

DETROIT SYMPHONY  
*Orchestra*  
H A L L

*Neeme Järvi, Music Director*



*Stagebill*



DETROIT SYMPHONY  
*Orchestra*

Neeme Järvi, *Music Director*  
Leslie B. Dunner, *Associate Conductor*

Thursday, February 7, 1991, at 8:00 p.m.  
Friday, February 8, 1991, at 10:45 a.m.  
Saturday, February 9, 1991, at 8:30 p.m.  
at Orchestra Hall

NEEME JÄRVI, *Conductor*  
NADJA SALERNO-SONNENBERG, *Violin*  
MARILYN MASON, *Organ*

RAPCHAK Sinfonia Antiqua (world premiere)  
SHOSTAKOVICH Concerto for Violin and Orchestra  
No. 1 in A minor, Op. 99  
Moderato  
Scherzo: Allegro  
Passacaglia: Andante; Cadenza—  
Burlesque: Allegro con brio; Presto  
Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg

INTERMISSION

SAINT-SAËNS Symphony No. 3 in C minor ("Organ")  
Adagio; Allegro moderato; Poco adagio  
Allegro moderato; Presto; Maestoso  
Marilyn Mason

The Galanti Praeludium III organ is provided courtesy of Classic Claviers of Farmington Hills, Michigan.

Thursday Pre-Concert Lecture—Lawrence Rapchak

Thursday's concert is sponsored by **Handleman Company**.  
Friday's concert is part of the **NBD Coffee Concert Series**.

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## PROGRAM NOTES

—Program Notes by Michael Fleming

### **Sinfonia Antiqua**

**LAWRENCE RAPCHAK**

*Born May 7, 1951, Hammond, Indiana*

*Currently living in Whiting, Indiana*

These are the first performances of Lawrence Rapchak's *Sinfonia Antiqua*. The score calls for piccolo, 2 flutes, 3 oboes, English horn, clarinet, 2 bass clarinets, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 off-stage horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, a large percussion battery managed by four players, harp, celesta, and strings (duration: 11 minutes).

Lawrence Rapchak was born in Hammond, Indiana, and studied at the Cleveland Institute of Music. His composition teachers include Donald Erb, Marcel Dick, and Leonardo Balada; he has also studied conducting with James Levine.

Four of his early orchestral works were premiered by local ensembles during his high school years, and numerous works—orchestral, chamber and vocal—were played at the Cleveland Institute. He served as composer-in-residence with the Northern Indiana Arts Association in 1978-79.

Among the commissions he has received are those from members of the Cleveland Orchestra, the Northwest Indiana Symphony, and the Bel Canto Woodwind Trio. He has also produced arrangements for the Cleveland Orchestra. His choral work *The Magic Voyage* was awarded first prize in the Phi Mu Epsilon National Choral Competition in Pittsburgh in 1978.

In 1987 Rapchak's *Mystic Promenade* was selected by the American Symphony Orchestra League for reading by Leonard Slatkin and the Saint Louis Symphony. In 1989 his *Chasing the Sunset* had a reading by the National Orchestral Association in New York, and a subsequent premiere by the Manhattan Philharmonia, conducted by David Gilbert.

Rapchak's opera, *The Lifework of Juan Diaz*, a collaboration with author Ray Bradbury, was commissioned by Chamber Opera Chicago. The work was premiered to critical acclaim in Chicago in the spring of 1990, and subsequently broadcast over Chicago's fine-arts radio station KFMT.

In March 1991 his *Il Concerto Vetrina* for bass clarinet and orchestra will receive its world premiere by the Concertante di Chicago with J. Lawrie Bloom of the Chicago Symphony as soloist. The composer has provided the following note for his *Sinfonia Antiqua*:

The *Sinfonia Antiqua* is modeled on two archaic forms, the Italian overture-sinfonia (as found in Mozart's K. 318) and the minuet-finale symphony (Haydn's Symphonies No. 18, 26, and 30). Both of these forms feature a basic fast-slow-fast structural pattern. The general character and texture also reflect the older forms: the continually active accompaniments, the tendency to divide the orchestra into choirs, the use of various ritornello figures, the clusters of oboes sparked by the light percussion.

