

UC San Diego Chamber Orchestra

**May 31, 8 pm
Conrad Prebys Music Center
Theatre**

UCSD Chamber Orchestra – May 31, 2011

David Medine Conductor



Franz SCHUBERT *Symphony no. 8* (Unfinished), D 759

I. ALLEGRO MODERATO
II. ANDANTE CON MOTO

—Intermission—

Gabriel FAURÉ *Ballade*, op 19

FEAT. WILLIAM FRIED – Piano

Robert SCHUMANN *Overture, Scherzo and Finale*, op 59

I. OVERTURE: ANDANTE CON MOTO - ALLEGRO
II. SCHERZO: VIVO
III. FINALE: ALLEGRO MOLTO VIVACE



VIOLIN I

Carolyn Chen (concertmaster)
Sara Choi
Beomjin Han
Mayuko Inoue
Sarah Kim
Mi Rae Park
Arielle Straus
Lily Voon
Daniel Zitter

VIOLIN II

Deborah Ahn
Sara Balmuth
Carine Bossard
Jenan Kharbush
Frank Li
Trevor Portiz
Seiya Tokunaga
Keith Yu

VIOLA

Mohammad Khorsand
Celine Lee
Benjamin Ou
Palak Pancholli
Cara Steiner-Kiggins

VIOLINCELLO

Peter Ko
Tiffany Cheng
Jakob Videm-Ellingsen
Stefani Von Huben
Danielle Wang

KONTRABASS

James McCloskey
Zhichao Xu

FLUTE

Krista Bergsen
Kelley Gallagher
Amy Klova

OBOE

Justin Kiggins
Candice Kim

CLARINET

Bob Chen
Ana Kasirer-Friede

BASSOON

Adam Fouse
Claire Perelman

HORN

David Ryan
Julianna Sharp

TRUMPET

Devin Barr
Paul Hembree

TROMBONE

Michael Kasa

PERCUSSION

Cody Sibulo

Franz Schubert 1797-1828

Schubert stands alone in the grand narrative of Western music. Born twenty-seven years after Beethoven, but thirteen before Robert Schumann and sixteen before Richard Wagner, his life spans a period in music history that is seen today as a transitional one. It has long been debated amongst Schubert scholars whether the man belonged to the Viennese classicists, amongst Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven or whether he belonged to the Romantic generation, with Schumann, Mendelssohn and Berlioz. Apart from the awkward location of his 'place in history' debate over Schubert's stylistic identity is troubled by the diversity of his output. He began composing competently, though conventionally, at a very young age and rapidly developed an increasingly sophisticated and individual technique. His first symphony dates from his sixteenth year and demonstrates a firm understanding of the rules of counterpoint and the stylistic vocabulary of Mozart and Haydn. That symphony, which this orchestra performed last year, is a beautiful essay in the classical style, and a remarkable effort for so young a man. His later music, however, such as this unfinished symphony from 1822, defies classification. It is certainly not in the style of Haydn, and although the influence of Beethoven is evident, it can hardly be called Beethovenesque. And, though it shows the Romantic tendency that Beethoven began, it is not full-blown Romanticism. It does not stand side by side with the symphonies of Mendelssohn or Schumann.

This so called 'Unfinished' symphony actually belongs to a group of unfinished symphonies that Schubert struggled with between 1818 to 1822. Many sketches and piano scores reveal Schubert's effort during this time to develop an individual identity as a symphonist. The albeit unfinished fruits of this labour are the two orchestrated movements of the 8th Symphony. As Robert Winter remarks: 'Orchestral works in B minor were almost unheard of in 1822; and originality informs every aspect of the work.' Antonio Salieri (the fictionally notorious enemy of Mozart who, factually, taught composition to Franz Schubert and, years prior, to the young Beethoven) said of his student: 'He is a genius! He can write anything: songs, masses, string quartets. . . ' Significantly Salieri left 'symphonies' off the list. Indeed, Schubert is primarily remembered for his development of *Leider*, the German art song. This genre of music was invented by Beethoven, but it was Schubert (and later Schumann) that championed the form. Schubert the melodist is the Schubert best remembered. Referring again to the notable Schubert scholar Robert Winter: 'the harmonic vocabulary of the King of Ragtime, Scott Joplin, is lifted in almost textbook fashion directly from Schubert, while unmistakable Schubertian gestures such as the ubiquitous flat sixth chord pop up in, say, The Beatles' *I saw her standing there*. Indeed, the very language of musical theatre, from Siegmund Romberg to Andrew Lloyd Webber, is saturated with Schubertian melodic and harmonic syntax'.

