DePaul University
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Saturday, November 8, 2025 • 8:00 PM

DePaul Symphony Orchestra

Francesco Milioto, Music Director & Conductor

Mary Patricia Gannon Concert Hall
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago

Saturday, November 8, 2025 • 8:00 PM
Gannon Concert Hall

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Francesco Milioto, Music Director & Conductor

Program

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92 (1811-1812)

I. Poco sostenuto - Vivace
II. Allegretto
III. Presto
IV. Allegro con brio

- Intermission -

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy, TH 42, ČW 39 (1869)

As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted.

Biographies

Francesco Milioto continues to establish himself as an incredibly gifted conductor whose interpretations are fueled by deep curiosity, and executed with a philosophy of collaboration.

Maestro Milioto currently serves as Music Director of both The Florentine Opera and OPERA San Antonio. Mr. Milioto's most recent acclaimed performances, outside his home companies, include productions at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Kentucky Opera, as well as Ballet San Antonio. He is currently a member of the music staff at the world-renowned Lyric Opera of Chicago and will join the faculty of DePaul University as Music Director of its Symphony Orchestra.

He begins the 2025-26 season with two Mozart productions back to back at his home companies in San Antonio and Milwaukee. First in San Antonio to conduct Barry Kosky's innovative production of The Magic Flute, and then quickly to Milwaukee for The Florentine Opera's production of Don Giovanni. Mr. Milioto will then head to the Lyric Opera of Chicago as cover conductor for Carmina Burana, A Night of Mellon Collie and Infinite Sadness, and Cosi fan tutte. Maestro Milioto will finish the season with two productions at the Florentine Opera, in continued collaboration with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, of The Tales of Hoffmann, and Puccini's Tosca.

Maestro Milioto is an avid coach and much sought after master teacher. He looks forward to continuing his fundamental mentorship of the young artists in The Florentine Opera's Baumgartner Studio Artist Program, as well as those in the 210 Festival, a summer collaboration between OPERA San Antonio and Classical Music Institute. The immediate bond created between Mr. Milioto and the DePaul Symphony Orchestra last season led to this important appointment as Music Director of the DPSO. Maestro Milioto is extremely excited to begin work with the talented and eager students that make up this unique and diverse ensemble.

As a music director and guest conductor Mr. Milioto has thrived in Chicago and beyond. Over his many years in Chicago, he claimed the title of Music Director to the New Millennium Orchestra, the Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra, the Highland Park Strings, Access Contemporary Music, and the Chicago Cultural Center Summer Opera. As a guest conductor, he has amassed several critically acclaimed productions with Chicago Opera Theater and has collaborated with many professional local orchestras. His work with the New Millennium Orchestra and Chicago Opera Theater were each named to the Chicago Sun-Times list of the "10 best performances of the year."

Mr. Milioto is a first generation Italian-Canadian and was born in Toronto. He began playing the piano at age seven and continued his early musical education at the Royal Conservatory of Music. He has earned a Bachelor's Degree in Piano Performance from the University of Western Ontario and a double Master's Degree in Orchestral Conducting and Opera Repetition from McGill University.

Program Notes

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92 (1811-1812)
Duration: 40 minutes
This work is simply a gem, and while certainly well known, deserves to be even better appreciated by concert audiences. Beethoven, himself, famously said that it was one of his best works. And, unlike so many works of genius that initially were pearls cast before swine, everybody knew on the spot that this work was great. It is commonplace, of course, for scholars to think of Beethoven's musical life in three great periods—the last being the time of compositions that "challenge" comprehension and appreciation. The fecund middle period, roughly the first decade of the nineteenth century is the time of dozens of the magnificent works that came to define the composer and establish his eternal reputation, and his seventh symphony stands pretty much near the end of that time.

Written mostly during 1811 and finished by early 1812, it is a without doubt a complete reflection of the happy times and optimistic personal attitude of the composer at that time in his life—both professionally and personally. We are all familiar with the struggles and depressive moments in his emotionally up and down life, but times were good about then. The beloved "Pastoral" symphony was finished in 1808, and he then busied himself with important works, among them, the "Emperor" piano concerto and the music for Egmont. Sketches for both the seventh and the eighth symphonies were all part of his activity during this time.

