La Jolla Symphony & Chorus

2010-2011 Season

CONCERTO

March 12, 2011
March 13, 2011

Mandeville Auditorium, UCSD

FACE THE MUSIC

EXPERIENCES FOR THE EARS AND THE EYES

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EXPERIENCES FOR THE EARS AND THE EYES

MUSIC DIRECTOR **STEVEN SCHICK**

LA JOLLA SYMPHONY & CHORUS
Affiliated with UC San Diego

CHORAL DIRECTOR **DAVID CHASE**

CONCERTO

Saturday, March 12, 2011, 8pm | Sunday, March 13, 2011, 3pm
Mandeville Auditorium, UCSD

Steven Schick conducting

PROKOFIEV **Violin Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Opus 63**

Allegro moderato
Andante assai
Allegro, ben marcato

Hannah Cho, violin

APPLEBAUM **Concerto for Florist and Orchestra** WORLD PREMIERE

I. Aphorism
II. Passacaglia
III. Inflorescence

James DelPrince, floral design

This performance is dedicated to the memory of Viola DelPrince

Commissioned by the Fromm Foundation and the Thomas Nee Commissioning Fund

INTERMISSION

BARTÓK **Concerto for Orchestra**

Introduzione: Andante non troppo; Allegro vivace
Giuco delle Coppie: Allegretto scherzando
Elegia: Andante non troppo
Intermezzo Interrotto: Allegretto
Finale: Pesante; Presto

Violin Concerto No. 2 and *Concerto for Orchestra* by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Unauthorized flash photography and audio/video recording are prohibited during this performance.

We gratefully acknowledge our underwriters for this concert
Eric & Pat Bromberger / Gary & Susan Brown

PROGRAM NOTES

BY ERIC BROMBERGER

VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 2 IN G MINOR, OPUS 63

SERGE PROKOFIEV

Born April 23, 1891, Sontsovka
Died March 5, 1953, Moscow

Like many other Russian musicians, Prokofiev fled to the West in the aftermath of the Communist Revolution of 1917, and he eventually made his home in Paris, where he wrote brilliant—and often abrasive—music. The young composer appeared to take delight in assaulting audiences: when one of his early premieres was roundly booed, Prokofiev walked onstage, bowed deeply to the jeering audience, and sat down and played an encore of equally assaultive music. As the years went by, though, Prokofiev began to feel homesick for Russia. He made the first of many return visits in 1927, and after 1933 he kept an apartment in Moscow and divided his time between that city and Paris. Prokofiev knew that if he returned to Russia, he would have to relax his style. Socialist Realism demanded music that was lyric and attractive to a mass audience, and the Soviet government would not for an instant have tolerated some of the music he had written in the West. Perhaps Prokofiev himself was ready to relax his style, but as the composer made the decision to return to Russia (which he did in 1936), his music grew more lyric and accessible: among the first works he wrote after his return were *Peter and the Wolf* and the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*.

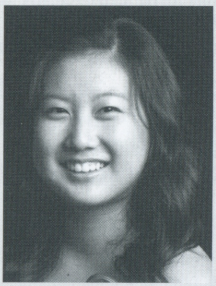
The *Second Violin Concerto* also dates from these years and from this evolution toward a more lyric style. In 1935 friends of the French violinist Robert Soetens asked Prokofiev to write a violin concerto for him. Prokofiev had already been thinking of writing a new work for the violin when the commission arrived, and he noted how the unsettled circumstances of his life caused this music to be written in many different places: "the principal theme of the first movement was written in Paris, the first theme of the second movement in Voronezh, the orchestration I completed in Baku, while the first performance was given in Madrid, in December 1935." Prokofiev and Soetens then took the concerto on an exotic tour, performing it in Portugal, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.

