Thursday, January 24, 8pm | THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION OF VOLUNTEERS CONCERT
Friday, January 25, 1:30pm
Saturday, January 26, 8pm

CHARLES DUTOIT conducting

HINDEMITH “SYMPHONIC METAMORPHOSES ON THEMES OF CARL MARIA VON WEBER”
Allegro
Turandot: Scherzo
Andantino
March

LISZT PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 IN E-FLAT
Allegro maestoso—Quasi adagio—
Allegretto vivace—
Allegro marziale animato. Presto

STEPHEN HOUGH

{INTERMISSION}

PROKOFIEV MUSIC FROM THE BALLET “ROMEO AND JULIET,” OPUS 64
Montagues and Capulets
Juliet the Young Girl
Madrigal
Minuet
Masks
Romeo and Juliet
The Death of Tybalt
Romeo at Juliet’s Tomb

BANK OF AMERICA AND EMC CORPORATION ARE PROUD TO SPONSOR THE BSO’s 2012-2013 SEASON.
The evening concerts will end about 9:55, the afternoon concert about 3:25. Concertmaster Malcolm Lowe performs on a Stradivarius violin, known as the “Lafont,” generously donated to the Boston Symphony Orchestra by the O’Block Family. Steinway and Sons Pianos, selected exclusively for Symphony Hall. Special thanks to The Fairmont Copley Plaza and Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, and Commonwealth Worldwide Chauffeured Transportation. The program books for the Friday series are given in loving memory of Mrs. Hugh Bancroft by her daughters, the late Mrs. A. Werk Cook and the late Mrs. William C. Cox. In consideration of the performers and those around you, please turn off all electronic devices during the concert, including tablets, cellular phones, pagers, watch alarms, and texting devices of any kind. Thank you for your cooperation. Please do not take pictures during the concert. Flashes, in particular, are distracting to the performers and to other audience members.

The Program in Brief...
It’s remarkable that the Hungarian pianist-composer Franz Liszt, gone these 126 years, is still the epitome of the flashy, emotionally and technically extravagant virtuoso. We imagine him with adoring, opulently dressed entourage surrounding him, pounding away at impossible transcriptions—his own—of Beethoven symphonies or opera excerpts from Wagner or Verdi. But although Liszt’s own music for solo piano or piano with orchestra is often brilliant and devilishly hard to play, his compositional aspirations went well beyond surface fireworks. His two concertos for piano and orchestra, both sketched out around 1839 and completed over a number of years, demonstrate the
influential idea of “cyclic form,” that is, the use of a thematic idea that recurs through many different moods of a piece.

In Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat, finally completed in 1855, the robust, thoroughly dramatic theme that begins the piece returns to tie together the concerto’s various fantasia-like sections. Other concerns aside, the concerto features colorful orchestration and a great deal of thrilling pianistic pyrotechnics for the soloist.

This program begins with one of German composer Paul Hindemith’s more frequently heard orchestral works. Having begun his career in the forefront of progressive music, Hindemith moved in later years toward a deep concern for craft and classical balance. A respected teacher, during and after World War II he lived in the United States, where he was a faculty member at the Tanglewood Music Center and at Yale University. Written during his U.S. sojourn, Hindemith’s four-movement Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes of Weber is based on little-known music of Carl Maria von Weber, an early Romantic-era German composer best-known for his operas. Hindemith began the piece as a ballet score, but that project fell through; a few years later he completed it as a concert piece, which the New York Symphony-Society premiered in 1944. The piece is designed to show each section of the orchestra in its best light.

After Sergei Prokofiev left Russia following the revolution of 1917, he traveled and lived in the U.S. and France during the 1920s and early ’30s. He returned to his homeland, now part of the USSR, in the 1930s, and in the last decades of his life wrote some of his best-known and finest music, despite his living in difficult circumstances. Among these works were the epic opera War and Peace, the Fifth and Sixth symphonies, Peter and the Wolf, and Romeo and Juliet. The latter two—both narrative stage works—share a lot in common in featuring the diverse strands of Prokofiev’s compositional style in highly characterized episodes. In Romeo and Juliet, the composer establishes the atmosphere of the tragedy with bold, foreboding music depicting the feud between the Montagues and Capulets, and with dark, aggressive music for the death of Tybalt. He also taps into his lyrical vein in his depiction of Juliet and of the lovers’ scenes together. Conductor Charles Dutoit’s selection draws upon the two separate suites Prokofiev created from the full ballet score.

Robert Kirzinger

Russia’s Varied Musical Heritage
by Harlow Robinson

The BSO’s 2012-13 season offers a wealth of music by Russian composers, so far represented this season by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky, and Prokofiev. The new year brings music by Shostakovich (the Violin Concerto No. 1, January 31-February 5), Tchaikovsky (Symphony No. 5, also January 31-February 5), Stravinsky (his complete “Pulcinella,” February 21-26), Rachmaninoff (the Piano Concerto No. 2, February 28-March 2; and Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, April 2), Miaskovsky (his Symphony No. 10, April 12-13), and Mussorgsky (“Pictures at an Exhibition,” in a rarely heard orchestration by Leopold Stokowski, also April 12-13).

What makes Russian music “Russian”? Let’s begin with a story.

When director David Lean was preparing to cast his film Doctor Zhivago, based on the novel by Boris Pasternak, the studio executives urged him to pick a stereotypically Russian blond for the title role. But then one of Lean’s associates reminded him—correctly—that “Not all Russians are blond.” So he cast the dark-haired, dark-eyed Egyptian Omar Sharif in the title role, opposite the very blonde Julie Christie, with excellent results.

