ONCE EVERY 30 YEARS IS

NOW

Berkeley Symphony

KENT NAGANO

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

MOZART | BRUCKNER | ROHDE

THURS, SEPT 18, 2008 | UC BERKELEY ZELLERBACH HALL

Berkeley Symphony Orchestra

2008–09 Season

Kent Nagano, Conductor/Music Director

James A. Kleinmann, Executive Director

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

WOLFGANG AMADÈ MOZART
Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551, "Jupiter"

I. Allegro vivace
II. Andante cantabile
III. Menuetto. Allegretto/Trio
IV. Molto allegro

— INTERMISSION —

ANTON BRUCKNER
Symphony No. 7 in E Major

I. Allegro moderato
II. Adagio. Sehr feierlich und sehr langsam
III. Scherzo/Trio. Sehr schnell
IV. Finale. Bewegt, doch schnell

ENCORE

KURT ROHDE
Bis Bald

Commissioned by the Berkeley Symphony Board of Directors
to commemorate thirty years of Music Director Kent Nagano's
exceptional leadership and vision

World Premiere

Post-concert celebration in the Zellerbach lobby.

Season Sponsors

Kathleen G. Henschel

Presentation bouquets are graciously provided by Jutta's Flowers.

Tonight's concert will be broadcast on KALW 91.7 FM,
Sunday, January 25, 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

Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551, "Jupiter"

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 in Vienna on December 5, 1791. His Symphony No. 41 is his very last symphony, completed on August 10, 1788. The work is scored for flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, strings, and timpani. Duration ca. 29 min.

Incredible as it seems, Mozart composed his last three consummate symphonies within a three-month period in the summer of 1788: the E-flat Major Symphony was completed on June 26, just four days after he had completed the Piano Trio, K. 542; the G minor Symphony on July 25, just eleven days after the Piano Trio, K. 548; and the *Jupiter* Symphony in C Major on August 10. The myth that these symphonies were not composed for any specific occasion—but rather "for art's sake"—arose out of the lack of documentation from the composer's own pen or from corroborating concert announcements or reviews. Mozart's chief correspondent, his father Leopold, had died the previous year, so the flow of informative letters stopped. Nor was he on the best of terms with his sister, another potential source of information. Furthermore, symphonies were typically advertised without specific identification—"A symphony by Mozart" usually sufficed. And, many of the concerts Mozart arranged were private, and consequently rarely reported.

Having painstakingly sifted the evidence, Neal Zaslaw and other Mozart scholars have argued conclusively that it would have gone utterly against Mozart's nature and practice to compose anything without a commission, planned performance, or financially productive publication in mind. They have also documented that occasions for performance of these symphonies did exist, that they were indeed performed, and that Mozart must have heard some if not all three. One "occasion" was a series of 1788 concerts that H. C. Robbins Landon has convincingly shown to have taken place, contrary to most commentaries. Other occasions for which they might have been written include an aborted visit to London in 1789, a later tour of Germany that probably included performances of some if not all three symphonies under Mozart's guidance, and concerts he gave in Frankfurt and Mainz in 1790. Several sets of manuscript orchestral parts still exist in various European libraries, providing further evidence of performances in Mozart's lifetime, which he may or may not have heard.

Mozart's financial hardship during this time is apparent in his heartbreaking pleas to Michael Puchberg for loans and his dismal financial returns from concerts, tours, publishers, and visits to royalty. Though distressed on this front and annoyed at his lack of recognition in Vienna, Mozart was not contemplating his own mortality. Instead, he was looking for the next opportunity just around the bend. Expecting to live into the nineteenth century, he had no idea the C Major Symphony would be his last, but he could hardly have left a more summarizing and at the same time forward-thinking work to conclude his symphonic career. According to Mozart's son, as recorded in the travel diaries of London publisher Vincent Novello and his wife Mary, the C Major Symphony was nicknamed *Jupiter* by London concert manager Johann Peter Salomon, whose motivation remains unknown.

The opening theme of the first movement follows one of Mozart's favorite patterns, one he had picked up from Johann Christian Bach and had begun using as early as his First Symphony: an energetic gesture, followed by a soft, almost pleading phrase. Also of note toward the close of the movement is Mozart's self-quotation from an arietta he had written a year earlier, "Un bacio di mano," K. 541, to be inserted in Pasquale Anfossi's opera *Le gelosie fortunate.* By its inclusion in the Symphony, the music to the words "You are a little dense, my dear Pompeo; go and study the way of the world," has been raised to a lofty level.

