



THE BROADWAY SYMPHONY

George Shangrow, *conductor*

DVORAK

Violin Concerto

Chris Wang, soloist

SCHUMANN


Symphony No. 3

BEETHOVEN

Coriolan Overture

FEBRUARY 8, 3:00 PM

KANE HALL, UW



The collaboration of the BROADWAY SYMPHONY and the SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS has become a respected musical force in the Pacific Northwest. This company of volunteer artists is dedicated to the presentation of exciting and polished musical performances. Each ensemble rehearses at University Unitarian Church, where they enjoy the status of artists-in-residence, and where they further develop their repertoire under conductor George Shangrow. Membership is by audition, and general auditions for vacant positions are held every August and September. On several occasions each season, smaller ensembles are formed from the main ensembles for the performance of chamber music. Especially important to the Broadway Symphony/Seattle Chamber Singers is the support and presentation of local performing artists and the work of local composers.

GEORGE SHANGROW, Music Director and Conductor of the Broadway Symphony and Seattle Chamber Singers, is a native of Seattle, who founded the chorus (in 1968) and the orchestra (in 1978) in order to give Seattle area artists and audiences an opportunity to hear and perform great works of music. In addition to acclaimed performances of the classic repertoire for both chorus and orchestra, he has brought to Seattle world premieres of operas, choral works and symphonies by Seattle's most gifted local composers. Mr. Shangrow has toured Europe as a conductor and keyboard artist; appeared as guest conductor with the Seattle Symphony, Northwest Chamber Orchestra, and Eastern Texas University Opera; and lectures frequently for the Seattle Opera and Symphony. As director of music for University Unitarian Church, Mr. Shangrow is a leader in the performance of sacred music, and as the guiding producer of The Bach Year in Seattle he brought to our city in 1985 the world's most extensive celebration of the music of J.S. Bach.

Special Guest Artist CHRISTOPHER WANG is the winner of the 1986 Broadway Symphony Solo Competition. Chris began his violin studies at the age of four (he is now fourteen) under the Master Teacher of the Taiwan Youth Genius Program. When he was ten, Chris' family moved to Seattle, where he continued his studies under Margaret Pressley and became concertmaster of the Seattle Junior Symphony. Chris also enjoys academics; he is a member of the National Honor Society, speaks French, English, and two Chinese dialects, and in 1984 was the winner of the Seattle Times Creative Writing Contest. Chris has participated in the Marrowstone, Santa Fe and Aspen Music Festivals and currently is a student of Seattle Symphony co-concertmaster Walter Schwede.

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THE BROADWAY SYMPHONY
GEORGE SHANGROW, CONDUCTOR

FEBRUARY 8, 1987

KANE HALL

PROGRAM

CORIOLAN OVERTURE, OPUS 62

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA, OPUS 53

ANTON DVORAK

ALLEGRO
ADAGIO
ALLEGRO GIOCO SO

INTERMISSION

SYMPHONY IN E FLAT MAJOR No. 3, OPUS 97

ROBERT SCHUMANN

LEBHAF T
SEHR MÄSSIG
NICHT SCHNELL
FEIERLICH
LEBHAF T

PROGRAM NOTES

by

Gary Fladmoe

Ludwig Van Beethoven - Overture to "Coriolanus," Opus 62

Opinion is divided concerning the meaning of the musical expression in the overture to Coriolanus. We do know that in the subtitle, Beethoven described it as the overture to the dramatic work entitled "Coriolan" by the Austrian, Heinrich Joseph von Collin and based on the story of Gaius Marcius Coriolanus, a character whose historical background is surrounded in mystery.

The central character of the drama is said to have taken his surname from Corioli, a Volscian city, the conquest of which he led in 439 B.C. Coriolanus, a member of the Roman aristocracy, (if he indeed ever existed) gained a reputation for advocating the causes of the common classes against and in denunciation of the popular tribunes of Rome who were the spokesmen of the plebian classes. Coriolanus was supposed to have proposed that the system of tribunes be abolished before the corn supplies from Sicily were distributed to the people. Such a position resulted in his being charged with disloyalty and exiled.

He was welcomed by the Volscians who assisted him in recruiting a large army to set against Rome itself. A number of victories along the way bolstered confidence, and by the time Coriolanus and his soldiers reached the gates of Rome, the city leaders had only the power of persuasion on their side. Coriolanus held firm to the belief that total ruin of the city was the only way to set right the wrong he believed had been done him. When nothing seemed capable of breaking the pride of the man, the Romans sent his wife, his mother, and his son to plead with him. The ploy worked. In Collin's version of the tragedy, Coriolanus, who has hesitated in attacking the city, is murdered by the Volscian Aufidius. Shakespeare and Plutarch, who both set the Coriolanus story in drama, have our main character ending his life in suicide.

