

HUXFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Thursday, February 8, 2024
Concert Hall
7:30 p.m

RANSOM WILSON, CONDUCTOR
NATHANIEL SHADIX, TRUMPET
BONNIE BLACKWELL, SOPRANO

PROGRAM

<i>Academic Festival Overture</i>	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Trumpet Concerto in E-flat Allegro Largo Vivace	Johann Baptist Georg Neruda (c. 1708-c. 1780)
“Ah! perfido,” Op. 65	Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88, B. 163 Allegro con brio Adagio Allegretto grazioso – Molto vivace Allegro ma non troppo	Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)
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PROGRAM NOTES

Brahms: *Academic Festival Overture*

The tradition of musicological discourse throughout the 19th and 20th centuries identifies Brahms as a champion of “absolute music” – pieces like symphonies, sonatas, and chamber works that stand alone, without referencing external sources of inspiration. Over the summer of 1880, Brahms wrote two concert overtures which defy that tendency. “One weeps, the other laughs,” he wrote to his friend and publisher of his biography, Max Kalbeck. The “weeping” piece refers to Brahms’s *Tragic Overture*, Op. 81. Its laughing counterpart is his *Academic Festival Overture*, Op. 80.

In 1879, the University of Breslau bestowed upon Brahms an honorary doctoral degree. As a response, Brahms was encouraged by the institution to write a commemorative piece, and the resulting effort became the *Academic Festival Overture*. The piece combines a number of student themes (many popular from their use at the beer-hall) into an excitedly charged, joyous work.

The piece starts with a hushed, almost mysterious affect – one can picture themselves exploring a vast, secretive library. After some exposition, a soft trumpet trio introduces the theme, “Wir hatten gebauet ein stattliches Haus” (We had built a stately house). The work outlines more energetic student themes, including the sprightly freshman’s song – “Was komm dort von der Höh” (What comes from afar) – while weaving all of them together using carefully crafted development. As the work builds to its triumphant climax, Brahms unleashes the rousing “Gaudeamus igitur,” a thrilling finale that leaves audiences exhilarated and uplifted. With the *Academic Festival Overture*, Brahms pays homage to the enduring spirit of scholarship and camaraderie, celebrating the joy of learning and the bonds of friendship that unite students and scholars alike.

-Anthony DiMauro

Neruda: *Trumpet Concerto in E-flat*

Johann Baptist Georg Neruda was a Czech composer from the pre-Classical era who is somewhat lesser known to the musical world at large. As a result, his exact birth and death dates are not known, but are approximated to be 1708 to around 1780. The popularity of his complete body of work is in contrast with how well known his trumpet concerto is. While his symphonies and other solo works do not enjoy this same reputation, the *Concerto in E-flat* is an indisputable staple in any advanced trumpet player’s repertoire. This work was first composed for the *corno da caccia*, a valveless horn-like instrument that is also known as the post horn. However, due to the extreme difficulty of playing in what would be a very high tessitura on the horn, the concerto is now performed almost exclusively on the B-flat or E-flat trumpet. The structure is the same as that of most other concertos – solo instrument with accompaniment and three separate movements in the order of fast-slow-fast. Additionally, this piece is in a niche style of the early Classical period, known as the *stile galant*. While this *galant* style was present in all art forms at this time, the music world developed its own particular traits: light and free, which contrasted with the seriousness of the Baroque period. Simplicity was highly valued, and clear homophonic texture is preferred.

-Nathaniel Shadix

Beethoven: “Ah! perfido” (Ah! Deceiver)

Ah! perfido, spergiuro, Barbaro traditor, tu parti? E son questi gl'ultimi tuoi congedi? Ove s'intese tirannia più crudel? Va, scellerato! va, pur fuggi da me, L'ira de' numi non fuggirai. Se v'è giustizia in ciel, se v'è pietà, Congiureranno a gara tutti a punirti! Ombra seguace, presente, ovunque vai, Vedrò le mie vendette, Io già le godo immaginando. I fulmini ti veggio già balenar d'intorno. Ah no! Fermate, vindici Dei! Risparmiate quel cor, ferite il mio! S'ei non è più qual era, son io qual fui, Per lui vivea, voglio morir per lui!	Ah! You treacherous, faithless, barbaric traitor, you leave? And is this your last farewell? Where did one hear of a crueler tyranny? Go, despicable man! Go, flee from me! You won't flee from the wrath of the gods. If there is justice in heaven, if there is pity, all will join forces in a contest to punish you. I follow you as a ghost! I am wherever you go, I will see my revenge, I already take my delight in it in my imagination. I already see you surrounded by flashes of lightning. Alas! Stop, avenging gods! Spare that heart, wound mine! If he is not what he was, I am still what I was. For him I lived, for him I want to die!
Per pietà, non dirmi addio! Di te priva che farò? Tu lo sai, bell'idol mio! Io d'affanno morirò.	Have mercy, don't bid me farewell, what shall I do without you? You know it, my beloved idol! I will die of grief.
Ah crudel! Tu vuoi ch'io mora! Tu non hai pietà di me? Perchè rendi a chi t'adora Così barbara mercè? Dite voi se in tanto affanno Non son degna di pietà?	Ah, cruel man! You want me to die! Don't you have pity on me? Why do you reward the one who adores you in such a barbaric way? Tell me, if in such a grief I do not deserve pity?

