



Advance Program Notes

Roanoke Symphony Orchestra
Friday, March 4, 2016, 7:30 PM

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.

Roanoke Symphony Orchestra

David Stewart Wiley, *conductor*
Akemi Takayama, *violin*

Prelude to Act III of *Lohengrin*

Richard Wagner

Violin Concerto

Samuel Barber

I. Allegro

II. Andante

III. Presto in moto perpetuo

INTERMISSION

Symphony no. 4 in F Minor

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

I. Andante sostenuto

Moderato con anima

Moderato assai, quasi Andante

Allegro vivo

II. Andantino in modo di canzona

III. Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato

Allergro

IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco

Program Notes

PRELUDE TO ACT III OF LOHENGRIN

RICHARD WAGNER

(b. 1813, Leipzig, Germany; d. 1883, Venice, Italy)

In the summer of 1845, Richard Wagner, exhausted by his duties as conductor at the Royal Saxon Court in Dresden, was ordered by his doctor to take a long rest and recover his health at the spa at Marienbad. Fortunately for music but unfortunately for his rest cure, the composer brought along copies of the anonymous German legend of Lohengrin and 12th century poems on the subject by Wolfram von Eschenbach to read. Before long, the story of the noble swan knight of the Holy Grail had so seized his imagination that he was working harder than ever on the outline of a libretto. Between 1846 and 1848, Wagner created both poetic libretto and the full score of a new opera.

The story of Lohengrin is set in the early 10th century in medieval Brabant, present-day Belgium. Elsa, the princess of Brabant, has been accused by the ambitious noble Telramund of murdering her brother, Gottfried, heir to the throne. To defend her honor, Elsa prays for the knight champion she has seen in a dream. Her prayer is answered by the appearance of the very man, clad in radiant silver and riding in a magical boat drawn by a swan. Lohengrin defeats Telramund in a trial by combat, and Elsa is judged innocent. The mysterious champion proposes to marry Elsa on one condition: that she never ask his name or from where he comes. Elsa happily agrees, but Ortrud, Telramund's scheming wife, inflames her doubts; on their wedding night, Elsa asks her husband the fatal question. The next morning, he reveals his identity: he is Lohengrin, knight of the Holy Grail and son of Parsifal (the subject of Wagner's last opera). Now he must leave Elsa forever. But before he does, he releases the enchanted swan from its spell; it is transformed into Gottfried, the lost brother.

The proud, fiery prelude to Act III recalls the splendid wedding ceremony that concluded Act II, but its agitated pace suggests all is not well, and, at the end, we hear in the horns the ominous motive of the forbidden question.

VIOLIN CONCERTO

SAMUEL BARBER

(b. 1910, West Chester, Pennsylvania; d. 1981, New York City, New York)

Samuel Barber's now celebrated Violin Concerto was his first major commissioned work. Sadly, it also became a cautionary tale of what can go wrong between a commissioner and a composer. In the 1930s, Barber was a fast-rising star of the American musical scene; his Symphony no. 1 and Adagio for Strings had already attracted the attention of such legendary conductors as Toscanini, Ormandy, and others. The wealthy Philadelphia businessman, Samuel Fels, had adopted a Ukrainian violin prodigy, Iso Briselli, and wanted to commission a concerto for him. In 1939 through the good offices of the Curtis Institute, he selected fellow Philadelphian Barber and offered him the then-substantial fee of \$1,000. Barber accepted, using some of the money to go to a favorite creative spot, the Swiss village of Sils Maria, and compose the work there. When Americans were ordered out of Europe on the eve of World War II, he returned to the U.S. and finished the work in the Poconos in Pennsylvania in July 1940.

