

BERKELEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA
NOW

07|08 SEASON

Kent Nagano

MUSIC DIRECTOR

MOZART
HOSOKAWA
SCHUBERT

Thursday, January 31, 2008
UC Berkeley Zellerbach Hall

BERKELEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2007–08 SEASON



KENT NAGANO, CONDUCTOR/MUSIC DIRECTOR

JAMES A. KLEINMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

8:00 pm, Thursday, January 31, 2008

Zellerbach Hall

WOLFGANG A. MOZART

Symphony No. 26 in E-flat Major, K. 184 (161a)

I. Molto presto

II. Andante

III. Allegro

TOSHIO HOSOKAWA

Lotus under the moonlight (Tsukiyo no Hasu)

U.S. Premiere

Momo Kodama, piano

— INTERMISSION —

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Symphony No. 9 in C Major, D. 944, "The Great"

I. Andante – Allegro ma non troppo

II. Andante con moto

III. Scherzo. Allegro vivace – Trio

IV. Finale. Allegro vivace

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Tonight's concert will be broadcast on KALW 91.7 FM,

Sunday, March 9, 2008 at 4:00 p.m.

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and the Association of California Symphony Orchestras.

Program Notes

Symphony No. 26 in E-flat Major, K. 161a (K. 184)

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 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, and strings. Duration ca. 8 min.

In December 1769, just before he turned fourteen, Mozart made the first of three extended journeys to Italy with his father Leopold. Their purpose was partly to show off Wolfgang's precocious talents as a performer, but also to seek commissions and employment. Stories of his impressive feats abound, and father and son's mild success in securing commissions had them making two more trips to Italy, one in 1771 and another in 1772. Between their first departure in 1769 and their return from the third trip on March 13, 1773, they had spent only fifteen months total at home in Salzburg.

This immersion in Italian culture had lasting and profound effects on the young Mozart, not only in the realm of opera, chamber music, and church music, but in symphonic production. In the six months following his last trip he composed six symphonies, all of which show Italian influences. He completed the first of these, the present Symphony in E-flat Major, on March 30, 1773.

Four of the six follow the conventions of the Italian opera overture (*sinfonia*) in

containing three movements, the last in the style of a merry jig. In some cases, as in the present work, the movements are connected without pause. The E-flat Symphony goes one step further in its Italian-overture connection in that its scoring includes pairs of both flutes and oboes. Most of Mozart's earlier symphonies use pairs of oboes or flutes, because the same pair of players played both and had to switch when the alternate instrument was required. Mozart's last symphonies, for Vienna, employed a single flute plus a pair of oboes. Aside from his *Paris* Symphony, all his other symphonies that use simultaneous pairs of flutes and oboes originated as opera overtures. It is likely, then, that Mozart intended the E-flat Symphony as an opera overture—though not for *Thamos, King of Egypt*, as some have claimed. The composer did permit its use by Johann Heinrich Böhme's traveling theatrical troupe to open Karl Martin Plümicke's play *Lanassa*, which also employed Mozart's incidental music for *Thamos*.

The dramatic declamatory gestures of the E-flat Symphony's opening movement and the somber minor-mode middle movement suggest its original connection with a tragedy. In the first movement the stark repeated notes of the opening, the propulsive stepwise unison passages, and the portentous chords all form a somber first theme that Mozart contrasts with a lightly tripping idea. This lighter idea returns only once, whereas the declamatory themes recur three times, lending weight to the brief movement.

The sighing effects in the minor-mode Andante again suggest Italian opera as does the constantly answering back and forth as if in dialogue. The pathos of this movement has led many commentators to single

it out as an important step to his late great minor-mode works.

Mozart seamlessly transforms the Andante's characteristic three repeated notes into the faster groups of three repeated notes in the merry finale. He contrasts this jig-like main theme with a gently swinging second idea, which in a sudden moment of drama plunges into a brief sequencing "development." A cheerful horn and oboe "hunting" fanfare leads to the recapitulation, in which this time the dramatic outburst immediately brings about a final rendition of the jolly main theme.

