Friday, July 27, 8pm

JUANJO MENA conducting

BRITTEN

Four Sea Interludes from “Peter Grimes,” Opus 33a
Dawn (Lento e tranquillo)
Sunday Morning (Allegro spiritoso)
Moonlight (Andante comodo e rubato)
Storm (Presto con fuoco)

MOZART

Piano Concerto No. 9 in E-flat, K.271
Allegro
Andantino
Presto—Menuetto: Cantabile—Presto

GARRICK OHLSSON

{Intermission}

BRAHMS

Symphony No. 3 in F, Opus 90
Allegro con brio
Andante
Poco Allegretto
Allegro—Un poco sostenuto

Leonard Bernstein led the American premiere of Britten’s “Peter Grimes,” which had been commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation, on August 6, 1946, at Tanglewood, in a production presented by the Berkshire Music Center (now the Tanglewood Music Center). He led the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the Four Sea Interludes on August 19, 1990, at Tanglewood, as part of the last concert he ever conducted.

Leonard Bernstein doubled as soloist and conductor for Boston Symphony performances of Mozart’s E-flat piano concerto, K.271, in February and March 1952, in Cambridge, Boston, New Haven, New York, and Brooklyn.

Piano by Steinway & Sons – the Artistic Choice of Tanglewood
Special thanks to Delta Air Lines and Commonwealth Worldwide Executive Transportation.
Concertmaster Malcolm Lowe performs on a Stradivarius violin, known as the “Lafont,” generously donated to the Boston Symphony Orchestra by the O’Block Family.
First associate concertmaster Tamara Smirnova performs on a 1754 J.B. Guadagnini violin, the “ex-Zazofsky,” and James Cooke performs on a 1778 Nicolò Gagliano violin, both generously donated to the orchestra by Michael L. Nieland, M.D., in loving memory of Mischa Nieland, a member of the cello section from 1943 to 1988.

In consideration of the artists and those around you, please turn off all electronic equipment during the performance, including tablets, cellular phones, pagers, watch alarms, messaging devices of any kind, anything that emits an audible signal, and anything that glows. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please note that the use of audio or video recording devices, or taking pictures of the artists—whether photographs or videos—is prohibited during concerts.

Notes on the program
Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
Four Sea Interludes from the opera “Peter Grimes”
First performance of the opera: June 7, 1945, Sadler’s Wells, London, Reginald Goodall cond., the opera having been commissioned by the newly formed Koussevitzky Foundation and being dedicated to the memory of Natalie Koussevitzky. First American performance of the opera: August 6, 1946, Berkshire Music Center, Tanglewood, Leonard Bernstein cond., though Serge Koussevitzky had already led the BSO in the first American performances of the Passacaglia and Four Sea Interludes in March 1946, in Boston, New Haven, New York, Newark, and at Hunter College. Most recent Tanglewood performance by the BSO of the Passacaglia and Four Sea Interludes: July 15, 2001, James Conlon cond. Most recent Tanglewood performance of the Passacaglia and Four Sea Interludes: July 24, 2017, Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, TMC Conducting Fellow Vinay Parameswaran cond. Leonard Bernstein led the BSO in the Four Sea Interludes (without the Passacaglia) in the last concert he ever conducted, on
August 19, 1990, at Tanglewood.

It was during his self-imposed exile from England in the early years of World War II that Benjamin Britten chanced to read an article about the Suffolk poet George Crabbe (1754-1832) and sought a copy of Crabbe’s lengthy narrative poem, The Borough, which told of the lives of various inhabitants of an English seaside village. The encounter proved to be fateful, for it inspired Britten to compose the work that has been recognized for more than a half-century as the cornerstone of modern British opera, Peter Grimes.

To the poet, Peter Grimes was an unrelieved villain—a thief, drunkard, and brute of a fisherman who brought about the death of three consecutive apprentices. Montagu Slater’s libretto for the opera takes a somewhat different tack and makes an astonishingly sympathetic figure of this coarse fisherman, an effect that is greatly reinforced by Britten’s music. To Slater and Britten, Grimes is an outsider, a dreamer who longs to escape from the gossiping tongues of the village by marrying the widowed schoolmistress, Ellen Orford—but only when he has made enough of a fortune out of his fishing so that she will not take him out of pity. All their dreams, hopes, and plans shatter on the rock of Peter’s pride and his uncontrollable temper; the tragedy is unavoidable.