The opening *Allegro* is built entirely on a lengthy two-part theme. The slow middle section of the work is based on an inversion of this theme. Just before the return of the *Allegro*, there appears a new version of the theme (now combined with its inversion), stately, austere, yet gentle.

As the restatement of the *Allegro* progresses, the new, combined tune continually attempts to assert itself, and finally does so. The orchestra regroups, as it were, into three massed choirs: strings, woodwind, and brass, with a new percussion contingent of cymbals, Chinese cymbals, and tam-tams; and harp, celesta, and glockenspiel adding to the clangor.

The new theme emerges in its finished form, that of a minuet, slightly out of phase at first, then suddenly shifting into rhythmic focus. This harmonious paean quickly fades, echoed by distant horns and bells. The *Sinfonia Antiqua* may be viewed as the composer's fond and rather sentimental tribute to past musical glories.

#### **Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No. 1 in A minor, Op. 99**

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Born September 25, 1906, St. Petersburg

Died August 9, 1975, Moscow

Shostakovich composed his First Violin Concerto in 1947-48. The first performance took place on October 29, 1955, with David Oistrakh as soloist and Yevgeny Mravinsky conducting the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra. The score calls for 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (1 doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, tuba, timpani, tam-tam, xylophone, celesta, harp, strings, and solo violin (duration: 36 minutes).

Twice in Shostakovich's lifetime, politics cut across the composer's career. The first time, in 1936, his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mzensk* drew official fire for its racy subject matter and dissonant musical style ("muddle instead of music," read the headline in *Pravda*). *Lady Macbeth*, in the middle of a successful run, was stopped in its tracks, and the hard-edged Fourth Symphony, withdrawn before its public premiere. The next year, Shostakovich issued his Fifth Symphony, "a Soviet artist's reply to just criticism," as he called it. Just how genuine his contrition was, we may wonder, but for the moment, Shostakovich was

restored to official favor, being awarded the Lenin Prize in 1940 for his Piano Quintet.

The second onslaught was less personal but no less destructive: in 1948 there began an official move against the purveyors of "formalism" in music, among them, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Miaskovsky. There had been rumblings of official discontent with contemporary musical trends as early as 1946, but with the appointment of Andrei Zhdanov as head of the Composers' Union two years later, the party line stiffened. In a decree in February of that year, he condemned the "formalistic perversions and anti-democratic tendencies" of Shostakovich and some of his contemporaries. Henceforth, those who wished to enjoy official favor would have to renounce the "cult of atonality, dissonance, and discord...infatuation with confused, neurotic combinations which transform music into cacophony."

Prokofiev, in failing health, managed to muddle through his last five years with token words of apology; Miaskovsky would die two years later, never to see the thaw that took place after Stalin's death. Shostakovich, then, bore the brunt of the attack, to which he replied with some weasel words. Without going so far as to recant his "modernistic" tendencies, he offered a speech in which he said that he had "always heeded criticism against me and tried in every way to work better and harder. Now, too, I am paying heed to criticism and shall continue to do so in the future."

What this meant was obvious on the surface. Over the next few years, Shostakovich cranked out more than his share of patriotic potboilers: a film score for *The Fall of Berlin*, a setting of ten revolutionary poems for a *cappella* chorus, and most disingenuous of all, a direct tribute to Stalin in the score for *The Unforgettable Year 1919*, which paid tribute to some of the fictional military exploits of the Soviet "leader and teacher."

At the same time, he voiced his real feelings in a number of works that could not be brought to public performance until the thaw that took place under the Khrushchev regime: the Fourth String Quartet, the Violin Concerto, and the song cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry*. "Not one of these works could be performed then," he told Solomon Volkov in his purported memoirs, published posthumously under the title *Testimony*. "They were heard only after Stalin's death. I still can't get used to it."

