

Leonard Slatkin, *Music Director*

Neeme Järvi, *Music Director Emeritus*

Classical Series

Friday, May 31, 2013 at 10:45 a.m. 

Saturday, June 1, 2013 at 8 p.m.
in Orchestra Hall

Leonard Slatkin, *conductor*
André Watts, *piano*

Missy Mazzoli Rouge River Transfiguration*
(b.1980)

Edward MacDowell Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 23
(1860-1908)
Larghetto calmato
Presto giocoso
Largo — Molto allegro
André Watts, piano

INTERMISSION


Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36
(1840-1893)
Andante sostenuto
Andantino in modo di canzona
Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato
Finale: Allegro con fuoco

*denotes World Premiere, commissioned for the DSO
as the Elaine Lebenbom Competition winner

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The DSO can be heard on the DSO, Chandos, London, Naxos, RCA, Mercury Record, and Live From Orchestra Hall labels.

Profile

Leonard Slatkin biography, see page 16

André Watts



WATTS

André Watts burst upon the music world at the age of 16 when Leonard Bernstein chose him to make his debut with the New York Philharmonic in their Young People's Concerts, broadcast nationwide on CBS-TV. Only two weeks later, Bernstein asked him to substitute at the last minute for the ailing Glenn Gould in performances of Liszt's E-flat Concerto with the New York Philharmonic, thus launching his career in storybook fashion. More than 45 years later, André Watts remains one of today's most celebrated and beloved superstars.

Watts has had a long and frequent association with television, having appeared on numerous programs produced by PBS, the BBC and the Arts and Entertainment Network, performing with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center among others.

Watts' extensive discography includes recordings of works by Gershwin, Chopin, Liszt and Tchaikovsky for CBS Masterworks; recital CDs of works by Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt and Chopin for Angel/EMI; and recordings featuring the concertos of Liszt, MacDowell, Tchaikovsky and Saint-Saens on the Telarc label. He is also included in the Great Pianists of the 20th Century series for Philips.

A much-honored artist who has played before royalty in Europe and heads of government in nations all over the world. At age 26 Watts was the youngest person ever to receive an Honorary Doctorate from Yale University and he has since received numerous honors from highly respected schools including the University of Pennsylvania, Brandeis University, The Juilliard School of Music and his Alma Mater, the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University.

Previously Artist-in-Residence at the University of Maryland, Watts was appointed to the newly created Jack I. and Dora B. Hamlin Endowed Chair in Music at Indiana University in May 2004.

Program Notes

Rouge River Transfiguration

MISSY MAZZOLI

B. 1980 in Lansdale, Pennsylvania

Scored for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani + 2 percussion (playing chimes, snare drum, bass drum, crotales, glockenspiel, vibraphone, suspended cymbal and triangle), harp, piano and strings. (Approx. 10 minutes)



A fast-rising force on the contemporary music scene, composer and pianist Missy Mazzoli draws audiences equally into concert halls and rock clubs, and is receiving critical acclaim for her chamber, orchestral and operatic works. Her unique music reflects a trend among composers of her generation who combine styles and techniques in an attempt to satisfy the wide-ranging tastes of 21st-century audiences. Technically speaking, she creates music in layers not normally heard together, but in ways that produce unique vertical harmonies. Referred to by *The New York Times* as “...one of the more consistently inventive and surprising composers now working in New York,” her music has been performed all over the world by ensembles such as the Kronos Quartet, the American Composers Orchestra, the New York City Opera, the Minnesota Orchestra, the South Carolina Philharmonic, Dublin’s Crash Ensemble and many others. She is keyboardist for Victoire, an electro-acoustic band she founded in 2008 dedicated to her own compositions. The band has played in venues all over the world including Berlin, Chicago, New York, Amsterdam, Toronto and Paris. Mazzoli holds degrees from the Yale University School of Music, the Royal Conservatory of the Hague, and Boston University. She is the recipient of four ASCAP Young Composer Awards, a Fulbright Scholarship to the Netherlands, the DSO’s Elaine Lebenbom Award for which this work was composed, and grants from the Jerome Foundation, the American Music Center and the Barlow Endowment. From 2007–2010 she was Executive Director of the MATA Festival in New York, an organization dedicated to promoting the works of young composers. She currently holds the position of Composer-In-Residence for the Opera Company of Philadelphia. In this position she will have the opportunity to follow a personalized, three-year development track focused on the advancement of her career as an operatic

composer.

