



2021-22 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom Family
Foundation Classical Series

TCHAIKOVSKY'S VIOLIN CONCERTO

Preview talk with KUSC's Alan Chapman @ 7 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 27, 2022 @ 8:00 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 28, 2022 @ 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022 @ 8:00 p.m.

Anja Bihlmaier, conductor
Bomsori Kim, violin

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Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

PROGRAM

- Boulanger** *D'un matin de printemps*
(Of a Spring Morning)
Pacific Symphony Premiere
- Tchaikovsky** **Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35**
Allegro moderato
Canzonetta: Andante
Finale: Allegro vivacissimo
Bomsori Kim, violin
- Intermission —
- Brahms** **Symphony No. 2 in D Major,**
Op. 73
Allegro non troppo
Adagio non troppo
Allegretto grazioso (Quasi
andantino)
Allegro con spirito

**This concert is being recorded for broadcast on
Sunday, July 10, 2022 on Classical KUSC.**

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Violinist Bomsori Kim's expressive communication with the audience through her personal interpretations have been recognized by many of the world's finest orchestras and eminent conductors.

In addition to winning the 62nd ARD International Music Competition—Germany's largest

international music competition—Bomsori Kim is a prizewinner of the Tchaikovsky International Competition, Queen Elisabeth Competition, International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition, Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition Hannover, Montreal International Musical Competition and Sendai International Music Competition. She won Second Prize, the Critic's Prize and nine additional special prizes at the 15th International Henryk Wieniawski Violin Competition.

Bomsori Kim made her New York Philharmonic debut in February 2019, performing the U.S. premiere of Tan Dun's violin concerto, *Fire Ritual*. The 2019-20 season featured her debuts at Lucerne Festival, Rheingau Music Festival, Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad, Heidelberger Frühling Festival and a residency at Poznan Philharmonic Orchestra. In the 2020-21 season, she returned to Rheingau Music Festival as the focus artist. The residency at the Festival in 2021 included seven concerts, presenting her entire artistic skills together with various musical partners. In summer 2021 she returned to the Gstaad Menuhin Festival performing twice as the "Menuhin's Heritage Artist." She also made her debut appearances at the Philharmonie Essen, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden and the Philharmonie in Cologne.

Bomsori Kim has had the privilege of performing under the direction of multiple conductors, including Jaap van Zweden, Andrey Boreyko, Jacek Kasprzyk, Marin Alsop, Hannu Lintu, Sakari Oramo, John Storgards, Yuri Simonov, Giancarlo Guerrero, Yoel Levi, Antonio Mendez and Lukasz Borowicz as well as with numerous leading orchestras, such as Bayerischer Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra, Moscow Symphony Orchestra, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, National Orchestra of Belgium, Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra and NDR Radiophilharmonie of Hannover, among others.

A native of South Korea, Bomsori received a bachelor's degree at Seoul National University, where she studied with Young Uck Kim. She also earned her Master of Music Degree and Artist Diploma at The Juilliard School as a full-scholarship candidate and studied with Sylvia Rosenberg and Ronald Copes.

With the support of Kumho Asiana Cultural Foundation, she currently plays on a 1774 violin by Joannes Baptista Guadagnini. 🎻

ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR



Anja Bihlmaier's strong musical instinct, abundant charisma and natural leadership have propelled her to the forefront of recently established conductors both on the symphonic and operatic stages. In August 2021, she assumed the role of chief conductor of the Residentie

Orkest in The Hague alongside her position as principal guest conductor of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra.

Bihlmaier opened the 2021-22 season at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw commencing her tenure as chief conductor of the Residentie Orkest, swiftly followed by opening concerts of the orchestra's long-anticipated new hall, Amare. Besides regular concerts in Amsterdam and The Hague, she conducts the orchestra at the Bodensee Festival in May and a tour of Germany is planned next season.

During the 2021-22 season, Bihlmaier conducts the BBC Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Symphony, Swedish Radio Symphony, Danish National Symphony, SWR- Stuttgart, Iceland Symphony, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, Kammerakademie Potsdam, Swedish Chamber and Pacific Symphony orchestras all for the first time, and returns to Gothenburg Symphony, Spanish National and Barcelona Symphony, among others.

