

ENDOWED BY CHRISTEL DEHAAN

GALA 2024



September 28 | 5:30 p.m.

Mario Venzago, CONDUCTOR
FEATURING Conrad Tao



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Welcome back to Hilbert Circle Theatre for the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra's 24–25 Opening Night Gala endowed by Christel DeHaan! This evening we are going to take a tour through Italy as the ISO serves up orchestral favorites under the direction of Maestro Venzago with special guest pianist Conrad Tao. I hope you enjoy this unforgettable evening of dazzling music.



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Sept. 28

Opening Night Gala

Jun Märkl, Music Director
Jack Everly, Principal Pops Conductor
Su-Han Yang, Associate Conductor

Opening Night Gala
Saturday, September 28, 5:30 p.m.
Hilbert Circle Theatre

ENDOWED BY
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MARIO VENZAGO, *Conductor* | CONRAD TAO, *Piano*

Gioachino Rossini | 1792–1868

Overture to *William Tell*

Luciano Berio | 1925–2003

Four Original Versions from Luigi Boccherini's "Ritirata notturna di Madrid"

Giuseppe Verdi | 1813–1901

"Le Ballet de la Reine" from *Don Carlos*

Sergei Rachmaninoff | 1873–1943

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43
Conrad Tao, *Piano*

There is no intermission.

Length of performance is approximately one hour and fifteen minutes.
Recording or photographing any part of this performance is strictly prohibited.



Mario Venzago

was, until summer 2021 and for 11 years, the Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Bern Symphony Orchestra.

Before, he has led as Principal

Conductor or General Music Director of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, the Basque National Orchestra in San Sebastian, the Basel Symphony Orchestra, the Graz Opera und Graz Philharmonic Orchestra, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Frankfurt (now Bremen), the Theatre and Philharmonic Orchestra of the City of Heidelberg and the Musikkollegium Winterthur. From 2010 to 2014 he was Principal Conductor of the Royal Northern Sinfonia, from 2010 to 2019 Artist in Association of the Finnish Tapiola Sinfonietta and from 2000 to 2003 Artistic Director of the Baltimore Summer Fest, as successor to Pinchas Zukerman and David Zinman.

Mario Venzago has conducted the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the orchestras in Philadelphia and Boston, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Filarmonica della Scala and the NHK Symphony Orchestra. He is a regular guest conductor with internationally renowned orchestras such as the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin and the Frankfurter Museumsorchester. He has given concerts with the world's most famous soloists, and collaborated with directors such as Ruth Berghaus, Peter Konwitschny and Hans Neuenfels.

Several of his CDs have won international prizes such as the Grand Prix du Disque, the Diapason d'or and the Edison Award. His recordings of the operas *Venus* and *Penthesilea* and of all choral works by Othmar Schoeck with the MDR choir and symphony orchestra received great international recognition and prestigious awards, as did his first film, *My Brother the Conductor*, by Alberto Venzago, which was shown in cinemas across Europe and released on DVD. The project *The Other Bruckner* with the recording of all ten symphonies, whose individual releases were acclaimed by international critics, was released at Classic Produktion Osnabrück. A collaboration with Sony Classical led to the spectacular recording of Franz Schubert's Unfinished symphony with the Kammerorchester Basel, completed and conducted by Mario Venzago, and the recording of all serenades and symphonies by Johannes Brahms.

The most recent CD projects have been recordings of Othmar Schoeck's opera *Schloss Dürande* in a new version with the Berner Symphonieorchester and the cantata *Vom Fischer und syner Fru* with the Musikkollegium Winterthur (both Claves). Most recently, in 2022, Prospero released his recording of Schubert's reconstructed 7th Symphony with Bern Symphony Orchestra. His recording of the Suite from Bernard Herrmann's *Wuthering Heights* with Singapore Symphony Orchestra was released on Chandos Records in June 2023.

In addition to his activity as a conductor, Mario Venzago recently has increasingly devoted himself to his passion for composing. In 2021 he premiered his Violin Concerto with Soyoung Yoon and the Bern Symphony Orchestra. Currently, various works by Mario Venzago are in preparation for publication by Universal Edition, including two operas.



Pianist and composer **Conrad Tao** has been dubbed “the kind of musician who is shaping the future of classical music” by *New York Magazine*. A soloist with leading orchestras in

the traditional repertoire, Tao possesses an encyclopedic artistic approach and vision, as well as a stunning array of innovative and impactful projects.

