



# RAVINIA

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IGOR LEVIT MAKES  
HIS LANDMARK  
BACH A SIGNPOST  
FOR THE FUTURE

## THE GIVING TREES

RAVINIA HOLDS  
A BUSHEL OF  
MEMORIES FOR  
JAMES CONLON

## SINGING POETIC

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HAMPSON  
GIVES VOICE  
TO CENTURIES  
OF HISTORY

## FANNING THE FLAMES

BRANDI CARLILE FIRES  
UP HER MUSIC WITH  
FAMILIAL FONDNESS





418 Sheridan Road  
Highland Park, IL 60035  
847-266-5000  
www.ravinia.org

Welz Kauffman  
President and CEO

Nick Pullia  
Communications Director, Executive Editor

Nick Panfil  
Publications Manager, Editor

Alexandra Pikeas  
Graphic Designer



## IN THIS ISSUE

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Sheldon Levin Publisher & Director of Finance

Account Managers  
Mike Hedge - Arnie Hoffman  
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East Coast  
Manzo Media Group 610-527-7047

Southwest  
Betsy Gugick & Associates 972-387-1347

Sales & Marketing Consultant  
David L. Strouse, Ltd. 847-835-5197

Cathy Kiepora Graphic Designer  
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## A MESSAGE FROM RAVINIA

Ravinia truly has so much to celebrate this season!

In 2015 Ravinia celebrates the accomplishments of an artist and friend who has helped shape so much of our recent history. James Conlon has programmed his final season as music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's residency at Ravinia with specific composers and pieces that call to mind the supreme performances that have defined his association with the festival from his earliest days as a guest conductor in the 1970s. As music director, he gave us a multiyear, complete Mahler symphony cycle; the complete Mozart piano concertos; high-quality opera performances, including Mozart in the Martin; a deep concentration on the music of the Russian masters; and his hallmark "Breaking the Silence" series, which turned our attention back toward the music plunged into obscurity by the Holocaust. Each issue of *Ravinia Magazine* this summer will feature a Conlon focus.

We're also celebrating the 80th birthdays of two Chicago legends who both happen to be Ravinia Life Trustees—fine arts sculptor Richard Hunt and jazz pianist Ramsey Lewis.

Richard started Ravinia's sculpture collection in 1971 by contributing his own massive outdoor work *Music For A While*. Ravinia has commissioned several other pieces from this artist whose works grace galleries around the world, and Richard remains influential in the selection and placement of new additions, such as significant pieces by Fernando Botero, Lynn Chadwick, Boaz Vaadia, and (most recently) Jaume

Plensa that have come to the festival in the past decade. All these works together greatly contribute to the beauty and unique park setting of Ravinia.

As a young piano student, Ramsey was told to abandon his drive to become a classical pianist because no major orchestra would hire a black man. This year, however, he achieves his sidelined dream by making his CSO debut as both composer and soloist with his *Concerto for Jazz Trio and Orchestra*, commissioned by Ravinia for this milestone. With such a backstory, it's no wonder that Ramsey has been so influential in developing Ravinia's REACH\*TEACH\*PLAY education programs, which reach 75,000 people through such initiatives as El Sistema-based student orchestras and a free family music school.

We're also continuing to celebrate gains in expanding and developing Ravinia's audience. We've made lawn admission to all classical concerts free for children and students through college, and priced most Pavilion seats to all CSO concerts at only \$25. We've expanded our programming over the past several years to bring new listeners to the CSO, even as audiences for classical music continue to wane worldwide. We took a page from the CSO's own handbook downtown to create movie nights, such as this year's amalgam of Disney's *Fantasia* and *Fantasia 2000* (the original soundtracks of which were performed by the Philadelphia and Chicago Symphony Orchestras) as well as Danny Elfman's music from Tim Burton films. Recognizing that movie scores are often the first place



*This year Ravinia is celebrating the 80th birthdays of two men who have had (and continue to make) a lasting impression on the festival, sculptor Richard Hunt (left, on his *Music For A While*) and jazz pianist Ramsey Lewis (above), who is making his CSO debut on August 8 with the world premiere of his Ravinia-commissioned *Concerto for Jazz Trio and Orchestra*.*





## A MESSAGE FROM RAVINIA

where young people hear the sound of a symphony, orchestras around the world—from New York to London—are programming film music to attract new listeners, especially families, to the live symphonic experience.

With one of the most extensive chamber series in the world, Ravinia also makes music affordable and accessible with its acclaimed \$10 BGH Classics series, through which patrons can experience such headliners such as cellist Alisa Weilerstein and jazz pianist Cyrus Chestnut with the Turtle Island Quartet in our intimate 450-seat, state-of-the-art venue for less than the cost of a movie. This series also includes performances by the fiercely talented fellows of Ravinia's Steans Music Institute (RSMI), young professionals who hone their performance skills with the talented guest artists and educators who perform at Ravinia.

This year the Martin Theatre welcomes superstars at the pinnacle of success, from soprano Karita Mattila to pianist Yefim Bronfman, as well as acclaimed artists who are about to take the world by storm, such as pianist Igor Levit. This 850-seat hall—the only building that dates back to Ravinia's 1904 construction—is considered one of the finest venues for chamber music and recitals.

Of course, we cannot get through this message without celebrating this year's "showmance" of Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga. Not only were their two concerts the fastest selling in Ravinia history, but they also exemplify the liquidity of genres and the co-mingling of audiences that is central to Ravinia's identity. And what better time to bring such a glamorous focus to the Great American Songbook than in Frank Sinatra's centennial year, when we'll have artists such as Seth MacFarlane, Ramsey Lewis, Harry Connick Jr., Diana Krall, Concert Dance Inc., and Frank Sinatra Jr. performing some of these classic songs.



*In his final season as music director of the CSO's residency, James Conlon will be recalling the major musical thrusts he brought to the festival over the past 10 years, culminating in Ravinia's first complete concert performance of Wagner's The Flying Dutchman.*

As a not-for-profit, Ravinia earns about half the money it needs to make all this work through ticket sales. The rest comes from private donors and corporate sponsors. And, of course, we can never thank—or celebrate—they enough. We send a special welcome and thank-you to Allstate for signing on as Ravinia's first Lead Classical Sponsor. Thanks also go to the generous and practical leadership and largesse of our Board of Trustees and Life Trustees; the Women's Board, the most generous funder in Ravinia's history; and the Associates Board, coming off its most successful Music Matters fundraiser ever.

Maybe we don't think about it much or say it aloud, but it bears decalring in print that every season (indeed, every day) at Ravinia is a "celebration" of the one before, a thankful nod to the musical continuum that has grown here amid the trees and breeze since Ravinia was established in 1904. So many genres. So many artists. So many geniuses with their so many masterworks. Not to mention more memories than any scrapbook can contain. We salute the artists, administrators, and audiences that came before us, and smile at what our future may bring.

Thanks for celebrating with us tonight!

### MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAVINIA FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION

**Ravinia is an internationally renowned, not-for-profit music festival that presents outstanding performances by the world's greatest artists. Ravinia's principal objectives are**

- to present performances of a full range of classical music in its open-air Pavilion and enclosed recital halls, by the world's greatest composers and musicians, along with a variety of other kinds of light classical, jazz and popular music;
- to maintain a beautiful park that is welcoming to all and attractive to families in which the music experience is enhanced by a beautiful environment and excellent dining opportunities;
- to enable gifted young performers to study under great teachers and perform in concert settings; and
- to develop broader and more diverse audiences for classical music through education and outreach programs and by maintaining affordable ticket prices.



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**Welz Kauffman**  
President and CEO,  
Ravinia Festival Association





# Singing In Tongues

Song itself is the *lingua franca* of art

By Mark Thomas Ketterson

I recently had one of those conversations that only occur between opera lovers and non-classical-music-loving friends. I mentioned having attended a performance of Debussy's opera *Pélleas et Mélisande* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, an offering in their recent French festival. "An opera?" my friend asked, with a puzzled look. "Don't operas have to be in Italian?" I smiled and explained there are wonderful operas in many languages.

One can explain that confusion as a lack of exposure, but regarding the arena of the art song, a similar situation oddly occurs among some of even the most erudite classical fans, who might as well wonder, "Don't art songs have to be in

German?" For many, a song recital is by definition a "*Liederabend*," a traversal of Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, and maybe some Hugo Wolf tossed in. That art song also exists in many languages seems almost off the radar.

Baritone Thomas Hampson, one of the great contemporary heirs to the legacy of international song, has a few thoughts on why that is. "Well, let's start with that word, 'art song.' I am going to sympathize with these poor bastards and say that I don't think we should use that term. It is wholly off-putting and distracting. Let's move over to what a lot of us in the industry are calling it, 'classic song.' That's not just a clever new word; it is very legitimate,

because classical music is born of an intentional desire to communicate an intentional aspect of the human experience with intentional use of musical devices. Classic song—in German we call it *Lieder*; in French, *mélodie*—is poetry set to music. Song as an art form is born of two independent art forms to build a third. It is born of intentionality. Any epoch has marvelously sensitive people who tell us what it means to be alive in that time. They are poets and composers. The wonder of song is not just the story it tells, it is this brief moment that allows someone to feel something in their own experience or emotional make up they may have forgotten or don't realize.





“In my opinion, there are two things going on in the German song of the 19th century; there is this incessant drive to find a better way to describe the first-person experience of the emotional landscape of a human being, and that is a direct result of the political upheavals of the 19th century everywhere. The 19th century is about the search for ‘I.’ Until Heinrich Heine, there was no German poetry in the first person. The first part of the century was preoccupied with metaphorically identifying in nature symbols of the landscapes of our lives. Then in the 1840s they said, Let’s keep the nature metaphor, but I get to *choose* what in nature is a metaphor for my feelings. This is powerful stuff.”

Thomas Hampson  
brings his passion for American song  
to the Martin Theatre on July 28,  
when he will give the Chicago premiere  
of Jennifer Higdon’s *Civil Words*.



Performing [Finnish] songs is like a greeting from where I am from. It feels very special, something from the inner world of myself. I never tire of them. ... When I describe the Finnish songs, my soul trembles, and maybe my voice a little bit, too!



That power exhibited itself in some rather surprising places. Consider Finland—a small country, but one that has fielded a prodigious wealth of musicians, including an unusual number of top-flight conductors. For soprano Karita Mattila, who will be heard in recital in Ravinia's Martin Theatre on August 10, Finnish song provides a particularly moving experience. "I will be doing Sibelius and Sallinen, one to close the first half of the program, then to open the second. Performing these songs is like a greeting from where I am from. It feels very special, something from the inner world of myself. I never tire of them, and I am so happy that in spite of the language and exotic atmospheres, I receive many requests to hear more, and that makes me very proud. I think of it as a duty. If you have that kind of duty it makes life more meaningful.

The character of these songs is so different from the German; the language is so different. Finnish is a very good language to sing. It brings a new phrasing; you are painting while you are singing. When you enter the German world, you go into an international tradition that has a long reach, vertically and diagonally. But when I describe the Finnish songs, my soul trembles, and maybe my voice a little bit, too!"

Beyond Germany, the strongest classic song tradition is undoubtedly French. French *mélodie* burst into life in the mid-19th century, after the German form had reached its zenith, and emerged from an earlier French form, the *romance*. Like its German counterpart, *mélodie* drew its texts from the best of the French poets and achieved an extraordinary fusion of musical and linguistic values. Hector Berlioz solidified the form with his

cycle *Les nuits d'été*, which remains one of the great examples of French song. Gabriel Fauré, Henri Duparc, Reynaldo Hahn—the list of great French song composers is extensive, and their output is joined by that of operatic composers Charles Gounod and Jules Massenet, as well as the great instrumental composers Maurice Ravel and Claude Debussy. "As detailed and as nature-metaphoric as German literature was," Hampson reminds us, "the French were the first to explore the *interior* life of the human being. [For instance,] Baudelaire, with his *Les fleurs du mal* in 1855, the same year as the first edition of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Now, they didn't know anything about one another, and that is an astounding fact, as the interior life of Whitman was so similar to the French. In every language of what we would call Western civilization, the 1840s and



## FALLA-ING IN LOVE WITH SONG

The vocal program at Ravinia's Steans Music Institute annually provides over a dozen of the best singers from conservatories and young artist programs a three-week period of intensive classic song study. When Kevin Murphy took up directorship of the program in 2012, he said, "Singers have to concentrate on opera so much, and [RSMI] gives them a way to take time away from that and focus in a different way on these little microcosms of drama. It helps with their opera singing and vice versa." On July 17 Murphy will be collaborating with one of the foremost exponents of the RSMI program, mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung, on a performance of Falla's Seven Spanish Folk Songs before she joins the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for Ravinia's first complete presentation of the composer's ballet score *The Three-Cornered Hat*.



Kristin Hoebemann

1850s was this huge political and personal vat that was overflowing with the right to self-determination. There is no stronger identifier of self than poetry and music."

"It is so interesting you asked me the similarities between German and Finnish song," Mattila reflects, "because on my program there are also Duparc songs. It is interesting to bring my experience with Wagner to Duparc, because he was so influenced by Wagner, and you can hear it in these songs. [But] he is a very *French* composer, for sure." Another of Ravinia's recitalists this season, the beloved mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade, has won considerable success as a French stylist. September 10 brings what promises to be a spectacular musical evening as von Stade joins fellow mezzo Laurie Rubin in the Martin for a program that includes Fauré, selections from Poulenc's *Banalités*, and a sampling of Berthomieu's *Les jardins de Paris*.

As for the Italian language—though Italy is given the moniker "The Land of Song," the beloved boot country's legacy in terms of classic song proper is perhaps not quite as rich as we see in surrounding areas. Certainly Italy's enigm-

atic Neapolitan songs have made local stars of generations of gondoliers and enhanced the celebrity of operatic superstars, too, including Carlo Bergonzi, Franco Corelli, and Luciano Pavarotti. Many classical singers also revere the *Arie Antiche*, ancient songs and arias from 18th-century operas now long forgotten. They are lovely, and deceptive in their seeming simplicity; as soprano Anna Moffo once observed, "Singing 'Tu lo sai' or 'Del mio amato ben' [two of the most familiar of the Arie] is much more difficult than singing 'Un bel dì' [the grand aria from Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*]. The Italian operatic composers of the 19th century composed songs as well, though most of these various examples do not register as classic song in the manner under discussion here. That has fallen to composers of a later period, notably Luciano Berio with his *Folk Songs* cycle, written for the great song stylist Cathy Berberian and first performed in 1964. Ravinia audiences recently had the opportunity to hear Berio's cycle for the first time on July 5, when soprano Dawn Upshaw performed them in the Martin with The Knights.