Throughout the opera the sea remains a constant, palpable presence, determining the daily rhythms of the villagers’ lives, bringing sustenance and income as well as hard work, danger, and death. The swell of the tides, the ripple of light on the waves, the flights of seagulls, the roar of ocean storms—these things pervade Britten’s score, nowhere more completely realized than in the several orchestral interludes that have long since become established as a self-sufficient orchestral suite from the opera. One of these interludes, the Passacaglia, is a musical picture of the title character; this will not be performed at these concerts. The others depict aspects of the omnipresent sea.

The four “Sea Interludes” provide different musical portraits of the presence that surrounds and dominates life in the Borough. Dawn functions as the true orchestral prelude to the opera (following a short dramatic courtroom scene, an inquest into the death of Peter’s first apprentice). Here is the sea as the constant background to life in the Borough. (The same music frames the opera at the very end; people come and go, but the sea remains forever.) The long, soaring lines in the violins suggest the vast tranquil seascape, with a few sparkling highlights in the woodwinds, undercut by the solemnity of the ocean’s imperturbable swell in the brasses.

Sunday Morning is the prelude to Act II. Church bells ring (in the sustained horn tones) and the sunlight sparkles brilliantly on the waves. It is a smiling day, everything seems for the moment peaceful: an effective foil for the scene that follows, in which it gradually becomes clear that nothing has changed, that Grimes is mistreating his new apprentice as he had the old, and that his plans with Ellen were doomed from the start.

Moonlight, the introduction to Act III, depicts a pleasant summer night. But peace is not to be found here; Peter’s new apprentice has suffered an accidental fall from the cliff behind his hut at the end of the preceding act. We don’t yet know exactly what happened to him, but we suspect the worst—especially at the stabbing interjections of flute and harp throughout.

Storm takes us back to the first act, where it is the interlude between the two scenes. A coastal storm is blowing up at the end of the first scene, while the sympathetic old sea captain Balstrode urges Peter to marry Ellen now, if only to assure the presence of a woman’s softening touch when the new apprentice arrives. Peter insists that he must first make enough money to “stop people’s mouths.” As the storm arrives, Balstrode gives up and enters the inn, while Peter remains outside in the tempest meditating on his dreams for the future: “What harbour shelters peace?” The natural force of wind and rain contrasts powerfully with his yearning for calm and content. As the curtain falls, the storm breaks out full strength in the orchestral interlude, with one brief recall of Peter’s longing vision as the storm nears its end.

Steven Ledbetter
Steven Ledbetter was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998.

Wolfgang Amadé Mozart (1756-1791)
Piano Concerto No. 9 in E-flat, K.271

On February 12, 1874, Miss Amy Fay, a young pianist then in her fifth year of living in Germany where she had gone, as they said in those days, to refine her taste and improve her technique, wrote to her family in St. Albans, Vermont:

Deppe wants me to play a Mozart concerto for two pianos with Fräulein Steiniger, the first thing I play
in public. Did you know that Mozart wrote twenty concertos for the piano, and that nine of them are masterpieces? Yet nobody plays them. Why? Because they are too hard, Deppe says, and Lebert, the head of the Stuttgardt conservatory, told me the same thing at Weimar. I remember that the musical critic of the Atlantic Monthly remarked that “we should regard Mozart’s passages and cadenzas as child’s play, now-a-days.” Child’s play, indeed! That critic, whoever it is, “had better go to school again,” as C. always says!

