UNLV Symphony Orchestra: Concert III. Red Earth

Taras Krysa
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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2009

Concert IV: Wagner and Berloiz
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

2008 - 2009 Concert Series

Concert III.

Red Earth,

TARAS KRYSA
MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR

Tuesday Evening
November 25, 2008  7:30PM

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

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS
Richard Wagner

Siegfried Idyll

W. A. Mozart

Symphony No. 35 “Haffner”, K.385
I. Allegro con spirito
II. Andante
III. Menuetto – Trio
IV. Finale: Presto

~ INTERMISSION ~

Virko Baley

Symphony No. 2 “Red Earth”

I. Intrada
II. Duma
III. Incantations
IV. Heart of Glass

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.
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.

~ PROGRAM NOTES ~

Siegfried Idyll

Wilhelm Richard Wagner was born on May 22, 1813 in Leipzig, and died on February 13, 1883, in Venice.

Scoring: 1 flute, 1 oboe, 2 clarinets, 1 bassoon, 2 horns, 1 trumpet, and strings.

Approximate performance time: 17 minutes.

Because Wagner worked so long on some of his operas, and experienced delays in getting some of them produced, the overtures and other portions of several of them were introduced in concerts before the premieres of the respective stage works themselves. The Prelude to Die Meistersinger and the concert arrangement of the Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde are examples of such works (the latter introduced in Vienna by Johann Strauss, the Waltz King, when the Court Opera failed to stage Tristan). The well loved Siegfried Idyll, however, was not taken directly from a stage work, and was introduced in neither the opera house nor the concert hall, but in the intimate surroundings of Wagner's home, "Tribschen," just outside Lucerne, on Christmas Day 1870.

Wagner in fact conceived this work as a Tribschen Idyll, for his family alone, specifically as "a symphonic birthday greeting to his Cosima from her Richard." The day on which the piece was first performed was not only Christmas but also Cosima's 33rd birthday. Among the 17 musicians assembled on the stairs leading to her bedroom was the illustrious Hans Richter, not as conductor (Wagner himself filled that role) but as performer of the 13 bars assigned to the trumpet. It was not until 1878 that
Wagner, pressed for funds, expanded the instrumentation to 35 players, changed the original title to Siegfried Idyll, and made the work available for public performance by selling it to the publisher B. Schott.

While motifs in the Siegfried Idyll relate the work to the eponymous music drama, the dramatic changes in Wagner's personal life during the period in which he completed Die Meistersinger had more to do with the creation of this work in its family context. Early in 1862, after completing the Meistersinger libretto in Paris, Wagner was granted an amnesty by the King of Saxony and allowed to return to Germany for the first time since his banishment for political activity in 1849. At the same time his break with his first wife, Minna, became final, and in November 1863 Wagner and Cosima von Bülow declared their love for each other.

Cosima, the daughter of Franz Liszt (who referred to her as "ma terrible fille") and the Comtesse d'Agoult, was at that time married to Hans von Bülow, the famous pianist and conductor who had been one of the most ardent champions of Wagner's music. She did not bother to divorce him when she joined Wagner, to whom she bore the first of their three children on April 10, 1865, a daughter they named Isolde. Two months later Bülow conducted the premiere of Tristan und Isolde in Munich, and 16 months later, after his wife bore Wagner's second daughter, Eva, Bülow conducted the premiere of Die Meistersinger (whose heroine, of course, is named Eva). It was not until the birth of Siegfried Wagner in June 1869 that Bülow finally instituted divorce proceedings against Cosima, who married Wagner in August 1870. Minna had died in Dresden four years earlier, and Wagner and his new family (which included Cosima's two daughters by Bülow) had moved into Tribschen, on Lake Lucerne, at about the same time; it is understandable that their domestic life in that lovely setting would prompt the composer to make such a personal gesture as this Idyll, which did take Cosima entirely by surprise when she was awakened by it that Christmas/birthday morning. The original family title of the piece made reference to "Fidi's Bird-Song and Orange Sunrise" as elements incorporated in the music, "Fidi" being a nick-name for the 18-month-old Siegfried and the "orange sunrise" being the effect made by the morning sun striking the orange wallpaper in Cosima's bedroom. The music, warm-hearted and intimate throughout, could not have been better categorized than by the designation Idyll. It begins and ends as a caressing lullaby, with what might be described as a sequence of dream-pictures as its substance. In it are several motifs associated with Siegfried, from the music drama so titled which Wagner had completed at about the time of the boy's birth the previous year.

The principal theme, stated at the outset, was actually created by Wagner as a gift for Cosima before he gave it to Brünnhilde in the opera's final scene. In 1863, the year in which they pledged their love for each other, Wagner noted this theme among the sketches he made for a string quartet he intended as a present for Cosima. In addition to the material borrowed from the opera, note must be made of the old lullaby "Schlaf, Kindchen, schlaf," which, as it happens, is another element Wagner had planned to use in an earlier work which he never got round to writing: before his son was born he entered this tune in his diary for use in a piece for his second daughter, Eva.

