

Friday, July 29, 8pm

Koussevitzky Music Shed

**BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**ANDRIS NELSONS, conductor**

**Julia ADOLPHE**

***Makeshift Castle (2022)***

(world premiere; co-commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Andris Nelsons, Music Director, supported in part by the New Works Fund established by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency)

I. Sandstone

II. Wooden Embers

**BEETHOVEN**

**Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat, Opus 19**

Allegro con brio

Adagio

Rondo. Molto allegro

PAUL LEWIS, piano

{Intermission}

**BEETHOVEN**

**Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Opus 37**

Allegro con brio

Largo

Rondo: Allegro

PAUL LEWIS

### Notes on the program

**Julia Adolphe (b.1988)**

*Makeshift Castle (2022)*

*Composition and premiere:* Julia Adolphe began *Makeshift Castle* in 2020 and completed it in 2022. The piece was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Andris Nelsons, Music Director, and Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Andris Nelsons, Gewandhauskapellmeister. The BSO commission is supported in part by the New Works Fund established by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. This is the world premiere performance.

Julia Adolphe grew up in New York City with artistic parents—her father a painter, her mother an architect. Her childhood was broadly influenced by art and culture, and she gravitated particularly toward performance. She started inventing music as a child, before any formal lessons in music, and after beginning piano lessons began writing songs for guitar and voice for herself to perform.

Adolphe attended Cornell University, where her composition teacher was the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Steven Stucky. Stucky's strong connections to the Los Angeles area—he was the LA Philharmonic's resident composer for over a decade and administered that orchestra's Green Umbrella new music series—led Adolphe to relocate to the West Coast, where she worked with Stephen Hartke at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music.

Adolphe began to receive national attention when her *Dark Sand, Sifting Light* was premiered by the New York Philharmonic for its Biennial in 2014. That orchestra followed up with a commission for her viola concerto *Unearth, Release*, premiered in 2016. She has a strong continuing relationship with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and its music director Gustavo Dudamel, who commissioned her orchestral work *Underneath the Sheen* (2018), her cello concerto *Chrysalis* (2020), and more recently the violin concerto *Woven Loom, Silver Spindle*, premiered in December 2021. The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and music director Louis Langrée commissioned and

premiered her *Paper Leaves on Fields of Clay* (2020). She has also written an “opera for all ages” on Jules Feiffer’s novel *A Barrel of Laughs, a Vale of Tears*, with a libretto by Stephanie Fleischmann, and a chamber opera, *Sylvia*, premiered at Brooklyn’s Bargemusic in 2013.

Adolph is an open and active communicator about music, the career of a composer, and countless other subjects via her Looseleaf Notebook videocast. Recent episodes with composer Frank Ticheli and mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke deal with such artistic (and everyday) stumbling blocks as imposter syndrome and overcoming anxiety. She was involved as an instructor of music in the Cornell Prison Education Program, teaching inmates at the maximum security Auburn Correctional Facility in New York State. She documented much of her experience on New Music USA’s New Music Box website.

Adolphe’s music is characterized by surprising and dramatic use of instrumental color and dynamic interaction among the players. She is especially accomplished as an orchestral composer. The titles of most of her pieces are evocative and imagistic, but she notes that these, while apt, typically don’t indicate specific programmatic narratives in the Straussian sense but rather offer something to orient the listener. The title of her violin concerto *Woven Loom, Silver Spindle* was inspired by the bright, precise nature of the violin’s sound and its interaction with the orchestra. In her two-movement *Makeshift Castle*, Adolphe posits two material images: “Sandstone” in the first movement and “Wooden Embers” in the second. These represent for the composer “contrasting states of permanence and ephemerality, of perseverance and disintegration, of determination and surrender.”

Commissioned by the BSO with the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, *Makeshift Castle* was originally to have been premiered in Boston in January 2021, but pandemic-related delays allowed Adolphe to continue refining the piece until it reached its final state in 2022. *Makeshift Castle* has been scheduled for a repeat performance by the BSO in Boston next season.

