

The 996th Suntory Subscription Concert
Thu. Feb. 22, 2024, 19:00 at Suntory Hall

The 997th Orchard Hall Subscription Concert
Sun. Feb. 25, 2024, 15:00 at Bunkamura Orchard Hall

The 160th Tokyo Opera City Subscription Concert
Tue. Feb. 27, 2024, 19:00 at Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall

Myung-Whun Chung, conductor

Akihiro Miura, concertmaster

Beethoven:
 Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68, "Pastoral" (ca. 40 min)

- I. Awakening of happy feelings on arriving in the country: Allegro ma non troppo
- II. By the brook: Andante molto mosso
- III. Merry gathering of country folk: Allegro
- IV. Thunderstorm: Allegro
- V. Shepherd's song — Happy and thankful feelings after the storm: Allegretto

— intermission (ca. 15 min) —

Stravinsky: Ballet "The Rite of Spring" (ca. 35 min)

Part I: The Adoration of the Earth

Introduction
 Augurs of Spring;
 Dance of the Adolescent Girls
 Game of Abduction
 Spring Round Dances
 Games of the Rival Tribes
 Entrance of the Sage
 Adoration of the Earth
 Dance to the Earth

Part II: The Sacrifice

Introduction
 Mysterious Circles of the Adolescents
 Glorification of the Chosen One
 Evocation of the Ancestors
 Ritual of the Ancestors
 Sacrificial Dance of the Chosen One

Presented by Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra
 Subsidized by the Agency for Cultural Affairs Government of Japan |
 Japan Arts Council (Feb. 22)
 In Association with **Bunkamura** (Feb. 25)



- ♪ All seats are reserved. Late admittance will be refused during the live performance. If you enter or reenter just before the concert or between movements, we may escort you to a seat different from the one to which you were originally assigned.
- ♪ Exiting during the performance will be tolerated. If you do not feel well, please exit or enter as you need. However, please mind the other listeners so that they will be minimally disturbed.
- ♪ Please refrain from using your cellphone or other electronic devices during performance.
- ♪ Hold applause please. Please cherish the "afterglow" at the end of each piece for a moment before your applause.

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Artist Profile



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Myung-Whun Chung, conductor

Honorary Music Director of
the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra

Born in Seoul, Myung-Whun Chung won the silver medal at the Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in 1974. After completing conducting studies at the Juilliard School, he served as assistant and subsequently associate conductor to Carlo Maria Giulini at the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Since his appointment as Music Director of the Paris Opera (L'Opéra Bastille) in 1989, Maestro Chung has conducted many prominent orchestras, including the Vienna Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, and la Filarmonica della Scala. He served as the Music Director of l'Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France (2000- 2015), the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra (2006-2015) and the Asia Philharmonic Orchestra, which he founded in 1997. Since 2012, he has been Principal Guest Conductor of the Staatskapelle Dresden. In June 2022, he received the title of Grand Officer of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Italy for his contributions to Italian cultural development over the years. In March 2023, he became the first-ever Conductor Emeritus of the Filarmonica della Scala in Milan.

For the TPO, Maestro Chung was Special Artistic Advisor (2001- 2010), its Honorary Conductor Laureate (2010-2016). Starting September 2016, he was appointed as Honorary Music Director. He is active in education for the younger generations and in promotion of peace especially in Asia through a variety of musical activities and serving as UNICEF Ambassador.

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Program Notes

Text by Robert Markow

Beethoven: Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 "Pastoral"

The dividing line between program music and absolute music is a thin one, but Beethoven proved himself a master of both in his Sixth Symphony. Although the work has been produced with scenery, with characters who move about on stage, and as part of the cinema classic *Fantasia*, Beethoven took care to advise that the symphony is “more an expression of feeling than painting.” Each listener should let his or her imagination work its own spell. After all, wrote Beethoven, “composing is thinking in sounds.” Hence, he continues, the *Pastoral* Symphony is “no picture, but something in which the emotions aroused by the pleasures of the country are expressed, or something in which some feelings of country life are set forth.”

Beethoven’s own love for the pleasures of the country is well-known. In a life of almost constant turmoil, anxiety, and stormy relationships, the periods he spent in the woods outside Vienna offered his tortured soul precious solace and peace of mind. To quote the composer again: “How glad I am to be able to roam in wood and thicket, among the trees and flowers and rocks. No one can love the country as I do. ... My bad hearing does not trouble me here. ... In the woods there is enchantment which expresses all things.”

Beethoven’s *Pastoral* Symphony received its first performance in Vienna as part of that incredible marathon concert of December 22, 1808 at the Theater an der Wien, an all-Beethoven concert that also included the Fifth Symphony, Fourth Piano Concerto, *Choral Fantasy* and some vocal and choral music. It is dedicated to two of Beethoven’s most ardent patrons, Prince Lobkowitz and Count Razumovsky.

The symphony’s opening places us immediately in relaxed, beatific surroundings. The day is sunny, warm and abounding in nature’s fragrances and gentle breezes. But aside from conjuring nature imagery, the music is remarkable for its motivic writing: virtually the entire movement is built from tiny musical cells found in the first two bars. Entire phrases and sentences are

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often formed from these motivic ideas repeated again and again. The second movement invites contemplation. To the musicologist Donald Francis Tovey, this is “a slow movement in full sonata form which at every point asserts its deliberate intention to be lazy and to say whatever occurs to it twice in succession, and which in doing so never loses flow or falls out of proportion.”