The other-worldliness of the slow movement is brought about partly by the use throughout of muted strings and the absence of trumpets and timpani. Mendelssohn was delighted when he discovered that the masterstroke of the main theme reappearing just before the final cadential section was an afterthought—Mozart had added an extra leaf in the autograph score at that point just to include it.

Mozart's graceful minuet is almost completely derived from its opening theme, remarkable for its little chromatic descent, which toward the end of the second half becomes so contrapuntally entwined that the world of the dance is left far behind. Mozart bases the little melodic figure in the more lightly textured trio on the same descent, now slightly embellished. The loud outburst in the trio's second half seems to preview the main motive of the finale.

This opening four-note motive (C–D–F–E), having originated in Gregorian chant, was well known in Mozart's day, according to musicologist Susan Wollenberg, as the start of the hymn *Lucis creator.* Mozart employed it in several earlier vocal and instrumental compositions as did numerous other composers who found it extremely useful for combining and developing. Mozart takes this motive along with a wealth of other ideas and combines them in a contrapuntal tour de force that concludes with a magnificent fugal coda. Little wonder that the work achieved celebrity across Europe as "the symphony with the fugue." This crowning movement firmly establishes the trend away from conventional "tossed off" symphony closings and points to the symphony of the future in which the finale could be as forceful as the traditionally weighty first movement.

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Symphony No. 7 in E Major

ANTON BRUCKNER (1824–1896)

Anton Bruckner was born in Austria on September 4, 1824, in the village of Ansfelden in the Danube Valley. He died on October 11, 1896 in Vienna. He began work on his seventh symphony on September 23, 1881, a mere 20 days after completing his sixth, and on September 5, 1883, the work stood complete. The symphony received its premiere under Arthur Nikisch with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra on December 30, 1884. Hermann Levi gave the second performance in Munich on March 10 of the following year. The success of the latter performance earned Bruckner the right to dedicate the score to King Ludwig II of Bavaria. The score appears to have gone through three revisions, the third of which seems to reflect the composer's final intentions and is the basis of Leopold Nowak's 1954 edition which is used for tonight's performance. The work is scored for a slightly enlarged version of the standard orchestra of the mid-nineteenth century, calling for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, four horns, three each of trumpets and trombones, plus 4 "Wagner tubas" (2 tenor and 2 bass) and contrabass tuba, and timpani, triangle, cymbals, and strings. Duration ca. 64 min.

After years of controversy and public neglect, Anton Bruckner finally earned

critical acclaim and public acceptance with his Seventh Symphony. This socially awkward Austrian peasant, trained as a provincial parish organist, fought an uphill battle to make a career in Vienna. Often derided for his rustic dress and manners, he did not make matters easy for himself by declaring his adoration for the music of Richard Wagner, whose music was treated with contempt by the musical establishment in the Imperial capital. By the time of his 60th birthday, most of Bruckner's symphonies were unperformed and unpublished; however, the premiere of the Seventh Symphony—notably as part of a benefit concert to raise funds for a memorial to Wagner that took place *not* in Vienna but in Leipzig—signaled the start of his progress toward full recognition.

Describing the formal structures Bruckner followed in his symphonies, Deryck Cooke, writing in the first edition of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* points out that Bruckner took's Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as his inspiration:

> From Beethoven's Ninth Bruckner derived his four main movement types—the far-ranging first movement, the big adagio built from the varied alternation of two themes [itself an invention of Haydn], the sonata form scherzo, and the huge cumulative finale.

Another feature that the younger composer took over from the earlier work was the opening of the symphony with tremolo strings, *pianissimo,* out of which the first theme of the Seventh Symphony emerges. This makes the exact moment of the start of the work unclear, blurring the frame, as it were—a typical device of Romantic art. It also gives the listener the impression that the music has not just begun, but has in fact been going on for an unknown period of time (rather like the blackbody radiation that is the cosmic echo of the Big Bang) and that we are only now becoming aware of it. This is another conceit that would have appealed to the Romantic imagination.