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Lotus under the moonlight

Piano Concerto

TOSHIO HOSOKAWA (b. 1955)

Lotus under the moonlight for piano and orchestra was commissioned by the German public broadcasting company Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth. The work received its world premiere in April 2006 with Jun Märkl conducting the NDR Sinfonieorchester and Momo Kodama as the soloist. The work received its Japanese premiere and was recorded in December 2006 with Seiji Ozawa conducting the Mito Chamber Orchestra and Momo Kodama as soloist. These artists will again partner to present the work during a European tour in spring 2008. Tonight's performance marks the concerto's United States premiere. Scored for flute doubling on piccolo, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, strings, timpani, 2 percussionists, and solo piano. Duration ca. 21 min.

The composer has provided the following comments:

I was asked by Mr. Richard Armbruster of NDR to choose one of Mozart's piano concertos and to compose something with the same instrumentation, in

commemoration of Mozart Year 2006. I selected the concerto in A Major, KV 488, and wrote this piece using its second movement in F sharp minor as the theme.

The music of Mozart has been one of my favorites among European music since I was a boy. Music which has integrated such great dignity and refinement, and the sorrow and comfort overflowing from it, is a musical world which we orientals had previously never known. For the past 130 years or so, we Japanese have accepted Western music in a variety of forms and tried to learn it. Mozart's music embodies the highest sphere of such Western music.

For the next few years, I plan to continue to write works on the theme of "flower." There are several reasons for my interest in this flower theme: the fact that my grandfather was an Ikebana master; the fact that for Zeami, originator of my favorite traditional Japanese theatre form Noh, the best performer was considered a "flower"; and the fact that in traditional Japanese poetry "flower" is the most important theme. For me to attempt to become the flower and sing of its blossoming and death—that is a very traditional attitude for those of us who are Japanese artists.

The lotus is the most highly valued flower in the Buddhist world. Most images of the Buddha depict Him standing on a lotus blossom. The blossoming of the lotus represents the opening of the mind (awakening to the Self) and the deep longing for satori, or enlightenment, and beatitude. The lotus sends its roots deep into the mud beneath the surface of the pond; the stem passes through the water; the buds dream of just barely breaking the surface and opening toward the sky. The shape of the lotus bud resembles the shape of human hands when pressed together in prayer.

The lotus flower is symbolized by the piano, the water and nature by the orchestra. In this music, the sustained note centered on F sharp represents vibrations on the water's surface; the

lower notes represent under the water; and the lowest register represents the darkness of the mud at the bottom of the pond. The high notes, having passed beyond the surface, suggest the boundless sky.

As I composed this piano concerto, I imagined a scene something like the following:

It is a quiet moonlit night. The lotus flower, still in its budding stage, is bathed in moonlight, and turning toward its blossoming falls into a dreamy doze. In the dream, a longing for Mozart's music (or the longing for Western music) is faintly expressed.

This work is dedicated to its first performer, pianist Momo Kodama.

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Symphony in C Major, D. 944, "Great"

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

Franz Peter Schubert was born in the Himmelfortgrund district, just outside Vienna, on January 31, 1797. Among the great composers of the Viennese Classical era (sometimes called "The First Viennese School"), he was the only one native to the city. He died on November 19, 1828, in Neue Wieden, another suburb of Vienna. It is not known when he began work on the second of his symphonies in C major (the first, now known as the "Little," was composed in 1817–1818). He was surely at work on it by June of 1825 while on holiday at Gmunden, in the foothills of the Austrian Alps between Vienna and Salzburg. He continued to work on it during the rest of the summer as he continued to travel through the Austrian countryside, returning to Vienna in September. He probably completed the work in the spring or summer of 1826 in Vienna. The symphony had no public performance while Schubert