The first signs of a change in official attitudes came with the Tenth Symphony, which had its first performance late in 1953. That work was vigorously debated in musical circles, but no move was made to suppress it. The way was clear for the "hidden" works from the late 1940s to be brought to performance, and with the advocacy of David Oistrakh, the Violin Concerto was first heard in Leningrad in 1955. The violinist, who had taken an active role in shaping the solo violin part, wrote an encomium of the concerto for the music journal *Sovetskaya Musyka*. From here on, the ice was broken: for his fiftieth birthday, in 1956, Shostakovich was again awarded the Lenin Prize, and



that same year, plans were made for a revival of *Lady Macbeth*.

For the Violin Concerto, his first for a stringed instrument, Shostakovich settled on, not the usual three movements, but a four-movement scheme. As in the Eighth Symphony, two weighty introspective movements were followed by shorter, more satirical ones. Musically, one can read this as a huge downbeat followed by an upbeat, tension followed by release. On a personal level, these two different sorts of music from the same composer seem to reflect a private life—hidden, often given over to brooding—and a public one, in which officially mandated hilarity is colored with bitter irony.

The Nocturne that opens the concerto is an extended meditation for the violin, a virtually uninterrupted flow of melody. Shostakovich had first essayed this sort of melodic spinning-out in the slow movement of the Fifth Symphony. Here, he has mastered the technique, deriving seemingly endless phrases from tiny melodic cells. Just once, near the end of the movement, the violin raises its voice; otherwise, it speaks in an undertone, the orchestra observing its reverie virtually without comment.

The roles are reversed for the Scherzo, in which the violin darts in and out of the orchestral texture, acting as an *agent provocateur*. The bright, hard woodwind writing and the motor rhythms here were common coin in Soviet music, minted by Prokofiev no less than Shostakovich. At the same time, however, Shostakovich puts his personal stamp on the Scherzo by sealing his initials in musical tones.

His method requires a little explanation. Taking the German words for the notes of the scale, Shostakovich creates a monogram that "reads" his initials: D-E-flat-C-B natural. Pronounced, as a German musician would, "day, ess, tsay, hah," this gives the initial of Shostakovich's first name and the first three letters of his last name. The device is complicated to understand, but easy to hear: the solo violin, in the midst of a running stream of notes, marks out these in longer tones, each taking up a full measure.

The Passacaglia that follows is nearly as much a personal assertion—such "formalist" musical schemes were looked on with particular disfavor during the Zhdanov era. Shostakovich had been much occupied with Baroque forms when he composed the concerto, having written 24 preludes and fugues à la Bach, for the piano. Within the confines of the archaic passacaglia structure—an endlessly repeating bass—he is free to muse, to ponder, occasionally to recall material from earlier movements. Without a pause, a lengthy cadenza follows—the only one in this concerto. The solo violin begins in the mood of the passacaglia, but gradually moves away, unambiguously stating the D-S-C-H motif about halfway through.

From here on, we move inexorably into the finale, which begins without a pause, announced only by a thump from the timpani. "Burlesque" is the title, and ostensibly there is as little to disturb the listener here as in a day at the circus. Even in

the midst of merriment, however, Shostakovich has not forgotten himself: his monogram sounds again, only slightly disguised; and near the end of the movement, the horns blurt out the beginning of the ground bass from the passacaglia. Is the composer tweaking our noses, or driving a knife into our vitals? He would not-or could not-tell us at the time, but as in much of Shostakovich's music from this point on, every simple statement contains its opposite, and it takes a careful listener to detect each shade of meaning.

### **Symphony No. 3 in C minor (Organ)**

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

Born October 9, 1835, Paris

Died December 16, 1921, Algiers

Saint-Saëns conducted the first performance of his Third Symphony with the royal Philharmonic in London on May 19, 1886. The score calls for 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, cymbals, bass drum, organ, piano four-hands, and strings (duration: 37 minutes).

