Welcome to the opening concert of the ESO’s 67th season, whose theme of “A Musical Passport” refers to the specific geographical locale for the compositions featured on each program. Please see the inside of this page for an interview with Matthew Hagle, our soloist in the Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto, and also please refer to the flap inside, which presents important information about the construction work near Pick-Staiger Hall and its effect on parking.

The Magic Flute, whose overture opens our concert, was premiered in Vienna only two months before the untimely death of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), and was probably Mozart’s greatest public success. This opera was composed as a “Singspiel”, which alternates arias with spoken dialogue like a Broadway musical, and it was sung and spoken in German instead of the Italian which was the operatic norm. It was extremely popular due both to the use of German and to Mozart’s music, among his most tuneful and greatest.

The Fourth Piano Concerto of Beethoven (1770–1827) was premiered (also in Vienna) as a part of a marathon concert in 1808 of Beethoven premieres which also included those of the Choral Fantasy, several other choral settings, and both the Fifth and the Sixth Symphonies. This G Major Concerto is considered by many to be the finest of all of Beethoven’s concerti. Its second movement, rather than a typical slow second movement, alternates abrupt string chords with softer replies by the piano, which has led to the theory that the movement represents Orpheus (the piano) taming the Furies (the strings).

Johannes Brahms agonized with his first symphony for over 20 years, but after its premiere in 1876, he quickly completed his Second Symphony, premiered in Vienna in December 1877. Due to its lack of the storm and stress of the first symphony, the Second has frequently been compared to Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony, which similarly followed the storm and stress of his Fifth Symphony. However, such a characterization of the Brahms Second is overly facile, as it ignores an element of darkness which Brahms himself mentioned in letters to friends. This is the only Brahms symphony to use the tuba, and it also employs the trombones more than in any of his other symphonies. Nevertheless, the finale is the most joyous of any of Brahms’ large orchestral works and a guaranteed crowd pleaser to end our opening concert.

—David Ellis
MEET MATTHEW HAGLE!

If Matt Hagle hadn't been, in his words, a "gawky, hyperactive kid," he might never have become such an accomplished pianist. His parents aren't musicians, but they recognized that piano lessons might improve their son's coordination — and force him to sit still for a certain amount of time each day. So, at age 5, Matt sat down at a piano and had his first lesson. He hasn't stopped playing since.

When asked what it was about music that grabbed him, Matt said it was different things at different points of his life. He remembers attending a concert as a six-year-old and being captivated by the strange sound of the opening chord of Chopin's Scherzo in D Minors. "I didn't know you could do that on a piano!" he said. The piano then "became the place that was mine, a place where I could make a difference." At the start writing "little pieces," music in his mind that he could play for family and friends.

The Hagle family lived in Northfield, and Matt studied composition with Bernard Brindel and piano with Shirley Hans at the Music Institute of Chicago while attending New Trier. Much of what Brindel taught was "very technical, traditional." Matt didn't fully understand it at the time, but now says that music theory is a language that he speaks fairly fluently. Above all, Brindel communicated his love of teaching and of music, and Hans was also a warm, inspiring musical presence in Matt's life.

After high school, Matt went to the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore and studied with Robert Weirich, who, in Matt's view, had a thoughtful, imaginative way of music-making. "He talked about how a performer could take a piece apart and use its structure to make it flow better. He would also play different parts of pieces and ask us to think of a different color for each one so we could see how that would affect the sound."

Matt was later awarded a Fulbright Fellowship, and took him to London to study with Maria Curcio Diamand, who helped him bring together things he had always separated and "un tangled" some of the things he had learned.

"I knew what I wanted to do," he said, "and while I could do some things well, I didn't have the technique to do others. Maria could make a huge variety of sound come out of a piano. She trained my ears to listen more closely. How loud was each note in a chord? If you change the volume on each note, you have a different sound." He now teaches these techniques to his students and says he's been "drawing interest" on his London experience ever since — perhaps even extra interest, as London is also where he met his wife, Mis.

