Guest Soloists

CAROL SAMS has a musical career that follows two parallel directions: she is a noted soprano soloist in the Northwest, having been a featured artist with the Seattle Chamber Singers, the University of Washington Contemporary Group, Cornish Opera and the Northwest Chamber Orchestra; and she is a composer of merit and public success. In 1981, she was part of the Seattle "Artists-in-Residence" program, through which Seattle Opera commissioned an opera. Two other operas, in addition to several smaller scale pieces have been performed at the UW, and both Juneau, Alaska and Portland Oregon Opera companies have presented her works. Dr. Sams received her formal musical training at the University of California at Santa Barbara (BA), Mills College, Oakland (MM) and the University of Washington (DMA). In addition to her work with the Northwest Boychoir, Carol Sams has taught at Seattle Central Community College and the University of Washington.

EUGENE LYSINGER has appeared as baritone soloist for many of the West Coast musical festivals and events. For successive seasons he has participated in the Carmel Bach Festival, the Peter Britt Festival, and has sung under Roger Wagner, William Hall, Milton Katims and others. He earned the Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting at the University of Washington, and is presently the music director of the Columbia Chamber Ensembles in Portland, Oregon. Highpoints of his work as a bass/baritone soloist include presenting recitals on both coasts, touring in performance in Europe, Australia and New Zealand and adding to his repertoire the bass roles in the Bach Passions, several cantatas, works of Handel, Haydn and 20th century composers. In addition to his career as a performer, Mr. Lysinger is the audio consultant for Oregon Public Broadcasting, doing much in the field of digital recording techniques.

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Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

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George Shangrow, conductor
present a Salute to Brahms'
150th anniversary
Oct. 29, 8:00 p.m.
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Johannes Brahms 1833–1897

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Johannes Brahms was born in Hamburg, Germany, the son of an aspiring, but not too successful, organ player. As a youngster, Johannes helped out the family income by playing piano in the dance halls of his neighborhood. Somehow his repartee as a fine accompanist grew beyond the slums of Hamburg and he was invited to tour with a prominent Hungarian soloist on a European tour. His mother always encouraged his formal musical education, and he did begin to earn a career as a serious musician. His first compositions made an impression on Joseph Joachim, leading violinist of the day. In fact, Joachim made a special trip to Düsseldorf to speak to Robert Schumann about the young Brahms. Schumann recognized in the shy young composer a future leader for the "camp" of musicians dedicated to absolute music. Absolute music is that for which the composer has not indicated to us any non-musical associations, whether story, scene or mood. The musical ideas are organized in such a way that, without any aid from external images, they give the listener a satisfying sense of order and continuity. Against the colorful program art of Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner, Schumann led a group dedicated to the purity of the classical style, and published an essay in which he called Brahms a "young eagle"; the one who "wanted to call forth to give the highest ideal expression of our race." Brahms suddenly found himself a famous 21-year-old.

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George Shangrow, conductor
Johannes Brahms — Symphony in C minor, No. 1

The first symphony of Johannes Brahms has, in this writer's opinion, been mistakenly described as Beethoven's "Tenth Symphony" or the logical evolution of music following Beethoven's ninth and last symphony. The listener can make a self-directed decision, but the rhythmical complexity, expressive timbre, and overall scope of the work would seem to suggest that Brahms had gone beyond the direct evolutionary influence of Beethoven.

The timpani notes at the beginning have also been programmatically described as the sounds of the footsteps of Beethoven as he haunted Brahms and pushed him into the symphonic form. The case for succession breaks down even more when one realizes that Brahms did not complete his first symphony until 1876, some forty-nine years after the death of Beethoven. He had made some earlier attempts at symphonic writing, but the three movements about which we know to be representing his real first symphony ultimately found their way to the D minor piano concerto and A German Requiem.

Brahms was prone to self-criticism, and the Beethoven footstep theories have some support from Brahms himself from this Brahmsian characteristic. The composer was concerned about the fact that Beethoven's epic fifth symphony was in C minor, and he had reservations about his choice of that key for his own first work in the symphonic form. He has been quoted as saying, "You have no idea how it feels to hear behind you the tramp of a giant like Beethoven."