Just as Mazzoli’s music has opened many listeners’ ears, so her comments about music in general have shown that she really thinks outside the box in this regard. Space limitations unfortunately preclude more than a smattering of her thought-provoking ideas, but here are just a few. About the current state of “classical” music:

“I often hear composers talk about the ‘dark ages’ of the 1970s and 80s—a murky and mysterious time when composers felt compelled to write in a specific, highly academic style in order to be accepted as ‘serious composers.’ [This] made many composers feel that they had to write in a style that was not truly theirs. But really, the more interesting composers of the past 50 years never stopped doing exactly what they wanted. They bravely faced criticism and accepted the consequences or found a way around the problem altogether by ditching the ‘composer’ label and abandoning all hope of acceptance within the increasingly isolated, grumpy and dogmatic world of ‘classical music.’ It was a sort of academy-sponsored brain drain.” In addition:

“The word ‘accessible’ can really ruffle feathers within the new music community, but I don’t think that ‘accessible’ equals oversimplifying, or dumbing things down, or playing to the lowest common denominator. The goal of my music has always been to communicate with an audience. That sounds obvious to 99% of the world, but it really is blasphemy to say that within academia!”

About what constitutes “classical music” in our time:

“Meredith Monk is often classified under World Music....but I experience her music as some of the most complex and innovative classical music I have ever heard....Why is the classical music world not clambering to acclaim excellent music [like this] for its own? Because its creators use repetition as a compositional tool? Because they write triads? Is it the electric guitars? The drums? Is it that the composers don’t look or act like the ‘composers’ we read about in music history class? LET IT GO! If classical music presenters, venues and funders could open up stylistically and stop excluding this music for superficial reasons, we’d probably see more diversity in terms of gender and ethnicity in the classical and new music communities. If we lived in a world where ‘outsiders’ like Meredith Monk, Laurie Anderson and Pamela Z were deeply respected by the ‘academy,’ the ‘well-funded’ and the ‘tenured,’ we might also see more

young women eager to call themselves ‘composers.’ I’d love to be able to see my students stop wasting their time worrying that their music is not smart enough. Yes, we’ve made great strides since the dark ages of the 70s and early 80s, but we have much further to go.”

Commissioned by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in honor of Elaine Lebenbom, the composer has kindly supplied the following explanatory remarks for *Rouge River Transfiguration*.

Charles Sheeler: “Our factories are our substitute for religious expression.”

Louis-Ferdinand Celine, from *Journey to the End of the Night*: “...all around me and above me as far as the sky, the heavy, composite muffled roar of torrents of machines, hard wheels obstinately turning, grinding, groaning, always on the point of breaking down but never breaking down.”

I first fell in love with Detroit while on tour with my band, Victoire, in 2010. When I returned home to New York I dove into early Detroit techno from the late 80s, Celine’s novel *Journey to the End of the Night*, and early 20th-century photographs by Charles Sheeler, who documented Detroit’s River Rouge Plant in 1927 through a beautiful, angular photo series. In my research I was struck by how often the landscape of Detroit inspired a kind of religious awe, with writers from every decade of the last century comparing the city’s factories to cathedrals and altars, and *Vanity Fair* even dubbing Detroit “America’s Mecca” in 1928. In Mark Binelli’s recent book *Detroit City Is The Place To Be*, he even describes a particular Scheeler photograph, *Criss-Crossed Conveyors*, as evoking “... neither grit nor noise but instead an almost tabernacular grace. The smokestacks in the background look like the pipes of a massive church organ, the titular conveyor belts forming the shape of what is unmistakably a giant cross.” This image, of the Rouge River Plant as a massive pipe organ, was the initial inspiration for *Rouge River Transfiguration*. The music is about the transformation of grit and noise (here represented by the percussion, piano, harp and pizzicato strings) into something massive, resonant and unexpected. The “grit” is again and again folded into string and brass chorales that collide with each other, collapse, and rise over and over again, “always on the point of breaking down but never breaking down.”

