BERKELEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA
NOW

07|08 SEASON

Hugh Wolff

CONDUCTOR

KERNIS
GOLIJOV
SHOSTAKOVICH
BEETHOVEN

Thursday, February 21, 2008
UC Berkeley Zellerbach Hall

Berkeley Symphony Orchestra

2007–08 Season

Kent Nagano, Music Director

Hugh Wolff, Conductor

James A. Kleinmann, Executive Director

8:00 pm, Thursday, February 21, 2008
Zellerbach Hall

AARON JAY KERNIS
Overture in Feet and Meters
West Coast Premiere

OSVALDO GOLIJOV
Night of the Flying Horses

Close Your Eyes
Doina
Gallop

Heidi Melton, ***soprano***

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
From Jewish Folk Poetry, Op. 79

I. Lament for a dead infant
II. Fussy Mummy and Auntie
III. Lullaby
IV. Before a long separation
V. A warning
VI. The deserted father
VII. A song of poverty
VIII. Winter
IX. The good life
X. A girl's song
XI. Happiness

Heidi Melton, ***soprano***
Katharine Tier, ***mezzo-soprano***
Thomas Glenn, ***tenor***

— INTERMISSION —

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92

I. Poco sostenuto – Vivace
II. Allegretto
III. Presto
IV. Allegro con brio

Season Sponsors

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Support for Berkeley Symphony's Music Director search is provided by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the James C. Irvine Foundation, and the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation.

Tonight's concert will be broadcast on KALW 91.7 FM, Sunday, April 27, 2008 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

Overture in Feet and Meters

AARON JAY KERNIS (b. 1960)

Kernis completed this overture in 2000 as an orchestration of the first movement of his Second String Quartet. He was commissioned by members of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra Board of Directors to honor departing Music Director Hugh Wolff, with whom the composer had enjoyed a longstanding relationship beginning from Maestro Wolff's time at the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and continuing throughout his tenure at the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Scored for 2 flutes (one doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (one doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, strings, and 2 percussionists. Duration ca. 10 min.

The composer has provided the following comments, in which he cites Renaissance and Baroque dance forms as inspiration for this work:

I have been playing various suites of Bach's and pieces from the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book* at the piano for my own pleasure for years, and I suspected for some time that their influence would eventually show up in my work. The first movement is a kaleidoscope, an overstuffed medley of many types of dances played separately and sometimes simultaneously. It is in three large sections. The first section is an exposition of many different strands of energetic music, while the second opposes two gentler dances, the Canzonetta and a Musette. The final section brings back most of the diverse elements of the opening in many varied guises and leads to a climactic uncovering of a simple, direct version of the main tune of the movement.

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Night of the Flying Horses

OSVALDO GOLIJOV (b. 1960)

Night of the Flying Horses *is the first part of Golijov's cycle* Three Songs, *which was premiered in 2002 by Dawn Upshaw and the Minnesota Orchestra conducted by Alan Gilbert. Scored for 2 flutes (one doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, strings, and celesta. Duration ca. 8 min.*

The composer has provided the following comments:

Night of the Flying Horses starts with a Yiddish lullaby that I composed for Sally Potter's film *The Man Who Cried.* It is set to function well in counterpoint to another important music theme in the soundtrack: Bizet's aria *Je Crois Entendre Encore,* from *The Pearl Fishers.* In her film Sally explores the fate of Jews and Gypsies in the tragic mid-years of the 20th century, through a love story between a Jewish young woman and a Gypsy young man. The lullaby metamorphoses into a dense and dark doina (a slow, gypsy, rubato genre) featuring the lowest string of the violas. The piece ends in a fast gallop boasting a theme that I stole from my friends of the wild gypsy band Taraf de Haïdouks. The theme is presented here in a canonical chase between two orchestral groups.

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From Jewish Folk Poetry

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

From Jewish Folk Poetry *was premiered in Leningrad on January 15, 1955, with Shostakovich at the piano accompanying soprano Nina Dorliak, alto Zara Dolukhanova, and tenor Aleksei Maslennikov. Shostakovich orchestrated the work in 1963 (op. 79a), and this orchestral version was premiered in the closed city of Gorki in February 1964 by the Gorki Philharmonic, conducted by Gennadi Rozhdestvensky. This evening's performance uses Shostakovich's 1963 orchestration, but Maestro Hugh Wolff has replaced the Russian text with the original Yiddish poetry, as he strongly believes this is the way Shostakovich originally intended. Scored for 2 flutes (one doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (one doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet), 3 bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, strings, timpani, 2 percussionists, and harp. Duration ca. 28 min.*

