

BEETHOVEN'S VIOLIN CONCERTO

2019-20 HAL & JEANETTE SEGERSTROM FAMILY FOUNDATION CLASSICAL SERIES

Christian Arming, conductor
Clara-Jumi Kang, violin

Beethoven

VIOLIN CONCERTO IN D MAJOR

Allegro ma non troppo
Larghetto
Rondo: Allegro

Intermission

Dvořák

SYMPHONY NO. 8 IN G MAJOR

Allegro con brio
Adagio
Allegretto grazioso
Allegro ma non troppo

Preview talk with Alan Chapman @ 7 p.m.

Thursday, January 16, 2020 @ 8 p.m.

Friday, January 17, 2020 @ 8 p.m.

Saturday, January 18, 2020 @ 8 p.m.

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broadcast on Sunday, March 1, 2020,
on Classical KUSC.*

PROGRAM NOTES

Ludwig van Beethoven: Violin Concerto in D Major



We can see all the clichés about classical composers of the Romantic era in the portraits of Beethoven that have come down to us over the generations. With his burning

eyes and rock-star hair, he seems to be ignoring us as he listens to the ideas in his head, struggling through insuperable difficulties to achieve a beautiful result. Composing was a Promethean struggle for Beethoven. Yet the concerto was a form that seemed to fit him like a glove: grand in scale and formally congenial to him, offering a forum for discourse between a single soloist and the massed forces of the orchestra that reflected his concern with the individual's place in society. We hear this aptness in all the piano concertos (Beethoven was, after all, a pianist), and perhaps most surprisingly in the ease and grace of his glorious Violin Concerto in D Major.

But then, we love this concerto more for its sheer beauty than for its innovations. Beethoven was 36 when he composed it, and he was said to be so confident of the work's lasting merit that he made a rash boast—predicting that violinists would still be playing it 50 years after his death. Now well over two centuries old, it dates from 1806, about two decades before Beethoven's death in 1827; the story of his confidence in it is still told to illustrate both the scale of

his talent and his outsized ego, fueled by determination and unconfined by seemly modesty. (In those days, even the greatest compositions tended to drop out of public performance within 25 years.) But the facts surrounding the composition of the concerto belie such picturesque lore, or at least some of it.

Beethoven was persuaded to write the concerto for one of the best-known violin virtuosos of his day, Franz Clement, and everything about the circumstances of its creation seems to have contributed to a circus-like atmosphere at the premiere. The contemporary accounts sound dreadful to us now. Clement was by all accounts a remarkable soloist who had been a spectacular child prodigy, but he never outgrew a penchant for daredevil showmanship. According to some hearsay reports he insisted on sight-reading the concerto and inserting a sonata of his own composition in the middle or at the end of Beethoven's work. In performing his own sonata, he is said to have held the violin upside-down and played on one string. No definitive evaluations of the performance quality have come down to us, but we can only wonder if it would've made a difference.

Another surprising circumstance was the haste of the concerto's composition. We know that Beethoven often agonized over his music, but for this benefit concert (with Clement himself as beneficiary), there was no time for indecision or even for preparatory conferences with the soloist. The orchestra, too, was said to be virtually unrehearsed.

Under these circumstances, it was perhaps inevitable that the initial commentary on the concerto was unenthusiastic. One contemporary critic, Johannes Moser, described Beethoven's thematic material as commonplace,

confused, wearisome and repetitious. It's difficult to reconcile that description with the concerto that we know and love today, but not with its performance history—which included only three public hearings between 1806 and 1844.

Well, a couple of centuries can make quite a difference. Now, this concerto is probably the most beloved and certainly the most frequently programmed in the repertory. It possesses all the grandeur of the piano concertos, and exceeds the scale of any earlier violin concerto; it also begins with the longest introduction of any violin concerto preceding the soloist's entrance. These are familiar hallmarks of Beethoven the form-breaker and innovator—signs of the new level of serious utterance that Beethoven brought to the concerto form.

In addition to the characteristic scope and dignity we hear in Beethoven's piano concertos, the violin concerto is also written with a sympathy for the instrument that is not always evident in Beethoven. It's no accident that "against the instrument" is a phrase we often read in analyses of Beethoven's compositions; some of his compositions for piano, voice and strings (in the quartets) seem written to challenge or contradict the usual modes of expression for these instruments. In the violin concerto, by contrast, a *cantabile* quality prevails that is the very essence of "violinistic" writing, like a song without words.