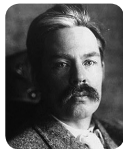
Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor

EDWARD MACDOWELL

B. December 18, 1860 in New York

D. January 23, 1908 in New York

Scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings. (Approx 26 minutes)



There can be few stories in the history of music as disheartening as the one concerning the greatly-gifted American composer and pianist Edward MacDowell. Although it may be difficult to comprehend at this point in history, it must be said that few artists in their time have been idolized to the extent that MacDowell was during most of his mature life. This phenomenal adulation only intensifies the great sadness one feels when contemplating the very tragic way in which his life ended. At the beginning of the 20th century, MacDowell was thought to be the finest of all American composers, but that reputation was short-lived, and following his untimely death his music went into a swift and long decline from which it has never fully recovered. Andre Watts, our soloist at these concerts, is one of MacDowell's staunchest supporters, and has often lamented the neglect of the man's outstanding works for the piano.

Born into a Quaker family of Scottish-Irish descent, Edward Alexander MacDowell received his first piano lessons from a Colombian violinist who happened to be living with the family at the time, and later his musically-inclined mother arranged for occasional lessons from the famous Venezuelan pianist Teresa Carreno, who would go on to become a great champion of his First Piano Concerto. In 1876 he and his mother went to Paris, where the following year he was admitted to the prestigious Paris Conservatory, becoming one of only several pupils accepted by Antoine Marmontel, one of the most sought-after teachers of his day. Among MacDowell's fellow students was the young Claude Debussy. However, Edward became quite dissatisfied with his studies at the Conservatory, and two years later he and his mother moved to Germany where he entered the Frankfurt Conservatory, studying piano and composition and eventually making the acquaintance of the great Franz Liszt. He was a first-rate pianist and originally intended to pursue a concert career, but both Liszt and Joachim Raff, the composer and conductor with whom he was studying composition, encouraged him to

think seriously about composition, even going so far as to arrange performances of his early works in Europe. In 1881 MacDowell began teaching at the conservatories in Darmstadt and Wiesbaden, but resigned after a year in order to teach privately. During this time he fell in love with Marian Griswold Nevins, an American who had been one of his piano students in Frankfurt, and they were married in 1884. They remained in Germany for the next four years, when financial difficulties forced them to return to the U.S., eventually settling in Boston, where he established an enviable reputation as a composer, pianist and teacher.

In 1896 MacDowell was asked to join the faculty of Columbia University in New York and to establish a music department there, in the process becoming the University's first Professor of Music. In addition to teaching, he also directed the famous Mendelssohn Glee Club in New York, and started an all-male choir at Columbia with an eye to raising the artistic standards of college glee clubs and music societies. During his tenure at Columbia he won the admiration of students and teachers alike for his enthusiasm, dedication and excellence as a teacher. In 1902 Columbia hired a man named Nicholas Murray Butler to be its new president, and almost immediately problems arose between Butler and MacDowell. For one thing, Butler did not at all share MacDowell's ideas about the role of music in a university, and even attempted to eliminate the music department altogether. For the next two years the two men carried on a heated and infamous public disagreement, resulting in MacDowell's explosive and scandalous resignation from the university in 1904, an act which became a *cause célèbre* in American music circles. The strain on MacDowell's mental and physical health was enormous, and that same year he was involved in a serious traffic accident in which he was struck down and run over by a Hansom cab. As if these two situations were not enough, some serious medical problems had earlier been discovered, and the resulting trauma and depression he experienced caused a rapid decline in the state of his mental and emotional health. He eventually suffered a total mental collapse and became partially paralyzed. The well-known author and music critic Lawrence Gilman visited MacDowell at this time, and left a heart-rending account of what he saw: "His mind became that of a little child. He sat quietly, day after day, in a chair by a window, smiling patiently from time to time at those about him, turning the

pages of a book of fairy tales that seemed to give him a definite pleasure, and greeting with a fugitive gleam of recognition certain of his more intimate friends." So it was that this once-lionized artist was reduced to the most pitiable condition imaginable.

