

TCO with Richard Goode and Mikko Franck (Dec. 7)

by Daniel Hathaway



The last regular Cleveland Orchestra concert before Severance Hall was to be decked out for its Christmas Concerts featured a new work by Julian Anderson, a Mozart concerto with pianist Richard Goode, and Brahms' First Symphony led by Finnish guest conductor Mikko Franck.

Anderson, who served as the Orchestra's Daniel R. Lewis

Young Composer Fellow a decade ago, wrote *Incantesimi* ("Enchantments") in 2016 as a commission from the Berlin Symphony, the London Philharmonic, and the Boston Symphony. Based on five "orbiting" musical ideas (Anderson was inspired by Mozart's contrapuntal use of five themes in the finale to his "Jupiter Symphony"), the composer stitches disparate ideas in the ten-minute work together with English horn solos, serenely played here by Robert Walters.

Beguiling textures and contrasts in orchestral voicing — high against low sounds punctuated by subtle comments from the percussion — made *Incantesimi* an easy, pleasant listen, a suitably enchanting curtain-raiser.

One of six piano concertos Mozart wrote in 1784, No. 18 in B-flat is assumed from circumstantial evidence to have been written for the blind Parisian pianist Maria Theresia Paradis. While the first and last movements make charming use of wind instruments, the set of variations on a minor-key theme that forms the slow movement is the musical standout of the work. Playing from a score, Richard Goode seized that opportunity to generate a series of expressive interactions with his orchestral colleagues.

Elsewhere, Goode continued to play with sensitive articulation and beautiful voicing, and balanced his solo line expertly with the Orchestra. Although Mozart's themes in the outer movements aren't among his most profound, Goode rescued them — especially the rondo tune — from becoming trivial or banal.



Mikko Franck seemed shy about putting his personal stamp on Brahms' First Symphony. And who could blame him for not trying to tinker with an iconic piece? The Cleveland Orchestra has recorded half a dozen times? He presided over a lean but sonorous performance, rich with beautiful woodwind and horn solos, that reached a triumphant conclusion in the last movement. Having conducted the concert from a chair, Franck leapt to his feet for the final bars of the symphony, as soon the audience did as well.

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