9-30-2008

UNLV Symphony Orchestra: Concert I. Beethoven's Fifth

Kanako Yamazaki
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Taras Krysa
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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THE UNLV

Symphony Orchestra

Concert I.

Beethoven's Fifth

Featuring

Kanako Yamazaki, piano
UNLV Concerto Competition Winner

TARAS KRYSка
MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR

Tuesday Evening
September 30, 2008  7:30PM

Artemus Ham Concert Hall
Located on Campus of UNLV
4505 Maryland Pkwy
2008

Concert II: The Magic of Brahms  
Sunday, October 26, 2008  
2:00pm  
Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall

Concert III: Virko's Birthday  
Tuesday, November 25, 2008  
Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall  
7:30pm

2009

Concert IV: Wagner and Berlioz  
Tuesday, February 17, 2009  
Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall  
7:30pm

Concert V: Mahler I  
Tuesday, April 28, 2009  
Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall  
7:30pm

~ PROGRAM ~

Hector Berlioz  
Roman Carnival Overture, Op. 9

Felix Mendelssohn  
Piano Concerto in G minor, Op. 25

I. Molto allegro con fuoco  
II. Andante  
III. Presto - Molto allegro e vivace

Kanako Yamazaki, piano

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven  
Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

I. Allegro con brio  
II. Andante con moto  
III. Allegro  
IV. Allegro

The UNLV Symphony Orchestra would like to extend a special thank you to Andy Zildjian for his generous donation of percussion equipment to the UNLV Music Department. We appreciate your support.
THE UNLV SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Symphony Orchestra at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas is comprised of undergraduate/graduate music majors/minors in the UNLV College of Fine Arts as well as non-music majors.

The mission of this performing ensemble is threefold:

1). To train music majors to become professional performers and teachers;
2). To introduce non-music majors to higher quality music making.
3). To enrich the cultural life of UNLV and the greater Las Vegas community.

The UNLV orchestra presents a number of programs each season that include a variety of the orchestral standard repertoire, ranging from early Baroque through Modern Contemporary. The UNLV Symphony Orchestra performs at least one major work with chorus every year as well as one complete opera. Student soloists are featured throughout the year either on the Student Soloists Concert or as guest artists for winning the annual Solo Concerto Competition. The list of guest conductors and soloists with the UNLV Symphony Orchestra includes Oleh Krysa, Itzhak Perlman, Sarah Chang, Rachel Lee, Edgar Meyer, Wei Wei Le, Andrew Smith, Mykola Suk, Kaitlen Tully and many others. Past music directors include Jim Stivers, Tad Suzuki, Hal Weller and George Stelluto.

Kanako Yamazaki
Piano

Kanako Yamazaki began studying piano in New York at the age of six. At the age of seven she was already giving public performances, being featured as a soloist with NHK Symphony DanYu Orchestra. Ms. Yamazaki attended Toho Gakuen High School of Music and Toho Gakuen College of Music in Tokyo, as well as the International Keyboard Institute in New York. She has participated in lessons and masterclasses with high profile pianists and pedagogues including Gianluca Luisi, Dr. Jerome Rose, Nadia Spachenko, Janice Weber, Mykola Suk, Walter Ponce, and Jerome Lowenthal. Currently Ms. Yamazaki is completing her Master’s degree in piano performance at UNLV. She is a student of Mykola Suk.

Taras Krysa
Music Director & Conductor

Taras Krysa was born in Kiev, Ukraine to a musical family 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 won positions with the New World Symphony orchestra and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras. In recent seasons his conducting appearances have included 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 Pops 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, and Music Director of the Henderson Symphony Orchestra.
Hector Berlioz was born in La Côte Saint André, Isère on December 11, 1803; he died in Paris on March 8, 1869. Composed in the fall of 1843, the Roman Carnival Overture was based on music from Berlioz’s opera Benvenuto Cellini. The Overture was first performed on February 3, 1844, in Paris, under the composer’s baton.

Scoring: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 cornets, 3 trombones, timpani, 2 tambourines, cymbals, triangle, and strings.

Approximate performance time: 8 minutes.

Berlioz conceived this piece as an afterthought to his opera Benvenuto Cellini, a fictionalized treatment of the life of the famous Renaissance sculptor, which reaches its climax in the casting of his great bronze “Perseus.” The opera had been performed in 1838 without much success, owing to the politics of French musical life. In this, Berlioz was perpetually an outsider; no matter how hard he worked, he was simply too witty, too honest, and too talented to make his way easily in a world of backstabbing and self-promotion by entrenched musical figures (though he himself was no mean self-promoter). The opera had been seriously hampered in performance by poor conducting from François-Antoine Habeneck, who was hostile to the work. The catastrophic experience of Benvenuto Cellini had a sobering effect on Berlioz, and he never forgot the humiliation of that opening night.

