

presents

THE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY
Julia Tai, *conductor*

July 20, 2008

3:00 PM

Walker-Ames Room

PROGRAM

OVERTURE to Der Freischütz CARL MARIA VON WEBER (1786-1826)

OCTET for wind instruments..... IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

- I. Sinfonia*
- II. Tema con Variazioni*
- IV. Finale*

Jessica Polin, *Flute*
Kent Van Alstyne, *Clarinet*
George Hamilton & Jeff Eldridge, *Bassoons*
Toby Penk & Eric Smedley, *Trumpets*
Colby Wiley & Daniel Rossi, *Trombones*

INTERMISSION

SYMPHONY NO. 6 in F Major, Op. 68 "Pastorale" LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1779-1827)

- I. Cheerful feelings aroused on arrival in the country*
- II. Scene at the Brook*
- III. Joyful gathering of the country folks*
- IV. Thunderstorm*
- V. Shepherds' song—Glad and thankful feelings after the storm*

Overture to *Der Freischütz*

The opera "*Der Freischütz*" (The free shooter) was composed between 1817-1821 right after Weber took up the post of Kapellmeister of the German opera in Dresden. The overture was composed after the opera was complete. The story is based on a German legend by Apel. Max, the lover of Agatha, daughter of Kuno, can only win her hand by victory in a shooting contest. Caspar, also a lover of Agatha, has sold himself to the fiend Zamiel for some unerring bullets cast under magic influences. He conspires to deliver Max to the fiend instead of himself. Max loses his skill in shooting and having been defeated by Kilian, abandons all hope. While in this despondent mood, Caspar induces him to cast the magic bullets in hope of propitiating Zamiel. Max succeeds well with six of his bullets and fires the seventh at a dove flying past. As he fires, Agatha appears to him as the dove, and he fancies he has killed her, but Zamiel has directed the shot to the heart of Caspar and claims his victim, while Max is rewarded with the hand of Agatha.

An impressive Adagio opening of the overture is followed by a beautiful horn quartet, which represents the forests and hunting. It is followed by the prelude of the story, the contrast between Zamiel and Caspar, described by tremolos in the strings; low clarinets, timpani and especially the sound of the diminished seventh chord are associated with the evil Zamiel and the dark power. The Molto vivace is based on Max's aria "*What evil power is closing around me?*" and Agatha's aria "*We shall meet in joy at last.*" The contrast between C major and minor symbolizes the battle between the power of good and evil. The piece ends in C major, signifying that the power of good wins at the end.

Octet for wind instruments

Stravinsky's Neo-Classical style is an attempt to write music in the old style, as well as a reaction against the ultra-romantic German style that prevailed in the late nineteenth century. The octet was the first masterpiece in the composer's new style. Stravinsky's choice of instruments in the octet strives for an extreme clarity of texture and creates a cold and more rigid timbre. According to Stravinsky, the Octet "is not an 'emotive' work, but a musical composition based on elements which are sufficient in themselves." Stravinsky uses classical forms commonly associated with absolute music: sonata form for the first movement, theme and variations (incorporating a fugue at the end) for the second, and a rondo finale.

In the first movement, a slow introduction gives way to a fanfare-like main theme, which in turn is followed by a development section featuring incessant running notes and fragments of the fanfare. The main theme then returns in full, but is performed only once, and the movement closes abruptly. A theme and five variations make up the second movement. The five variations come in the order of ABACDAE, with a repeated first variation (A). Variation A makes use of the first few notes of the *Dies irae* chant, immersed in flurries of running notes. Variation B is march-like in character and Variation C a waltz. Variation D sounds like a can-can, and variation E is a fugue. A flute solo passage connects the second and the third movement and slips seamlessly into the rondo theme in the finale. Stravinsky closes the Octet with a true rondo, which opens with a constant pulsing accompaniment from one of the bassoons while the other plays the main theme. The ensuing episode opens with a brass outburst and trumpet melody, which eventually dissolves into a reappearance of the main theme. The second episode features the flute and introduces a syncopated and chromatic melodic line. The return of the main theme is re-orchestrated in the first trombone, rhythmically altered and sweet in character. After a passage of ascending chromatic scales presented simultaneously by running sixteenth notes and a syncopated melodic line, the piece ends with a homophonic passage and syncopated rhythm, in hints of a calm and jazzy tune.

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68 "*Pastorale*"

Beethoven's sixth symphony was composed simultaneously with his more famous and fiery one—the fifth symphony. It was completed in 1808 with the title "Recollections of Country Life" at its first performance. It is one of Beethoven's few works of program music and contains some of his most beautiful writing. Beethoven uses explicit descriptions of nature, which includes murmuring of the brook by the strings and the birdcalls by the woodwinds in the second movement and the fierce thunderstorm.

The symphony begins with a beautiful theme that represents the serenity and gentleness of nature. The F and C drone in the viola and cello depicts the openness of the outdoors. Beethoven avoids usage of diminished chords in order not to destroy the sweet sound of nature. The second movement—Scene by

the Brook—is more spacious still. Beethoven explores the softer, more cushioned regions of the flat keys and introduces his inspired cadenza for nightingale (flute), quail (oboe), and cuckoo (clarinet). The dance in the third movement hints at elements of humor and a village country band. The earthy trio suggests a dance that clearly involves foot-stomps and slapping of the thighs. The festivities are interrupted by a summer storm. For this depiction of pelting rain, blinding bolts of lightning and terrifying thunder, Beethoven holds in reserve part of his orchestral arsenal: the piercing piccolo, a pair of trombones, and the timpani, as well as potent harmonic resources such as long-withheld diminished chords. After the storm dies down, we hear a hymn-like chorale, which leads us into the final movement—Shepherds’ Songs with happy and thankful feelings. The open-fifth drone in the viola and cello comes back and the first violins sing out one of the sweetest theme of all time. The theme along with a more cheerful and lively second theme concludes the symphony with a country life full of energy and prosperity.

The University Symphony
Julia Tai, *conductor*

VIOLIN I

Matt Wu, *Concertmaster*
Su-Min Lim
Anni Wong
Seoyoung Lim
Tiffany Lee
Spencer Beaudette

VIOLIN II

Samson Lu*
Michelle McKenzi
Alex Pham
Rachel Bernstein
Sean Chang
Peter Cho
Emily Wing

VIOLA

Julia King*
Nathan Ho
Allen Wong
Michael Siew
Wei-Fen Chang
Sam Alkek

CELLO

Natalie Hall*
Stephan Siew
Brendan Kellogg
Chelsea Lee

BASS

Nic Eisele*
Cara Peterson

FLUTE

Jessica Polin*
Paul Gillespie
Zhaorong Chen

OBOE

Chris Aagard*
Justin Henderlight*

CLARINET

Kent Van Alstyne*
Jonathan Tu
Libby Sandusky

BASSOON

George Hamilton*
Ya-Yun Tseng

HORN

Josiah Boothby*
Kestrel Wright*
Dan Remme
Aaron Avril

TRUMPET

Toby Penk*
Eric Cranfield

TROMBONE

Colby Wiley*
Valeriy Buzunov
Daniel Rossi

TIMPANI

Craig Wende

**denotes principle*