

# Program Notes for the Subscription Concerts

by April L. Racana

## The 854th Subscription Concert

Suntory Hall, 12 November

## The 89th Subscription Concert

Tokyo Opera City, 13 November

## The 855th Subscription Concert

Bunkamura Orchard Hall, 16 November

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

## Symphony No. 6 in D Major "Le Matin"

Opera City

Suntory

**I Adagio - Allegro (ca. 6 min.)**

**II Adagio - Andante - Adagio  
(ca. 8 min.)**

**III Menuet (ca. 5 min.)**

**IV Finale: Allegro (ca. 5 min.)**

Given the title 'father of the symphony', Haydn produced 106 symphonies in his lifetime, which are considered to be of the highest artistic quality as well as of great historical importance. During his thirty years at Esterházy, he composed twenty-five of these symphonies, having at his disposal professional players with which he could explore and experiment, and which were utilized to foster his creative abilities as well.

In 1761, Haydn was offered the position of Vice-Capellmeister (the assistant to the main musical director, Gregor Joseph Werner) for the Esterházy royal family. When Werner died in 1766, Haydn was promoted to the position of Capellmeister,

which he would maintain until about 1790. The Sixth Symphony was apparently composed during his first years at Esterházy, and presumably at the request of Prince Paul Anton, who may have suggested the theme of composing a series of works based on the times of day. Given the subtitle *Le Matin* (The Morning), the Sixth Symphony was composed and premiered together with the Seventh *Le Midi* (The Afternoon) and Eighth *Le Soir* (The Evening). All three works were composed with solos featuring many of the virtuoso instrumentalists of the ensemble, which also was a way for him to show his appreciation to the players he would be working with, and simultaneously earn their respect and support as well.

*Le Matin* presents an opening sunrise in the violins, slowly easing from a *pianissimo* to a crescendo that builds to the full ensemble's *fortissimo* as

the sun's light and warmth shine down on the opening hours of the day. The flute is featured on the opening theme, along with the oboes in apparent imitation of various birds stirring at dawn's light. A solo horn makes an appearance at the repeat of this theme later in the movement, only to be taken over by the flute and oboes again. The violin and cello are featured in the second movement, with the violin seemingly presenting a lesson on scales, following a more solemn processional opening in the strings.

In the third movement, Minuet, the flute is featured once again together with a brief woodwind ensemble, while the Trio features the bassoon and string bass, with a solo for viola as well. The Finale seems to have woken all the instruments fully, as they are each featured in turn at a more sprightly pace, especially highlighting the virtuoso first violin to close the first part of the day in this opening work of the symphonic triptych.

**Instrumentation:** flute, 2 oboes, bassoon, 2 horns, strings

Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)

## Symphony No. 4 in E-flat major "Romantic"

Opera City

Suntory

- I Bewegt, nicht zu schnell**  
(ca. 21 min.)
- II Andante quasi allegretto**  
(ca. 15 min.)
- III Scherzo: Bewegt (ca. 11 min.)**
- IV Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell (ca. 23 min.)**

Although it is not uncommon for composers to revise their works after creating them, Bruckner has been thought to have taken this 'reworking' to an extreme, especially in regards to his symphonies. In fact, the Third Symphony may have seen as many as nine revisions, and some of his symphonies were revised even without the composer having heard them in

performance. Up until the 1880's the majority of Bruckner's symphonies were not only unpublished, but had not been performed either. However, due to his own insecurities, combined with critical feedback from supporters and non-supporters alike, these numerous revisions seemed inevitable for the composer.

In 1868, Bruckner was offered a position as theory teacher at the Vienna Conservatory, and later also taught at a teacher training college from 1870-74 as well as at Vienna University from 1875. And although he had already written two symphonies prior to this (1863 and 1865/6), the

remainder of his symphonic works were created during his tenure in Vienna. The musical community in Vienna did not initially receive the first three of these favourably, so it was with great relief that his Fourth Symphony was successfully played. But not surprisingly this came only after Bruckner made numerous revisions.

There are basically three versions of the Fourth Symphony, the first of which was completed in 1874. Without having heard the first version played, (and following a disastrous reception of the Third Symphony), Bruckner determined to 'tighten up' the first two movements and revise the finale (which was re-titled 'Volksfest'), as well as replace the original scherzo with a new movement, in 1878. Then in 1880 Bruckner reworked the finale to a substantial degree. So what is referred to as the 'second version' includes the first three movements from the 1878 revisions and the finale from 1880. The premiere of this version (1878/80) was conducted by Hans Richter on February 20th, 1881 and performed by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

This premiere was no small undertaking given the climate in Vienna at the time, and Bruckner was fortunate to have a conductor of Richter's stature to take on the task. Due to the composer's allegiance to Wagner, there were many in Vienna

who were very critical of him from the start (this especially due to the strong Brahms vs. Wagner camps that existed during that period). Leading the criticisms was the influential Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick, who was a staunch supporter of Brahms, and also taught at Vienna University, opposing Bruckner's post there.

Bruckner made several additional revisions following this first performance, but was still unable to get it published. With the assistance of Ferdinand Lowe and the brothers Franz and Joseph Schalk, it is believed that final revisions were made in 1887-88. This 'third version' was published in September of 1889. There remains a question as to whether unauthorized revisions were made by these 'supporters', and in November of 1893, Bruckner indicated in his will his 'intention to lend the original manuscripts of his most important works to the imperial library and ask that they serve as the basis for publications.' (*Grove*) From this, some have asserted that perhaps the composer reconsidered the changes made in 1887-88 and perhaps wanted to consider the 1880 version to be the definitive one.

In recent years, there have even been publications of the first version (1874) of the Fourth Symphony (Nowak 1953,1975), as musicologists and conductors continue to study the creative processes that this composer went through in the many revisions

of his symphonic works. There are some who speculate that perhaps he wouldn't have made so many changes if he had had the opportunity to hear his 'first' versions, and if he hadn't received so many 'critical' suggestions even from those whose intentions may have been good.

In any case, the Fourth Symphony was the only one of his symphonies that Bruckner provided a descriptive label for, when he called it "Romantic." This came several years following the premiere, with the composer describing 'the first movement as a scene for the days of chivalry, the

second as a rustic love scene, and the third as a hunt broken by a dance interlude.' When asked about the final movement, the composer stated: "I'm sorry, but I have forgotten what it was about." But since the music had come first anyway, it is perhaps enough that he referred to this symphony with the subtitle "Romantic", as it aptly reflects the spirit therein, complete with the Wagnerian influence of the full sounds of the brass.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, strings

## Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

### Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor Op. 30

Orchard

- I Allegro ma non tanto**  
(ca. 15 min.)
- II Intermezzo: Adagio** (ca. 10 min.)
- III Finale: Alla breve** (ca. 14 min.)

Rachmaninoff was due to embark on his first concert tour of America in the fall of 1909, with the plan to unveil his latest work, this, the Third Piano Concerto. He was sequestered away in the family's country estate, Ivanovka, where he finally completed the piece, dating it 23 September 1909 (in the traditional Julian calendar of the time). This was only nine days before he was to leave on his journey to America, hardly

enough time to prepare sufficiently for a performance of a work of such magnitude. So Rachmaninoff, now replacing his composer's hat for that of his performer's tails, resorted to practicing the work on board the ship using a silent keyboard.

The *Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor* was premiered on November 28th at the New Theatre in New York with Walter Damrosch conducting. In January of the following year, Rachmaninoff performed the work again, this time at Carnegie Hall with Gustav Mahler conducting. One review in the *New York Herald*