With the Ninth Symphony as a notable exception, Beethoven is remembered more for his instrumental music than his vocal works, having completed only one opera, *Fidelio*; however, he wrote a great number of choral works in addition to a formidable array of songs, including several song cycles throughout his early and middle career. With text written by the famed librettist, Pietro Metastasio, “Ah! perfido” was first performed in 1796, counting it among Beethoven’s earlier works.

The piece was later revived for an 1808 concert in Vienna, an infamous four-hour marathon which included the premieres of both Beethoven’s fifth and sixth symphonies. For this performance, Anna Milder, the soprano initially hired for the role, was relieved from her obligation due to creative disagreements with the temperamental composer. She was replaced by the then 17-year-old Josephine Schultz-Killitschky on short notice, and based on notes given by the composer in the manuscript, she may not have had a successful performance. “Ah! perfido” outlines the story of a spurned lover who laments their betrayal, vacillating between emotions of wrath and regret. In this piece, we already see Beethoven’s preference for longer forms and high drama. In reference to the text, the twelve-minute work continually shifts between tempestuousness and vulnerability – even sometimes when using the same text. This gives the impression of a narrator with mixed emotions, an experience entirely timeless, relatable, and human.

-Anthony DiMauro

Dvorak: Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88, B. 163

Written over a two-and-a-half month period in 1889, Dvorak's eighth symphony (originally published as Symphony No. 4) was dedicated to the Bohemian Academy of Science, Literature, and Arts, which had recently elected Dvorak to its membership. Compared to his sixth and seventh symphonies, the eighth is less Romantically Germanic and more exuberant, drawing on Czech folk melodies, flute calls, and joyful fanfares.

The first movement, marked *Allegro con brio*, opens with one of the century's greatest melodies expressed by Dvorak's beloved cello section. The heartstrings torn by their soulful playing are soon mended by a light, easy flute solo reminiscent of a bird call. The movement develops a vigorous rhythmic vitality, ultimately culminating in dramatic re-orchestrations of the original folk-inspired tune.

In the second movement (*Adagio*), Dvořák offers a slow, spacious, and contemplative backdrop against which he sets highly contrasting ideas. Some of these feel warm by the firelight of company, while others explore the greater grandeur of the landscape. The music unfolds with a sense of quiet reverence but develops towards great intensity. The movement finally gives an exclamation point to its original theme before being lulled to peaceful reverie by a quiet trumpet fanfare.

The third movement (*Allegro grazioso*) dances with playful, mysterious energy and rhythmic vitality, as lively folk-inspired melodies intertwine with lilting waltz rhythms. Dvořák's sense of joy and spontaneity infuses the movement with a sense of celebration and exuberance, while a surprise coda invites listeners to join in the revelry.

The fourth movement opens with an iconic trumpet fanfare before unleashing a series of episodic theme-and-variation fragments, escalating in intensity and drawing on the prominent role of the flute. A middle section rolls to slow stop but in the end culminates in a grand celebration.

-Anthony DiMauro

HUXFORD SYMPHONY PERSONNEL

*principal on Brahms #principal on Beethoven ^principal on Dvorak

Violin 1

Iwona Augustyn (concertmaster)
Daniel Torres Salazar
Cecelia Erbe
Julia Strassner
Harry Evans
David Handler

Violin 2

Tyler Browning (principal)
Jon Dickerman
Teresa Ford
Zumanah Kamal
Emma Berry
Kris Handler

Viola

Sergio Lozano (principal)
Jake Pietroniro
Dylan Vanderpool
Caleb Joseph
Hannah Faulk

Cello

Alvaro Miranda Gamarra (principal)
Haley Nicholson
Julia Stouges
Amanda Green
Sam Nguyen
Bryce McHenry

Bass

Lauren Erwin (principal)
Mikey Sivertson
Daniel Waldrop

Flute

Audrey Boling
Anna Chong #
Mallory Harrison ^
Sara Reeves *

Oboe

Gregory Lucero ^
Eli Sivel
Brett Stafford *

Clarinet

Megan Amrine *#
Jorge Diez ^
Will Wenger

Bassoon

Nelson Menjivar ^
Katelyn Thomas *#

Horn

Harrison Bruner *#
Cam Bryant ^
Hope Moebes
Jackson Shue
Tyler Winningham

Trumpet

Nick Katulka
Will Pettry
Ryan Winston *^

Trombone

Andrew Campbell *^
Jillian Ochsendorf

Bass Trombone

Connor Baggette

Timpani

Matthew Sandridge *
Mike Spiller ^

Percussion

Zach Langner
Dawson Welch

UPCOMING EVENTS

Faculty Recital Series: Strings

Monday, February 12
7:30 p.m., Concert Hall

Matthew Meadows, horn

Tuesday, February 13
5:00 p.m., Concert Hall

Nelson Menjivar, bassoon

Tuesday, February 13
7:30 p.m., Recital Hall

Concert and University Band

Thursday, February 15
7:30 p.m., Concert Hall

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Jackson Parker, trombone

Friday, February 16
5:30 p.m., Recital Hall

Faculty Recital: Moisés Molina, cello

Tuesday, February 20
7:00 p.m., Recital Hall

Symphonic Band Concert

Wednesday, February 21
7:30 p.m., Concert Hall

Noah Nguyen, cello

Thursday, February 22
7:30 p.m., Recital Hall

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