

SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS
RENÉE AND HENRY SEGERSTROM CONCERT HALL



presents

2016-17 HAL & JEANETTE SEGERSTROM FAMILY FOUNDATION CLASSICAL SERIES

Performance begins at 8 p.m.; Preview talk with Alan Chapman begins at 7 p.m.

DAVID DANZMAYR • CONDUCTOR | **NING FENG** • VIOLIN

Hamish MacCunn (1868-1916)

The Land of the Mountain and the Flood

Max Bruch (1838-1920)

Scottish Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 46

Prelude: Grave and Adagio cantabile
Allegro
Andante sostenuto
Finale: Allegro guerriero
Ning Feng

INTERMISSION

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Symphony No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 56 (Scottish)

Andante con moto - Allegro un poco agitato
Vivace non troppo
Adagio
Allegro vivacissimo - Allegro maestoso assai

The Thursday night concert is generously sponsored by **Julie and Bob Davey**.

The Friday night concert is generously sponsored by **Betty and S.L. Huang**.

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The Saturday, Feb. 4, concert is being recorded for broadcast on Sunday, March 5, at 7 p.m. on Classical KUSC.



HAMISH MACCUNN
(1868-1916)

The Land of the Mountain and the Flood

HAMISH MACCUNN (1868-1916)

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets,

2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion, strings

Performance time: 9 minutes

Background

Hamish MacCunn was a Scottish Romantic composer and conductor whose name is not exactly a byword in the U.S. these days, but the centenary of his death did not go unnoticed here in 2016. As writer Jennifer Oates noted for the North American British Music Studies Association, "MacCunn succeeded in establishing himself as a 'Scottish' composer; yet, this label only reflects one aspect of his music. There is little to no trace of his homeland in a significant proportion of his music, including most of his compositions from after 1900. These works—particularly his songs, partsongs, and works for cello and piano—are some of his most sophisticated efforts."

In *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood*, we hear both aspects of MacCunn's style—grounded in a broad knowledge of the European classical tradition, and radiant with the composer's love of his homeland. This concert overture is considered by many listeners to be the quintessential Scottish overture. As with so much music that celebrates Scotland, *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood* is indebted to Sir Walter Scott—in this case for its title, drawn from a stanza in Canto VI of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*:

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of the heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand!

What to Listen For

We live in an age of irony, so be forewarned: It's best to abandon trendy cynicism before listening to this unabashedly lyrical yet powerful music. No clever hidden meanings here: *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood* is a loving appreciation that could only have been written by a composer in tribute to his own homeland. It bears interesting comparison to another such work, the set of six symphonic poems comprising *Ma Vlast* ("my homeland," including the movement "The Moldau") that Bedrich Smetana composed as a paean to his native Bohemia. Smetana completed *Ma Vlast* in 1879; MacCunn completed his overture in 1887. Both were once praised somewhat grudgingly, as lovely but sentimental; both are now more fully appreciated...without an asterisk, one might say. "Stern," "wild" and "lush" are frequent descriptors for *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood*.

Music historians frequently cite George Bernard Shaw's contemporary review of this work. The text is always described as "withering," and it is. Even its praise of the "charming Scotch overture" is somewhat dismissive. Shaw's music criticism could be hilariously polemical, as it was in this case, when he described how MacCunn's supposedly formulaic development section inspired him to set a typist up in business churning out by-the-numbers development sections based on just a few notes (and no musical knowledge). In fairness to MacCunn, we'll refrain from quoting the (Irish) Shaw here. But if you're curious, his characterization is widely available online.

