

BERKELEY
SYMPHONY
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NOW

08|09 SEASON



Berkeley Akademie

KENT NAGANO, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SCHNEID
MOZART
MUNO
BRAHMS

Sunday, May 17, 2009

First Congregational Church of Berkeley

BERKELEY AKADEMIE ENSEMBLE

2008–09 SEASON



KENT NAGANO

CONDUCTOR/ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

JAMES A. KLEINMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

7:00 pm, Sunday, May 17, 2009

First Congregational Church of Berkeley

WOLFGANG AMADÈ MOZART

Divertimento in D Major, K. 136

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Presto

ALEXANDER MUNO

Masques & Divertissements

World Premiere

— INTERMISSION —

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Serenade No. 1 in D Major, Op. 11

- I. Allegro molto
- II. Scherzo. Allegro non troppo—Trio. Poco più moto
- III. Adagio non troppo
- IV. Menuetto I—Menuetto II
- V. Scherzo. Allegro—Trio
- VI. Rondo. Allegro

*Please note: A previously scheduled premiere
by Tobias Schneid will not be performed this evening.*

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Presentation bouquets are graciously provided by Jutta's Flowers.

**Tonight's concert will be broadcast on KALW 91.7 FM,
Sunday, September 13, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.**

Berkeley Akademie Ensemble is a program of Berkeley Symphony.
Berkeley Symphony is a member of the League of American Orchestras
and the Association of California Symphony Orchestras.

Program Notes

Divertimento in D Major, K. 125a (K. 136)

WOLFGANG AMADÈ MOZART (1756-1791)

Johann Chrysostom Wolfgang Amadè Mozart (he only used the form "Amadeus" when in a mock-pompous mood) was born on January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, at that time an independent archbishopric within the Austrian Empire. He died on December 5, 1791, in Vienna. Scored for strings. Duration ca. 17 min.

Mozart's Divertimento in D Major, K. 125a, is one of a set of three written in Salzburg during the winter months of 1772, after he had returned from his second journey to Italy. The southern influence certainly seems present in these works, for they all use the three-movement structure then popular in Italian symphonies, direct descendants of Italian three-part opera overtures. The Divertimentos also contain clear echoes of the young Mozart's most admired composers, Joseph Haydn and Johann Christian Bach.

All three movements of the D Major Divertimento rely on sonata form, but with relatively short development sections. The first movement features the violins in a *concertante* manner—in other words, the interest is focused almost exclusively on their virtuosic runs and figurations while the viola and bass lines provide a more or less constant rhythmic drive in eighth notes. The slow movement unfolds with lilting grace; its

development lasts only seven measures. The last movement exhibits a lighthearted approach; even when contrapuntal texture appears in the development, Mozart gives it a playful touch. The second theme of this finale charms with its utter simplicity, ascending and descending stepwise in tenths.

The three Divertimentos, K. 125a, b, and c (K. 136–138), present interesting questions similar to those surrounding the famous *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*: were these works meant to be performed as string quartets or by larger string ensembles? Though they sound equally compelling in both guises, historical evidence suggests that Mozart envisioned them being played one on a part—either by the typical string quartet (performed here by quintet) or the “divertimento quartet” comprised of two violins, viola, and bass. Mozart expert Alfred Einstein suggested that Mozart and his father might have taken the three Divertimentos along to Milan with a view toward turning them into symphonies, if asked, by adding oboe and horn parts, thus supporting the idea of their orchestral performance.

Scholars even differ as to the correct title of these pieces, calling them sometimes “Quartett-Divertimenti” or “Salzburg-Symphonies”; on the original autograph score, the title “Divertimento” was penned by someone other than Mozart. A further count against calling them divertimentos might be their lack of minuets, since conventional divertimentos were expected to contain

one or two such dance movements. If, however, one takes the broadest definition of the word “divertimento,” namely entertainment or amusement, these works provide just that.

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Masques & Divertissements

ALEXANDER MUNO (b. 1979)

Alexander Muno was born in Saarburg, a town near Trier, Germany. Tonight's performance marks the world premiere of this work. Scored for flute, clarinet, horn, and strings. Duration ca. 9 min.

The composer has provided the following comments:

Working on this piece was a most peculiar experience, since I changed my plan nearly every day. The entries in my working diary are quite confused; the working process, although not the piece emerging out of it, proved to be labyrinthine. There is no distinct echo of Mozart, at least no direct quotation, but maybe a shimmer of classical transparency. The formal structure is made clear by considered use especially of the wind instruments.