Sentimental and musical interrelationships abound in this music, tying together Wagner's creative work, his love for Cosima and their children, and their home itself. No wonder that, according to Cosima's diary, she wept when Wagner found it necessary to sell this intimate family document.
Symphony No. 35 “Haffner,” K. 385

Johann Chrysostom Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg on January 27, 1756; he died in Vienna on December 5, 1791.

The score calls for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings. Approximate performance time: 19 minutes.

Music lovers owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Sigismund Haffner, Jr. Mozart and this respected Salzburg businessman, son of the city’s former mayor, were friends since childhood. In the summer of 1776, he asked Mozart to compose a serenade to be performed at the marriage of Haffner’s sister. Mozart’s glorious music lent beauty, harmony and class to the occasion.

Mozart re-located to Vienna in 1781 and took up the whirlwind life of a free-lance composer. In mid-July of the following year, his father Leopold passed on a second commission that Haffner had sent him. The request was for a work to be performed at a celebration in honour of Haffner’s impending elevation to the nobility. The timing proved awkward, since Mozart was deeply involved with several urgent projects. Some were musical, such as the making of lucrative wind ensemble arrangements of arias from his comic opera The Abduction from the Seraglio, which had recently premiered to tremendous acclaim. Others were personal, headed by a change of residence in anticipation of his wedding to Constanze Weber, due to take place on August 4.

Some doubt exists as to the nature of the piece he composed to meet Haffner’s new commission: was it a six-movement serenade or a four-movement symphony? The eminent Mozart scholar Neal Zaslaw believes it to have been a symphony, and that is how Mozart father and son referred to it in their correspondence. Wolfgang composed it quickly, but apparently still not quickly enough to meet the deadline. He apologized for this tardiness to Leopold: “You see that my intentions are good – only what one cannot do, one cannot! I am really unable to scribble off inferior stuff. So I cannot send you the whole symphony until next post-day.”

A few months later, he asked his father to send it back so he could program it at a subscription concert in Vienna. To his embarrassment, the speed of its creation, plus the multiple distractions he had undergone while composing it, resulted in his not recognizing it when it arrived. “The new Haffner symphony positively amazed me,” he wrote, “for I had forgotten every single note of it. It must surely produce a good effect.”

To create the version of the piece that is known today, he dropped the march that he originally intended to open it, and added flutes and clarinets to the scoring of the outer movements. The premiere took place in Vienna on March 23, 1783. Following the typical programming practice of the day, the first three movements were played at the start of the concert, and the finale at the end. No less that 10 other pieces by Mozart were performed in between, among them two full piano concertos, several arias and piano solos.

The joyful event for which Mozart intended the “Haffner” Symphony accounts in great measure for its character. It is brilliant and festive even by his standards. Launched by a stirring call to attention, the sweeping first movement has just one real theme, a marked departure for the period. Such is the ingenuity that Mozart brings to bear that any lack of a traditional, clear-cut companion melody stirs not a ripple of regret. The second movement is a serene, gracious andante; the third, a brief minuet with a tender trio section at its core. The finale, which Mozart requested be played “as fast as possible,” bubbles over with comic-opera vivaciousness. The main theme, in fact, is a close variation of the jovial aria Ha, wie will ich triumphieren (Ah, how I shall triumph) from The Abduction from the Seraglio.
Symphony No. 2 “Red Earth”

Virko Baley was born in Radekhiv, Ukraine on October 21, 1938. He is currently a Distinguished Professor of music composition at UNLV. Symphony No. 2, Red Earth was composed for the New Juilliard Ensemble, which premiered it on November 19, 2004 in Alice Tully Hall.

Scoring: 1 flute doubling on piccolo and alto flutes, 1 oboe doubling on English horn, 1 clarinet doubling on bass clarinet, 1 bassoon, 2 horns, 1 trumpet, 1 trombone, 1 tuba, harp, piano, celesta, percussion, tam-tam, and strings.

Approximate performance time: 34 minutes.

Mr. Baley says: “The idea of the symphony came to me after visiting Sedona, Arizona for the first time about a year ago. The beauty of the many canyons, the lush starkness of the triad of the vivid colors of red, blue and green, caused a kind of epiphany.”

On 1 August 2008, the Harvard Ukrainian Summer Institute (HUSI) sponsored a lecture by the critically acclaimed composer and Grammy award-winning producer Virko Baley, Distinguished Professor of Music and Composer-in-Residence at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, on his new opera Red Earth (Hunger). During the lecture he talked about the opera’s overall theme and message, the development of the libretto, and the musical influences that have shaped the work, and selections from these influential pieces accompanied the lecture. The world premiere of excerpts from the opera will be on 17 November 2008 as a featured part of the Institute’s international conference on “The Great Famine in Ukraine: The Holodomor and its Consequences, 1933 to the Present.”

