UNLV Symphony Orchestra
Taras Krysa, conductor, violin
Takayoshi Suzuki, guest conductor

PROGRAM

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)  
Serenade for 13 Wind Instruments, Op. 7
Takayoshi Suzuki, conductor

W.A. Mozart
(1756-1792)  
Violin Concerto No. 5 in A, K.219
I. Allegro aperto
II. Adagio
III. Rondeau: Tempo di menuetto - Allegro
Taras Krysa, violin

INTERMISSION

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)  
Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47
I. Moderato
II. Allegretto
III. Largo
IV. Allegro non troppo

Tuesday, November 23, 2010  7:30 p.m.  Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall
Performing Arts Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
BIOGRAPHIES

Takayoshi Suzuki
Conductor
Takayoshi Suzuki enrolled at the Tokyo Conservatoire Shobi as a music education major in 1970. While completing his education degree, he began attending the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts. During his university days, he was active as a trombonist with several recording studios, the Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra and the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra. He returned to his alma mater, Fukuoka Technical High School, in 1974 to become the Music Teacher and Band Director. In addition to his high school teaching assignments, he was the conductor of the Fukuoka University Wind Ensemble. During the 15 years he was band director, the Fukuoka Technical University High School Wind Orchestra traveled to Tokyo for the All Japan Band Contest for 13 consecutive years. In that time, the band won the Gold Prize five times, Silver four times and the prestigious Grand Prix (Sweepstakes) Award four times. In 1987, the Fukuoka Technical University High School Wind Orchestra became the first Japanese high school band to perform at the annual Mid-West Band and Orchestra clinic in Chicago. The group was so well received a fifteen-minute standing ovation followed. In 1991, Mr. Suzuki was invited by the president of the Tokyo Conservatoire Shobi to return to his alma mater and become a faculty member.

Mr. Suzuki has been an Instructor of Conducting at UNLV since 1995. His duties include teaching private conducting lessons, conducting seminar courses and a variety of education classes. In addition to his duties at the university, Professor Suzuki is a highly sought after clinician and guest conductor throughout Japan and the United States. He is the music director of the United Brass in New York City. Mr. Suzuki is also the music director of the TAD Wind Symphony, a professional group consisting of former students and professional musicians from numerous orchestras in Japan. Mr. Suzuki has conducted and recorded five compact recordings with his groups. These recordings are: TAD Steps, 2002, Basic Video Arts Co., Ltd., Japan, The United Brass, 2000, Basic Video Arts, Co., Ltd., Japan, Tad Wind Symphony: Concert Vol. 6, 1999, Soundseek Laboratories Ltd., Legendary IV: Most Memorable Performances of H.S. Bands, 1999, Brain Company, Ltd., Enigma Variations, 1998, Brain Company, Ltd. His conducting teachers include: Seiji Ozawa, Leonard Bernstein, Yushihiro Shiozawa and Kenichirou Kohayashi. Mr. Suzuki is a member of the All Japan Band Director's Association, the Bandmasters Academic Society of Japan, the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles and recently became the only native Japanese Director to be voted into the American Bandmaster's Association.

Taras Krysa
Music Director & Conductor
Taras Krysa was born in Kiev, Ukraine and began his formal studies as a violinist at the Moscow Conservatory. After moving to the United States, Mr. Krysa continued his studies at Indiana University and Northwestern University, both in violin and conducting. His conducting teachers have included Victor Yampolsky, Jorma Panula and David Zinman. As a violinist, Mr. Krysa has performed with the New World Symphony Orchestra and St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. His conducting appearances have included the National Ukrainian Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra van het Osten, New World Symphony, St. Petersburg Symphony, Moscow Soloists, Slovak Sinfonietta, Spoleto Festival Chamber Orchestra, Kiev Chamber Orchestra and the Lublin Philharmonic Orchestra. He has made three critically acclaimed recordings for the Brilliant Classics label. In addition, Mr. Krysa has served as Principal Conductor of the Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestra, which he led on several European tours with an appearance at the Concertgebouw Hall. Currently Taras Krysa is serving as the Director of Orchestras at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Music Director of Henderson Symphony Orchestra, and Artistic Director of Las Vegas Sinfonietta.

PROGRAM NOTES

Richard Strauss
Serenade for 13 Wind Instruments, Op. 7
In 1863 the horn player Franz Strauss, having lost his first wife and two children in the cholera epidemic of 1853, remarried Josepha Pschorr, daughter of a well-to-do Munich brewer. Only a year later Josepha gave birth to a son, Richard. The father was a strict and inflexible man who detested the "modern" works of Wagner, yet who possessed such a high sense of honor that he was renowned for his performances of Wagner's music. But he was also a loving parent, and encouraged his son to study music, beginning with the piano and violin. At 6, Richard wrote a Christmas carol and a polka, followed by a number of other works which, though immature, allowed the boy to practice the craft of composition. At 8, he was "terrified" by his first opera, Weber's Der Freischütz. By the age of 12, he had written a Festival March which was eventually published as his Opus 1 - but only because the cost of printing was subsidized by his wealthy uncle, Georg Pschorr. Yet by the time he had written a second publishable work, he had advanced enough that no subsidy was necessary.