Prokofiev had at first not planned to write a concerto and intended instead to compose a smaller-scaled work, which he described as a "concert sonata for violin and orchestra." As completed, though, the work is clearly a violin concerto, though one conceived on a somewhat intimate scale: Prokofiev scores it for what is essentially Mozart's orchestra (pairs of woodwinds, horns, and trumpets, plus strings), but that classical sound is enlivened by some unusual percussion instruments, including castanets and a variety of drums.

The intimate scale and lyric nature of this concerto are evident from the first instant of the *Allegro moderato*, where the solo violin—all alone—lays out the opening theme. This concerto veers between extremes—it can be murmuring and muted one instant, full of steely energy the next—and such a contrast arrives with the bittersweet second subject, also announced by solo violin. The development of this sonata-form movement is extremely energetic, and the movement finally snaps into silence on abrupt pizzicatos.

Pizzicato strings also open the second movement, where they provide a pointilistic accompaniment to the violin's long cantilena. This melody, which changes meters smoothly between 12/8 and 4/4, evolves through a series of variations until a pair of clarinets introduces the singing central episode. The opening material returns, and Prokofiev closes with an imaginative touch: he has the solo violin take over the pizzicato figure from the opening and "accompany" the orchestra to the quiet close.

Briefest of the movements, the concluding *Allegro ben marcato* demands virtuoso playing from both soloist and orchestra, who must solve complex problems of coordination and balance. This is the most exotic-sounding of the movements, for here Prokofiev makes distinctive use of his percussion instruments, particularly the castanets. The closing pages—which alternate measures of 7/4, 5/4, 2/2, and 3/2 with the basic pulse of 3/4—are particularly exciting, and Prokofiev drives the concerto to a saucy close.✦



HANNAH CHO

violin, 2009 Young Artists Winner

Hannah Cho, 16, is a junior at Professional Children's School in New York City. She currently studies at the Juilliard Pre-College Division with Cho-Liang Lin and Masao Kawasaki. Ms. Cho has been an award-winner at competitions nationwide and, most recently, received Honorable Mention at the 2010 Stradivarius International Violin Competition in Salt Lake City and the California International Young Artist Competition in La Jolla. In 2010, Ms. Cho appeared on "From the Top" at the Kahilu Theatre in Waimea, Hawaii and later received first prize at the Korean Cultural Center's Fourth Music Contest. In December 2009, she was the youngest participant of the New York String Orchestra Seminar and twice performed at Carnegie Hall during the ten-day seminar. Ms. Cho was the first-place winner (instrumental category) of the 2009 La Jolla Symphony & Chorus Young Artists Competition. She has performed as a soloist with orchestras and has participated in many master classes, including the Coaching Workshops at the La Jolla Music Society SummerFest and with Gil Shaham and Robert Lipsett at the Aspen Music Festival and School. Ms. Cho aspires to become a world-renowned soloist and loves how music can communicate with people in a special way that words cannot express.

CONCERTO FOR FLORIST & ORCHESTRA

MARK APPLEBAUM

Born 1967, Chicago

The following program note has been supplied by the composer.

I met James DelPrince, by chance, on an airplane in 1999. Four things happened during the ride, all in the span of about twenty seconds: I learned that he was a florist; I instantaneously had the idea of a concerto for florist; I asked him if he'd ever thought about being a performance florist; and he responded "Yes–I've always dreamed about being a performance florist." *The Concerto for Florist and Ensemble* was premiered soon after, a piece for improvising musicians, with Jim simultaneously sculpting magnificent and idiosyncratic floral sculptures. The piece was revised for several subsequent performances, always with a new ensemble, a new improvisation score, and new durations. Likewise, Jim changed his approach to floristry each time, sometimes employing skewered green apples, barbed wire, or police crime scene tape, other times working with long-stemmed artichokes and a glue gun, inserting flowers and flashlights into salvaged car parts, or weaving fronds of juniper and tinsel. Jim is not your standard florist.

