



Chris Christodoulou

Cheryl Mazak

Sunday, January 26, 2020, 3pm
 Zellerbach Hall

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Pinchas Zukerman, *conductor and violin*

PROGRAM

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770–1827) Overture to *Egmont*, Op. 84

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756–1791) Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major,
 K. 219, *Turkish*
 Allegro aperto
 Adagio
 Rondeau: Tempo di minuetto

INTERMISSION

Pyotr Ilyich TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893) Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64
 Andante – Allegro con anima
 Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza
 Valse: Allegro moderato
 Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace

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Overture to *Egmont*, Op. 84 Ludwig van Beethoven

Just how far Ludwig van Beethoven had traveled stylistically during the first decade of the 19th century can be judged by comparing the vivacious, post-Mozartian gestures of *The Creatures of Prometheus* to the galvanizing, storm-tossed musical narrative of the Overture to *Egmont*. Beethoven was no longer content merely to delight and cajole his audiences; he pummeled them into submission according to his will. The rapid deterioration in his hearing had not only forced him to retire from the concert stage as a pianist; it had profoundly affected his whole way of thinking.

Beethoven's incidental music to *Egmont* was the result of a commission from the Burgtheater in Vienna in 1809, and intended for a 20th-anniversary revival of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's original play. The central plot, involving Count Egmont's unsuccessful attempts to free 16th-century Netherlands from its Spanish oppressors and his subsequent execution, clearly struck a chord in the composer's psyche. Indeed, Beethoven wrote to Goethe personally, explaining how he had been moved by "that glorious *Egmont* on which I have again reflected through you, and which I have reproduced in music as intense as my feelings when I read your play."

On the opening night of the new production (May 24, 1810), the audience was somewhat perplexed by the lack of any preparatory music: Beethoven still hadn't completed the overture! It wasn't until the fourth performance on June 15th, that this symphonic masterpiece finally received its grand premiere.

The overture immediately contrasts the forces of good and evil with a slow introductory section that sets massive brass and string chords against soothing, plaintive cries from the woodwinds. This is followed by a storm-swept *allegro* section, a gloomy landscape startlingly illuminated by nerve-shredding strikes of musical lightning. A final reminiscence of the woodwind motif sets up a coda of remarkable force (this is recalled later in the incidental music in the form of a "victory symphony," as Egmont is sent to his execution).

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K. 219, *Turkish*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Despite the fact that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was taught to play the violin from a very early age by his expert teacher-father, Leopold, the boy genius apparently hardly touched the instrument between lessons. Nevertheless, shortly after his seventh birthday, Mozart still went on to make his sensational concerto debut with the court orchestra in Salzburg. It is a sign of his all-embracing creative gift that in later life, Mozart's prodigious talent for the violin and viola was reduced to little more than an enjoyable pastime.

The received wisdom for many years was that Mozart's five authenticated violin concertos—K. 207 in B-flat major, K. 211 in D major, K. 216 in G major, K. 218 in D major, and K. 219 in A major (*Turkish*)—were composed during an eight-month period between April and December 1775. Alan Tyson's paper studies and Wolfgang Plath's detailed examination of the original manuscripts now suggest, however, that K. 207 actually dates from two years earlier.

No one is exactly certain what compelled Mozart to show such unprecedented enthusiasm for the genre at this time. It is therefore more than likely that he simply composed the concertos for himself to play as an act of ingratiation for his powerful employer, the archbishop of Salzburg. The concertos were extremely well received, so much so that the following year the newly appointed leader of the archbishop's orchestra, Antonio Brunetti, eagerly took them under his wing.

Finest of all is K. 219, whose opening *Allergro aperto* is notable both for its exuberant melodic invention and the soloist's very first entry, which opens with a six-bar *adagio* interlude as though it were the most natural thing in the world. Another striking feature is the finale's "noisy" third episode in A minor, composed in the then fashionable Janissary ("alla turca") style, with cellos and double basses instructed to play with the wood of their bows. Apparently the audiences of the time found the intensity of feeling generated by the central *Adagio* so

perplexing that the following year, Brunetti requested Mozart compose a substitute. The result is the magical Adagio in E major, K. 261.

