

5-3-2009

Concert: Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.ithaca.edu/music_programs



Part of the [Music Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra and Meyer, Jeffery, "Concert: Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra" (2009). *All Concert & Recital Programs*. 4513.

https://digitalcommons.ithaca.edu/music_programs/4513

This Program is brought to you for free and open access by the Concert & Recital Programs at Digital Commons @ IC. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Concert & Recital Programs by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ IC.

ITHACA COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

ITHACA COLLEGE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Jeffery Meyer, conductor
Charis Dimaras, piano

Ford Hall
Sunday, May 3, 2009
4:00 p.m.

ITHACA

PROGRAM

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15 Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

- I. *Allegro con brio*
- II. *Largo*
- III. *Rondo. Allegro*

Charis Dimaras, piano

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 1 in D Major, "Titan" Gustav Mahler
(1860-1911)

- I. *Langsam, Schleppend*
- II. *Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell*
- III. *Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen*
- IV. *Stürmisch bewegt*

To receive occasional emails from the School of Music about upcoming concerts, send an email with your name and address to: concerts@ithaca.edu

Photographic, video, and sound recording and/or transmitting devices are not permitted in the Whalen Center concert halls. Please turn off all cell phone ringtones.

Program Notes

Before the onset of deafness in 1802 that would permanently alter the course of his musical career, **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770–1827) was revered as a gifted performer and virtuosic pianist. His solo career spanned throughout much of the 1790's, during which time the composer favored the piano more than any other solo instrument. In an era well preceding copyright laws, Beethoven notes, "Musical politics compel one to keep the best concertos to oneself for a time," and for fear of robbery by musical brigands, left his first two concertos unpublished until many years after their completion.

Although the *C Major Concerto Op. 15* (1801) is identified as Beethoven's first piano concerto, it is actually the second of two concertos he completed during his early years as a composer. This *C Major Concerto* was completed between 1795 and 1796, approximately one year before Beethoven would perform it in a concert tour of Prague and Berlin. The opening movement contains a lengthy introduction that announces itself in a regal fashion. After the key is clearly established, a dotted rhythm common to military marches of the period is announced by the winds; here, the movement takes on the character and bravura of a militaristic fanfare. The rhythmic presence and quarter-note motion are essential to maintaining the character throughout this first movement. When a lyrical second section begins, it contrasts melodically and introduces triplet figuration while maintaining the energy and presence of the opening material. After a lengthy cadenza and restatement of the opening material, the movement ends boldly with a final statement of the first theme in rhythmic unison.

As Beethoven rarely employs *Largo* as a tempo marking, it is clear that the *Largo* indication at the beginning of the second movement implies not only a suggested tempo, but also a mood and character. In keeping with the character of the work, the slowness of this movement is refined and almost ceremonious in its procession. The opening piano solo is accompanied by the strings that alternate phrases with a low-lying chordal reduction of the piano part; this is the first piano concerto ever to use this feature. The growth of this movement swells with plagal cadential motion, particularly between the piano and clarinet, and culminates in a coda which lasts for nearly a quarter of the movement's duration.

The final rondo is not only an *Allegro scherzando*, but also marked "All'Inglese", perhaps meant to invoke a variety of dance music found in English compositions. Though the 2/4 time signature could suggest either a hornpipe or a contredanse, the strong emphasis on beat one and the folk-tune influence of the theme lend

itself toward the latter. Like many rondo finales of this period, eighth-note motion is prevalent in this seven-part rondo. An extended transition and a coy anticipation occur before the return of each theme, and a full cadenza rounds out the movement. Here, the coda presents a retrospective glance backward, and not just at the movement, but at the entire composition. The artistic acumen and aggressive wit remain a key part of Beethoven's compositional style culminate in this early concerto.

Not only celebrated as the champion composer we admire today, **Gustav Mahler** (1860–1911) was highly respected during his own lifetime for his aptitude and facility as a conductor. As a young man, Mahler became the conductor of the Vienna Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic before finally winning the chief conducting position in New York at both the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic. Throughout his lifetime, Mahler was often fortunate enough to have a venue for his new compositions; however, like so many who push the limit on contemporary artistic vision, the genius of Mahler's compositions was often not entirely understood until after his death. When Mahler premiered his first symphony as *Symphonic Poem in Two Parts* in 1889 in Budapest, the work was met with such criticism that Mahler would spend the next four years thoroughly revising the work.