One of the most interesting traditions has developed right here at home.

As with Italy, distinction must be made between American popular music and the classic songs of such composers as Samuel Barber, Amy Beach, and Aaron Copland. "The miracle of American song," Hampson enthuses, "has been to tell the story of this cantankerous thing we call American culture. We are not preoccupied with whether it sounds like Brahms or Schubert. It is *our* music, our people saying, I was born there but I was raised here; all these ideals of what we call 'E Pluribus Unum,' which doesn't mean we are all the same. It means we are different and believe in the right to be together. Many American composers are children of immigrants or immigrants themselves, and have spent time contemplating what it means to be an American. We have a different point of departure than Europe. The desire to say who we are and who we should be is similar, but to understand American song we have to look at it through prisms of 10- or 15-year periods. The people in the 1880s are completely different from the people before World War I. I see American song as a diary of our existence. I see song as a diary of *human* existence, but I see American song as a diary of who we are as *Americans*, in all of our differences.





Frederica von Stade (top) and Dawn Upshaw (bottom), both appearing at Ravinia this summer, were each accompanied by former Ravinia music director James Levine as they shared their passions for classic song at the festival in the late 1980s.

"I see American song as a diary  
of our existence. I see song as a diary  
of *human* existence."

—Thomas Hampson



E Pluribus Unum. The miracle of both sides of that equation is to be found in our arts and humanities and, specifically, in our songs."

The baritone brings his passion for American song to the Martin on July 28, when he performs a number of American works within an eclectic program of international song literature, including the Chicago premiere of Jennifer Higdon's *Civil Words*, which was commissioned for Hampson by Carnegie Hall. [Ravinia audiences may recognize such Higdon works as *Loco* (commissioned for the festival's centennial) and *Concerto 4-3* (commissioned for and featuring the string trio Time for Three)—both performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with Christoph Eschenbach—as well as her piano trio, championed by the Ravinia-favorite Lincoln Trio. Her first opera, *Cold Mountain*, is receiving its premiere this summer in Santa Fe and stars another Ravinia favorite, baritone Nathan Gunn.]

Hampson caps the discussion with a pointed observation that brings analysis of song full circle, from the relatively young American consciousness back to the venerated German. "I deeply appreciate civic opera, civic buildings, civic responsibility, and civility towards your neighbor. This is why civil discourse is so powerful. The birth of that was *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and the poem 'Die Gedanken Sind Frei'—'the thoughts are free.' Pete Seeger made that song very famous in English! This is all *one* continuum that we are *all* part of. One river with many wells." R

Mark Thomas Ketterson is the Chicago correspondent for *Opera News*. He has also written for *Playbill*, *Chicago* magazine, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, and Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center.





All photos by Felix Broede



# Very Able

Igor Levit has proven that a little variation can go a long way

*By Michael Cameron*

When Ravinia welcomes 27-year-old Igor Levit for an all-Bach program this summer in his Chicago-area debut, the audience will get a taste of the many musical styles that have occupied the brilliant young pianist in his short but burgeoning career. He has been a known commodity in Europe for a few years, but domestic audiences have only recently begun to take notice. On the occasion of his North American debut in 2014, the *New York Times* proclaimed, "A major new pianist has arrived."

Classical music lovers could be forgiven for assuming that the path to stardom is paved with strategic maneuvering by publicity agents and managers. According to this formula, a recording of a Rachmaninoff concerto (faster, cleaner, and more self-indulgent than the last wunderkind's version) is followed by designer apparel and lucrative endorsements. While much of Levit's attention has been devoted to standard repertoire, with a little digging it becomes clear that

the pianist's restless intellect, unquenchable curiosity, and uncompromising idealism have led him down some surprising musical paths. In a wide-ranging interview from his home in Hanover, Levit was quick to emphasize his passion for a broad spectrum of possibilities: "I listen to so much music, and a huge variety of music, from 15th-century Renaissance to American hip-hop from 2015."

While Levit's path to stardom may include some unconventional choices in repertoire, his career was jump-started by early successes on the competition circuit, including the silver prize at the 2005 Arthur Rubinstein Competition in Tel Aviv. Although he was the youngest participant in a crowded field, his versatility was recognized with additional prizes as the best performer of both chamber music and contemporary music.

After inking an exclusive recording deal with Sony Classics in 2013, Levit elected to feature Beethoven's last five sonatas on his debut recording, a choice

that raised more than a few eyebrows among critics who assume that decades of concertizing are needed before plumbing the depths of that profound music. The gamble paid off handsomely. The recording was universally praised for its surprising maturity, structural clarity, and rigorous attention to detail, earning him the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist award, the *BBC Music Magazine* Newcomer of the Year award, and the ECHO 2014 award for Solo Recording of the Year. When asked if he was bothered by accusations of arrogance for tackling these sonatas at such a young age, with so little life experience from which to draw, he answered politely, though it was clear he was (rightly) a bit weary of addressing the subject. "As simple as it sounds, the short answer is, why not? For the last couple of years this has simply been a major part of my core repertoire. In my particular situation, I never thought about what might be the best move for my career, but rather what was most



"I never thought about what might be the best move for my career, but rather what was most natural for me."



natural for me at the time. I play all of the Beethoven sonatas, and all are rather demanding. My desire to concentrate on the late sonatas began during my intense study of the 'Diabelli Variations,' which naturally led me down the path of various Beethoven sonatas, and more specifically the late ones. I also heard a performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* led by John Eliot Gardiner, and this changed almost everything for me. It completely altered the way I was working on

'Diabelli.' I soon began to work on Opp. 110, 101, and 106. Why shouldn't the 'Hammerklavier' be suitable for a young man?"

Levit's follow-up disc for Sony also featured works not typically associated with a budding young concert artist: the complete keyboard partitas by J.S. Bach, the same collection he will tackle at Ravinia. Given that these two albums each focused on a single composer, one wonders if he prefers to carry that over

into his live performances. "There is no preference one way over another," he says. "When I decide on a program, I think a lot about how the pieces speak to each other, or at least how I think they speak to each other, which of course is entirely subjective! I don't do single-composer programs often—in fact Ravinia will be only the second time I will be doing this particular all-Bach program, and actually I'm not sure that anyone [would want to] do it that often,





since it's three hours of music!" Does the programmatic context then affect how he performs, say, an individual Bach partita? "Absolutely, there is no question that my performances will vary depending on the rest of the program. If I know that after a Bach partita I will be playing a piece by Liszt or Prokofiev, the Bach will naturally vary. And vice versa, my Liszt or Shostakovich will sound different coming after Bach than it might coming after a Beethoven sonata, a work by Cage, William Bolcom, or whomever. The climate in the room depends very much on the entire musical context. And this is what makes listening to music a new experience each time."

