BERKELEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA
NOW

08|09 SEASON

Joana Carneiro

CONDUCTOR

LINDBERG
ADAMS
BEETHOVEN

Thursday, December 18, 2008
UC Berkeley Zellerbach Hall

BERKELEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2008–09 SEASON

KENT NAGANO, MUSIC DIRECTOR

JOANA CARNEIRO, CONDUCTOR

JAMES A. KLEINMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

8:00 pm, Thursday, December 18, 2008
Zellerbach Hall

MAGNUS LINDBERG
Chorale

Bay Area Premiere

JOHN ADAMS
Shaker Loops

— INTERMISSION —

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

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

Season Sponsors

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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, June 28, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.

Berkeley Symphony is a member of the League of American Orchestras and the Association of California Symphony Orchestras

Program Notes

Chorale

MAGNUS LINDBERG (b. 1958)

Magnus Lindberg was born on June 27, 1958, in Helsinki, Finland. Chorale *was written in 2002 and premiered by the Philharmonica Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen. Scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba and strings. Duration: ca. 6 min.*

Magnus Lindberg's work is a kind of musical meditation on the chorale "Es ist genug," which closes Bach's cantata "O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort" (O Eternity, Thou Word of Thunder). For this chorale, lasting barely a minute, Bach in his turn harmonized a pre-existing hymn, published in 1662 by J. A. Ahle.

Bach's church cantatas are, in effect, miniature musical sermons; in "O Ewigkeit," the sermon takes the form of a dramatic dialogue between *Furcht* (Fear) and *Hoffnung* (Hope). After a decisive contribution from the Voice of Christ, the concluding chorale offers a glimpse of comfort and resolution: "It is enough; Lord, when it pleases You, unshackle me. My Jesus comes; now, farewell, world. I journey in peace to Heaven's house, leaving my woes behind. It is enough."

Nearly 300 years later, and with characteristic ingenuity, Alban Berg used "Es ist genug" to serve both musical and extra-musical ends in his Violin Concerto. As the basis for a set of variations in his final movement, it provided this "Requiem for an angel" with a note of redemptive consolation, as well as a trace of tonality.

Unlike Berg, Magnus Lindberg has no extra-musical agenda. Instead, he says, "I took the harmonic structure of the chorale, and embedded it in my own harmonies. At some points we find ourselves a long way from the original, at others we are close to it, and sometimes I allow it to come to the surface. I make an analogy with the rise and fall of the tide. When the tide is in, the sea-bed is invisible; but when the tide goes out, you see the rock formation on the sea-bed."

For Lindberg, this short piece has potentially far-reaching implications: "Sometimes you force things in certain directions; on other occasions you feel that the material has forced you. I have always considered my music as non-melodic, in the sense that melody arose out of the harmonies, which I never thought of as having a tonal quality. In *Chorale,* I have my harmonies, but suddenly there is a melody on top. For me, that opens up a new dimension."

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Shaker Loops

JOHN ADAMS (b. 1947)

John Adams was born on February 15, 1947 in Worcester, Massachusetts. Shaker Loops *was written in 1978 and first performed that same year by members of the New Music Ensemble at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music . Originally scored for a string septet: 3 violins, 1 viola, 2 cellos, and 1 bass . Duration: 26 minutes.*

The composer has provided the following comments:

Shaker Loops began as a string quartet with the title *Wavemaker*. At the time, like many a young composer, I was essentially unaware of the nature of those musical materials I had chosen for my tools. Having experienced a few of the seminal pieces of American Minimalism during the early 1970's, I thought their combination of stripped-down harmonic and rhythmic discourse might be just the ticket for my own unformed yearnings. I gradually developed a scheme for composing that was partly indebted to the repetitive procedures of Minimalism and partly an outgrowth of my interest in waveforms. The "waves" of *Wavemaker* were to be long sequences of oscillating melodic cells that created a rippling, shimmering complex of patterns like the surface of a slightly agitated pond or lake. But my technique lagged behind my inspiration, and this rippling pond very quickly went dry. *Wavemaker* crashed and burned at its first performance. The need for a larger, thicker ensemble and for a more flexible, less theory-bound means of composing became very apparent.

Fortunately I had in my students at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music a working laboratory to try out new ideas, and with the original *Wavemaker* scrapped I worked over the next four months to pick up the pieces and start over. I held on to the idea of the oscillating patterns and made an overall structure that could embrace much more variety and emotional range. Most importantly the quartet became a septet, thereby adding a sonic mass and the potential for more acoustical power. The "loops" idea was a technique from the era of tape music where small lengths of prerecorded tape attached end to end could repeat melodic or rhythmic figures ad infinitum. (Steve Reich's *It's Gonna Rain* is the paradigm of this technique.) The Shakers got into the act partly as a pun on the musical term "to shake," meaning either to make a tremolo with the bow across the string or else to trill rapidly from one note to another.