Conrad’s 2024–25 season includes a return to Carnegie Hall in recital performing Debussy’s *12 Études*, alongside *Keyed In*, a work arranged and improvised by Tao on the Lumatone. He returns to the San Francisco Symphony to perform Tchaikovsky with Nicholas Collon, the Dallas Symphony to perform Mozart with Jaap van Zweden, the St Louis Symphony to perform Saint-Saëns with David Danzmayr, and the Baltimore Symphony to perform Mozart with Jonathon Heyward. He also will perform with the Seoul Philharmonic and NDR Hannover with Ingo Metzmacher. He continues his collaboration with award-winning dancer Caleb Teicher in a U.S. tour.

In the 2023–24 season, Conrad made his subscription debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and reunited with the New York Philharmonic following summer appearances and his specially curated program for their Artist Spotlight series. Meanwhile, he celebrated Rachmaninov’s 150th anniversary with recitals presented by the Cleveland Orchestra and Klavierfestival Ruhr.

The season also saw performances with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Marin Alsop, and the Boston Symphony and Dima Slobode-

niouk, as well as performances celebrating the 100th anniversary of *Rhapsody in Blue* at the Philharmonie Berlin, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, and the Concertgebouw Amsterdam with Matthias Pintscher and the Kansas City Symphony. His companion piece to Gershwin’s *Rhapsody*, *Flung Out*, was commissioned by the Santa Rosa Symphony, Aspen Music Festival, and Omaha Symphony.

In recent years, Conrad has been the subject of a special focus with the Finnish Radio Symphony and the Swedish Radio Symphony, both of whom have presented him over multiple concerts. He has also performed with the Orchestra Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. As a composer, his work has been performed by orchestras throughout the world; his first large scale orchestral work, *Everything Must Go*, received its world premiere with the New York Philharmonic and its European premiere with the Antwerp Symphony.

Conrad was the recipient of a New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” Award for Outstanding Sound Design / Music Composition for his work on *More Forever*, in collaboration with dancer and choreographer Caleb Teicher. He is also the recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant and was named a Gilmore Young Artist.

A Warner Classics recording artist, Tao’s debut disc *Voyages* was declared a “spiky debut” by the *New Yorker*’s Alex Ross. His next album, *Pictures*, features works by David Lang, Toru Takemitsu, Elliott Carter, Mussorgsky, and Tao. His third album, *American Rage*, featuring works by Julia Wolfe, Frederic Rzewski, and Aaron Copland, was released in 2019. In 2021, Tao and brass quartet The Westerlies released *Bricolage*, an album of improvisations and experiments recorded in a small cabin in rural New Hampshire in June 2019.

Tao was born in Urbana, Ill., in 1994. He has studied piano with Emilio del Rosario in Chicago and Yoheved Kaplinsky in New York, and composition with Christopher Theofanidis.



Christel DeHaan's life epitomized the American dream. Born during World War II in Germany and immigrating to the United States in 1962, she started typing and ironing ser-

vices upon her arrival in Indiana. In 1974 she co-founded RCI, the company that pioneered vacation exchange and became the leader in its industry. When she became the sole owner of RCI in 1989, Christel led the company's global expansion, creating over 30 international offices. At the time she sold the company in 1996 to NYSE-traded HFS, RCI had more than 4,000 employees.

Christel's passion for life, for causes, for people and for the arts, music, and nature was underscored by a deep commitment to excellence in all that she did. She made a difference as an employer, as a community leader, and as a philanthropist. The Christel DeHaan Family Foundation (CDDF) was privileged to oversee more than \$133 million in grants supporting over 700 arts, education, child welfare, and human needs organizations during its lifespan (2009–2023). In 1998 she founded Christel House, a public charity that helps children around the world break the cycle of poverty and become self-sufficient, contributing members of society.

Through her careful planning, the work of Christel House will continue. Currently serving nearly 6,000 students, Christel House uses a holistic approach, which ensures that a child's basic needs are met, and then provides

top-quality education, character development, career-planning, and ultimately, job placement. As a thoughtful and strategic philanthropist, Christel DeHaan desired CDDF to close following her death and corpus assets be provided to designated organizations through Legacy Gifts.

Christel was an avid supporter of the ISO and attended a wide range of programming, from Classical concerts, to *Symphony on the Prairie* and *Yuletide Celebration*. Over \$6,800,000 was donated to the ISO through direct gifts from the CDDF and through support recommended by the CDDF Board. On top of financial support, Christel also donated her time by serving on the ISO's Board of Directors and on the Music Director Search Committee that appointed Mario Venzago as Music Director of the ISO in 2002. Christel had a close relationship with Raymond Leppard, the ISO's Music Director prior to Maestro Venzago. She even wrote a poignant tribute that was read at Maestro Leppard's memorial service at the beginning of 2020.

