CSO AT MUSIC HALL | 2020–2021 SEASON
FRI JAN 29, 7:30 pm | SAT JAN 30, 7:30 pm | SUN JAN 31, 2 pm

IMPRESSIONS OF FOLK

Louis Langrée, conductor
Kirill Gerstein, pianist

GEORGE WALKER
(1922–2018)

Folksongs for Orchestra
Going to lay down my sword and shield
And they crucified my Lord
My Lord, what a morning
O, Peter, go ring dem bells

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906–1975)

Concerto No. 2 in F Major for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 102
Allegro
Andante
Allegro

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY
(1882–1967)

Galántai tánkok (“Dances of Galánta”)
Lento
Allegretto moderato
Allegro con moto, grazioso
Allegro
Allegro vivace

This performance will last approximately 1 hour; there is no intermission. Watch this concert online starting Feb. 26; visit cincinnatisymphony.org for details.

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The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra is grateful for the support of the Louise Dieterle Nippert Musical Arts Fund of the Greenacres Foundation and for the thousands of people who give generously to the ArtsWave Community Campaign.
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Post-Concert Q&As are endowed by Melody Sawyer Richardson.
These concerts are endowed by Martha Anness, Priscilla Haffner & Sally Skidmore in loving memory of their mother, LaVaughn Scholl Garrison, a long-time patron of the Orchestra.
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The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in-orchestra Steinway piano is made possible by the Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trust.
Steinway Pianos, courtesy of Willis Music, is the official piano of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Cincinnati Pops.
I am beyond delighted and excited to welcome you back to Music Hall and the shared experience of a live, in-person concert! Tonight’s concert will be a celebration with joyful, energetic, dance-like music and a beloved piano concerto from the repertoire. We begin with a fusion of the African-American Spiritual tradition and the symphonic tradition, George Walker’s Folksongs for Orchestra. Walker’s setting allows for the ethos of the lyrics to be dramatically conveyed through orchestral colors and the passing of fragmented melodic material from instrument to instrument.

Next, we welcome back the fantastic pianist Kirill Gerstein to play Dmitri Shostakovich’s exuberant and tender second piano concerto. The work was a birthday present to his 19-year-old son, Maxim, who premiered it at his piano graduation from the Moscow Conservatory in May 1957. Dmitri included a few musical jokes in the third movement by quoting the notorious Czerny finger exercises—a good way to ensure his son practiced. Maxim went on to have a career as a conductor, and guest conducted the CSO twice, both times choosing programs that paid homage to his father. In 1983 he conducted the Symphony No. 10, and in 1984 he conducted the Symphony No. 13, Babi Yar, at the May Festival.

Lastly you will hear Zoltán Kodály’s exhilarating Galántai táncok (“Dances of Galánta”), a highly expressive and virtuosic orchestral gem. Kodály uses gypsy melodies to craft five elaborate Hungarian dances, each more frenzied than the last—until the piece ends in stomping, roaring, and irresistible energy!

Program Notes

GEORGE WALKER
Folksongs for Orchestra

George Walker (b. June 27, 1922, Washington, D.C.; d. August 23, 2018, Montclair, NJ) completed his Folksongs for Orchestra in the fall of 1990; they were premiered in May of 1992 by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra under conductor David Zinman. Walker, the first African American composer to receive the Pulitzer Prize in Music (for Lilacs for Voice and Orchestra), uses the orchestra in an interesting way to set these folk song melodies, quoting the melodies in full before presenting them in fragments throughout the orchestra. These performances are the work’s CSO premiere.

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
Concerto No. 2 in F Major for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 102

Shostakovich (b. September 25, 1906, St. Petersburg; d. August 9, 1975, Moscow) wrote the Piano Concerto No. 2 as a gift for his son, Maxim. And it was Maxim who gave the first performance of the work, at his graduation from the Moscow Conservatory—also Maxim’s 19th birthday. Nikolai Anosov conducted the USSR Symphony Orchestra for the premiere.
Galántai Táncok (also referred to as Dances of Galánta) by Zoltán Kodály (b. December 16, 1882, Kecskemét, Hungary; d. March 6, 1967, Budapest) was commissioned for the 80th anniversary of the Budapest Philharmonic Society and premiered by the Budapest Philharmonic on October 23, 1933. This piece is based on the folk music of Galánta, where Kodály lived for many years, and contains melodies inspired by those the composer grew up listening to as a child.

Guest Artist

KIRILL GERSTEIN, pianist
Based in Berlin, Kirill Gerstein appears world-wide in performances ranging from concerts with the Chicago and Boston Orchestras, the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Royal Concertgebouw, Vienna and Berlin Philharmonics, London Symphony Orchestra and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, to recitals in London, Berlin, Vienna, Paris and New York.

Born in 1979 in Voronezh, Russia, Gerstein attended one of the country’s special music schools for gifted children and taught himself to play jazz by listening to his parents’ record collection. Following a chance encounter with jazz legend Gary Burton in St. Petersburg when he was 14, he was invited to attend the Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he studied jazz piano in tandem with his classical piano studies. At age 16, he decided to focus on classical music, continuing his studies with Solomon Mikowsky in New York, Dmitri Bashkirov in Madrid and Ferenc Rados in Budapest. Gerstein is the sixth recipient of the prestigious Gilmore Artist Award, First Prize winner at the 10th Arthur Rubinstein Competition, and an Avery Fisher Career Grant holder.

Kirill Gerstein has performed with the CSO three times before, in November 2013, January 2016 and January 2019.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
For more information about the music on this program, and for details about the guest artist and the musicians of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, please visit cincinnatisymphony.org/gerstein or point your phone’s camera at this QR code:

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