The flip side of the pun was suggested by my own childhood memories of growing up not far from a defunct Shaker colony near Canterbury, New Hampshire. Although, as has since been pointed out to me, the term "Shaker" itself is derogatory, it nevertheless summons up the vision of these otherwise pious and industrious souls caught up in the ecstatic frenzy of a dance that culminated in an epiphany of physical and spiritual transcendence. This dynamic, almost electrically charged element, so out of place in the orderly mechanistic universe of Minimalism, gave the music its raison d'être and ultimately led to the full realization of the piece.

Shaker Loops continues to be one of my most performed pieces. There are partisans who favor the clarity and individualism of the solo septet version, and there are those who prefer the orchestral version for its added density and power. The piece has several times been choreographed and even enjoyed a moment of cult status in the movie *Barfly,* an autobiographical account of the poet Charles Bukowsky's down and out days on LA's Skid Row. In a famous scene Bukowsky (Mickey Rourke), having been battered and bloodied by his drunken girlfriend (Faye Dunaway), holes up in a flophouse room, writing poems in a fit of inspiration to the accompaniment of the insistent buzz of "Shaking and Trembling."

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Symphony No. 5 in c minor, Op. 67

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770–1827)

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn, in the German Rhineland. The exact date of his birth is not known, but he was baptized on December 17, 1770 so it is presumed that he was born either on that day or on the day before. He died in Vienna on March 26, 1827. Beethoven began making sketches for his fifth symphony in 1804–05, but did most of the work of composition during 1807, finally completing the work some time in 1808. The symphony's first performance, conducted by the composer, was on December 22, 1808 in the Theater an der Wien in Vienna. The work was first published (in parts) in the April of 1809 by Breitkopf & Härtel of Leipzig. The same publisher also brought out the first edition of the full score, in 1826, but as Beethoven had ceased to do business with the firm in 1823, this score is of limited authenticity. Tonight's concert (as well as all performances of Beethoven symphonies this season) use the new Urtext edition of the Beethoven symphonies edited by Jonathan Del Mar and published by Bärenreiter-Verlag in 1999. Del Mar's edition takes a fresh look at these classic works, and, relying on the fruits of modern scholarship, attempts to arrive at a text as close to the composer's intent as possible. The first three movements of the work are scored for a standard Classical-era orchestra consisting of pairs each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets, plus timpani and strings. In the fourth movement, a piccolo, contrabassoon, and three trombones are added to the ensemble. Duration ca. 34 minutes.

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, one of the most famous works in the orchestral repertory, was a long time aborning. The composer began sketching the piece in about 1804 or 1805, but events conspired to delay its completion. Other works competing for Beethoven's attention during 1804 were his Fourth Symphony, his Fourth Piano Concerto, revisions of two numbers from the oratorio *Christus am Ölberg* (*Christ on the Mount of Olives*), and the ever-troublesome opera, *Leonore* (or, as it was titled when eventually performed, *Fidelio*). He managed to make good progress on the C minor Symphony during 1805, but in 1806 new distractions arose, among them being further revisions of *Leonore/Fidelio,* the three Razumofsky String Quartets, Op. 59, the Fourth Symphony (again), and the Violin Concerto. The following year, 1807, witnessed the bulk of the work on the Fifth Symphony, but at times it had to take a back seat to projects such as the commission from Prince Nikolaus Eszterhazy for a Mass in honor of his wife (the *Mass* in C). In addition, in 1807 Beethoven began work on the Sixth Symphony (the "Pastoral").

Part of the reason that the Fifth Symphony kept being relegated to back-burner status was that symphonies were in Beethoven's time largely built "on spec." They were not dependable sources of cash, unlike pieces (such as the *Mass*) composed in response to commissions, or chamber music (like the Opus 59 Quartets), which found a ready market among amateur musicians. Beethoven usually saved the premieres of new symphonies for special events; benefit concerts, or *Akademien,* the proceeds of which he could keep for himself. During the period when he was working on the Fifth Symphony, the opportunity for such an *Akademie* did not arise. In the meantime, Beethoven conducted performances of several of his earlier works in concerts produced by other parties and contributed his services to several concerts given for the benefit of various charities. Finally, at least partially in recognition of his efforts for charity, he was granted permission to use the resources of the Theater an der Wien to mount a benefit concert for himself on December 22, 1808.