The support of the ISO by Christel and the CDDF has been unmatched. Christel's advocacy for and love of the ISO has allowed the organization to grow and prosper over the years. Her passion for artistic excellence has pushed the organization to continually strive to be an arts leader in Indianapolis and central Indiana.

Christel's philosophy of life was "to care, to share, to make a difference," and nothing could summarize her life more clearly.

About the Annotator:

Elizabeth Schwartz is a musician, writer, and music historian based in Portland, Oregon. She has been a program annotator for more than 25 years, and writes for ensembles and festivals across the United States and around the world. Ms. Schwartz has also contributed to NPR's "Performance Today," (now heard on American Public Media).
www.classicalmusicprogramnotes.com

Overture to *William Tell*
Gioachino Rossini

Born: February 29, 1792, Pesaro, Italy
 Died: November 13, 1868, Passy, France
 Year Composed: 1829
 Length: c. 12 minutes
 World Premiere: August 1829, Paris
 Last ISO Performance: April 2011 with conductor David Glover
 Instrumentation: Piccolo, flute, 2 oboes (one doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, percussion, and strings

Gioachino Rossini's final opera, *William Tell*, is an epic six-hour musical setting of Friedrich Schiller's tale of the celebrated Swiss hero, William Tell, who fought for Swiss independence from the Hapsburgs during the 14th century. Although warmly received, the opera was deemed too long and was cut from six acts to three; subsequent performances were so abridged they scarcely resembled the original; one such performance featured only the second act. A possibly apocryphal anecdote about this wholesale "slash and burn" policy has the head of the Opéra telling Rossini, "Tonight we are performing the second act of your *Tell*," whereupon the composer is said to have responded, "Indeed! All of it?"

Although known to take a cavalier attitude toward his music, Rossini's Overture to *William Tell* is a major departure from his standard opera overtures, which often bore little resemblance to the operas they preceded. A clear precursor to the orchestral tone poem, the Overture to *William Tell* was hailed by Berlioz as "a work of immense talent which resembles genius so closely as to be mistaken for it." Written in four distinct sections, it opens with the low strings depicting a mountain sunrise, which Berlioz described as "the calm of profound solitude, the silence of nature when the elements and human passions are at rest." The second section features a tempestuous storm, which gives way to the famous pastoral melody played by the English horn. Finally, the trumpets signal the advancing Swiss army as the overture ends with the galloping melody indelibly associated with The Lone Ranger.

Four Original Versions from Luigi Boccherini's "Ritirata notturna di Madrid"
Luciano Berio

Born: February 19, 1743, Lucca
 Died: May 25, 1805, Madrid
 Year Composed: Boccherini composed his Quintet, Op. 30, No. 6, from which this movement is excerpted, in 1780; Berio arranged this version in 1975
 Length: c. 7 minutes
 World Premiere: Undocumented
 Last ISO Performance: This is the ISO's first performance of this piece
 Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, celesta, 2 harps, and strings

“The piece is absolutely useless, even ridiculous outside Spain because the audience cannot hope to understand its significance, nor the players to play it as it should be played.”

—Letter from Luigi Boccherini to his publisher explaining why his Op. 30 No. 6 should not be published

A contemporary of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Luigi Boccherini was born into a musical family and became an early master of the cello. In 1770, Don Luis, the younger brother of the Spanish King Charles III, hired Boccherini as a composer in his royal court. Don Luis was an accomplished musician in his own right, and he appreciated Boccherini’s skills as both composer and cellist.

Boccherini is best known for his chamber works, including over 100 quintets he wrote for the unusual combination of two violins, viola, and two cellos. Boccherini’s Op. 30 No. 6 is one of these, but it is unusual in Boccherini’s catalogue because it was written as program music. Boccherini gave it the title “La musica notturna delle Strade di Madrid” (Night Music from the Streets of Madrid), and explained it was his attempt to capture the various sounds one would hear on Madrid’s streets at night. Boccherini also wrote his own program note for the audience. For the final movement, titled “La Ritirata di Madrid” (the retreat of the Military Night Watch of Madrid), Boccherini wrote, “One must imagine sitting next to the window on a summer’s night in a Madrid flat and that the band can only be heard in the far-off distance in some other part of the city, so at first it must be played quite softly. Slowly the music grows louder and louder until it is very loud, indicating the Night Watch are passing directly under the listener’s window. Then gradually the volume decreases and again becomes faint as the band moves off down the street into the distance.”

In 1975, Italian composer Luciano Berio layered four of Boccherini’s own arrangements of “La Ritirata” into his own version for full orchestra, at the request of La Scala Theatre Orchestra in Milan.