So when preparing a work, he naturally allows for such flexibility, not only in the interpretation of the individual piece in the context of a program, but also with the program as a whole. "Any musician whose goal is to play the same program exactly the same 15 times in a row isn't dealing with human reality. It's dangerous, and beyond ridiculous. You wake up in the morning as a different person, and you have different experiences during the day.

You meet different people, you eat different food. No day is exactly the same, and these experiences affect how music flows through an artist."

The varied styles one encounters in performances of Bach continue to be hotly debated. In considering the artists that have helped him formulate his own approach, Levit couches that "Bach has always been a central component of my listening habits. Fortunately, it seems that we've always had great interpreters of Bach, [whether] harpsichordists, violinists, cellists, etc. I have always cherished the Bach Collegium Japan recordings with Ton Koopman. I listened to these for years, and they are certainly ones that I emulate musically." He doesn't, however, immediately single out any keyboard players as models. Perhaps wishing to not leave out any important pianistic models, he hesitates when asked to put those reservations aside, but finally relents: "Murray Perahia's 'Goldberg Variations' are an incredible achievement, and Andreas Staier's version on harpsichord is amazing."

If Levit's tastes seem unusually

inclusive, there are also some surprising, though deliberate, gaps in his repertoire. He rarely performs Chopin, feeling that others engage that catalogue more persuasively than he could. He is equally reluctant to play Mozart, finding his music to be incompatible with the modern concert grand. Already consistently illuminating with his insight into standard repertoire, the pianist became particularly animated when the discussion veered toward contemporary music, including that of the American composer Frederic Rzewski.

"A few years ago I came across a recording of Rzewski's *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*," Levit began. "The discovery of this amazing piece really shook me. I quickly found a score, and decided not only to add it to my repertoire, but to contact the composer, who had been living in Europe for many years." Their subsequent meetings not only gave him valuable insight into the massive, hour-long set of 37 variations, but Levit mustered the courage to ask for a new piano work to premiere.


Rzewski's cycle of "Nanosonatas"





for solo piano began life in 2006, and the composer has since added eight sonatas dedicated to Levit. Their collaboration continued this year with Levit's premier performance of *Dreams II* at the Heidelberger Frühling festival in April.

He has since explored other modern music from off the beaten path, including the quiet, freely flowing works of Morton Feldman and the politically virulent and populist music of self-described Maoist composer Cornelius Cardew. Levit also maintains a close working relationship with such leading German composers as Wolfgang Rihm and Jorg Widmann. He has performed Stockhausen's *Klavierstück VI*, but is equally drawn to the work of Renaissance master Josquin and the relatively unheralded 17th-century composer George Muffat.

Given the pianist's recent passions, it's not surprising that his next recording will consist of three colossal sets of variations: Bach's "Goldberg," Beethoven's "Diabelli," and Rzewski's *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!* Aside from the identical genre, this may seem like a trio of strange bedfellows. For Levit, it's a natural outgrowth of a rather dizzying array of explorations. "For me, at this point in my life, these are the three most significant sets of piano variations in the repertoire. I love the concept of variations—taking a germ of an idea, beginning a series of explorations, and finally arriving at a conclusion. Very much like life itself." 

Michael Cameron is a double bassist and professor of music at the University of Illinois. His writings have appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Classical Review*, and *Fanfare Magazine*.



# Fanning the Flames

Brandi Carlile  
fires up her music  
with familial  
fondness

*By Web Behrens*

David McCleister





*“The hard times that I had  
really don’t seem all that bad.  
Yesterday is long ago and far away.  
And I’m beginning to feel the years,  
but I’m going to be OK  
as long as you’re beside me along the way.”* —Lyrics to “Beginning to Feel the Years”

Hailing from Brandi Carlile’s 2015 release *The Firewatcher’s Daughter*, the track “Beginning to Feel the Years” offers a maturing perspective on life as achingly beautiful as that in Stevie Nicks’s “Landslide,” but with a happier outcome. These lyrics tell a sweet love story, leavened by maturity. Or do they? The answer is yes ... and no.

“It’s weird, because the thing that a person writes a song about might mean a totally different thing to me,” observes Carlile, who brings her band to Ravinia on July 31. As ever, she’s touring with identical brothers Phil and Tim Hanseroth, her longtime bandmates, commonly known as “The Twins.”

While many listeners might take the words, “As long as you’re beside me along the way,” as a reflection on romantic love, that’s not how the song resonates for Carlile. It’s about family—the sort of family you choose. “I see ‘Beginning to Feel the Years’ as a kind of a love song between me and The Twins about the band: the way that we’ve been together as long as we have, the family we started, and who knows what’s next,” she says.

A native of Washington state, the singer-songwriter typically gets pegged as “alt-country,” yet Carlile’s discography with The Twins could actually support a variety of labels, from folk to country to indie rock. They’ve collaborated with a diverse array of artists, from Elton John to Kris Kristofferson to Miranda Lambert (“Getting to sing country music with her definitely feels a little bit like home: It’s kind of like a country throwdown, and it’s always just a little bit drunk,” Carlile quips.) The Carlile band even joined forces with the Seattle Symphony, resulting in the 2011 release *Live at Benaroya Hall*.



David McClister





"We tend to write and collaborate together so completely, we almost forget who wrote which songs."

The constant amid the interchanging styles is the tight connection of the trio, who met in a Seattle recording studio more than 15 years ago, when Carlile was just 17. She was cutting demos and trying to get a recording deal; the same went for Phil (who plays bass) and Tim (guitar), who are a few years older. Impressed by the guys, Carlile determined that they should play together, even

though they were in other bands. Her dogged persistence eventually paid off, although none of them could imagine then how long their musical act would last, nor how thoroughly their lives would grow together over the years.

When asked what she calls the Hanseroths—The Twins? Phil and Tim? Tim and Phil?—Carlile responds with a characteristic joke: "I don't know—it

depends on how much trouble they're in." After a short chuckle, she elaborates, "I just call them my brothers, basically. They're not really my brothers [by blood], but they are now by marriage." (Phil Hanseroth married Carlile's younger sister about six years ago.)

Their closeness is reflected by their decision to share all songwriting credits. "We tend to write and collaborate together so completely, we almost forget who wrote which songs," Carlile says. "We collaborate based on what a song needs. In every configuration possible that you could imagine with three people, we have written a song." Sometimes it's a genuinely equal collaboration; other times, one of them does the primary writing and the other two contribute. But rather than get into splitting hairs about who wrote exactly what—a significant decision, given that songwriting credits tie directly to royalties—they choose a united perspective: "We made a decision early on to split everything three ways equally."

There's also an unsung fourth member of Carlile's band: Josh Neumann, who's been with them for a decade. Initially he played cello, but since then he's also taken up piano and percussion. "As we've grown and changed as a band," she explains, "every time we set an old idea on the back burner and come up with a new idea, Josh adjusts to it and learns that instrument. So he's been a really integral part of the band for a very long time."

True to form, when you're in tight artistic orbit with Carlile, that closeness bleeds into other areas of life. "And [Josh] just got engaged to my wife's sister," Carlile notes, "so things are getting really weird."

