

NOVEMBER 3, 2014

HOUSTON SYMPHONY PRESENTS

Gewandhausorchester Leipzig

Riccardo Chailly, Gewandhauskapellmeister
Nikolaj Znaider, violin

Monday, November 3, 2014 7:30pm | Jones Hall

Mendelssohn Die Hebriden (The Hebrides), Opus 26 ca. 10

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor, Opus 64 ca. 27
I Allegro molto appassionato—Presto—
II Andante—
III Allegretto non troppo—Allegro molto vivace

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Mendelssohn Symphony No. 5 in D major, Opus 107 (*Reformation*) ca. 29
I Andante—Allegro con fuoco
II Allegro vivace
III Andante—
IV Chorale, Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott!: Andante con moto—
Allegro vivace—Allegro maestoso

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The Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and its United States Tour

The Gewandhausorchester is the oldest civic symphony orchestra in the world. The Orchestra was founded in 1743 on the initiative of a group of 16 people, comprising both nobility and regular citizens, to perform for the newly formed concert society *Das Große Concert*. On taking residence in the trading house of the city's textile merchants—the *Gewandhaus*—the Orchestra assumed the title Gewandhausorchester. Of the many celebrated Gewandhauskapellmeisters who have directed the Orchestra over the centuries, Johann Adam Hiller, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Arthur Nikisch and Kurt Masur are worthy of particular mention. Riccardo Chailly's tenure as Gewandhauskapellmeister commenced in 2005.

Music lovers the world over treasure the unique sound of the Gewandhausorchester that distinguishes it from all other symphony orchestras. The unmistakable sound identity alongside the extraordinary diversity of repertoire to which the Orchestra dedicates itself in its three "homes" are cultivated in far in excess of 200 performances each year. The Orchestra performs weekly concerts in the Gewandhaus; it serves as the orchestra in the Leipzig Opera and joins the Thomanerchor each week in the performance of cantatas by Johann Sebastian Bach in the Thomaskirche. No other elite symphony orchestra in the world performs such an abundance of the works of J.S. Bach. In addition to these core activities, the Orchestra has toured the world regularly since 1916. The Orchestra's work is documented in an enormous wealth of CD and DVD recordings, as well as radio and television broadcasts.

Few orchestras have played such an active, formative role in the development of symphonic music as the Gewandhausorchester—still today an orchestra that attracts the world's most highly celebrated composers, conductors and soloists. The Leipzigers performed a cycle of Beethoven's nine symphonies during the composer's lifetime (1825-26) as well as the first-ever complete cycle of Bruckner's symphonic oeuvre (1919-20). The Gewandhausorchester has premiered an enviable amount of the works which the wider music world counts among its most beloved: Wagner's prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Beethoven's 5th Piano Concerto (the *Emperor*), Brahms' Violin Concerto and *Deutsches Requiem* to name but a few. Today, the Orchestra continues to commission and perform new compositions every season.

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy must be credited with exerting decisive influence on the development of today's core symphonic repertoire during his tenure as Gewandhauskapellmeister (1835-1847). During his incumbency, the Gewandhausorchester gave the first performances of several of his own most significant works, including the Violin Concerto in E minor, the *Scottish Symphony* and the overture to *Ruy Blas*. Mendelssohn also conducted the Orchestra in the world premieres of Schubert's C major Symphony, *The Great*, as well as the 1st, 2nd and 4th symphonies of Robert Schumann. By way of innovative programming, Mendelssohn also broadened the Leipzig audience's horizons toward the masterpieces of the past, in particular reintroducing and resurrecting interest in Bach's instrumental works—music that until Mendelssohn's arrival in Leipzig was, astonishingly, largely forgotten. Thanks to

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Mendelssohn's inspiration and commitment to the undertaking, Germany's first conservatoire was founded in Leipzig in 1843, the modern-day University of Music and Theatre "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy." In keeping with Mendelssohn's original conception for the institution of providing the next generation of orchestral musicians with training to the highest professional standards, the Gewandhausorchester collaborates with the University in the provision of the Mendelssohn Orchestra Academy. Graduates of the Academy receive a master's degree in orchestral musicianship.