Actually, counting the concerto for two pianos that Miss Fay prepared with Fräulein Steiniger, and another for three pianos, Mozart wrote twenty-three piano concertos. (This does not take into account his adaptations of sonatas by other composers that he made for his tours between 1765 and 1767.) Most of us, moreover, would have a hard time reducing the number of “masterpieces” to just nine. The series, at any rate, begins with the still seldom heard, inventive, brilliant, if not perfectly equilibrated concerto in D, K.175, of December 1773, and concludes with one of the most familiar of the “masterpieces,” the gently shadowed concerto in B-flat, K.595, completed three weeks before Mozart’s thirty-fifth and last birthday. Mozart’s most intense concentration on the genre occurred in the middle of the 1780s, the peak of his popularity as a composer and as an adult performer. The concerto being played in this concert holds a special place in the sequence, for, after the dashing display of ingenuity of K.175 and the charms of K.238 in B-flat and K.246 in C, it is an all but inconceivable leap forward in ambition and achievement alike. At twenty-one, Mozart is mature.

It all leaves us most curious about Mlle. Jeunehomme—“die jenomy”—whose playing, whose personality, or perhaps whose reputation so stimulated Mozart. But to no avail. She passes through Salzburg and through musical history for just a moment in January 1777, leaving her indiscriminately spelled name attached to the work in which Mozart, as it were, became Mozart, and she disappears again—to France, one imagines, to concerts and teaching, perhaps to marriage and retirement from public life. We know that Mozart himself played “her” concerto at a private concert in Munich on October 4, 1777, and from his sending “Eingänge” (seemingly improvisatory passages leading to the return of a theme) to Nannerl in February 1783 we know that it continued to engage his attention.

The scoring is modest: only pairs of oboes and horns join the strings, something remembered always with surprise because the impression is so firmly of a big concerto. (It is, in fact, Mozart’s longest.) But Mozart uses these restricted resources remarkably: the horn gets to play a melody in unison with the piano, and more than once Mozart explores the uncommon sonority of the keyboard instrument joined only by the two oboes. The orchestra’s opening flourish is a formal call to attention. The piano’s response is a delicious impertinence. Normal concerto etiquette after all obliges the soloist to wait until the end of an extended tutti. But the piano’s penchant for playing at unexpected times once established, the whole issue of who plays when becomes the subject of continuing, subtle jokes and surprises.

It was often typical of Mozart to translate the gestures of opera into the context of the concerto. In the slow movement of his Sinfonia concertante for violin and viola, for example, Mozart engages the soloists in impassioned operatic duetting. Here, in the Andantino of this concerto, he presents a scene from some somber tragedy. Strings are muted, violins proceed by close imitation, and the music that prepares the singer’s entrance makes its cadence on the formal full close of an opera seria recitative. The aria is impassioned and complex, the C minor of its beginning soothed occasionally by a gentler music in E-flat major, but it is the gestures of recitative, now pathetic, now stern, that dominate the discourse.

The finale begins in unbuttoned and purling virtuosity, and again we might infer that Mlle. Jeunehomme was an especially elegant executant of trills. One of the virtuosic sweeps down the keyboard and up again leads to the opening of a door onto a world of whose existence we had not expected a reminder: we hear a minuet, music of a new character, a new meter, a new key. Mozart outdoes himself both in his melodic embellishments, so characteristic in their confluence of invention and control, pathos, and grace, and also in the wonderfully piquant scoring as each strain is repeated with orchestral accompaniment (first violins and the lowest strings pizzicato, but the former with far more notes; the middle voices sustained, but their tone veiled by mutes). The minuet dissolves into another cadenza, whence the Presto emerges again to send the music to its runaway close.

Michael Steinberg

Michael Steinberg was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1976 to 1979, and after that of the San Francisco Symphony and New York Philharmonic. Oxford University Press has published three compilations of his program notes, devoted to symphonies, concertos, and the great works for chorus and orchestra.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Symphony No. 3 in F, Opus 90

The third movement is a gentle interlude in C minor, its pregnant melody heard first in the cellos and then in a triplet rhythm that stirs its otherwise halting progress. Brahms will use the repeated-note motive to mysterious effect sweetly expressive within a narrow compass, clearly characterized by the repeated pitch at its beginning and the deeper strings; the entry of the violins brings emphatic embellishment and the appearance of a new idea. Hanslick describes the opening pages of the C major Andante as “a very simple song dialogue between the winds and the deeper strings”; the entry of the violins brings emphatic embellishment and the appearance of a new idea.

