

JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT CONCERT HALL

Sherwood M. and Judy Weiser Auditorium

Monday, March 29, 2010

Adrienne Arsht Center presents

JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT

MASTERWORKS SEASON

SANFORD AND DOLORES ZIFF

CLASSICAL MUSIC

LANG LANG

CHRISTOPH ESCHENBACH, conductor

Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival Orchestra



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Program

Prokofiev: Symphony No. 1 in D Major, Op. 25 (“Classical”)

Allegro con brio
Larghetto
Gavotte
Finale

Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 26

Andante - Allegro
Andantino (Tema con variazioni)
Allegro ma no troppo

INTERMISSION

Beethoven: Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92

Poco Sostenuto - Vivace
Allegretto
Presto - Presto meno assai
Allegro con brio

Program subject to change.

Program Notes

Notes on the Program By Octavio Roca

Sergei Prokofiev

Born in Sontsotka, Ukraine, April 27, 1891; died in Moscow, March 5, 1953

Symphony No. 1 in D Major, Op. 25 (“Classical”)
Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 26

These are youthful works, composed well before Prokofiev’s permanent return to the Soviet Union in 1935 and filled with an optimism and exuberance that would be hard to hear in his later music. The “Classical” Symphony, finished in 1917 when Prokofiev was fresh from his studies of Haydn, is a joyous affair. He took Haydn as his model, but only so far: The work in many ways is a precursor of neoclassicism in the way it subverts established musical forms with an unmistakably modern viewpoint. In other words, Prokofiev was sincere in his admiration of Haydn, but he also couldn’t help making something new. From the sonata form of the first movement through the sweet romance of the larghetto second movement and beyond, here is young music drenched in dance. The gavotte third movement looks forward to Prokofiev’s great ballet scores. The finale, another stab at revamping the sonata form, is charm itself.

The Piano Concerto No. 3 is something else. It was first played in Chicago in 1921, then in Paris in 1922, and it soon became one of Prokofiev’s most popular works. It is now considered one of the masterworks of the 20th Century, a *rara avis* in being both challenging and definitely crowd-pleasing. Prokofiev’s love of classical forms is here, of course, and again he can’t help it when he turns them on their heads. The piano part is fiendishly difficult, and the music just doesn’t go where one might expect. In the sonata-form first movement, there is a revolutionary mash-up of theme development and capitulation, with a downright sarcastic exchange between the pianist’s open C octaves near the end and the orchestra’s slightly acid backing. The middle movement, a classic theme and variations that surely had the ghost of Tchaikovsky smiling with pride, boasts five variations with at

Program Notes

least as many strikingly original comments from the piano. The finale, marked *allegro ma non troppo*, is too much: a dizzying rondo with cluster-note arpeggios that call for super-human virtuosity, all piling up on a peel of laughter in C Major at the close.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born in Bonn, Dec. 17, 1770; died in Vienna, March 26, 1827

Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 82

Beethoven finished his Symphony No. 7 in April of 1812, and he conducted the premiere himself at a benefit concert for wounded veterans at the University of Vienna on Dec. 8, 1813. The audience of soldiers and their families, of students, of music lovers and of Viennese tired of the long Napoleonic wars they had never asked for, received the new symphony enthusiastically. It is easy to understand why, just as it is impossible not to be moved by this masterpiece today. The Seventh seems at once spontaneous and perfectly designed, drenched in raw feeling yet also articulated with stunning clarity. Dusk and dawn coexists in this music, which mirrors the end of an age as well as the coming of new sounds made possible by this unique musical genius. No classical music before this, and no romantic music after it, surpasses his lightning.

There is no one quite like Beethoven, a genius who broke all the rules. A literary equivalent is difficult to find—somehow even Goethe or much later Proust don't seem quite enough of a parallel to the glorious embodiment of contradictions made real in Beethoven's music. Yet there is a parallel in art, in Beethoven's contemporary Francisco Goya. Witnessing the Spanish painter's own journey from the harmonious perfection of his early works to the desperately human, frantic brush strokes of the canvases that followed the Napoleonic wars is very much like moving from Haydn's exquisite classical compositions to Beethoven's tempestuous originality and genius. With both men, one finds it all but impossible to remain objective, to experience their genius passively. The work of both can mark one's life forever. The way painters to this day break the rules as Goya did two centuries ago, so music in the 21st Century still follows the path of rebellion blazed by Beethoven. There is freedom in this music.

The symphony's traditional four-movement structure already challenges itself from the start, with a *poco sostenuto* introduction to the first movement that easily could stand on its own. As if in one long breath, this introduction leads to an *allegro* that in anyone else's hands might have been one more correctly developed sonata. What we get instead is a subversion of the sonata form, everywhere from the primal violins to what amounts to frantic modulations over an insistent little drone on the basses. The lively coda barely ends when the *allegretto* second movement begins. The time signature is deceptive, the melodies heartbreaking, the cumulative emotional impact considerable. Beethoven has a way of insisting—the main theme is repeated off the bat in this movement—and each repetition forces the listener to new reckonings. Where classical rules might dictate a second theme, Beethoven reminds us once more that this really is all there is and it is enough: The impossibly beautiful coda restates the main theme. An explosion of orchestral colors makes the *presto* second movement almost as effective, giving audiences time to catch their breath even as the notice new insistent sounds: a horn figure near the end, repeated and repeated again, gains momentum bar by bar. There is vibrant, real life here. One can see why Richard Wagner called the Seventh the "apotheosis of the dance." The stunning last movement is fast, furious and loud: it is one of the very few places where Beethoven uses the *fff* indication in the score—*fortississimo*. He meant it.

