

ORANGE COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
RENÉE AND HENRY SEGERSTROM CONCERT HALL
Thursday, Friday & Saturday, October 15–17, 2009, at 8:00 p.m.
Preview talk with Alan Chapman at 7:00 p.m.



PRESENTS

2009–2010 HAL AND JEANETTE SEGERSTROM FAMILY FOUNDATION CLASSICS SERIES

CARL ST. CLAIR, CONDUCTOR
MARKUS GROH, PIANO • MATTHIAS KIRSCHNEREIT, PIANO
TOBIAS MELLE, PHOTOCHOREOGRAPHER

MOZART Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*,
(1756–1791) K. 492

MOZART Concerto for Two Pianos, No. 10 in
E-flat Major, K. 365
Allegro
Andante
Rondo: Allegro
MARKUS GROH
MATTHIAS KIRSCHNEREIT

— I N T E R M I S S I O N —

STRAUSS An Alpine Symphony, Op. 64
(1864–1949) Nacht (Night)
Sonnenaufgang (Sunrise)
Der Anstieg (The Ascent)
Eintritt in den Wald (Entry into the Woods)
Wanderung neben dem Bache
(Wandering along the Brook)
Am Wasserfall (At the Waterfall)
Erscheinung (Apparition)

Auf blumigen Wiesen (On Blooming
Meadows)
Auf der Alm (On the Alpine Pasture)
Durch Dickicht und Gestrüpp auf
Irrwegen (Going Astray through the
Thicket)
Auf dem Gletscher (On the Glacier)
Gefahrvolle Augenblicke (Moments of
Danger)
Auf dem Gipfel (At the Summit)
Vision (Vision)
Nebel steigen auf (The Fog Rises)
Die Sonne verdüstert sich allmählich
(The Sun Gradually Darkens)
Elegie (Elegy)
Stille vor dem Sturm (Calm before the
Storm)
Gewitter und Sturm, Abstieg (Thunder
and Storm, Descent)
Sonnenuntergang (Sunset)
Ausklang (Vanishing Sounds)
Nacht (Night)
TOBIAS MELLE

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PROGRAM NOTES

BY PETER LAKI, *Program Annotator for Pacific Symphony and the Cleveland Orchestra*



MOZART

Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*, K. 492 (1786)

BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
(SALZBURG, 1756 - VIENNA, 1791)

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings.
Performance time: 5 minutes.

In its own time, *The Marriage of Figaro* was a potentially “dangerous” piece because it openly challenged certain long-standing social conventions of class. The play on which it was based, written in 1781 by French playwright Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, was forbidden by the Viennese censors, due to the explicit anti-aristocratic views expressed by the barber, Figaro. These sentiments were a clear signal of the French Revolution, which broke out only a few years later. The opera, premiered in 1786 in Vienna, was approved only after librettist Lorenzo da Ponte had excised or softened the play’s most inflammatory passages. Even so, there is an open conflict between Count Almaviva and the lower-class characters Figaro and Susanna who devise an elaborate play to outwit him.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The overture is a fireball of energy that anticipates the high speed of the action and gives us a foretaste of the strong emotional forces that fill the four acts, though Mozart used no actual melodies from the opera itself.

Concerto for Two Pianos No. 10 in E-flat Major, K. 365 (1779)

BY MOZART

Instrumentation: two solo pianos; 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, and strings.
Performance time: 25 minutes.

Mozart had an older sister named Anna Maria (“Nannerl”) who, like her brother, was a child prodigy on the piano. Their father took them both on extended concert tours to Vienna, Paris, and London, where her success equaled Wolfgang’s. Yet, as a woman, she was denied the chance of a musical career; she gave up performing entirely when she got married and worked only as a teacher.

It is unlikely that she ever had a chance to play the concerto her brother wrote with the two of them in mind. Instead, Mozart performed the work with his talented student Josephine Aurnhammer.

This concerto has always remained popular as one of the jewels of the none-too-large body of works for two pianos and orchestra. It bears some resemblance to another work for two solo instruments and orchestra written the same year and in the same key: the *Sinfonia Concertante* for Violin and Viola (K. 364). In both works, the two solo instruments are strictly equal in terms of their treatment. In the words of Hermann Abert, author of a book on Mozart that is itself a classic: “They share all their melodies, vary each other’s music, interrupt each

other, even argue sometimes gently; however, their fraternal agreement is never troubled by serious differences of opinion.”

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Although it starts with a motif that is like a military fanfare, the first movement is mostly lyrical, melodic and brilliant. The slow movement is extremely tender and intimate. The first theme of the good-humored Finale reminded Abert of an old Austrian folksong. Full of harmonic surprises, the music retains its cheerful mood almost without interruption to the end.