Scottish Fantasy

MAX BRUCH (1838-1920)

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets,

2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, 2 percussion, harp, strings, solo violin

Performance time: 30 minutes

Background

Today's political spin-doctors would have no trouble casting a deceptively rosy glow over the life of composer Max Bruch. After all, his music enjoyed popularity in his own lifetime and remains popular today. His three fine violin concertos and the beloved *Scottish Fantasy* demonstrate a rare gift for the ardently voiced melody, and his deep feeling for the violin has made him perhaps the least familiar name among composers of the most cherished standard-repertory concertos for the instrument. His violin music has everything that Romantic and modern audiences could ask for in a classic concerto: singing lines, passionate phrasing, extreme dynamics, overarching drama, double- and triple-stops. If you've only heard Bruch on recording, watch the soloist dig into the strings: this is music to play while bobbing your shoulders or tossing your hair.

But Bruch's popularity did not equate with success during his lifetime; his first concerto seemed almost cursed by its own popularity. He composed it when he was 28, more than a decade before the *Scottish Fantasy*, and found both listeners and musicians clamoring for it—to the almost total exclusion of his later compositions, which boast the same qualities.

Bruch's hard luck seemed to begin in 1868, after he revised his first concerto with the assistance of the great violinist Joseph Joachim. The later version, which is the performing edition we know today, was first performed in January 1868—beginning the concerto's oddly jinxed history. Though he kept a copy of the score for himself, Bruch sold the original score and its rights to his publisher, and in the economic turmoil surrounding World War I, it passed in and out of the hands of

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various Bruch associates until its final sale to the collection of Pierpont Morgan Library. The one element all these transfers had in common was that they did not benefit Bruch in any way.

Even with performances of his first concerto seemingly in every concert hall, Bruch suffered economic privation throughout his life. Small wonder he was embittered by this concerto's success. "Nothing compares the laziness, stupidity and dullness of many German violinists," he wrote to his publisher. "Every fortnight another one comes to me wanting to play the First Concerto; I have now become rude, and tell them: 'I cannot listen to this concerto any more—did I perhaps write just one? Go away, and play my other concertos, which are just as good, if not better.'"

That phrase "other concertos" doubtless encompasses his *Scottish Fantasy*, which has all the breadth and virtuosity of a concerto for violin, though it is more rhapsodic in form. But from the development of the *Fantasy*, we can see that Bruch's hard luck was, at least in part, of his own making. He seems frequently to have expected the worst... and found it.

Always an admirer of great violin playing, Bruch had been lavish in praising the Spanish virtuoso Pablo de Sarasate, whom he met in 1871 when returning from a trip to Switzerland. In 1877, when Bruch conducted Sarasate in his first violin concerto, the public's response—and, more importantly, Bruch's—was overwhelmingly positive. Sarasate wanted to commission a work from the composer, and Bruch was eager to write for him. In a letter to his friend Otto Goldschmidt, an esteemed pianist, Bruch wrote, "Yesterday, when I thought vividly about Sarasate, the marvelous artistry of his playing re-emerged in me. I was lifted anew and I was able to write, in one night, almost half of the *Scottish Fantasy* that has been so long in my head."

From these beginnings, things deteriorated rapidly. The prickly Bruch was more than a little annoyed when Sarasate did not leap at the chance to meet with him to consult on the commission. It was customary for soloists—especially dedicatees—to work with concerto composers, but it was also a time of new-found fame and glamour for star instrumentalists. The friction between Bruch and Sarasate looks suspiciously like a clash of egos, and it prompted Bruch to pack up his score and seek another star violinist to advise him: Joseph Joachim.

It was Joachim who was soloist at the *Fantasy's* premiere in Liverpool in 1881. But Joachim, too, ignited Bruch's temper. Bruch lambasted Joachim's performance, finding that his lack of preparation and passion "annihilated" the work. Overstatement? Perhaps. But remember, Bruch was still seeking to bring his composing career out from the shadow of his Concerto No. 1, and he had every reason to hope that the spectacular *Scottish Fantasy* would do just that.

What to Listen For

Foreign cultures and faraway landscapes have always held irresistible fascination for European classical composers. To continental composers of the 19th century, Scotland was a strange, exotic world unto itself, yet just across the Channel. Italian composers of the era created no fewer than 25 operas based on the Waverly Novels of Sir Walter Scott, including such staples as Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (based on *The Bride of Lammermoor*) and Rossini's *La Donna del Lago* (based on *The Lady of the Lake*). Even these operas' ardent fans are usually hard-pressed to hear the sound of Scotland in them.

Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy*, too, is informed by Scott's writing—at least in its moody introduction, which depicts "an old bard contemplating



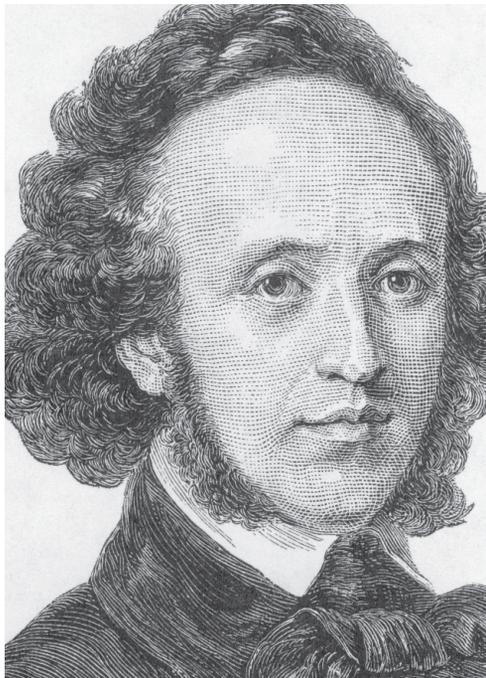
MAX BRUCH
(1838-1920)

the ruins of a castle, and the glorious times of old." But Bruch's treatment of these materials, by contrast, really does seem to breathe the air of Scotland. German-born and -bred, he had long felt a special affection for Scottish music, and in 1863—when he was only 25—he published his arrangements of *Twelve Scottish Songs* for voice and piano. Some of the songs that enchanted him then came from James Johnson's reference volume *Scots Musical Museum*, which Bruch had encountered in Munich.

In the *Fantasy's* four movements (rather than a concerto's customary three), each movement is based on a Scottish folk song with centuries-old roots. In the adagio cantabile first movement, we hear a luxuriously slow-paced approach to "Through the Wood Laddie"; the second movement goes more up-tempo with "The Dusty Miller," a tune dating back to the time of Shakespeare and King James VI. In the third movement, with its moderate pace (marked *andante*), we reach an impassioned rendition of "I'm A'Doun for Lack O' Johnnie"—a song of love and remembrance that, in Bruch's hands, does not need words to break our hearts. This is the emotional core of the *Fantasy*, which ends with the equally passionate call to Scottish national pride, "Scots Wha Hae"—sometimes called the unofficial Scottish national anthem.

Questions of authenticity aside—there is no beginning or end to that discussion—the sound of the *Scottish Fantasy* is surely enough to make listeners feel Scottish, regardless of our national origins. Bruch pays real respect to the ancient traditions of Scottish fiddle players with music full of double- and triple-stops. It digs deeply into the strings, yet also manages to turn sprightly, like sun breaking through the mist on the moors. It also gives a prominent role to Scotland's beloved harp; in fact, the *Fantasy's* original title (in German) designated it as a work for solo violin and harp with orchestra.

With the *Fantasy's* enormously appealing combination of Scottish-inspired violin technique and virtuosic showmanship typical of continental Romantic violin concertos, Bruch may well have had high hopes for it. Surprisingly, it seemed to disappear from the concert hall in the first half of the 20th century, but has remained a staple of the violin repertory since Jascha Heifetz revived it in 1947.



FELIX MENDELSSOHN
(1809-1847)

Symphony No. 3 in A Minor, "Scottish"

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings

Performance time: 40 minutes

Background

Some of Mendelssohn's most brilliant musical inspirations came from his travels, as we can readily hear in the landscapes evoked in his compositions, and in their nicknames—the Italian Symphony, the Hebrides Overture and the Scottish Symphony, to name three. But even Mendelssohn enthusiasts can be confused by the titles of his travel-inspired works. His third symphony, "The Scottish," was not published until after the one catalogued as No. 4, "The Italian." The Hebrides Overture, which was inspired by the same trip to Scotland as his Scottish Symphony, was originally titled "The Lonely Island," and is also known as "Fingal's Cave"—an alternate title that sounds like it should identify an excerpt; the cave is, after all, just one of the geographic wonders of Scotland's Hebrides Islands.