Saint-Saëns wrote his first symphony around 1850, his fifteenth year. Already he was an accomplished pianist, having made a sensational debut at the Salle Pleyel in 1846. As a composer, he still had much to learn, and he denied this early symphonic effort a number among his works, even though he never went to the trouble of destroying the score. His first "official," that is, numbered symphony, came in 1853, the year after he made his first try at the Prix de Rome.

He did not win the prize, but the symphony brought him high praise as a composer. Gounod was in the audience for the first performance, and afterward he wrote to the 17-year-old Saint-Saëns: "You are far in advance of your years: carry on—and remember that on Sunday, 18th December 1853, you contracted the obligation of becoming a great master." Berlioz was there too, and he was equally impressed. "Apart from Saint-Saëns...and Gounod...I can see nothing but ephemerae and mosquitoes hovering over this stinking morass we call Paris."

Saint-Saëns' achievement was all the more remarkable, since there was in France nothing like a symphonic tradition. Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique* had been performed then dropped; Bizet's one symphony and Gounod's two remained to be written. Looking back on the musical scene during his youth, Saint-Saëns later recalled only "a small circle of professional and amateur musicians who really cared for and cultivated music for its own sake, secret worshippers of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and occasionally Bach and Handel. It was quite useless to try and get a symphony, a trio, or a quartet performed except by the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire or by one or two private chamber music societies."

Saint-Saëns was undeterred, however. In 1856 he wrote another symphony, subtitled *Urbs Roma*, which took the prize of the St. Cecilia Society in Bordeaux (this symphony too was later dropped from the canon of his works). Three years later, he composed his "Second" Symphony, in which the British critic Martin Cooper hears an anticipation "by nearly thirty years of the 'serene anxiety' of Cesar Franck."

There, for the moment, Saint-Saëns' career as a symphonist stopped. He would continue an active life as a pianist, organist, and conductor; he would write piano concertos and symphonic poems; and would try, for a long time unsuccessfully, to gain an entree to the sacred halls of the Paris Opera. Not until 1886 would he attempt another symphony, this time at the behest of the Royal Philharmonic Society in London. The offer came by-the-way: the Society had intended at first to engage Saint-Saëns as a pianist and conductor; unable to meet his fee of forty pounds, it sweetened the deal by offering him a commission to write a new work.

He already had ideas for a symphony in mind, and when Liszt visited Paris in April 1886, Saint-Saëns played some of them to him at the piano. Two months later, Liszt died, and Saint-Saëns paid him tribute by dedicating the new symphony to him. "It will be terrifying, I warn you," he wrote "It will be a treat for me to conduct it. Will it be a treat, though, for the people who hear it? *that is the question* [this passage in English]. It's you who asked for it. I wash my hands of the whole thing."

The crowd at St. James' Hall in London was enthusiastic at the first performance; afterward, Saint-Saëns was presented to the Prince of Wales. A year later, the composer conducted the first Paris performance, and as he left the platform, Gounod made a remark that equalled his encomium of 34 years earlier: "There goes the French Beethoven," he said. Saint-Saëns would live another 44 years, but without writing another symphony and without quite reaching the level he attained here. "I have given all that I had to give," he wrote. "What I have done I shall never do again."

For the London premiere of his Third Symphony (actually his Fifth, you will recall), Saint-Saëns wrote a descriptive program note. Polemical, stiff, and overdetailed in places, it still gives the flavor of the piece and the period as no contemporary analysis can. It is reproduced here:

This symphony is divided into two parts, in the manner of Saint-Saëns' Fourth Concerto for Piano and Orchestra and Sonata for Piano and Violin. It nonetheless includes practically the traditional four movements. This first, checked in development, serves as an introduction to the Adagio. In the same manner, the scherzo is connected with the finale. The composer has thus endeavored to avoid somewhat the interminable repetitions which are now more and more disappearing from instrumental music.

The composer thinks it's now high time the symphony benefitted from the progress of modern instruments. [He adds a list of the symphony's instrumentation.]