But after Barber sent the various movements to Fels and Briselli, the complaints began rolling in. Briselli found the first two movements lacking in the showy writing that would display his virtuosity. Then, conversely, when the high-speed finale arrived, he declared it "unplayable." (More recently, Briselli told Barber biographer Barbara B. Heyman that he actually objected to the finale because—at four minutes—he thought it too short to balance the work.) But in this confused story of ego-saving and 20/20 hindsight, Barber heard the "unplayable" criticism. To prove it was indeed playable, he hired a Curtis violin student, Herbert Baumel, to play the movement on just two hours notice and as fast as he could before a jury of Curtis faculty. Baumel performed it easily, and all agreed that Barber deserved his fee. Fels and Briselli, however, remained dissenters. But at the work's debut in February 1941 by the Philadelphia Orchestra with soloist Albert Spaulding, the composer won a spiritual vindication: the work triumphed with the audience and remains today the most frequently performed American violin concerto.

Program Notes, continued

But actually Briselli had a genuine complaint if he was seeking a bravura concerto in which the spotlight would be trained firmly on his virtuosity. For Barber's beautiful concerto is something quite different: a subtle melding of violin and orchestra, with a chamber music-like sensibility. In keeping with Barber's lifelong interest in vocal music, it focuses on the violin's expressive singing quality. Both the first and second movements are notable for their lyrical beauty and fine-spun melodies. In the opening movement, the violin enters immediately with a haunting, slightly melancholic melody; this contrasts with a vivacious little theme with Scotch-snap (short-long) rhythms introduced by the solo clarinet and associated chiefly with the woodwinds.

The Andante second movement is still more lyrical, with a principal theme of eloquent simplicity presented, not by the violinist but by solo oboe (shades of the Brahms Violin Concerto!), an instrument Barber especially loved. When the violinist finally enters, he pushes the music into a more agitated, lamenting mood, but ultimately adopts the oboe's theme for a serene conclusion.

Virtuosity is on display in the brief Presto finale, in which the soloist plays fast triplets for 110 non-stop measures. With its nervous hyperactivity, irregular rhythms, and higher ratio of dissonance, this movement seems to belong far more to the 20th century than its Romantic partners.

SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN F MINOR

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

(b. 1840, Votkinsk, Russia; d. 1893, St. Petersburg, Russia)

Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony is a tale of two women, both of whom entered the composer's life in 1877, the year he created this tempestuous, fate-filled work. One of them nurtured his creative career with bountiful gifts of friendship, understanding, and money; the other, in a quixotic marriage, nearly destroyed it.

The composer's bright angel was Nadezhda von Meck, recently widowed and heiress to a substantial financial empire. An intelligent, highly complex woman, she loved music passionately, and that passion became focused on Tchaikovsky. Early in 1877, she began writing long, heartfelt letters to him: "I regard the musician-human as the supreme creation of nature. ... In you the musician and the human being are united so beautifully, so harmoniously, that one can give oneself up entirely to the charm of the sounds of your music, because in these sounds there is noble, unfeigned meaning."

From such effusions grew one of the strangest and most fruitful relationships in music. Von Meck and Tchaikovsky found they were soul mates, yet they determined to conduct their relationship exclusively through letters and never to meet. For 14 years they poured out their innermost feelings to each other. She gave him a generous annual stipend that freed him from financial worries. He stayed at her estate when she was away. Years later when they accidentally encountered each other on a street in Florence, they raced past each other in embarrassment. For a man of homosexual inclination who nevertheless yearned for closeness with a woman, it was an ideal situation.

Less ideal was Tchaikovsky's relationship with his dark angel, Antonina Milyukova, whom the composer—in hoping to create a "respectable" home life for himself—foolishly agreed to marry in July 1877. The relationship was a disaster from the beginning and drove the composer to a nervous breakdown. He fled his new bride almost immediately and for years traveled throughout Europe to avoid her.

Program Notes, continued

The Fourth Symphony was conceived during this turmoil—drafted before the marriage and orchestrated in the aftermath—and the continual appearances of a malign “Fate” fanfare, the turbulence of its first movement, and the almost hysterical rejoicing of its finale reflect it. Dedicating the symphony to her, Tchaikovsky turned to his best friend, von Meck, for solace. He kept her continuously apprised of the progress of “our symphony.” When she begged him for a program explaining what the music meant, he at first demurred but finally obliged with the following movement descriptions, which are so expressive they seem more helpful than discussions of sonata forms and thematic development:

Movement 1:

“The introduction [the loud fanfare theme] is the seed of the whole symphony, without a doubt its main idea. ... Fatum, the fateful force that prevents our urge for happiness from achieving its end, ... hangs over our heads like the sword of Damocles, and constantly, unceasingly, poisons our soul. ...