Hanslick describes the opening pages of the C major Andante as “a very simple song dialogue between the winds and the deeper strings”; the entry of the violins brings emphatic embellishment and the appearance of a new idea. Brahms’s motto here serves still another, purely musical purpose: the A-flat suggests F minor rather than F major, an rejoinder to Joseph Joachim’s F-A-E, “frei aber einsam,” “free but lonely,” many years before. But the F-A-flat-F motto here serves still another, purely musical purpose: the A-flat suggests F minor rather than F major, an ambiguity to be exploited elsewhere in the symphony. The sweeping main theme gives way to a new idea, tentative in its progress, clinging tenuously to nearly each note before moving to the next, but soon opening out and leading to a graceful theme given first to solo clarinet, then to solo oboe and violas in combination. This theme, in darker colorations, will be prominent in the development section of the movement. Now, however, an increase in activity leads to the close of the exposition, a forceful passage built from stabbing downward thrusts in the strings and a swirling wave of energy beginning in the winds and then encompassing the entire orchestra before grinding to a sudden halt for a repeat of the exposition. This is a particularly difficult moment rhythmically since the return to the nearly static opening of the movement comes virtually without warning, but there is something about the tight, classical architecture of this shortest of Brahms’s symphonies that makes the exposition-repeat an appropriate practice here, and not just a bow to convention. Hearing the beginning twice also helps us recognize the master-stroke that starts the recapitulation, where the motto idea, introduced by a roll on the kettledrum, broadens out both rhythmically and harmonically to propel the music forward in a way the opening of the symphony did not attempt. The motto and main theme will come back in yet another forceful guise to begin the coda, the theme transforming itself there to a chain of descending thirds—Brahms’s musical signature in so many of his works—before subsiding away from it altogether, and which also may explain why it appears with considerably less frequency than the First, Second, and Fourth. Early in the last century, Tovey described the F major as “technically by far the most difficult [of Brahms’s symphonies], the difficulties being mainly matters of rhythm, phrasing, and tone.” One can expand upon this by mentioning the swift alternation of sharply contrasted materials during the course of the first movement, and the need to make both clear and persuasive the thematic connections that bind together the first, second, and last movements, a procedure Brahms does not attempt in his other symphonies. And, as the least often performed of the four, the Third continues to remain, in a sense, almost “new” inssofar as audiences are concerned, and especially since its tight thematic and architectural structure, lean orchestration, and less effusively Romantic tone stand in sharp contrast to the other three.

The symphony begins Allegro con brio, with a rising motto for winds and brass whose broad 6/4 meter seems almost to hold back forward progress; it is only with the introduction of the main theme, taking the initial motto as its bass line, that the music begins really to move. The three-note motto, F-A-flat-F, is Brahms’s shorthand for “frei aber froh,” “free but glad,” musical symbolism he had already used in the A minor string quartet, Opus 51, No. 2, as rejoinder to Joseph Joachim’s F-A-E, “frei aber einsam,” “free but lonely,” many years before. But the F-A-flat-F motto here serves still another, purely musical purpose: the A-flat suggests F minor rather than F major, an ambiguity to be exploited elsewhere in the symphony. The sweeping main theme gives way to a new idea, tentative in its progress, clinging tenuously to nearly each note before moving to the next, but soon opening out and leading to a graceful theme given first to solo clarinet, then to solo oboe and violas in combination. This theme, in darker colorations, will be prominent in the development section of the movement. Now, however, an increase in activity leads to the close of the exposition, a forceful passage built from stabbing downward thrusts in the strings and a swirling wave of energy beginning in the winds and then encompassing the entire orchestra before grinding to a sudden halt for a repeat of the exposition. This is a particularly difficult moment rhythmically since the return to the nearly static opening of the movement comes virtually without warning, but there is something about the tight, classical architecture of this shortest of Brahms’s symphonies that makes the exposition-repeat an appropriate practice here, and not just a bow to convention. Hearing the beginning twice also helps us recognize the master-stroke that starts the recapitulation, where the motto idea, introduced by a roll on the kettledrum, broadens out both rhythmically and harmonically to propel the music forward in a way the opening of the symphony did not attempt. The motto and main theme will come back in yet another forceful guise to begin the coda, the theme transforming itself there to a chain of descending thirds—Brahms’s musical signature in so many of his works—before subsiding to pianissimo for one further, quiet return in the closing measures.