After an introduction, Adagio, of a few measures, the string quartet introduces the initial theme, which is somber and agitated (*Allegro moderato*). The first transformation of this theme leads to a second motive, distinguished by greater tranquility. A short development presents the two themes simultaneously, after which the motif appears briefly in a characteristic form, for full orchestra.

A second transformation of the opening theme includes, now and then, the plaintive notes of the introduction. Varied episodes gradually bring calm, thus preparing the Adagio in D-flat. The extremely peaceful, contemplative theme is given to the violins, violas, and cellos, which are supported by organ chords. This theme is taken up by clarinet, horns, and trombone, with string accompaniment. After a variation (in arabesques) by the violins, the second transformation of the initial theme of the *Allegro* reappears, bringing a vague feeling of unrest, intensified by dissonant harmonies. These soon give way to the theme of the Adagio, this time performed by some of the strings with organ accompaniment and with a persistent rhythm of triplets presented by the preceding episode. This movement ends with a mystical coda, which sounds alternately the chords of D-flat major and E minor.

The second movement commences with an energetic phrase (*Allegro moderato*). This is followed immediately by a third transformation of the first movement's initial theme, more agitated than before. Into it enters a fantastic spirit that is frankly disclosed in the *Presto*. Arpeggios and scales, swift as lightning, on the piano are accompanied by the syncopated rhythm of the orchestra. Each time they are in a different tonality (F, E, E-flat, G).

This tricky gaiety is interrupted by an expressive phrase from the strings. The repetition of the *Allegro moderato* is followed by a second *Presto*, which at first appears to be a repetition of the first *Presto*. Scarcely has it begun, however, before a new theme is heard, grave, austere (trombone, tuba, double-bass), strongly in contrast to the fantastic music. There is a struggle for mastery, which ends in the defeat of the restless, diabolical element.

The phrase rises to orchestral heights and rests there as in the blue of a clear sky. After a vague reminiscence of the initial theme of the symphony, a *Maestoso* in C major announces the approaching triumph of calm and lofty thought. The initial theme, wholly transformed, is now exposed by divided strings and pianoforte (four hands), and repeated by the organ with the full strength of the orchestra.

Then follows a development built in a rhythm of three measures. An episode of a tranquil, pastoral character (oboe, flute, English horn, clarinet) is twice repeated. A brilliant coda, in which the initial theme by a last transformation takes the form of a violin figure, ends the work.



# P R O F I L E S

## NEEME JÄRVI, *Conductor*



Neeme Järvi began his tenure as eleventh music director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra on September 1, 1990, his first position with an American symphony orchestra. Internationally acclaimed for his performances with orchestras and opera houses throughout the world, Mr. Järvi is also one of today's most recorded conductors. Born in Tallinn, Estonia, in 1937, he graduated from the Tallinn Music School with degrees in percussion and choral conducting, and later completed his studies

in opera and symphonic conducting at the Leningrad State Conservatory. He made his conducting debut at the age of 18 with a concert performance of Strauss' *Night in Venice* and his operatic debut with *Carmen* at the Kirov Theater. In 1963 he became director of the Estonian Radio and Television Orchestra and began a 13-year tenure as chief conductor at the Tallinn Opera. International acclaim came in 1971 when Mr. Järvi won first prize in the Conductors Competition at the Academia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome. This triumph led to invitations to conduct major orchestras throughout Eastern Europe, Great Britain, Germany, Sweden, Japan, Mexico, and Canada. In the Soviet Union he became chief conductor and artistic director of the Estonian State Symphony and also conducted the Soviet