He had already suffered health problems by early 1811, and traveled to the spa in the Bohemian town of Teplice, where work on the symphonies went on during that summer. Both symphonies were finished the next year, and together they more or less demark the end of an era. From that time on, until the end of his life in 1827, Beethoven the man, and his musical works underwent significant changes. His health underwent further deterioration, with debilitating family squabbles and failures in personal relationships all contributing to the change. While there were great works still to be written, the flow of inspiration was lessened, his social isolation increased, and the style of his composition took on a new, abstract quality.

So, the uplifting joy and vigor of Symphony No. 7 is a turning point. Beethoven, himself, conducted the première—contemporary accounts entertainingly describe his energetic and exaggerated

gesticulations on the podium. And in the orchestra were some of the luminaries of the musical scene. It must have been an inspiring concert, indeed. The audience is on record for its enthusiastic response to this vivacious composition. No wonder, for there are few works by Beethoven so spurred by rhythmic inspiration and drive. Wagner has been endlessly excoriated for the banal comment that the work is "an apotheosis of the dance." While it may have been a ham-fisted comment—neither Beethoven, nor few others have alluded to any dances in the work–but there is more than a grain of truth in the comment.

After a few dynamic chords the first movement opens with a long, slow introduction that is a perfect example of Beethoven's skill at artfully creating an atmosphere of expectation out of nothing much more than a few scales, sustained chords, and some melodic fragments. As it ends it seems to fragment into just a few repeated notes peeking out from octave to octave. And then there coyly appears a murmur of the simple rhythmic figure around which the first movement, proper, is built. A multiplicity of themes inhabit this driving, happy affair—all built in typical Beethoven fashion out of that little dotted rhythm.

The second movement is a special one—even for Beethoven. The first audience immediately recognized its inherent appeal, and forced its encore, right then. It consists of a "theme" that undergoes a series of variations—or, rather more strictly, is repeated with new and attractive elements added with each repetition, while retaining all that which was added. And it's not really a theme in the melodic sense at all, rather just a basic chord progression in a constantly repeated simple rhythm. Here again, is ample evidence of Beethoven's consummate skill at conjuring up magic out of the simplest of elements. There is a new tune in the middle, in the major mode—still with the simple rhythm of the beginning. The material of the opening returns, with some development added, and it all ends as it began.

A driving and dynamic scherzo can be expected next, and the composer certainly delivers one, quite a long one, at that, in an extended form that Beethoven liked. This movement possesses all of the impetus and rhythmic verve of the first movement, and again reaffirms the composer's optimism. The last movement, if it is possible, trumps everything so far. It jumps right in with an intensity and jubilant ferocity rare even in Beethoven. Thumping, swinging, hammering—it relentlessly drives ahead, spurred by the timpani and

the horns. If ever there was one movement from Beethoven's nine symphonies that reminds us of his epochal innovation of rhythm as a fundamental element in musical composition, this is it. It doesn't take long, dashing to a headlong conclusion that is nothing less than breathtaking.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy, TH 42, ČW 39 (1869)
Duration: 20 minutes
Even a cursory review of the lives of most of the significant composers of the nineteenth century–from Berlioz to Verdi–shows them to have been fascinated with the timeless art of Shakespeare. In fact, it is a major trait of Romanticism as an intellectual movement to have plumbed the depths of his work for archetypes of the human condition. And it is telling that generations of young composers took personal initiative to school themselves so. Tchaikovsky is representative, and his concert overture, *Romeo and Juliet,* is typical of the many compositions of the times that drew inspiration from the playwright.

Composed just as Tchaikovsky turned twenty-nine years old, it's a relatively early work. The composer had composed his first programmatic work, *Fatom* (fate)—he soon tore up the original score—only the year before, and the first version of his first symphony three years previous. So, almost all of the orchestral music that has established his durable popularity was yet to come. In fact, his beloved fifth and sixth symphonies, as well as *The Nutcracker,* lay roughly two decades in the future. But, withal, this work has taken its place with the masterpieces of his maturity. That being said, *Romeo and Juliet* did not take that place without a somewhat checkered history.