Nevertheless, as a symphonist and composer of extended forms in general, Schubert also left a deep footprint upon the music of the future. Schubert is a forerunner to the late Romantic symphonic styles of Bruckner, Mahler and Sibelius. Very much like Bruckner, Schubert creates a sense of great space not only with temporal length (which is, after all, not space but time), but also with patience. Nothing occurs hurriedly and there is no attempt to captivate the listener with complex detail. In this sense, the influence of Schubert's symphonic style skipped a generation. Certainly Wagner and Brahms wrote some very long pieces (particularly Wagner), but both those composers weave dense and intricate musical detail into every moment. It is this density of ideas, which Mahler, and particularly Bruckner abandoned for this more open landscape style which Schubert anticipates. Like the 'Great' C major symphony of Schubert from 1825, the 'Unfinished' has no textural complexity or rapidly evolving details. There are sudden contrasts in dynamics and harmony, to be sure, but they are always executed with a predictable inevitability which undercut the impression of contrast that is so typical in Beethoven and late Haydn. There is always a sense of languor (albeit a sometimes tragic one) and acceptance in this work which Beethoven seldom attempted. The 'Pastoral' Symphony of Beethoven, to be sure, has a sense of space that is akin to the 'Unfinished', but in that piece Beethoven was literally portraying the countryside. It is programmatically linked to its subject, which is a spacious one. Schubert's innovation was to utilize this sense of broad musical space in a work whose associations are purely musical, and deeply personal. It is not about the land, it is about the self.

Schubert lived a difficult life and a short one. In 1822, the year of the 'Unfinished' Symphony, Schubert contracted syphilis. This disease was, in those days prior to hygiene and antibiotics, not only deadly, but socially crippling. Due to the severe physical impairments associated with his infection (including a full body rash) the end of Schubert's life was painful, lonely, and often bed ridden. He died young. It is a common speculation held about those artists whose lives were cut very short: 'what would they have accomplished had they lived?' However, it could be that Schubert's brief and tragic life would have been less brilliant with out its brevity. The virtual anonymity in which he lived as an artist also contributed, in a way, to the depth of his legacy. For, unlike Beethoven or Mozart whose works were always there, publicly performed and discussed, printed in collections, available for future generations to behold and be inspired by, Schubert's music was published mostly (mainly thanks to the efforts of Schumann and Brahms) posthumously, in increments throughout the 19th century. It was almost as if he were still alive, writing new works, participating in the dialogue of music in 19th century Europe.

Gabriel Fauré 1845-1924

In December of 1877, Fauré presented Franz Liszt with his Ballade for piano and orchestra and that giant of the piano proclaimed the piece to be unplayable. It is a maze of seemingly endless ornamentations, arpeggios, and little cadenzas. It is highly demanding on the soloist, but as William Fried shall prove, not at all unplayable. Yet despite its virtuosic nature, Ballade has the wonderful virtue of not feeling like a showpiece. The mood is somewhat subdued, not at all like one of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies, or the Schumann Piano Concerto; and, it is Fauré's melodic material, rather than showy finger-work, which drives the music. Even when the virtuosity of the piano is in the foreground, as it is in the beginning of the second section of the piece, the material is always designed to create a specific sonic effect rather than pianistic fireworks. The guiding principle in this piece is always the sound, and never piano chops alone. In this way, Fauré's piano writing is much more reminiscent of Chopin's than Liszt's or Schumann's.

The American composer Ned Rorem has a theory that there are two stylistic distinctions that characterise all of music. He claims that music is either 'French', or 'German'. Rorem says this, one hopes rather than believes, with tongue at least somewhat in cheek, but if one is willing to play along with his absurdly reductionist attitude some interesting observations can be noted. For example there are numerous conspicuous Franco-German doppelgangers that appear in the grand narrative of Western music. There is the case of the two great composers of the late Baroque, Jean Rameau and J. S. Bach; there are the two fierce innovators of the 19th century, Berlioz and Wagner; and then there are the two giants of the early twentieth century, Schönberg and Stravinsky, whose parallels and contrasts were so numerous and apparent that Stravinsky wrote an essay that enumerates them all. Well, ok, Stravinsky was Russian, but Rorem would have him down as a Frenchman, no question – French in spirit, he would say; and, probably, Stravinsky would obligingly agree.

Rorem is a self-admitted francophile and his thesis is, in effect, an attempt to take the *palm d'or* out of the hands of the German composers. The Germans have certainly traditionally held the advantage in terms of recognizability. Who has ever heard of Jean Baptiste Lully? But the prominence of the Germans in the history books is simply a case of who writes the history. For it was the Germans that pioneered 'music history' as a field. Naturally they focused primarily on their own heroes rather than those amongst their Western neighbors (of whom they've always been somewhat jealous). However, Rorem is right in criticising the persistence of this Teuton-centricity. Except perhaps for a section on Debussy and a paragraph on Berlioz, the French are conspicuously absent from music history textbooks, and as Rorem seeks to rectify this injustice

by attempting to take the Germans down a peg, he is also making a constructive observation.

There is a peculiarly 'German' approach to composition that is occluded in the 'French' style and vice versa. The essence of this difference is, I believe, a matter of form vs gesture, or, to put it even more vaguely, a matter of rigidity vs fluidity. The French approach is one in which musical gestures define the form, rather than the other way around. There is no *echt* formal structure for Fauré and his work demands a form that is quite free. Ballade's structural non-regularity allows him to fluently interleave, introduce, or abandon the three main themes of Ballade. Schubert and Schumann, on the other hand, squeeze all of their material into the much more rigid framework sonata-allegro, ABABA and Scherzo forms.