Steven Schick, conductor of the La Jolla Symphony Orchestra and a longtime friend, mentor, and collaborator, played percussion in the most recent adaptation of the *Concerto for Florist and Ensemble,* a 50-minute version scored for an octet of particular virtuoso musicians. Steve enthusiastically proposed a new piece for symphony orchestra, one that differs from its predecessors in a number of important ways. First, and most obvious, the *Concerto for Florist and Orchestra* has a generously expanded instrumentation, including six *very* active percussionists. Second, it is a three-movement work, whereas the earlier versions were all single movement forms. Third, and most significant, the musicians perform a determinate, traditionally notated composition, whereas earlier concerti featured improvisers who were directed when to play, but not what to play.

Unlike the orchestral players, the soloist is free to improvise his part spontaneously. Alternatively, he may choose to prepare an approximate agenda, or to formulate an exact

JAMES DELPRINCE floral design

James DelPrince is an Associate Professor of Floral Design at Mississippi State University and has been a member of the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD) since 1992, serving as President of the Southern Region 2001-2002. He is also a member of the Professional Floral Communicators International.

DelPrince earned his Ph.D. in 1996 and is an expert in Victorian-era floral design. This expertise led to two prestigious fellowships, the first at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC where he researched Victorian and American Classical floral arrangement and conducted design classes for Smithsonian horticulture staff. His second fellowship was at Winterthur, the country estate of Henry Francis du Pont, Wilmington, Delaware.

DelPrince has co-authored *The AIFD Guide to Floral Design* and is a featured writer for Flora magazine. He has produced a series of educational DVDs on the subject *Flowers for Entertaining.*

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series of step-by-step actions in advance. The only requirement is that he undertake three projects on stage whose duration of execution matches those of the orchestra's musical endeavors. In this regard, the spirit is very much akin to the classic Merce Cuningham and John Cage collaborations in which music and dance *cohabitate* rather than *coordinate*. My experiences composing for the Cunningham Company, first in 1993 and then in 2005, profoundly affected my aesthetic orientation. The music and dance—or music and floristry—will have coincidental, chance moments of seeming congruity, and other times of seemingly coordinated antithesis, both of which suggest a kind of cognitive clarity. But for me, the abundant time in which the media relate at an uncomfortable, oblique angle is of greatest interest and excitement. It is the problem of their incongruous juxtaposition that I find most arresting.

An alternative performer of another medium may be substituted. When such a substitution is made, the title is revised accordingly. Some examples include: *Concerto for Juggler and Orchestra, Concerto for Plumber and Orchestra, Concerto for Contortionist and Orchestra, Concerto for Quilter and Orchestra, Concerto for Locksmith and Orchestra, Concerto for Chef and Orchestra, Concerto for Tax Attorney and Orchestra,* etc. A *Concerto for Composer and Orchestra* might involve a composer (but not the one of this piece) quietly working at a desk onstage.

The *Concerto for Florist and Orchestra* was composed for the La Jolla Symphony Orchestra and was made possible by a grant from the Fromm Music Foundation. It is dedicated to Steven Schick and James DelPrince, intrepid collaborators, conspirators, and experimentalists.✦

JOINING US. . .

MARK APPLEBAUM

Nee Commission

Mark Applebaum is Associate Professor of Composition and Theory at Stanford University. He received his Ph.D. in composition from UCSD where he studied principally with Brian Ferneyhough. His solo, chamber, choral, orchestral, operatic, and electroacoustic works have been performed throughout the U.S., Europe, Africa, and Asia with notable premieres at the Darmstadt summer sessions. He has received commissions from Betty Freeman, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, the Fromm Foundation, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, the Vienna Modern Festival, Antwerp's Champ D'Action, Festival ADEvantgarde in Munich, Zeitgeist, MANUFACTURE (Tokyo), the St. Lawrence String Quartet, the Jerome Foundation, and the American Composers Forum, among others. In 1997, Applebaum received the American Music Center's Stephen Albert Award and an artist residency fellowship at the Villa Montalvo artist colony in Northern California.