Once the date was set, this concert became the focal point for all of Beethoven's composition projects for the year. The program quickly took on the characteristics of a marathon. The original list of selections for the evening included the premieres of not only the Fifth, but also the Sixth Symphony; the concert aria, "Ah, perfido!"; the Fourth Piano Concerto, with Beethoven as soloist; two movements from the Mass in C; and an improvisation on the piano by Beethoven. He became concerned that because of the great length of the concert, the audience might become fatigued and so would fail to appreciate the full grandeur of the Finale of the Fifth Symphony, with which he originally planned to close the evening. Curiously, this line of reasoning led him to throw together a new piece to end the concert, the Choral Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra.

As one might expect, this epic program, consisting of four hours of music, much of it brand new and underrehearsed, was less than a complete success. The German composer Johann Friedrich Reichardt provides this account of the event:

> I accepted the kind offer of Prince Lobkowitz [one of Beethoven's usual patrons] to let me sit in his box with hearty thanks. There we continued, in the bitterest cold, too, from half-past six to half-past ten, and experienced the truth that one can easily have too much of a good thing—and still more of a loud [thing]. Nevertheless, I could no more leave the box before the end than could the exceedingly good-natured and delicate Prince, for the box was in the first balcony near the stage, so that the orchestra with Beethoven in the middle conducting was below us and near at hand; thus many a failure in the performance vexed our patience in the highest degree. Poor Beethoven, who from this, his own concert, was having the first and only scant profit that he could find in a whole year, had found in the rehearsals and performance a lot of opposition and almost no support. Singers and orchestra were composed of heterogeneous elements, and it had been found impossible to get a single full rehearsal for all the pieces to be performed, all filled with the greatest difficulties.

No review comes down to us of any of the works on the evening's program; but the Fifth Symphony received a second performance a month later by the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig. Rochlitz, the editor of the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* ("General Musical Periodical") wrote a review of the performance, which he said was "received enthusiastically." About the opening movement he went on to say:

> The first movement is a very serious, somewhat gloomy yet fiery Allegro, noble both in feeling and in working-out of idea, which is handled firmly and evenly, simply with a lot of originality, strength and consistency—a worthy movement which offers rich pleasure

> even to those who cling to the old
> way of composing a big symphony.

And indeed, from the very first measures Beethoven makes it clear that this symphony is composed in a new way. Early nineteenth-century audiences were accustomed to symphonies beginning either with a grand, expansive slow introduction, or with a pleasant melody. The taut, muscular opening theme of this symphony fits neither category. It is elemental, consisting of a combination of a simple repeated note figure and a basic falling melodic interval. One has the impression of music stripped bare, so that its underlying skeleton is exposed. And immediately we are shown how the components of this skeleton can be taken apart and reassembled into myriad shapes.

The opening passage of the symphony, with its harmonic ambiguity and frequent pauses, is ripe with the promise of drama to come. In this symphony, more so than in Beethoven's previous work, there is a clear sense of a narrative. Somehow, purely instrumental music is made to tell a story. All four movements of the symphony bear witness to a struggle between opposing forces: something dark, threatening, and mysterious is pitted against a noble spirit that triumphs in the end. The conflict is at its most violent in the first movement, which ends in victory for darkness. The forces of good bide their time during the slow movement, which is interrupted by flashes of hope and inspiration. The battle is taken up again in the third movement, which (in one of Beethoven's extraordinary innovations) flows without a break into the rejoicing of the fourth movement as the forces of light celebrate their victory.

One of the techniques that Beethoven uses to maintain the thread of this narrative throughout the entire work is to ensure that a family resemblance runs through the musical material used in different movements. This is most audible in the pervasive use of the dit-dit-dit-dah rhythm of the opening theme, which recurs in every movement. Beethoven also relies on the elementary, but effective, musical symbolism of using the C minor/C major duality to represent dark and light, evil and good.

Beethoven's contemporaries grasped this new, dramatic treatment of the symphonic form almost immediately. The poet E. T. A. Hoffmann wrote an insightful review of the Fifth Symphony that appeared in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in July of 1810, and which is generally recognized as marking the beginning of serious music criticism in the nineteenth century. Describing the transition from the third into the fourth movement he said, "The full orchestra, with piccolos, trombones, and contrabassoons added, joins in the magnificent, jubilant, C-major theme of the final movement. It is like radiant, blinding sunlight which suddenly illuminates the dark night." Of the emotional effect of the symphony as a whole he wrote:

> For many people, the whole work rushes by like an ingenious rhapsody. The heart of every sensitive listener, however, will certainly be deeply and intimately moved by an enduring feeling—precisely that feeling of foreboding, indescribable longing—which remains until the final chord. Indeed, many moments will pass before he will be able to step out of the wonderful realm of the spirits where pain and bliss, taking tonal form, surrounded him.

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