Perhaps all the tight interpersonal relationships help explain the band's fond obsession with Fleetwood Mac, a group almost as well known for its complicated romances as it is for its music. Carlile and The Twins listened to a lot of Fleetwood Mac while recording *The Firewatcher's Daughter*, finding inspiration, she says, in the band's connection—including its turbulence. Does that apply to their own connections? "Yeah," she jokes, "we've definitely changed from being a band to being a cult."





Carlile grew up about 45 minutes southeast of Seattle in Maple Valley, where she resides again today, now with her wife of three years and their young daughter. She never formally studied music—she plays both guitar and piano by ear—but her mother was a singer, and “there was always music in my family growing up, a lot of jam sessions,” she recalls. “I was always singing and telling stories. I definitely got the bug to entertain before I got the bug to really delve into music.”

It’s not just music that drives her. Carlile also has a philanthropic side, exemplified by her Looking Out Foundation, which began in 2008. She says she “always” felt a call to do something beyond make music—and the inspiration to give back comes in part from the musician she calls her “favorite of all time,” Elton John. “I’ve looked up to him since I was 11. From philanthropy to entertainment to music to songwriting, he’s been a cornerstone to me.” His activism regarding gay rights and AIDS education “influ-

enced me at an early age to get in those trenches.”

But instead of associating herself with just one cause, Carlile decided to take a different approach. As outlined on [LookingOutFoundation.org](http://LookingOutFoundation.org), the agency’s mission “is to support, through music, humanitarian outreach efforts in local communities and beyond.” While the foundation naturally raises money in a variety of ways, one method is through Carlile donating one dollar from tickets to many of her concerts to the foundation, which hopefully also results in greater awareness among her fans. The money backs a variety of causes.

“We do short-term support campaigns,” Carlile explains. “Anything from environmental issues to women’s rights to hunger to different local issues. We’ll take on a campaign for a year, maybe two years, and then lay it down.”

One issue naturally close to her heart is LGBTQ equality. Carlile came out publicly long ago—in 2002—and married Catherine Shepherd in Massachusetts 10 years later. (Last summer, the couple had their first child, a daughter named Evangeline.) When they tied the knot, same-sex marriage wasn’t recognized in Washington, although state voters approved a referendum several months later. “The fact that we traveled out of state was a total coincidence, weirdly enough,” Carlile says. “We were going to get married in Washington state before we had equal rights here, but we traveled to Massachusetts because that’s where my wife’s father lives. He was ill and wasn’t able to travel at the time, so we got my family on a plane and flew across the country. It was only a bonus that it happened to be legal there.”

By the time she arrives at Ravinia, marriage equality might well be the law of the land in all 50 states (a Supreme Court decision likely to settle the issue nationally is expected in late June). Carlile admits she’s taken aback by the accelerated sea change in both laws and public opinion. “I never thought we would see this rapid ascent into marriage equality and equal territory for LGBTQ people. It’s a beautiful, beautiful thing to see in my lifetime. I’ve seen all kinds of beautiful things! I’m going to have amazing stories to tell Evangeline.”



“I really loved getting to make a record where those moments sound like the songs still had control over us, as opposed to the other way around.”



Brandi Carlile made a rare appearance without The Twins at Ravinia in 2009, instead sharing the stage with the Indigo Girls to close out her set.

Some of those stories will surely be about the making of *The Firewatcher's Daughter*, Carlile's first release since 2012. As evidenced by a new maturity to the lyrics—not just with “Beginning to Feel the Years” but also apparent in “The Eye” and “Heroes and Songs”—the musicians all find their lives in very new places. Shepherd was nearing full term with her pregnancy while Carlile finished up the album; meanwhile, The Twins were both relatively new dads, with toddlers at home—and, occasionally, at the studio, popping in while their dads recorded. (The whole extended family, with wives and kids, will travel together this summer throughout the tour.)

It's not just parenthood that brings a new feel to this latest release. *The Firewatcher's Daughter* also marks the band's first release as independent recording artists in a decade, following a string of albums made for Columbia Records. As a result, Carlile believes, she and The Twins produced their most rock-and-roll release yet—not just musi-

cally but philosophically. This time, “the music got to speak for itself,” she says. “When you make a record on a major label, especially if you're not a huge artist, you end up having to make demos. A lot of demos. When you record a song more than once, it loses something every time. I really loved getting to make a record where those moments—albeit less refined than if we'd worked them out—those moments sound like the songs still had control over us, as opposed to the other way around.”

The raw sound gets juxtaposed in a fascinating way with the hard-earned wisdom in the new lyrics. So many of the new tunes, says Carlile, reflect “the road that leads to where you are. It's about closing chapters out and starting new ones. The whole record is a record of arrival for us.” **R**

A Chicago-based journalist, Web Behrens has covered theater, museums, music, film, books, and graphic novels for the *Chicago Tribune*, *Time Out Chicago*, *Time Out Chicago Kids*, and *The Advocate*.





# THE SUM OF ALL YEARS

From guest conductor to music director, James Conlon  
sees his time at Ravinia as a continuous highlight

*By James Conlon*





In looking back over my years at Ravinia, it is almost impossible to gather my thoughts in a linear fashion. The memories are so many; the musical experiences so rich, varied and exciting; the immense presence of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra so monumental, that it is difficult to condense into words.

Since I became music director of the CSO's residency in 2005, I have been struck by how many music lovers I have met around the country and even overseas, who have told me that they heard their first concerts at Ravinia. I began joking that perhaps everyone grew up north of Chicago, and that they had all gone to Ravinia as children.

Gustav Mahler's music has been identified with the CSO for at least

half a century. Having grown up during the Bernstein years in New York City, I was exposed to Mahler early. My generation in America is perhaps the first who grew up in an age when Mahler was already a fully accepted presence in concert life. As a young adult, I watched and participated as his music went from present to omnipresent.

From the time I attended the CSO's famous (1970) performance of the Fifth Symphony with Georg Solti, I dreamt of conducting Mahler with them. It is not an accident that, when given the opportunity to first conduct at Ravinia, I chose Mahler's First Symphony; nor is it an accident that it heads up my programs this season. When I planned the Mahler symphony cycle as a central part





At top, James Conlon leads violinist Itzhak Perlman and cellist Lynn Harrell in Brahms's "Double" Concerto in the Pavilion for his 1977 Ravinia debut, and at bottom, he looks on during his final concert of the 2014 season, a performance of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* in the Martin Theatre.

of my first years as music director at Ravinia, it was designed to go in order and conclude in 2011, the 100th anniversary of his death. At the beginning of the cycle in 2005, I had already conducted five of his symphonies at Ravinia (two as a part of the single-season cycle spearheaded by James Levine in 1979) as well as *Das Lied von der Erde* and the first performance in CSO history of *Das klagende Lied*. Of the more than 400 Mahler performances I have led throughout the world, my cycle with the CSO will always remain at the apex.