Applebaum is also active as a jazz pianist and builds electroacoustic instruments out of junk, hardware, and found objects for use as both compositional and improvisational tools. His music can be heard on recordings on the Innova, Tzadik, Capstone, and SEAMUS labels. Prior to his current appointment, he taught at UCSD, Mississippi State University, and Carleton College. Additional information is available at www.markapplebaum.com.

CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA

BÉLA BARTÓK

Born March 25, 1881, Nagyszentmiklos, Hungary
Died September 26, 1945, New York City

Bartók and his wife fled to the United States in October 1940 to escape World War II and the Nazi domination of Hungary, but their hopes for a new life in America were quickly shattered. Wartime America had little interest in Bartók or his music, the couple soon found themselves living in near-poverty, and then came the catastrophe: in the spring of 1942 Bartók's health failed. By the following spring his weight had dropped to 87 pounds (a ghastly photo from these months shows an emaciated figure, his bones pressed through his skin), and he had to be hospitalized. Bartók fell into a deep depression, convinced that he would neither recover nor compose again. To his publisher he wrote, "Artistic creative work generally is the result of an outflow of strength, highspiritedness, joy of life, etc.—All these conditions are sadly missing with me at present."

At this point, Bartók's friends rallied around him—and very discreetly too, since the fiercely-proud composer would never accept anything that savored of charity. Fritz Reiner and Joseph Szigeti convinced Serge Koussevitzky to ask for a new work from the ailing composer, and the conductor visited Bartók's hospital room in New York City to tell him that the Koussevitzky Foundation had commissioned an orchestral work for which it would pay $1000. Bartók refused. He believed that he could never complete such a work, but Koussevitzky gave Bartók a check for $500 and insisted that the money was his whether he finished it or not. The visit had a transforming effect: soon Bartók was well enough to travel to Saranac Lake in upstate New York, where he spent the summer. First he rested (using the time to read an English translation of *Don Quixote*), and then he began work. He worked fast: beginning August 15, 1943, he completed the score eight weeks later on October 8.

The *Concerto for Orchestra*, as Bartók called the piece, had its first performance on December 1, 1944, in Boston. It was an instant success, and Bartók reported that Koussevitzky called it "the best orchestra piece of the last 25 years." For that premiere, Bartók prepared a detailed program note, and—unusually for this composer—that note talked not just about the title and structure, but about the content of the music:

> The title of this symphony-like orchestral work is explained by its tendency to treat the single orchestral instruments in a concertant or soloistic manner. The 'virtuoso' treatment appears, for instance, in the fugato section of the development of the first movement (brass instruments), or in the

perpetuum-mobile-like passage of the principal theme of the last movement (strings), and especially in the second movement, in which pairs of instruments consecutively appear with brilliant passages.

This is music of strength, humanity, beauty, and (not least) humor, and Bartók's own description may touch the secret of its emotional appeal: "The general mood of the work represents, apart from the jesting second movement, a gradual transition from the sternness of the first movement and the lugubrious death-song of the third, to the life-assertion of the last one."

The five movements of the *Concerto for Orchestra* are in the beautifully-symmetric arch form that Bartók sometimes employed. The outer movements, both in modified sonata form, are the anchors of this arch. They frame the two even-numbered movements, both of which have the character of scherzos (each is marked *Allegretto*). The central slow movement, which itself is in a symmetric ternary form, becomes the capstone to the arch.

Introduzione: The music comes to life with a brooding introduction, and flutes and trumpets hint at theme-shapes that will return later. The movement takes wing at the *Allegro vivace* with a leaping subject (immediately inverted) for both violin sections, and further themes quickly follow: a second subject for solo trombone and a more intimate figure for solo oboe. As part of the development comes a resounding fugato for the *Concerto's* eleven brass players, and the movement drives to a resplendent close on its second subject, stamped out by the brass.