First section: The genesis of a melody coming from afar, *lontanissimo*, is played by the horn. The material used in the strings is derived from sketches for a string quartet which represent a musical rethinking of Monet's *Nymphéas (Water Lilies)*. Dance-like gestures appear. **Second section:** A duet for the two violins is symmetrically arranged around a short “axis,” played by horn and string quintet. The **third section** could be

described as a transition or development section, as a new rhythmical object—a triplet movement—appears. The material in this section consists mostly of the aforementioned “axis.” A chorale-like element is introduced, played by viola, cello and double bass. **Fourth section:** The clarinet makes its first appearance with grotesque melodic fragments or gestures, mostly accompanied by flageolet chords played by a “trio basso” consisting of viola, cello, and double bass. The chorale-like element is then combined with the horn melody (the “axis” material from the second section), followed by a short duet of viola and cello. The clarinet reappears, this time accompanied by the two violins. It follows a short transition using several of the elements already described. The **fifth section** juxtaposes the different melodic materials played by horn and clarinet. The horn is accompanied by fragments of the chorale-like structure played by the trio basso, the clarinet by scales in triplet movement played by the two violins. Transition: material that predominated the duets is now presented *pizzicato*, the scales in triplet movement are continued, leading to the **sixth section**. Here the flute comes in, chanting a somewhat distorted melodic line, playing harmonics, in combination with *pizzicato* in the viola and harmonics in the cello, while clarinet and horn add a counterpoint. A motto is written above this last section, alluding to Mahler's *Lied von der Erde*—“Die Laute schlagen und die Gläser leeren, Das sind die Dinge, die zusammen passen” (“To play upon the lute, to empty glasses, these are things that fit well together”). The piece ends with a short epilogue, using the “axis” material of the second section.

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Serenade No. 1 in D Major, Op. 11

JOHANNES BRAHMS

(1833-1897)

Johannes Brahms was born in Hamburg on May 7, 1833. He died in Vienna on April 3, 1897. Scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, timpani, and strings. Duration ca. 49 min.

Brahms composed his D Major Serenade in 1857–58 while he was employed during the winters at the Lippe-Detmold court, where avid music lover Prince Leopold II reigned. It was the young composer's first official position and he was required to perform on the piano, give lessons, and conduct a choir. Though he was not commissioned to compose any instrumental pieces, he was moved to compose this and his A Major Serenade by being exposed to many Mozart serenades and divertimentos performed by the court orchestra and by his studies of Haydn orchestral works.

The D Major Serenade went through several other configurations before ending up as the well-known orchestra piece. Brahms seems to have begun the piece as a wind and string octet in three or four movements, with specific Detmold musicians in mind. He then turned the work into a nonet for flute, two clarinets, bassoon, horn, and strings, possibly in six movements, a version he may have tried out in Göttingen in 1858. A small orchestra rendition with single winds came next, which his violinist friend Joseph Joachim conducted in Hamburg in March 1859.

In May Brahms then made a four-hand piano version—a customary practice not intended as the work's final form—and finally, by December 1859,

he sent Joachim a version for larger orchestra. Brahms contemplated the title “Symphonie-Serenade” because the piece combined the more weighty characteristics of a symphony with the lighter traits of a serenade, but then reverted to the simpler designation. Joachim again conducted the first performance, this time in Hannover in March 1860. Always meticulous about destroying sketches, incomplete pieces, and any compositions he did not consider worthy of publication, Brahms disposed of the “non-definitive” versions of his Serenade, leaving only his masterful orchestral version and the four-hand piano reduction.

Serenades traditionally contained more than the four movements of a symphony. Brahms, who was always looking back to Classical and even earlier tradition, cast his First Serenade in six movements and his Second in five. The D Major Serenade's first movement sets a pastoral mood with its “bagpipe” drones and rustic horn theme, which a number of commentators find reminiscent of the main theme of the Finale in Haydn's Symphony No. 104. Brahms develops and recapitulates this theme and his lyrical, expansive second idea with great leisure—more so than he allowed himself in later works. The ensuing Scherzo—alternately furtive and merry, and full of the rhythmic play that he loved—frames a central contrasting trio that again evokes the countryside with a “peasant-dance” theme.

The bucolic atmosphere continues in the slow movement, which many commentators have linked with the Scene by the Brook from Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony on account of its rippling accompaniment. Brahms presents a flexible sonata form, which again unfolds with all the time

in the world—the Adagio tempo is rare for most Classical serenades and divertimentos. Brahms reduces his performing forces for the pair of Menuettos, reminding us of the work's chamber-music origins. The jolly first minuet particularly highlights the clarinets with a bouncing bassoon accompaniment. The second minuet serves as a central trio, providing contrast with its pure string sound, after which the first minuet returns.

The exuberant second Scherzo dances along, cheerfully wearing its indebtedness to Beethoven and Haydn on its sleeve: the main theme resembles the trio of the Scherzo in Beethoven's Second Symphony and its accompani-

ment, again, the main theme of Haydn's Symphony No. 104 Finale, but woven together and filled out with plenty of original material. The horn theme of the trio is buoyed by a bubbly, racing accompaniment in the strings. Brahms caps his first orchestral work with a quintessentially pastoral offering—a “hunt” movement, replete with galloping rhythms and horn calls. The “hunting” theme appears three times as a rondo refrain, separated by two trios in which a lovely melody lilts over fast accompanying passages that put viola, bassoon, and flute to the test. A coda crowns the final refrain, coming to an expectant hush in order to set up the driving conclusion.

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First Congregational Church of Berkeley

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