On February 10, 1948, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued its now-infamous decree, "On the Opera *The Great Friendship* by Vano Muradeli." Muradeli's insignificant opera, a dramatic depiction of Georgian partisans fighting for Bolshevik power during the Civil War, merely served as a pretext for a much larger campaign. This resolution, issued 60 years ago this month, signaled the beginning in Soviet music of the Zhdanovshchina, the post-war cultural crackdown headed by Andrey Zhdanov, Stalin's cultural commissar. Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Myaskovsky, the leading figures in Soviet music, were singled out for particular abuse and were branded in this decree as "anti-people formalists." Official bans were placed on many of their works, and their livelihoods were threatened. In April 1948, the first All-Union Composers Congress publicly rebuked Shostakovich, who was fired from his professorship at the Moscow Conservatory. Friends and colleagues lined up to denounce Shostakovich, who publicly recanted, as had many others before, in acts of "Bolshevik self-criticism."

In the midst of this harrowing year, Shostakovich set about composing his song cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry* (*Iz yevreiskoi narodnoi poezii*), Op. 79. Sometime during the early summer of 1948, Shostakovich had acquired a collection of Jewish folk song texts translated into Russian. Shostakovich's interest in Jewish culture was not new: already by 1943, Shostakovich had orchestrated the opera *Rothschild's Violin* by his short-lived pupil Venyamin Fleishman, and Shostakovich had made use of Jewish musical elements in his Piano Trio, Op. 67 (1944) and Violin Concerto no. 1, Op. 77 (1947-48). In August 1948, Shostakovich set eight Jewish song texts for voice and piano, which were premiered informally at his birthday party the next month. By October 1948, he had set three more texts, completing the eleven-song cycle for soprano, alto, and tenor with piano accompaniment as it is known today. As musicologist Joachim Braun points out, the tuneful cycle, rooted in folklorism, adheres closely to the Stalinist aesthetics Shostakovich pledged to uphold in his public recantations following the 1948 denunciation. By early January 1949, Shostakovich was apparently preparing to send the work to the Composer's Union for peer review, an obligatory step towards performance and publication.

Succeeding events, however,

prompted Shostakovich to withhold submission, and forever charged this work with devastating poignancy. In January 1949, Soviet authorities announced new policies against "rootless cosmopolitanism," initiating a bloody and protracted anti-Semitic campaign. The beginnings of this campaign are often traced back to the murder of Solomon Mikhoels, one of the Soviet Union's leading actors and head of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. His death in Minsk in January 1948 was officially reported as a car accident but, as recently-opened archives show, he was killed by the Soviet security apparatus. The anti-Semitic campaign reached fever pitch in January 1953 with the announcement in *Pravda* of the discovery of a "Doctor's Plot," an imaginary conspiracy devised by party leaders claiming that Jewish doctors were systematically poisoning Soviet politicians and were actively plotting Stalin's assassination. Following the "exposure" of this bogus plot, scores of Soviet Jews were executed or sent to the gulag. Only Stalin's death on March 5, 1953 brought a halt to the campaign, which was revealed as a fabrication soon thereafter.

These events of 1949-53 unfolding between the work's completion and its public premiere imbue *From Jewish Folk Poetry* with crushing, if unintended, meanings. The cycle's final song, "Happiness," completed in October 1948, is particularly devastating in its unintended ironies, as all three singers boast "Our sons have become doctors! Our sons have become doctors! A star burns brightly over our heads!" Needless to say, no one at the work's public premiere in January 1955 could hear these words without thinking of the fateful events of only two years before. As Laurel Fay writes, "What started as [Shostakovich's] diligent attempt to respond to the imperative of Socialist Realism was transformed by the ravages of history into a heart-rending musical monument to the end of the Stalinist era."

Although no overarching program links the texts, the songs are grouped into two basic units corresponding to their dates of completion. The first group, which closes with the desolate bleakness of No. 8, "Winter," describes the difficulties of Jewish life during tsarist rule, while the second group describes the "Good Life" (the very title of song No. 9) in the Soviet here-and-now. All eleven songs are linked modally, as the cycle's musical language is based almost exclusively upon the *freygish* scale common to klezmer music, with its characteristic augmented second (the interval of "na-gi" in "Hava Nagila"). Several of the songs, notably Nos. 2 and 5, are stylizations of existing Jewish folk melodies. For example, Song No. 5, "A Warning," corresponds to a *freylakh* melody included in a 1962 collection of Jewish folk melodies edited by Moisei Beregovsky, whose 1946 dissertation on Yiddish music Shostakovich had referred.