The Wind Serenade is also a youthful work, as can be seen from the opus number. It was composed around the time Strauss entered the University of Munich, though the exact date is uncertain. Featuring jaunty themes and a relatively simple form, it was the first Strauss piece mature enough to withstand regular performance (although it shows his lack of experience in the use of the double bass to support the final chord, an insertion that is always ignored in performance). The work quickly caught the attention of the prominent conductor Hans von Billow, who had previously dismissed Strauss' abilities ("We have here to deal not with genius, but with the kind of talent that comes ten a penny," he had sniffed when shown the Op. 3 piano pieces). Billow not only performed the work, but encouraged the young composer in his efforts, launching him on a career that would carry the flag of 19th-Century Romanticism throughout the first half of the Twentieth Century.
W.A. Mozart

Violin Concerto in A, K. 219

Mozart's brilliance at the keyboard is as well known as his compositions themselves; he was admired in his own time as an outstanding performer and improviser, and he composed most of his piano concertos for his own use. That he was also an accomplished violinist is less emphasized, but he introduced at least some of his concertos for that instrument as well. He could hardly escape the violin, for his father, Leopold, was a widely respected master violinist whose pedagogical treatise was in use long after both father and son were gone. Not long after Wolfgang reached his teens he was serving as concertmaster in the orchestra maintained by the Archbishop of Salzburg. Naturally, Leopold was pleased to have his son playing his own instrument, and insisted that he might well become “the foremost violinist in Europe” if he would only apply himself; all of Wolfgang’s violin concertos were composed in a brief period in those teen years, and he is assumed to have been the soloist in the respective premières.

As early as 1773 Mozart produced the first of his five authenticated violin concertos and a Concertone for two violins and orchestra; each year from that time through 1776 he inserted a miniature violin concerto in one of his big orchestral serenades. At least eight full-scale violin concertos have been attributed to him at one time or another. One of these, the “Adélaïde” Concerto in D major, was actually fabricated in the last century by Marius Casadesus, who with his brother Henri enriched the repertory with several works they introduced as works of Mozart, Handel and C.P.E. Bach. Two of the others, “No. 6” in E-flat, K. 268, and “No. 7” in D major, K. 271a, are probably spurious as well; the latter appears to be a pastiche using material from genuine Mozart works in other forms. The last and greatest of the five concertos we know without question to be his was completed some five weeks before his twentieth birthday and, like its four predecessors, calls for the modest orchestra of oboes, horns and strings that was more or less the norm in Salzburg.

The horns add warm color to the energetic tutti that opens the first movement (Allegro aperto); for the soloist’s entry the tempo drops to Adagio, and the original pace is not resumed until after the violinist’s ruminative little prelude, following which he introduces a commanding new theme over the same orchestral chords heard in the opening tutti. The ensuing discourse on these materials and additional new themes is one of the sections Alfred Einstein must have had in mind when he wrote that “this concerto is unsurpassed for brilliance, tenderness and wit.”

Antonio Brunetti (1745-1786), the celebrated Italian violinist who arrived in Salzburg to join the Archbishop’s musical staff in 1776 and succeeded Mozart as concertmaster the following year, took up Mozart’s concertos. He was uncomfortable with the “seriousness” of some of the individual movements, and Mozart, despite his low opinion of him, obliged him by providing substitutes. Late in 1776 he gave Brunetti a shorter Adagio, in E major, to replace the original slow movement of this work; that piece is occasionally performed now as an independent work (K. 261), but never as part of the Concerto, whose original slow movement is one of its particular glories. Simple in construction but more expressive than any concerto movement Mozart had written before, the expansive Adagio he created as part of his original design for the A-major Concerto is characterized by serenity and long-breathed, contemplative lyricism.

The final movement, marked Tempo di menuetto, is actually a rondeau (Mozart used the French form of the word in labeling the finales of his violin concertos), in which a five-note rising figure, related to one heard near the opening of the first movement, is stated by the horns and the soloist between episodes. The otherwise orderly proceedings are interrupted by a rauous interlude in A minor which Mozart adapted from the “Turkish music” he had composed in Milan two years earlier for Le gelosie del seraglio, a ballet appended to his opera Lucio Silla. Following this dervish-like episode, the violin leads back to the Tempo di menuetto with a cadenza, and the Concerto ends softly, with the rising figure from the violin and the horns.

Despite the excellence of his 1775 concertos and the exhortations of his father, Mozart could not develop a liking for playing the violin. After this work he completed no more solo concertos for the instrument, nor did he play the violin at all after he left Salzburg for in 1781. In the “quartet parties” with Haydn, Dittersdorf and Vanhal in Vienna, Mozart’s instrument was the viola, which he had played, in all likelihood (and with Brunetti as his partner), in the first performance of his final Salzburg concerto, the Sinfonia concertante in E-flat for violin, viola and orchestra, K. 364, in 1779.