This sense of instrumental sympathy and singing line is achieved without cliché. The first movement declares its gravitas by opening with four startling beats on the timpani, and though it is marked *allegro*, there is an air of stateliness and a poetic introduction to the much-loved main theme—a six-note ascending scale that begins on the third note of the scale, F-sharp, and ascends to the tonic of D before dropping back down to the dominant A. This simple melody, one of the most familiar in the violin repertory, could have been built around a central triplet, but Beethoven achieves a more poetic effect by using only half-, quarter- and eighth-notes without triplet figures.

While the concerto's second movement, a *largetto*, is in G major, the third (and final) returns to D major, framing the concerto in moods of similarity and contrast. The opening movement's *allegro* is dignified and almost solemn (the *allegro* pace is marked *ma non troppo*—"but not too much"), built grandly upon a four-beat motif that sings. But the closing rondo,

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: 1770. Bonn, Germany

Died: 1827. Vienna, Austria

Violin Concerto in D Major

Composed: 1806

World premiere: Dec. 23, 1806, with Franz Clement as soloist

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: Jan. 13, 2018, with Ray Chen as soloist

Instrumentation: flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons; 2 horns, 2 trumpets; timpani; strings; solo violin

Estimated duration: 42 minutes

with a full-out *allegro*, dances—with a six-beat motif that is charged with energy and a sense of celebration. Its finale, a soaring arpeggiated phrase that ascends an octave and a fourth to end on a single blast of the tonic D Major, is a short summation for Beethoven, but no less emphatic for its brevity.

Antonin Dvořák: Symphony No. 8 in G Major



Dvořák's symphonies were widely admired during his lifetime—at least, those that the public had heard. Dvořák's advocate Johannes Brahms had worked off and on for

two decades before unveiling his first symphony when he was 43. By the time Dvořák was that age, he was working on his Symphony No. 7 in 1885; No. 8 followed two years later. But those facts conceal a reticence on Dvořák's part that was apparently on a par with Brahms': he never published his first four symphonies during his lifetime, and they remained unknown until they surfaced in the 1950s. Until then, the numbering of Dvořák's symphonies remained muddled, and this one was published with the number that Dvořák had inexplicably assigned it: four. This insecurity—if that's what it was—did not result from a lack of critical and collegial support, nor did it hinder his creativity during the period when he wrote his Symphony No. 8. It was one of the most productive times of his life.

Dvořák dispatched his Symphony No. 8 in just about 10 weeks' time and

conducted the premiere on the occasion of his election to the Bohemian Academy of Science, Literature and the Arts. In contrast with the stormy, brooding No. 7 and the phenomenally popular No. 9 ("From the New World"), with its haunting evocations of American folkways, Dvořák's Eighth is bright, bucolic and irrepressibly Bohemian. The ever-insightful musicologist Phillip Huscher has called it Dvořák's "Pastoral," referencing Beethoven's. Though Huscher hears Brahms' voice in Dvořák's music (and rarely the other way around), other listeners (including this one) believe that Brahms' main influence on Dvořák's symphonies was in demonstrating how symphonic form in the hands of a master could accommodate individuality of expression—in this case, the country dances that Dvořák loved so much.

This is Dvořák's music at its most optimistic. Like the phenomenally popular Ninth, it took shape in a country setting—in this case, at the composer's summer resort in Bohemia. (He would compose the Ninth in rural Iowa about three years later.) Few of his compositions came so easily to him, free of conflict and doubt. "Melodies simply pour out of me," he said while writing it. He completed the first movement in two weeks, and the remaining three even more rapidly. The result is not just buoyant, but has a kind of rural fecundity to it, like a midsummer meadow bursting with green. As his countryman Leoš Janáček remarked, "You've scarcely got to know one figure before a second one beckons with a friendly nod, so you're in a state of constant but pleasurable excitement."