The Sixth is the only symphony in which Beethoven departs from the four-movement format. The remaining three movements are played without interruption. Rough, peasant merry-making and dancing are portrayed, but the boisterous festivities suddenly stop when intimations of an approaching storm are heard. There is not much time to take cover; a few isolated raindrops fall, and then the heavens burst open. Timpani, piccolo and trombones, hitherto silent in the symphony, now make their entrances. With the tempest over, a shepherd’s pipe is heard in a song of thanksgiving for the renewed freshness and beauty of nature. The joyous hymn is taken up by the full orchestra as if, to quote the conductor Edward Downes, “in thanks to some pantheistic god, to Nature, to the sun, to whatever beneficent power one can perceive in a universe that seemed as dark and terrifyingly irrational in Beethoven’s day as it can in ours.”

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: Born in Bonn, December 16, 1770; died in Vienna, March 26, 1827

Work composed: 1808 **World premiere:** December 22, 1808 at Theater an der Wien in Vienna, conducted by the composer

Instrumentation: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, timpani, strings

Stravinsky: Ballet "The Rite of Spring"

Who wrote this fiendish *Rite of Spring*
 What right had he to write the thing,
 Against our helpless ears to fling
 Its crash clash cling clang bing bang bing?

The anonymous author of this witty verse, which appeared in the Boston *Herald* following the local premiere of *Le Sacre du printemps* (*The Rite of Spring*), obviously hadn't been able to come to terms with this most revolutionary of masterpieces, even eleven years after its riotous Paris premiere in 1913. But Stravinsky's right to create was not really in question. The issue concerned in part the music's unprecedented degree of explosive power, volcanic sounds produced by a gigantic orchestra, savage rhythmic impulses, and rending dissonances, all of which combined to provoke early critics into speaking or writing as if, in the words of Donald Mitchell, "the music had done them personal injury, physical violence, as if the score of the ballet were an instrument of aggression."

But its brutality and violent dissonance were not the only reasons for the reaction *Sacre* engendered. It seemed to reach deep into the subconscious, to activate instinctual, primal feelings and responses that are often depicted in myths. The mythic, archetypal element of *Sacre* has led some commentators to interpret the score in terms of Jungian psychology.

Stravinsky described the moment of conception, which took place during the spring of 1910 while he was working on *The Firebird* in St. Petersburg, in these terms (from *Chronicle of My Life*): "I saw in imagination a solemn pagan rite: wise elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring." He then described the vision to Sergei Diaghilev, director of the Ballets russes, who saw balletic possibilities in it, and to the designer, painter and archeologist Nicholas Roerich.

Work on several other compositions, including the highly successful *Petrushka*, intervened between Stravinsky's original conception and completion of *Sacre*, but well before *Sacre's* premiere in Paris on May 29, 1913, Pierre Monteux, conductor of the historic performance, sensed the approaching trauma. He wrote of his initial acquaintance with the music: "With only Diaghilev and myself as audience, Stravinsky sat down to play a piano reduction of the entire score. Before he got very far I was convinced he was raving mad. Heard this way, without the color of the orchestra, which is one of its greatest distinctions, the crudity of the rhythm was emphasized, its stark primitiveness underlined. The very walls responded as Stravinsky pounded away. ... My only comment at the end was that such music would surely cause a scandal."

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And cause a scandal it did – probably the most famous musical scandal of the century. At the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the audience almost immediately began laughing, booing and heckling. Unrest turned to anger, and then to violence, requiring an appearance by the gendarmes. The ballet, choreographed by Nijinsky, managed to continue to the end, but for weeks and months afterwards, newspapers and journals were filled with vivid descriptions of the event. Carl van Vechten dubbed it “war over art.” Léon Vallas referred to it as “Le Massacre du printemps.” And Nicolas Slonimsky, writing more with reason than passion, observed somewhat later that “from the initial bassoon solo to the final frenzy of the sacred dance, *Le Sacre du printemps* relentlessly moves on, creating musical values so new that the world was faced with the alternative either to reject this music as a freakish exhibition of an unbalanced young man, or to accept it as a revolutionary innovation.”

The whole phenomenon of *Le Sacre du printemps* is perhaps most succinctly summarized in Pierre Boulez’ statement: “It has become the ritual – and the myth – of modern music.”

IGOR STRAVINSKY: Born at Oranienbaum (a resort near St. Petersburg), June 17, 1882; died in New York City, April 6, 1971

Work composed: 1911-1913 **World premiere:** May 29, 1913 at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, conducted by Pierre Monteux

Instrumentation: piccolo, 3 flutes (3rd doubling second piccolo), alto flute, 4 oboes (4th doubling second English horn), English horn, clarinet in E \flat and D, 3 clarinets (3rd doubling second bass clarinet), 2 bass clarinets, 4 bassoons (4th doubling second contrabassoon), contrabassoon, 8 horns (7th and 8th doubling tenor tubas), 4 trumpets (4th doubling bass trumpet), 3 trombones, 2 tubas, timpani (2 players), percussion (tambourine, bass drum, triangle, antique cymbals, cymbals, tam-tam, güiro), strings

Formerly a horn player in the Montreal Symphony, **Robert Markow** now writes program notes for numerous orchestras and other musical organizations in North America and Asia. He taught at Montreal’s McGill University for many years, has led music tours to several countries, and writes for numerous leading classical music journals.