The experience convinced Berlioz that every composer owed it to himself to become a conductor, too, so he could have some control over the treatment given his new pieces. He took his own advice to become active as a conductor and wrote a series of effective concert pieces for use on his tours. To that end he returned to the lively second-act finale of Benvenuto Cellini, which takes place in Rome during the unbuttoned pre-Lenten period known as carnival time and drew upon it for Le carnaval romain (The Roman Carnival) described as a “characteristic overture.” It became one of Berlioz’s most popular compositions.

For this concert showpiece, Berlioz begins with a brief outburst of the main saltarello theme at a devil-may-care speed, followed by an exquisite slow, lyrical melody in the English horn (drawn from the duet between Cellini and Teresa in the opera’s first act). The third time through, we hear it in tight canonic imitation. Once into the Allegro, the material comes almost literally from the Act II finale of Cellini for nearly 200 measures. The brief fugato that comprises the development keeps the galloping saltarello rhythm constantly present while the lyric melody recurs in sustained notes. The climactic moment involves the combination of all these elements—saltarello, canon, lyric passages, and tricky phrase elisions—to make a wonderfully invigorating close that leaves the listener, as well as the performers, breathless with its non-stop, headlong rush.
Piano Concerto in G minor, Opus 25

Felix Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg on February 3, 1809; he died in Leipzig on March 4, 1847. The G minor piano concerto was first performed in Munich in 1831, with Mendelssohn conducting from the piano.

In addition to the solo piano, the score calls for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Approximate performance time: 20 minutes.

Immediately following his epochal revival performance of Bach's St. Matthew Passion in Berlin on March 11, 1829, Felix Mendelssohn, age 20, set out on a grand tour of Europe. The first leg of the journey took him to England and Scotland, a junket that inspired the Hebrides Overture and the "Scottish" Symphony. He returned home to Berlin late in the year, refused a professorship at the university there, and in May headed for Weimar, where he visited his old friend Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Munich. Mendelssohn, young, attractive, charming and cultured, was welcomed into society wherever he went, and in Munich he spent an evening, according to his June 11th letter to his sister Fanny, at "a great soirée [where] Excellencies and Counts went about as thick as fowls in a poultry yard. Also artists and other cultivated minds." At the party, he met one Delphine von Schauroth, "who is adored here (and deservedly), her mother being a baroness, and she herself a fine pianist and very cultivated. I followed her around like a little lamb... I really wanted to say that the girl plays very well... she genuinely impressed me."

On June 26th, he confessed that he was visiting Fräulein Schauroth "twice a week, where I stay for a long time. We flirt outrageously - but it is not dangerous." Or, perhaps, it was, as he later confided to Robert Schumann. At any rate, by the end of the summer the peripatetic bon vivant was again on the road, through Linz and Vienna and Pressburg (where he witnessed the coronation of the King of Hungary), arriving in Venice on October 10th: "Italy at last... and I am basking in it." A month later he passed through Florence on his way to Rome, where he met Berlioz, admired the paintings and artworks, and regularly listened to the music at St. Peter's. (His father had had him baptized into Christianity in 1816.) From Rome, in November, he told Fanny that he was sketching a piano concerto "for Paris," which he of course planned to conquer the following year, though actually the work seems to have been inspired by his thoughts of Delphine. He stayed in Rome through the following June, working on the Hebrides Overture, the "Italian" and "Scottish" Symphonies and the concerto, and then headed north through Milan, Chamonix and Lucerne, arriving again in Munich by early October. He saw Delphine regularly, and even said that she contributed a passage to the gestating concerto. The concert that he had planned for soon after his arrival to premiere the new work had to be postponed for a week because of that Bavarian ritual, Oktoberfest, but on October 17th he unveiled the G minor Piano Concerto to an enthusiastic audience. Mendelssohn's romance was much discussed among the city's society (and by composer's family, which opposed the match), but he left Munich for Paris in late November, still single. He never again saw Delphine on intimate terms, and mentioned her only once or twice in his later correspondence.

The First Piano Concerto is disposed in the traditional three movements -- fast--slow--fast -- though, unlike the Classical model, these are instructed to be played without pause. (Mendelssohn abhorred applause between movements.) Among the Concerto's other forward-looking attributes: the excision of the opening orchestral introduction in favor of the immediate presentation of the soloist, a technique to which he returned in his two later concertos; the omission of a solo cadenza; and the return of the first movement's subsidiary melody in the finale. The opening movement (marked "Very fast, with fire") follows sonata form, though the return of its
thematic materials is considerably compressed so as not to over­whelm the transition to the second movement. The Andante is a deliciously filigreed song-without-words given by the soloist above the rich-hued accompaniment of strings without violins. The finale is a glittering rondo prefaced by a mock-dramatic orchestral strain.