An Alpine Symphony, Op. 64 (1915)

BY RICHARD STRAUSS
(MUNICH, 1864 - GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, 1949)

Instrumentation: 4 flutes, 2 piccolos, 3 oboes, English horn, heckelphone (baritone oboe), 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, small clarinet in E-flat, 4 bassoons, contrabassoon, 8 horns (four doubling tenor tubas), 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 2 bass tubas, 2 harps (doubled if possible), timpani (2 players), percussion (wind machine, thunder machine, glockenspiel, cymbals, bass drum, snare drum, triangle, cowbells, tam-tams), celesta, 2 harps (doubled if possible), and strings, plus an offstage brass group.
Performance time: 50 minutes.

The last of Strauss’s great symphonic poems, *An Alpine Symphony*, came more than a decade after its closest predecessor, *Sinfonia domestica*. It has been frequently misinterpreted as a collection of musical picture postcards from Strauss’s outings in the mountains of his beloved Bavaria. It is true that the score gives explicit indications of forests, meadows, glaciers, mountain peaks, and so on—but if we take everything only at face value and forget about the symbolic significance of these natural sights, we are likely to miss the whole point of the piece. On one occasion, Strauss referred to himself as his



“Antichrist”—a term that should be understood in the context of Friedrich Nietzsche’s book of that title, in which “liberation” and “moral purification” occur not through the Christian religion but rather “through one’s own strength, deliverance through labor, and worship of nature, eternal and magnificent.” So we are really not as far from the world of Zarathustra as we might think. In fact, as German musicologist Franzpeter Messmer pointed out, “Zarathustra descends from the mountains to the lowlands of humanity; the wanderer in *An Alpine Symphony* takes the opposite course, scaling the heights of a mountain top.”

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The ascent and descent take place within a single day from night and sunrise to sunset and night, giving the work a clearly audible symmetrical structure. The splendid sunrise at the beginning of the piece is more “real” than the one that opens Zarathustra: a lushly orchestrated, enormous crescendo leads up to the first presentation of one of the work’s principal themes, a passionate melody, descending in stepwise motion. After an expansive development of this theme, a new melody occurs, energetic, rhythmic and upward-moving (“The Ascent”). Hunting



R. STRAUSS

horns are heard from the distance (off-stage brass) but soon the music takes on a slightly more mysterious character as we enter the forest, which “murmurs” somewhat like it does in Wagner’s *Siegfried*, complete with delightful birdcalls. The brook is portrayed by the gentle sixteenth-note runs in the strings and woodwinds, the waterfall by the musical cascades of the harps, the celesta, with high violins and piccolos. But what is the “Apparition” (*Erscheinung*) that suddenly appears before the wanderer? We must be transcending reality, even if only briefly; the harp and violin glissandos, together with some magical music for woodwinds and celesta, point to a supernatural experience.

Next we pass through some “flowery meadows” as the earlier “walking melody” is juxtaposed with a chromatic harmonic progression scored for eight solo violins, all playing in a high register. The alpine pasture greets us with distant cowbells, birdcalls and horn signals, apparently representing alphorns. Finally, the wanderer reaches the glacier: massive blocks of sound proclaim this breathtaking moment. Yet it is dangerous to walk on a glacier; the ice is extremely slippery and if you don’t watch out, you might fall into a deep crevice. The “dangerous moments” are represented by anguished instrumental solos accompanied by string tremolos; in the formal logic of the piece this is a momentary holding-back before the climax which comes immediately afterwards as our wanderer reaches the mountaintop.

This is not a full-blown orchestral climax right away, however; after the strong initial statement of an F-major harmony, the oboe plays a strangely hesitant theme. Finally, we reach an almost Zarathustra-like C-major with a grandiose orchestral tutti, and, as in the earlier symphonic poem, it is followed by an immediate darkening of the scene. Powerful brass harmonies combine with a gentle theme

for woodwind and harps to produce some of the most dramatic music heard so far. The peak has been reached, now things go “downhill” not only in a literal sense but figuratively as well. A brief respite is provided in the section called “Elegy”—a portion that seems to have little to do with any program but instead gives us a brief yet deeply moving slow movement, coming exactly when the dramaturgy of a symphony would call for a moment of introspection after all the exciting developments and monumental climaxes.