Giuoco delle Coppie (Game of Couples): This charming movement should be understood as a scherzo in the literal meaning of that term: a "joke"—music for fun. A side drum sets the rhythm, and then pairs of woodwinds enter in turn to play a variation on the good-natured opening tune, first heard in the bassoons. Bartók varies the sound by having each "couple" play in different intervals: the bassoons are a sixth apart, the oboes a third, the clarinets a seventh, the flutes a fifth, and finally the trumpets a second apart. A noble brass chorale interrupts the fun, and then the woodwinds pick up the opening theme and resume their game, but now with a difference: a third bassoon gets to tag along, and Bartók combines some of the

pairs of woodwinds on their return. The side drum returns to tap this music into silence.

Elegia: At the center of the *Concerto* lies this dark *Andante,* which Bartók called a "lugubrious death-song" and which is based in part on material first heard during the introduction to the first movement. It opens with an inversion of the *Concerto's* very beginning, and this gives way to one of the finest examples of Bartok's "night-music," with a keening oboe accompanied by spooky swirls of sound. A great outburst from the violins, also derived from the very beginning, leads to the violas' *parlando* declarations. The music winds its way back to the eerie night-sounds of the opening before vanishing with only two instruments playing—piccolo and timpani.

Intermezzo Interrotto (Interrupted Intermezzo): A sharper sense of humor emerges here. Bartók begins with a woodwind tune whose shape and asymmetric meters suggest an Eastern European origin and continues with a glowing viola melody that must have had specific appeal for him: it is derived from an operetta tune by Zsigmond Vincze that originally set the words "You are lovely, you are beautiful, Hungary." At the center of the movement comes the interruption. During the war Bartók had been dismayed by the attention paid to Shostakovich's *Leningrad Symphony,* and he objected particularly to the obsessive ostinato theme Shostakovich associated with the Nazi invaders (and which in turn he had taken from Lehár's *The Merry Widow*). Bartók quotes that tune in the solo clarinet, then savages it: he makes the orchestra "laugh" at the theme, which he treats to a series of sneering variations and finally lampoons with rude smears of sound. This has long been considered Bartók's attack on Shostakovich, but is it possible that Lehár's tune functions in exactly the same way for both Shostakovich and Bartók? For each, it is a symbol of the hated Nazis, it invades their own music, and it is thrown aside in an act of defiant nationalism. Once it is gone, Bartók returns—in one of the most beautiful moments in the *Concerto*—to his "Hungarian" tune, now sung hauntingly by muted violins.

The *Finale* begins with a fanfare for horns, and then the strings take off and fly: this is the perpetual motion Bartók mentioned in his note for the premiere, and—beginning very quietly with the *inside* second violins—he soon invests this rush of energy with a slashing strength. This movement is of a type Bartók had developed over the previous decade, the dance-finale, music of celebration driven by a wild energy. Yet it is a most disciplined energy, as much of the development is built on a series of fugues. The fugue subject, derived from the opening horn fanfare and first announced by a pair of trumpets, evolves through a remarkable sequence of permutations: when the strings have their turn with it, that fugue is announced by the *outside* second violins (Bartók is scrupulous in this score about giving every single section and player a moment of glory). Matters subside into a mysterious quiet, and from this misty murk the fugue theme suddenly blazes out in the brass and the *Concerto for Orchestra* ends with one of the most dazzling conclusions to *any* piece of piece of music: the entire orchestra rips straight upward in a dizzying three-octave rush of sound.

It is hard to imagine that music of so much strength, so much optimism, so much—to use Bartók's own term—"life-assertion" could have come from the frail man who had to be helped onto the stage to receive the cheers in Boston at the premiere. For the Bartók who wrote this powerful score was a man unhappily exiled from his native land, a man tormented by the war, a man so physically weak that his doctors barely let him attend the premiere, a man wracked by the leukemia that would kill him ten months later. The appeal of this music lies not just in its virtuosity but in something much deeper: in the midst of worldwide conflagration and his own terminal illness, Bartók did recover his "strength, highspiritedness, [and] joy of life," and he turned them into great music.✦