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Composed the very same year as Richard Strauss' *Don Juan*, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony is the most popular of all his works in the genre. Its string of unforgettable melodies, breathtaking emotional power, and sense of a glorious triumph won in the face of adversity has guaranteed it an immortal place in music history. Tchaikovsky initially had severe doubts about the piece, convinced that it represented the start of a creative decline. Having witnessed the thunderous applause that greeted the work wherever it was performed, however, he later confided to his nephew, Lev Davidov: "I like it far better now."

Tchaikovsky was blessed with one of the most profoundly instinctive of creative gifts. Far from merely representing the self-indulgent outpourings of an emotionally unstable personality, the often painful immediacy of his deeply introspective and volatile soundworld was to touch a whole generation of composers as disparate in technique as Puccini, Sibelius, and Berg. Tormented throughout his life by feelings of guilt regarding his homosexuality (referred to simply as 'Z' in his correspondence), it is a bitter irony that as little as 20 years after the composer's death, the great impresario Serge Diaghilev could write from the admittedly racy artistic circles of Paris: "Tchaikovsky thought of committing suicide for fear of being discovered a homosexual; but today, if you are a composer and *not* a homosexual, you might as well put a bullet through your head." Tchaikovsky's early musical progress was constantly hampered by his father's blinkered desire to see him enter the legal profession. Despite composing his first song setting at the age of four and subsequently showing signs of exceptional talent (none of the local teachers could keep pace with him), six years later, Tchaikovsky was packed off to the School of Jurisprudence. This caused him such deep distress that on the day of his arrival he had

to be forcibly torn away from his mother, and then clung onto the wheels of her carriage in an effort to prevent her leaving. He graduated in 1859 and immediately obtained a job with the Ministry of Justice in Saint Petersburg, but after three years of inexorable tedium, the 22-year-old wrote to his father informing him that he was going to make music his career.

Enrolling at the Conservatory in 1863, Tchaikovsky's progress was fairly spectacular. Having composed little more than a handful of piano pieces and songs up to this point, within five years he had the remarkably assured First Symphony (*Winter Daydreams*) under his belt. In addition, he had been taken on as a lecturer at the newly founded Moscow Conservatory, and then in 1869 produced the first version of his seminal Romantic masterpiece, the *Romeo and Juliet* fantasy-overture.

Despite recurring fits of depression brought about by his homosexuality and natural insecurity, this opened the floodgates to a stream of compositions over the following seven years that indisputably established Tchaikovsky as Russia's greatest living composer, including the Second (*Little Russian*) and Third (*Polish*) Symphonies, the First Piano Concerto, the ballet *Swan Lake*, and the *Variations on a Rococo Theme* for cello and orchestra. That same year, Tchaikovsky began exchanging letters with a wealthy widower, Nadezhda von Meck, who offered to support him financially (and emotionally) on the rather strange condition that neither of them should ever meet. Overwhelmed by her generosity, he responded with three axiomatic, storm-tossed masterworks: the symphonic fantasia *Francesca da Rimini*, the Fourth Symphony, and the opera *Eugene Onegin*.

At the very height of his powers, Tchaikovsky then took the appallingly ill-advised step of marrying a psychologically wayward admirer of his, Antonina Milyukova. Tormented and repulsed, after only a few weeks he escaped to the Caucasus, where he suffered a nervous collapse, having made a bungled attempt at suicide. It took him nearly 10 years to recover fully artistically, for while a number of works he composed during the early/mid 1880s are highly popular today (the *Capriccio*

Italien, Serenade for Strings, and 1812 Overture, in particular), the music of this period, despite many felicities and moments of burning inspiration, only occasionally manages to live up to the supreme promise of his earlier work. Whatever his mild creative shortcomings, Tchaikovsky's reputation continued to blossom both at home and abroad (including in North America), where he went on tour conducting his own music and was warmly welcomed by many of his most distinguished musical colleagues, including Dvořák, Grieg, Fauré, and Brahms (who actually had little time for his music). In 1892, no less a figure than Gustav Mahler was at the helm of a celebrated Hamburg production of *Eugene Onegin*.