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William Quillen is a Ph.D. candidate in historical musicology at UC Berkeley and is currently a Fulbright Scholar at the Moscow Conservatory. He delivered the pre-concert talk for Berkeley Symphony's December 2007 performance of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 7, "Leningrad."

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

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 moved to Vienna in 1792 to take up the study of composition with Franz Josef Haydn, and remained a resident of that city until his death on March 26, 1827. Beethoven seems to have begun work on the 7th Symphony in the autumn of 1811; he began to write out the fair copy of the completed work on May 13, 1812. Its first performance took place on December 8, 1813 in the Hall of the University of Vienna. The concert was sufficiently successful (credit for this is at least partly due to the other major work on the program, Beethoven's "Battle Symphony") to be repeated on December 12; then again on January 2 and February 27 of the following year, in the Large Redoutensaal in the Hofburg Palace. At the latter event it was joined on the program by the Eighth Symphony, which was receiving its premiere. Publication followed in November of 1816, by Steiner of Vienna. Score and parts appeared simultaneously, a first for one of Beethoven's symphonies, and the title pages of both bear the dedication to Count Moritz von Fries, a wealthy aristocrat and patron of the arts who provided material aid to the careers of Haydn and Beethoven. The work is scored for the typical late-Classical-Period orchestra, calling for pairs each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and trumpets, plus timpani and strings. Duration ca. 38 min.

After completing the Fifth and "Pastoral" Symphonies in 1808, Beethoven turned away from symphonic music for several years. No doubt the 1809 occupation of Vienna by Napoleon's army is at least partly responsible for this; most of the city's aristocratic families fled to the countryside, taking an important source of patronage for the performing arts with them. In addition, the financial and social disruptions caused by the presence of the foreign army rendered impractical most large-scale public music-making. French troops departed the city in late 1809, and life slowly began to return to normal. The first signs of work on the Seventh Symphony are found in the so-called Petter sketchbook, now in the Bodmer collection in Bonn, which dates from the second half of 1811. Beethoven's ideas for the A major symphony are intermingled with sketches for the Eighth Symphony. Some notations in this sketchbook confirm references in Beethoven's letters of the time to a third symphony in D minor. (These ideas were to lie fallow for another decade, until he began work on the Ninth Symphony in earnest.)

Completed by May of 1812, the Symphony in A major languished, unperformed. Austria was in the grip of a general economic and emotional malaise, thanks to the hardships wrought by the continuing Napoleonic wars. For the most part, the only public concerts that took place were charity events in support of the victims of the war. Furthermore, Beethoven was struggling with emotional conflicts of a more personal nature. In the summer of 1812, he composed (but probably did not send) the famous letter to his "Immortal Beloved," a woman with whom he was passionately in love, but who was hopelessly out of reach. And in the fall of the year, he devoted much time and energy to meddling in the love life of his brother, Johann. He was convinced that his brother's girlfriend was wicked and immoral, and he traveled to their home in Linz in an attempt to drive them apart, going so far as to attempt to enlist the local bishop and the police in his causes. Naturally, Beethoven's efforts backfired; the couple, driven to desperation by the composer's interference, got married. Beethoven slunk back to Vienna in defeat.

Finally, in late 1813, an opportunity arose for a performance of the new symphony, thanks to Beethoven's acquaintance with the inventor and musician, Johann Nepomuk Mälzel (1772–1838), who had earned the hearing-impaired composer's admiration and affection by crafting an ear-trumpet that actually worked. Mälzel, better known to music history through his 1817 invention, the metronome, became famous through his

elaborate mechanical musical instruments, including his Mechanical Trumpeter and the grand Panharmonicon. This ungainly beast incorporated all of the usual military band instruments in a box, complete with bellows to power them and a music-box-like toothed cylinder to play them. After the news of Wellington's victory over the French at the Battle of Vittoria (in June of 1813) arrived in Vienna, Mälzel hit on the idea of asking Beethoven to compose a "Battle Symphony" that would display the talents of the Panharmonicon to greatest advantage. The plan was for the odd couple to take the machine on tour, performing the novelty act in numerous cities across Europe. To finance the venture, Mälzel realized that not one, but several benefit concerts would be necessary. To gain public favor, the proceeds from the first concerts would be earmarked for the victims of the recent Battle of Hanau; but if there was sufficient demand, the concert could be repeated to the benefit of its sponsors. He asked Beethoven to orchestrate the "Battle Symphony" for full orchestra (minus the Panharmonicon) and suggested that if he had any other unheard orchestral works lying around, those could help fill out the program.