was alive; the Vienna Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (of which Schubert was a member) had parts copied out from the score, and supposedly read through the work in late 1827, but it was set aside due to its length and difficulty. It was not heard in public until the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra gave a partial performance under the direction of Felix Mendelssohn on March 21, 1839. Projects to perform the work in other European capitals during the 1840s generally came to naught, but in the second half of the 19th century, thanks to the advocacy of English conductors such as Grove in London and Hallé in Manchester, the complete work began to be accepted. It was published in 1840 by Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig (both score and parts). The piece is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, and 3 trombones, plus timpani and strings. Duration ca. 58 minutes.

It is commonplace to lament the early death of Mozart—a tragic figure, snatched away by death at the too-young age of 35, at the peak of his powers! Who knows what might have been, and yet . . . what about Franz Schubert, who died just short of his 32nd birthday? Schubert, the works of whose final years show not only an astonishing command of form, harmony, and melody, but above all demonstrate an artistic maturity of the first order? It boggles the imagination to contemplate what Schubert might have gone on to achieve had he been granted the grace to live just a few more years. The "Great" C major symphony¹ is the crowning achievement of his last years, at least among his orchestral music: in breadth and majesty of both conception

¹Because of confusion surrounding the date of this work, its numerical position among Schubert's symphonies has fluctuated over the years. It has sometimes been called "No. 7," at other times "No. 9," and even "No. 8." Many orchestras have chosen to dispense with the number altogether, and refer to it as the "Great" C Major Symphony.

and execution, it far surpasses anything one would expect of a mere 29-year-old.

At the time he began his “Great” C major symphony while on vacation in the summer of 1825, things were looking up for Schubert, professionally. True, he was still a struggling young composer, but he was selling his pieces to Viennese publishers at a good rate, and his works were much in demand for the programs of private concert series. The archives of the venerable Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (or “Philharmonic Society,” which still exists today) report that from 1825 on, the only composer whose works were played more often than Schubert’s was Rossini.

This sense of public acceptance must have emboldened Schubert to strike out in a new direction. He returned to symphonic composition for the first time in almost a decade and produced a work infused with the confident optimism of youth, imbued with grand ideas and rhythmic vitality. The very opening of the symphony makes this clear from the first gesture, a noble theme played by the horns in unison. From our vantage point almost two hundred years later, having heard many a brass-laden Romantic work, it is hard to remember that in Schubert’s time, this was not how one opened a symphony. A symphony led off with the full orchestra, or at least the string band, not with a brave horn call. Moreover, this gesture is not merely a splash of exotic color: the horn theme contains melodic and rhythmic elements which are to serve as building blocks of much of the rest of the work. The tune itself holds several rising melodic thirds, which are conspicuous in other thematic material throughout the work, and the dotted rhythm in the second and third measures provides the germ from which the principal theme of the first movement grows.

We quickly realize that this opening passage is taken at a slow-ish tempo, but it is unlike the typical slow introduction of the Haydn-Mozart symphony; rather, it is tightly integrated with the rest of the first

movement. The horn call is taken up by the strings, who harmonize it in a hymn-like manner, reinforcing the impression of nobility and serenity. After developing the theme at length, Schubert distills the dotted rhythm from the theme, doubles the tempo, and launches the main part of the first movement with a new theme in which the dotted rhythm predominates.

A perfunctory harmonic side-step (typical of Schubert) takes us to the unexpected key of E minor, where the bouncy secondary theme is heard. The usual key of G major is reached eventually, but not after detours to some dicey locales in the neighborhood of various flat keys. Meanwhile, the original horn theme is recalled, but now with a more sinister tone. All of this drama culminates in a sunny G major ending to the exposition, but reignites in the development section, where the dotted principal theme and bouncy second theme are combined in interesting ways. In an unconventional stroke, the recapitulation of the main theme is handled *pianissimo*—Schubert is saving his big climax for later. The recap proceeds more or less according to the usual plan, with much of the harmonic tension of the first half of the movement dissipated. It is followed by a grand coda in the Beethovenian manner, almost a second full development section in which the dotted-rhythm melody works itself into a froth. At the climactic moment, who should appear but our horn call hero, now restored to his full glory.

