

Concert of
Saturday,
May 21, 2022,
7:00pm

NICOLA LUISOTTI,
conductor

ITZHAK PERLMAN,
violin

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)
Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt
(Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage),
Op. 27 (1828) 13 MINS

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)
Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy (1869) 20 MINS

MAX BRUCH (1838–1920)
Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor,
Op. 26 (1866) 25 MINS
I. Vorspiel: Allegro moderato
II. Adagio
III. Finale: Allegro energico
Itzhak Perlman, violin

The use of cameras or recording
devices during the concert is
strictly prohibited. Please be
kind to those around you and
silence your mobile phone and
other hand-held devices.

Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt, Op. 27

***Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt* is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, two horns, three trumpets, timpani and strings.**

“The boy was born on a lucky day,” said the famous poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Imagine hearing such an observation about yourself from one of the world’s greatest writers. And it was true. Felix Mendelssohn was just 16 when he composed his first masterpiece.

The son of a banker, he received the finest instruction available, excelling in music, literature, languages, geography, math and drawing. His parents cultivated a home life that was the envy of Europe, a gathering place for famous poets, scientists, writers, musicians, artists and thinkers in Berlin—a host of celebrities who came together for community, music, and to marvel at the uncanny abilities of the Mendelssohn prodigies (Felix and his sister Fanny).

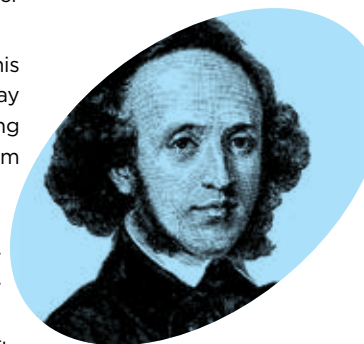
Mendelssohn first met Goethe at the age of 12, when his composition teacher Carl Friedrich Zelter took him to stay with the famous writer. In a letter to his parents, young Mendelssohn gushed, “Every morning, I receive a kiss from the author of *Faust* and *Werther*.”

Goethe wrote the two poems “Calm Sea” and “Prosperous Voyage” no later than 1795. The first contemplates terror and deadly conditions at sea—it’s not about icebergs or violent storms, but sailing ships becalmed. The second poem expresses the sailors’ exultation as a breeze wafts across the water.

Generally printed and read as a pair, the poems inspired music from Beethoven, Schubert and the poet’s 19-year-old friend Felix Mendelssohn, who wrote a concert overture on the subject in 1828.

by Noel Morris
Program Annotator

- First ASO performance:
- November 20, 1965
- Robert Mann, conductor
- Most recent
- ASO performances:
- May 5–7, 2016
- Lothar Zagrosek, conductor



Calm Sea (Goethe)

Deep quiet rules the waters;
 motionless, the sea reposes,
 and the boatsman looks
 about with alarm
 at the smooth surfaces about him.
 No wind comes from any direction!
 A deathly, terrible quiet!
 In the vast expanse
 not one wave stirs.

Prosperous Voyage (Goethe)

The mist is torn away,
 The heavens turn bright,
 And Aeolus unfastens
 The bonds of fear.
 There, the winds rustle,
 the boatsman stirs.
 Quickly! Quickly!
 The waves rise up again.
 The distant view draws close,
 Land ho, I call

First ASO performances:
 December 17-18, 1959
 Henry Sopkin, conductor

Most recent

ASO performances:
 March 8-10, 2018
 Stephen Mulligan, conductor

Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy

Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings.

Historically, Russia was an isolationist country when it came to music. For centuries, Western instruments, harmonies, and dance rhythms were frowned upon by the Orthodox church. Sacred music and folk music necessarily served as the basis for Russian composition. And the first Russian conservatory didn't open its doors until 1862. Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was a member of the first graduating class.

In the 1860s, a composer named Mily Balakirev loomed large over Russian music, badgering others to preserve the Russian style free from European (conservatory) influence. A terrific pianist and natural musician, Balakirev wore his lack of formal music education like a badge of honor. With his uncompromising attitude, he made enemies and lost his job in 1869. Quite unexpectedly, Tchaikovsky published an article in his defense. They became friends, and Balakirev saw in the 29-year-old Tchaikovsky a mind he could mold—at least for a time.