Many outsiders make the same mistake that Lean’s producers did when looking at Russians and Russian culture, including music. They proceed from certain narrow presumptions about “Russianness.” Not only are not all Russians blond. For many centuries, Russia has been an enormous multicultural empire encompassing not only a vast territory (still the world’s largest country in land area) but also hundreds of different ethnic groups, with different languages, religions, and musical and cultural traditions. Russians made up barely half of the population of the late USSR before it abruptly went out of business on Christmas Day, 1991. Even today, non-Russians constitute nearly twenty per cent of the population of the Russian Federation—including the largest Muslim population in Europe.

What does this mean for Russian music, so prominently featured on BSO programs this season, with no less than sixteen works by seven composers? It means that Russian music comes from a melting pot, having absorbed many different influences and traditions: Russian Orthodox liturgical music,
folk music of many diverse groups, the European classical tradition (first German, later French), the exotic “Orientalism” of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Because of the official censorship of culture practiced with amazing vigor first by the Tsarist government until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and then by the Soviet government, music in Russia has also long performed a more active political role than in other European countries. Russian composers (Mussorgsky, Shostakovich, and Prokofiev come to mind) have frequently done battle with censors and commissars, and have often used their music to make political statements. In Russia, music has been at times literally a matter of life and death, especially during the Soviet period (1917-1991).

Russian “classical” music came of age late. The first conservatories (first in St. Petersburg, then in Moscow) were founded in the 1860s—centuries later than in Europe. The main reason was the dominant role of religion in Russian culture. The music of Russian Orthodoxy—like Russian Orthodoxy itself—originally came to Russia from Byzantium in the tenth century. Byzantine Orthodoxy did not allow the use of any musical instruments during the liturgy. Indeed, the use of instruments was considered a serious sin—and was a punishable crime—until the mid-seventeenth century.

This situation changed dramatically when Tsar Peter I (“The Great”) came to the throne in 1682. After moving the capital from Moscow to the brand-new city of St. Petersburg, Russia’s “Window on the West,” he began ordering his reluctant aristocratic subjects to attend Western-style court balls, where they clumped through European dances like the minuet, polonaise, and anglaise. The Tsars who came after Peter generously subsidized composers. Tsar Alexander III was particularly fond of the music of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-93), bestowing upon him in 1888 a generous lifetime pension of three thousand rubles a year that freed the composer from financial worries—and earned him the envy of less favored colleagues.

Because St. Petersburg was the political and cultural capital of the rapidly expanding Russian Empire—and the home of the Tsar and his entertainment-hungry court—by the early nineteenth century most of the action in Russian music was happening there. In the 1860s, a new group of five nationalist composers emerged. “The Mighty Handful” or “The Five” (who included Modest Mussorgsky and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov) resented the domination of Russian music by imported European styles and performers, and advocated a vague kind of musical “realism” that celebrated Russian folk music and folklore. Their aesthetic position was the exact opposite of the one held by Tchaikovsky, whom they viewed as a cheap imitator of European models.

Unlike Tchaikovsky, born just one year later, the undisciplined Mussorgsky did not have a systematic conservatory education. Tchaikovsky composed six symphonies and several concertos for piano and violin, Mussorgsky none. What Mussorgsky did convey in his best works, such as the programmatic piano cycle *Pictures at an Exhibition*, later orchestrated brilliantly and most famously by Maurice Ravel, was a unique, compelling, and dark vision. The dialectic between Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky represented a sharp divide between two different philosophical positions on how Russian culture should develop. The Slavophiles agreed with Mussorgsky that Russian culture should pursue its own special path and not attempt to copy Western models. The Westernizers, like Tchaikovsky, believed the opposite: that the only hope for backward Russian culture was to adopt European models.

In the twentieth century, Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky became the two poles of the Russian (and Soviet) musical axis. One of Mussorgsky’s greatest admirers was Dmitri Shostakovich, who found his spare, biting, and socially aware approach both congenial and relevant. Especially in his rebellious youth, Sergei Prokofiev was also drawn to Mussorgsky’s musical style, particularly in opera. Later, however, Prokofiev gravitated toward the Tchaikovsky camp in such works as the full-length ballet *Romeo and Juliet* (whose subject Tchaikovsky had already treated in his popular fantasy-overture) and the wartime Symphony No. 5. In his romantic piano concertos and symphonies, Sergei Rachmaninoff clearly continued the Tchaikovsky tradition of late Romanticism, showing a certain aristocratic taste and nostalgic sentimentality at a time when economic, political, and social life in Russia was poised on the brink of cataclysmic transformation.

Although he was living at a time when European composers (Schoenberg, for example) were undertaking various “modernist” experiments, Rachmaninoff rejected such ideas. Russian musical Modernism is a contradictory phenomenon, a vague and spacious label that has been stretched to include the music of composers as dissimilar as the mystical Scriabin, the protean emigré neoclassicist Stravinsky, the ironic Prokofiev, and the reluctant Soviet socialist realist Dmitri
Shostakovich. Modernism also developed differently in Russia’s two competing artistic capitals—ancient holy Orthodox Moscow and St. Petersburg, the country’s much younger “Window on the West.” Mysticism and utopianism played a more important role in the creative identity of Muscovite composers like Scriabin and Rachmaninoff. Composers trained in St. Petersburg—like Stravinsky and Prokofiev—tended to follow a more subdued and ascetic neoclassicism and to think of themselves (in the words of Russian-born choreographer George Balanchine) as “Europeans from Russia.”