What's important is not to keep track of the composer's comings and goings, but to sit back and listen to his amazingly vivid musical evocations of the natural landscape. Mendelssohn's amazing musical precocity is the reason he is so often compared with Mozart, and like Mozart, he often composed music that seems to accomplish the impossible. He wrote mature masterpieces in his teens and toured Scotland with a close friend when he was 20 years old. The country's rugged landscape and culture deeply inspired him at that young age—particularly with its embodiment of the Romantic fascination with the dichotomy of the individual versus nature. Imagine a college sophomore of today brooding over such ideas!

Mendelssohn's "travel" compositions, including his Scottish Symphony, are acknowledged as some of the most brilliant evocations of landscape in the history of music. By his own account, Mendelssohn conceived the Scottish Symphony after a visit to Great Britain in 1829. Following a successful series of performances in London, he embarked on a walking tour of Scotland with his friend

Karl Klingemann and was particularly moved by the picturesque, evocative ruins of the chapel at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh. In a letter describing this experience, he included a sketch of the symphony's opening theme.

Despite the deep impression that this visit made and a quick start on the opening movement, Mendelssohn struggled with the symphony's development. After a series of initial sketches, he laid the work aside in 1831. This interruption, apparently, was just what was needed; after resuming work in 1841, he was able to complete the symphony in the first weeks of the year—the fifth and final symphony he composed, though the third to be published. The premiere was played in March, 1841 in the Leipzig Gewandhaus.

What to Listen For

As we can readily hear in the Scottish Symphony, Mendelssohn's "travel music" really does suggest the landscapes and cultures that inspired it. The symphony's first movement is grand and joyful, with a briskness and energy that seem true to Scotland. This effect is even more marked in the lively second movement, which evokes the tunes and rhythms of Scottish folk music without directly quoting from Scottish sources. The contemplative third movement gives way to an energetic finale that draws from the rhythms of Scottish folk dances. In an elevated, German-style coda, Mendelssohn seems to conclude the symphony with a Scottish-German alliance of his own invention.

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and Louisiana Philharmonic, and editor-in-chief for The Santa Fe Opera.

THANK YOU TO OUR CONCERT SPONSORS

JULIE AND BOB DAVEY (Thursday)

Pacific Symphony is pleased to thank Julie and Bob Davey, who are avid supporters of classical music. Bob is a distinguished member of the Board of Counselors where he serves on the Governing Committee. Julie has been active with Symphony 100 and now serves on the Board of this group. Both Julie and Bob bring their passion for classical music and their leadership strengths to make significant contributions to Pacific Symphony as volunteers and supporters. We are very grateful to Julie and Bob Davey for their friendship, dedication and all they do for Pacific Symphony.

BETTY AND S.L. HUANG (Friday)

Betty and S.L. Huang are very generous philanthropists in Orange County. In addition to generous support to Pacific Symphony, they support higher education, Segerstrom Center for the Arts and South Coast Repertory. Betty is a past volunteer leader of Pacific Symphony's annual Gala. In conjunction with the Gala, the Huangs organized, curated and guided a Symphony patron tour to China. S.L. has enjoyed taking the podium as a special guest conductor for Pacific Symphony at a Pops concert. We are very grateful to Betty and S.L. Huang for their support of Pacific Symphony and the Orange County community.

In honor of **Senior Independence Month**, Pacific Symphony would like to recognize our Heartstrings partner **Age Well Senior Services** who is devoted to providing critical services to help enhance, enrich and prolong the lives of homebound and low-income senior citizens living in South Orange County. Please look for **Age Well** in the lobby on Feb. 2-4, or visit www.agewellseniorservices.org to learn more.