The two Mozart cycles—the complete piano concertos and six of his principal operas (my one regret is that *La Clemenza di Tito* eluded us)—also comprised a central part of these years, though, of course, those weren't the only works represented. In addition to some symphonies (that one can never conduct enough of) and violin and wind concertos, the performances of Mozart's wind serenades stand out in my memory. But





Not long after his first performances at Ravinia, Conlon was featured as “Musician of the Month” in *Musical America*.

the absolute zenith for me was the transformation of the Martin Theatre into a semi-staged opera venue, featuring the CSO center stage and the best troupes of Mozart singers available.

As a part of a greater effort, I wished to significantly raise awareness among classical music lovers of the enormous volume of rarely performed, if not completely unknown, music by composers whose lives and fortunes were negatively impacted by the Nazi regime, introducing symphonic, operatic, and chamber music in both the Pavilion and the Martin Theatre as much as possible. For the first five years of my directorship, each season focused on an individual composer; in order they were Viktor Ullmann and Erwin Schulhoff (both of whom died in camps), Alexander

Zemlinsky (who emigrated to the US), Franz Schreker, and Kurt Weill (concentrating on his early German period). Thereafter the series continued in the Martin Theatre with a mix of compositions linked by the turbulent history of the mid-twentieth century—chamber music, works for singers and small orchestra, even two dance evenings—all drawn from composers who were either murdered, banned, banished, or forced into exile. The attendant list is long, but we were able to include Adolph Busch, Hanns Eisler, Wilhelm Grosz, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, Gideon Klein, Hans Krása, and Darius Milhaud.

The opportunity to discuss this subject from the Martin Theatre stage gratified me. Combined with all the visual aids that became part of these concerts,

these talks gave me an opportunity to share my thoughts on this music and the necessity of its revival. The audience may have been small compared to Ravinia’s hundreds of thousands of annual visitors, but large in its intellectual curiosity and its fierce loyalty. I am grateful to those who were among them.

To name particular artists with whom I have shared the stage would be to exclude others; to reminisce about who played what concerto and sang which opera would be to mix and blur hundreds of memories. In the end, for me, the overwhelming image (and sound) of Ravinia is that of the CSO and, on those occasions when they participated, the Chicago Symphony Chorus. Are there any performances that have a special memory for me? Again Mahler springs



## THE ACTUAL SUMS

Reminiscing takes on greater proportions with the passage of time. It is (in my case) increasingly accompanied by a predilection for statistics. I suppose it is a way of, at worst, idling away time or, at best, assembling the massive quantity of life's experiences in some sort of order that helps make sense of it all. Between 1977 and the start of this season, I have led 165 concerts at Ravinia—47 as a guest conductor, and 118 as the festival's music director.

In that time, I have shared the stage with 281 guest soloists, 226 of them over the past decade alone.

In sum total, since I first came to Ravinia in 1977 I have conducted 358 works. This has included 127 in the years leading up to beginning my directorship in 2005, and 293 on my programs since then. Fourteen of these have been concert operas.

Nearly a hundred different composers are represented on the catalog of music I have led at Ravinia, and 78 of them can be accounted for in the past 10 years. There are some, of course, whose works I have performed more of than others. A top-five list would begin with Mozart and no fewer than 42 of his works. Beethoven would follow at 20, and then Tchaikovsky, Mahler, and Wagner at 12 each.



A passionate musician, Conlon discussed many of his programs from the Pavilion and Martin Theatre stages.

immediately to mind, via his Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Symphonies, as well as Verdi's *Requiem*, the first act of Wagner's *Die Walküre*, "Siegfried's Funeral March" and the final scenes of *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, the Mozart operas, the Shostakovich symphonies—when I start thinking about it, the memories multiply. I've probably already gone too far. It is best left unqualified. The collective memories are greater than the sum of their parts.

I am grateful to several persons who brought and kept Ravinia in my life. First and foremost to James Levine, who first encouraged me to visit and attend rehearsals and performances in 1974—and first invited me to guest conduct in 1977; to Welz Kauffman and the entire Ravinia family for placing their confidence in me by asking me to become music director; and to his predecessor, Zarin Mehta, whose friendship, support, and love of music over the years has been very meaningful. And I reserve a special place for that very special, extraordinary individual who was the heart of Ravinia for so many years, and who supported me at the beginning, Ed Gordon.

I have written this essay looking backwards, whereas my focus is on the moment, with an eye to the future. The rear-view mirror is helpful when decid-

ing the right moment to change lanes.

I value long-term relationships and friendships, musical as well as personal. In a world driven by short-term interests, shifting loyalties, zigzagging career advancements, and superficial attachments, I stand by my choices to build associations with orchestras and musical institutions on a long-term basis, whether as a music director or as a guest. I have preferred longevity to the short term. With the symphony orchestras, opera houses, and festivals of which I have been music director, the shortest tenure was eight years and the longest 37.

It is now 38 years since I first conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as a guest at Ravinia, and I have now served as its music director for 11 years. The festival has been a source of inspiration, immense musical pleasure, and personal satisfaction. I have conducted one of the world's greatest orchestras, surrounded by a beautiful park, sustained by a large extended family of loyal supporters and a public of all ages.

I am grateful for that privilege and for the years spent in your midst. R

A complete listing of the repertoire James Conlon has led at Ravinia can be found in future issues of *Ravinia Magazine* this season.



# DOUBLE DIPPED

The combination of  
soloist and conductor  
is a rare treat

*By Dorothy Andries*

Violinist Nikolaj Znaider admits that conducting a concerto while playing as soloist can be regarded as “mission impossible.”

“When you are doing both, it does change your focus,” he declares. But that’s exactly the mission he’ll be focused on the evening of July 16 in Ravinia’s Pavilion. His Ravinia-debut program with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra includes Mozart’s Violin Concerto No. 3, which Znaider will be conducting with his bow as he traverses the work, written when the composer was but 19 years of age.

Znaider, who began his career as a violinist, has been conducting for about a decade. He is currently principal guest conductor with the Mariinsky Orchestra in Saint Petersburg, and next season he will begin conducting his own subscription series with the Mariinsky annually. Following his debut conducting the Cleveland Orchestra last season, Znaider was invited to return







for a two-week residency as a conductor and soloist, though not at the same time. He also conducts the London Symphony Orchestra every season and is embarking on a recording project with the orchestra in which he will conduct and solo in Mozart's five violin concertos.

Still, he allows that conducting and soloing at the same time is "an exception" for him. "It is difficult, because you use your hands in a different way when you conduct and when you play," he explains. "So you should not do it too often." But when he does, he discovers vast rewards. "What you might lose in soloing, you gain in transferring your attention to the way that the solo integrates cohesively into the concerto," he insists. "It is different than working with a separate conductor. You experience a spiritual awareness that is very satisfying.

"But there is no safety belt," Znaider adds, "only that as the conductor you can

anticipate problems before they happen."

The size of the orchestra is an element in the success of this unorthodox musical arrangement. "I would say that once the orchestra has more than two horns or any trombones, it is simply too big to be conducted by the soloist," he affirms. "For example, I would never try to play and conduct Sibelius's Violin Concerto."

Znaider's conducting career now occupies about half of his time. He counts Daniel Barenboim, who was music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1991 to 2006, as his initial influence, and he credits the late British conductor Sir Colin Davis, music director of the London Symphony Orchestra, with being his mentor. "I can't say I studied conducting in a classroom," he says of this newer aspect of his career. "Conducting is like driving, you can't practice it alone at home. You need an orchestra and you learn by doing it."