The symphony opens not in G Major but in G Minor, with a motif that recurs like a reminder preceding a series of cheerier themes. The gentle, leisurely second movement also alternates between major and minor, this time in C. It slowly builds to a dramatic climax, then opens onto a

brilliant waltz in the third. The symphony's joyful finale is a movement built upon a theme and variations. Pleasing and elemental, it is proof that in music, nothing is more difficult than simplicity: to achieve the ease and naturalness he wanted for it, Dvořák reportedly worked harder on this section than on any other passage in the symphony, toiling through nine drafts before he was satisfied. The movement's mercurial changes of mood end with nearly explosive enthusiasm, in a final page that Huscher has called "ripping-roaring."

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.

Antonín Dvořák

Born: 1841. Nelahozeves, Czechia

Died: 1904. Prague, Czech Republic

Symphony No. 8 in G Major

Composed: 1889

World premiere: Feb. 2, 1890, with Dvořák conducting

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: April 12, 2014, with Tito Muñoz conducting

Instrumentation: 2 flutes including piccolo, 2 oboes including English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons; 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba; timpani; strings

Estimated duration: 34 minutes



CLARA-JUMI KANG

An artist of impeccable elegance and poise, Clara-Jumi Kang has carved an international career performing with the leading orchestras and conductors across Asia and Europe. Winner of the 2010 Indianapolis International Violin Competition, Kang's other accolades include first prizes at the Seoul Violin Competition (2009) and the Sendai Violin Competition (2010).

Having made her concerto debut at the age of 5 with the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, Kang has since performed with leading European orchestras including the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Kremerata Baltica, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Belgique and the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande.

In the U.S., she has performed with orchestras including the Atlanta, New Jersey, Indianapolis and Santa Fe symphony orchestras, while elsewhere highlights have included appearances with the Mariinsky Orchestra, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, New Japan Philharmonic, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, NCPA Beijing Orchestra, Macao Philharmonic and the Taipei Symphony. A prominent figure in Korea, she has performed with all of the major Korean orchestras and in 2012 was selected as one of the top 100 "most promising and influential people of Korea" by major Korean newspaper *Dong-A Times*. She returns annually to Korea for tours and was awarded the 2012 Daewon Music Award for her outstanding international achievements, as well as being named Kumho Musician of the Year in 2015.

She has collaborated with eminent conductors including Valery Gergiev, Lionel Briguier, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Andrey Boreyko, Christoph Poppen, Vladimir Spivakov, Yuri Temirkanov, Gidon Kremer, Gilbert Varga, LüJia, Myun-Whun Chung, Heinz Holliger and Kazuki Yamada.

Kang's first solo album entitled "Modern Solo" was released on Decca in 2011 and featured works including Schubert's *Erk König* and Ysaÿe's solo sonatas. Her second recording for the label of the Brahms and Schumann Violin Sonatas with pianist Yeol-Eum Son was released in 2016.

A devoted chamber musician, Kang is a regular visitor to festivals across Asia and Europe, with recent highlights including the Pyeongchang, Hong Kong, Ishikawa and Marvao Chamber music festivals. She is also a member of the Berlin Spectrum Concerts series and has collaborated with artists including Boris Berezovsky, Boris Brovtsyn, Eldar Nebolsin, Gidon Kremer, Guy Braunstein, Julian Rachlin, Maxim Rysanov, Misha Maisky, Sunwook Kim, Vadim Repin and Yeol Eum Son.

European concerto highlights of the 2018-19 season included engagements with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León, Musikkollegium Winterthur, Nordic Chamber Orchestra, Rheinische Philharmonie, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Dalasinfoniettan, Moscow Soloists and Concerto Budapest. Further afield, she returned to Japan for performances with the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra, while engagements in China took her to the Hangzhou Philharmonic Orchestra and the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra. Recital tours took Kang to Italy and Korea in collaboration

with pianists Sunwook Kim and Alessio Bax, while chamber music performances included the Spectrum Concerts series at the Berlin Philharmonie and Pyeongchang Chamber Music Festival.

Born in Germany to a musical family, Kang took up the violin at the age of 3 and a year later enrolled as the youngest ever student at the Mannheim Musikhochschule. She went on to study with Zakhar Bron at the Lübeck Musikhochschule and at the age of 7 was awarded a full scholarship to the Julliard School to study with Dorothy Delay. She graduated with her bachelor and masters degrees from the Korean National University of Arts under Nam-Yun Kim before completing her studies at the Munich Musikhochschule with Christoph Poppen.