Ballade is a sound world that is something quite apart from the works of Schubert or Schumann. If one were to play the 'one of these things is not like the other' game with tonight's program, Ballade would be the obvious choice, and not just because it features a soloist. Hopefully the Gallic sensibility of Fauré and the brilliant virtuosity of Mr. Fried provide a welcome respite from the rigid structuralism that is so unappealing to Ned Rorem in German music. It is notable though, that there is an ABA (German - French - German) structure to the program this evening, and this is a classic example of a 'German', in the Rorem sense of the word, approach.

Robert Schumann 1810-1856

Like Schubert, Robert Schumann fell victim to a syphilitic infection, and ultimately died from it. Schumann spent his last two years at the Enderich asylum in Bonn, birthplace of Beethoven. Throughout the year prior to his hospitalization, Schumann began to exhibit increasingly erratic behavior, culminating in two suicide attempts. He was quite psychotic when admitted to the hospital in 1854 and he continued to decline until his death. During his lucid moments, he jotted down his morbid thoughts which his doctor collected. It is from this document that the cause of his madness was established. 'In 1832,' he wrote, 'I contracted syphilis and was cured with arsenic'. The cure, it seems, was effective, but incomplete.

It was a terrible end to an intense life. The center of that rocky existence was, for Schumann, his beloved wife Clara. Schumann met Clara Wieck in 1828 when he began taking piano lessons from her father. At that time she was still a young girl, only nine years old, but already she impressed the college-aged Robert with her incredible piano playing. From the time of her adolescence, she was a perpetual infatuation for him. The family was against the marriage

from the start, so much so that ultimately Schumann had to bring legal proceedings against Clara's father in order to extract consent for the marriage. It was a brutal and extended battle but one that finally ended in union.

In addition to the complicity between man and wife that resulted from such a tumultuous courtship, the relationship was intensified by mutual professional jealousies. During her lifetime Clara was at least as well known a pianist as Paganini was a violinist. Schumann had always aspired to be a great pianist, and, to make things worse, Clara had always aspired to be a worthy composer. Neither are well remembered for those amateur pursuits, but Schumann did famously damage his right hand from over using a mechanical exercise device in an effort to improve his facility upon the keyboard.

But, reading the marriage diary which the couple kept, the incessant devotion for Clara from Schumann is overwhelming. Day after day, week after week, Schumann wrote down, in the most florid of German poesy, the details of his noble and ardent feelings for his wife. Only the Romantic generation could produce a man like Schumann.

It was not just with text, however, that Schumann 'wrote' to and of Clara. His music is littered with snippets of tone painting that spell the word 'Clara'. One such device is the ascending half-step, followed by a leap up to a descending half-step: 'Cla-ra, Cla-ra', he moans. The small symphony of 1841, Overture, Scherzo and Finale opens with this device and the first movement treats this atom as a central theme for development. This work is typical of Schumann also in that it attempts to revise traditional genres. The three-movement structure, with no adagio, is reminiscent of some of Beethoven's early piano sonatas but to utilize this scheme in a symphonic work was an entirely new idea.

Overture, Scherzo and Finale is, if not one of Schumann's masterpieces, a work of considerable genius and craft, full of novelty and innovation. In the finale the first theme is a quasi-fugato and the period of imitation is five-bars. This asymmetricality is in stark contrast to the preceding Scherzo which exhibits text-book formal structure until the coda recalls the theme of the Overture. The quasi-fugal feel brings to mind the composer J. S. Bach, with whom Schumann was deeply obsessed, but the context of the imitation is purely Romantic. This was the great power for Schumann's craft. He had the ability to find new contexts for old ideas, and vice versa: to unite tradition with innovation.

William Fried

William Fried has appeared in concert at the LA Philharmonic's Green Umbrella Series, Boston's Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance Practice, and The Aspen Music Festival. His playing has been hailed as particularly forceful (San Diego Union Tribune) and described as "subtly shaded and delicately phrased" (sandiego.com).

In residence at UCSD since 2005, Fried performed frequently with SONOR, Palimpsest, redfishbluefish, and the La Jolla Symphony, and appeared as piano soloist with both the Chamber Orchestra and Wind Ensemble. He also performed and recorded numerous new works by UCSD students and faculty, and was the 2009-10 soloist-in-residence of UCSD's composition program. In 2009, his playing was featured in "This Week @ UCSD," as part of an expos on UCSD's new concert hall.

Fried holds degrees in mathematics (Sc.B.) from Brown University, and in piano (MM) from the New England Conservatory. He recently completed his DMA at UCSD, where he studied with Aleck Karis.

David Medine

David Medine holds a BA in viola performance from the Manhattan School of Music where he studied with Robert Rinehart and an MA (also in viola performance) from UCSD where he studied with Brian Chen. He is currently pursuing a PhD in the field of computer music. This is his second year as director of this ensemble, and he is incredibly impressed with the growth of musicianship that the members of this group have exhibited in that time. It is an honor to conduct them.