Joseph Wagner tells us to focus on the unwinding of the plot in Shakespeare's setting to reveal the real dramatic counterpart to Beethoven's overture. He writes:

"We shall see one solitary shape loom forth, the defiant Coriolanus in conflict with his inmost voice, that voice which only speaks the more unsilenceably when issuing from his mother's mouth. And of the dramatic development there will remain but that voice's victory over pride, the breaking of the stubbornness of a nature strong beyond all bonds."

To Wagner the overture is closely depicting the dramatic elements of the third scene of Act V of the Shakespeare play. In that part of the play we have the confrontation between Coriolanus and his family in the Volscian camp on the edge of Rome. The opening, with its loud C's, ringing chords, and intense first theme depicts the defiance of the revenge-directed outlaw bent on the complete destruction of all held dear by those who so brutally wronged him. The poignant and lyric second theme heard first in the violins would then depict the voice of Volturnia, his mother, pleading with her son to desist from his ill-fated course. Whether the result of his mother's intervention or from other motives, we do know that Rome was not destroyed and that our flawed character met his demise, either by his own hand or by that of one of his trusted warriors.

Yet another interpretation is provided by Reichard who was convinced that the tie to the Coriolanus drama was merely a cover for the deeper meaning, that of Beethoven's own musical self-portrait, a theory that seems unsupported by any evidence, but which, based on what is known about Beethoven, his life and personality, could be construed to fit.

Whatever real musical meaning, the music itself stands as a deeply emotional expression of an emotionally charged master. Beethoven certainly knew the Coriolanus legend, but we'll leave the final decision as to his true musical meaning to you, the listener.

Anton Dvorak - Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in a minor, Opus 53

It is perhaps interesting to note that the name of Joseph JOachim, the reknowned Hungarian violin virtuoso of the late nineteenth century is connected to Anton Dvorak's violin concerto. As he had been to Brahms when he composed his violin concerto in D Major, JOachim served as a sort of spiritual and editorial consultant to Dvorak during the composition of his violin concerto. Having completed the first draft in 1879, the same year that the Brahms concerto was premiered, Dvorak sent the manuscript to Joachim for his approval. Joachim had retained the manuscript for more than two years, and when Dvorak finally submitted it to the Simrock publishing house in 1882, he wrote in a letter to Simrock:

"Here I am again in Berlin. I have played over the Violin Concerto twice with Joachim. It pleased him, and Mr. Keller (Simrock's agent), who was also there, and very much delighted. As for me, I am glad that the whole business is finished. The revision has been in Joachim's hands for atleast two years. He was so kind as to make over the solo part, and only in the Finale have I to make a few alterations and in some places to lighten the instrumentation. I must go again to Berlin at the beginning of November; by that time everything should be ready, and Joachim can make a rehearsal at the Hochschule."

That rehearsal turned out to be a major frustration for Dvorak. Keller, who had been so favorable during the writing of the work, suddenly took to picking the work apart, suggesting "improvements" throughout. There followed a series of letters between Dvorak and Keller which only served to heighten the anger building in Dvorak. He finally did make some cuts in the final movement, but refused to make any changes to the other movements.

The concerto was premiered on December 3, 1883 in Vienna and was well received. Its American debut occurred in 1891 with the Chicago Symphony. That and subsequent American performances were equally successful. It came to be described as "violinistic" and as having "skillful workmanship and admirable style," probably reflecting the influence of Joachim.

The work is in typical three-movement concerto structure. The first movement, Allegro ma non troppo, is basically a sonata form, although Dvorak takes some departures in order to (as the composer puts it) "transcend the classic model." The orchestra boldly states an introduction which gives way to the principal theme in the solo violin. The theme is lyrical yet vigorous. The orchestra picks up the theme in a new key and undertakes a development section. Violins then suggest a second theme against a woodwind counterpoint. Extended development of previously stated material leads to a third theme in the solo part. During the development of this theme, echoes of the first theme are sounded, and these subtly blossom into a full realization of the principal theme. The movement subsides to a close which moves without interruption to the second movement.