ROBERT KIRZINGER

Composer and writer Robert Kirzinger is the Boston Symphony’s Director of Program Publications.

## Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

### Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat, Opus 19

*Composition and premiere:* Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 2 had its origins in 1790, in Bonn, but did not reach what was essentially its final form until Beethoven substituted a new rondo for the original finale in 1798. Beethoven may have played the B-flat concerto in March or December of 1790 in Vienna, but it seems more likely that it was the C major concerto that he played that December; we do know that he played the B-flat concerto in Prague in 1798. Some further, slight revisions followed before the concerto was published in 1801. Richard Burgin led the first Boston Symphony performance of the B-flat concerto on February 17, 1948, in New Haven, with soloist Bruce Simonds, as well as the BSO’s first subscription performances, in December 1953 with soloist Grant Johannesen—though Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops had introduced the concerto to Symphony Hall, with soloist Evelyn Barry, in May 1945. Pianist Theodor Letwin gave the first Tanglewood performance, with the BSO under Erich Leinsdorf on July 9, 1965; Christian Zacharias was both soloist and conductor with the BSO for the most recent Tanglewood performance, on August 11, 2013.

Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat—written first but published second, as Opus 19—started its life in Bonn around 1790. The first movement, much revised, is likely the only surviving element of the original version. By the time it appeared in print Beethoven had a string of concertos under his belt, including the early piano concerto in E-flat, a sketch for a violin concerto in C, and an oboe concerto from around the time he went to Vienna. The first movement of the B-flat piano concerto was stitched and patched over the years. A new rondo finale finished its evolution around 1798. His Rondo in B-flat catalogued as WoO 6 (“Werk ohne Opus”—“Work without opus number”) seems to have been the original finale.

The opening movement of the B-flat has a military air, like many concertos in that era—including all of Beethoven’s. For the main theme he juxtaposed brisk fanfares with lyrical phrases, all of it attractive if rather on the conventional side. (If a convention suited his purpose, he used it.) As in Mozart, after an extended orchestral tutti the soloist first enters with a quasi-new idea derived from earlier material; he soon slips into virtuosic roudades. The

soloist will turn out to emphasize the lyrical aspect of the material, providing some quite lovely stretches. All of this shows a young composer/pianist as more at home with the keyboard than the orchestra.

In the end the movement is effective, if with some rough transitions and a drifting quality recalling a young composer following his nose—and a more mature composer who doesn't have the time or the patience to fix any problems, which didn't seem to bother him excessively. When he first presented this concerto to a publisher, he introduced it as a work “which I do not claim to be one of my best.” Yet as in the early violin sonatas and string quartets, beneath the not particularly bold material his searching nature can't help showing itself. The whole of the B-flat concerto has a habit of veering off into startling keys: in the first movement, the second theme includes a leap into D-flat major. In the recapitulation that idea will return in an even more striking G-flat major, a distinctively spiced key in those years when pianos were not tuned in equal temperament.

While the first movement never entirely escapes Beethoven's Bonn apprenticeship, the next two movements sound more mature, more Viennese. Even here in one of the more cautious of his early opuses Beethoven tended to wide-ranging tonal peregrinations. The Adagio, in E-flat major, sounds Mozartian in conception but more nearly Beethovenian in tone, with an elegantly nocturnal atmosphere. It echoes the preciousness of the 18th-century *galant* mood—also the lofty choruses of Mozart's *Magic Flute* (whose home key is E-flat major). As in Mozart slow movements, the theme is beautifully ornamented by the soloist; but the keys include a strikingly dark B-flat minor, and the pianism is fresh and brilliant.

Traditionally, concerto finales were lively and witty sonata-rondos—a convention Beethoven conformed to in all his concertos. (The most common sonata-rondo formal outline is ABACABA, with the A and B functioning like the first and second themes of a sonata, the C section often serving as development section.) For this finale Beethoven sketched a dancing 6/8 main theme that did not take wing until he moved its pickup note over to the downbeat, making a droll hopping effect. Here he plays the sort of joking game with rhythm and meter that Haydn was given to, but in a robust tone of his own. The C section jumps into a Turkish or Gypsy-flavored minor. The soloist ends the story with a blaze of double trills in the right hand, a specialty of Beethoven the young virtuoso. In any case, when he published this concerto as Opus 19, Beethoven was already far beyond it as a composer: the blazing, revolutionary *Pathétique* piano sonata is Opus 13.