The tie to the past was also uphold by Brahms' apparent revulsion at the unbridled romanticism of those like Berlioz and Liszt and the emerging style of Richard Wagner. Brahms seemed to tie himself to the Classic ideal, almost importing his own stamp upon it.

The First Symphony opens with an introduction, Un poco sostenuto, and after a rather lengthy beginning gives way to the first theme in the violins. The woodwinds then state the second theme. The two themes are then developed in an expansive movement of seeming forcedness.

A lyric second movement, Andante sostenuto, features the woodwinds with a contrasting middle section for the strings.

Brahms avoids the use of the scherzo as his third movement. Instead an almost frolicsome Allegretto is heard. Again the woodwinds occupy the center stage with melodic material reminiscent of a national tune or Volkslied.

The fourth movement, Adagio, opens with a dramatic introduction which culminates in a majestic horn melody. This gives way to one of the most famous and beautiful of Brahms' melodies. The movement moves to a rousing close through a grand development of the thematic material.

The music shows a perfect grasp of architecture and design. Its contemplative tenderness and epic qualities have forever secured its place in the hearts and minds of concert-goers throughout the world.
Johannes Brahms — Academic Festive Overture, Op. 80

On May 11, 1879, the University of Breslau conferred upon Brahms an honorary doctor's degree. The Academic Festive Overture was his way of expressing appreciation for the honor. Brahms had first acquainted himself with the songs of the university students as early as 1853 while on a visit to Jachin in Dettingen. He would remember those songs in the summer of 1880 when he composed his now famous ouvertures.

Brahms himself conducted the first performance, given in the highest academic setting, at Breslau in January of 1881. He gave his own description of the work as “a very jolly potpourri of students’ songs à la Suppé.”

The song numbers four. The overture begins with a theme set which has an energetic mood only to give way to a quiet section with a viola melody. The first of the student songs, “Wir hatten gebaut ein städtisches Haus” (We had built a stately house) is rendered in profound style by the brass.

This gives way to “Der Landesvater” (The Father of the Country) and is stated in the second violins. This tune serves as a bridge to the light and jovial mood of “The Fox Song” or “Was kommt dort von der Hölle” (What Comes There from on High), a popular but supposedly base freshman “ditty,” as Brahms might have described it.

The conclusion of the overture is marked by the quoting of the well-known “Gaudium Iguita,” a song for academics throughout the world.

It is perhaps interesting to note that Brahms wrote both of his concert overtures, the Academic Festive Overture and Tragic Overture (heard earlier this season), during the summer of 1880 while spending one of twelve summers the composer spent at a house in Ichlisch in Upper Austria. Ichlisch’s claim to fame seems to be the fact that Brahms did spend his vacations there for twelve years. A plaque on the house reads, “the great tone poet Dr. Johannes Brahms” once lived there.

We hope you enjoy this performance of one of the staples of the orchestral literature, as well as one of the works for which Brahms is best remembered.

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Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted. It is true that all flesh is as green and all the glory of man like the flower of grass; it is true that every man must one day die. But death is not an eternal annihilating, but a re-deemed of the Lord shall obtain everlasting joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. And, therefore, we say in the end: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from this time on. For death leads into a better life; those who lead a God-fearing and upright life on earth, shall see their dear ones again in heaven, and rest from their care and labor, for the works will follow them.

As the text might suggest, the music is by no means despairing. Rather it addresses itself to the elements of hope, challenge, defiance, and finally, gentle resignations.

In the first section, the chorus sings a dialogue with the orchestra. The mood is one of peaceful serenity rather than grieving for the dead. The pulse of the timpani underlies an ever-increasing emotional intensity in the second section. The baritone soloist and the chorus set a mood of strength and optimism through the third section. Longing, pity, contemplation and solace intertwine in sections four and five, especially in the extremely beautiful fifth section, featuring the soprano and the chorus.

The sixth section explores the mystery of death and gives way to a feeling of the triumph of life over death and the peace of mind that the feeling can bring.

The musical style is thoroughly Brahmsian, and yet there is a restraint and grace about A German Requiem which sets apart from the somewhat earthier traits that pervade so much of Brahms' music. He obviously believed life to be for the living, and the evidence suggests that Brahms certainly lived his own life to the fullest. However, it is in his first major work to provide him with success as a composer that he displays a reverence for the dead.