For some years just before and after World War I, Paris became a new center of Russian musical life. It was here that the St. Petersburg ballet impresario Serge Diaghilev, seeking a more adventurous artistic atmosphere, established his Ballets Russes. This extraordinary company drew the talents of Russia’s leading dancers, choreographers, musicians, and composers for nearly twenty years until Diaghilev’s death in 1929. Igor Stravinsky achieved his first and most important artistic successes with scores for the Ballets Russes—The Firebird, Petrushka, The Rite of Spring. Altogether Diaghilev staged nine ballets using Stravinsky’s music, including Pulcinella in 1920, as well as three Stravinsky operas, including The Nightingale in 1914. Diaghilev’s activities introduced Russian music—new music as well as classics by Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Borodin, and Glinka—to a wide international public for the first time, creating a strong Franco-Russian connection that lasted until World War II and strongly influenced French composers such as Debussy, Ravel, and Poulenc. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 turned the world of Russian culture, including music, upside down. One of the most immediate results was the emigration abroad of numerous leading figures of pre-Revolutionary Russian musical life. By 1918, Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff, and Prokofiev had all left Russia. Both Stravinsky and Rachmaninoff eventually settled in the United States. Prokofiev took a more unusual route, settling first in America, then moving to Paris, and finally returning to Stalin’s USSR in 1936.

Meanwhile, back in the USSR, Josef Stalin had consolidated state control over all branches of artistic activity, including music. All composers were required to join the Composers Union, which reviewed all new compositions for possible ideological deviation from the doctrine of Soviet Socialist Realism. In this conservative climate, the genre of the symphony, which had largely fallen out of favor in the West, thrived. Many of Shostakovich’s fifteen symphonies were the subject of intense debate and criticism, particularly the monumental and gloomy Fourth, shelved for twenty-five years because of its excessive pessimism. Prokofiev wrote the last three of his seven symphonies in the USSR; his moody Sixth was also attacked by Soviet officials and withdrawn from performance.

But the undisputed champion of Soviet symphonism, at least in quantity, was the indefatigable Nikolai Miaskovsky (1881-1950), who turned out no fewer than twenty-seven symphonies, most of them little known outside Russia, and whose Symphony No. 10 will be played here in April—the first time since the Koussevitzky era that the BSO will play any of the composer’s music. A lifelong friend and confidant to the much more famous Prokofiev, with whom he conducted a voluminous and fascinating correspondence for more than forty years, Miaskovsky also studied composition at the St. Petersburg Conservatory just before World War I. Composed in 1927 on the tenth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Symphony No. 10 is a tribute to the city of St. Petersburg (renamed Petrograd from 1914 to 1924, and Leningrad from 1924 to 1991). Miaskovsky described the work, an unusual and vivid example of Soviet-style Modernism, as “very massive, monolithic, and made, I would even say, of cast iron.” The musical style of Miaskovsky’s later symphonies became considerably more conservative in response to the pervasive demands for “accessibility” during the Stalin era.

With Stalin’s death in 1953, the situation in Soviet music began to change. As in all areas of culture, the period of “The Thaw”—the late 1950s and early 1960s—was an exciting and turbulent time. Banned works were “rehabilitated.” Contact with the West became much easier. A new generation of Soviet composers (including Alfred Schnittke and Sofia Gubaidulina) became familiar with and began to employ enthusiastically the music and progressive techniques of American and European composers. After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Russian composers were finally free to travel the world and write without fear of censorship after seventy years of nearly total isolation. Today, composers from Russia and the newly independent countries that were formerly part of the USSR write in a diverse and eclectic range of styles, freely combining elements of their unique musical heritage with the latest global trends. The best results—one prominent example being the acclaimed music of the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, which merges minimalist, Russian Orthodox, Lutheran,
and German-Scandinavian folk elements—have already deeply enriched world musical culture.

Paul Hindemith
“Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber”

PAUL HINDEMITH was born in Hanau, near Frankfurt, Germany, on November 16, 1895, and died in Frankfurt on December 28, 1963. He composed his “Sinfonische Metamorphosen nach Themen von Carl Maria von Weber” in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1943. Arthur Rodzinski led the New York Symphony-Society in the first performance on January 20, 1944.

THE SCORE OF HINDEMITH’S “SYMPHONIC METAMORPHOSES” calls for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, tenor drum, bass drum, tom-tom, tambourine, triangle, glockenspiel, chimes, cymbals, wood block, tam-tam, and strings.

During his all-too-brief forty years, Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826) almost single-handedly created German romantic opera with Der Freischütz, Euryanthe, and Oberon. His works contained characters who stood for honor and nobility, love and sacrifice, thus representing the highest ideals of a humane German culture. In 1943, at a time when German culture seemed to have been overwhelmed by barbarism, Hindemith—then teaching at Yale—paid homage to his great predecessor among German composers by turning some of Weber’s little four-hand piano pieces into a brilliantly elaborated, playful symphonic score. (Hindemith’s Konzertmusik for Strings and Brass, a BSO fiftieth-anniversary commission introduced in 1931 by Serge Koussevitzky, will be performed here by the orchestra, along with music of Rachmaninoff and Bartók, in the concerts of February 28-March 2 and again on April 2.)

Hindemith’s entire career epitomized the need for composers to have sound technique; his own was consummate. He was an active performer, a distinguished violist, who wanted to write music that would “sound” in performance, yet which grew out of a carefully balanced interrelationship between melody, harmony, and counterpoint. After sowing his artistic wild oats in a series of youthful works that pleased advanced musicians but outraged conservative ones (including the Nazis, who banned his music), Hindemith settled into a maturity lasting some three decades that offered a remarkable consistency in its neo-classical approach, its careful dissonance treatment (following principles that Hindemith formulated for himself from the overtone series), and an increasing sensitivity to orchestral color.

For the Symphonic Metamorphoses, Hindemith chose themes mostly from Weber’s four-hand piano music, with the exception of the second movement, which drew upon material written as incidental music to Schiller’s Turandot. Hindemith did not consider any of this material to represent the very best work or most typical elements of Weber’s style, so he used it quite freely and made whatever alterations he deemed appropriate for his own musical purposes.

The opening Allegro offers a vigorous and concise working out of two different Weberian themes. The scherzo offers a touch of chinoiserie (of course, Schiller’s play, drawn from Gozzi’s fairy tale, was set in China) with the principal material in the flute and a slightly exotic—certainly for Hindemith—percussion ensemble. The Andantino in 6/8 becomes more and more florid as it progresses, with an extended passage for the flute comprising most of its latter part. The March, the score’s finale, stays very close to the Weber original at the beginning, but then Hindemith extends and builds it to a powerful climax.