#### JAN SWAFFORD

Jan Swafford is a prizewinning composer and writer whose most recent book, published in December 2020, is *Mozart: The Reign of Love*. His other acclaimed books include *Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph*, *Johannes Brahms: A Biography*, *The Vintage Guide to Classical Music*, and *Language of the Spirit: An Introduction to Classical Music*. He is an alumnus of the Tanglewood Music Center, where he studied composition.

## Ludwig van Beethoven

### Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37

*Composition and premiere:* Sketches for Beethoven's Concerto No. 3 appear as early as 1796 or 1797, but the principal work of composition came in the summer of 1800. Beethoven may have revised it in 1802 prior to the first performance, which took place in Vienna on April 5, 1803, with the composer as soloist. Sometime after completing the concerto—but before 1809—Beethoven wrote a cadenza for the Archduke Rudolph, though the concerto had been dedicated to Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia. The BSO's first performances were in April 1888 under Wilhelm Gericke's direction; Mrs. H.H.A. Beach was soloist. Pierre Monteux led the first Tanglewood performance on August 7, 1960, with Leon Fleisher as soloist. The most recent Tanglewood performance was Yefim Bronfman's with the BSO and Andris Nelsons on July 25, 2021.

For virtuoso performer-composers like Beethoven, concertos were designed as personal showpieces. For that reason, the dynamic of performance and publication was different with concertos than with other genres. Beethoven would write a concerto, revising as he performed it, the cadenzas left for improvisation. Only when a concerto had been heard enough to become familiar to audiences did he publish it. Thus the deceptively late opus number for the Third Concerto, which was finished around late 1802 into 1803 but not published until 1804.

In fact, when the Third was premiered the solo part had not been written down at all, as a well-known story relates. Everybody nominally played from music in those days, so at the performance Beethoven carefully placed the solo part on the piano's music stand. He was flanked by a young page-turner, who discovered that the pages were mostly blank, with only occasional "hieroglyphics" as reminders. The young man spent the performance anxiously watching Beethoven, waiting for his solemn nods to turn the empty pages. At a dinner afterward, Beethoven was roaring with laughter over the youth's distress.

Even though much of the Third Concerto is audibly indebted to Mozart, in his handling of color and material Beethoven is playing sophisticated games of his own. The quiet unison opening in C minor recalls Mozart's great C minor concerto, K.491, of which Beethoven once said—after hearing a performance in Vienna's Augarten in summer 1799—"I'll never do anything like that!" Still, even in relatively backward-looking works like this one, Beethoven possesses a mature mastery of form and conception. Like many pieces of the "First Period," the Third Concerto is more than beautiful; it is a remarkable essay in musical form and logic.

The beginning sets a tone dark and dramatic, with a certain military-march aspect familiar in concertos by Beethoven and many others. This, his only minor-key concerto, does not really have the driving and demonic tone of the Fifth Symphony's first movement and other examples of his "C minor mood"; neither is this concerto the full-blown "heroic" style of the Middle Period. As such, it has a distinctive voice in Beethoven's orchestral music.

The entire concerto will turn around a few ideas from the beginning. The first measure is a rising figure, the second measure a down-striding scale, the third measure a martial drumbeat. Separately and together, these ideas will pervade the first movement and beyond. The most important, as it turns out, is not one of the melodic motifs but rather the drumbeat rhythm. The opening string phrase is echoed a step higher by the winds, who add another fundamental idea: a line that rises up to a piercing dissonance on A-flat. In various guises, that dissonant A-flat will resonate throughout the piece and find its resolution only at the end.

The second theme of the opening movement is, as expected, a lyrical contrast to the sternly militant opening, and brings us to the piano's entrance on an explosive upward-rushing scale. The soloist takes up the main theme, establishing a commanding personality in the dialogue with the orchestra.