Originally written with a fifth movement (found between the first and second movements in the final version), Mahler's first symphony also contained a set of programmatic titles for each movement: Springtime without End, Blumine, Under Full Sail, Stranded (a funeral march in the manner of Callot), and Dall'Inferno [al Paradiso]. Mahler noted himself, "The reason for omitting [the programmatic titles]... is not only that I consider them to be less than comprehensive – indeed, I do not even believe them to be accurate characterizations – but I have seen how the audience is misled by them." Taken after Romantic German writer Jean Paul's novel *The Titan*, the nickname attached to this symphony actually refers to the original form of the work; unlike the titles of each movement, however, the nickname is retained in the work's final version.

The first movement unfolds slowly and begins with a mysterious and almost impressionistic introduction. Alternated with gestures of fanfare, a motive comprised of a descending fourth is heard throughout this opening. This motive floats above the nebulous, yet stagnant atmosphere created by the strings, and propels the work forward into a restrained allegro. The same descending fourth motive is found here, this time as a clarinet portraying a cuckoo bird, and a melody from Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* (1883–1885) is recycled. The text to this song, "Ging heut' morgens übers Feld" ("I walked this morning through a field"), describes a beautiful

morning, and within the context of the symphony, portrays the gradual awakening of springtime.

Instead of composing a traditional minuet and trio in the second movement, Mahler chooses to combine a ländler, an Austrian peasant dance with strong emphasis on beat one, and a more-refined waltz. The opening ländler melody is stomped out in an almost clumsy fashion, while the waltz, announced by a solo horn, glides along gently and graciously. These two sections vary widely in character and are also written in contrasting tempi.

Described by the critics of Mahler's time as "strange, grotesque, and bizarre," the funeral march of the third movement contains a famous German drinking song "Brother Martin, Are You Sleeping?" the melody of which is perhaps better known to the English-speaking world as "Frère Jacques." Set in a minor mode and beginning with solo double bass, Mahler's contemporaries did not know what to make of his revolutionary choice in instrumentation or the peculiar character of this movement. To explain his intentions, Mahler notes:

On the surface one might imagine this scenario: A funeral procession passes by our hero, and the misery, the whole distress of the world, with its cutting contrasts and horrible irony, grasps him. The funeral march of "Brother Martin" one has to imagine as being played in a dull manner by a band of very bad musicians as they usually follow such funeral processions. The roughness, gaiety, and banality of this world then appears in the sounds of something interfering – Bohemian musicians, heard at the same time as the terribly painful lamentation of the hero. It has a shocking effect in its sharp irony and inconsiderate polyphony, especially when we see the procession returning from the funeral (after the beautiful middle section) and the funeral band starts to play the usual happy tune (which pierces here to the bone).

The opening melody is played in a round, much in the manner of the original drinking song. It is both haunting and mesmerizing, and after the pointed countermelody in the oboe is introduced, each subsequent entrance of the round is distinct in color and timbre. The beautiful and klezmer-influenced middle section contains another melody from the *Songs of a Wayfarer*, "The Two Blue Eyes of my Beloved".

The fourth movement depicts what it is like to be "liberated from and to rise above sorrow," according to Mahler, and is a gradual and volatile ascent from darkness into light. Following the funeral march without break, this movement begins with a terrifying outcry, like a "flash of lightning from a dark cloud." Mahler again

stages a scenario to help the audience digest the complexity of the movement:

Our hero is completely abandoned, engaged in a most dreadful battle with all the sorrow of this world. Time and again he – and the victorious motif with him – is dealt a blow by fate whenever he rises above it and seems to get hold of it, and only in death, when he has become victorious over himself, does he gain victory. Then the wonderful allusion to his youth rings out once again with the theme of the first movement (Glorious Victory Chorale!)

The melody of the first movement is reworked into a stately chorale, and the opening nebulous material also returns to announce the beginning of the slow, passionate middle section. After a long struggle, the work concludes in a brilliant coda whose modulation upward to the tonic key sounds, according to Mahler, "as if it had fallen from heaven, as if it had come from another world."

Notes by Aimée Shorten

Greek international concert pianist and conductor **Charis Dimaras** has presented numerous solo recitals, has collaborated in chamber music concerts, and has been featured as soloist with orchestras throughout Europe, Turkey, Russia, Brazil, and the USA. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and prizes (among them, the British Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music Award, the Alexandros S. Onasis Beneficiary Foundation Scholarship and the International Richard-Wagner-Foundation Scholarship), has been featured on NY's WQXR, on several Dutch, Italian and Greek radio stations, and on Greek national television. He has recorded works by Franck, Bartok, Prokofiev & Stravinsky. His latest CD featuring piano works by contemporary Greek composers D. Mitropoulos and Y. Sicilianos is due for release in the fall of 2009. Dr. Dimaras, who holds degrees in piano performance from the Royal College of Music in London and from New York's Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music, is currently associate professor of piano and collaborative studies at Ithaca College. Elsewhere he was the artistic director of an international summer festival of classical music in Sparti, Greece, as well as the artistic director of the Renaissance Academy Chamber Music Concerts in Naples, Florida. During a recent sabbatical leave from Ithaca College, Dr. Dimaras completed an additional master's degree in orchestral conducting at Bard College. Since then, he has appeared as guest conductor on both sides of the Atlantic, with such orchestras as the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra and the Symphony Orchestra of the Greek National Opera.

