

5:00 PM SUNDAY, AUGUST 3, 2025

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAURA JACKSON, *conductor*

ZLATOMIR FUNG, *cello* #

TCHAIKOVSKY **Symphony No. 4 in F minor, op. 36**
Andante sostenuto—Moderato con anima
Andantino in modo di canzona
Scherzo. Pizzicato ostinato: Allegro
Finale: Allegro con fuoco

—INTERMISSION—

TCHAIKOVSKY **Variations on a Rococo Theme, op. 33**
Moderato assai quasi Andante
Tema. Moderato semplice
Var. 1. Tempo della Tema
Var. 2. Tempo della Tema
Var. 3. Andante
Var. 4. Allegro vivo
Var. 5. Andante grazioso
Var. 6. Allegro moderato
Var. 7. Andante sostenuto
Var. 8 e Coda. Allegro moderato con anima
Zlatomir Fung

TCHAIKOVSKY **1812 Festival Overture, op. 49**
(with cannons)

Steans Institute alum

Ravinia expresses its appreciation for the generous support of
Premier Sponsor **The Negaunee Foundation**
as well as **The Tchaikovsky Spectacular Consortium**.

The Tchaikovsky Spectacular Consortium comprises an anonymous donor,
Sarah & Larry Barden, Jane & David Casper, Winnie & Bob Crawford,
Kari A. Guhl & Larry A. Gerber, Betsy & Arthur Holden,
Chris & Elise Klein, and Kenneth & Jodi Meister.

Ravinia is proud to feature “Charlie’s Cannons”
in tonight’s performance of the *1812* Overture.

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893) Symphony No. 4 in F minor, op. 36

Scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets and two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings

Terrible crises often provoke uncommonly heroic and majestic responses. The Symphony No. 4 revealed the depth of Tchaikovsky’s character in the face of the greatest crisis in his life. In 1877, an infatuated young student at the Moscow Conservatory, Antonina Milyukova, began to flaunt amorous feelings for her distinguished professor. Tchaikovsky found her a “rather pretty girl of spotless reputation,” but did not share her sentiment. Nonetheless, he soon felt “as though some power of fate was drawing me to this girl.” Antonina and Peter married on July 6, 1877.



Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s cabinet card by Émile Reutlinger (1888)

The union suffered a disastrous start from which it never recovered. On his wedding day, Tchaikovsky confessed great shame to his patron Nadezhda von Meck, the wealthy widow of a railroad baron. “But as soon as the ceremony was over, as soon as I found myself alone with my wife and realized that it was now our destiny to live together, inseparable, I suddenly felt that not only did she not inspire in me even simple friendship but that she was detestable in the fullest sense of the word.” A quick, but painful, dissolution was arranged. The despondent composer found consolation and security in his distant relationship with Meck. In gratitude for her monetary and emotional beneficence, Tchaikovsky dedicated his Fourth Symphony to “my best friend,” Nadezhda von Meck.

The Symphony No. 4—written between May 1877 and January 7, 1878, and premiered in Moscow on February 22, 1878, by the Orchestra of the Imperial Musical Society under conductor Nikolai Rubinstein—portrayed Tchaikovsky’s triumph over the ill fortunes of Fate. He once divulged that the work’s model was Beethoven’s

Symphony No. 5, whose opening notes depicted “Fate knocking at the door.” Tchaikovsky symbolized Fate in his Symphony No. 4 with a minor-key brass and woodwind fanfare. This ominous gesture returns throughout the opening movement and again in the finale. The *canzona* bows under the oppressive weight of destiny, but the famous pizzicato *Scherzo* adds some levity.

Tchaikovsky wrote a letter to Meck that offers rare insight into the residual effects of the marriage crisis, his creative thought process, and the programmatic meaning behind the Symphony No. 4. “You ask if the symphony has a definite program. Ordinarily, when asked that question concerning a symphonic work, I answer, ‘No, none whatever.’ And in truth it is not an easy question. How can one express those vague feelings which pass through one during the writing of an instrumental work which in itself has no definite subject? It is a purely lyrical process, a musical confession of the soul that, filled with the experiences of a lifetime, pours itself out through sound, just as the lyric poet pours himself out in verse. The difference is that music is an incomparably more delicate and powerful language in which to express the thousand varicolored moments of the spiritual life ...