Tchaikovsky's final years witnessed a glorious affirmation of his extraordinary creative prowess, highlighted by the ballets *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*, as well as the Fifth and Sixth (*Pathétique*) Symphonies, the latter completed in the year of his death, 1893. The official version of Tchaikovsky's sudden passing was that, having drunk unboiled water, he subsequently contracted an extremely virulent form of typhoid. However, it is now widely

held that a private court of honor had met to decide the outcome of a potentially embarrassing liaison that Tchaikovsky had formed with the nephew of a Russian nobleman—it was apparently resolved that the only course of action open to the composer was for him to take his own life. In these more enlightened times, it seems barely conceivable that in order to protect the reputation of a singularly anonymous member of the Russian aristocracy, one of the greatest musical talents of the 19th century was ruthlessly silenced.

More than in any other of his symphonies, Tchaikovsky attempted to impart a sense of unity to the Fifth by the use of a “fate” motif that we hear announced at the very opening by clarinets and bassoons over the subdued tread of accompanying strings. This re-emerges in the slow movement, most potently towards the end, where the brass, underpinned by a massive timpani roll, throttle the music almost to the point of extinction. In the waltz-like third movement, “fate” emerges ghost-like from the clarinet in the closing bars, while the finale opens and closes with major-key versions of the motif, sending one's spirits soaring into the night sky.

—Julian Haylock

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

For more than seven decades the **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** (RPO) has been at the forefront of music-making in the United Kingdom. Its home base since 2004 at London's Cadogan Hall serves as a springboard for seven principal residencies as well as more than 45 concerts per year in long-term partnership venues across the country, often in areas where access to live orchestral music is limited. In London, the orchestra's regular performances at Cadogan Hall are complemented by distinguished series at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall and the Royal Albert Hall. With a wider reach than any other UK large ensemble, the RPO has truly become Britain's national orchestra.

Alongside its concert series, the RPO embraces 21st-century opportunities includ-

ing appearances with pop stars and on video games, and film and television soundtracks, while its artistic priority remains paramount: the making of great music at the highest level for the widest possible audience. This would have been lauded by the orchestra's founder and first conductor, Sir Thomas Beecham, who established the RPO in 1946, leading a vital revival in the UK's orchestral life after World War II.

Since then, the orchestra's principal conductors have included Rudolf Kempe, Antal Doráti, Walter Weller, André Previn, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Yuri Temirkanov, Daniele Gatti, and Charles Dutoit; and its repertoire has encompassed every strand of music, from the core classical repertoire to music of the 20th and 21st centuries, and works by leading composers

of recent years such as Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and Sir John Tavener.

The RPO's commitment to working with the finest conductors continues and in July 2018, the orchestra announced Vasily Petrenko as its new music director; he will assume the title of Music Director Designate in August 2020 prior to taking on the full role in August 2021. Petrenko joins the RPO's roster of titled conductors, which includes Pinchas Zukerman (Principal Guest Conductor), Alexander Shelley (Principal Associate Conductor) and Grzegorz Nowak (Permanent Associate Conductor).

The orchestra maintains a busy schedule of prestigious international touring throughout Europe, the Far East, and the United States. It appears regularly at major festivals, including, most recently, events in Poland, Austria, and Italy. Highlights of recent seasons include an extensive tour of Germany and three performances at the new Sheikh Jabar Al-Ahmed Cultural Centre in Kuwait.

In 2018, RPO Resound, the orchestra's community and education program, marked its 25th anniversary. Throughout its history, this effort has thrived on taking music into the heart of the regions that the orchestra serves. From Azerbaijan to Jamaica and from Shanghai to Scunthorpe, the team—comprising the majority of the orchestra—has worked with young people, the homeless, recovering stroke patients (in the award-winning STROKESTRA project in Hull), and in settings ranging from the Sea Life London Aquarium to hospitals, orphanages, and children's hospices.

In 1986, the RPO became the first UK orchestra to launch its own record label. The ensemble has embraced digital advances; continuing its tradition of entrepreneurial innovation,

in 2017 the RPO partnered with a concert-enhancing app, EnCue by Octava, becoming the first orchestra in Europe to offer its audiences real-time program notes delivered to their mobile or tablet devices. The orchestra has become increasingly active on social media platforms, inviting audiences to engage informally on Facebook and Twitter (@rpoonline) and to enjoy behind-the-scenes insights on the RPO website (www.rpo.co.uk), YouTube (RPOOnline), and Instagram (@RPOOnline).