Three versions of it evolved, as the composer labored to create the successful, final iteration. The première (1870) of his first take was not successful at all, owing to numerous technical and conceptual problems, and Tchaikovsky made extensive changes, most of which are in the final version. Finally, about ten years later, the composer made a few more changes, and that is the version we all hear, today. All throughout the initial composition of *Romeo and Juliet* Tchaikovsky was guided in great detail by Mily Balakirev, the informal leader of the famed group of Russian nationalistic composers known as the "mighty handful," the others being Cui, Borodin, Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. Located in St. Petersburg, they were self-taught

followers of Glinka, and sought to establish a Russian school of musical style. Balakirev and Tchaikovsky (by then, living in Moscow) had established an informal relationship earlier, and *Romeo and Juliet* was the result of a kind of collaboration between the two men. Balakirev had suggested the subject matter, and even the rough sonata form, which associated the introduction with Friar Laurence, the first theme with the conflict between the Capulets and the Montagues, and the second theme with the lovers. Balakirev made significant suggestions for revisions to the composition, and evidently Tchaikovsky took several of them to heart—even dedicating the work to him. On the other hand, most scholars seem to agree that the result is still totally Tchaikovsky's composition, and that Balakirev cannot legitimately be considered the younger man's mentor.

The "Friar Laurence" introduction is a solemn evocation of the church through skillful writing for low woodwinds that masterfully imitates a small reed organ. Little by little Tchaikovsky draws the ominous mood out, teasing us with intimations of the conflict to come, in the manner with which so much of the drama in his later ballets is spun out. Eventually, the main theme explodes as the Capulets and the Montagues battle, and, after a bit of teasing, the familiar "love theme" is heard, colored poignantly by the English horn. Now, that all three protagonists have been introduced, Tchaikovsky builds the conflict with a vengeful return to the battle, replete with palpable swordplay from the percussion section. You'll find the same pictorial talent displayed years later in the attack of the mice in the *Nutcracker*. But, love triumphs—if only for a bit—and the theme of the lovers soars out in the quintessential orchestration so familiar from a thousand cultural uses: lush strings and "heart-throbbing" horns. Conflict resumes, this time with sinister bits of Friar Laurence's theme, and finally the death of the star-crossed lovers is clear. The timpani taps out a dirge as an epilogue, with an intimation of the pair's transfiguration in the rest of the orchestra. Dramatic orchestral hammer-strokes seal their fate and conclude the tragedy.

Notes by Wm. E. Runyan

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FLUTE
Chia-Fen Chang
Kaya Egan
Hannah Hartwig
Beatrice Larson
Elena Rubin

OBOE
Madison Constantine
Ana Martinez
Lauren Patton
Yung-Hui Wang

CLARINET
Jay Savoy
Matthew Tomaino

BASSOON
Dylan Neff
Xavier Woodley

HORN
AC Caruthers
Ethan Clark
Hannah Janka
Katy Meffert
Tarre Nelson
Liam Weber
Kathryn Wolfgram

TRUMPET
Maria Merlo Martinez
Emmett Needles

TROMBONE
Leo Ernest Garcias Leite
Noah Ochander
Ryan Saladin

TUBA
Castin York

HARP
Ksenia Sushkevich

PERCUSSION
Pou I Chao
Toby Elliott
Brendan Rich
Kevin Tan

VIOLIN
Sean Hsi, *concertmaster*
Olha Tytarenko
Hannah Kim
Alyssa Goh
Ava Wipff
Henry Hsueh
Stela Mkrtchian
Edith Samuelssohn
Mia Smith
Madelyne Garnot
Carlysta Tran, *principal 2nd*
Joshua Sukhdeo
Po Yao Fang
Muirne Mitchell
Sonya Jones
Teo Lubecke
To Wang
Haydn Jones
Ben Koenig
Nicole Kwasny

VIOLA
Darren Carter, *principal*
Sophia Schöch
Kylie Baird
Tiana Moritz
Julia Seabron
Amanda Perez
David Phetmanysay
Mallory Welsch

CELLO
Ryan Han, *principal*
Julianna Bray
Francisco Garay
Clara Dodge
Nathaniel Ealum
Alex Moore
Milo Klise
Marc Vredenburg
Alina Ying
Alona Sella
Ramida Navisnanda

BASS
Lily Enderle, *principal*
Walker Dean
Adam Wang
Tony Sanfilippo
Sebastian Sanchez
Mateo Estanislao
Connor Ampleman

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November 11 • 7:00 P.M.
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November 11 • 8:00 P.M.
Gannon Concert Hall
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String Chamber Showcase II

November 12 • 7:00 P.M.
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Gannon Concert Hall
Concert Orchestra

November 13 • 7:00 P.M.
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall
Jazz Combos I

November 14 • 7:30 P.M.
Jarvis Opera Hall
Opera Theatre

November 16 • 3:00 P.M.
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall
Jazz Ensemble

November 17 • 8:00 P.M.
Gannon Concert Hall
Wind Symphony

November 17 • 7:00 P.M.
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Jazz Combos II

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