The honor that Brahms would pay Robert Schumann through A German Requiem was probably a small indication of the mutual admiration which the two men felt for each other and their art. In words which tend to capture the essence of A German Requiem as well as provide insight into Brahms, the artist and man, Schumann, some three years before his own death and fifteen years before the Requiem was successfully premiered, wrote:

Many new and remarkable talents have made their appearance, and a fresh musical power seemed about to reveal itself among the many aspiring artists of the day, even though their compositions were known only to the few. I thought to follow with interest the pathway of these; there would, there must, after such promise, suddenly appear one who should attain the highest ideal expression of his time, who should claim the Mastership by no gradual development, but burst upon us fully equipped, as Minerva sprung from the brain of Jupiter. And he has come, this chosen youth, over whose cradle the Graces and Genius seem to have kept watch. His name is Johannes Brahms.

The conclusion of the overture is marked by the quoting of the well-known “Gaudens meus,” a song for academics throughout the world.

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Johannes Brahms — Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in B flat major, No. 2, Op. 83

Brahms' two piano concerti stand as gigantic monuments to the pianist's art. They have proved the downfall of many a pianist. Like much of Brahms' music they sound deceptively simple, but the complexity of the music and the technical demands made upon the soloist belie that simplicity of sound.

The second concerto could almost be described as a symphony for piano and orchestra for such is the scope of the work. Eduard Hanslick, the assumed head of the "anti-chromatic society" which railed against the excesses of Wagnerian music, described the work as "a symphony with piano obbligato." That perhaps understimates the role of the piano and tends to downplay the concerto to the realm of parlor music. One needs only to hear a few bars to realize that the music has certainly gone beyond the petite confines of parlor music.

The first concerto, written in 1854, never received much acclaim until the second was completed and performed in 1881. The second concerto was successful from the beginning, except in Leipzig. It was only when Brahms made his final appearance as a conductor in 1885 in Leipzig that the city "discovered" the greatness of both concerti. In that particular performance, both concerti were played to enthusiastic response.

The work begins Allegro non troppo with horn, piano, and woodwinds treating a first theme in dialogue fashion. The piano then renders a cadenza which gives way to a tutti statement of both first and second themes which are then developed in a long and elaborate section.

The second movement is a scherzo, Allegro appassionato. It is the opinion of one Max Kalbeck that the movement had originally been intended for use in the violin concerto. The piano states the first theme powerfully. Tranquil strings contrast with the second theme and lead to the trio section. The return to the scherzo material is then greatly altered.

An expressive Andante serves as the third movement. A solo cello intones a melody resembling Brahms' song "Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer." A second melody in the piano and clarinet seems to quote another Brahms song, "Todessehnen." The first theme returns in the cello continuing through the coda section against a flourish of trills and arpeggios in the piano.

The finale is a rondo based on three themes. Its grand scope provides a dynamic conclusion to the concerto. The music is replete with melody and rhythm which suggest a Hungarian flavor, a trait not surprising in view of Brahms' use of Hungarian influences in other settings.

The first movement of Johannes Brahms has, in this writer's opinion, been mistakenly described as Beethoven's "Tenth Symphony" or the logical evolution of music following Beethoven's ninth and last symphony. The listener can make a self-directed decision, but the rhythmic complexity, expressive timbre, and overall scope of the work would seem to suggest that Brahms had gone beyond the direct evolutionary influence of Beethoven.

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JOHANNES BRAHMS FESTIVAL
1983

October 29, 8:00 p.m.
October 30, 3:00 p.m.
Scottish Rite Temple

The Tragic Overture, Op. 81

Ein Deutsches Requiem, Op. 64
Carol Sans, soprano
Eugene Lysinger, baritone

October 19, 8:00 p.m.
November 20, 3:00 p.m.
Kane Hall, UW Campus

Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80
Concerto for Piano and Orchestra
in B-flat Major, Op. 83

Allegro non troppo
Allegro appassionato
Andante
Allegretto grazioso

Clive Swansborne, piano

Symphony No. 1 in C-minor, Op. 68

Un poco sostenuto: Allegro
Andante sostenuto
Un poco allegretto e grazioso
Adagio: allegro non troppo
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— Claude Frank

Born in England in 1954, Clive Swansbourne won Great Britain's highly competitive YOUNG MUSICIANS AWARD and was featured on the B.B.C. in a one-hour recital broadcast. He won the Royal College of Music Concerto Competition, numerous performance awards, and scholarships to study with Charles Rosen.

