

FROM E.B. WHITE'S *Here is New York*, 1949

Another hot night I stop off at the band concert in the Mall in Central Park. The people seated on the benches fanned out in front of the band shell are attentive, appreciative. In the trees the night wind sings, bringing leaves to life, endowing them with speech; the electric lights illuminate the green branches from the under side, translating them into a new language. On a bench directly in front of me, a boy sits with his arm around his girl; they are proud of each other and are swathed in music. The cornetist steps forward for a solo, begins, "Drink to me only with thine eyes. . ." In the wide, warm night the horn is startlingly pure and magical. Then from the North River another horn solo begins—the "Queen

Mary" announcing her intentions. She is not on key; she is a half tone off. The trumpeter in the bandstand never flinches. The horns quarrel savagely, but no one minds having the intimation of travel injected into the pledge of love. "I leave," sobs Mary. "And I will pledge with mine," sighs the trumpeter. Along the asphalt paths strollers pass to and fro; they behave considerately, respecting the musical atmosphere. Popsicles are moving well. In the warm grass beyond the fence, forms wriggle in the shadows, and the skirts of girls approaching on the Mall are ballooned by the breeze, and their bare shoulders catch the lamplight. "Drink to me only with thine eyes."

It is a magical occasion, and it's all free.

The Naumburg Orchestral Concerts, named after their founder Elkan Naumburg, have been heard continuously each summer since 1905. Mr. Naumburg saw the need to encourage and stimulate the public's interest in symphonic and semi-classical music. The Oratorio Society of New York was founded in the family parlor, where Leopold Damrosch, Theodore Thomas and Marcella Sembrich, among others, played weekly in the later 19th century. Mr. Naumburg's wife, Bertha, gave the group its name. The family tradition of supporting classical music was further reinforced by Elkan's son, Walter, who began the Walter W. Naumburg Prize in 1926, and his grand-niece, Eleanor Naumburg Sanger, who co-founded WQXR, New York's classical music radio station. The Concert Ground's earlier Central Park Bandstand was deemed inadequate in 1912, so Elkan donated the Naumburg Bandshell to the City of New York in 1923. A nephew, William G. Tachau designed the building in 1916. In 1992, a lawsuit was filed against the Central Park Conservancy and the Parks Department to save the Bandshell from imminent demolition. A decision on July 6th 1993, by New York's highest court, ended both the litigation and the planned demolition. After Elkan Naumburg's death in 1924, the concerts were continued by his sons, Walter W. Naumburg and George W. Naumburg. When Walter Naumburg died in 1959, his will provided for the perpetuation of these concerts. It is now the oldest continuous free outdoor concert series in the United States.

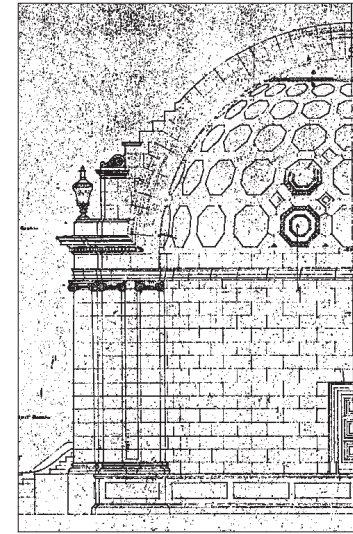
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98TH SEASON OF FREE CONCERTS
FOR THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK

NAUMBURG ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

GREGORY VAJDA, *Conductor*
ANTAL SZALAI, *Violin Soloist*

7:30 PM TUESDAY JULY 1 2003

THE NAUMBURG BANDSHELL
ON THE CONCERT GROUND OF CENTRAL PARK

OUR NEXT CONCERTS ARE TUESDAY JULY 8th & 22nd
OUR CONCERTS ARE LISTED AT WWW.NAUMBURGCONCERTS.ORG
OR (212)501-3333

GREGORY VAJDA, *Conductor*

ANTAL SZALAI, *Violin*



DVORÁK, ANTONÍN

(1841-1904)

CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA IN A MINOR, OP. 53

I. ALLEGRO, MA NON TROPPO

II. ADAGIO, MA NON TROPPO

III. FINALE - ALLEGRO GIOCO SO, MA NON TROPPO

INTERMISSION

WEINER, LEO

(1885-1960)

CARNIVAL HUMORESQUE (FASCHING), OP. 5

ALLEGRO VIVACE

KODÁLY, ZOLTÁN

(1882-1967)

SUMMER EVENING

ANDANTE ASSAI

DANCES OF GALANTA

Antal Szalai – Violin soloist is one of the most exciting artists of his generation. Born in 1981 [Budapest, Hungary] he is a product of the Bela Bartok Conservatory [1990-94], Franz Liszt University of Music [1999 to present] and the Manhattan School of Music [2001-02]. He started his musical career at the age of five. In 1987 he began his studies with Laszlo Denes, continuing with him at the Bela Bartok Secondary School of Music. Since 1995, he has been a pupil of Peter Komlos (first violin of the Bartok String Quartet). Still in his early twenties, Szalai has already benefited from the tutelage of such great violinists as Yehudi Menuhin, Isaac Stern, Pinchas Zukerman, Erick Friedman, Tibor Varga, Gyorgy Pauk and Lorand Fenyves.