Nadezhda von Meck

“The introduction is the germ of the entire symphony, the idea upon which all else depends. This is Fate, the inexorable force that prevents our hopes of happiness from being realized, that watches jealously lest our felicity should become full and unclouded—it is Damocles’s sword, hanging over the head in constant, unrelenting spiritual torment. It is unconquerable, inescapable. Nothing remains but to submit to what seems useless unhappiness. Despair and discontent grow stronger, sharper. ... So life itself is a persistent alternation of hard reality with evanescent dreams and clutching at happiness. ... This, approximately, is the program of the First Movement.

“The Second Movement expresses another phase of suffering. It is the melancholy that comes in the evening when we sit alone, and weary of work, we try to read, but the book falls

from our hand. Memories crowd upon us. How sweet these recollections of youth, yet how sad to realize they are gone forever ...

“The Third Movement expresses no definite feelings, rather it is a succession of capricious arabesques, those intangible images that pass through the mind when one has drunk wine and feels the first touch of intoxication. ... They are out of touch with reality; they are wild and strange.

“The Fourth Movement: If you truly find no joy within yourself, look for it in others. Go to the people. See—they know how to make the best of their time, how to give themselves up to pleasure! A peasant festival is depicted. No sooner do you forget yourself in this spectacle of others’ joy, than the merciless Fate reappears to remind you of yourself. ... Here one sees the existence of simple, deep joys; enter into them and life will be bearable.

“This, dear friend, is all I can tell you about the symphony. Of course what I have said is neither clear nor complete. This follows from the very nature of instrumental music, which does not submit to detailed analysis. ‘Where words cease, there music begins,’ as Heine said.”

Variations on a Rococo Theme, op. 33

Scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, strings, and solo cello

Tchaikovsky formulated well-defined appraisals of older composers: Bach provided good entertainment in his fugues, Handel was a fourth-rate hack, Haydn composed melodies with remarkable fluency, and Beethoven often languished in verbosity. But Mozart was “the Christ of music, in whom are quenched all his predecessors, just as rays of light are in the sun itself.” Tchaikovsky viewed Mozart from an idealized, 19th-century perspective: he led a tragically short life of childlike innocence and inspiration that produced the most sublime works of musical art.

A prolonged discussion surrounding the influence of the Classical Mozart on the Romantic Tchaikovsky continued through correspondence with his patron Nadezhda von Meck. The aesthetic goals of the two composers seemed at opposite poles, a fact Tchaikovsky admitted to Meck: “You say that my worship for Mozart is quite contrary to my musical nature. But perhaps it is just because—being a child of my day—I feel broken and spiritually out of joint, that I find consolation and rest in Mozart’s music, wherein he gives expression to that joy of life which was part of his sane and wholesome temperament, not yet undermined by reflection. It seems to me that an artist’s creative power is something quite apart from his sympathy for this or that great master ... dissimilarity of temperament between two artists is no hindrance to their mutual sympathy.”

Only two of Tchaikovsky’s compositions reveal a direct musical affinity to the great Classical master: the *Variations on a Rococo Theme for cello and orchestra*, op. 33 (1876), and the *Orchestral Suite No. 4*, op. 61, known as “Mozartiana” (1887). He composed the “Rococo Variations” for Wilhelm Fitzenhagen, a prominent German cellist who was a faculty member at the Moscow Conservatory and concertmaster of the Russian Imperial Musical Society, director of the Moscow Musical and Orchestral Society, and cellist in the Russian Musical Society string quartet that premiered all three of Tchaikovsky’s quartets. Fitzenhagen gave the premiere in Moscow under conductor Nikolai Rubinstein on November 30, 1877.



Wilhelm Fitzenhagen

Fitzenhagen oversaw the publication of a cello-piano version of the variations in 1878. Without the composer’s consent, he introduced numerous alterations to the score, rearranging several variations and omitting one. When the tampering was discovered, Tchaikovsky and his publisher, Peter Jurgenson, were livid. However, the composer later sanctioned some of these emendations, and both versions of the *Variations on a Rococo Theme*—Tchaikovsky’s and Fitzenhagen’s—are still in print. (The Fitzenhagen edition is being performed this evening.) This piece begins with an orchestral introduction, Classically balanced in its phrasing. The solo cello enters with a *moderato semplice* theme accompanied lightly by strings. Several variations contain built-in cello cadenzas. The final variation also functions as a virtuosic coda.