A student of Claude Frank in Yale University's Doctorate in Performance Program since 1979, Swansbourne won the third highest prize given at the 1982 MARYLAND INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION, the ARTISTS INTERNATIONAL AUDITIONS in New York, gold and silver medals at the 1982 INTERNATIONAL PIANO RECORDING COMPETITION and was in the top three of the CHAUTAUQUA MUSIC FESTIVAL CONCERTO COMPETITION.

The rare maturity, poetic sensibility, and technical mastery of this young artist has deeply impressed audiences and critics alike throughout Great Britain, Canada, and the U.S.
As a result of his travels, CLIVE SWANBOURNE has chosen to make his home in Seattle, where, in addition to teaching and chamber music activities, he plans to give regular recitals. Later this season, Mr. Swansbourne will present a series comprising the last six sonatas, bagatelles and Diabelli Variations of Beethoven.

The first recital will be December 5th, 1983 at 8:00 pm at the University Unitarian Church, 6556 35th NE in Seattle.

PROGRAM FOR THE DECEMBER 5th RECITAL

Contrapuncti nos. 1 and 4
from the "Art of Fugue".................J. S. Bach

Sonata in B-flat, K. 333....................W. A. Mozart
  Allegro
  Andante cantabile
  Allegretto grazioso

Five Preludes:..............................S. Rachmaninoff
  Op. 32 No. 1 in C
  Op. 23 No. 4 in D
  Op. 23 No. 7 in c-minor
  Op. 23 No. 6 in E-flat
  Op. 23 No. 2 in B-flat

INTERMISSION

Sonata in B-flat, D. 960....................F. Schubert
  Molto moderato
  Andante sostenuto
  Allegro vivace con delicatezza
  Allegro ma non troppo

This recital will be played by Mr. Swansbourne on the new 7-foot Grotrian grand piano recently added to the music facilities at the University Unitarian Church.
JOHANNES BRAHMS 1833–1897

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Christine Howell
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English Horn
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George Shangraw, conductor

Bassoon
Daniel Hershman, co-principal
Francine Peterson, co-principal
Contrabassoon
Herbert Hamilton
Horn
Matthew Cary, principal
Mary Ruth Helphie
Nancy Foss
Trumpet
David Henkel, principal
Mary Fadmore
Dan Brick
Trombone
James Harrington
Charles Arndt
Bass Trombone
William Irving
Tuba
David Brewer
Timpani
Ian Alvarez
Harp
Nomi Kato
Organ
James Denny
Guest Soloists

CAROL SAMS has a musical career that follows two parallel directions: she is a noted soprano soloist in the Northwest, having been a featured artist with the Seattle Chamber Singers, the University of Washington Contemporary Group, Cornish Opera and the Northwest Chamber Orchestra; and she is a composer of merit and public success. In 1981, she was part of the Seattle "Artist-in-Residence" program, through which Seattle Opera commissioned an opera. Two other operas, in addition to several smaller scale pieces have been performed at the UW, and both Juneau, Alaska and Portland Oregon Opera companies have presented her works. Dr. Sams received her formal musical training at the University of California at Santa Barbara (BA), Mills College, Oakland (MM) and and the University of Washington (DMA). In addition to her work with the Northwest Boychoir, Carol Sams has taught at Seattle Central Community College and the University of Washington.

EUGENE LYSINGER has appeared as baritone soloist for many of the West Coast musical festivals and events. For success seasons he has participated in the Carmel Bach Festival, the Peter Britt Festival, and has sung under Roger Wagner, William Hall, Milton Katims and others. He has earned the Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting at the University of Washington, and is presently the music director of the Columbia Chamber Ensembles in Portland, Oregon. High points of his work as a bass/baritone soloist include presenting recitals on both coasts, touring in performance in Europe, Australia and New Zealand and adding to his repertoire the bass roles in the Bach Passions, works of Handel, Haydn and 20th century composers. In addition to his career as a performer, Mr. Lysinger is the audio consultant for Oregon Public Broadcasting, doing much in the field of digital recording techniques.

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