Much of the music from the solo entrance on, especially the middle development section, is dominated by the drumbeat figure in constantly new forms—but never, so far, played by an actual drum. After the piano's concluding cadenza, however, the rhythmic motif finally turns up in the timpani, as if emerging as a "real" drumbeat, in a duet with the piano. That moment of piano and timpani together appears to be the first idea Beethoven jotted down for the concerto, in 1796: "For the Concerto in C minor, kettledrum at the cadenza." Here was the generating conception from which the work developed.

The second movement is in a striking E major, about as far from C minor as a key can be. But the first note in its solemnly beautiful opening theme is G-sharp, the same pitch as A-flat. The starring pitch continues to resonate. The form is a simple ABA, the piano now with an air of rapturous improvisation. The final chord of the second movement places G-sharp on the top in strings. The piano picks up that note and turns it back into A-flat to begin what will be a lively and playful rondo, despite the C minor tonality. The middle section is in A-flat major—the starring note now with its own key. As a kind of musical joke, Beethoven turns the A-flat back into G-sharp and on that pivot shoves us for a moment into E major, the key of the slow movement. After a mini-cadenza for the piano the 2/4 main theme is transformed into a Presto 6/8, driving to the end in pealing C major high spirits.

#### JAN SWAFFORD

Jan Swafford is a prizewinning composer and writer whose most recent book, published in December 2020, is *Mozart: The Reign of Love*. His other acclaimed books include *Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph*, *Johannes Brahms: A Biography*, *The Vintage Guide to Classical Music*, and *Language of the Spirit: An Introduction to Classical Music*. He is an alumnus of the Tanglewood Music Center, where he studied composition.

## Guest Artist

### Paul Lewis

Paul Lewis is internationally regarded as one of the leading musicians of his generation. His cycles of core piano works by Beethoven and Schubert have received unanimous critical and public acclaim worldwide and consolidated his reputation as one of the world's foremost interpreters of the central European classical repertoire. His numerous awards have included the Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist of the Year, two Edison awards, three *Gramophone* awards, the Diapason D'or de l'Annee, and the South Bank Show Classical Music award. He holds honorary degrees from Liverpool, Edge Hill, and Southampton universities, and was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours. Lewis appears regularly as soloist with the world's great orchestras, collaborating with the most well-respected conductors on the international circuit, and has performed several acclaimed Beethoven concerto cycles. In the 2018-2019 season, he concluded a two-year recital series exploring connections between the sonatas of Haydn, the late piano works of Brahms, and Beethoven's Bagatelles and *Diabelli* Variations. Lewis's recital career takes him to venues such as London's Royal Festival Hall, Alice Tully and Carnegie Hall in New York, the Musikverein and Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Théâtre des Champs Élysées in Paris, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and the Berlin Philharmonie and Konzerthaus as well as some of the world's most prestigious festivals, including Tanglewood, Ravinia, Schubertiade, Edinburgh, Salzburg, Lucerne, and the BBC Proms. His multi-award-winning discography for Harmonia Mundi includes the complete Beethoven piano sonatas, concertos, and the *Diabelli* Variations, among many others. Future recording plans include a multi-CD series of Haydn sonatas, Beethoven's Bagatelles, and works by Bach. Paul Lewis studied with Joan Havill at Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London before going on to study privately with Alfred Brendel. In 2021 Paul Lewis became an Irish citizen. He is co-artistic director of Midsummer Music, an annual chamber music festival held in Buckinghamshire, UK. He is a passionate advocate for music education, and the festival offers free tickets to local schoolchildren. Lewis also gives master classes around the world alongside his concert performances. Paul Lewis made his Tanglewood and Boston Symphony Orchestra debuts in August 2012, as soloist in Mozart's A major piano concerto, No. 23, K.488, and his BSO subscription series debut in October 2013. In 2016 at Tanglewood he was soloist with the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra in Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 1. He appeared twice at Tanglewood in July 2019: with the BSO and Andris Nelsons in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 12 in A, K.414(385p), and in recital at Seiji Ozawa Hall.