The second and third movements are marked by a contained lyricism, subdued and only rarely rising above piano. Hanslick describes the opening pages of the C major Andante as “a very simple song dialogue between the winds and the deeper strings”; the entry of the violins brings emphatic embellishment and the appearance of a new idea sweetly expressive within a narrow compass, clearly characterized by the repeated pitch at its beginning and the triplet rhythm that stirs its otherwise halting progress. Brahms will use the repeated-note motive to mysterious effect in this movement, but the entire theme will return to extraordinarily significant purpose later in the symphony. The third movement is a gentle interlude in C minor, its pregnant melody heard first in the cellos and then in a
succession of other instruments, among them combined flute, oboe, and horn; solo horn, solo oboe, and, finally, violins and cellos together. Before the statement by the solo horn, an interlude plays upon a yearning three-note motive again characterized by a simple repeated-pitch idea. As in the preceding movement, trumpets and drums are silent.

The finale begins with a mysterious dark rustling of strings and bassoons that seems hardly a theme at all, and it takes a moment for us to realize that, contrary to all expectation—but obviously so right once we’re aware of it—this last movement is in the minor mode. A pianissimo statement of the second-movement theme quoted earlier steals in so quietly that we barely have time to make the connection. Then, without warning, a fortissimo explosion alerts us already to how ripe for development is Brahms’s “non-theme,” as in the space of just a few pages it is fragmented and reinterpreted both rhythmically and melodically. This leads to the finale’s second theme, a proud and heroic one proclaimed in the richly romantic combined timbres of cellos and horns; this is the music that suggested to Joachim the story of Hero and Leander.* After playing with further muted transformations of the opening idea, the development builds to a climax on overlapping statements of the second-movement theme proclaimed by the orchestra at full volume and hurling the music into the recapitulation. Only with a quiet transformation in the violas of the opening idea does the energy level finally subside. The symphony’s final pages return to the soft serenity of F major with the reemergence in a newly restrained guise of the second-movement theme, followed by allusion to and the return of the F-A-flat-F motto, and, at the end, one last, mist-enshrouded recollection of the symphony’s beginning.

MARC MANDEL
Marc Mandel is Director of Program Publications of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

*Joachim writing in a letter to Brahms dated January 27, 1884: “I find the last movement of your symphony deep and original in conception... It is strange that, little as I like reading poetic meanings into music, I have here formed a clear picture of ‘Hero and Leander’ and this has rarely happened to me in the whole range of music. The second subject in C major recalls to me involuntarily the picture of the intrepid swimmer fighting his way towards the promised goal, in the face of wind and storm. Is that something like your own conception?”