Steven Ledbetter

STEVEN LEDBETTER was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998 and now writes program notes for other orchestras and ensembles throughout the country.

THE AMERICAN PREMIERE OF THE “SYMPHONIC METAMORPHOSES” was the world premiere noted above, given by Arthur Rodzinski with the New York Symphony-Society on January 20, 1944.

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES of Hindemith’s “Symphonic Metamorphoses” were given by George Szell in January 1945, subsequent BSO performances being
given by Richard Burgin, Charles Munch, Robert Shaw, Erich Leinsdorf (numerous performances both in and out of town between 1963 and 1966, including the most recent subscription performances in March/April 1966), Eugen Jochum, and Charles Dutoit (the BSO’s most recent Tanglewood performance, on August 10, 1991, though Herbert Blomstedt led a more recent performance there on July 25, 2010, with the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra).

Franz Liszt
Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat
FRANZ (FERENC) LISZT was born in Raiding, Hungary, on October 22, 1811, and died in Bayreuth, Germany, on July 31, 1886. Sketches for the Piano Concerto No. 1 go back to 1830, though Liszt evidently completed drafts of both his piano concertos at roughly the same time in 1839. He seems to have worked on the First Concerto again in the late 1840s and again in 1853, making further revisions of detail following the premiere, which took place at Weimar on February 17, 1855, with the composer as soloist and Hector Berlioz conducting.

IN ADDITION TO THE SOLO PIANO, the score of Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 1 calls for an orchestra of two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, triangle, cymbals, and strings.

For all his spectacular self-assurance at the piano, Franz Liszt was astonishingly insecure as a composer. He would rework old compositions repeatedly, fussing with this detail or that, never quite sure if he had yet got it right. And, worse, he often took advice from random acquaintances, offered gratuitously, and then reworked pieces again. Almost every one of his major compositions went through stages of creation, and a number of works actually exist in two different “finished” forms.

It was during the early phase of his career, when he was known primarily as a touring piano virtuoso of extraordinary attainments, that Liszt sketched both of his piano concertos—almost simultaneously—in 1839 (in the case of the E-flat concerto, he drew on a thematic sketch that went back to 1830, when he was only nineteen years old). At that point they were surely conceived as showpieces for his own talents, and if he had actually finished and performed them then, they would no doubt have been much different in character than they finally turned out. As it was, the pressure of touring caused him to put both works aside for a decade until he had settled in Weimar and given up the vagabond life of the international concert star to devote himself to composition and conducting. Although he had written a great deal of music already (mostly brilliant display pieces for piano solo), he worked hard to improve his skills, especially in orchestration.

Liszt was surely not lacking totally in experience at orchestration, since he had already finished a score for the 1839 version of the A major concerto, No. 2. But by 1849 he had to some extent put himself in the hands of Joachim Raff, who worked with him on his orchestrations and even scored a few of the symphonic poems in preliminary versions that were later modified by Liszt himself.* It is hard to tell exactly how much influence Raff had on these scores, partly because most of the manuscripts are in the Liszt Museum in Weimar (the former East Germany), and only relatively recently did scholars begin to undertake systematic study there. The sources for both piano concertos are exceedingly complicated—it could well take a book-length study to disentangle the manuscripts, with their different versions and handwritings, and determine who was responsible for writing what. And even then we can never know the amount of oral instruction that Liszt gave to his amanuenses.

Even after Liszt “finished” the Piano Concerto No. 1 in 1849, he clearly was in no rush to present it to the public. Perhaps he still entertained lingering doubts about the piece’s effectiveness. In any case, there seem to have been some slight adjustments to the score during the ensuing years. Liszt wrote to Hans von Bülow on May 12, 1853, “I have just finished reworking my two concertos and the Totentanz in order to have them copied definitively.”

The E-flat concerto underwent still another (quite minor) round of retouching after the first performances. A comparison of the various versions reveals that, in general, Liszt simplified the work for the performer—hard as that may be to believe when we hear its final shape. In his days as a traveling virtuoso, he was willing to risk all in compositions that approached the limits of human speed and endurance. Later on he found ways of making the virtuosity less an end in itself and more a servant of poetic expression, which is not to say that any of his music is ever easy!

The concerto has garnered a remarkable number of unpleasant reviews over the years. The conservative critic Eduard Hanslick wrote scathingly, dubbing Liszt’s work the “Triangle Concerto” because the composer was so bold as to give that instrument a prominent role in the scherzo section.
This was surely grasping at straws; Beethoven, after all, used the triangle for the “Turkish music” in the finale of the Ninth Symphony, and Mozart before him had employed similar effects. Liszt’s sin, evidently, was to use the triangle for a purely musical effect, not to suggest musical exoticism. As if to forestall criticism for this boldness, Liszt added to his score the cautionary note, “The triangle is here not to be beaten clumsily, but in a delicately rhythmical manner with resonant precision”—good advice for any percussion instrument! Liszt was not deterred from inventing new percussion effects by the attacks of such as Hanslick; rather, he vowed to “continue to make use of them, and I think I shall yet win for them some effects that are little known.”

More daring and difficult for most audiences was that he cast his work in a large span that seemed to destroy the traditional fast-slow-fast relationship of movements within a concerto. Actually the “traditional” movements have been subsumed into the overall span of the entire work, which is unified by the transformation of themes into a well-organized whole, reworking the assertive opening figure in many ways and translating the poetic Adagio theme into the marchlike finale. No less a musician than Béla Bartók hailed the E-flat concerto as “the first perfect realization of cyclic sonata form.”