However, as so often happens in life, this very dark cloud did indeed have a kind of silver lining. In 1896 the MacDowells had purchased the beautiful 450-acre Hillcrest Farm in Peterborough, New Hampshire, which became their regular summer residence, and where Edward found renewed inspiration in his activities. He spent the last summers of his life there before passing away in New York in 1908 just past his 47th birthday. Even during those clouded final years he had occasional moments of lucidity in which he became obsessed with creating a haven for artists of all kinds at the Farm. Shortly before he died his wife realized the dream, creating the MacDowell Colony in 1907 where artists could indeed enjoy a summer retreat away from the distractions and problems of everyday and big-city life. Among the notables who have worked there are Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Roy Harris, Amy Beach, Virgil Thomson, Thornton Wilder, Edward Arlington Robinson, DuBose Heyward, Studs Terkel, Barbara Tuchman, Alice Walker, and James Baldwin. In 1997 the MacDowell Colony was awarded the National Medal of the Arts for "nurturing and inspiring many of [the 20th century's] finest artists." Over the years some 4,000+ composers and writers have been there, and these Colonists have won more than 50 Pulitzer Prizes, 7 MacArthur Genius Awards, 60 Rome Prizes, and hundreds of other awards. Edward and Marian (who died at the age of 98) would surely have been proud.

The Second Piano Concerto is MacDowell's magnum opus, is considered the first truly significant major piano concerto by an American composer, and is his most frequently-performed work. It was written while he was still in Germany in 1885, but given its first performance here in March of 1889 with the composer as soloist and Theodore Thomas conducting the New York Philharmonic. It was a remarkable accomplishment for being only 24 years old. One of his greatest triumphs occurred in December of 1894, when he performed the work again with the New York Philharmonic, but this time with the renowned conductor Anton Seidl on the podium. The reception he was given after that performance was overwhelming, with one critic calling it "...a tremendous ovation such as is usually accorded only to a

popular operatic prima donna or to a famous virtuoso of international repute.” Another critic referred to “...that splendid kind of virtuosity which makes one forget the technique.” The work is in the traditional three movements, but not in the usual order. Unlike the usual fast-slow-fast arrangement, this concerto is more like slow-fast-majestic, a pattern which Sir William Walton was to utilize in his three concertos in the 20th century. The first movement, which is very slow and expansive, is the longest of the three, and contains a lovely lyrical theme which was one of the main reasons for the concerto’s immense popularity around the turn of the last century. The second movement is quite fast and virtuosic, almost like a breathless dance, and pays homage to Franz Liszt with its dazzling display of technical pyrotechnics. This movement appears to have been inspired by a London performance of Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which the celebrated English actress Ellen Terry gave a memorable portrayal of Beatrice. According to MacDowell, after the performance he hurried to his home and directly sketched out the movement for two pianos. In the finale we hear again music from the first movement, but then it goes boldly in a new direction, and even though there are some dark moments along the way, the concerto ends triumphantly and optimistically in true Romantic fashion.

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY
 B. May 7, 1840, in Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia
 D. November 6, 1893, in St. Petersburg, Russia

Premiered by the Russian Musical Society under the direction of Nikolai Rubinstein in February 1868.



Scored for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 B-flat clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, cymbals, bass drum and strings (approx. 44 minutes).

“I adore terribly this child of mine; it is one of only a few works with which I have not experienced disappointment...this is my best symphonic work” — so spoke Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky regarding his monumental Fourth Symphony. Considering the circumstances surrounding the inspiration for the work, though, it is surprising Tchaikovsky felt such affection.