“Discontent and despair grow stronger, become more scathing. Would it not be better to turn one’s back upon reality and plunge into dreams? [the solo clarinet’s wistful theme] ...

“O joy! At least one sweet and tender dream has appeared. Some beatific, luminous human image flies by, beckoning us on [the sweeping, waltz-like music] ...

[Return of Fate fanfare] “No! They were only dreams, and Fatum awakes us. ... So life itself is the incessant alternation of painful reality and evanescent dreams of happiness ...”

Movement 2:

“The second part of the symphony expresses a different aspect of human anguish. It is the melancholy feeling that appears in the evening, when you are sitting alone. ... Memories swarm around you. You feel sad about what was and is no more. ... It is sad and somehow sweet to sink into the past.”

Movement 3:

“The third part ... is made up of the capricious arabesques ... that pass through the mind when one has drunk a little wine and feels the first phase of intoxication. The soul is neither merry nor sad. One does not think of anything; one leaves free rein to the imagination, and, for some reason, it begins to draw strange designs. ... These are the disconnected pictures that pass through the head when one goes to sleep. They have nothing in common with reality; they are bizarre, strange, incoherent.”

Finale:

“If you do not find cause for joy in yourself, look to others. Go to the people ... They make merry and surrender wholeheartedly to joyful feelings. Picture a popular festival. Scarcely have you forgotten yourself and become interested in the spectacle of other people’s joy, when the tireless Fatum appears again and reminds you of his existence. ... Do not say that everything is sad in the world. There exist simple but deep joys. ... Life can still be lived.

“This, my dear friend, is all I can tell you about the symphony. Of course, it is unclear and incomplete, but this is in the nature of instrumental music. ... As Heine said: ‘Where words end, music begins.’ ”

—Notes by Janet E. Bedell, copyright 2016

Biographies



DAVID STEWART WILEY, *music director and conductor*

The Roanoke Symphony Orchestra (RSO) is grateful to celebrate David Stewart Wiley's 20th season as music director and conductor. RSO's maestro also serves as music director and conductor of New York's Long Island Philharmonic and conducts such distinguished symphonies as Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Cincinnati, San Francisco, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Minnesota, Saint Louis, Oregon, Honolulu, and Utah, among others in most U.S. states. Wiley's music has taken him to dozens of countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe, including Italy, Germany, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. He previously served as assistant conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. His New Year's Eve concert in New York with the Long Island Philharmonic is an annual sellout, and he conducts summer parks, educational, and classical programming that reaches over 100,000 music lovers in many states each year.

Wiley's leadership with the RSO since 1996 has been a remarkable success story, with consistently stellar reviews, innovative commissions of new music fusing classical and bluegrass, and a remarkably diverse and impressive list of guest artists and composers. The RSO has hired over 50 new professional musicians during his tenure, collaboratively raising the RSO to new artistic heights. The RSO works with public radio WVTF to broadcast RSO concerts and started producing its first live TV web broadcast in conjunction with WDBJ-7 this past season. Wiley partners with schools and numerous arts and civic organizations throughout the region, and the RSO and Wiley this year received a Distinguished Music Educator Award at Yale University. Innovative events like *RSO Rocks* and the *Destination* series have broadened what a symphony event can be for new audiences. Wiley's energetic work bringing classical music to youth in minority communities has been steadfast, and he was honored by the NAACP as Citizen of the Year in the Arts for his service.

As a solo pianist, Wiley has performed with numerous major orchestras throughout the United States, including Minnesota, Indianapolis, Oregon, Honolulu, Wheeling, and West Virginia, performing major concerti by Baroque to contemporary composers, often conducting from the piano. He has appeared as both a jazz and classical pianist in Boston's Symphony Hall, as well as in recital and chamber music appearances throughout the U.S., China, Russia, Romania, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Bulgaria.