As the RPO proudly looks to its future, its versatility and high standards have established the orchestra as one of today's most open-minded, forward-thinking symphonic ensembles.

For more information, please visit the orchestra's website at www.rpo.co.uk.



Cheryl Mazak

Pinchas Zukerman, *principal guest conductor*
With a celebrated career encompassing five decades, Pinchas Zukerman is one of today's most sought after and versatile musicians—violin and viola soloist, conductor, and cham-

ber musician. He is renowned as a virtuoso and admired for the expressive lyricism of his playing and the singular beauty of his tone, as well as his impeccable musicianship. Zukerman's artistry can be heard throughout his discography of over 100 albums for which he gained two Grammy awards and 21 nominations.

Highlights of his 2019–20 season include tours with the Vienna Philharmonic and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as guest appearances with the Boston, Dallas, and Prague symphony orchestras, the Berlin Staatskapelle, and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. In his fifth season as artist-in-residence of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, he tours with the ensemble to China and Korea, and recently premiered Avner Dorman's Double Concerto for Violin and Cello, written for Zukerman and cellist Amanda Forsyth. Subsequent performances of the important new work take place at Tanglewood with the Boston Symphony; Ottawa with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, where Zukerman serves as conductor emeritus; and with the Israel Philharmonic. In chamber music, he

travels with the Zukerman Trio for performances throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia, and joins longtime friend and collaborator Daniel Barenboim for a cycle of the complete Beethoven sonatas for violin and piano, presented in a three-concert series in Berlin.

A devoted teacher and champion of young musicians, he has served as chair of the Pinchas Zukerman Performance Program at the Manhattan School of Music for over 25 years, and has taught at prominent institutions throughout the United Kingdom, Israel, China, and Canada, among other countries. As a mentor, he has inspired generations of young musicians who have achieved prominence in performing, teaching, and leading roles with music festivals around the globe. Zukerman has received honorary doctorates from Brown University, Queen's University in Kingston (Ontario), and the University of Calgary, as well as the National Medal of Arts from President Ronald Reagan. He is a recipient of the Isaac Stern Award for Artistic Excellence in Classical Music.

ORCHESTRA ROSTER

First Violins

Duncan Riddell
Tamás András
Sulki Yu
Shana Douglas
Eriko Nagayama
Andrew Klee
Kay Chappell
Anthony Protheroe
Erik Chapman
Sophie Mather
Esther Kim
Marciana Buta
Patrycja Mynarska
Imogen East

Second Violins

Andrew Storey
David O'Leary
Jennifer Christie
Charlotte Ansbergs
Peter Graham
Stephen Payne
Manuel Porta
Charles Nolan
Sali-Wyn Ryan
Colin Callow
Nicola Hutchings
Sheila Law

Violas

Abigail Fenna
Liz Varlow
Ugne Tiškutė
Chian Lim
Jonathan Hallett
Triona Milne
Clive Howard
Felix Tanner
Helen Picknett
Zoe Matthews

Cellos

Richard Harwood
Jonathan Ayling
Roberto Sorrentino
Jean-Baptiste Toselli
William Heggart
Rachel van der Tang
Naomi Watts
Anna Stuart

Double Basses

David Stark
David Gordon
Benjamin Cunningham
Ben Wolstenholme
Mark O'Leary
David FC Johnson

Flutes

Joanna Marsh
Harry Winstanley

Piccolos

Helen Keen

Oboes

John Roberts
Timothy Watts

Clarinets

Benjamin Mellefont
Katy Ayling

Bassoons

Joshua Wilson
Fraser Gordon

French Horns

Austin Larson
Finlay Bain
Philip Woods
Jonathan Bareham
Richard Ashton

Trumpets

James Fountain
Adam Wright
Mike Allen

Trombones

Matthew Knight
Rupert Whitehead

Bass Trombone

Josh Cirtina

Tuba

Kevin Morgan

Timpani

Matt Perry

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA MANAGEMENT

Managing Director

James Williams

Deputy Managing Director

Huw Davies

Concerts Director

Louise Badger

Tours Manager

Dawn Day

Tours Assistant

Charlotte Fry

Orchestra Manager

Kathy Balmain

Stage and Transport Manager

Steve Brown

Stage Manager

Esther Robinson

Assistant Stage Manager

Dan Johnson