Anja Bihlmaier recently conducted the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken, City of Birmingham Symphony, BBC Scottish Symphony and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestras.

With a passion for opera, Bihlmaier has amassed 15 years of experience from positions at Staatsoper Hannover, Theater Chemnitz and Staatstheater Kassel with productions including Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Massenet's *Werther*, Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and Dvořák's *Rusalka*. More recently, she conducted Gounod's *Faust* with Trondheim Opera, Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Malmö Opera, and she has regularly conducted Volksoper Wien, including productions of *Carmen*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Marriage of Figaro* and Henry Mason's highly acclaimed new production of *The Magic Flute*.

Following studies at the Freiburg Conservatory of Music, Anja Bihlmaier won a scholarship to study with Dennis Russell Davies and Jorge Rotter at the Salzburg Mozarteum. She won further scholarships from the Brahms Foundation and was admitted onto the prestigious Deutsche Dirigentenforum, the conducting forum of the German Music Council. 🎻

PROGRAM NOTES

Lili Boulanger:

D'un matin de printemps



The first thing you should know about the life of Lili Boulanger is that it ended when she was just 24. The second is a question that is asked with increasing frequency these days: How might the history of classical music be different if she had not died tragically young? To most enthusiasts, the name Boulanger conjures tales of Lili's

sister Nadia, the conductor and legendary pedagogue who was perhaps the most influential teacher of musical composition who ever lived. To frame their professional achievements in current vernacular, both women smashed numerous glass ceilings in a field that had been closed off to women for centuries.

The hundreds of major composers Nadia taught at her Paris apartment—Copland, Gershwin and Phillip Glass among them—spoke of her ear and her insights with almost mystical reverence. But Nadia always spoke of Lili as “the talented one,” and it was Lili who in the years before World War I seemed marked for greatness. In the rarefied air of the Conservatoire de Paris—there is no more rigorous musical training ground in the world—Lili excelled in the most difficult curriculum, composition, and became the first woman to win the prestigious Prix de Rome, an award specifically designed to launch young French composers to prominence.

It's a sad irony that Nadia, who continued teaching until her death at age 92, insisted on her pupils' finding their individual, unique voices as composers—a mission she could never fulfill with Lili. But from the 50 or so works Lili completed before her death, we hear technical facility, youthful lyricism and emergent originality that might have led her to take her place alongside Ravel and Debussy. *D'un matin de printemps*, her evocation of a spring morning, is one of the last works she was able to complete. It is also one of the most beautiful, a musical meditation that seems to find a deep, appreciative joy in the natural world. She composed it in 1917, in a time when the horrors of World War I and uncontrolled industrialization drove many composers to seek unspoiled nature in their music. It is instructive to compare this work to a similarly lovely (and more familiar) English opus, Frederick Delius' *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*. Though Delius was in his early fifties when he composed “Cuckoo” in 1913, we can hear more freshness, more sophistication, perhaps even more musical maturity in *D'un matin de printemps*. In recent years, duo, trio and orchestral versions have been increasingly heard in concert. 🌸

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky:

Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 35



Tchaikovsky seized upon the idea of composing a concerto for violin after hearing others he liked, particularly the energetic, five-movement *Symphonie Espagnole* of the French composer Edouard Lalo. He worked intensively on the project and actually seemed to enjoy the process. “For the first time in my life I have begun to work

on a new piece before finishing the one on hand,” he wrote to his patron, Madame von Meck. “I could not resist the pleasure of sketching out the concerto...” Composition of the concerto proceeded swiftly, blessedly free of emotional encumbrance.

He chose the great violinist Leopold Auer as its dedicatee and to play the premiere, and planned to convey the completed manuscript to the virtuoso via their mutual student, Josif Kotek. “How lovingly [Kotek] busies himself with my concerto,” Tchaikovsky told his brother. “...He plays it marvelously.” We can only imagine Tchaikovsky's shock when Kotek refused the finished manuscript outright; seeing the work in progress, Auer had developed misgivings about it and expressed them with harshness, pronouncing the concerto “unplayable.”