The recordings released by the Gewandhausorchester and Riccardo Chailly have been decorated with an enviable array of the music world's most coveted awards, including a Golden Disc. Among the most celebrated highlights of this partnership's extensive discography are the complete cycles of the symphonies of Schumann, Brahms and Beethoven, a Gershwin album with the pianist Stefano Bollani, Bach's keyboard concertos with Ramin Bahrami, *Christmas Oratorio*, *St. Matthew Passion* and the *Brandenburg Concertos*, Brahms' piano concertos with Nelson Freire, Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* and the *Mendelssohn Discoveries* disc.

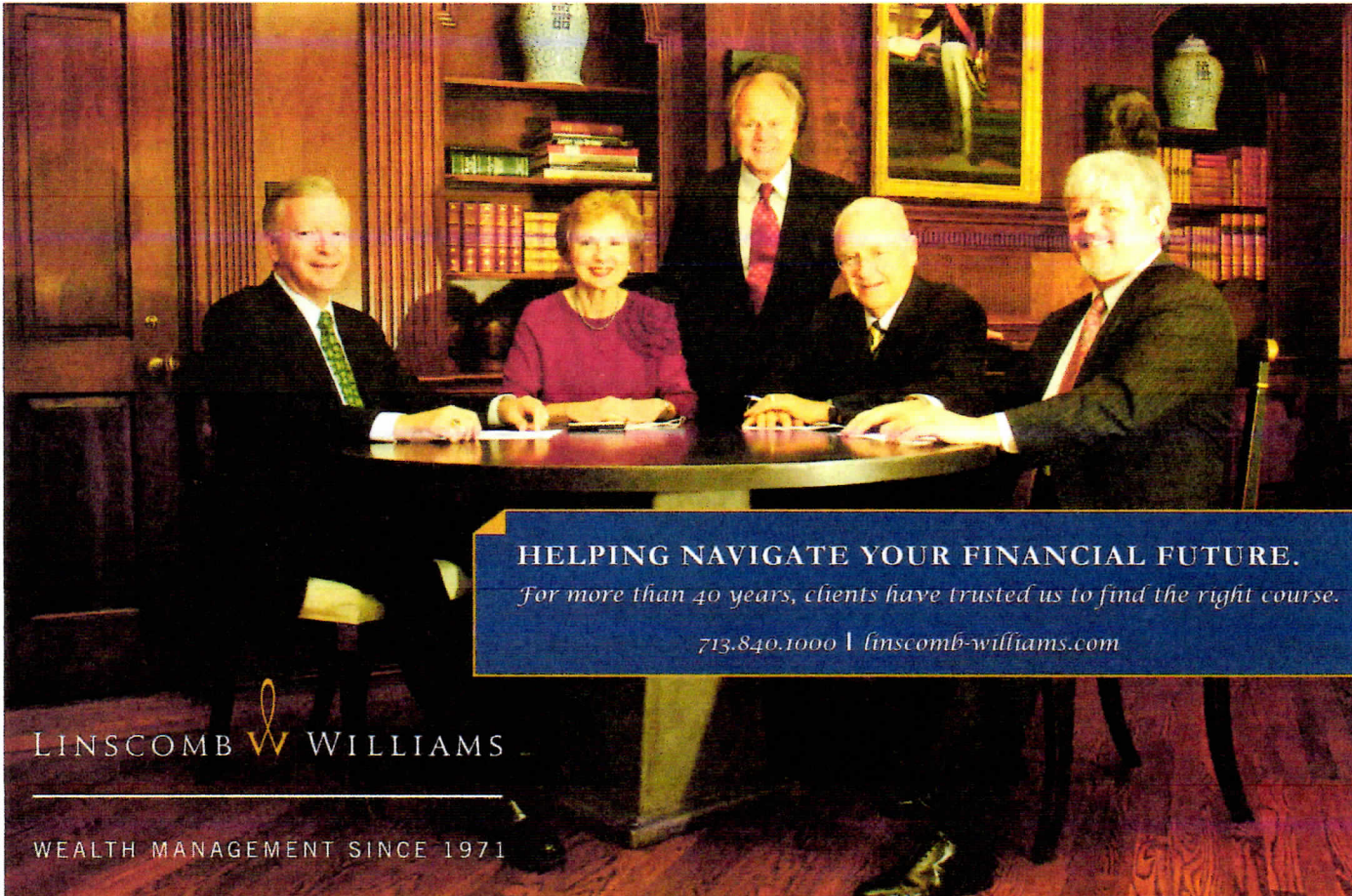
Not only was the Gewandhausorchester founded during **Johann Sebastian Bach's** tenure as Thomaskantor, it also had a strong connection to this most revered of all musicians. Bach was responsible for the sacred music in Leipzig's principal churches (including those of St. Thomas and St. Nikolai) for 27 years. In this capacity, he was music director of the musicians in the employment of the city, the *Stadtpfeiffer* ("Town Pipers"), as well as directing one of the *Collegia musica*, consisting of students from the university. 1743