Summer engagements include the Aspen Music Festival, Brevard Music Center, Garth Newel, Wintergreen, Park City, Minnesota Orchestra Summerfest, and Sitka (Alaska) and Prince Albert (Hawaii) Summer Music Festivals. From 1999 until 2006 Wiley was the artistic director and conductor of the Wintergreen Summer Music Festival, where he founded the festival orchestra, created the academy, and led the festival to remarkable artistic growth in seven years, tripling the balanced budget. Among his diverse and creative activities, he conceived an acclaimed event with business executives and musicians together on stage, *Conducting Change*, which helps executives to model leadership skills in a fun and engaging atmosphere.

Wiley's CDs include an album of French Cello Concerti with Zuill Bailey and the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra on Delos International, Beethoven's Symphony no. 9 *Choral* with the RSO and Choruses, American Piano Concertos with Norman Krieger and the RSO on Artistic 4, *Wiley and Friends: Classical Jazz*, American Trumpet Concertos with the Slovak Radio Symphony/Neebe, and violin/piano duo CD *Preludes and Lullabies* with Akemi Takayama. As a composer, he collaborated on the film *Lake Effects*, which featured a symphonic soundtrack performed by the RSO, with Wiley conducting, featuring original music by Kazimir Boyle and Wiley. His CD, *Full Circle*, with all original compositions, is now in its third 1,000-copy printing and continues to sell briskly. Wiley's solo piano release, *Piano Bells—Reflections on Classic Carols*, is now available.

Biographies, continued

David Stewart Wiley won the Aspen Conducting Prize, acted as assistant conductor for the Aspen Music Festival, and was awarded a Conducting Fellowship at Tanglewood. Wiley holds both a doctor and a master of music in conducting from Indiana University, a degree in piano performance with honors from the New England Conservatory of Music, and a degree in religion, summa cum laude, from Tufts University. He is a recipient of the Perry F. Kendig Prize for service to the arts and is a Paul Harris Fellow from Rotary International.

He and his wife, Leah Marer Wiley (a soprano soloist and certified fitness instructor), have a son and a daughter who study cello and violin and enjoy traveling, hiking, biking, and making music together. For more information, please visit www.DavidStewartWiley.com.



AKEMI TAKAYAMA, violin

Violinist Akemi Takayama has served as the concertmaster of the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra (RSO) since 2004. Takayama appears regularly as soloist and concertmaster of the RSO and Williamsburg Symphonia, and is also an active chamber musician and associate professor at the Shenandoah University Conservatory of Music, where she holds the Victor Brown Endowed Chair. She was also invited to teach at Oberlin College throughout the fall of 2012, during which time she was on a brief RSO sabbatical. Takayama was a member of the internationally renowned Audubon Quartet for 14 years while the group toured regionally and nationally. Her recordings with the Audubon Quartet include four CDs, all available on the Centaur and Composers Recordings labels. Born to musical parents in Tokyo, Japan, Takayama began her violin studies with her mother at the age of three. Her professional violin career began in Japan at the age of 15. She has performed throughout Japan, France, and the U.S., including appearances with the Shinsei-Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Toho School of Music Orchestra, and on an "FM Recital" broadcast throughout Japan on NHK Radio. She also has performed with

the Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra, the Yomiuri Philharmonic Orchestra, Music at Gretna, and the New World Symphony Orchestra. Her solo performances in the U.S. have included radio and TV appearances in the greater Cleveland area and with the Cleveland Institute of Music Symphony Orchestra, the Grand Junction Orchestra, and the University of Wyoming Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra.