LANG LANG

Lang Lang has played sold-out concerts in every major city in the world, appeared in *Time* magazine's 2009 list of the 100 Most Influential People in the World, inspired 35 million Chinese children to learn classical piano, and is one of the 250 Young Global Leaders picked by the World Economic Forum. Five billion people viewed his performance at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. In 2008, he launched the Lang Lang International Music Foundation to inspire and support the next generation of musicians. He is the first ambassador of the YouTube Symphony Orchestra, and in 2008, his biography, *Journey of a Thousand Miles*, was released to critical acclaim, with a version for younger readers entitled *Playing with Flying Keys*.

By the age of five, Lang Lang had won the Shenyang piano competition and had given his first public recital. Entering Beijing's Central Music Conservatory at age nine, he won first prize at the Tchaikovsky International Young Musicians Competition. Stardom came at age 17, when he was called upon for a dramatic last-minute substitution at the "Gala of the Century," playing the Tchaikovsky concerto with the Chicago Symphony.

He is the featured soloist on Alexandre Desplat's Golden Globe-winning score *The Painted Veil*, and performs on Tan Dun's soundtrack for *The Banquet*. All his albums have entered the top classical charts and many pop charts around the globe. His first and fourth Beethoven piano concertos with L'Orchestre de Paris and Christoph Eschenbach debuted at #1 on the classical *Billboard* chart, and he has appeared on *Billboard's* New Artist chart at the highest position ever for a classical artist. In 2007, he was nominated for a Grammy – the first Chinese artist to be nominated for Best Instrumental Soloist. His latest recording is Chopin's Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2 with Zubin Mehta conducting the Vienna Philharmonic.

CHRISTOPH ESCHENBACH

Music Director Designate of the National Symphony as well as the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, Christoph Eschenbach is in demand as a guest conductor with the finest orchestras and opera houses throughout the world. Artistic Director of the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival from 1999 to 2002, he has continued a close relationship with the Festival, regularly conducting the Orchestra at home and on tour as well as playing piano concerti and recitals.

Now in his 10th and final season as Music Director of the Orchestre de Paris, highlights of Eschenbach's current season include his first concerts with the National Symphony as Music Director Designate; tours with the London Philharmonic and the Staatskapelle Dresden; and engagements with the Wiener Philharmoniker, the Filarmonica della Scala, the New York Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, the Münchner Philharmoniker, the Orchestra Sinfonica dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and the NDR Symphony, where he served as music director from 1998 to 2004. As a pianist, Eschenbach continues his collaboration with baritone Matthias Goerne, with whom he is recording Schubert's three song cycles for the Harmonia Mundi label.

A prolific recording artist over five decades, Eschenbach has recorded as both a conductor and a pianist on labels including Deutsche Grammophon, Sony/BMG, Decca, Ondine, Warner, and Koch. His recent Ondine recording of the music of Kaija Saariaho with the Orchestre de Paris and soprano Karita Mattila won the 2009 MIDEM Classical Award in Contemporary Music.

Mentored by George Szell and Herbert von Karajan, Eschenbach's other past posts include chief conductor and artistic director of the Tonhalle-Orchestra from 1982 to 1986; and music director of the Houston Symphony from 1988 to 1999, the Ravinia Festival from 1994 to 2003, and the Philadelphia Orchestra from 2003 to 2008. His many honors include the Légion d'honneur, Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, the Officer's Cross with Star and Ribbon of the German Order of Merit, and the Commander's Cross of the German Order of Merit. He also received the Leonard Bernstein Award from the Pacific Music Festival, where he was co-artistic director from 1992 to 1998.

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

The Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra is comprised of the world's finest young musicians under the age of 27, hand-picked through a rigorous auditioning process. While in residence at the Festival, which takes place at the Salzau Castle 100 kilometers north of Hamburg in one of the most beautiful European country sides, the musicians are given an extraordinary opportunity to grow together as an orchestra and to form a social community. They work with experienced teachers from the Berlin Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, and the NDR Symphony Orchestra, collaborate with famous conductors, study and perform the greatest orchestral and chamber music, and attend lectures and seminars. Mutual understanding, respect, tolerance and awareness of the universality of music and life beyond it lie at the heart of the Orchestral Academy. Its first-ever tour in the United States and Canada under Maestro Eschenbach, with Lang Lang as soloist, is a unique opportunity for North American audiences to embark on a real musical adventure. Maestro Eschenbach has been principal conductor of the SHMF International Orchestral Academy since 2004. His long-standing artistic and personal friendship with Lang Lang has led to numerous memorable performances and a critically acclaimed recording of Beethoven Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 4 with Orchestre de Paris in 2007.

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