saw the founding of the concert society Das Große Concert. The orchestra initially comprised the professional *Stadtpfeiffer*, members of Bach's Collegiums musicum, as well as pupils of the Great Master. A few short decades later, this orchestra was to assume the name *Gewandhausorchester*. It is a source of great pride that the majority of the original members of the Orchestra regularly made music with the *Übervater* of western music.


Toward the end of the 18th century the duties of the musicians of the Gewandhausorchester extended to include that previously entrusted exclusively to the *Stadtpfeiffer*: the provision of sacred music in the churches of St. Thomas and St. Nikolai. This most privileged field of activity for the Gewandhausorchester has developed an enormously rich tradition—now more than two centuries old—of dedication to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Today, the Orchestra performs the Great Master's cantatas together with the Thomanerchor in the Thomaskirche on a weekly basis. The great Christian festivals are marked with performances of the Christmas Oratorio and the St. John and St. Matthew Passions.

The fact that the instrumental and orchestral music of J.S. Bach is not lost to us in the concert hall today is largely due to the endeavours of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. During his tenure as Gewandhauskapellmeister, Mendelssohn introduced a series of "Historic Concerts" to the Gewandhaus season in which he focussed the Orchestra's and the audience's attention on the music of centuries past, none more so than that of J.S. Bach.

Musicologists and historians perceive Leipzig in the early 19th century as being at the forefront of Beethoven performance outside



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Vienna. Not only did **Ludwig van Beethoven** allow his symphonies to be performed at the Gewandhaus shortly after their respective premieres in Vienna, but he entrusted the Gewandhausorchester itself with the first performances of two of his most significant works: the Triple Concerto, opus 56 (1808) and the 5th Piano Concerto in E flat major (the *Emperor*), opus 73 (1811). A year before Beethoven's death, in the 1825-26 season, the Gewandhausorchester became the first orchestra in the world to stage a complete cycle of his nine symphonies. The Gewandhausorchester's first Beethoven symphony cycle on foreign soil took place (twice) in 1961 during the Orchestra's first tour to Japan.

Anton Bruckner's first appearance at the Gewandhaus was, in fact, as an organist. On December 29, 1884—18 days after the inauguration of the New Gewandhaus—the celebrated composer gave a recital on the new organ. The following day, he was present as the Gewandhausorchester gave the world premiere of his 7th Symphony under the direction of Arthur Nikisch. This performance was to afford Bruckner his first resounding success; the recognition as a composer and international fame he subsequently enjoyed were due in no small measure to the success of this premiere in Leipzig.

Nikisch was, indeed, a great admirer of Bruckner's music and conducted the Gewandhausorchester in the first complete cycle of the nine symphonies ever to take place in the 1919-20 season. Music historians are unified in their opinion that this monumental achievement was "the single most important instance in the history of Bruckner performance since the composer's death." At the end of the concert on February 12, 1920, at which the 7th Symphony was performed, Nikisch spontaneously delivered a speech to express his gratitude to the audience: "If someone had said to Bruckner: 'Hey, don't be disheartened, there's a city in Germany in which, in the not too distant future, your complete symphonies will be performed within one season,' he would have declared him to have taken leave of his senses ... This cyclical performance of all Bruckner's symphonies has only been possible thanks to the ever-increasing enthusiasm of the Gewandhaus audience ..."