By the time Tchaikovsky began writing his Fourth Symphony in 1877, he had exchanged vows with Antonina Milyukova,

a young Russian conservatory student. This is somewhat perplexing considering Tchaikovsky’s supposed homosexuality. Whatever the reason for the union — perhaps a chance to silence innuendos regarding his sexual orientation — it dissolved within a year. During his marriage, however, one of Tchaikovsky’s most triumphant works was written — a tribute to his beliefs regarding musical creation. In a letter to his patroness and friend, Madame Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky muses:

“At the moment of creation the artist

needs complete quiet. The artist’s work, even that of the musician, is always objective. Those are mistaken who think that the creative artist can express his feelings through his artistic medium while he is experiencing them. Sad as well as joyous feelings are always expressed, as it were, in retrospect... In short, the artist leads two lives: that of the ordinary human being and that of the artist; and these two lives do not always run parallel.”

Tchaikovsky’s friendship with Mme. von Meck seems to have played just as critical a role in the genesis of the symphony as his

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faltering marriage. He dedicated the work to “my dearest friend” - a reference to von Meck — and at times referred to the piece as “our symphony.”

Musically, Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony hinges on a recurring “Fate” motive — recalling the opening theme of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. The massively complex first movement (Andante sostenuto — Moderato con anima) opens with the “Fate” motive, a fanfare sounded first by the horns and bassoons and then by the trumpets. From this moment forward, the movement never ceases to develop, presenting new themes and continually contorting around the omnipresent “Fate” motive.

The second movement (Andantino in modo di canzona) presents an entirely new aspect of sadness – melancholy - as the plaintive solo oboe presents the first of two themes. The initially subdued second theme rises from the clarinet and bassoon to reach shimmering heights in the strings, only to return once more to the oboe theme, which is now passed throughout the orchestra.

The playful third movement — a scherzo — seems almost out of place with its piquant pizzicati and colorful wind trio, complete with frenzied piccolo outbursts.

The Finale: Allegro con fuoco once again

confronts Tchaikovsky’s “Fate” motive, this time with more determined success. The initial theme, based on the Russian folk song “In the field a little Birch Tree stood,” escalates and morphs into the fanfare. But Tchaikovsky chooses to overcome “Fate” and the music triumphs over oppression, as the symphony sprints to a cacophonous close.

Although Tchaikovsky never published a program associated with the Fourth Symphony, he did include a detailed programmatic description of the work in a letter to von Meck:

I. The introduction is the kernel, the quintessence, the chief thought of the whole work. The main idea, first heard in the trumpets and then in the horns, is Fate, the inexorable power that hampers our search for happiness... The main theme of the Allegro describes feelings of depression and haplessness. Would it not be better to forsake reality and lose oneself in dream?... A sweet and tender dream enfolds me, a serene and radiant presence leads me on, until all that was dark and joyless is forgotten... But no, these are but dreams. Fate returns to waken us, and we see that life is an alternation of grim reality and fugitive dreams of happiness.

II. The second movement shows another aspect of sadness. Here is the melancholy feeling that overcomes us when we sit weary and alone at the end of the day. The book we pick up slips from our fingers, and a procession of memories passes by in review. We remember happy times of youth as well as moments of sorrow. We regret what is past, but have neither the courage nor the will to begin a new life... There is a bittersweet comfort in losing oneself in the past...

III. Here are only the capricious arabesques and indeterminate shapes that come into one’s mind with a little wine. The mood is neither sad nor gay... One may envision a drunken peasant singing a street song, or hear a military band passing in the distance. These are disconnected pictures... with no connection to reality.

IV. If you find no joy in yourself, look around you. Go to the people: See how they can enjoy life and give themselves up to festivity. But hardly have we had a moment to enjoy this when Fate, relentless and untiring, makes his presence known. In their revelry, the others take no notice... There is still happiness, simple and naive; rejoice in the happiness of others and you can still live.



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