The strain on audience expectations seems to have been intense until listeners grew accustomed to the work. In Boston, the redoubtable Dwight’s Journal of Music declared (in 1868) “anything more awful, whimsical, outré, and forced than this composition is unknown; anything more incoherent, frosty to the finer instincts we have hardly known under the name of music.” Yet by the 1890s the Boston Symphony was regularly programming the work as a feature attraction when it toured, suggesting that audiences had long since come round and accepted the view of an English critic in 1903 that the E-flat concerto was “quite the most brilliant and entertaining of concertos.” The same writer added, “No person genuinely fond of music was ever known to approach it with an unprejudiced mind and not like it.”

Steven Ledbetter

* -Raff was an extremely fluent and prolific composer eleven years’ Liszt’s junior; in 1875—the year before Brahms’s First Symphony—he was widely regarded as the greatest living German symphonist. His compositions, running to some 200-plus opus numbers, are largely forgotten today, although a wide variety of his music, including eleven symphonies, several concertos, and numerous smaller works, has by now been recorded.

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE OF LISZT’S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 was given by Theodore Thomas’s Orchestra in New York on December 2, 1865, with Sebastian Bach Mills as soloist.

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY PERFORMANCE of Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 1 was on October 17, 1885, with soloist Adèle Margulies under Wilhelm Gericke’s direction. Subsequent BSO performances of the concerto featured Julia Rivé King, Adele Aus der Ohe, Ernst von Dohnányi, Mark Hambourg, George W. Proctor, Rafael Joseffy, Vladimir de Pachmann, Ernest Schelling, Rudolph Ganz, Olga Samaroff, and Moritz Rosenthal (all under Gericke); Franz Rummel and Eugen d’Albert (under Arthur Nikisch); Bernhard Stavenhagen and Aus der Ohe (under Emil Paur); Proctor, Samaroff, Max Paur, Germaine Schnitzer, Edward Morris, and Winifred Christie (under Karl Muck); Samaroff (under Carl Wendling); Schnitzer, Samaroff, Elizabeth K. Howland, George C. Veh, Josef Hofmann, Ferruccio Busoni, and Ganz (under Max Fiedler); Rosita Renard (under Henri Rabaud); Sergei Rachmaninoff, Guy Maier, Ignaz Friedman, Raymond Havens, and Schelling (under Pierre Monteux); Alexander Borovsky, Eunice Norton, George Liebling, José Iturbi, Gladys Heathcock, and Jesús Maria Sanromá (under Serge Koussevitzky); Robert Casadesus (Richard Burgin); Nicole Henriot (under Eleazar de Carvalho, Charles Munch, Jean Morel, William Steinberg, and Joseph Silverstein); Leonard Pennario and Byron Janis (Munch); Jorge Bolet (Monteux); Van Cliburn, Jeanne-Marie Darré, André Watts, and Emanuel Ax (Erich Leinsdorf); Liu Shih-kun and Krystian Zimerman (Seiji Ozawa); Russell Sherman (under Pascal Verrot—the most recent subscription performances, in October/November 1988), Earl Wild (Carl St. Clair), Zoltán Kocsis (James Conlon), and Jean-Ives Thibaudet (under Adam Fischer—the BSO’s most recent performance of the piece, at Tanglewood on August 18, 2000).

Sergei Prokofiev
Music from the ballet “Romeo and Juliet,” Opus 64

SERGEI PROKOFIEV was born in Sontsovka, Ukraine, on April 23, 1891, and died in Moscow on March 5, 1953. “Romeo and Juliet,” a ballet in four acts based on Shakespeare’s tragedy of the same name, was originally commissioned in 1934 by the Mariinsky Theater (also known as the State Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet and the Kirov Theater) in Leningrad. Prokofiev completed the score in 1935, but numerous political and administrative complications delayed its premiere in Russia. In 1936, Prokofiev arranged two orchestral suites from the ballet’s music. Suite No. 1 (Opus 64-bis) was first performed in Moscow on November 24, 1936, and Suite No. 2 (Opus 64-ter) in Leningrad on April 15, 1937. The ballet had its stage premiere in Brno, Czechoslovakia, on December 30, 1938, and its Russian premiere at the Kirov on January 11, 1940. The present selection of excerpts includes movements from both suites: “Montagues and Capulets,” “Juliet the Young Girl,” and “Romeo at Juliet’s Tomb” are from the Suite No. 2; “Madrigal,” “Minuet,” “Masks,” “Romeo and Juliet,” and “The Death of Tybalt” are from the Suite No. 1.

THE SCORE OF PROKOFIEV’S “ROMEO AND JULIET” calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, two bassoons, contrabassoon, cornet, two trumpets, four horns, three trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, tambourine, snare drum, cymbals, bass drum, bells, xylophone, harp, piano, and strings. Perhaps to make them easier to perform in concert, Prokofiev made the orchestration in the suites somewhat lighter than in the ballet, with only two trumpets rather than three, four horns rather than six, and a smaller percussion group.

The plays of William Shakespeare—especially the tragedies—have long been popular in Russia. Among their admirers have been numerous composers. Romeo and Juliet inspired both Tchaikovsky (in his Fantasy-Overture) and Sergei Prokofiev (in his full-length ballet), while Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich turned repeatedly to Hamlet and King Lear, producing incidental music for several stage productions and scores for Grigor Kozintsev’s classic film versions.

Prokofiev, too, found frequent inspiration in Shakespeare. In 1933-34 he produced incidental music for a production called “Egyptian Nights,” a strange potpourri based on Antony and Cleopatra staged by experimental director Alexander Tairov at his Moscow Chamber Theater. Later, in 1937-38, he wrote incidental music for a celebrated and controversial Leningrad production of Hamlet, whose theme of guilt and regicide resonated deeply with Soviet audiences living through Stalin’s purges.