Born in Chicago, **Jeffery Meyer** (DMA, MM, SUNY Stony Brook; BM, Lawrence Conservatory) began his musical studies as a pianist, and shortly thereafter continued on to study composition and conducting. He is presently the director of orchestras at the Ithaca College School of Music, as well as the founder and artistic director of the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in St. Petersburg, Russia. In the 2008-09 season, he assumed the position of artistic director of the Water City Chamber Orchestra, northeast Wisconsin's only professional chamber orchestra.

Called "one of the most interesting and creatively productive conductors working in St. Petersburg" by Sergei Slonimsky, in recent concert seasons, he has been seen conducting, performing as piano soloist and chamber musician, as well as conducting from the keyboard in the United States, Canada, Russia, and throughout Europe and Asia. He has appeared with ensembles such as the Milwaukee Symphony, Syracuse Symphony, Philippine Philharmonic, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestra Sinfonico "Haydn" di Bolzano e Trento. As a pianist, he performs frequently as part of the piano-percussion duo *Strike*. He has been broadcast on CBC Newfoundland, has recorded and performed with the Philadelphia Virtuosi (Naxos), and has been heard as a soloist at the Aspen Festival. During the 2001-2002 academic year he lived and studied in Berlin and Leipzig as the recipient of a DAAD grant in music. He has been distinguished in several international competitions (2008 Cadaqués Conducting Competition, 2003 Vakhtang Jordania International Conducting Competition, 2003 Beethoven Sonata International Piano Competition) and was recently awarded third prize in the Tenth International "Antonio Pedrotti" Conducting Competition.

ITHACA COLLEGE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Jeffery Meyer conductor

Violin I

Kate Goldstein,
concertmaster
Mary Raschella
Tim Ball
Natalie Brandt
Sharon Mohar
Charles Palys
Matteo Longhi
Colin Oettle
Kevin Harper
Aimee Lillienstein
Samantha Hecht
Sarah Weber
Shana Griffith

Violin II

Laura Scivolino*
Will Downey
Alyssa Jutting
Misako Sakurai
Kristin Bakkegard
Chris Sforza
Gabriella Colkett
Bridget Corrigan
Alexis Esposito
Kyle Unruh
Austin Schlichting
Jason Calhoun
Bryn Digney
Elizabeth Waltman

Viola

Zach Slack*
Frances Newton
Nicole Wright
Sarah Thrall
Jennifer Meckler
Jacquelyn Timberlake
Derek Hensler
Violet Goncarovs
Michael Capone
Kathleen Stevens
John Wysocki
Marissa Ledet

Cello

Allison Rehn*
Tyler Borden
Kristin Mills
Daniel Frankhuizen
Phil Abbott
David MacLeese
Evan Hong
Marta Kelleher
Tristen Rais-Sherman
Thillman Benham
Nathan Murphy
Chelsea Crawford
Jeremy von Deck

Bass

Jane Lazarovic*
Kyle Kresge
Jarrett Bastow
Corey Stevens
Jordan Morton
Sara Johnson
Will Karl
Kyle Olmstead
Samuel Verneuille
Patrick Murphy

Flute

Jacque Christen*
Cora Crisman
Lisa Meyerhofer
Alison Snee

Oboe

Alicia Rockenhauser*
Rachel Seiden
Amy Kleinsmith
Justine Popik

Clarinet

Adam Butalewicz*
Marcus Christian
Brianne Remaley
Brendon Lucas

Bassoon

Josh Malison*
Margaret Fay
Noah Wolfinger
Maggie Oswald

Horn

Rose Valby*
Elizabeth Teucke, asst.
Michael Drennan
Bryn Coveney
Elizabeth Kane
Lori Roy
Tyler Ogilvie
Laura Francese

Trumpet

Cyril Bodnar*
Michael De Weaver
Leslie Neal
Michael Banewicz

Trombone

Andrew Bennett*
Hank Currey
Edward Swider

Tuba

Alf Hadinger

Timpani

Emily Ickes
Andrew Boynton

Percussion

Ben Berry
Nate Dominy
Peter Kieler

Harp

Myra Kovary*

Graduate Assistant*

Kevin Ryan
Jesse Livingston

* Guest Artist