This sprawling opening theme outlines an E Major triad, the tonal center of the work, but soon modulates deftly to B Major and back again. Bruckner's melodies often slip easily from one key to another, adding color to the harmony. Two more themes round out the melodic material of this movement: a serene linear tune, introduced by the winds, that contrasts with the leaping intervals of the opening theme, and finally a quiet and mysterious marchlike tune in B minor. In the course of the movement, Bruckner transforms the character of these themes by reclothing them in different harmonic garb and by setting them off against each other in a variety of contrapuntal combinations. Only at the very end of the movement does the opening theme triumphantly return home to E Major.

The famous Adagio (marked "Very solemn and very slow") is Bruckner's act of homage to his spiritual master, Richard Wagner, who died while Bruckner was writing the symphony. Indeed, it was a premonition of Wagner's death that inspired this memorial. In January of 1883 Bruckner wrote to a colleague: "One day I came home and felt very sad. The thought had crossed my mind that before long the Master would die, and just then the C-sharp minor theme of the Adagio came to me." Sure enough, within a month the Master did die.

The scoring of this theme, in character a mournful chorale, underlines the connection to Wagner: it is scored for five tubas of different sizes, four of which are "Wagner tubas," a unique hybrid instrument invented by the older composer for his immense four-opera cycle, *Der Ring des Nibelungen.* They combine the lightness and agility of the horn with the dark, mysterious quality of the tuba. Variations on the elegiac opening theme alternate with a more hopeful melody in F-sharp Major in triple meter. Finally, the second phrase of the "Wagner" theme attains a stunning apotheosis in glorious C Major. This moment is punctuated by cymbals and triangle, which Bruckner added to the score as an afterthought, supposedly at the moment he heard the news of Wagner's passing.

Bringing us back to the land of the living, the vivacious Scherzo spends a few measures revving its engines before firing up its first theme. Seen from afar, the Scherzo follows the traditional ABA' formal pattern, but in this case the B section does not have its own melodies, but develops those from the A section. The two parts are linked by a single timpani tapping out a dotted rhythm. This same timpani rhythm connects the Scherzo to the more relaxed Trio (whose tempo is marked as "Somewhat slower" and whose melody is labeled "songful"). The Scherzo is repeated, verbatim, after the Trio.

The complex finale ("moving along, but not fast") opens with a theme that is a close relative of the main theme of the first movement, but which is even more tonally slippery. After beginning in E Major, whose key signature includes four sharps, it soon drifts toward a cadence in A-flat (defined by four flats). This flirtation between sharp and flat keys provides much of the drama and intrigue of the movement, in which plain vanilla C Major often serves as neutral territory. As in the opening movement, the final triumphant arrival at E Major, the home key, is made all the more powerful by being delayed until the last possible minute.

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Bis Bald

KURT ROHDE (b. 1966)

Kurt Rohde was born in New York City on March 20, 1966. Bis Bald *was commissioned by the Berkeley Symphony board of directors as a musical surprise for Kent Nagano's last concert after 30 years as music director of the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra. The piece is scored for two flutes (doubling piccolo), two oboes, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, two trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, two percussionists and strings.Duration ca. 5 min.*

The composer has provided the following comments:

In May 2008, I received a call from the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra asking if I would be willing to compose a commemorative work to be performed on Kent's final concert leading Berkeley Symphony as Music Director. They asked that the piece be five minutes long, have the flexibility of being used as either a fanfare/overture or an encore, and that it utilize the instrumentation from the other works on the program, Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony and Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. Being relatively short on time, but possessing a wealth of requirements, I got to work almost immediately.

How do you commemorate Kent in five minutes, be it in music or in words? There would always be more to say, to explore and celebrate with someone like Kent. It became clear that whatever I decided on, 'commemorating' would be open ended, incomplete, almost as if there would have to be more that must be said, if not now, then next time. Kent will be back, so until next time, until soon, *bis bald,* we wish him mighty wonderful wishes on what lies ahead for him, and thank him deeply for the countless gifts he has graciously given to us all over the years.

Bis Bald ('until soon') is an exuberant piece, restlessly moving forward towards a nearly cataclysmic culmination, only to quickly dissipate into quiet, simple music at the conclusion of the piece. The reason for the work's closing open-endedness connects with the idea of 'until soon,' creating the feeling that there should be more to come, just as we all look forward to all that is to come when Kent returns to work with Berkeley Symphony in the future.

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