In discussing his work Baley said, “The opera was conceived over thirty years ago, but only now is being completed. I became fascinated by a play of Bohdan Boychuk, Holod [Hungry], which he wrote in the 1960s. I liked its slightly Beckett-like atmosphere, which was invested with remnants of expressionism and dreamlike qualities. I also liked its verbal precision. “I asked Bohdan to make me a libretto in two versions, Ukrainian and English,” Baley continued, “with the understanding that it would be set first in English, with the Ukrainian adapted to it afterwards... In the late 1990s there was a plan by the combined forces of the University of Nevada departments of music and theater to produce the opera. The distinguished film director Yuri Illienko agreed to produce and direct it. We also contacted one of Ukraine’s great costume designers, Liudmyla Semykina, to participate in the project, and she agreed. Unfortunately, due to a number of conflicts that arose, the whole project was cancelled. “However, in 2004 I decided to revive work on the opera by first taking four scenes and creating a symphonic version of them which became my Symphony No. 2, Red Earth,” Baley continued. “It was the first completed stage in the opera’s slow progress towards full realization. In 2006, I received [the Petro Jacyk Distinguished Research Fellowship] from HURI, which enabled me to concentrate on the full elaboration of the work.”

Baley is a composer, conductor, pianist, and writer. He was born in Radekhiv, Ukraine, in 1938, but has spent most of his creative life in the United States. He began his piano and composition studies at the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music and the Arts. The wide span of his compositions includes works for choral ensembles, chamber and solo works, film scores, symphonies, and concertos.
Baley is the recipient of the 1996 Shevchenko Prize for Music, awarded by the Ukrainian government. In 2007 Baley was awarded a Grammy as recording producer for TNC Recordings for Best Instrumental Performance with Orchestra. He is the author of many articles on Ukrainian music, including many entries for the New Grove Dictionary of Music. Shirley Fleming, reviewing a concert of his music in the New York Post, called his music “vibrant, dramatic, communicative, much of it framed by extra-musical allusions that place it in a solid context.” According to Village Voice critic Kyle Gann, the New York premiere of Violin Concerto No. 1, quasi una fantasia was full of “sonic images memorable enough to take home.”

His Symphony No. 1, Sacred Monuments (TNC Recordings), was described in Classics Today by David Hurwitz as “powerfully imagined, clearly articulated, and quite moving.... It’s a very serious ambitious statement by a gifted artist, and I wouldn’t be a bit surprised if it turns out to have more staying power than many other contemporary works by today’s trendier composers.” In addition, Virko Baley co-produced and wrote the music for Illienko’s film Swan Lake: The Zone, which won two top prizes at Cannes in 1990, and the music for Illienko’s last film, Prayer for Hetman Mazepa.

As a conductor he has led the Kyiv Camerata in recordings of over fifteen albums of orchestral music by composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Ivan Karabyts, Valentin Silvestrov, Bernard Rands, and Yevhen Stankovych. Most recently Baley received the prestigious Academy Award in Music 2008 from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

UNLV Symphony Orchestra Personnel
Taras Krysa, Music Director

Violin I
Brian Hwang
Christina Riegert
Sandro Ladu
Barbara Ellis
Thomas Keeley
Brandi Frias
Amanda Gentile
Angela LaBella
Zach McBride
Belinda Martinez
Lydia Scheve

Violin II
Zach McBride
Mina Park
Kellow Davis
Alexandria Ludwig
Samantha Alterman
Marla Huizar
Andrew Ferral
Janay Harris
Malvyn Barlaw
Jose Orozco
Jason Hung

Viola
Merietta Oviatt
John Pollock
Izzy Trinkle
Megan Muse
Gerardo Polanco
Vasheral Carter
Michael Karargiozis

Violoncello
Jessika Soli
Columban Heo
Courtney Waldron
Leigh Wardle
Joe Griego
Nicole Johnson
Courtney Thomas
Alyssa Ledesma
Kathryn Runyon-Walker
Anthony Rodriguez

Harp
Gina Bombola

Double Bass
Alex Arnold
Zuriel Santoyo
Korey Mueller

Flute
Clare Birmingham
Kristen Mosca
Asuka Kawashima

Oboe
Mark Runkles
Alex Hayashi

Clarinet
Aki Oshima
Kanade Oi
Jonathan Cannon

Bassoon
Eric Foote
Leigh Anne Duncan

French Horn
Bryce Nakaoka
Fred Stone

Trumpet
Megumi Kurokawa
Travis Higa

Trombone
James Nelson
Russell Koester
John Riley

Tuba
Husten Pullen

Piano/celesta
Mykola Suk

Percussion
Corene Peltier
Charles Gott
Daniel Steffey
Elyssia Gonzales
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