Because Beethoven hadn't given a public orchestral concert in several years, and because of the charitable nature of the event, many of Vienna's most prominent musicians offered their services for free or next to nothing. One gets the sense from contemporary sources that they volunteered partly for the honor of participating in a new major work by Beethoven (for the Seventh Symphony) and partly as a professional frolic (for the "Battle Symphony"). Several of the musicians recorded their impressions of the event; Louis Spohr, who played violin and was a renowned composer in his own right, describes Beethoven's conducting:

> Beethoven had accustomed himself to indicate expression to the orchestra by all manner of singular bodily movements. So often as a *sforzando* occurred, he tore his arms, which he had previously crossed upon his breast, with great vehemence asunder. At *piano* he crouched down lower and lower as he desired the degree of softness. If a crescendo then entered he gradually rose again and at the entrance of the *forte* jumped into the air. Sometimes, too, he unconsciously shouted to strengthen the *forte* . . . It was obvious that the poor man could no longer hear the *piano* of his music.

The amazing thing is that Mälzel's plan worked spectacularly. The first concert was a smash hit. Both the potboiler, *Wellington's Victory* (to give it its official title), and the Seventh Symphony were received with wild applause, and the repetition of the concert a few days later had the same result. A large sum of money was raised for the widows and orphans, and at further repetitions of the program in early 1814, Beethoven earned a handsome profit for himself. But these concerts had a significance for Beethoven that went far beyond pecuniary matters. They were a watershed in his career, the moment when his public recognition spread beyond the narrow circle of aristocrats and connoisseurs who were his original patrons and reached a much wider audience. He had "arrived," in the modern sense.

At the time, much of this success was attributed to *Wellington's Victory*, which combines *God Save the King* with imitation cannon blasts; but it is clear the A major Symphony was understood and appreciated as well. For one thing, at each performance, the audience insisted that the Allegretto, one of Beethoven's most sublime achievements, be repeated. This melancholy movement, whose frequent shifts of mode between minor and major foreshadow the art of Schubert, is the only serious moment in a work that is almost entirely devoted to the expression of unbridled joy and good humor. Its giddy atmosphere was a heady tonic for a people just beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel after a decade of almost constant warfare and political and economic upheaval. Overall, the symphony is characterized by radical contrasts and almost comical juxtapositions. The opening movement begins with one of Beethoven's most grand and imposing slow introductions; but once we reach the main part of the movement, a solo flute in jaunty 6/8 time leads the merry-making. Frequently, thematic statements made by instruments at the treble end of the orchestra are answered by those at the extreme bass end. Forte and piano follow upon each other in quick succession. It is not uncommon for metric weight to be shifted from strong beats to weak for many measures in a row. Indeed, it is Beethoven's mastery of rhythm that gives this work its intoxicating vitality. Not only is every movement pervaded by rhythmic motives that are treated almost obsessively, but on deeper levels the structure of the music propels the work inexorably forward to climaxes of enormous power. In the words of J.W.N. Sullivan (*Beethoven: His Spiritual Development*): "The exultant note rises higher until in the last movement, we are in the region of pure ecstasy, a reckless, headlong ecstasy, a more than Bacchic festival of joy."

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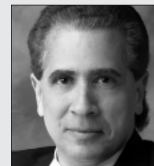
BERKELEY SYMPHONY 07|08 Season



Thursday, March 13, 2008 | Guillermo Figueroa

Roberto Sierra, *Boriken*
Berlioz, *Les Nuits d'été*
Dvořák, Symphony No. 7

Wednesday, April 2, 2008 | Laura Jackson

Susan Botti, *Translucence*
Darius Milhaud, *La Création du Monde*
Rimsky-Korsakov, *Scheherazade*

All main stage concerts 8PM at UC Berkeley Zellerbach Hall

Berkeley Akademie Ensemble

Thursday, May 1, 2008 | Kent Nagano

C.P.E. Bach, Symphony in C Major
Igor Stravinsky, *Apollon Musagète*
Wolfgang A. Mozart, "Posthorn" Serenade

8PM at First Congregational Church

The final program of Berkeley Akademie Ensemble's debut season features violin luminary Stuart Canin leading the first half of the program from the concertmaster chair.

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