9-27-2011

UNLV Symphony Orchestra

Taras Krysa

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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UNLV
Department of Music
College of Fine Arts
presents the
UNLV Symphony Orchestra
Taras Krysa, conductor

PROGRAM

Johannes Brahms
(1833 - 1897)

Academic Festival Overture

Ralph Vaughn Williams
(1872 - 1958)

Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

INTERMISSION

Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)

Symphony No. 4 in D Minor, Op. 120
I. Ziemlich langsam – Lebhaft
II. Romanze
III. Scherzo

Tuesday, September 27, 2011  7:30 p.m.  Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall
Performing Arts Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Program Notes

Academic Festival Overture
Johannes Brahms

Johannes Brahms composed his *Academic Festival Overture* to thank the University of Breslau for an honorary Doctor of Philosophy bestowed upon him in 1879. Brahms, while certainly intellectual, chose never to pursue a position in academia. He spent two months in the summer of 1853 with violinist and composer Joseph Joachim at a university in Hanover. Even then, however, Brahms spent much of his time at local breweries with the students, where he learned several popular college songs, many of which are incorporated into *Academic Festival Overture*. Following a mysterious opening, Brahms presents an adaptation of the *Rákóczy March*, Hungary's traditional national anthem. Brahms then introduces a series of *studentenlieder*, or student songs, including a majestic brass choral “*Wir hatten gebaut ein stattliches Haus*” or “We have built a stately house,” originally used as a protest song. Brahms also uses “*Der Landesvater*” or “The Father of Our Country,” and “*Was kommt dort von der Hoh*” or “What comes from afar.” Despite Brahms’ cheeky and often comedic juxtaposition of these themes throughout the overture, he ends the work with the somber and celebratory “*Gaudeamus igitur*” or “Now, let us be merry.” Brahms conducted the premier of this overture on January 4, 1881, in Breslau.

Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis
Ralph Vaughan Williams

Above all Ralph Vaughan William’s 1910 *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* is a study in string color, spurred by the composer’s three-month long study with composer and renowned orchestrator Maurice Ravel in 1908. The work juxtaposes three separate string orchestras: a solo quartet, a full string orchestra, and a smaller string orchestra of nine players. In lieu of extended string techniques, the work explores church modes and a lush, though unexpected, harmonic language, highlighted by numerous string *divisi*. In orchestration, strings are usually considered the most homogenous of all ensembles. Here, however, they become an arena for an infinite number of possibilities, showcasing the changing tambours inherent in different sized string ensembles.

Perhaps inspired by his position as a church organist and profound interests in folk songs and musicology, Vaughan Williams conducted research on *The English Hymnal*, where he became particularly attracted to sixteenth-century composer and church musician Thomas Tallis and his Third Mode, or Phrygian, Melody. This brief melody serves as the compositional basis for Vaughan Williams’ fifteen to twenty-minute fantasia.
Symphony No. 4 in D Minor, Op. 120
Robert Schumann

Following Ludwig van Beethoven, many nineteenth-century symphonists were forced to confront the symphony on a terrifyingly insurmountable scale. Composers’ symphonic efforts were inevitably judged alongside Beethoven’s masterworks, forcing an “imperative of originality”, as scholar Mark Evan Bonds refers to it. Robert Schumann’s Symphony no. 4 in D Minor, Op. 120, successfully offers an extension on the traditional four-movement, fast-slow-fast-symphonic form standardized by Beethoven and his Viennese predecessors. Foreshadowing the continuous drama of Richard Wagner’s operatic works, Schumann’s fourth symphony contains four *attacca* movements that evoke a large-scale *sonata-allegro* form. The first movement’s slow introduction presents a lyrical descending melody, followed by a tumultuous *allegro* that solidifies the symphony’s primary motives. The second and third movements, a *romanza* and *scherzo* respectively, are developmental, expounding upon the first movement’s themes. The fourth movement’s slow introduction serves as a retransition into the *Allegro vivace*, the final permutation of the symphony’s motives. Schumann later referred to the work as a “symphonic fantasy,” reflecting its cyclical nature.

Schumann was often criticized for both his abilities as an orchestrator and conductor. As he gained conducting experience, Schumann chose to reorchestrate his fourth symphony in 1851, the version that is most popularly performed today. While emulating a Schubertian quality in orchestration, the work also simultaneously foreshadows a Mahlerian schizophrenia. The music surges with dynamic extremes and sharp melodic contrasts. Not surprisingly, Schumann’s first signs of mental illness began to appear in 1843, two years after the premier of the original fourth symphony. Schumann suffered from severe depression. He was institutionalized in an asylum in Endenich in Bonn, Germany in 1854 and died there in 1856.

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UNLV Symphony Orchestra Personnel

Violin I
Christina Riegert*
Edward Mendiola
Michael Burkhardt
Sarah Wright
Amanda Gentile
Sammi Ciarlo
Dmytro Nehrych
Debra Yavitz

Violin II
Belinda Martinez*
Samantha Altermann
Robert Hunt
Megan Hermansen
Braydon Pikyavit
Keegan Bonabian
Elizabeth Bedrosian
Anna Childs
Sam Valdez

Viola
David Chavez*
Rahmaan Phillip
Rosemary Fajardo
Shelby Rosten
Valerie Reives
Youngmee Merrick

Cello
Rebecca Gray*
Chang Yue
David Warner
Anthony Rodriguez
Jeremy Russo
Brad Taylor
Robert Chavez
Domenique Jackson
Corinne Hymel

Bass
Timothy Harpster*
Zariel Santoyo
Issa Acosta

Flute
Kate Zigterman**
Chrissy McHugh***
Emily Schank, Piccolo

Oboe
Chris Fujiwara**
Alexandra Gilroy***
Ben Serna-Grey

Clarinet
Jonathan Cannon**
Jennifer Illes***
Tallyn Wesner

Bassoon
K.C. Chai*
Bronson Foster
Brock Norred

Horn
Jordan Rush*
Fred Stone*
Erin Paul
Kyle Tolstyka

Trumpet
Dumitru Cernei**
Allison McSwain***
Justin Bland

Trombone
Noe Otani*
Sarah Geiger

Bass Trombone
Saxon Lewis*

Tuba
Garrison Gillham

Percussion
Chris Bernabe
Kyle Bissantz
Bronson Purdy
Chris Tusa

*Principal
**Principal, Brahms
***Principal, Schumann