Even more shocking was the condemnation of the influential Austrian critic Eduard Hanslick; his phrase “music that stinks to the ear” remains infamous in the annals of music history. If such writings amuse and astonish us with our benefit of hindsight, they tormented Tchaikovsky, who reportedly re-read Hanslick's review until he had committed it to memory. Hanslick's outburst is all the more shocking in light of our modern appreciation of Tchaikovsky's gift for rich, singing melody, in which this concerto abounds. Its first movement, an allegro moderato in D major, is all graceful lyricism—seemingly an affectionate description of the scenic charms of Clarens, the resort town where it was composed. But its virtuosity and vigor seem to delineate the existential questions that are always present and passionately articulated in Tchaikovsky's major works, especially the symphonies. This emotional intensity reaches a climax in the buildup to the first cadenza.

The second movement, a serenely mournful andante cantabile, contrasts markedly with the first; the violin's entry is melancholy, and it voices a singing lament that eventually gives way to a happier pastoral melody, like a song of spring. Both moods shadow each other for the duration of the movement, as we alternate between brighter and darker soundscapes.

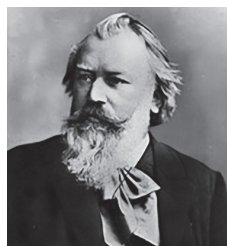
The concerto's final movement follows the second without pause. It is extravagantly marked allegro vivacissimo and returns to the opening movement's D major key, recapturing its exuberant energy. This movement also incorporates an energetic Russian dance that leaps off the page as the violinist's bow dances along with it. A nostalgic second theme provides an emotional counterpoint to the movement's higher-

energy passages, but it is finally eclipsed by a passionate, exuberant finale.

The success and sheer beauty of Tchaikovsky's violin concerto were quick to win listeners over and end its jinx; even Auer had to admit that the work was a success. More than three decades later, Auer recounted his early involvement with the concerto to a New York publication, the *Musical Courier*, in what amounted to a bit of self-justifying revisionist history. Though he had steadfastly maintained that the original version could not be played as written long after others were happily doing so, he finally told his interviewer that "The concerto has made its way in the world, and that is the most important thing." 🌬

Johannes Brahms:

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 73



Brahms did not produce his first symphony until age 43, after 10 years of agonized labor; despite all the revising and polishing, he suffered fearsome anxiety before the premiere. After its great success one might have expected him to relax and wear the mantle of symphonist more comfortably; instead, he worried about his

second, facing what writers today call the "sophomore curse" as they wonder how to follow a successful first novel.

Despite his nerves, Brahms was not about to spend another 43 years fretting about a symphony. In 1877, during the summer after the premiere of his Symphony No. 1, he isolated himself in the Austrian lake resort of Pörttschach, in a tranquil villa on the banks of the Wörthersee. There, agreeably isolated in a picturesque setting, he threw himself into the composition of his Symphony No. 2. By the end of the summer, it was essentially complete. Though the symphony was not greeted with the same enthusiasm as his first, today we recognize it not only as the first's equal in stature, but also as its necessary complement: a symphony that does not look back to Beethoven in tribute, but instead looks ahead to a progressive future for the form.

In analyzing this symphony, some scholars have looked at it in the context of two symphonic pairs: Brahms' first and second symphonies and Beethoven's fifth and sixth. The evidence is circumstantial, but fascinating. When we compare all four, the earlier symphony in each pair is an impassioned statement exploring human fate in a metaphysical way; each later symphony has a lyrical, pastoral feeling. Each earlier symphony had a long, agonized gestation; each later symphony was composed with relative speed, in a burst of creative energy. (For both Beethoven and Brahms, composition was more usually a process of great deliberation.) In fact, Brahms' second is sometimes referred to as his pastoral symphony. But as musicologist Sarah Gerk points out, the pattern of propulsive inspiration for a symphony following prolonged labor on another is common among symphonists—as is the pattern of following a profound, fateful symphony with one that is more relaxed. And

Lili Boulanger

Born: Aug. 21, 1893 in Paris

Died: March 15, 1918 in Mézy-sur-Seine, northwest of Paris
d'un matin de printemps (Of a Spring Morning)
Pacific Symphony Premiere