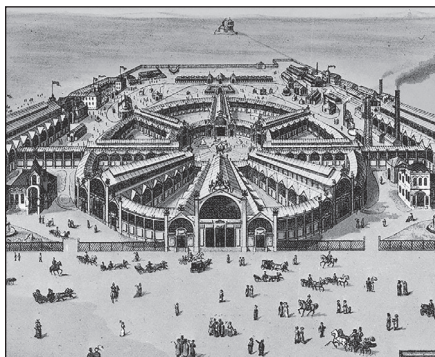
1812 Festival Overture, op. 49

Scored for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, two tenor and one bass trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, tambourine, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, cannons, chimes (bells) and strings

“The overture will be very loud, noisy, but I wrote it without any warm feelings of love, so it will probably be of no artistic worth.”

Unquestionably, Tchaikovsky produced an overture with “very loud, noisy” portions, but the rest of his assessment missed wide of the mark. The *1812 Festival Overture* ranks as perhaps Tchaikovsky’s most popular composition for its sensational, as well as artistic, value.

In June 1880, Nikolai Rubinstein—the renowned pianist, conductor, and head of the music section for the upcoming All-Russian Industrial and Art Exhibition in Moscow—invited Tchaikovsky to compose a new work for the grand event. Khodynka Field, a vacant tract of land northwest of Moscow just outside the city limits, was chosen as the location for the exhibition buildings, including the imposing circular pavilion. Exhibitors came from all industries, ranging from the burgeoning oil sector to the world of fine craftsmanship, such as the dazzling displays of Peter Carl Fabergé.



All-Russian Industrial and Art Exhibition (1882)

Tchaikovsky reacted with “extreme repugnance” at the invitation, but Rubinstein made another attempt to convince his friend three months later: “Your composition would be dearer and more precious to me than all the others.” Tchaikovsky’s protestations and complaints continued a while longer, but he eventually agreed to write a work for the Exhibition that also honored the new Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the 70th anniversary of the Russian resistance to Napoleon’s assault. Tchaikovsky’s “festival overture” was given a grand, open-air first performance. A massive assemblage of instruments filled the cathedral square with sound—a military band, an enormous orchestra, a company of artillery, and pealing bells from the church towers.

Tchaikovsky composed the *1812 Overture* between October 12 and November 19, 1880, with the Napoleonic defeat in mind. An old Russian anthem—a patriotic prayer—serves as the slow introductory theme. The tempo increases as the conflict builds. Among the main themes is a Russian children’s folk song. French troops advance to the strains of the “Marseillaise,” but the Russian anthem spurs the people to victory.

—Program notes © 2025 Todd E. Sullivan



LAURA JACKSON

Spending her early childhood in Virginia and Pennsylvania, Laura Jackson arrived in New York at age 11 and fell in love with the violin in public school and later attended the North Carolina School for the Arts. Following undergraduate studies at Indiana University with a dual focus on violin and conducting, she decamped to Boston in 1990 to freelance as a violinist and teach at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. Jackson later advanced her conducting studies at the University of Michigan, earning a DMA in orchestral conducting under the guidance of Kenneth Kiesler, and at Tanglewood as the Seiji Ozawa Conducting Fellow during the summers of 2002 and 2003. She was named the second-ever Taki Alsop Conducting Fellow in 2004, the same year she was appointed assistant conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the first woman in the position, which she held through 2007. Jackson was named music director of the Reno Philharmonic in 2009 and has recently been extended through 2029 in recognition of her artistry, leadership, innovative programming, and creative community engagement. The Composer-in-Residence initiative she launched has yielded seven world premieres, including Jimmy López Bellido’s *Symphony No. 3 (Altered Landscape)*, a collaboration with the Nevada Museum of Art and The Nature Conservancy that led to a featured in *Forbes*, and Zhou Tian’s *Transcend*, where the Reno Phil led a 13-orchestra consortium to commemorate 150 years since the completion of the transcontinental railroad. Beyond concerts with the Reno Phil, Jackson has guested with orchestras across the United States, Canada, France, Poland, Czechia, Algeria, the Philippines, and China. She has been featured conducting the Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Colorado, and New World Symphonies, as well as at the Prague Summer Nights Festival, and she has also led major ensembles in Buffalo, Detroit, Hartford, Hawaii, Ontario, Orlando, Phoenix, Richmond, San Antonio, Toronto, and Winnipeg. Jackson has recorded Michael Daugherty’s *Time Cycle* on Naxos with the Bournemouth Symphony, Marin Alsop, and Mei-Ann Chen, as well as Augusta Reed Thomas’s violin concerto *Spirit Musings* at Tanglewood. Laura Jackson made her Ravinia and Chicago Symphony Orchestra debuts in 2022.