Szalai was awarded first prize at the Janos Koncz National Violin Competition in both 1989 and 1992. He also won first prize at the Leo Weiner Sonata Competition, the 2002

Web Concert Hall Competition, and he was named "Soloist of the Philharmonia" in Budapest, leading to several widely acclaimed concerts in Hungary and abroad.

Szalai has extensive solo performing experience and he has also given recitals recently in some very prestigious venues. In February 2003 he made his Carnegie Hall debut at Weill Recital Hall. In addition, he has given recital performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., the Moscow Conservatory, Kensington Palace in London, Victoria Hall in Geneva and the Opera House in Budapest, just to name a few.

Szalai has already issued three recordings: "The Leo Weiner Album" and "Antal Szalai plays Bach/Kreisler/Isayel/Petrovics" on BMC Records, and "Antal Szalai plays Leopold Auer violin-transcriptions" on Hungaroton Records, with more planned in the near future.

NAUMBURG ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

DEAR FRIENDS:

We hope you enjoy tonight's musical performance presented by the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts.

The Naumburg Orchestral Concerts has a 98-year tradition of providing free outdoor classical music concerts to New Yorkers. This was the vision of my great-grandfather, who founded the series in 1905, and of my great-uncle, who endowed it in 1959.

Rising costs and a stagnant endowment, however, had forced us to reduce the number of concerts from its original four to two or three each year. We hope that, with the help of our friends and devoted followers, we can remain with our four concert season.

We invite you to become a patron of the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts, a non-profit 501(c)3 located in Manhattan and managed by a board of trustees. All contributions are fully tax-deductible and will be used towards the direct costs of presenting the concerts-musicians' honoraria, park fees, chair rentals, printing and promotion.

Your gift will help to ensure that we can continue what has become a delightful musical tradition in the beautiful setting of Central Park. Please contribute what you can- all gifts, great or small, will be enormously appreciated and help us raise money from other funders.

Thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely Yours,

Christopher W. London
President

NAUMBURG ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

c/o C.W. London 300 Central Park West, 18 H New York, N.Y. 10024-1513

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Crystal Garner
Kathy Sinsabaugh
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Amy Ralske

BASS
Gregg August, *Principal*
Troy Rinker

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Tania Witek

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Erin Gustafason, *Principal*
Kathy Halvorson

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Owen Kotler, *Principal*
Stacey Miller

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Marc Goldberg, *Principal*
Gil De Jean

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Tony Cecere, *Principal*
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Katie Dennis
Lisa Pike

TRUMPET
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Arthur Murray

TIMPANI
Matt Beaumont, *Principal*

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Notes

Gregory Vajda—Conductor is one of Hungary's finest young conductors. Recognized for his strength and intensity in conducting nineteenth and twentieth century repertoire, Vajda has recently been appointed Assistant Conductor of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Prior to that, he served as Music Director of the New Theater Budapest, Founder and Artistic Director of the Forras (Source) Chamber Music Workshop, Founder and Artistic Advisor of the Valley of the Arts Summer Festival in Hungary, Permanent Guest Conductor of the Hungarian State Opera (1998-2003), Artistic Leader of the Brass in Five Ensemble and Music Director of the Ernő von Dohnányi Symphony Orchestra of Budapest, and he was a member of the Austro-Hungarian Haydn Orchestra. When appointed to Milwaukee, he resigned all his permanent European posts. Upcoming performances include leading György Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* with the Hungarian State Opera at La Scala, Milan.

Vajda's recent engagements include: The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, The National Arts Centre Orchestra, Ottawa, the premiere of his chamber opera *The Giantbaby* at the New Theatre, Budapest, Péter Eötvös' *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams* and *Three Sisters* at the Vienna Klangforum (as part of the Vienna Festwochen), the Ensemble Intercontemporain at Cite de la Musique, the premiere of György Ránki's opera *King Pomadé's New Clothes* at

the Hungarian State Opera, and an autumn 2001 tour with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. He has also recently conducted at the Avignon and Strassbourg festivals.

In March 2002, Vajda assisted Eötvös in performance rehearsals of *Three Sisters* at La Monnaie, Brussels. Along with Eötvös or Kent Nagano, Vajda is one of only three conductors to lead performances of *Three Sisters* in France, Germany, Austria, Belgium and Hungary.

In addition to conducting, Vajda is a clarinetist and composer. Recently, he conducted his own composition for the silent film *The Crowd* at the Auditorium of the Louvre, with American pianist Jay Gottlieb. He was honored with the Zoltán Kodály State Scholarship for composers in 2000, and the Annie Fischer State Scholarship for music performers in 1999.

Born in 1973 in Budapest, Hungary, the son of renowned soprano Veronika Kincses, Vajda studied clarinet and composition at Béla Bartók secondary school. He then studied conducting at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music under Professor Ervin Lukács. He recently completed a half-year study-session with the Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris with Jonathan Nott. He has also been a conducting pupil of the well-known twentieth century composer and conductor, Eötvös. Vajda is also a frequent guest lecturer at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music.

