past August, playing Ravel's Piano Concerto in G under Anna Rakitina. He has performed at Tanglewood in chamber music and as a recitalist, including July 2011 performances of Ravel's complete solo piano music in Ozawa Hall. His concert wardrobe is designed by Dame Vivienne Westwood. Mr. Thibaudet's worldwide representation: HarrisonParrott. Mr. Thibaudet records exclusively for Decca Records.