The idea of creating a ballet out of Romeo and Juliet originally came from the Soviet stage director Sergei Radlov (1892-1958), an important figure in the Russian theatrical avant-garde both before and after the 1917 Revolution. Radlov was also very familiar with Prokofiev’s music, since he had staged the first Russian production of Prokofiev’s opera Love for Three Oranges in 1926 in Leningrad.

Noted for his adventurous productions of contemporary opera, Radlov directed the Russian premiere of Berg’s Wozzeck at the Mariinsky Theatre, where he served as artistic director from 1931 to 1934. He also staged several plays of Shakespeare at his own dramatic theater in the early 1930s, including Romeo and Juliet in 1934.

Originally, Radlov and Prokofiev were planning to stage Romeo and Juliet at the Mariinsky (later known as the Kirov Theatre). But in one of the many political storms that beset the theater during the Soviet era, Radlov lost his position there in the aftermath of the assassination of the Leningrad Communist Party boss Sergei Kirov in December 1934. Still continuing to work with Radlov as librettist, Prokofiev signed a new contract (also later broken) for the ballet with the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. At the time, Prokofiev was living a peripatetic and nomadic life, commuting between Paris (where his wife and two sons still lived) and Russia, with frequent trips to the United States. Only in early 1936 did he make the fatal decision to settle his family permanently in an apartment in Moscow.

Preparing for this final move back to his homeland, Prokofiev spent the spring, summer, and early fall of 1935 in the USSR. Despite the increasingly repressive political and ideological atmosphere to which he seems to have paid remarkably little attention, this was a period of apparently happy productivity, his chief project being Romeo and Juliet. In fact Prokofiev worked with incredible speed, as he did when genuinely inspired. Act II was completed on July 22, 1935; Act III on August 29, and the entire piano score by September 8, after less than five months of work. In October he began the orchestration, working at top speed, producing the equivalent of about twenty pages of full score each day. But the planned Bolshoi production failed to take place, and no other theater came forth to take on the project.

Frustrated, Prokofiev created two orchestral suites from the ballet’s music in late 1936. These were
performed soon afterwards in Russia, representing one of the few instances in dance history when a ballet’s music was heard in concert form before being staged. The stage premiere of the full-length ballet eventually took place not in Russia, but in Brno, Czechoslovakia, with choreography by Ivo Psota, who also danced the role of Romeo. The first Russian production at the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad was choreographed by Leonid Lavrovsky. Galina Ulanova scored one of her greatest successes in the role of Juliet. The story line of the Kirov version had been stitched together by four authors: Radlov, Prokofiev, Lavrovsky, and critic/playwright Adrian Piotrovsky. Not surprisingly, the repeated revision of the scenario produced what critic Arlene Croce has called a “dramaturgical nightmare.”

The original scenario (later altered) changed the play’s ending to a happy one. Radlov and Prokofiev had Romeo arrive later than in Shakespeare, finding Juliet alive. “The reasons that led us to such a barbarism were purely choregraphic,” Prokofiev explained later. “Living people can dance, but the dead cannot dance lying down.” Another factor was certainly the Soviet doctrine of Socialist Realism, which urged composers to provide optimistic, uplifting endings to their operas and ballets. But in the end, Prokofiev and his collaborators restored the original tragic ending, which turned out to be spectacularly effective both choreographically and musically.

Each of the two orchestral suites Prokofiev arranged in 1936 from the music for Romeo and Juliet has seven titled sections. Suite No. 1 (Opus 64-bis) focuses on rearranged genre episodes from Acts I and II and does not attempt to follow the dramatic action. Four of its sections are dance intermezzi and only two (“Madrigal” and “Romeo and Juliet”) make use of the major dramatic leitmotifs. Suite No. 2 (Opus 64-ter), on the other hand, possesses a more logical narrative structure that follows the play’s plot.

Romeo represents a giant step forward in Prokofiev’s evolution as a ballet composer. It is a remarkable synthesis of the five “lines” of his musical personality, as he once described them: classical, modern, toccata (or motor), lyrical, and grotesque. His aggressive “Scythianism” found brilliant expression in the violent hostility between the Montagues and Capulets, and in the brutal darkness of the unenlightened medieval setting. His “classicism” found an outlet in the courtly dances required of an aristocratic setting, such as gavottes and minuets. Entirely appropriate for some of the character roles, such as the Nurse, was Prokofiev’s famous satirical style, while his scherzo style suited volatile characters like Mercutio. And finally, Prokofiev’s lyricism, an increasingly important part of his artistic personality since the late 1920s and now reinforced by the Soviet musical environment (which prized melody and accessibility above all else), was both necessary and particularly successful in conveying the innocent passion between the lovers that lies at the center of the drama. Romeo is Prokofiev’s first completely successful lyrical stage work, and his first convincing portrayal of non-ironic romantic love.

Harlow Robinson

Harlow Robinson is Matthews Distinguished University Professor at Northeastern University. The author of “Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography” and editor/translator of “Selected Letters of Sergei Prokofiev” (both published by Northeastern University Press), he is a frequent annotator and lecturer for the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera Guild.

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCES, WHICH WERE ALSO THE FIRST BSO PERFORMANCES, of music from Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet were given by the BSO under the composer’s direction on March 25 and 26, 1938, as part of an all-Prokofiev program (see page 46). Since then, various excerpts from the score have been heard in Boston Symphony concerts under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky, Richard Burgin, Charles Munch, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Erich Leinsdorf, Charles Wilson, Seiji Ozawa (on several occasions between 1970 and 1996, including a complete traversal of the score when it was recorded here in the fall of 1986), Edo de Waart, Kazuyoshi Akiyama, Andrew Davis, Hugh Wolff, Grant Llewellyn, Kazushi Ono, Stefan Asbury, Ludovic Morlot (the most recent subscription performances, in October 2006), André Previn, and Charles Dutoit (the most recent Tanglewood performance, on July 30, 2010).

