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Jay Friedman, Music Director



Holiday Concert

December 10, 2023 4:00 P.M.

Concordia University Chapel of our Lord

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace — Poco più presto

Baird Dodge, violin

Nutcracker Suite, Op. 71a

P.I. Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)

- I. Miniature Overture
- II. Danses caractéristiques: Marche - Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy - Russian Dance (Trepak) - Arabian Dance - Chinese Dance - Dance of the Reed-Flutes
- III. Waltz of the Flowers

Sleeping Beauty Suite, Op. 66a

Tchaikovsky

- I. Introduction
- II. Adagio. Pas d'action
- III. Pas de caractère
- IV. Panorama
- V. Waltz

Jay Friedman, conductor

The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest is supported in part by grants from the Donnelley Foundation, Illinois Arts Council, and Oak Park Area Arts Council.

Brahms was twenty when in 1853 he and a Hungarian violinist, Eduard Reményi, underwent a brief concert tour. Reményi encouraged Brahms's love of the Gypsy style that would color much of his music. During a stopover at Weimar, Brahms met Joseph Joachim, who would become one of the century's greatest violinists and a friend and confidant. Joachim introduced Brahms to Robert Schumann, composer and editor of Europe's most influential music journal, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Schumann decided he had found the next great German artist. Writing in the *Neue Zeitschrift*, he called his discovery "the one . . . chosen to express the most exalted spirit of the times in an ideal manner, one who [sprang] fully armed from the head of Jove. . . . A youth at whose cradle the graces and heroes of old stood guard." During the next two decades, Brahms produced a piano concerto, a pair of serenades for orchestra, and his monumental *German Requiem*, and much masterful chamber music and songs. Finally in 1876, he finished his *First Symphony*.

Things moved quickly after the *Symphony No. 1*, a work that conductor Hans von Bülow dubbed *Beethoven's Tenth*: in other words, the most important symphony to be introduced since the *Beethoven Ninth* premiered in 1824. Liberated by the composition and reception of his symphony, which had cost him fourteen years of labor, Brahms turned out a second one in four months. And then he envisioned another way of etching his name into marble. He would write a violin concerto.

Composers before and since Beethoven had written violin concertos, but few of those works had taken hold in the concert hall. In fact, only Beethoven's and Mendelssohn's were acknowledged as masterpieces, and even Beethoven's had had a hard time getting established. Writing a violin concerto was going to be a challenge for Brahms, as, being a pianist, he lacked a good understanding of violinists and violin writing. For counsel, Brahms turned to his friend Joseph Joachim. Regularly, Brahms would thank Joachim for suggesting revisions, then ignore Joachim's advice. But Brahms was smart enough to accept many of his friend's suggestions.

Joachim was the soloist in the New Year's Day 1879 premiere in Leipzig, with Brahms conducting. Brahms appeared almost in disguise, having just grown the long beard with which he would forever after be identified, knowing that Leipzig had never had much use for his music. The audience reception was polite but not enthusiastic. Two weeks later, however, Viennese concertgoers got their first hearing of the concerto and took it immediately to heart. Audiences since have sided with Vienna.

The long opening movement (*Allegro non troppo*) is symphonic in scope and a true collaboration between orchestra and soloist. The slow orchestral introduction contains the seeds for most of the subsequent themes presented in the movement. The soloist enters with dramatic flair, almost cadenza-like in its style, before presenting the expansive warmth of the main theme and its counterpart, a yearning, searching melody. Overall, this movement combines Brahms' laser-like intensity with gentle lyrical passages, with the coda following a cadenza composed by Joachim.

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Eliot Abarbanel 6
Isabela Flores 3 ^
Gwen Gates 3 ++
Caitlin Hillyard 3
Jacob Johnson 2
Lisa Minish 5
Aileen Murphy 2
Aubrey Reynolds 3
Ingrid Schimnoski 6 +
Tiffany Bodine Wagner 3 ^
Michelle Wynton 11

Second Violins

Carol Janossy 46 *
Abe Baker 3
Cheryl Flinn 31
Lisa Gaspero 2
Yi-Chen Huang 13
Judy Meredith 22
Melissa Proulx 1
Ed Torgerson 8
Julie Tumma 23
Wailin Wong 7

Violas

Uli Widmaier 7 *
Allena Berry 1
Lili Casillas 3
Sarah Duffy 2
Jacob Keener 2
Jackie Sabuda 8
Fernando Siaba 6
Janet Widmaier 7

Cellos

Chris Springthorpe 8 *
Karen Baldwin 26
Andrea Charest 6
Alex Groesch 7
Christian Hernandez 7
Lenore Mass 29
Emma Schnieder 3

Basses

Kristina Lee 22 *
James Janossy 17
David Malatesta 11
Jolie Quick 9

Flutes

Laurel Tempas 10 *
Marcia Hustad 7
Julie Siarny, *Piccolo* 22

Oboes

Debbie Barford 45*
Linda Johnson 52
Beth Hoover 46, *English horn*

Clarinets

Diane Doll 50*
Howard Green 2
Jacob Kimble 1, *Bass*

Bassoons

Martha Mitchell Cavender 5 *
Lisa Rathje 12

French Horns

David C. Barford 44 *
Melinda Z. Robinson 23
Michael Papierniak 34
Becky Leff 7
Charlie Adkins 2
Owen Kaiser 1

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Trumpets

Dale Kerner 44 *
Augustine Melecio 5
Enrique Escamilla 1
Edward Kerner 8

Trombones

Chris Wood 22 *
Patrick Zielinski 39
Lance Malina 41, *Bass*

Tuba

Nathaniel Schmidt 1

Keyboard

David Leehey 20, *Celesta, Piano, Harpsichord, Chorus rehearsal accompanist*

Percussion

Tammy Worl 1*, *Timpani*
Michael Daniel 54
Matt Hart 11

Although Brahms, in his usual self-deprecating way, described the second movement Adagio as “a poor Adagio”, for some listeners it is the most beautiful of the three. A solo oboe presents the tranquil main theme, which the violinist echoes and elaborates, tracing arabesques of sound.