premiere performances of *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Porgy and Bess*, and *Il turco in Italia*. In January 1980 Mr. Järvi immigrated to the United States, and the following month made his American orchestral debut with the New York Philharmonic. Since then he has conducted the major orchestras in North America and Europe, and has served as principal guest conductor with the City of Birmingham Symphony (1981-83); music director of the Scottish National Orchestra (1981-88), with which he presently serves as conductor laureate; and he currently holds the post of principal conductor of the Gothenburg Orchestra of Sweden. Standing in at the last minute for an ailing Seiji Ozawa, Mr. Järvi recently led the Boston Symphony Orchestra in performances at Symphony Hall in Boston, as well as an exciting concert in New York's Carnegie Hall. Equally renowned for his opera conducting, Mr. Järvi made his Metropolitan Opera debut with *Eugene Onegin* during the 1978-79 season and returned during 1985-86 to conduct a new production of *Khovanshchina*. His first performances in Detroit were on tour with the Metropolitan Opera, conducting performances of *Samson et Dalila*. Considered an expert interpreter of Carl Nielsen's music, Mr. Järvi conducted a concert performance of the opera *Saul and David* with The Royal Danish Radio Orchestra this past summer. Part of the Orchestra's 125th-anniversary celebration of Nielsen's birth, it was broadcast on radio throughout Europe and resulted in a recording for Chandos Records. In addition, he added to his vast catalogue of discs the first original Russian language recording of Prokofiev's opera *The Fiery Angel*. Mr. Järvi has recorded extensively for Chandos, BIS, Orfeo, and Deutsche Grammophon, including releases with the Chicago Symphony, Scottish National Orchestra, London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Bamberg Symphony, Gothenburg Symphony, and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. He has won several awards for his recordings of the complete Prokofiev symphonies as well as his ongoing project to record all of Sibelius' orchestral music.

#### NADJA SALERNO-SONNENBERG, *Violin*



Violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg's performances have earned her great respect and attention in the music world. In North America, Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg has appeared with all of the major orchestras, including those in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Montreal, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco. She has also appeared with the major London orchestras and made her first tour of Japan in the spring of 1990. Festival appearances include the Mostly Mozart Festival, in New York and Washington, D.C., as well as the festivals of

Ravinia, Blossom, Hollywood Bowl, Meadow Brook, Great Woods, Caramoor, Aspen, and Tanglewood. Her recital credits include Lincoln Center's Great Performers Series, Chicago's Orchestra Hall, New York's 92nd Street "Y" Distinguished Artists Series, California's Ambassador Auditorium, Wolf Trap, and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Internationally she has appeared in Vienna, Munich, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Geneva, Rotterdam, and Lisbon. Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg has been featured on CBS' "60 Minutes," on a CBS national television special, on NBC's National News, on PBS' "Live from Lincoln Center," and the PBS/BBC series "The Mind," as well as appearances on the "Tonight" Show with Johnny Carson. Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg was born in Rome and moved to the United States at the age of eight to study at the Curtis Institute of Music. She later studied with Dorothy DeLay at The Juilliard School. She is the recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, winner of the Walter W. Naumburg 1981 International Violin Competition, and a recipient of a 1988 Ovation Award. Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg records exclusively for Angel/EMI records.

#### MARILYN MASON, *Organ*



Marilyn Mason is university organist and chairman of the organ department at the University of Michigan. Her extensive career as concert organist, lecturer, adjudicator, and teacher has taken her throughout the western world. She was the first American woman to play in Westminster Abbey, the first woman organist to play in Latin America, and the first American organist to perform in Egypt. In addition to performing on five continents, she has served as adjudicator at almost every major competition in the world. Professor Mason's dedication to contemporary music is evidenced in the 40 organ works she has commissioned and premiered. Currently she is pursuing her commitment to stylistic integrity through scholarly research into the construction and tonal design of historic European instruments. More than 20 research tours have focused on historic organs in France, northern Germany, Saxony, and Spain. In 1987 she was awarded an honorary doctor of music degree by the University of Nebraska, where she had served as consultant for the Casavant mechanical action organ. In addition, the New York chapter of the American Guild of Organists selected her as its 1988 performer of the year. Professor Mason's discography includes the music of Bach, Handel, Pachelbel, and many contemporary composers on the Columbia and Musical Heritage labels. Recently Professor Mason was awarded a Rackham Grant to record the complete works of Pachelbel, soon to be issued by the Music Heritage Society.