Guest Artists
Juanjo Mena
Chief Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester, United Kingdom, Juanjo Mena is one of Spain’s most distinguished international conductors. He has conducted most of the leading orchestras in North America, including the symphony orchestras of Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, Cincinnati, Montreal, and Toronto, the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, and Philadelphia Orchestra. This season he assumed the role of principal conductor of the Cincinnati May Festival. In Europe, Juanjo Mena has been artistic director of the Bilbao Symphony Orchestra, chief guest conductor of the Orchestre de Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, and principal guest conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. He has worked with such prestigious orchestras as the Berlin Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Oslo Philharmonic, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Milan’s Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala, the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonic, and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, as well as with all the major orchestras in Spain. A guest at various international festivals, he has appeared at the Stars of White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg, the Hollywood Bowl, Grant Park (Chicago), Tanglewood, and La Folle Journée in Nantes. He has led the BBC Philharmonic on tours of Europe and Asia, including performances in Cologne, Munich, Vienna, Madrid, Beijing, and Seoul, and appears with that orchestra every year at the BBC Proms in London. His work on the operatic stage includes The Flying Dutchman, Salome, Elektra, Ariadne auf Naxos, Duke Bluebeard’s Castle, Fidelio, and Erwartung, as well as productions of Eugene Onegin in Genoa, The Marriage of Figaro in Lausanne, and Billy Budd in Bilbao. He has made several recordings with the BBC Philharmonic, including a recent release of Glinka’s orchestral works to mark the composer’s centenary; two discs of works by Manuel de Falla, one of which was a BBC Music Magazine “Recording of the Month”; a disc of Gabriel Pierné works (a Gramophone “Editor’s Choice”), and critically acclaimed releases of music by Albéniz, Montsalvatge, Weber, and Turina. He has also recorded a critically acclaimed rendering of Messiaen’s Turangalîla-symphonie for Hyperion with the Bergen Philharmonic. Highlights of Juanjo Mena’s 2017-18 season have included his debut with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C., as well as return visits to the Montreal Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, and London Philharmonic. Juanjo Mena made his Boston Symphony Orchestra debut in July 2010 at Tanglewood and his subscription series debut in October 2011, subsequently returning for subscription concerts in November 2012 and October 2014 and Tanglewood concerts in August 2014 and July 2016. His most recent BSO appearances were...
for two weeks of subscription concerts in January 2017, leading music of Prokofiev, Weinberg, Tchaikovsky, Schumann, Schubert, and the American premiere of Julian Anderson’s *Incantesimi*; and at Tanglewood last summer, repeating Anderson’s *Incantesimi* on a program with music of Brahms and Beethoven.

Garrick Ohlsson

Pianist Garrick Ohlsson has established himself worldwide as a musician of magisterial interpretive and technical prowess. Although long regarded as one of the world’s leading exponents of the music of Chopin, Mr. Ohlsson commands an enormous repertoire ranging over the entire piano literature and has come to be noted for his masterly performances of the works of Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, as well as the Romantic repertoire. To date he has at his command more than 80 concertos, ranging from Haydn and Mozart to works of the 21st century. During the 2017-18 season audiences in cities including St. Louis, Washington, D.C., Cincinnati, San Francisco, Portland (Oregon), Prague, Stockholm, Wroclaw, and Strasbourg have sampled this vast repertoire in concertos ranging from Chopin, Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms to Barber and Busoni. In recital Mr. Ohlsson has been heard in New York’s Tully Hall, and in Seattle, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, and Puerto Rico. Twice during the season he performed with the Indianapolis Symphony—first playing two Prokofiev concertos in a weekend during which all five were programmed, and returning later for Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1. An avid chamber musician, Mr. Ohlsson has collaborated with the Cleveland, Emerson, and Tokyo string quartets, and this fall will tour with the Takács Quartet. Together with violinist Jorja Fleezanis and cellist Michael Grebanier, he is a founding member of the San Francisco-based FOG Trio. He can be heard on the Arabesque, RCA Victor Red Seal, Angel, BMG, Delos, Hänssler, Nonesuch, Telarc, Hyperion, and Virgin Classics labels. A native of White Plains, New York, Garrick Ohlsson began his piano studies at the age of eight, at the Westchester Conservatory of Music; at thirteen he entered the Juilliard School in New York City. He has been awarded first prizes in the Busoni and Montreal piano competitions, the Gold Medal at the International Chopin Competition in Warsaw (1970), the Avery Fisher Prize (1994), the University Musical Society Distinguished Artist Award in Ann Arbor, Michigan (1998), and the Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano Performance from the Northwestern University Bienen School of Music (2014). Garrick Ohlsson made his Boston Symphony Orchestra debut at Tanglewood in August 1971 and his BSO subscription series debut in January 1981. He has since been a frequent guest with the orchestra at Symphony Hall and at Tanglewood, most recently in Boston for subscription performances of Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in March 2016, and most recently at Tanglewood for both of Chopin’s piano concertos in August 2017, when he was last summer’s Koussevitzky Artist, a designation created to honor artists whose presence at the BSO’s summer home has made a lasting impact on Tanglewood’s musical and educational programs. At Tanglewood he has also appeared with the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra and in numerous Ozawa Hall recitals.