Even more forward-looking is the slow movement, whose orchestration and sense of narrative point to the nineteenth century more than they reflect Schubert’s classical heritage. First we hear seven bars of pure accompaniment—as if a soloist forgot to enter—but the orchestra bravely chugs along anyway. Finally, a jaunty tune in A minor is heard in the oboe. Like the horn call from the first movement, it too features a dotted rhythm and prominent rising thirds. Each phrase ends with accented, repeated notes—a striking gesture, and

one with great implications for the final movement of the symphony.

With its clear-cut rhythmic structure and its tidy phrasing, one can easily imagine words fitting to this tune—Schubert was one of the world’s great songwriters, after all—but because of the offhand nature of the melody, the text would have to be something objective, or remote. A story from long ago and far away, perhaps, of the sort Mahler would later set to music. The story is fairly grim, but a ray of sunshine breaks through as a heart-breaking new theme in F major is heard. Its hymn-like texture recalls the similar passage at the opening of the first movement. This melody eventually falls apart in an eerie passage marked by repeated notes in the horn over an oscillating harmony. The harmony becomes increasingly dissonant, and when the tension breaks, the opening tune returns. Now the melody is accompanied by a solo trumpet playing a militaristic tattoo (another Mahlerian touch) which gradually infects the whole orchestra. The situation seems dire indeed, until the hymn-like theme re-appears, now garlanded with flowing sixteenth-notes and supported by antique counterpoint, restoring faith and hope. Alas, the happy ending is illusory: the opening tune with its nihilistic undercurrents returns to close the movement.

The Scherzo that follows is full of boisterous energy. It is permeated by the vigorous rhythmic character of its opening theme, which later is contrasted with a pair of more lyrical melodies. These, in turn, complement each other: the first is a waltz with a strong upward sweep, and the second descends the scale, giggling with glee. At the center of the movement is the Trio, for which Schubert penned a marvelous, full-throated chorus. After the Trio, the Scherzo returns to round off the movement in customary form.

Capping the work is an extraordinary finale, bursting with vitality and raw dynamism. The first half of the principal theme is brief, but it contains a rising third

and a dotted rhythm, just as the opening motive of the first movement did. Its second half is a swirl of spinning triplets. As if to serve as an obstacle to all this forward motion, the second theme starts with four deliberate hammer strokes on one note (this echoes the repeated notes in the main melody of the slow movement). These hammer strokes will come to play a major role as the movement progresses. These strokes are followed by a mostly linear tune. Its step-wise motion is broken only by—you guessed it—a rising melodic third. The development section begins with a theme derived from this linear tune, but altered to resemble the “Ode to Joy” melody from the last movement of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9. Schubert had been present at that work’s premiere in 1824, and it is thought that the experience may have provided some of the impetus to embark on his own grand symphonic project. All of these melodic ideas contribute to the non-stop jubilation that builds up to the final stunning climax.

Ironically, this innovative work, which seems to offer so much for the future of music, dropped completely out of the stream of music history for many years. After Schubert’s death the score was locked away, along with numerous other forgotten works, in a cupboard in the home of the composer’s brother Ferdinand. And there it lay, gathering dust, until New Year’s Day, 1839, when Robert Schumann came calling and rescued it from oblivion. He took it back home with him to Leipzig, where he persuaded his friend Felix Mendelssohn of its value, and a few months later Mendelssohn led the first performance of the work (albeit in a heavily cut form). Musicians of the time found its technical difficulties insurmountable: in several cities orchestral players simply refused to play it, or laughed it out of the room. Only during the second half of the 19th century did Schubert’s masterwork begin to be accepted into the repertoire.

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