In the Allegro giocoso, Brahms gives us drama and fire in a characteristic Gypsy fashion. The main theme showcases Joachim’s extraordinary facility with double stops (sounding two notes simultaneously) and other virtuosic violin techniques. The violin and the orchestra blend their combined abilities to create a sound full of irrepressible joy.

Tchaikovsky wrote three ballets, all of them now very famous. His first ballet, *Swan Lake* (1877) was so demanding for choreographer, dancers and orchestra that it was dropped from the repertoire after 1883 and was only revived in 1895, two years after the composer’s death, and even then, in modified form.

By 1888, with his reputation firmly established, such shabby treatment of the composer was unthinkable. The Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg commissioned ***The Sleeping Beauty***, promising the composer a lavish staging paid for through the personal patronage of Tsar Alexander III. Tchaikovsky’s imaginative orchestration coupled with spectacular staging and choreography resulted in *Sleeping Beauty* becoming the model for the Russian imperial style. The story was definitely secondary or, as Tchaikovsky commented: “Going to the ballet for the plot is like going to the opera for the recitatives.” *Sleeping Beauty* was premiered at the Mariinsky Theater in January, 1890. The Tsar, who was present, was less than enthusiastic: “Very nice” was his tepid comment. However, the rest of the audience – and soon the rest of the world – thought otherwise.

The ***Sleeping Beauty Suite*** opens with the original introduction, which foreshadows the curse of the evil fairy Carabosse followed by the mitigating blessing of the Lilac Fairy. The “Rose” Adagio is one of the most famous moments in the ballet, during which the Princess Aurora is courted by four suitors, each bearing a rose. “Le chat botte et la chatte blanche” (Puss in Boots and the White Cat) appear on stage scrapping, among the fairytale characters invited to Aurora’s wedding in Act 3. The “Panorama” is the opening number to Act 2, showing the forest around Aurora’s castle where everyone has been asleep for a hundred years. The suite concludes with the so-called “Sleeping Beauty Waltz” from Act 1.

The Nutcracker (1892) was the last of Tchaikovsky’s three ballets. Though most audiences find the music to be as memorable as it is charming, the composer himself had a somewhat different opinion, describing it as “infinitely worse than *Sleeping Beauty*”.

In the story by E. T. A. Hoffman, young Clara Stahlbaum is given a nutcracker doll with the appearance of a prince by her godfather (and a magician), Drosselmeyer, at a Christmas party. After midnight, with nearly everyone asleep, the doll transforms into the prince it had formerly been, and Clara aids him in defeating the



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mouse king who had threatened to take over the house. With the exception of the March, the selections from the **Nutcracker Suite** are from Act 2, in the Prince's Land of Sweets, where they journey before Clara returns home. The Sugar-Plum Fairy welcomes them (she had ruled in the Prince's absence), and there is a sequence of dances representing exotic lands.

The Miniature Overture skips delicately, the atmosphere of charmed fantasy heightened by omitting bass instruments. The March is an exciting profusion of fanfares and swirling strings. The Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy introduces the newly invented celesta for the first time in orchestral music. It is followed by Trepak - a fast and furious Russian folk-dance. The Arabian Dance is slow, sinuous, and exotic (and more than a touch erotic, as anyone who has seen the Disney movie *Fantasia* is well aware). The Chinese Dance, full of flute flourishes, is followed by the Dance of the Reed Flutes. The suite concludes with the famous Waltz of the Flowers - brimming with grace and elegance, Tchaikovsky's most inspired foray into the form of the French Valse.



A New York City native, **Baird Dodge** joined the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as a violist in 1996. He moved to the second violin section that same year. In 2002, he was appointed principal second violin by Daniel Barenboim. After studying violin and viola from an early age, Dodge attended the precollege division of the Juilliard School. He received a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Swarthmore College in 1990 and a master's degree in music from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1994. His teachers have included Helen Kwalwasser, Gregory

Fulkerson and Joyce Robbins. An avid chamber musician, Dodge has collaborated with such artists as Daniel Barenboim, Isidore Cohen and Ida Kavafian. He also has appeared as a guest artist with the Chicago and Colorado string quartets. He has performed at the Bravo! Colorado Festival, Taos Chamber Music Festival, Marlboro Music Festival and on Music from Marlboro tours. Baird Dodge has a special interest in contemporary music. He often has performed works by his father Charles Dodge, including the premiere of his Violin Etudes at Columbia University's Miller Theater in 1994. He recorded his father's Viola Elegy for New Albion Records in 1992. In 2006, he premiered and recorded *Carillon Sky*, a chamber concerto written for him by Augusta Read Thomas, on the CSO's MusicNOW series with Oliver Knussen conducting. He also has championed the works of composer James Matheson and premiered several of his pieces, including the Violin Concerto, with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the CSO in 2011.

For a biography of conductor **Jay Friedman**, please see your Program Book.

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