Composed: Completed in early 1918, when Boulanger expanded it from a work for violin and piano written the year before

World Premiere: March 13, 1921, in the concert hall of the Paris Conservatory, with Rhené-Baton conducting the orchestra of the Concerts Pasedeloup

Instrumentation: three flutes including piccolo, three oboes including English horn, three clarinets including bass clarinet, three bassoons including contrabassoon, four French horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, percussion, harp, celesta and strings

Estimated duration: 5 minutes

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Born: May 7, 1840 in Votkinsk, Russia

Died: Nov. 6, 1893 in Petersburg, Russia

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

Composed: March 1878, completing it on April 11 of the same year

World Premiere: Dec. 4, 1881. Adolf Brodsky was soloist, with Hans Richter conducting the Vienna Philharmonic

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: Sept. 7, 2019 at Pacific Amphitheatre in Costa Mesa with Benjamin Beilman as violin soloist and Carl St.Clair conducting

Instrumentation: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four French horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings and solo violin

Estimated duration: 33 minutes

Johannes Brahms

Born: May 7, 1833 in Hamburg, Germany

Died: April 3, 1897 in Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 73

Composed: Summer of 1877

World Premiere: Dec. 30, 1877, with Hans Richter conducting the Vienna Philharmonic

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: Nov. 15, 2014 with Rossen Milanov conducting

Instrumentation: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four French horns, two trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani and strings

Estimated duration: 43 minutes

isn't it also possible that Brahms was both inspired and calmed by his beautiful lakeside surroundings?

Pleasantly relaxed, with the calmness of nature suffusing it—that is our immediate impression upon hearing the lovely opening theme as the symphony begins. It is based on a four-note motif that, as it develops in the cellos and basses, takes on a wistful quality that pervades three of its four movements. “The new symphony is so melancholy that you will not be able to bear it,” he wrote to his publisher, Fritz Simrock. Though this was an intentionally comical overstatement—Brahms knew his reputation for grim seriousness, and was hedging his bets—he was sincere in his belief that melancholy is the symphony’s overriding emotion; its relative lightness of mood took early audiences by surprise.

Most of the work’s melodic materials are exposed in the first movement. After the lyrical opening, Brahms gives us a second motif in the horns that is taken in new directions by the woodwinds. This passage displays Brahms’ deep mastery of sonata allegro development if we choose to listen for it, but his greatest mastery was his sense of flow and the sheer impetus of the music keeps our mind off of technical details and on the notes. As the second movement opens with a noble theme in the cellos, we detect a gathering darkness that intensifies the melancholy mood without becoming weighty or somber. But this did not deter Brahms from describing this movement to Herr

Simrock as unbearably long and formal. Nonetheless, it is his only true symphonic adagio and a superb example of the form. Astute listeners will notice the second theme’s resemblance to the famous “Brahms Lullaby,” the *Wiegenlied*.

Together, these opening movements take us through an absorbing half-hour of music—more than twice the length of the final two movements. As the third movement opens, the oboe intones a charmingly rustic melody suggesting a *Ländler*—the folk dance that Mozart so loved—that gives way to a traditional scherzo. The symphony reaches a rousing finale with the zesty final movement, marked *allegro con spirito*. Harvard musicologist Reinhold Brinkmann likens this to a *Kehraus*, a kind of joyful “last dance” favored by Haydn. If we consider that the symphony’s first movement is in waltz time (somewhat unusual for symphonies) and its third opens with a *Ländler*, it becomes clear that this symphony is bursting with dance. Hardly what one might expect of a work “so melancholy that you will not be able to bear it.” 🌀

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and Louisiana Philharmonic, and editor-in-chief for *The Santa Fe Opera*.



The Johannes Brahms monument “One of Us”

His monument sits on Karlsplatz, close to the Musikverein concert venue where two of his symphonies premiered. The sculpture is a large stone monument crafted by Rudolf Weyr, and was unveiled on a rainy May 7th, 1908, around 11 years after Brahms’ death on what would have been the composer’s 75th birthday.