Znaider has conducted on both sides of the Atlantic, and he notes that there is a difference between European and American ensembles. "American orchestras and those in the United Kingdom are very well prepared, very professional when they come to the first rehearsal. They are ready for you," he explained. "The [continental] Europeans, especially the Germans, can be more lax. But then there is more rehearsal time in Europe." It all evens out, however. "By the time the concert comes, they are all willing to go all the way to give a good performance." He cribbs from Leonard Bernstein in saying the conductor should make every orchestra want to play for him: "You have to treat the players with respect. You must establish that human connection. I look at the musicians in the back of the orchestra as well as the front. You'd be surprised how many conductors just look at the few in front."





In 2006 Jaime Laredo led Bach's complete "Brandenburg" Concertos from his violin in the Martin Theatre with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Who came first, the concertmaster or the harpsichordist as conductor of the ensemble?

Mozart and Beethoven conducted orchestras from the keyboard. In fact, some historians made the wry observation that Mozart wrote his piano concertos for his own concerts, which he also conducted himself.

Orchestras in that period were smaller than today's large ensembles. The rise of what was initially called the baton conductor came when there were simply too many players on stage to be managed by the first violinist with his bow. For that development, we must either applaud or blame the composers, who wrote for more and ever more instruments. The mid-1800s has been generally accepted as the time when the ground shifted irrevocably to the separate conductor and the subsequent cult of personality, including such giants as Mendelssohn, Liszt, Berlioz, and Hans von Bülow.

So what of the violinist who assumes the double role of conductor and soloist? It is one thing to solo in a work of one's own, but today, that is less common than a soloist simply playing and conducting a work by a well-known composer. Violinists who have conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as soloists include Itzhak Perlman, Gil Shaham, Jaime Laredo, and Anne-Sophie Mutter.

Violinist David Taylor has been on

the other side of the podium all his professional life, as assistant concertmaster of the CSO since 1979 and previously as first violinist of the Cleveland Orchestra for five years. "It's rare that someone

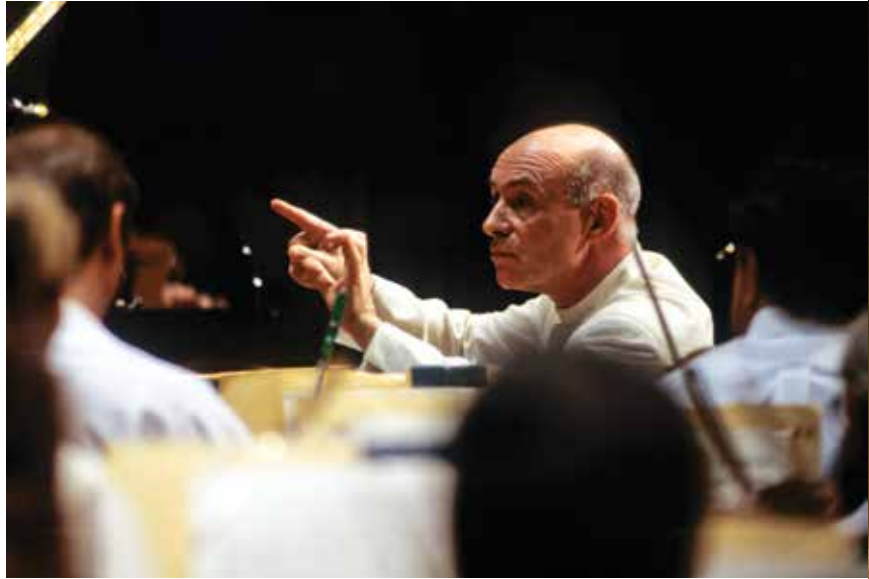
conducts a large orchestra and is soloist at the same time," he says, adding that he has no interest in trying it himself. "They are two different things and it is very hard to do both well." Regarding



Chris Christodoulou

Joshua Bell regularly conducts the orchestra of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, of which he is music director, from his violin rather than the podium.





Pianists Mitsuko Uchida (left) and Christoph Eschenbach (right) have led the CSO from their instruments, using pauses in their solo parts to provide direction.

conducting from the keyboard, he says, “When that happens, the piano is turned to face the orchestra and the lid is usually removed. So the sound goes off in all directions. It’s not ideal.” He cites Mozart’s music among the standard orchestra repertoire as having the best chance of being successfully conducted with the bow of a violin or from the keyboard. “Mozart’s music comes the closest to chamber music,” he explains.

On the other hand, violinist Joshua Bell, who navigates an international career as a soloist, has retained an interest in leading an ensemble from his instrument, having done so with smaller groups, such as the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

Since the ’60s, several of the CSO’s own music directors have led the ensemble from their solo instruments at least once, from Jean Martinon (1963 to 1968) to Sir Georg Solti (1969 to 1991) and, of course, Barenboim. Other keyboard luminaries that have made such an appearance include Bernstein and harpsichordist Christopher Hogwood, founder of the Academy of Ancient Music. More recently, pianists Murray Perahia and András Schiff, as well as harpsichordists Trevor Pinnock of The English Concert and Nichols Kraemer, found-

er/conductor of the English Chamber Orchestra, have conducted the orchestra while soloing.

Right now there is one artist who might be called the reigning queen of conducting from the keyboard, Mitsuko Uchida. She has conducted the CSO often as soloist. She also has recorded a series of Mozart’s piano concertos with the Cleveland Orchestra on the Decca label, with herself as conductor.

**R**avinia audiences may be most familiar with pianist-conductors via Christoph Eschenbach, who made his CSO and Ravinia debuts the evening of August 3, 1978. On that occasion he conducted and soloed in Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 2 and then led the composer’s “Eroica” Symphony. He became the festival’s music director in 1994, and on June 25 that year again conducted Beethoven’s Second Piano Concerto from his instrument, pairing it with Bruckner’s Ninth Symphony.

Two years later, on June 27, he conducted and soloed with the CSO in Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 23. The soloist was to be Edward Gordon, Ravinia’s executive director from 1968 until 1990, when he retired from the position and began to reestablish his piano

career. However, Gordon died in the spring of 1996, and Eschenbach became the soloist for the concert then dedicated to Gordon’s memory. That same season, on August 9, Eschenbach conducted the Ravinia Festival Orchestra in a Mozart extravaganza that included the Concerto for Two Pianos with Emanuel Ax and the Concerto for Three Pianos with Ax and Yoko Nozaki. Leading up to the new millennium, he would also twice essay Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 1 from the keyboard while leading the CSO, and he re-created his 1978 program for the 20th anniversary of his debut. In 2003 he again used the bench as his podium for a piano fest, playing Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 12 with the CSO, also leading Bernstein’s Symphony No. 2 (“The Age of Anxiety”) with pianist Christopher Taylor as the featured soloist and Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 4 with Lang Lang, whom he had introduced to Ravinia (and the classical music world at large) four years earlier.