That same year, Tchaikovsky destroyed one of his scores after having received savage criticism from his new friend Balakirev. (The tone poem *Fatum* was recovered from orchestral parts and published posthumously.) Balakirev then suggested the younger composer write a symphonic

poem on the subject of *Romeo and Juliet*. Tchaikovsky agreed and went to work.

"My overture is coming along quite quickly," he explained to his mentor. "When it has emerged from my womb, you will see that, whatever else it may be, a great deal of it has been carried out in accordance with your instructions. In the first place, the overall scheme is *yours*: an introduction representing [Friar Laurence]; the struggle [Montagues and Capulets]... and love." Tchaikovsky completed the first version in 1869, and it drew more criticism from Balakirev. The following year, Tchaikovsky made extensive revisions to his score while on holiday in Switzerland, including writing the introductory music as we know it today. Sadly, Balakirev suffered a mental breakdown and, for some years, withdrew from the music world.

Through the 1870s, Tchaikovsky wrote some of his most famous works. He made a final revision to *Romeo and Juliet* in 1880, and with the score won Russia's Glinka Award along with a cash prize of 500 rubles.

Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 26

In addition to the solo violin, this concerto is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings.

Music insiders refer to this piece as "the Bruch Violin Concerto." It is a mainstay for violin soloists and a perennial audience favorite; however, the fact that it's known as *the* Bruch Violin Concerto speaks volumes about something that became a serious bone of contention for its composer: Bruch wrote three violin concertos, not one.

In a letter to the publisher Fritz Simrock, he wrote:

"Nothing compares to the laziness, stupidity and dullness of many German violinists. Every fortnight another one comes to me wanting to play the first concerto. I have now become rude; and have told them: 'I cannot listen to this concerto any more—did I perhaps write just this one? Go away and once and for all play the other concertos, which are just as good, if not better.'"

First ASO performance:
 March 3, 1953
 Henry Sopkin, conductor
 Robert Harrison, violin
 Most recent
 ASO performances:
 January 10-13, 2021
 Gemma New, conductor
 Randall Goosby, violin



During his lifetime, Bruch was an important conductor, choral composer, and professor of music. He premiered his First Symphony at the age of 14 and wrote at least some of the material that would go into the Violin Concerto while still a teenager. He started to compose the Concerto in 1864, and conducted a premiere in 1866, but was dissatisfied with it. By then, he had caught the attention of the famous violinist Joseph Joachim, who helped him make revisions. In 1868, Joachim played the premiere of the piece as we know it today.

By the age of 30, Bruch had a huge hit on his hands and probably expected to grow into a life as an esteemed composer. But nothing he wrote compared to the popularity of his Violin Concerto No. 1. A century after his death, Bruch has been spared the fate of the one-hit-wonder by two delightful, if not quite as popular works: the *Scottish Fantasy*, based on Scottish folk song, and *Kol Nidrei*, based on sacred Hebrew melodies.



NICOLA LUISOTTI,
CONDUCTOR
See biography on
page 32.

ITZHAK PERLMAN, VIOLIN

Undeniably the reigning virtuoso of the violin, Itzhak Perlman enjoys superstar status rarely afforded a classical musician. Beloved for his charm and humanity as well as his talent, he is treasured by audiences throughout the world who respond not only to his remarkable artistry, but also to his irrepressible joy for making music.

Having performed with every major orchestra and at concert halls around the globe, Perlman was granted a Presidential Medal of Freedom—the nation’s highest civilian honor—by President Obama in 2015, a Kennedy Center Honor in 2003, a National Medal of Arts by President Clinton in 2000 and a Medal of Liberty by President Reagan in 1986. Perlman has been honored with 16 Grammy® Awards, four Emmy Awards, a Kennedy Center Honor, a Grammy® Lifetime Achievement Award and a Genesis Prize.

In 2021/22, Perlman opened the Baltimore Symphony season, performed at the NY Philharmonic’s 2021 Season Gala, appeared in recital at venues including Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and Jones Hall in Houston, and he brings his new program entitled “An Evening with Itzhak Perlman” which captures highlights of his career through narrative and multi-media elements intertwined with performance to San Francisco, Seattle, East Lansing, West Palm Beach, Ft. Myers and Tallahassee.

Most recently, Perlman launched an exclusive series of classes with Masterclass.com, the premier online education company that enables access to the world’s most brilliant minds including Gordon Ramsay, Wolfgang Puck, Martin Scorsese, Ron Howard, Helen Mirren, Jodie Foster and Serena Williams, as the company’s only classical music presentation.