MUSIC PAVILION



In 1859 Jacob Wrey Mould, an amateur musician and the architect who designed many of the original structures in Central Park, persuaded his wealthy friends to pay for free band concerts at a temporary bandstand in the Ramble, and he arranged their musical programs. The first concert, on July 13, included the Festival March from *Tannhäuser*, Mendelssohn's song, "I would that my Love," selections from *La Traviata* and Strauss's Sorgenbrecher Waltz. In the summer of 1860 concerts were transferred to the Mall, and *The New York Herald* reported that the September 22 concert attracted "at least five thousand persons gathered around the performers, while outside of these were stationed an immense number of carriages... filled with the beauty of fashion of New York." The overwhelming popularity of the concerts prompted Central Park's board to finance them and to build a permanent Music Pavilion on the west side of the Mall near the Terrace. Mould designed the elaborately painted and brightly gilded Moorish-style wooden structure, completed in 1862. The Parks Department razed the Music Pavilion in 1923.

The Naumburg Bandshell, a gift of Elkan Naumburg to 'the City of New York and its Music Lovers', replaced in purpose the former structure. Though the Naumburg Bandshell opened on September 29th 1923, the Art Commission of New York had approved of the change in 1912 and the design of the Bandshell in 1916. 'On the Mall', composed by Edwin F. Goldman in 1923, to honor Elkan Naumburg, was premiered that September afternoon, conducted by Franz Kaltenborn. Astonishingly, during that summer, 959 concerts were presented on the Concert Ground, over 400 of which were underwritten by the Parks Department. It was a popular place, providing a well-liked activity.

The design of the Bandshell has historic precedents in the Pantheon of Rome, or more closely, the Imperial Russian pleasure park's pavilion at Gatchina Palace, by Vincenzo Brenna, his 'Eagle Pavilion' of the 1790's, and the later work of the architect F.G.P. Poccianti, his 'Cisternone' at Livorno of 1829-42. The use of European park architecture as a model for what to insert in Central Park was in keeping with Olmsted's design sources and methods of nearly 60 years earlier. The Naumburg Bandshell was set into the Manhattan schist hillside, which nestles it, to prevent views being blocked across the Mall and Concert Ground which caused an earlier proposal of Carrère & Hastings to be found wanting by city and park officials. The design also admirably reflects the architect William G. Tachau's own Ecole des Beaux-Arts classicist and historicist training. The result was Central Park's only Neo-Classical building.

THE MALL, CENTRAL PARK

*Saturday, May 23, 1874**

The double rows of American Elms, planted fourteen years earlier, create a green tunnel. Sunlight filters through the canopy of new leaves and throws dappled patterns of light and shade on the gravel walk. It is a beautiful day, the Mall is crowded: ladies in voluminous skirts and colorful hats; Irish nurses in bonnets and white aprons, pushing baby carriages; gentlemen in frock coats and top hats; a few young clerks in stylish broadcloth suits; the children in a variety of dress, miniature versions of their parents. It is a decorous crowd; tomorrow - Sunday - is when working people have a holiday and attendance will be even larger.

At the north end of the Mall, on the west side, is the bandstand. Mould has pulled out all the stops for this design. The raised platform is covered by a Moorish-style cupola, dark blue and covered with gilt stars. It is topped by a sculpture of a lyre. The roof is supported by crimson cast-iron columns. The bandstand is unoccupied - the Saturday - afternoon concerts start next month. The annual summer series is so popular - **up to forty-five thousand people attend** - that the park board has provided extra seating and has taken the unprecedented step of allowing listeners to sit on the grass. Not everyone admires these free concerts. "The barriers and hedges of society for the time being are let down," sniffs the *Times*, "unfortunately also a few of its decencies are forgotten."

The barriers of society are not altogether absent. Across the Mall from the bandstand is a broad concourse where the wealthy park their carriages and, separated from the lower orders by a long wisteria arbor, listen to the music in comfortable isolation. Beside the concourse stands a large one-story building with a swooping tiled roof and deep overhanging eaves. Originally the Ladies Refreshment Stand, it has recently been converted into a restaurant called the Casino.

An excerpt from Witold Rybczynski - *A Clearing in the Distance*, pp.317-18 in which a letter of Frederick Law Olmsted - a principal designer of Central Park is quoted.

*Please note how popular and crowded concerts were in 1874 on the Concert Ground. When will this area of the park be made available again, for use as originally intended in the Greensward Plan for Central Park?

The final determination of the landmark legal decision assuring the Naumburg Bandshell's future was made of July 6th 1993.

The Parks Department is presently surveying the Naumburg Bandshell. The Central Park Conservancy has neither raised nor pledged any money towards its restoration. The building is seriously neglected on its interior and exterior. I hope these two groups will restore the Naumburg Bandshell and with it the Concert Ground's role, dating to the 19th century, as a place of great beauty and tranquility in which to enjoy musical concerts in Central Park.

Prior to closure, the Naumburg Bandshell was only available principally on Monday and Tuesday evenings throughout much of the summer due to present NYC Parks Department policies affecting its use.