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn on December 16, 1770; he died in Vienna on March 26, 1827.

Scoring: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Approximate performance time: 30 minutes.

This is the symphony that, along with an image of Beethoven, agitated and disheveled, has come to represent greatness in music. Perhaps we are speaking only of the very opening seconds, just as we may remember vividly and accurately no more than the Mona Lisa's smile, or the first ten words of Hamlet's soliloquy. It's hard to know how so few notes, so plainly strung together, could become so popular; there are certainly those who would argue that this isn't even Beethoven's greatest symphony, just as the Mona Lisa isn't Leonardo's finest painting—Beethoven himself preferred his Eroica to the Fifth Symphony. And yet, it's hardly famous beyond its merits, for one can't easily think of another single composition that in its expressive range and structural power better represents what music is all about. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony has spoken forcefully and directly to many listeners—trained and untrained—over the years; we each listen and understand in our own way. We can probably find ourselves somewhere here, among the characters of E. M. Forster's Howard's End:

Whether you are like Mrs. Munt, and tap surreptitiously when the tunes come—of course not so as to disturb the others; or like Helen, who can see heroes and shipwrecks in the music's flood; or like Margaret, who can only see the music; or like Tibby, who is profoundly versed in counterpoint, and holds the full score open on his knee; or like their cousin, Fräulein Mosebach, who remembers all the time that Beethoven is "echt Deutsch"; or like Fräulein Mosebach's young man, who can remember nothing but Fräulein Mosebach: in any case, the passion of your life becomes more vivid, and you are bound to admit that such a noise is cheap at two shillings. That is why we still go to concerts (although two shillings will no longer buy Mrs. Munt a seat), and, whether we see shipwrecks or dominant sevenths, we may well agree, while caught up in a captivating performance, "that Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated into the ear of man." For a while it was somewhat overshadowed by the Ninth Symphony, which seemed to point the way to the rest of the nineteenth century and emboldened generations of composers to think differently of the symphony, or of music in general. But the Fifth has never really lost its appeal. Robert Schumann, whose musical predictions have often come true, wrote that "this symphony invariably wields its power over men of every age like those great phenomena of nature .... This symphony, too, will be heard in future centuries, nay, as long as music and the world exist." A familiarity that only a handful of pieces in any century earn has largely blunted much of the work's wild power for our ears. And knowledge of the many works that couldn't have been written without this as their example has blinded us to the novelty of Beethoven's boldest strokes: the cross-reference between the famous opening and the fortissimo horn call in the scherzo, the way the scherzo passes directly—and dramatically—into the finale, and the memory of the scherzo that appears unexpectedly in the finale—all forging the four movements of the symphony into one
unified design. There's no way to know what the first audience thought. For one thing, that concert, given at the Theater an der Wien on December 22, 1808, was so inordinately long (even by nineteenth-century standards) and jammed with so much important new music that no one could truly have taken it all in. J. F. Reichardt, who shared a box with Prince Lobkovitz, later wrote: "There we sat from 6:30 till 10:30 in the most bitter cold, and found by experience that one might have too much even of a good thing." Reichardt and Lobkovitz stayed till the end, their patience frequently tried not by the music—to which these two brought more understanding than most—but by the performance, which was rough and unsympathetic. Surely some in the audience that night were bowled over by what they heard, though many may well have fidgeted and daydreamed, uncomprehending, or perhaps even bored. Beethoven's was not yet the most popular music ever written, and even as great a figure as Goethe would outlive Beethoven without coming to terms with the one composer who was clearly his equal. As late as 1830, Mendelssohn tried one last time to interest the aging poet in Beethoven's music, enthusiastically playing the first movement of the Fifth Symphony at the piano. "But that does not move one," Goethe responded, "it is merely astounding, grandiose." Take the celebrated opening, which Beethoven once, in a moment he surely regretted, likened to Fate knocking at the door. It is bold and simple and thus, like many of the mottoes of our civilization, susceptible to all manner of popular treatments, none of which can diminish the power of the original. Beethoven writes eight notes, four plus four—the first ta-ta-ta-TUM falling from G down to E-flat, the second from F to D. For all the force of those hammer strokes, we may be surprised that only strings and clarinets play them. Hearing those eight notes and no more, we can't yet say for certain whether this is E-flat major or C minor. As soon as Beethoven continues, we hear that urgent knocking as part of a grim and driven music in C minor. But when the exposition is repeated, and we start over from the top with E-flat major chords still ringing in our ears, those same ta-ta-ta-TUM patterns sound like they belong to E-flat major.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The UNLV Music Department would like to acknowledge the following scholarships.

Andre Agassi Foundation Scholarship
Kenneth & Mary Devos Fine Arts Endowment
UNLV Jazz Scholarship
Liberace Foundation
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Barry Manilow Scholarship
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