To Read and Hear More...
books on the composer include Ian Kemp’s *Hindemith* in the series “Oxford Studies of Composers” (Oxford paperback), David Neumeyer’s *The Music of Paul Hindemith* (Yale University), Geoffrey Skelton’s *Paul Hindemith: The Man Behind the Music* (Crescendo), *Selected Letters of Paul Hindemith* as translated and edited by Skelton (Yale University), Guy Rickards’s *Hindemith, Hartmann and Henze* in the series “20th-Century Composers” (Phaidon paperback), and Luther Noss’s *Paul Hindemith in the United States* (University of Illinois).

The three-disc set “Hindemith Conducts Hindemith” includes, among other things, the composer’s recordings from the 1950s with the Berlin Philharmonic of his *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, the BSO-commissioned *Konzertmusik* for Strings and Brass (to be performed here later this season), and the Symphony, *Mathis der Maler* (Deutsche Grammophon). Other recordings of the *Symphonic Metamorphoses* include Claudio Abbado’s with the London Symphony Orchestra (Decca) and Berlin Philharmonic (DG), Leonard Bernstein’s with the New York Philharmonic (Sony) and Israel Philharmonic (DG), Herbert Blomstedt’s with the San Francisco Symphony (Decca), Riccardo Chailly’s with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam (RCO Live), and George Szell’s with the Cleveland Orchestra (Sony).

The important biographies of Liszt are Derek Watson’s compact *Liszt* in the Master Musicians series (Schirmer paperback) and Alan Walker’s Liszt biography in three volumes—*Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years (1811-1847)*, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years (1848-1861)*, and *Franz Liszt: The Final Years (1861-1886)*—which was reprinted in paperback (Cornell University Press). Walker also authored *Reflections on Liszt* (Cornell University Press) and an older brief biography with good illustrations, *Liszt*, in the “Great Composers” series (Faber and Faber, out of print); edited the symposium volume *Franz Liszt: The Man and his Music* (Taplinger), and provided the Liszt article in the 2001 edition of The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. Michael Steinberg’s notes on the two Liszt piano concertos are in his compilation volume *The Concerto–A Listener’s Guide* (Oxford paperback). Also worth noting is Kenneth Hamilton’s 2007 *After the Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance*, an engaging history of the piano recital and its changing mores from the time of Liszt into the twentieth century (Oxford University Press).

The Boston Symphony Orchestra with Seiji Ozawa conducting recorded Liszt’s two piano concertos and *Totentanz* in 1987 with soloist Krystian Zimerman (Deutsche Grammophon). Stephen Hough has recorded the two Liszt piano concertos with Andrew Litton and the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra (Hyperion, also including Grieg’s Piano Concerto). Charles Dutoit recorded both Liszt piano concertos with Jean-Yves Thibaudet and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra (Decca) and the Concerto No. 1 with Martha Argerich, also with the Montreal Symphony (EMI). Other noteworthy pairings of the two Liszt concertos include Nelson Freire’s with Michel Plasson and the Dresden Philharmonic (Brilliant Classics), Sviatoslav Richter’s with Kiril Kondrashin and the London Symphony Orchestra (Philips), Emanuel Ax’s with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Philharmonia Orchestra (Sony), and Alfred Brendel’s with Bernard Haitink and the London Philharmonic (Philips).

The important modern study of Prokofiev is Harlow Robinson’s *Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography*. Originally published in 1987, this was reprinted in 2002 with a new foreword and afterword by the author (Northeastern University paperback). Robinson’s book avoids the biased attitudes of earlier writers whose viewpoints were colored by the “Russian”-vs-“Western” perspectives typical of their time, as reflected in such older volumes as Israel Nestyev’s *Prokofiev* (Stanford University Press; translated from the Russian by Florence Jonas) and Victor Seroff’s *Sergei Prokofiev: A Soviet Tragedy* (Taplinger). More recently Robinson produced *Selected Letters of Sergei Prokofiev*, newly translating and editing a volume of previously unpublished Prokofiev correspondence (Northeastern University). *Sergey Prokofiev* by Daniel Jaffé is in the well-illustrated series “20th-Century Composers” (Phaidon paperback). Claude Samuel’s *Prokofiev* is an equally well-illustrated introductory biography (Marion Boyars paperback, if you can still find it). Other useful books include Boris Schwarz’s *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia, Enlarged Edition, 1917-1981* (Indiana University Press) and *Prokofiev by Prokofiev: A Composer’s Memoir*, an autobiographical account covering the first seventeen years of Prokofiev’s life, through his days at the St. Petersburg Conservatory (Doubleday).

The Boston Symphony Orchestra recorded the complete score of *Romeo and Juliet* under Seiji Ozawa’s direction in 1986 (Deutsche Grammophon). Charles Dutoit’s recording of excerpts with the NHK Symphony Orchestra includes the selection being performed by the BSO this week (Decca). Other recordings of the complete score include Valery Gergiev’s with the Kirov Theater Orchestra...
(Philips) and André Previn’s with the London Symphony Orchestra (EMI). A powerful sequence of excerpts with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting the New York Philharmonic has been reissued on compact disc (Sony). Other choices for a disc of excerpts include the aforementioned Gergiev with the Kirov Orchestra (Philips), Claudio Abbado with the Berlin Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon), Riccardo Muti with the Philadelphia Orchestra (EMI), and Michael Tilson Thomas with the San Francisco Symphony (RCA). Serge Koussevitzky recorded Prokofiev’s Suite No. 2 from *Romeo and Juliet* with the BSO in 1945 (RCA). Charles Munch recorded an atmospheric LP of music from *Romeo and Juliet* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1957, excerpts from which appeared on CD in the Munch volume of the series “Great Conductors of the 20th Century” (EMI/IMG Artists). Erich Leinsdorf and the BSO recorded excerpts from Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* in 1967 (originally RCA; reissued on Testament).

