

# GRANT PARK MUSIC FESTIVAL

**Carlos Kalmar** Artistic Director and Principal Conductor

**Christopher Bell** Chorus Director



Wednesday, July 12, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

## TCHAIKOVSKY PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1

**Grant Park Orchestra**

**Gemma New**, conductor

**Joyce Yang**, piano

**Vivian Fung**

*Aqua*

**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

Piano Concerto No. 1

Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso

Andantino semplice

Allegro con fuoco

JOYCE YANG

**Samuel Barber**

Symphony No. 1 in One Movement

Allegro ma non troppo - Allegro molto - Andante tranquillo - Con moto

This concert is generously supported  
by *American Accents* Series Sponsor AbelsonTaylor.  
Piano provided by Steinway Piano Gallery of Chicago

Tonight's concert is being broadcast and streamed live  
on [98.7WFMT/wfmt.com](http://98.7WFMT/wfmt.com)



Sought after for her insightful interpretations and dynamic presence, New Zealand-born **Gemma New** is artistic advisor and principal conductor of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. She also holds the titles of music director of the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra and principal guest conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Hailed by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* as “a rising star in the musical firmament”, New is the recipient of the prestigious 2021 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award. New regularly appears with top orchestras in North America and Europe and served previously as associate conductor of the New Jersey Symphony.



Grammy-nominated pianist **Joyce Yang** captivates audiences with her virtuosity, lyricism, and interpretive sensitivity. At age 19, she won the silver medal at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. In 2006 she made her celebrated New York Philharmonic debut alongside Lorin Maazel at Avery Fisher Hall. On the Philharmonic’s tour of Asia, she made a triumphant return to her hometown of Seoul, South Korea. In the last decade, Yang has blossomed into an “astonishing artist” (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*) in solo recitals and collaborations with the world’s top orchestras and chamber musicians. She is a Steinway artist.



**VIVIAN FUNG** (b. 1975)

**AQUA (2012)**

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

**Performance time:** 7 minutes

**First Grant Park Orchestra performance**

Vivian Fung’s *Aqua* was commissioned in 2013 as part of Chicago Sinfonietta’s “ChiScape” project, which featured works inspired by iconic Chicago buildings. Fung’s muse was Jeanne Gang’s eighty-two-story skyscraper, Aqua, which stands just a couple blocks north of the Jay Pritzker Pavilion. Completed in 2010, Aqua was the tallest building in the world designed by a woman until it was surpassed by another Gang structure nearby, the St. Regis, in 2020. The building’s distinctive undulating façade is achieved through concrete floor slabs that jut out at different intervals, creating outdoor terraces where neighbors can socialize and creating sightlines between existing buildings and around corners to Chicago landmarks. Fung’s piece is structured in two parts, based on the building’s juxtaposition of horizontal and vertical patterns.



AQUA TOWER



**PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY** (1840 - 1893)  
**CONCERTO NO.1 IN B-FLAT MINOR FOR PIANO & ORCHESTRA, OP.23, TH 55 (1874)**

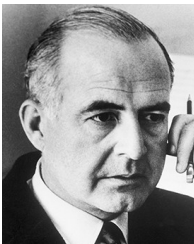
**Scored for:** two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four French horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings, and solo piano

**Performance time:** 32 minutes

**First Grant Park Orchestra performance:** August 17, 1941; Walter H. Steindel, conductor and Teresa Sterne, piano

Nicolai Rubinstein has gone down in history alongside the likes of the publishers who rejected *Harry Potter* for his ill-fated opinion of what would become one of the most popular pieces of classical music in history. On Christmas Eve 1874, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky brought the score of his first piano concerto to his trusted mentor and friend, Nikolai Rubinstein. Rubinstein was a highly respected pianist, conductor, and founder of the Moscow Conservatory. He had hired Tchaikovsky as a theory teacher for the conservatory, and Tchaikovsky even lived with him for a while. The two butted heads occasionally, but nothing would compare to their falling out over Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1.

Tchaikovsky freely admitted he was no piano virtuoso, so he sought Rubinstein's feedback to identify any awkwardness or unidiomatic writing in the solo part. Tchaikovsky's lack of pianistic chops necessary to do justice to his concerto likely contributed to Rubinstein's scathing appraisal. After Tchaikovsky had finished playing, Rubinstein reportedly bellowed that the concerto was unplayable, trite, clumsy, and tawdry and asserted that Tchaikovsky had "filched" bits of his concerto from other sources. "In short, any outsider who chanced to come into the room might have thought that I was an imbecile, an untalented scribbler who understood nothing, who had come to an eminent musician to pester him with his rubbish," Tchaikovsky recalled in a letter three years later. Deeply insulted, Tchaikovsky doubled down, refusing to take on any of Rubinstein's suggestions. He published the score as is, though he would later revise it in 1879 and 1889. (*Read more at gpmf.org*)



**SAMUEL BARBER** (1910 - 1981)  
**SYMPHONY NO.1 IN ONE MOVEMENT, OP.9 (1935)**

**Scored for:** three flutes including piccolo, three oboes including English horn, three clarinets including bass clarinet, three bassoons including contrabassoon, four French horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings

**Performance time:** 21 minutes

**First Grant Park Orchestra performance:** August 21, 1964; Donald Johanos, conductor

Samuel Barber was one of the first students to enroll at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia when it opened in 1924. Then only fourteen years old, the precocious musician had started composing at age seven, penning his first operetta by age ten. He studied piano, voice, and composition at Curtis for ten years. Shortly after graduating, he earned the coveted Prix de Rome in May 1935. This award came with a two-year residency at the American Academy

in Rome. He spent the summer before he left for Italy in Camden, Maine, with fellow composer and romantic partner Gian Carlo Menotti. The two composers each had their own projects, Menotti working on his opera *Amelia Goes to the Ball* and Barber setting out on what he called “an orchestra piece of ambitious tendencies.”

When Barber got to Rome, he temporarily put his symphony aside as his compositional attentions were drawn to the realm of art song. During his time in Rome, he made frequent excursions to other parts of Europe. His first trip was to the Anabel Taylor Foundation in the French Riviera town of Roquebrune. Though the Foundation was an independent entity, it had an association with the American Academy and would often host the Academy’s musicians. It was during his two-week stay in Roquebrune in February 1936 that Barber completed his *Symphony No. 1 in One Movement*. The piece was Barber’s first international hit. *(Read more at [gpmf.org](http://gpmf.org))*

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