Dmitri Shostakovich

Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

The score calls for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, three clarinets, three bassoons with contrabassoon, four French horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, harp, piano, celesta, timpani, percussion and strings. Duration, 50 minutes.

The late 1930’s were not pleasant for Dmitri Shostakovich. His successful opera, Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk, was banned after Stalin saw it in 1936 and was offended by its veiled criticism of the Communist regime. This was no small matter; most who drew the dictator’s wrath soon died in a labor camp. Shostakovich was luckier, perhaps because the young composer had already achieved some international recognition, but the attacks in Pravda turned him into a pariah who began keeping a packed suitcase beside his bed in case he were arrested in the night. Shostakovich’s next misstep came with the Fourth Symphony, which he had been composing in his mind for some time. Despite the risk of associating with an “enemy of the people,” the Leningrad Philharmonic agreed to premiere it, but the rehearsals went badly, and it became clear to Shostakovich that a performance of such a forward-looking work would be dangerous to his life. In December of 1936, he announced that it was a failure and withdrew it, ostensibly to work on the finale. Meanwhile, Russia was undergoing what would later be called the “Great Terror.” Stalin had concocted an assassination and then responded to it with a level of repression rarely seen in human history. After he declared that five percent of the population was “unreliable,” orders went out that the number of arrests must match this figure. Guilt was irrelevant; it was sufficient to round up ten or fifteen thousand people from a given town and send them off to Siberia. Historians disagree on the exact number of Russian citizens murdered during this time, but it was certainly in the millions. In such an
atmosphere, and with a wife and two young children to worry about, it was only natural that Shostakovich would pull his head back into his shell and try to please the authorities. And so he did, at least on the surface: the Fifth Symphony’s subtitle is “A Soviet Artist’s Practical Creative Reply to Just Criticism.” One does not need to look far beneath the surface of the Fifth to discover just what this “Practical” reply actually contains. The first movement begins with a cry of despair, a tragic lament that goes on for some time before suddenly being interrupted by a goose-stepping march. The third movement is one of the most despairing pieces of music ever written, a memorial for Mother Russia and all those sent to the labor camps. Of the finale, Shostakovich wrote in his memoirs: What exultation could there be? I think it is clear to everyone what happens in the Fifth. The rejoicing is forced, created under threat... It’s as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying “Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing,” and you rise, shaky, and go marching off, muttering, “Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing.” What kind of apotheosis is that? You have to be a complete oaf not to hear that.

The Fifth was hugely successful. The government was pleased that the rebel had knuckled under, while the Russian in the street saw the truth behind the facade. Western listeners, generally unaware of what was going on behind Stalin's mask, took the work at face value, yet were still overwhelmed by its grandeur and beauty. The symphony has become Shostakovich's most popular work, and is a testament to one man’s struggle to express his peoples’ anguish under a brutal tyrant.

UNLV SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

First Violins
Sandro Ladu
Matthew Tsai
Christina Riegert
Amanda Gentile
Elaine Thomas
Michael Burkhardt
Edward Mendiola
Tracy Bu
Samantha Alterman
Megan Hermansen

Second Violins
Svetlin Belneev
Brandie Frias
Debra Yavitz
Belinda Martinez
Robert Hunt
Marla Huizar
Angela Labella
Stefanie Martin
Kish Hipsak
Anna Childs

Violas
John Pollock
Carlos Guzman
Rahman Phillip
Youngmee Merrick
Joe Cha

Cellos
David Warner
Courtney Waldron
Anthony Rodriguez
Rob Chavez
Dominique Jackson
Bradley Taylor
Jeremy Russo
Adrian Smallwood
Eddie Yue
Cynthia Javier

Celli
Emilee Wong
Kristen Mosca
Jessica Kahal

Basses
Blake Riley
Korey Mueller
Ryan Bel
Hayden Bryant
Zuriel Santoyo

Oboes
Alex Hayashi
Matt Guschl
Chris Fujiwara

Flutes
Emilee Wong
Kristen Mosca
Jessica Kahal

Trombones
Russell Koester
Dustin Stevens
Saxon Lewis

Tuba
Garrison Gilham

French Horns
Fred Stone
Kyle Tolstyka
Chris Kase
Erin Paul
Jordan Rush

Bassoons
Kim Chai
Brandon Durham
Emily Grady
Brian Marsh

Oboes
Phillip Lenberg

Flutes
Gina Bombola

Clarinet
Melanie Scarberry

Trumpets
Allison McSwain
Kendall Demavivas

Bassoon
Percussion
Melody Loveless

Clarinet
Corene Peltier

Trombones
Saxon Lewis

Harp
Gina Bombola

Tuba
Charlie Gott

Timpani
Phillip Lenberg

Tuba
Corene Peltier

Flute
Gina Bombola