When Eschenbach retired as Ravinia’s music director, he expressed the hope that he would be invited back as a guest conductor, and indeed he has. He has returned as both a conductor and as a soloist, though not at the same time. Most frequently he has served as a coveted accompanist for singers’ recitals





Former Ravinia music directors Christoph Eschenbach (top) and James Levine (bottom) led the CSO from the piano several times during their tenures at the festival.

in the Martin Theatre, as James Levine before him so often was.

In the early years of his directorship, Levine himself occasionally led the CSO from the piano, most frequently in performances of Bach's Clavier Concertos Nos. 1 and 5 and "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 5. He also led the orchestra through his performances of Mozart's Piano Concertos Nos. 9 and 12, as well as the composer's Concerto for Two Pianos with Ken Noda as the other half of the duo. [Levine will be making his long-awaited return to Ravinia next year to commemorate the 45th anniversary of his debut by conducting the very same work he led in 1971: Mahler's Symphony No. 2.]

So while doubling as conductor and soloist is time-honored, it is not often done. All the more reason to salute those who attempt this "mission impossible." [R](#)

Dorothy Andries is a freelance writer specializing in the performing arts and classical music.





# FoodStuff

*By Ali Saboor, Executive Chef at Ravinia*

Most chefs will tell you that the most common question they hear is, What's your favorite thing to cook? While this seems to be a simple and obvious question, it is actually quite difficult to answer. So much of my cooking is dictated by the seasons, my intended audience and, most importantly, the availability of ingredients I enjoy utilizing. For these reasons, I can only answer this question by telling you about my favorite flavors.

As I create dishes for the Ravinia season, I like to combine local, seasonal ingredients with hints of more exotic tastes with which I'm familiar: saffron, sumac, pistachios, barberries, cured yogurt, and cardamom, to name just a few. Many of these are the flavors I grew up with, so they are a natural influence in my cuisine. The idea of introducing these inspirations to new audiences is something that brings me great joy.

Rosewater is another great example of a component I enjoy utilizing that many people are unfamiliar with. It originated back in the 18th century as a fragrance. Made through the process of distilling rose petals in water, it was soon discovered to also be a wonderful addition to food and beverages. Predominantly used in sweets and pastry applications, rosewater can also be added to smoothies, tea, and even cocktails. The possibilities are endless; however, it is important to remember that a small amount of rosewater goes a long way. So don't get too excited or you'll find your dish overpowered. When portioned properly, hints of rosewater will leave your guests wonderfully puzzled by this delightful, secret ingredient.

Cheers,  
Chef Ali Saboor

## Rosewater Panna Cotta with Blueberries

Yield: 4 servings

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons water
- 1¼ teaspoon unflavored gelatin
- 1¼ cups cream
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1½ cups whole-milk yogurt
- ½ teaspoon rosewater
- Pinch salt
- 1 cup blueberries, divided

### Directions

Sprinkle the gelatin over the 2 tablespoons of water in a small bowl. Let sit to soften.

Put the cream in a small saucepan with the sugar over medium heat and heat until bubbles form around the edges. Whisk until all the sugar is dissolved. Take off the heat and whisk in the gelatin mixture until completely dissolved. Whisk in the yogurt, salt, and rosewater.



Rinse the blueberries and pat dry. Divide about half of the berries between four 6- to 8-ounce cups or bowls. Fill each one part-way with the berries. Pour the warm panna cotta mixture over the berries and refrigerate. Chill until set, about 2 to 4 hours, depending on the size and depth of the cups.

When ready to serve, divide the remainder of the berries between the cups, piling them on top of the set custard. Garnish with a mint leaf and serve with coffee, fresh mint tea, or dessert wine.



# Time Enough at Last

By Jack Zimmerman

*The Twilight Zone* was a weekly TV show that first hit the airwaves in 1959. Hosted by Rod Serling, the show was quirky and Kafkaesque. But in 1959 I was 13 and wouldn't know anything about Kafka until I went to college. Still, I was captivated by it.

My favorite *Twilight Zone* episode is "Time Enough at Last." Burgess Meredith stars as Henry Bemis, a lowly bank clerk with incredibly thick glasses. He loves to read classic literature, and while sitting in his teller cage he's always sneaking a look at a volume of Dickens, Melville, or some other literary heavy hitter. He tries to engage customers into discussing literature, but they want none of it.

One day his boss calls him into his office and gives him a thorough butt kicking about his job performance. That's nothing compared to what Henry gets when he goes home to his wife. She secretly took his favorite volume of poetry and made little x's through every word. She asks him to read her a poem, a gesture Henry views as touching and romantic. Of course, he's crushed when he realizes what she's done.

Henry closes himself in the bank's vault every lunch hour to read in solitude. The man just wants to be alone with a book. One day he's in the vault and knocked unconscious by a loud explosion. When he comes to he finds the world has destroyed itself—a nuclear hiccup of some kind. Buildings are leveled, streets deserted, and the world's just a big, smoking heap.

Henry wanders about, finds food, and slowly realizes only he has survived. He contemplates 30 or 40 years of being com-

pletely alone, picks up a revolver that's laying around and, just as he's ready to dispatch himself, he sees that he's standing near the ruins of a public library. The stairs are still there but the building's wrecked. The books, while scattered about, survived. Henry has lost everything—wife, job, friends—yet he's ecstatic. "Collected works of Dickens! Collected works of George Bernard Shaw!" he shouts. "Poems by Browning, Shelley,

*All-Stars*) when I was a high-school freshman. In college I bought hundreds of classical albums—anything conducted by Fritz Reiner, Arturo Toscanini, Herbert von Karajan, Bruno Walter, or George Szell.

I married a musician, and we spent our first year as husband and wife living around the corner from a record store. We spent more money on vinyl than we did on food. But there was a sea change in the '80s. I can't remember the exact year, but suddenly, I was buying CDs instead of records. Soon enough the CDs outnumbered the vinyl recordings.

Throughout my life I worked a half-dozen different careers, sometimes two at once. Being an adult takes up a lot of time. If you work all day and raise kids, you don't have time to listen to recordings, regardless of how good they are.

Sixteen years ago my wife and I moved from a suburban house to a Loop condo. We packed up all the recordings, but we only unpacked the CDs

in the new digs. We were always going to get to all that vinyl, but somehow never did.

Last summer I retired. This spring we finally unpacked our records. I feel like the music-loving equivalent of Henry Bemis. "Collected works of Beethoven! Collected works of Brahms! Tone poems by Strauss, Smetana, Dvořák! All the records I'll ever need! All the records I'll ever want!" And I now have time enough at last!

I'm terrified of what comes next.

*Jack Zimmerman has written a couple of novels and numerous newspaper columns and has told stories his entire life.*



Keats! Books! Books! All the books I'll ever need! All the books I'll ever want!" He has time enough at last.

He organizes piles of books on each of the library's steps, one for each month. The poor guy endured a lifetime of soul-killing employment and now can finally do what he loves most without anybody scolding him.

He sits among the many volumes, basking in his good fortune, and then leans forward slightly. His glasses with ultra-thick lenses slip off and shatter. Henry now has time enough at last to read, but he can't see.

From the time I was a teenager, I loved recordings. At first it was jazz, and later classical music. I bought my first Miles Davis album (*Walkin' with the Miles Davis*

# LAWN CLIPPINGS