

GRANT PARK ORCHESTRA

Carlos Kalmar Artistic Director and Principal Conductor

Christopher Bell Chorus Director



Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

HOUGH PLAYS MENDELSSOHN

Grant Park Orchestra

Carlos Kalmar, conductor

Stephen Hough, piano

Moritz Moszkowski

From Foreign Lands

Russian: Allegretto

Italian: Presto

German: Andante sostenuto

Spanish: Molto vivace

Polish: Allegro con fuoco

Hungarian: Molto allegro

Felix Mendelssohn

Piano Concerto No. 1

Molto allegro con fuoco

Andante

Presto - Molto allegro e vivace

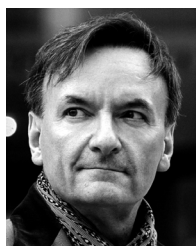
STEPHEN HOUGH

Franz Liszt

Les préludes

Piano provided by Steinway Piano Gallery of Chicago

Tonight's concert will be broadcast and
streamed live on 98.7WFMT/wfmt.com



One of the most distinctive artists of his generation, **Sir Stephen Hough** combines a distinguished career as a pianist with those of composer and writer. Named by *The Economist* as one of Twenty Living Polymaths, Hough was the first classical performer to be awarded a MacArthur Fellowship (2001). In 2014 he was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) and was knighted in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2022. Since taking first prize at the 1983 Naumburg Competition in New York, Sir Stephen has appeared with most

of the major European, Asian and American orchestras and plays recitals regularly in major halls and concert series around the world.



MORITZ MOSZKOWSKI (1854 – 1925)

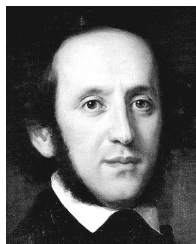
FROM FOREIGN LANDS (1879)

Scored for: three flutes including piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four French horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings

Performance time: 22 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance

German composer Moritz Moszkowski is predominantly known for his piano music, so much so that fellow pianist and former Polish prime minister Ignacy Jan Paderewski once stated, "After Chopin, Moszkowski best understands how to write for the piano." It makes sense, then, that the composer originally wrote *From Foreign Lands* for four-hand piano and then later orchestrated it. When Moszkowski arranged the piece for a larger ensemble, it signaled a return to the beginnings of his compositional journey when he had mainly focused on writing in the symphonic form. As he grew older, the virtuosic pianist began to focus more on composition than performance. Moszkowski's works were quite popular near the turn of the 20th century, but musical trends eventually moved away from his style of writing, and he fell into poverty. Even though he is no longer a familiar name and his creations have mostly fallen out of the performance repertory, he was respected during his time. A fundraising benefit was even held for the impoverished composer at Carnegie Hall. (*Read more at gpmf.org*)



FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809 - 1847)

CONCERTO NO.1 IN G MINOR FOR PIANO & ORCHESTRA OP.25 (1831)

Scored for: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two French horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings, and solo piano

Performance time: 21 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance: July 27, 1947; Arthur Fiedler, conductor and Jesus Maria Sanroma, piano

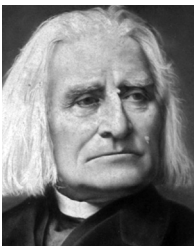
After a trip around Europe and a brief encounter with a beautiful young pianist, the 21-year-old Mendelssohn arrived back in Germany to write his First Piano Concerto. It was to be played in a concert to benefit the poor, and after sitting at the piano for

its premiere, he observed, "The orchestra played wonderfully and the poor must have received a good whopping sum."

Mendelssohn embraced a huge variety of musical influences that ranged from Bach to Beethoven to Weber. His strong background playing keyboard instruments and close study of Bach's music further informed his knowledge of how to write for piano. Though his technique was rooted in the musical style of his time, he also enjoyed exploring new ideas. In the First Piano Concerto, he played with two main structural departures. In earlier concertos, the orchestra typically played a more sizable introduction and presented main melodic themes, but this concerto's is quite short and ushers in the soloist after only seven measures. Mendelssohn was also intrigued by the idea of connecting separate orchestral movements to create a less disjointed work and did this in the concerto in two ways: by omitting pauses between movements (another approach that was not widely used during his time) and by liberally reusing thematic material among the movements.

Mendelssohn wrote to his father during the compositional process: "It is a glorious feeling to awaken in the morning and know that you are going to write the score of a grand Allegro, with all sorts of instruments, and various oboes and trumpets, while bright weather holds out the hope of a cheering long walk in the afternoon." The Allegro movement is indeed glorious; marked to be played "with fire," the piano wastes no time with its gutsy scalar entrance. Even within a single movement, Mendelssohn manages to highlight both the dramatic and lyrical capabilities of his beloved instrument. Solo piano leads the way into the middle movement and introduces a contemplative opening theme later echoed by the orchestra. Surprisingly, violins do not play until later in the movement, providing opportunity to spotlight the lower strings' rich sound. The Presto includes a brass flourish taken from the concerto's first movement, and its final moments mimic the young composer's exuberance for life.

At an age in which most young adults are still seeking career paths and stability, Mendelssohn wrote a stunning, mature concerto. The composer did not peak early, either; his illustrious career as a composer, conductor, organist, and pianist greatly evolved throughout his lifetime. While colleagues and friends Clara Schumann and Franz Liszt encouraged the piece's popularity, Mendelssohn's First Piano Concerto has always been easy to like. He later remarked, "I wrote it in but a few days and almost carelessly. . . . It always pleased people the most, but me very little."



FRANZ LISZT (1811 - 1886)

LES PRÉLUDES, S.97 (1848)

Scored for: three flutes including piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four French horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings

Performance time: 16 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance: July 12, 1935;
Ebba Sundstrom, conductor

Though Liszt did not invent the instrumental format called a symphonic poem (typically a one-movement orchestral piece with a descriptive theme), he was the first to use the term. He was excited by the idea of writing in a different orchestral genre and at one point declared, "New wine demands new bottles." Due in part to their

shorter duration, symphonic poems demand a tightened structure: repeated themes adopt a new personality rather than return as exact copies, and the form challenged Liszt to blend any contrasting music seamlessly into the main melody.

Liszt first wrote the music for the symphonic poem *Les préludes* and then later attached the association “after A. de Lamartine” and the title. Supposedly, he picked up the piece’s name from the fifteenth poem in Alphonse de Lamartine’s *Poetical Meditations*. A quote from the poet: *What is life but a series of preludes to that unknown song whose initial solemn note is tolled by Death?* (Read more at gpmf.org)

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THANK YOU FOR A WONDER-FILLED SEASON

WE’LL SEE YOU AGAIN ON JUNE 12, 2024

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Karlie Henderson, Assistant Front Of House Manager

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Peggy Cassidy
Win Eggers
Jane Feeney
Meg Givhan
Clive Kamins
William Kessler
Dennis Lord
Kathy Moroz
Janie Urbanic

Ushers

Kayla Algee
Nathan Ankrom
Kiera Battles
Danny Blatt
Valecia Briars
McKennen Campbell
Marlana Carlson
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Sara Crouse
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