ZLATOMIR FUNG

Cellist Zlatomir Fung burst onto the scene as the first American in four decades (and youngest musician ever) to win first prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition Cello Division. The 26-year-old has since garnered critical acclaim and standing ovations around the world, and in 2024 he joined the faculty of his alma mater, The Juilliard School, as one of the youngest members of the faculty. Highlights of Fung’s 2025/26 season include a recital at Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall in March, returns to Aspen and La Jolla Music Society festivals, and guest-soloist engagements with the Reno and Sacramento Philharmonics, Sarasota Orchestra, and Fort Worth, Nashville, Albany, Knoxville and Pacific Symphonies. Appearances outside the US include the Pohang International Music Festival in Korea and Guiyang Symphony Orchestra in China; Belgrade Philharmonic in Serbia; Melbourne Symphony; and a recital at Wigmore Hall in London. In April, Signum Records released Fung’s debut album, *Fantasies*, a collection of opera fantasies and transcriptions for cello and piano. Fung served as artist in residence with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in the 2023/24 season, appearing in four London performances. Across recent seasons, he has debuted with the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Lille National Orchestra, and BBC Philharmonic, as well as the Baltimore, Dallas, Detroit, Seattle, Milwaukee, Utah, Rochester, and Kansas City Symphonies. He has performed at several major festivals, including Ravinia, Blossom, Aspen, Bravo Vail, and Grant Park in the US, as well as the Verbier, Dresden, Leoš Janáček, and Tsinandali Festivals and the Cello Biennale Amsterdam in Europe. Beyond the long-standing canon, Fung brings exceptional insight to contemporary repertoire, championing such composers as Unsuk Chin, Katherine Balch, and Anna Clyne. In 2023, with the Dallas Symphony, Fung gave the world premiere of Balch’s *whisper concerto* as the dedicatee of the work; he gave its UK premiere in 2024 with the BBC Philharmonic. As a participant in WXQR’s Artist Propulsion Lab, he wrote and performed the radio play *The Elves and the Cello Maker*. Zlatomir Fung held fellowships at Ravinia’s Steans Institute in 2016 and 2017 and was a member of the alumni tour ensemble in 2018.

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

KLAUS MÄKELÄ, Zell Music Director Designate • **RICCARDO MUTI**, Music Director Emeritus for Life

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Stephanie Jeong
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CONCERTMASTER
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David Taylor
ASSISTANT
CONCERTMASTER *
*The Ling Z. & Michael C.
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Yuan-Qing Yu
ASSISTANT
CONCERTMASTER *

So Young Bae
Cornelius Chiu #
Gina DiBello
Kozue Funakoshi
Russell Hershow

Qing Hou #
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Matous Michal
Simon Michal
Sando Shia
Susan Synnestvedt
Rong-Yan Tang

Baird Dodge
PRINCIPAL
Danny Yehun Jin
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
Lei Hou #

Ni Mei
Hermine Gagné
Rachel Goldstein ‡
Mihaela Ionescu
Melanie Kupchynsky
Wendy Koons Meir
Ronald Satkiewicz
Florence Schwartz

VIOLAS

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PRINCIPAL
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Sunhee Choi
Wei-Ting Kuo #
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Weijing Michal
Diane Mues ‡
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Max Raimi

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Karen Basrak
*The Joseph A. & Cecile Renaud
Gorno Chair*

Richard Hirschl
Daniel Katz
Katinka Kleijn
Brant Taylor
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PRINCIPAL
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Green Principal Bass Chair*
Alexander Horton
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
Daniel Carson
Ian Hallas
Robert Kassinger
Mark Kraemer
Stephen Lester ‡
Bradley Opland
Andrew Sommer

HARP

Lynne Turner

FLUTES

Stefán Ragnar Höskuldsson
PRINCIPAL
*The Erika & Dietrich M. Gross
Principal Flute Chair*
Emma Gerstein
Jennifer Gunn