Bruckner's symphonic oeuvre has played a central role in the Gewandhausorchester's work ever since. In the 1974-75 season, Gewandhauskapellmeister Kurt Masur conceived a 10-programme cycle comprising the symphonies and the *Te Deum* to honour the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth. Masur conducted seven of the concerts himself; the remaining three were entrusted to esteemed guest conductors, among them Herbert Blomstedt. The concerts of the works of Bruckner that Blomstedt was later to conduct, having assumed the office of Gewandhauskapellmeister, and subsequently record for commercial release during the years 2005-11 were universally acclaimed as being interpretations of superlative quality.

HOUSTON—November 3, 2014

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: *The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave) - Overture*, op. 26, MWV P 7
 Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: *Violin Concerto in E minor*, op. 64
 Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: *Symphony No. 5 in D minor*, op. 107, *Reformation Symphony*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—November 5, 2014

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: *Violin Concerto in E minor*, op. 64
 Anton Bruckner: *Symphony No. 7 in E major*, WAB 107

BOSTON—November 7, 2014

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: *The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave) - Overture*, op. 26, MWV P 7
 Ludwig van Beethoven: *Violin Concerto in D major*, op. 61
 Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: *Symphony No. 5 in D minor*, op. 107, *Reformation Symphony*

NEWARK—November 8, 2014

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy:
The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave) - Overture, op. 26, MWV P 7
 Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: *Violin Concerto in E minor*, op. 64
 Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: *Symphony No. 5 in D minor*, op. 107, *Reformation Symphony*

NEW YORK—November 9, 2014

Johann Sebastian Bach: *Orchestral Suite No. 4 in D major*
 Anton Bruckner: *Symphony No. 7 in E major*, WAB 107

NEW YORK—November 10, 2014

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: *The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave) - Overture*, op. 26, MWV P 7
 Ludwig van Beethoven: *Violin Concerto D major*, op. 61
 Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: *Symphony No. 5 in D minor*, op. 107, *Reformation Symphony*

BIOGRAPHIES

RICCARDO CHAILLY, Gewandhauskapellmeister

Riccardo Chailly devotes himself to both concert and operatic repertoire. The native of Milan has conducted the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics, the Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Munich Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Chailly's first artistic encounter with the Gewandhaus Orchestra took place at the Salzburg Festival in 1986. He took up his position as Gewandhauskapellmeister (Music Director) of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in September 2005.

Previously, Chailly was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra from 1983 to 1986 and chief conductor of the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra from 1982 to 1989. From 1986 to 1993, he was music director of the Teatro Comunale di Bologna, where he conducted numerous opera productions with resounding success. Since his appointment as chief conductor of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra (1988 to 2004), he has also devoted himself increasingly to symphonic repertoire. He delights a steadily growing audience not only with his performances of the great standard works, but also with many 20th-century works.



PHOTO BY GERT MOTHE

Chailly has an exclusive contract with Decca and has recorded an extensive repertoire of symphonic works and operas—more than 100 CDs in total. His first CD/DVD with the Gewandhaus Orchestra was released in September 2005.

NIKOLAJ ZNAIDER, violin

Nikolaj Znaider is not only celebrated as one of the foremost violinists of today, but is fast becoming one of the most versatile artists of his generation by uniting his talents as soloist, conductor and chamber musician.



PHOTO BY GEORGE LANGE

As a soloist, Znaider works regularly with the world's leading orchestras. Highlights of the coming season include performances with WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln under Jukka

Pekka Saraste, Orchestre de Paris and David Zinman, Orchestra Del Teatro Alla Scala and Fabio Luisi, Cleveland Symphony Orchestra under Pierre Boulez, Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra and a European tour with the SWR Sinfonieorchester under

Stéphane Denève, Orchestre National de Lyon with Alan Gilbert, Bayerischer Rundfunk and Franz Welser-Möst, and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Neeme Järvi. He will also perform with the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra and Rumon Gamba at the grand opening of their new concert hall. In recital and chamber music, Znaider appears at all the major concert halls.

Znaider is passionate about the education of musical talent and was for 10 years the founder and artistic director of the Nordic Music Academy, an annual summer school whose vision it was to create conscious and focused musical development based on quality and commitment.

Nikolaj Znaider plays the "Kreisler" Guarnerius "del Gesu" 1741, which is on extended loan to him by The Royal Danish Theater through the generosity of the VELUX FOUNDATIONS and the Knud Højgaard Foundation.

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