“Le Ballet de la Reine” from *Don Carlos* Giuseppe Verdi

Born: October 9 or 10, 1813, Roncole, Italy

Died: January 27, 1901, Milan

Year Composed: 1866

Length: c. 16 minutes

World Premiere: March 1867, Paris

Last ISO Performance: January 2004 with conductor Mario Venzago

Instrumentation: Piccolo, 3 flutes, 2 oboes,

English horn, 2 clarinets, 4 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 cornets,

2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani,

percussion, offstage stage band, harmonium, harp, and strings

For the French, ballet was an integral part of opera, and any opera that did not include a ballet was not worthy of the name. When the directors of Paris Opera first saw the original score of *Don Carlos*, the opera they had commissioned from Giuseppe Verdi, they were dismayed to find no ballet, and demanded the composer include one.

Verdi reluctantly complied—he was not opposed to ballets in opera, but he was increasingly concerned over the opera’s length, which had ballooned to over four hours. Nonetheless, Verdi made several cuts elsewhere in the opera to accommodate the ballet, which takes place in Act III.

Don Carlos centers on the love triangle among Don Carlos, Prince of Asturias, his father, Philip II of Spain, and Carlos’ fian-

cée, Elisabeth of Valois. One of the terms of a peace treaty that ended the Italian War (1551–59) between the Hapsburgs and the Valois (France’s ruling family) dictated that Elisabeth marry Philip instead of Carlos. The opera focuses on themes of passion, deception, political intrigue, and religious persecution.

The “Ballet for the Queen” provides a pleasant diversion from the weighty themes of the opera, and bears no narrative relationship to the overall story. In the ballet, a fisherman in a grotto discovers a massive pear-shaped pearl, which later became known as “La Peregrina.” (In Spanish, “peregrina” means “pilgrim” or “wanderer.”) This historical pearl was the largest ever found at the time of its discovery in 1513 off the coast of Panama. It remained in the treasury of Spain for centuries, barring a short interlude during which Napoleon appropriated it after he had conquered Spain. In the 20th century, the English Dukes of Abercorn came into possession of La Peregrina, and in 1969, the actor Richard Burton purchased it as a gift for his wife, Elizabeth Taylor.

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43 Sergei Rachmaninoff

Born: April 1, 1873, Oneg, Russia

Died: March 28, 1943, Beverly Hills, California

Year Composed: 1934

Length: c. 24 minutes

World Premiere: November 1934, Baltimore, Maryland

Last ISO Performance: April 2023 with conductor Robert Spano and pianist George Li

Instrumentation: Solo piano, piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings

After he left Russia, Sergei Rachmaninoff found little time for composition. He had a family to support, and his skills as a conductor and concert pianist were more in demand, and paid far better, than his compositions. Consequently, Rachmaninoff wrote relatively little in the years after the Russian Revolution; instead, he maintained a demanding concert tour schedule performing earlier works, particularly the Second and Third Piano Concertos.

The *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* is an exception; Rachmaninoff wrote it in 1934, just seven years before his death. Based on the last of Niccolò Paganini’s 24 Caprices for Solo Violin, this melody has inspired variations by several other composers, including Franz Liszt, Johannes Brahms, and Witold Lutosławski.

Audiences immediately responded to the *Rhapsody’s* technical virtuosity and unabashed romanticism. As the late critic Michael Steinberg noted, “[the *Rhapsody*] embodies [Rachmaninoff’s] late style at its

brilliant and witty best, it has one of the world's irresistible melodies and it gives the audiences the satisfaction of watching a pianist work very hard and with obviously rewarding results."

Critics were far less enthusiastic: one described it as "trite to the verge of cheapness," while another opined, "[it is] just a concert piece for the composer's playing, and the day for that sort of thing is past." The *New Yorker* critic was especially harsh, denigrating both music and audience: "The *Rhapsody* isn't philosophical, significant, or even artistic. It is something for audiences." Despite the condescending reviews, the *Rhapsody* became an instant hit on the concert circuit, and remains one of the most popular works for piano and orchestra.

Structurally, the *Rhapsody* follows the typical outline of a piano concerto, with the first ten

variations (some under 20 seconds) corresponding to a first movement. These ten variations stay very close to Paganini's theme and remain in the key of A minor, each one building on the excitement and tension of its predecessor. Variation 11 transitions to the slow "second movement" (variations 12-18). In keeping with the middle movement of a concerto, the harmony shifts from A minor and wanders through several other keys until it arrives at the famous 18th variation in D-flat major, which was featured in the 1993 hit movie *Groundhog Day*. "This one," Rachmaninoff shrewdly commented, "is for my agent." While this variation seems unrelated to the fundamental melody, Rachmaninoff constructed it by simply inverting Paganini's original theme. The final six variations make up the third movement and feature Paganini's opening theme as the *Rhapsody* builds to its fiery climax.

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