DAVID DANZMAYR
CONDUCTOR

Described by *The Herald* as "extremely good, concise, clear, incisive and expressive," David Danzmayr is widely regarded as one of the most talented and exciting European conductors of his generation. Danzmayr is chief conductor of the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra in Croatia, the first to hold this title in seven years. As leader of this orchestra, he is following in the footsteps of famous conductors like Lovro von Matacic, Kazushi Ono and Dmitri Kitajenko. Last season, he led the orchestra in a highly successful tour to the Salzburg Festspielhaus where they performed the prestigious New Year's concert and were immediately re-invited to perform in future seasons.

In the U.S., Danzmayr is music director of the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra in Ohio, where his contract was recently extended, as well as the artistic advisor of the Breckenridge Music Festival. Previously, Danzmayr served as music director of the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, where his performances were lauded regularly by both the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Classical Review*. He was also the only conductor in the Chicago area who programmed a piece of American music on every concert. Danzmayr has won prizes at some of the world's most prestigious conducting competitions, including a second prize at the International Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition and prizes at the International Malko Conducting Competition. For his extraordinary success, he was awarded the Bernhard Paumgartner Medal by the Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum, and he has quickly become a sought-after guest conductor for orchestras around the globe. He has served as assistant conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, which he conducted in more than 70 concerts, performing in all the major Scottish concert halls and in the prestigious Orkney-based St Magnus Festival.

Danzmayr received his musical training at the University Mozarteum in Salzburg where, after initially studying piano, he went on to study conducting in the class of Dennis Russell Davies. He was strongly influenced by Pierre Boulez and Claudio Abbado in his time as conducting stipendiary of the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra and by Leif Segerstam during his additional studies in the conducting class at the Sibelius Academy.



NING FENG
VIOLIN

Established at the highest level in China, Ning Feng performs regularly in his native country with major international and local orchestras, in recital and with the Dragon Quartet, which he founded in 2012. Now based in Berlin and enjoying a global career, Ning has developed a reputation internationally as an artist of great lyricism and emotional transparency, displaying tremendous bravura and awe-inspiring technical accomplishment. Born in Chengdu, China, Ning studied at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music, the Hanns Eisler School of Music (Berlin) with Antje Weithaas and the Royal Academy of Music (London) with Hu Kun, where he was the first student to be awarded 100% for his final recital.

The recipient of prizes at the Hanover International, Queen Elizabeth and Yehudi Menuhin International violin competitions, Ning was first prize winner of the 2005 Michael Hill International Violin Competition (New Zealand), and in 2006 won first prize in the International Paganini Competition. Recent successes for Ning have included debuts with the LA Philharmonic and Frankfurt Radio Symphony, a tour of China with Vasily Petrenko and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, a major European tour with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and Jaap van Zweden, and returns to Berlin Konzerthausorchester and Singapore Symphony Orchestra.

Highlights of Ning's 2016-17 season include a return to Budapest Festival Orchestra/Iván Fischer performing Dutilleux's *L'arbre des songes* with concerts in Budapest and on tour in China, and a major tour with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and van Zweden, performing in Seoul, Singapore, Melbourne, Sydney and Osaka, where he will perform Bartók's Violin Concerto No. 2 and Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4. Elsewhere, he makes his debut with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London playing Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1. He returns to the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, Macao Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (for two concerts and a recording), and in Eindhoven he performs a recital of solo Bach to mark the release of his new recording. Ning records for Channel Classics in the Netherlands and his debut concerto disc featured Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy* and the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin. His latest disc, *Apasionado*, with Orchestra Sinfónica del Principado de Asturias and Rossen Milanov, features works by Sarasate, Lalo, Ravel and Bizet/Waxman and was released in March 2016. Ning plays a 1721 Stradivari violin, known as the "MacMillan," on private loan, kindly arranged by Premiere Performances of Hong Kong, and plays on strings by Thomastik-Infeld, Vienna.