Kang currently plays the 1708 "Ex-Strauss" Stradivarius, generously on loan to her from the Samsung Cultural Foundation of Korea.



CHRISTIAN ARMING

Christian Arming is one of Austria's most sought after conductors, highly successful in both the symphonic and operatic fields. Since 2011, he has held the post of music director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Liège in Belgium. He has also held music directorships with the New Japan Philharmonic in Tokyo from 2003 to 2013, and the Lucerne Theatre and Symphony Orchestra from 2002 to 2004. In 2017, he was named principal guest conductor of the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra.

In North America, he has conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Cincinnati, Houston, Colorado, Fort Worth, New Jersey, Utah and Vancouver symphonies. Most recently, he made highly acclaimed debuts with the St. Louis and Atlanta symphonies. He is also invited annually to both the Aspen and Roundtop festivals in the U.S. A regular guest conductor in Asia, he has worked with the NHK, Hiroshima and Shanghai symphonies, as well as the philharmonic orchestras of Taiwan and Malaysia.

Born in Vienna, Arming studied conducting under Leopold Hager at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. Seiji Ozawa has also been a mentor and supporter of his career, introducing him to Boston and Tokyo. At the age of 24, he was appointed chief conductor of the Janáček Philharmonic in Ostrava, Czech Republic, a position he held from 1996 to 2002.

Since conducting the Czech Philharmonic at the opening concert of the Prague Spring Festival in May 2003, Arming's career has continued

to flourish. He has conducted many of the top European orchestras, including the Staatskapelle Dresden, Deutsches Sinfonieorchester, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Munich Philharmonic, NDR Hamburg, Salzburg Mozarteum, Vienna Symphony, Polish National Radio Symphony, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Prague Symphony, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Barcelona Symphony, Belgium National, Capitoile de Toulouse and RAI Turin orchestras.

North American highlights of the 2019-20 season include debut engagements with the Indianapolis Symphony, Pacific Symphony and the Fort Worth Symphony, as well as return engagements with the Aspen Chamber Orchestra and the Round Top Festival (Texas). A regular guest conductor in Asia, he has worked with the NHK, Hiroshima and Shanghai symphonies, in addition to the philharmonic orchestras of Taiwan and Malaysia. He has just returned from a very successful tour of Japan with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Liège.

In the 2018-19 season, Arming returned to the stage in his hometown, conducting the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra at the Wiener Konzerthaus. He also had the honor of sharing the podium with his mentor, Seiji Ozawa, in a new production of *Carmen* in Kyoto, Yokosuka and Tokyo.

Christian Arming's discography includes a 2018 Deutsche Grammophon release with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Liège and the Sirba Octet, a unique Klezmer ensemble made up of musicians from the Orchestre de Paris. He has also recorded for the Arte Nova and Rosa Classic labels with the Janáček Philharmonic; the Fontec label with the New

Japan Philharmonic; Wagner arias with Russian bass-baritone Evgeny Nikitin for the Naïve label, in addition to a recording of the Frank Symphony in D Minor with the Liège Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, which won the Diapason d'Or.

Equally at home with operatic repertoire, Arming has won many supporters in the operatic world since his 1997 debut at the Salzburg Festival; two immediate re-invitations followed. His subsequent productions have included Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* (Cincinnati); *Der Rosenkavalier* (Trieste); *La Bohème* (Lucerne); *Salome and Elektra* (Verona); *Prince Igor* (Strasbourg); as well as *The Flying Dutchman*, *Don Giovanni*, *Jenůfa*, *Tales of Hoffmann* and *Der Zwerg* for the Frankfurt Opera. He regularly conducts productions in Tokyo, the most recent being *Pelleas and Mélisande*, *Leonore*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Salome*, *A Florentine Tragedy*, *Lohengrin* and *Die Fledermaus*.

Arming's varied discography includes works by Janáček and Schubert with the Janáček Philharmonic (Arte Nova and Rosa Classic); Brahms Symphony No. 1 and Mahler Symphonies Nos. 3 and 5 with the New Japan Philharmonic (Fontec); and more recently, with the Liège Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Franck's Symphony in D Minor (Diapason d'Or) and a CD of Wagner opera arias with Russian bass-baritone Evgeny Nikitin (Naïve). All have received positive reviews in the international music press.