This movement, Adagio ma non troppo, is a simple but lovely theme drawn from the wealth of Czech folk melody with which Dvorak was so familiar and conversant. The solo sings the melody against the woodwind background. the solo digresses into florid passages and then returns to the simple theme. The movement then surges ahead through a second and third theme. The remainder of the movement features the interplay among the three themes, finally closing with the first theme stated by two horns while the solo violin ornaments around that theme.

The finale, Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo, is a rondo based on three themes, all first announced in the solo line. the themes are folklike and bright and stated with much dash and vigour. The rondo form is obvious, but the reliance on the structure is pushed from view by the brilliance of the movement, and the work charges to a lively and exciting close.

Robert Schumann - Symphony in E flat Major, No. 3 ("Rhenish"), Opus 97

Schumann's Symphony in E flat Major provides the musicological sleuth with some diversion in terms of arriving at the appropriate number for the symphony. Although commonly called No. 3, this is really the fourth symphony which Schumann composed. Some nine years before he had written this symphony, Schumann composed a symphony in d minor. He was not pleased with the work and withdrew it from circulation for the next ten years. In the meantime, he completed two other symphonies, the second of which was the E flat Major work. He then returned to what was really his second symphony and after reworking and reorchestrating it, released it. It was a major success and was promptly published, but what started as Symphony No. 2 was now No. 4, and our present work which was the fourth symphony Schumann wrote became No. 3. If it is any consolation to the purist, the Symphony in B flat, No. 1, performed by the Broadway Symphony is a prior season, was indeed Schumann's first symphony.

The subtitle "Rhenish" appears to be Schumann's invention. Shortly after its premiere in Dusseldorf in February of 1851, Schumann wrote to his publisher (again the ubiquitous Mr. Simrock) the following remarks about the symphony. It "perhaps mirrors here and there something of Rhenish life."

He later revealed that his plan had been to picture the Rhine valley in the exuberant simplicity and natural quality of its folk life. After a brief flirtation with titling the movements (the fourth movement was for a time called "An Accompaniment to a Solemn Ceremony"), Schumann dropped the idea of making the programmatic elements of the music too obvious. He wrote, "For a general impression of an art work is more effective; the listener then will not institute any absurd comparisons."

Despite some weaknesses in orchestration technique, the music itself offers the listener the opportunity for some sheer sonic delights. The first movement, Lebhaft, opens with the principal theme stated by the full orchestra. The second theme, with its somewhat mournful and contrasting mood is introduced by the flutes, oboes, and clarinets and answered by the other woodwinds and the violins.

The second movement, Sehr mässig, begins with a theme in the cellos and bassoons. Apthorp has described this scherzo as:

"...a modified version of the so-called 'Rheinweinlied.' The theme 'of a rather ponderous joviality,' well expresses 'the drinkers' in the scene in Auerbach's cellar in Goethe's Faust. (Uns is ganz cannibalisch wohl, als wie funf hundert Sauen! - As were 500 hogs, we feel so cannibalic jolly!)"
The trio features a cantilena in the horns and other winds over a pedal note.

The third movement, Nicht schnell, features a theme in the clarinets and bassoons against a swaying viola accompaniment over a cello pizzicato. The melody has reminded many of Mendelssohn and Donizetti.

The fourth movement, Feierlich, often described as the "Cathedral Scene," needs no description to help identify it. Here, as was common practice in music revealing religious import, the trombones were added and the principal theme appears immediately in the horns and trombones.

The final movement, Lebhaft, embodies the expression of a festival on the Rhine. Near the end the "Cathedral" atmosphere of the previous movement reappears to introduce a brilliant coda which brings the work to a conclusion.

Schumann himself especially liked this symphony, although the initial reaction from the critic and the public was cool. His wife Clara evidently shared her husband's view. Following the premiere, she wrote:

"The creative power of Robert was again ever new in melody, harmony, and form. I cannot say which one of the five movements is my favorite. The fourth is the one that at present is the least clear to me; it is most artistically made - that I hear - but I cannot follow it so well, while there is scarcely a measure in the other movements that remain unclear to me. And indeed to the layman this Symphony, especially in its second and third movements, is easily intelligible."

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- Saturday, March 14, 8pm, University Unitarian
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- Friday, March 27, 7:30pm, Kane Hall (UW)
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- Sunday, March 29, 3pm, Kane Hall (UW)
BROADWAY SYMPHONY IN CONCERT - Join us for Haydn's Symphony No. 103, Beethoven's First Symphony, and Stravinsky's Jeu de Cartes.