Since 1999, Matt has been principal collaborator to violinist Rachel Barton Pine. He doesn't share her love of heavy metal, however! When she asked whether he likes jazz, Matt said he appreciates good musicians, but doesn't play jazz himself "because it's just another thing for me to be bad at!" He also enjoys listening to WEIU's Sadie Opaline, "the world's only rock-and-roll talk show." The program keeps him "somewhat in the 21st century" and he likes to hear another type of music criticism. He finds it interesting that the critics and guests on Sadie Opaline use the same terminology as the critics of classical music, almost as though there was a "classical model" of criticism that has been adopted by critics of later genres.

At 6½, Matt says he's "too tall to play the piano," but his wife gave him a custom-made bench that helps him "fit" better at the keyboard without knocking his knees. On the other hand, his height makes him perfect for basketball and he also likes chess, which made him part of the "music-playing, chess-playing, basketball-playing subculture" at Peabody. He had to give up basketball, however, when he broke a finger during a game and missed his degree recital. No more hoops for the pianist! And, most people don't know that he has a "goofy" sense of humor, which he keeps for family and close friends because he thinks it wouldn't fit well with the rest of his career!

In his spare time Matt reads a lot, often starting 4 books at a time. He especially likes books on music, popular science and poetry as well as mysteries, particularly the authors of the "golden age" of detective fiction — Rex Stout, Michael Innes, Dorothy Sayers, etc.; at; he's now re-reading the complete works of a favorite, Josephine Tey.

When Matt was 10, his father asked him what he wanted to do with his life. "Music," he said, so his father made him plan out how to accomplish his life's goals. The plan seems to have worked!
SOUTH CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

RESTRICTED ACCESS TO ARTS CIRCLE DRIVE

A construction project on the south side of campus has altered the normal route to and from Pick-Staiger Concert Hall. Arts Circle Drive is now closed to traffic. Please allow extra time for parking.

Where can I park?
Free parking is still available on weekends and after 4 p.m. on weekdays in the structure located on Campus Drive. After turning onto Campus Drive from Sheridan Road, enter the parking structure on your right by way of ramps leading to the upper and lower levels. For vehicles with handicap placards, reserved spaces are available on weekends and after 4 p.m. on weekdays in the small lot directly west of Louis Hall.

How can I get to Pick-Staiger Concert Hall from the parking structure?
After parking your vehicle, walk to the north-central stairwell of the parking structure and exit to a pedestrian walkway. This path will lead you along the east side of the theater buildings and up the stairs to the Arts Circle Plaza and Pick-Staiger Concert Hall.

How can I drop off a guest who needs special access?
After turning onto Campus Drive, continue driving straight past the parking structure and Louis Hall and park temporarily in the available turnaround space. From there, escort your guests by following the sidewalk eastward and using the ramp or stairs next to the Block Museum to access the Arts Circle Plaza and Pick-Staiger Concert Hall. After dropping off your guest(s), you can either park in one of the handicap-accessible spaces in the small lot directly west of Louis Hall (for vehicles with handicap placards) or continue south on Campus Drive and enter the parking structure on your left.

ESO WELCOMES FIVE PLAYERS

Music Director Lawrence Eckerling has appointed five new players to the ESO following recent auditions. We welcome James Donohue as Principal Flute and Robert Holland as Principal Trombone, and cellists Eitan Cher and Aaron Oppenheimer and violinist Christopher Brathwaite.

The ESO extends its gratitude to retiring Principal Flute Sherry Kujala and retiring Principal Trombone Richard Wunder for their many years of excellent artistry and dedicated service.

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Viennese Masterworks
October 21, 2012
Lawrence Eckerling, Conductor

MOZART Overture to The Magic Flute
BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major
Matthew Hagle, Piano
BRASS Symphony No. 2 in D Major

Slavic Favorites
March 3, 2013
Lawrence Eckerling, Conductor

GLINKA Overture to Ruslan and Ludmilla
DVORAK Concerto for Violin in A Minor
Irina Muresanu, Violin
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 5 in E Minor

Music from the English Countryside
May 5, 2013
Lawrence Eckerling, Conductor

Britten Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes
ELGAR Concerto for Cello in E Minor
Wendy Warner, Cello
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Symphony No. 5 in D Major

From the City of Light to Eternal Rome
June 16, 2013
Lawrence Eckerling, Conductor

DUKAS Fanfare: La Péri
SAINT SAENS Danse Macabre
PAULUSCH Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani
DURUFLÉ Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun
RESPIGHI Roman Festivals