PICCOLO

Jennifer Gunn
*The Dora & John Aalbregtse
Piccolo Chair*

OBOES

William Welter
PRINCIPAL
*The Nancy & Larry Fuller
Principal Oboe Chair*

Lora Schaefer
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
Scott Hostetler

ENGLISH HORN

Scott Hostetler

CLARINETS

Stephen Williamson
PRINCIPAL
John Bruce Yeh
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
The Governing Members Chair
Gregory Smith

E-FLAT CLARINET

John Bruce Yeh

BASSOONS

Keith Buncke
PRINCIPAL
William Buchman
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
Miles Maner

HORNS

Mark Almond
PRINCIPAL
James Smelser
David Griffin
Oto Carrillo
Susanna Gaunt
Daniel Gingrich

TRUMPETS

Esteban Batallán
PRINCIPAL
*The Adolph Herseith Principal
Trumpet Chair, endowed by an
anonymous benefactor*
John Hagstrom
The Bleck Family Chair
Tage Larsen

TROMBONES

Jay Friedman §
PRINCIPAL
*The Lisa & Paul Wiggins
Principal Trombone Chair*
Michael Mulcahy
ACTING PRINCIPAL
Charles Vernon

BASS TROMBONE

Charles Vernon

TUBA

Gene Pokorny
PRINCIPAL
*The Arnold Jacobs Principal
Tuba Chair, endowed by
Christine Querfeld*

TIMPANI

David Herbert §
PRINCIPAL
The Clinton Family Fund Chair
Vadim Karpinos
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

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Cynthia Yeh
PRINCIPAL
Patricia Dash
Vadim Karpinos

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*The Michael & Kathleen Elliott
Fellow*
Olivia Reyes, bass

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DIRECTOR
Anne MacQuarrie
MANAGER, CSO AUDITIONS
& ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

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STAGE MANAGER
Blair Carlson
Paul Christopher
Chris Grannen
Ryan Hartge
Peter Landry
Joshua Mondie

Founded by Theodore Thomas in 1891, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is consistently hailed as one of the world's great orchestras. In April 2024, Klaus Mäkelä was named the orchestra's 11th music director, and he will begin an initial five-year tenure as Zell Music Director with the 2027–28 season. Riccardo Muti, the orchestra's distinguished 10th music director from 2010 until 2023, became Music Director Emeritus for Life at the beginning of the 2023–24 season. Joyce DiDonato is the CSO's Artist-in-Residence for the 2025–26 season.

The CSO commands a vast repertoire, from baroque through contemporary music. Its renowned musicians perform more than 150 concerts annually in Orchestra Hall at Symphony Center in downtown Chicago. The ensemble regularly tours nationally and since 1892 has made 65 international tours, performing in 29 countries on five continents. The orchestra first performed at Ravinia Park in 1905, and in July 1936 the CSO helped to inaugurate the first season of the Ravinia Festival. It has been in residence nearly every summer since.

Patrons around the globe enjoy weekly radio broadcasts of CSO concerts and recordings via the WFMT Radio Network and online at cso.org/radio. Since 1916, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus have amassed an extensive discography that has earned 65 Grammy Awards from the Recording Academy.

The CSO is part of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA), which also includes the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Symphony Center Presents, and the Negaunee Music Institute. The Chicago Symphony Chorus, founded by Margaret Hillis in 1957, is the country's largest professional chorus. Founded by second music director Frederick Stock during the 1919–20 season, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago is a training ensemble for emerging professionals with Ken-David Masur serving as its principal conductor. Symphony Center Presents features guest artists and ensembles across an expansive array of genres, including classical, jazz, world, and contemporary. The Negaunee Music Institute offers community and educational programs that annually engage more than 200,000 people of diverse ages and backgrounds throughout the Chicago area.

* Assistant concertmasters are listed by seniority. ‡ On sabbatical § On leave # Ravinia Steans Institute alum

The CSO's music director position is endowed in perpetuity by a generous gift from the Zell Family Foundation. The Gilchrist Foundation and Louise H. Benton Wagner chairs currently are unoccupied. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra string sections utilize revolving seating. Players behind the first desk (first two desks in the violins) change seats systematically every two weeks and are listed alphabetically. Section percussionists also are listed alphabetically.