Soft timpani rolls announce the approaching storm—certainly the most sophisticated and at the same time the most realistic tempest in the history of music, which has no shortage of depictions of the raging elements. During the storm, the wanderer frantically tries to make his way down from the summit. As he arrives at the foot of the mountain, the sun begins to set as we hear a solemn section with brass and heavy organ chords. The final section (*Ausklang* or “waning tones”) restores the longed-for peace and calm in which we recognize the ultimate meaning of the entire journey that the hero now has behind him. At the end of the piece, everything is shrouded, once again, in the darkness of night.

ABOUT THE GUEST ARTISTS

MATTHIAS KIRSCHNEREIT PIANO



Matthias Kirschnereit is currently one of the most interesting and sought-after German pianists of his generation. Born in Westphalia, Kirschnereit grew up in the Namibian desert and began studying piano

at the Detmold Music Academy with Professor Renate Kretschmar-Fischer. Many years of cooperation with Claudio Arrau, Bruno Leonardo Gelber, Murray Perahia, Oleg Maisenberg and Sandor Vegh left an indelible artistic impression on him. First prizes at the German Music Competition in Bonn, the International Concours Géza Anda in Zurich and the Australian International Piano Competition in Sydney marked the beginning of his international concert career, which has since then taken him to five continents. Leading European orchestras such as the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, the Residentie Orkest Den Haag or the Camerata Academica Salzburg have invited him as a soloist. The pianist's successful cooperation with ARTE NOVA/BMG is documented by his recording of W.A. Mozart's complete piano concertos with the Bamberg Symphoniker under Frank Beermann. He has also released recordings of piano works by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Johannes Brahms and Robert Schumann. Since 1997, Kirschnereit has been a professor at the newly founded Academy of Music and Theater in Rostock.

MARKUS GROH PIANO



Consistently cited for his astonishing power and "sound imagination," Markus Groh has confirmed his place among the finest pianists in the world today. Groh's highly acclaimed New York

Philharmonic debut in June 2007 was followed by an electrifying Philadelphia Orchestra subscription debut in November playing Liszt's Concerto No. 1 under the direction of Miguel Harth-Bedoya.

In the United States, Groh has appeared with Pacific Symphony in 2006, as well as with the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Colorado, Detroit, Florida, Fort Worth, Jacksonville, Louisville, Milwaukee, New Jersey, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, D.C., among others. Outside the United States engagements have included the Auckland Philharmonia, Bamberg Symphony, Beijing Symphony, Berlin Symphony, Bournemouth Symphony, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Hague Residentie Orkest, Helsinki Philharmonic, London Symphony, Malmö Symphony, MDR Orchestra at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, New Japan Philharmonic, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Osaka Philharmonic, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, and the SWR Orchestra (Stuttgart). Among the conductors with whom he has collaborated are Jesus Lopez Cobos, Andreas Delfs, Ivan Fischer, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Marek Janowski, Neeme Järvi, Fabio Luisi, Kent Nagano, Jonathan Nott, and Stefan Sanderling.

Recent and upcoming engagements include debuts with the Indianapolis Symphony, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, San Antonio Symphony, and the Warsaw Philharmonic, as well as return appearances with the Florida Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic, West Virginia Symphony, and the MDR Orchestra at the Leipzig Gewandhaus.

TOBIAS MELLE PHOTOGRAPHER

Tobias Melle, born in 1966, finds his personal expression in a wide range of artistic activities. A cellist since the age of 14, he has played with several orchestras and over the years has performed most of the works that he has interpreted photographically. Melle also combines his musical and theatrical skills with four other cellists in the music comedy ensemble Cello Mafia, and performs as a classical cellist with the Bruckner Akademie Orchester.

Melle's desire to render the audible in visual terms has led him to create numerous "Symphony in Images" projects. His artistic ambitions, coupled with his love for travelling, often take him away for months on end. He began to roam the world about two decades ago, inspired by the images conjured up by works such as Strauss' *Alpine Symphony* or Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. He has dedicated himself to capturing the images these works suggest on film—in the mountains and the deserts, in the cities and on the islands, he has found impressions that instruments and sounds can convey a thousand times over: vivacity, beauty, intense hues and associations of enormous intensity.

The reaction by audiences has been tremendous, with many sold-out houses, including the 2,200-seat Philharmonie in Munich. Melle's works have brought many new and younger audience members into the concert hall and won great critical acclaim. Digital projection on the large screen enables Melle's images to merge effortlessly with the orchestra, resulting in a theatrical and musical experience that continues to amaze audiences. Both music and images are experienced in a wholly new way, and we are able to hear with our eyes and see with our ears. The pictures are synchronised to the music in real time; the musicians' playing is directly coordinated with the progression of the music as a whole. Bolstered by audience reaction, Melle has also completed projects based on the music of Dvořák, Strauss, Vivaldi, Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky.