Takayama's recent solo performances with orchestras include Daugherty's *Fire and Blood* and *Ladder to the Moon*, Mendelssohn's Double Concerto, Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, Pärt's *Fratres*, Beethoven's Violin Concerto, Brahms's Double Concerto for violin and cello, Mozart's Violin Concerto, Bach Concerto, Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, and Roskott's Violin Concerto. She has performed at and served on the faculties of the Chautauqua Institute in New York, the Idyllwild School of the Arts in California, the Brevard Music Center in North Carolina, Shenandoah Performs in Virginia, and at Virginia Tech. During her graduate studies, Takayama was a teaching assistant to the renowned Donald Weilerstein at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she earned both an artist diploma and a master of music degree. Previously she studied with Toshiya Eto and Ryosaku Kubota at the renowned Toho School of Music in Tokyo, where she earned a bachelor's degree in music performance. She also studied with Brian Hanly at the University of Wyoming, where she earned a professional studies degree. Takayama won a position in the prestigious Marlboro Music Festival and the Isaac Stern Music Workshop. The late Isaac Stern said of Takayama, "she is a true musician and will always bring credit to any group that she works with." Takayama indeed brings great credit to the RSO and to our region.

Takayama plays a J.B. Ceruti violin from Cremona, Italy, made in 1805.

Photo courtesy of Jim Stroup

Roanoke Symphony Orchestra

FIRST VIOLIN

Akemi Takayama, *concertmaster*
James Glazebrook, *associate
concertmaster*

Violaine Michel
Larry Chang
Tara Planeta
Heather Austin-Stone
Andrew Emmett
Richard Downs
Nicole Paglialonga
Christi Salisbury
John Pruet

SECOND VIOLIN

Matvey Lapin, *principal*
Martin Irving, *assistant principal*
Shaleen Powell
Yulia Zhuravleva
Kevin Matheson
Vladimir Kromin
Donna Stewart
Jared Hall
Casey Mink

VIOLA

Kathleen Overfield-Zook, *principal*
Thomas Stevens, *assistant principal*
Johanna Beaver
Sam Phillips
Bryan Matheson
Megan E Gray
Alistair Leon Kok
Elizabeth Lochbrunner

CELLO

Kelley Mikkelsen, *principal*
Lukasz Szyrner, *assistant principal*
Sarah Kapps
Jeanine Wilkinson
Brian Carter
Rachel Sexton

BASS

John P. Smith IV, *associate principal*
Michael DiTrolio
Christopher Ewan
Joe Farley
Cody Rex

FLUTE

Alycia Hugo, *principal*
Julee Hickcox
Jeremy McEntire

OBOE

William P. Parrish Jr., *principal*
Aaron Hill

CLARINET

Carmen Eby, *principal*
Candice Kiser

BASSOON

Cynthia Cioffari, *acting principal*
Scott Casada

HORN

Wallace Easter, *principal*
Abigail Pack
Wallace Easter III
Rodney Overstreet

TRUMPET

Paul Neebe, *principal*
Thomas Bithell
Sue Messersmith

TROMBONE

Jay Crone, *principal*
Barry Tucker
John McGinness

TUBA

Alex Lapins

TIMPANI

Rob Sanderl

PERCUSSION

William Ray, *principal*
Al Wojtera
Annie Stevens

KEYBOARD

Tracy Cowden, *principal*

In the Galleries

DATAStream

PHILIP ARGENT, QUAYOLA, CASEY REAS, AND JOHN F. SIMON

Artist Spotlight: Casey Reas

Los Angeles based artist Casey Reas is one of many artists today using digital technologies to establish new directions in the art of our times. Reas blends the technical, digital, and mathematical worlds in works of art made with code. "I want programming to be as immediate and fluid as drawing," he says. For the works in this exhibition Reas programs data from radio and television signals and Twitter accounts from the Internet into mesmerizing, rapidly-changing imagery that comments on the world in which we live. Want to see how Reas transforms code into works of art? Check out his work in the *DATAStream* exhibition now on view!

DATAStream

February 25, 2016-May 7, 2016

Ruth C. Horton Gallery, Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery, Sherwood Payne Quillen '71 Reception Gallery, and Francis T. Eck Exhibition Corridor

DIANA COOPER: GRAND LOBBY WALL MURAL

February 11, 2016-Spring 2018

Grand Lobby

GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday-Friday, 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.; interesting and free!