

# CLASSIC AND POPS REIGN AT BRAVO!

The **Philadelphia Orchestra** arrives for its fifth residency and a weekend of music

By **Chris Freud**

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**VAIL** — Rachmaninoff to Mancini. The former's Third Piano Concerto to "Moon River."

There is no lack of variety when it comes to the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival this weekend as The Philadelphia Orchestra opens its fifth residency tonight at 6 in Vail at the Ford Amphitheater.

The Philadelphia Orchestra performs three concerts in as many nights, ranging from the traditional symphonic fare, including Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade" tonight, Beethoven's Sixth, the Pastoral, on Saturday to "Luck Be a Lady" from "Guys and Dolls" on Sunday, as part of a Broadway-Hollywood-themed pops concert.

Rafael Fruhbeck de Burgos leads The Philadelphia Orchestra tonight and Saturday in the classical offerings, which start with a bang with Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto. The Third is one of the more daunting works by Rachmaninoff for pianists — OK, that's an oxymoron — and Yuja Wang will be on the bench for the concerto. Just 24, Wang made her New York Philharmonic debut at the age of 20 during the 2006 Bravo! festival here. She has since performed with a who's who of international orchestras and conductors.

The second half of the program is a trip to the Orient (aka the then-exotic Middle East) with Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade." Will the fair Sultana Scheherazade avoid execution at the hands of her new husband, the Sultan Schariar, on their wedding night? Come to find out.

While Bravo! files Beethoven's Sixth under the season-long theme of "Beethoven: Architect of Humanity" the Pastoral could also be categorized as "Symphonic Tales," a la "Scheherazade!" It is the only symphony of Beethoven's nine that is a tone poem. We do hope that life does not imitate art during the fourth movement, which depicts a storm.

Saturday's concert turns to the Romantic after the intermission with Liszt's Second Piano Concerto and Strauss' "Suite from Der Rosenkavalier." While there is a great production about



**TOP:** Pianist Yuja Wang joins The Philadelphia Orchestra for Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto tonight at the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival.

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**BOTTOM:** Efe Baltacıgil, The Philadelphia Orchestra's associate principal cellist, in performance at the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival in 2010. The orchestra opens its fifth residency at Bravo! tonight at the Ford Amphitheater.

ZACH MAHONE | Special to the Daily

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ZACH MAHONE | Special to the Daily

Conductor Rossen Milanov will lead members of The Philadelphia Orchestra on Thursday, playing "The Song of the Earth."

## PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

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Mahler's centennial — and justifiably so — 2011 is also Liszt's 200th birthday. Pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet returns for the Liszt.

Sunday is a fun mix of Broadway and Hollywood with musical numbers and familiar movie melodies. Since this writer has inherited his mother's love of musicals, one cannot really go wrong with selections from "West Side Story," "Brigadoon," "Bye Bye Birdie" and "Ragtime." The second half of the program is dedicated to movie buffs with offerings from "Titanic," "Star Wars" and "Breakfast at Tiffany's." Vocalists Ashley Brown and Ryan Silverman are on hand Sunday.

### In other Bravo! news and notes

- One of the many thrills of the festival is that it is live. That would seem to be stating the obvious, but in the

first week of the symphonic concerts, we've seen vivid examples of how exciting that can be. Most MP3 recordings or those on compact disc (are we dating ourselves already?) are the result of multiple performances so an orchestra or artist can get it just right.

Outdoor music festivals deal with different variables such as weather, as was the case a little more than a week ago as the Dallas Symphony Orchestra performed Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Baseball games are official after 4½ innings, which begs the question is a symphony in the books after two of four movements? Kudos to Jaap Van Zweden and the DSO for finishing the Seventh and dealing with the deteriorating conditions with a good sense of humor and professionalism.

- There is also the thrill of seeing and hearing something live. I've heard Mahler's Sixth, which the Dallas Symphony Orchestra performed magnificently Saturday, over and over and in different recordings. I've seen

YouTube clips of the hammer blow in the final movement. It is simply not the same as seeing and hearing it in person. You know it's coming — after all, the gentleman in the back of the orchestra is picking up a really big mallet — but it's still shocking.

- Along those lines, Mahler's Sixth is not average fare for a summer music festival. Nor was Wednesday's presentation of Tchaikovsky's "Mansfield Symphony" Wednesday in Dallas' finale. (If it's Tchaikovsky, it's normally Symphonies No. 4-6.) Kudos to Bravo! for broadening the spectrum.

- Mark your calendars: Wednesday evening, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg returns for Bruch's First Violin Concerto, followed by Brahms' Symphony No. 2. Thursday night at 6 p.m., Bravo's chamber-music series, Big Music for Little Bands, returns with Mahler's "The Song of the Earth" at the Vilar in Beaver Creek.

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