

GRANT PARK MUSIC FESTIVAL

Carlos Kalmar Artistic Director and Principal Conductor

Christopher Bell Chorus Director



Wednesday, June 21, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

BRAHMS ACADEMIC FESTIVAL OVERTURE

Grant Park Orchestra

Carlos Kalmar, conductor

Xavier Foley, double bass

Johannes Brahms

Academic Festival Overture

Nino Rota

Divertimento Concertante

Allegro

Marcia

Aria

Finale

XAVIER FOLEY

Robert Fuchs

Symphony No. 2

Allegro moderato, ma energico

Andante

Menuetto: Allegretto grazioso

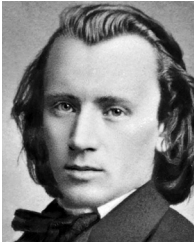
Finale: Allegro giusto

Xavier Foley's residency is generously supported by the
Robert and Isabelle Bass Foundation, Inc.

Tonight's concert is being broadcast and streamed live
on 98.7WFMT/wfmt.com



Xavier Foley was first-prize winner of the 2014 Sphinx Competition, the Young Concert Artists Auditions 2016, and a winner of the Astral Artists National Auditions 2014. He has appeared as soloist with the Sphinx and Atlanta symphony orchestras, Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Nashville Symphony. He made his Carnegie Hall solo debut with the Sphinx Virtuosi. Xavier Foley strives to become a world artist on the double bass, incorporating all styles of music. In addition, he is becoming a much sought-after composer.



JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833 - 1897)

ACADEMIC FESTIVAL OVERTURE, OP.80 (1880)

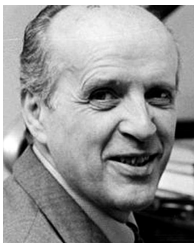
Scored for: three flutes including piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, three bassoons including contrabassoon, four French horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings

Performance time: 10 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance: August 5, 1935; Victor Grabel, conductor

Johannes Brahms wrote his *Academic Festival Overture* on the occasion of receiving an honorary doctorate of music from the University of Breslau in 1880. The university (now known as the University of Wrocław, Poland) expected Brahms to compose something for the ceremony that matched the solemnity of the occasion. What they weren't anticipating was a lighthearted piece the composer called a "rollicking potpourri of student songs."

Brahms' *Academic Festival Overture* quotes four beer-hall songs that would have been immediately recognizable to German college students at the time. The first song, "Wir hatten gebauet ein stattliches Haus" ("We have built a stately house"), introduced by the trumpets, had more political connotations than your average drinking song, however. It had been used as a theme song for a student organization that advocated for the unification of independent German principalities. The authorities had banned the song for decades. Though the ban had been lifted in most places by 1871 with the official founding of the German Empire, it was still in place in Vienna when Brahms composed the overture. As a result, the police delayed the Viennese premiere for two weeks for fear that it would incite civil unrest.



NINO ROTA (1911 - 1979)

DIVERTIMENTO CONCERTANTE (1973)

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

Performance time: 23 minutes

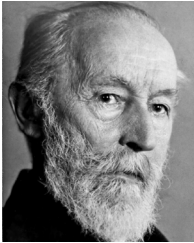
First Grant Park Orchestra performance

Nino Rota was a renowned Italian composer best known for his 171 film scores. He worked with virtually all the notable Italian directors of the time, including Federico Fellini, Franco Zeffirelli, and Francis Ford Coppola.

He won an Academy Award for *The Godfather Part II*. In addition to his prolific career as a composer, he served as director of the Bari Conservatory in Italy. In 1967, Franco Petracchi joined the conservatory's faculty as professor of double bass. Because Petracchi's teaching studio was right above Rota's office, the composer became quite familiar with the etudes and exercises Petracchi liked to give his students. Instead of getting annoyed at the repetitive sounds of musical instruction, Rota had the idea for a piece.

Rota initially set out to compose a single-movement work for double bass and piano. He first wrote the Marcia, which would later become the second movement of *Divertimento Concertante*. Full of scales, arpeggios, and chromatic figures, the Marcia recalls the exercises that emanated from Petracchi's studio. Petracchi later explained that Rota wanted to make the exercises "more enjoyable" for students by scoring them within the context of a fully-fledged piece. The following year, Rota wrote the Aria, which explores the instrument's lyrical capacity. The Finale, which puts the technical abilities of the soloist to the test, came next in 1969, followed by the opening Allegro in 1971.

Divertimento Concertante, first published in 1973, has since become one of the most widely-performed concertos for the double bass. Having worked in close collaboration with Petracchi, Rota ensured that the solo part is playable but technically challenging, using the full range of the instrument and exploring all its possible characters.



ROBERT FUCHS (1847 - 1927)

SYMPHONY NO. 2 (1887)

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

Performance time: 35 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance

Austrian composer and teacher Robert Fuchs was a rare figure in the divisive Viennese music scene in being universally liked and respected. Even Johannes Brahms, who did not give praise lightly, said, "Fuchs is a splendid musician; everything is so fine and so skillful, so charmingly invented, that one is always pleased."

The youngest of thirteen children, Fuchs demonstrated musical talent early on, quickly becoming proficient in piano, organ, violin, and flute. He moved to Vienna at 18 and scraped together a meager living as a pianist and organist. Compositional success eluded him until the premiere of his Serenade No. 1 in 1874. The next year, he was appointed professor of harmony at the Vienna Conservatory. There, he would teach a string of successful students, including Gustav Mahler, Jean Sibelius, Erich Korngold, and Hugo Wolf. It was under Fuchs' tutelage that Sibelius' orchestral style went from awkward and stilted to polished and fluent. One can also hear Fuchs' influence in the harmonic schemes of Wolf's art songs. Without Fuchs' teaching, the mature works of his pupils—and, therefore, the trajectory of late Romantic music—would have looked much different.

Fuchs was most known for his five serenades, earning him the nickname "Serenaden-Fuchs" during his lifetime, though he did go on to publish three numbered symphonies. His Symphony No. 1 in C Major, particularly admired by Brahms, even earned him the Beethoven prize in composition. Symphony No. 2 premiered the following year.

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