Marc Mandel

Guest Artists

Charles Dutoit

Since his initial Boston Symphony appearances in February 1981 at Symphony Hall and August 1982 at Tanglewood, Charles Dutoit has returned frequently to the BSO podium at both venues, most recently for two weeks of subscription programs this past October. Last summer at Tanglewood he led concerts with both the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra. In 2010-11, the Philadelphia Orchestra celebrated its thirty-year artistic collaboration with Mr. Dutoit, who made his debut with that orchestra in 1980 and who became chief conductor there in 2008. This season he became the Philadelphia Orchestra’s conductor laureate. Also artistic director and principal conductor of London’s Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Mr. Dutoit collaborates regularly with the world’s leading orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, and Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, as well as the Israel Philharmonic and the major orchestras of Japan, South America, and Australia. His more than 170 recordings for Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI, Philips, and Erato have garnered more than forty awards and distinctions. For twenty-five years, from 1977 to 2002, he was artistic director of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, a dynamic musical partnership recognized the world over. Between 1990 and 2010, he was artistic director and principal conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra’s summer festival at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in upstate New York. From 1991 to 2001, Charles Dutoit was music director of the Orchestre National de France, with which he has toured extensively on five continents. In 1996 he was appointed music director of the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo, with which he has toured Europe, the United States, China, and Southeast Asia; he is now music director emeritus of that orchestra. Mr. Dutoit has been artistic director of both the Sapporo Pacific Music Festival and the Miyazaki International Music Festival in Japan, as well as the Canton International Summer Music Academy in Guangzhou, China, which he founded in 2005. In summer 2009 he became music director of the Verbier Festival Orchestra. When still in his early twenties, Charles Dutoit was invited by Herbert von Karajan to lead the Vienna State Opera. He has since conducted regularly at the Royal Opera House–Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and Deutsche Oper in Berlin, and has also led productions at the Los Angeles Music Center Opera and the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. He is an Honorary Citizen of the City of Philadelphia, a Grand Officier de l’Ordre National du Québec, a Commandeur de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de France, and an Honorary Officer of the Order of Canada, the country’s highest award of merit. The recipient of the 2010 Governor’s Distinguished Arts Award, which recognizes a Pennsylvania artist of international fame, he recently received an honorary doctorate from the Curtis Institute of Music. He also holds honorary doctorates from McGill University, the University of Montreal, and Université Laval. Charles Dutoit was born in Lausanne, Switzerland; his extensive musical training included violin, viola, piano, percussion, the history of music, and composition at the conservatoires and music academies of Geneva, Siena, Venice, and Boston. A globetrotter motivated by his passion for history and archaeology, political science, art, and architecture, Charles Dutoit has traveled in all the nations of the world.

Stephen Hough
Stephen Hough is widely regarded as one of the most distinctive pianists of his generation. Awarded a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship in 2001, he is also the 2008 winner of the Northwestern University School of Music’s Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano Performance and the 2010 winner of the Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumentalist Award. Mr. Hough has appeared with most of the major American and European orchestras and plays recitals regularly in the world’s major halls and concert series. Recent engagements include recitals in London, Paris, Hong Kong, Sydney, Chicago, and San Francisco; performances with the New York, London, Los Angeles, and Czech philharmonics, the Chicago, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Toronto symphonies, and the Cleveland, Philadelphia, Minnesota, and Russian National orchestras; and a performance televised worldwide with the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle. He is also a guest at such festivals as Salzburg, Ravinia, Tanglewood, Blossom, the Hollywood Bowl, Aspen, Grand Teton, Mostly Mozart, Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, and at the BBC Proms, where he has made over twenty appearances. In summer 2009 he played all of Tchaikovsky’s works for piano and orchestra over four Prom concerts, three of which were broadcast live on BBC television. Highlights of Mr. Hough’s 2012-13 season include serving as artist-in-residence with the BBC Symphony in London, recording the two Brahms concertos with the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra, and appearing in reengagements with the Boston, San Francisco, Houston, and Baltimore symphonies, as well as with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and Deutsche Sinfonie-Orchester Berlin. In addition he plays solo recitals in Carnegie Hall, Vancouver, St. Paul, and London’s Barbican Center. Mr. Hough’s catalogue of more than fifty CDs has garnered numerous international prizes, including the Deutsche Schallplattenpreis, Diapason d’or, Monde de la musique, four Grammy nominations, and eight awards from Gramophone Magazine, including “Record of the Year” in 1996 and 2003, and the 2008 “Gold Disc.” His most recent recordings are the Grieg and Liszt concertos for Hyperion and a disc of his own compositions for BIS Records. An avid writer, Stephen Hough frequently writes for many of the major London newspapers, including a cultural blog for the Daily Telegraph. He has also written extensively about theology; his book, The Bible as Prayer, is published in the U.S. and Canada by Paulist Press. As a composer, Mr. Hough has received commissions from musicians of the Berlin Philharmonic, London’s National Gallery, Westminster Abbey, Wigmore Hall, Le Musée de Louvre, and Musica Viva Australia, among others. He premiered his Sonata for Piano (Broken Branches) at Wigmore Hall in June 2011; the world premiere of his Missa Mirabilis, commissioned by the Indianapolis Symphony, took place in April 2012. His numerous compositions for solo piano, chamber ensembles, orchestra, and voice are published by Josef Weinberger Ltd. A resident of London, Mr. Hough is a visiting professor at the Royal Academy of Music in London and holds the International Chair of Piano Studies at his alma mater, the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Stephen Hough made his Boston Symphony Orchestra debut at Tanglewood in July 1998 with Mozart’s E-flat piano concerto, K.271, subsequently making subscription appearances at Symphony Hall in April 2005 (Saint-Saëns’s Piano Concerto No. 5, Egyptian) and March 2009 (Rachmaninoff’s Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini).