

Thursday, February 5, 8pm
Friday, February 6, 8pm
Saturday, February 7, 8pm

James Levine conducting

MOZART “Bella mia fiamma...Resta, o cara,” concert aria, k.528

“Oh smania! oh furie!...D’Oreste, d’ Aiace,”
from *Idomeneo*, act iii

Barbara Frittoli, soprano

SCHULLER *Where the Word Ends* (2007)

(BSO 125th Anniversary Commission/world premiere;
commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra,
James Levine, Music Director, through the generous
support of the New Works Fund, established by
the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency)

{INTERMISSION}

BRAHMS Symphony no. 2 in D, opus 73

Allegro non troppo
Adagio non troppo
Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino)
Allegro con spirito

Barbara Frittoli’s appearances this week are supported by the Alan J. and Suzanne W. Dworsky Fund for Voice and Chorus.

Ms. Frittoli’s jewelry provided by Shreve, Crump & Low

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Mozart’s Symphonic Legacy

Next week and the week after, the Boston Symphony Orchestra plays three programs of Mozart symphonies with James Levine conducting: two programs of early and middle-period symphonies (February 12-17) and the three last Mozart symphonies played in a single program (February 19-21).

by Thomas May

“With Mozart you either hit the bull’s eye or you miss; and a miss is as bad as a mile.”

So observed George Bernard Shaw regarding the demands of performing Mozart's music. You cannot whip it up to "make an effect," for "nothing but the finest execution—beautiful, expressive, and intelligent—will serve." If, for Shaw's contemporaries, the impact of Mozart's greatest scores seemed tame, even "trivial," compared with that of a Beethoven symphony, the blame lay in the "superficiality of Mozart's interpreters." Even amid the enthusiastic celebrations marking the first centenary of the composer's death in 1891, Shaw noted that rote accounts of the same small handful of works, played over and over, had become the norm, giving a false impression that posterity had already come to terms with Mozart's true significance.

The danger Shaw pointed to remains relevant for audiences today: Mozart's comfortable omnipresence can lull us into overlooking just what is so great about his art. But a competing "appetite for riotous, passionate, willful, heroic music"—the legacy of the romantic era, in other words—could not hold sway indefinitely, Shaw predicted. "Once we have become conscious that there are grades of quality in emotion as well as variations of intensity, then we shall be on the way to become true Mozart connoisseurs."

Mozart's catalogue of symphonies offers an especially fascinating perspective from which to consider the scale of what he achieved in his all too short career. Appreciating the range of these works—which span a quarter-century, from 1764 to 1788—not only enhances our Mozart connoisseurship but provides an outstanding glimpse into how creative genius interacts with larger historical and cultural forces.

The traditional tally of forty-one symphonies arrived at in the first Complete Edition from the nineteenth century was long ago superseded. A few of the officially numbered symphonies have been deleted as the work of others (No. 37, for example); in addition, a substantial body of unnumbered symphonies that originated as multi-movement serenades or as opera overtures have come to light, along with such finds as the G major *Lambach* Symphony, K.45a (so-called for the Austrian monastery in which the score was discovered). The New Grove Dictionary (2001 edition) lists 56 authentic symphonies. Neal Zaslaw, a leading expert on the Mozart symphonies, counts 52 that survive from an original total of 72. The sheer quantity—as in the case of Haydn's hundred-plus symphonies—is a mark of their era. "The extent to which quantity was once used as a visible symbol of wealth and power can hardly be missed by visitors to the great palaces of Europe," observes Zaslaw. He goes on, however, to note that by the 1780s a decisive transformation in favor of quality over quantity was under way.

Mozart's symphonies themselves illustrate nothing less than a paradigm shift for this genre of orchestral music—from incidental, even disposable, entertainment to the kind of enduring artistic statement we associate with Beethoven and such later symphonists as Brahms, Bruckner, and Mahler. The course traced by Mozart, as the legendary music historian Alfred Einstein so succinctly puts it, is "an advance from the decorative to the expressive, from the external to the internal, from mere ceremonial to spiritual avowal." And while Haydn's role in elaborating the prototype and language of the classical symphony was indispensable, the influence between him and his younger colleague worked in both directions. The distance traveled between Mozart's first symphony (K.16) and the last, the *Jupiter* (K.551), Einstein points out, "is longer than that from Haydn's first work in the form to the last of his London Symphonies"—a stretch that, moreover, exceeded Mozart's entire lifespan.

While his remarkable versatility and fluency across genres have long been admired, what tends to take center stage are Mozart's contributions to opera and, in the instrumental domain, the concerto and chamber music. When it comes to the symphonies, however, you're more likely to find opinions polarized into either of two camps—both sharing a consensus view of the final trilogy of symphonies from 1788 (K.543, 550, and 551) as consummate masterpieces.

One camp regards the bulk of Mozart's symphonies—the great majority of which were written before he turned twenty—as essentially little more than preparation work, "juvenilia," paving the way toward the glories of the last three (with exceptions made to savor the *Linz*, the *Prague*, and perhaps the *Haffner*, and even the Symphony No. 29 and *Paris* Symphony, too). Even a creation as urgent and powerful as the Symphony No. 25 (K.183)—whose status was enhanced by its use in the *Amadeus*

soundtrack—has long been known by the telling moniker “Little” G minor, as if it could be only dwarfed in comparison with Mozart’s other symphony in that key, the undeniably great No. 40. An offshoot of this way of thinking is an attitude of occasional condescension, accompanied by frustration with musical conventions that are perceived as exerting too firm a grip. (Beethoven, by contrast, emerges as the “liberator” who ultimately frees the genre from its servitude to decorum.)

At the other extreme are those who approach every measure of Mozart as if it were Holy Writ. Where the former camp emphasizes an oversimplified model of linear “progress,” the latter succumbs to a form of Mozart idolatry that smoothes over the stops and starts and speed-bumps of his growth as an artist. Both extremes, however, are tempted to treat the lesser-known symphonies with an indiscriminating sameness (whether dismissive or enthralled), failing to register their distinctive moments of epiphany—whether in the new colors contributed by the use of flutes in the Symphony No. 14 (K.114) and an extra pair of horns in No. 18 (K.130), or the formal experiment of mixing dance and sonata structure in the finale of Symphony No. 21 (K.134).

Both approaches also fall prey to the desire to “rescue” Mozart from his era, from a period separated by the epochal shift in sensibility of the French Revolution. Yet the composer’s own historical context shows his uniquely fruitful interaction with the creative stimuli he encountered. Fittingly enough, Mozart composed the very first symphony in his catalogue (K.16) as a boy of eight while on tour in London. His symphonies are on one level a kind of travelogue that map out his exposure to the various national schools of this post-Baroque era. They travel from the Italian (where the idea of the symphony had originated, as a short, three-sectioned opera overture) to the Viennese (which introduced a fourth, dance-oriented movement into the scheme)—with stops along the way in Mannheim and Paris. From these journeys Mozart gleaned varying approaches to structuring his music, as well as state-of-the-art techniques for enhancing orchestral body and timbre (from the superlative orchestra in Mannheim and, later, Vienna’s top-notch woodwind players).

Haydn had the advantage of being able to conduct his symphonic experiments with the stability of his employer’s palace orchestra over a lengthy period. But Mozart turned his peripatetic experiences to his own advantage: his imagination and tenacious memory became a crucible in which he synthesized these international stylistic elements into a personal voice. Along with this stylistic and geographical trajectory, the symphonies encode Mozart’s aesthetic and even psychological journey toward independence. Biographer Robert Gutman sees the conservative retreats found after some of the composer’s bolder forays in the genre—eventually dropping the symphony in his later Salzburg years in favor of the predictably pleasing galant style of the serenades and divertissements—as the result of pressure from his father Leopold and the Archbishop’s court. “It must have cost him much to cut himself down to size—and in a genre in which his goals had come to be higher than the decorative,” Gutman speculates. Eventually, following the “least painful path,” he all but gave up the symphony for several years until, “later and far from Salzburg,” he returned to it.

By the time he wrote his final three symphonies in that extraordinary summer of 1788, the genre had left its humble origins far behind, when it functioned as a mere call to attention framing the performance of more important music. “The change in Mozart’s symphonies over his lifetime,” Zaslav cautions, “must be explained not only by his own artistic and technical development, but by the stylistic evolution of the period.” He observes an overwhelming “silence” with regard to 18th-century critical response to the symphony, comparing this prevailing attitude to the perception of a painting’s frame—indispensable but taken for granted. Soon, though, it would yield to an eloquently voiced reevaluation that called attention to Mozart’s symphonic achievement. In his famous review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, E.T.A. Hoffmann cited Mozart’s Symphony No. 39 as offering “an anticipation of the infinite” and later declared the genre to represent “the highest type of instrumental music.”

Perhaps the most haunting likeness of Mozart—even after last year’s discovery of a rare authenticated portrait—is the unfinished painting by Joseph Lange: haunting because it is left to us to complete the picture in our imaginations (see page 29). And Mozart’s music, for all its perfection, remains open to encompass what we bring to it. As Anthony Burgess observed so memorably,

Mozart “reminds us of human possibilities. He presents the whole compass of life and intimates that noble visions exist only because they can be realized.”

Thomas May *writes and lectures about music and theater.*

Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

“Bella mia fiamma...Resta, o cara,” Concert aria, K.528

“Oh smania! oh furie!...D’Oreste, d’Aiace,” from

“Idomeneo,” Act III

JOANNES CHRISOSTOMUS WOLFGANG GOTTLIEB MOZART—who began calling himself Wolfgang Amadeo about 1770 and Wolfgang Amadè in 1777 (he used “Amadeus” only in jest)—was born in Salzburg, Austria, on January 27, 1756, and died in Vienna on December 5, 1791. He composed his concert aria “Bella mia fiamma...Resta, o cara,” K.528, in Prague, for the soprano Josepha Duschek; the manuscript is dated November 3, 1787, less than a week after the premiere of “Don Giovanni.” The aria “D’Oreste, d’Aiace” was intended for the third act of his opera seria “Idomeneo, rè di Creta” (“Idomeneus, King of Crete”), but it was cut from the premiere (see below), which took place in Munich on January 29, 1781.

THE SCORE OF “BELLA MIA FIAMMA,” in addition to solo soprano, calls for flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, and strings.

THE SCORE OF “D’ORESTE, D’AIACE,” in addition to solo soprano, calls for two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Mozart’s extraordinary gifts as a composer of arias are manifest not only in those he wrote for the operatic stage, but also in a large number of stand-alone arias—including “Bella mia fiamma” on this program—composed for a variety of singers, occasions, and reasons. From a 21st-century perspective—especially given our primary emphasis on Mozart’s symphonies, concertos, operas, and chamber music—it is not only interesting but important to note, too, that such arias were not necessarily minor or casual by-products to Mozart’s output. In fact, they would sometimes have reached a larger audience than might hear his purely instrumental compositions.

Though we have no details of the first performance, the autograph score of “Bella mia fiamma” is dated November 3, 1787. That fall, Mozart was in Prague for performances of *Le nozze di Figaro* and the first performance anywhere, on October 29, of *Don Giovanni*. He spent part of his time in Prague with his friends the Duscheks at their nearby country cottage—where, in fact, he put the finishing touches on his new opera. Franz Duschek was a composer, teacher, and pianist; his wife, Josepha, was a concert and oratorio singer with whom, Alfred Einstein speculates, Mozart was “perhaps a little in love.” It was as a present to his hosts that Mozart composed “Bella mia fiamma”; a famous story relates that Josepha locked him in the pavilion of her garden with a supply of writing materials, refusing to release him until the aria was done. Mozart, in turn, threatened to destroy the piece unless Josepha could sing it perfectly at sight. Though the text was for a long while believed to be by Lorenzo Da Ponte (Mozart’s collaborator on *Figaro*, *Giovanni*, and *Così*), who was with him in Prague, we now know it to be from D.M. Sarcone’s *Cerere placata* (set as an opera by Niccolò Jommelli and produced in Naples in 1772), based on the myth of Proserpina and her mother Ceres. Ceres has separated Proserpina (the “bella fiamma” in question) from her mortal lover Titano, whom Ceres has decreed will die, and who here expresses his anguish.

Bella mia fiamma, addio! Non piacque
al cielo di renderci felici.

Ecco reciso, prima d’esser compito,

My dearest love farewell! It did not
please heaven to make us happy.

Lo, severed before yet completed

quel purissimo nodo, che strinsero
fra lor gli animi nostri con il solo voler.
Vivi! Cedi al destin, cedi al dovere!
Dalla giurata fede la mia morte t'assolve;
a più degno consorte...oh pene!
Unita vivi più lieta e più felice vita.
Ricordati di me; ma non mai turbi
d'un infelice sposo la rara rimembranza
il tuo riposo.
Regina, io vado ad ubbidirti; ah tutto
finisca il mio furor col morir mio.
Ceres, Alfeo, diletta sposa, addio.

(a *Proserpina*)

Resta, o cara; acerba morte
mi separa, oh Dio, da te.

(a *Ceres*)

Prendi cura di sua sorte,
consolarla almen procura.

(ad *Alfeo*)

Vado...ahi lasso! addio per sempre...
Quest' affanno, questo passo
è terribile per me.

Ah! Dov'è il tempio, dov'è l'ara?

(a *Ceres*)

Vieni, affretta la vendetta!
Questa vita così amara
più soffribile non è.

(a *Proserpina*)

Oh cara, addio per sempre!

is that holy knot that bound our
spirits together in a single will.
Live! Yield to fate, yield to duty!
My death will absolve you from
the faith you pledged—oh grief!
Live a happier and more carefree life.
Remember me, but never let the
occasional memory of an unfortunate
betrothed disturb your peace.
Queen, in obedience to you, I go.
Ah, may all my fury end with my death.
Ceres, Alfeo, beloved spouse, farewell!

(to *Proserpina*)

Stay, my dearest: bitter death
parts me, oh God, from you.

(to *Ceres*)

Care for her lot:
try at least to console her.

(to *Alfeo*)

I go...alas! Farewell for ever...
This torment, this step
is terrible to me.

Ah! Where is the temple, where the altar?

(to *Ceres*)

Come quickly, hasten vengeance!
So bitter a life as this
I can no longer bear.

(to *Proserpina*)

My dearest, farewell for ever!

D.M. Sarcone

Sometimes, for a later production of an opera that had already been premiered (whether his own or someone else's), Mozart would write a so-called "substitute aria" geared to the specific strengths or needs of a particular singer taking a role in that later production. (Two well-known examples that subsequently remained in the opera for which Mozart wrote them are in *Don Giovanni*—Donna Elvira's "Mi tradi" and Don Ottavio's "Dalla sua pace," both composed for the 1789 Vienna production of *Giovanni* two years after the Prague premiere.) In the case of Elettra's extraordinary "rage aria," "D'Oreste, d'Aiace," we have an aria that Mozart actually eliminated from the premiere of *Idomeneo, rè di Creta* ("Idomeneus, King of Crete")—the great opera seria that established his maturity as an opera composer upon its premiere in Munich on January 29, 1781—because the production was running too long. To avoid compromising dramatic efficacy, Mozart expanded the aria's brief, introductory recitative to an intensely dramatic, three-times-longer recitative (fifteen vs. the original five lines) that could work on its own. Nowadays, whether in concert or in full productions, it is not unusual to have the expanded recitative introduce the aria, as will be heard here. These final moments for Elettra come in Act III near the very end of the opera: Idomeneo's son Idamante, with whom Elettra is in love, is betrothed instead to the Trojan princess Ilia. The desperate Elettra (daughter of Agamemnon) resolves to join her brother Orestes in hell, to remain "in everlasting woe, in eternal weeping."

Marc Mandel

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCE OF “BELLA MIA FIAMMA” was a single performance in Lowell, Massachusetts, with Gertrude Franklin under the direction of Georg Henschel. Subsequent BSO performances featured Ms. Franklin with Wilhelm Gericke conducting in Boston in January 1885, in Springfield in April 1886, and in Providence in April that year; soprano Dorothy Maynor at Tanglewood on August 17, 1940, with Serge Koussevitzky conducting; soprano Jessye Norman with Colin Davis conducting in February 1974, in Boston and at Carnegie Hall; and soprano Andrea Rost with André Previn conducting at Tanglewood last summer, on August 10, 2008.

THE ONLY PREVIOUS BOSTON SYMPHONY PERFORMANCE OF “D’ORESTE, D’AIACE” AS A CONCERT EXCERPT took place at Tanglewood on August 22, 1992, with soprano Carol Vaness under the direction of Grant Llewellyn. The aria would also have been sung by Hildegard Behrens at Tanglewood on July 13, 1991, in the concert staging of the complete “Idomeneo” led by Seiji Ozawa to commemorate the bicentennial of Mozart’s death. Also worth noting here is that the first American performance of “Idomeneo” was given by the Tanglewood Music Center (then called the Berkshire Music Center) in the Theatre-Concert Hall at Tanglewood on August 4, 1947, with Boris Goldovsky conducting.

[RECITATIVE]

Oh smania! Oh furie!
Oh disperata Elettra!
Addio amor, addio speme!
Ah, il cor nel seno già m’ardono
l’Eumenide spietate.
Misera! A che m’arresto?
Sarò in queste contrade
della gioia, e trionfi
spettatrice dolente?
Vedrò Idamante alla rivale in braccio,
e dall’uno, e dall’altra
mostrarmi a ditto?
Ah no, il germano Oreste
ne’ cupi abissi io vuò seguir.
Ombra infelice! Lo spirto mio accogli,
or or compagna m’avrai
là nell’Inferno.
A sempiterni guai, al pianto eterno.

Oh frenzy! Oh Furies!
Oh, desperate Electra!
Farewell, love! Farewell, hope!
Ah! Already within my breast
the pitiless Eumenides are burning my heart.
Wretch that I am! Why do I hold back?
Shall I, in this region
of joy and triumphs,
be a grieving spectator?
Shall I see Idamante in the arms of my rival,
and see both of them point their
fingers at me?
Ah, no! My brother Orestes
I shall follow into the deep abysses.
Unhappy shade! Receive my spirit;
in no time you’ll have me as a
companion in Hell.
In everlasting woe, in eternal weeping.

[ARIA]

D’Oreste, d’Aiace
Ho in senor i tormenti.
D’Aletto la face
Già morte mi dà.

The torments of Orestes and Ajax
I have in my breast.
The torch of Alecto
already brings me death.

Squarciatemi il core
Ceraste, serpenti,

Tear open my heart,
Ceraste, serpents,

O un ferro il dolore
In me finirà.

or a sword will put an end
to my sorrow.

Giovanni Battista Varesco

Gunther Schuller

“Where the Word Ends” (2007)

GUNTHER SCHULLER was born in New York City on November 22, 1925, and lives in Newton, Massachusetts. “*Where the Word Ends*” is a Boston Symphony Orchestra 125th anniversary commission and was written on commission from the Boston Symphony Orchestra, James Levine, Music Director, through the generous support of the New Works Fund, established by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. These are the first performances. James Levine and the BSO will also perform the piece this coming Monday at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

“WHERE THE WORD ENDS” CALLS FOR A LARGE ORCHESTRA of four flutes (second doubling alto flute, third and fourth doubling piccolo), three oboes and English horn, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet, and bass clarinet, three bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, four Wagner tubas, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, percussion (five players suggested: xylophone, glockenspiel, vibraphone, marimba, four tom-toms, bass drums, two snare drums, four suspended cymbals, choke cymbal, ride cymbal, small gong, medium and large tam-tams, chimes, crotales, bell tree, three triangles, log drum, temple blocks, wood block), timpani, piano and celesta, two harps, and strings. The single-movement work is about twenty-five minutes long.

Where the Word Ends: music expresses what words can't, it's that simple. So says Gunther Schuller of his new orchestral work, written as a 125th anniversary commission for the Boston Symphony Orchestra and its music director James Levine. Schuller was one of a short list of composers Levine hoped to have the BSO commission for a new orchestral work when he became the orchestra's music director in the 2004-05 season. The commission was eventually proffered and the new piece scheduled for the 2006-07 season. Schuller, who works very quickly, began work in late 2006 and, with interruptions, finished the piece in a matter of weeks, completing it in early 2007. When Levine had a look at the score, it was clear to him that it would be better served in a different program. Schuller agreed, and the premiere was rescheduled for this season so Levine could devise a new context that set the piece off in complete contrast; hence the Brahms and Mozart music on this concert. (The original program featured the flashy, spotlight-stealing second suite from Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* in addition to a Mozart symphony and concerto.)

Schuller's ties to the BSO began at Tanglewood, where he joined Aaron Copland as head of the composition program during Erich Leinsdorf's tenure as BSO music director. He went on to become artistic director of Tanglewood from 1970 until 1984. Meanwhile he was also president of Boston's New England Conservatory, which under his guidance became the first such school to add a jazz program to its curriculum, leading nearly every other major music education institution to follow suit.

Schuller's jazz activities are well documented—in his early years he was performing on French horn both under Toscanini and uptown with Miles Davis and Gil Evans. He also arranged and composed for jazz groups. It was Schuller who coined the now common phrase “Third Stream” to denote a style of music blending new classical and jazz sensibilities, an approach that expanded the possibilities for the avant-garde improvising musicians of the late 1950s. His immediate cohorts in this fruitful experience were John Lewis and the Modern Saxophone Quartet, in the same orbit with George Russell, Eric Dolphy, Ornette Coleman, and many others. In his “free time” he has written several books, beginning with the still-used *Horn Technique* in 1962 and including two important volumes on the history of jazz; *Musings*, a collection of essays; and *The Compleat Conductor*, outlining his views on the subject of orchestral conducting. The first volume of his memoirs—as Schuller

describes it, a kind of history of mid-20th-century culture through music as seen by one of its most involved participants—is due for publication by the University of Rochester Press, hopefully later this year. On top of all this, he ran his own publishing company (transferred to the G. Schirmer catalogue in recent years) and the recordings label GM Recordings, highlighting great underserved repertoire, mostly new and mostly American.

As a composer, Schuller was essentially self-taught—or rather, like the composers of the past, he learned through taking part in the performances of the great works and by studying scores. Although he is not an exclusively orchestral composer, he leans strongly toward that medium. Among his nearly two hundred works of all kinds, more than two-thirds have been orchestral, including three dozen concertos for all kinds of instruments. As he has said, he was “born in an orchestra”: his father was a New York Philharmonic violinist, and Gunther himself was performing professionally in orchestras already in his mid-teens. Beginning with the Cincinnati Symphony (where he was soloist in his own Horn Concerto at age eighteen), he later became a member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra at nineteen and also played with the New York Philharmonic. Since he turned from horn playing more to conducting in the late 1950s, he has conducted dozens of orchestras from student-level to the world’s elite, not only in his own works and other recent pieces but also the standard repertoire. With the BSO alone (he first led the orchestra in 1964 in his own *Paul Klee Studies*), his conducting repertoire included such composers as Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert, Wagner, Szymanowski, and Strauss, John Knowles Paine, Ives, Bernstein, and Scott Joplin (to name a few).

Schuller’s explicit influences center on the *Rite of Spring*/post-neoclassical Stravinsky and on Schoenberg, with particular notice for the latter’s *Erwartung* and his Variations for Orchestra. A New York Philharmonic recording of the *Rite* and the work’s presence in Disney’s *Fantasia* fired his desire to compose, and he was voracious in his approach to learning music. His interests are otherwise remarkably catholic, his personal canon encompassing such early moderns as Debussy, Ravel, Delius(!), Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Szymanowski, and Reger—surprising only if one hasn’t paid attention to Schuller’s lush chromaticism and verdant orchestration. He has written commissioned works for nearly every major American ensemble, and won the Pulitzer Prize for his *Of Reminiscences and Reflections* (1993), composed for the Louisville Orchestra. *Where the Word Ends* is the third work by Schuller to be premiered by the BSO, after *Museum Piece* (1970, written for the centennial of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston) and *Deai* for three orchestras, a BSO commission premiered in 1979 during the orchestra’s tour to Japan. Including the present piece, the BSO has performed, all told, eleven scores by Schuller; James Levine has previously conducted his *Spectra* and *Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee* with the orchestra.

Apart from several symphonic-poem-like pieces such as the *Klee Studies* and the early *Vertige d’Eros* that take visual arts as a starting point, many, if not most, of Schuller’s orchestral works are symphonic in conception. (Only one of his pieces, from 1965, is actually called “Symphony.”) In discussing this predilection, Schuller explained, “This symphonic form invented by Haydn and expanded by Beethoven is not just a classic, it’s an eternal form that is inexhaustible in its potential. I cherish this tradition and try my best to retain its best qualities.”

Where the Word Ends, then, is a symphony-like one-movement work in four sections played without pause. Its span is readily heard as four continuous movements, but with the second-movement Adagio interrupted by the scherzo (complete with Trio): Lento—Adagio—Scherzo; Trio—Adagio—Allegro vivace. The Lento serves as both introduction and fully fledged opening movement, establishing the harmonic and textural world of the piece. It begins with strings alone, and in measure seven (about thirty seconds in—very slow tempo) we hear part of Schuller’s “magic” twelve-tone row—which he has employed for most of his pieces for decades—appear in the basses and cellos as a kind of motto, the first true melodic statement within the atmospheric texture of the upper strings. Gradually the orchestra fills out as the Lento expands toward the “grand convulsion” (as it’s marked in the score) and climax that precedes the Adagio.

Although some of the figural elements, particularly fast scale passages, of the Lento return in the Adagio, the rhythmic procession of this part is more straightforward, supporting sustained melodic writing until another big crescendo introduces the scherzo. Cellos and basses chug away to keep the

quick regular pulse of this primarily 6/8 movement, while insistent figures appear throughout the different orchestral sections, a mosaic of timbres. The Trio section smoothes things out somewhat, but the forward motion continues lively. The scherzo returns verbatim, but truncated, and there follows a clear return to the Adagio, with its heartbeat-like oscillations in the second violins. When this fades away, a quietly wonderful little episode of repeated pitches, beginning in the flutes and working its way through the winds, prepares the sudden arrival of the final section, Allegro vivace. That repeated-note figure reappears judiciously in a relaxation toward the end of this exuberant movement, which ebbs and flows in density and is punctuated liberally with big chords, an orchestra reveling in rich, sonorous life.

Robert Kirzinger

Johannes Brahms

Symphony No. 2 in D, Opus 73

JOHANNES BRAHMS was born in the free city of Hamburg on May 7, 1833, and died in Vienna on April 3, 1897. He composed his Symphony No. 2 during a productive summer stay at Pörschach in Carinthia (southern Austria). The first performance took place in Vienna on December 30, 1877, under the direction of Hans Richter.

THE SYMPHONY IS SCORED for two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings.

In a letter to Clara Schumann, Johannes Brahms offhandedly revealed something fundamental about himself: "I always write only half-sentences, and the reader...must supply the other half." He was talking about his letters, which were often misread, and were often intended to be. In person and on the page, Brahms was chronically given to the oblique, the ironic, the unspoken. Likewise in some of his music we find an ironic play of surface appearance and hidden import; but in his art the irony was no joke, rather a symptom of his own thickly shrouded inner world.

Another example is the celebrated Brahmsian lyricism. When we think of his warmly lyrical moments we usually think of his instrumental works, rather than where we would expect to find that warmth, in his songs. When Brahms was setting words with their inescapable emotions, he pulled back; he only warmed fully within the abstractions of instrumental music. Yet despite his historical reputation as a creator of "pure" music, his life and feelings always went into his work, where they could at once lie hidden and sing for all the world.

Perhaps the most regularly misread of Brahms's major works is his Second Symphony. From the beginning, critics hailed it as a sunny and halcyon vacation from the turbulent First Symphony. The Second, everybody said, is Brahms's counterpart to Beethoven's *Pastoral*, and looks back further to Haydn and Mozart at their most congenial.

But if the Second paints an idyll, it is a lost idyll. Brahms himself hinted at its tangled import. To his friend and critic Eduard Hanslick he wrote, "It'll sound so cheerful and lovely that you will think I wrote it specially for you or even your young lady." He cited the benevolent influence of his composing spot on the Wörthersee: "[there are] so many melodies flying around that you have to be careful not to step on them." Meanwhile, having just finished the First Symphony after some fifteen years of wrestling with it, Brahms completed the Second—and several smaller works—during one delightful four-month working vacation in the summer of 1877.

To Clara Schumann, however, Brahms described the symphony as "elegiac." To his publisher he wrote, "The new symphony is so melancholy that you won't be able to stand it. I've never written anything so sad....The score must appear with a black border." There the presumable joke is that the symphony usually strikes listeners as suave and enchanting. After all, every movement is in a major key.

The deeper irony hidden in Brahms's words is that the elegiac black border is as much a part of the symphony as its more explicit cheeriness. Brahms's Second is like a vision of nature and youth troubled by shadows that come and go like dark clouds in a summer sky.

In his book on the Second Symphony, *Late Idyll*, Harvard scholar Reinhold Brinkmann calls this supposed hymn to nature and serenity a "questioning of the pastoral world, a firm denial of the possibility of pure serenity." Brahms's testament to the past is haunted by a skepticism and foreboding that seem prophetic.

The questioning begins within the gentle opening. We hear a little three-note turn in the basses (D–C-sharp–D), a melodic shape that will pervade the symphony. The basses are answered by an elegant wind phrase that at once suggests a Strauss waltz (Brahms admired the Waltz King) and the hunting horns of a Haydn symphony or divertimento. But all this gracious simplicity is deceptive. Anyone trying to waltz to this opening will fall on his face: the phrasing of the basses and the answering winds are offset by one measure, with neither predominating. At times the movement falls into tumultuous stretches where the meter is dismantled. The breezy and beautiful first theme is followed by a fervent second theme that, in itself, is in A major—but harmonized in F-sharp minor. Throughout the symphony, the brightness of major keys will be touched by darker minor-key tints.

The more salient voices disturbing the placid surface are the trombones and tuba. After the balmy opening, the music seems to stop in its tracks; there is a rumble of timpani like distant thunder, and the trombones and tuba whisper a shadowy chorale, in cryptic harmonies. That shadow touches the whole symphony. Later, the development section is intensified by braying brasses—startling for Brahms, more startling in this halcyon work.

From the beginning of the symphony's career there were some who saw the shadows. One of them, conductor and Brahms acquaintance Vincenz Lachner, complained to the composer about "the gloomy lugubrious tones of the trombones" intruding on the tranquility. Brahms replied with one of the most revealing statements he ever made about his music or about himself:

I very much wanted to manage in that first movement without using trombones....

But their first entrance, that's mine, and I can't get along without it, and thus the trombones.

I would have to confess that I am...a severely melancholic person, that black wings are constantly flapping above us, and that in my output—perhaps not entirely by chance—that symphony is followed by a little essay about the great "Why."...It casts the necessary shadow on this serene symphony and perhaps accounts for those timpani and trombones.

The "little essay" Brahms mentions is another product of the same summer, the motet "Warum ist das Licht gegeben" (Opus 74, No. 1: "Wherefore is the light given to them that toil?") in which the chorus proclaims Job's anguished question, "Why? Why?" Thus the trombones, the necessary shadow, the great "Why."

The second movement begins with a sighing high-Brahmsian cello theme. While the tone throughout is passionate and Romantic, the movement's languid beauties are unsettled by rhythmic and harmonic ambiguity. It ends with a chromatic haze like an expansion of the first movement's trombone chorale—and underneath, the relentless strokes of timpani that for Brahms were an image of fate, and the thought of fate always ominous. The final sustained chord sounds remarkably frail and uncertain for B major.

If the keynote of the first two movements is tranquility compromised, in the last two movements gaiety and frivolity break out. Brahms was generally influenced by the vacation spots where he composed, for example the cliffs and crashing seas of Rügen that helped complete the stormy First Symphony. This time the pleasures of the Wörthersee have the last word. The third movement unfolds as a charming and jocular scherzo marked by sudden shifts of rhythm and meter: an elegant Allegretto grazioso leaping into a skittering Presto.

The finale is a romp, with one droll and delicious theme after another, ending unforgettably with a triumphant D major blaze of trombones. Here Brahms does something he was not supposed to know how to do—make an instrument the bearer of meaning. The trombones as harbingers of fate have become the heralds of joy; avant-gardists of the next century would call that “tone-color composition.” If the great “Why” is ultimately unanswerable, this time Brahms was happy to lay aside the question in favor of *joie de vivre*, flourishing his trombones like a wineglass.

Of Brahms’s four symphonies the Second often seems the most atavistic, the least ponderous and self-conscious. Yet in its pensive irony as in its masterful craftsmanship, in its dark moments as in its jubilation, the Second is essentially Brahms. He was a composer who looked back to the giants of the past as an unreachable summit, and who looked to the future of music and civilization with increasing alarm. He was a man who felt spurned by his beloved hometown of Hamburg, who called himself a vagabond in the wilderness of the world. So midway through his journey as a symphonist, Brahms wrote a serenely beautiful masterpiece whose secret message is that you can’t go home again.

Jan Swafford

Jan Swafford is an award-winning composer and author whose books include biographies of Johannes Brahms and Charles Ives, and “The Vintage Guide to Classical Music.” An alumnus of the Tanglewood Music Center, where he studied composition, he teaches at The Boston Conservatory and is currently working on a biography of Beethoven for Houghton Mifflin.

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE of Brahms’s Symphony No. 2 was given on October 3, 1878, by the Philharmonic Society under Adolph Neuendorff in New York’s Steinway Hall. Boston heard the Brahms Second for the first time several months later, on January 9, 1879, with Carl Zerrahn conducting.

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCES of Brahms’s Symphony No. 2 were given by George Henschel on February 24 and 25, 1882, during the orchestra’s inaugural season, subsequent BSO performances being given by Wilhelm Gericke, Arthur Nikisch, Emil Paur, Karl Muck, Max Fiedler, Otto Urack, Henri Rabaud, Pierre Monteux, Serge Koussevitzky, Richard Burgin, Bruno Walter, Leonard Bernstein, Charles Munch, Eugene Ormandy, John Barbirolli, Lorin Maazel, Ernest Ansermet, Erich Leinsdorf, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, William Steinberg, Michael Tilson Thomas, Sir Colin Davis, Eugen Jochum, Seiji Ozawa, Joseph Silverstein, Kazuyoshi Akiyama, Kurt Masur, Gunther Herbig, Bernard Haitink, Leonard Slatkin, Dennis Russell Davies, Zdenek Macal, James DePreist, Sir Simon Rattle, Haitink again (including European tour performances following the 2001 Tanglewood season), Andrey Boreyko, James Levine (the most recent subscription performances, in March 2005, followed by a performance at Carnegie Hall and then at Tanglewood in July 2005), and Pinchas Steinberg (the most recent Tanglewood performance, on August 20, 2006).

To Read and Hear More...

The article on Gunther Schuller in the 2001 New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians is by Richard Dyer (with a works list by Norbert Carnovale). The article in the previous (1980) New Grove is by Austin Clarkson. Much useful information can also be found on the website of Schuller’s publisher, G. Schirmer (www.schirmer.com). Schuller himself is the author of several books, all of which are available in paperback from Oxford University Press. Most useful from a standpoint of learning about Schuller’s musical interests is the collection of essays entitled *Musings*. His *The Compleat Conductor* is a thesis on the primacy of the composer’s intentions as revealed in the score and a critique of conducting styles. He has written two volumes of jazz history: *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Development* (winner of the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award in 1969) and *The Swing Era: The*

Development of Jazz 1930-1945. Schuller recently finished a first volume of memoirs, to be published by the University of Rochester Press.

Although it's just scratching the surface given the number of works Schuller has written, there are quite a few good recordings of his orchestral pieces available on CD. James Levine recorded his *Spectra* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1990, but this is currently not in the catalog (Deutsche Grammophon, with music of Carter, Cage, and Babbitt). Among readily available recordings of Schuller's orchestral music are his *An Arc Ascending*, *Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee*, *Vertige d'Eros*, and *Meditation* with the composer conducting the Hannover Radio Philharmonic Orchestra (GM Recordings). There is also his Pulitzer Prize-winning orchestral work, *Of Reminiscences and Reflections*, on a disc with the Concerto for Organ and *The Past is the Present*, all works from the early 1990s, with the North German Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer (New World Records). Three of Schuller's concertos—his Horn Concerto No. 1, Piano Concerto, and Bassoon Concerto—are available on disc together (GM Recordings). BSO principal bass Edwin Barker is soloist in a recording, released in early 2005, of Schuller's Concerto for Double Bass with the composer conducting the Boston-based Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, on a disc with works for double bass by Vanhal, Tom Johnson, and Theodore Antoniou (GM Recordings).

Robert Kirzinger

The important modern biography of Mozart is Maynard Solomon's *Mozart: A Life* (Harper Perennial paperback). Peter Gay's *Mozart* is a straightforward and very concise general introduction to the composer's life, reputation, and artistry (Penguin paperback). Relatively recent additions to the Mozart bibliography are *Mozart: His Life and Work*, by Julian Rushton, in the Master Musicians series (Oxford); the late Stanley Sadie's *Mozart: The Early Years, 1756-1781* (Oxford); *Mozart's Women: His Family, his Friends, his Music*, by the conductor Jane Glover (HarperCollins), and Robert Gutman's *Mozart: A Cultural Biography* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/Harvest paperback). An important recent source of information on Mozart is the *Cambridge Mozart Encyclopedia*, edited by Cliff Eisen and Simon Keefe (Cambridge University paperback). Stanley Sadie's Mozart article from *The New Grove Dictionary* (1980) was published separately as *The New Grove Mozart* (Norton paperback). The revised entry in the 2001 Grove is by Sadie and Cliff Eisen; this has been published separately as a new *New Grove Mozart* (Oxford paperback). "Musical lives," a series of readable, compact composer biographies from Cambridge University Press, includes John Rosselli's *The life of Mozart* (Cambridge paperback). Though published nearly twenty years ago, *The Complete Mozart: A Guide to the Musical Works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, edited by Neal Zaslaw and William Cowdery, remains a valuable source of information (Norton). Alfred Einstein's *Mozart: The Man, the Music* is a classic older study (Oxford paperback). *The Mozart Compendium: A Guide to Mozart's Life and Music*, edited by H.C. Robbins Landon, is another important general reference (Schirmer). Among other books on the composer, Volkmar Braunbehrens's *Mozart in Vienna, 1781-1791* provides a full picture of the composer's final decade (HarperPerennial paperback), and Peter Clive's *Mozart and his Circle: A Biographical Dictionary* is a handy reference work with entries about virtually anyone you can think of who figured in Mozart's life (Oxford).

Soprano Barbara Frittoli has recorded a disc of Mozart concert and opera arias, with Sir Charles Mackerras conducting the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, that includes both "Bella mia fiamma" and "D'Oreste, d'Aiace" (Erato). Among many other recordings (of varying vintage, listed alphabetically by soloist) of "Bella mia fiamma" are those by Soile Isokoski with Peter Schreier and the Tapiola Sinfonietta (Ondine), Gundula Janowitz with Willfried Boettcher and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon "Originals"), Felicity Lott with Jane Glover and the London Mozart Players (ASV), Leontyne Price with Peter Adler and the New Philharmonia Orchestra (RCA), and Kiri Te Kanawa with György Fischer and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra (London/Decca). Other available recordings of "D'Oreste, d'Aiace" include Edita Gruberova's with John Pritchard and the Vienna Philharmonic (Decca), Anna Netrebko's with Claudio Abbado and the Mozart Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon), Leontyne Price's with Nello Santi and the New Philharmonia Orchestra (RCA), and Cheryl Studer's with Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields (Philips).

Important additions to the Brahms bibliography in recent years have included Jan Swafford's *Johannes Brahms: A Biography* (Vintage paperback); *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters* as selected and annotated by Styra Avins (Oxford); *The Complete Brahms*, edited by conductor/scholar Leon Botstein, a compendium of essays on Brahms's music by a wide variety of scholars, composers, and performers, including Botstein himself (Norton); and Walter Frisch's *Brahms: The Four Symphonies* (Yale paperback). Also relatively recent is Peter Clive's *Brahms and his World: A Biographical Dictionary*, which includes a chronology of the composer's life and works followed by alphabetical entries on just about anyone you might think of who figured in Brahms's life (Scarecrow Press); this follows Clive's earlier, similar books, *Mozart and his Circle* (Yale University Press) and *Beethoven and his World* (Oxford University Press). The Brahms entry in the 2001 New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians is by George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch; the entry in the 1980 Grove was by Heinz Becker. Important older biographies include Karl Geiringer's *Brahms* (Oxford paperback; Geiringer also wrote biographies of Haydn and Bach) and *The Life of Johannes Brahms* by Florence May, who knew Brahms personally (originally published in 1905, this shows up periodically in reprint editions). Malcolm MacDonald's *Brahms* is a very good life-and-works volume in the "Master Musicians" series (Schirmer). John Horton's *Brahms Orchestral Music* in the series of BBC Music Guides includes discussion of Brahms's symphonies, concertos, serenades, *Haydn* Variations, and overtures (University of Washington paperback). Michael Musgrave's *The Music of Brahms* concentrates on the music (Oxford paperback), as does Bernard Jacobson's *The Music of Johannes Brahms* (Fairleigh Dickinson). Michael Steinberg's notes on the four Brahms symphonies are in his compilation volume *The Symphony—A Listener's Guide* (Oxford paperback). Donald Francis Tovey's notes on the symphonies are among his *Essays in Musical Analysis* (Oxford paperback).

BSO Music Director James Levine has recorded the four Brahms symphonies twice: in 1975-76 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (RCA) and live with the Vienna Philharmonic between 1992 and 1995 (Deutsche Grammophon). Noteworthy, more recent cycles of the four symphonies include Nikolaus Harnoncourt's with the Berlin Philharmonic (Teldec), Charles Mackerras's with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, in "period style" as suggested by documentation from Meiningen, Germany, where Brahms himself frequently led the orchestra (Telarc), and Daniel Barenboim's with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Erato). The Boston Symphony Orchestra recorded the four Brahms symphonies between 1990 and 1994 with then principal guest conductor Bernard Haitink (Philips). Earlier Boston Symphony accounts of the Brahms Second were recorded in 1955 by Charles Munch (RCA) and in 1964 by Erich Leinsdorf (also RCA, as part of Leinsdorf's complete Brahms symphony cycle with the BSO for that label). A telecast of the BSO performing Brahms's Symphony No. 2 (plus music of Delius and Walton) under the direction of Sir John Barbirolli, broadcast originally on February 3, 1959, from Sanders Theatre in Cambridge by WGBH, is available on DVD (VAI Artists in collaboration with the BSO and WGBH-TV).

For those interested enough in historic recordings to listen through dated sound, recordings of the Brahms Second worth investigating include Bruno Walter's from 1953 with the New York Philharmonic (EMI/IMG Artists, in the excellent volume devoted to Walter in the series "Great Conductors of the 20th Century"); Arturo Toscanini's 1952 commercial recording with the NBC Symphony Orchestra (RCA; collectors may also want to know about his 1938 concert performance with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, on Testament, and his live 1952 Brahms symphony cycle with the Philharmonia Orchestra, likewise on Testament); Pierre Monteux's 1951 recording with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra (RCA), and Wilhelm Furtwängler's 1945 concert performance with the Vienna Philharmonic (Music & Arts). The Brahms recordings of Willem Mengelberg with the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam (Naxos Historical) and of Felix Weingartner with the London Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestra (Living Era) will be important to anyone interested in the recorded history and performance practice of these works; both Mengelberg's and Weingartner's recordings of the Brahms Second date from 1940.

Marc Mandel

Guest Artist

Barbara Frittoli

Barbara Frittoli is widely regarded as one of the foremost Italian sopranos before the public today. In opera she is internationally acclaimed for her interpretations in the great works of Mozart (*Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Idomeneo*) and Verdi (*Otello*, *Falstaff*, *Simon Boccanegra*, and the Requiem). Born in Milan, she graduated with highest honors from the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory. Today she is as much in demand for opera as she is for symphonic works and recital. Highlights of Ms. Frittoli's 2007-08 season included *Così fan tutte* with Riccardo Muti at the Vienna State Opera, a new production of *Suor Angelica* under Riccardo Chailly at La Scala, and *Le nozze di Figaro* at London's Royal Opera. Concert performances brought her to Chicago, Tel Aviv, London, Berlin, Moscow, London, and Vienna. In future seasons she is scheduled to return to the Metropolitan Opera for *Don Giovanni* and Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra*, the role that served as her San Francisco Opera debut last fall. Among her career highlights are *Otello* at the 1996 Salzburg Easter Festival and at Turin's Teatro Regio in 1997 under Claudio Abbado; *Così fan tutte* at the Vienna State Opera in 1994, at the 1998 Ravenna Festival under Riccardo Muti, and at Covent Garden in 1998 with Colin Davis; Verdi's Requiem with the Berlin Philharmonic under Claudio Abbado in 1997; *Don Giovanni* at the 1999 Salzburg Festival with Lorin Maazel; the role of Liù in *Turandot* with Zubin Mehta, a performance telecast live worldwide from the Forbidden City in 1998; and Desdemona in *Otello* at the Metropolitan Opera with James Levine, the role that also served for her Bayerische Staatsoper debut with Zubin Mehta. At La Scala, Ms. Frittoli has enjoyed the honor of opening the new season in December 1998, 2000, and 2002, as Leonora in *Il trovatore*, Desdemona in *Otello*, and Anaide in *Mosè in Egitto*, respectively, all under the baton of Riccardo Muti. Her discography includes *I pagliacci* and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with Riccardo Chailly, *La bohème* with Zubin Mehta, and Puccini's *Il trittico* with Bruno Bartoletti for Decca; *Il viaggio a Reims* with Claudio Abbado for Sony/BMG Masterworks; Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with Riccardo Muti for EMI, and *Turandot* with Zubin Mehta for BMG, as well as solo albums on Erato of Mozart arias with Charles Mackerras and Verdi arias with Colin Davis and the London Symphony Orchestra. On DVD Ms. Frittoli can be seen in Verdi's *Falstaff* under Bernard Haitink (Opus Arte); another *Falstaff* production on TDK, Rossini's *Moise et Pharaon*, and Verdi's *Otello* (all with Muti); *Turandot* under Mehta (BMG), and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* under Muti (EMI). Ms. Frittoli and her family make their home in Milan. Barbara Frittoli made her Boston Symphony Orchestra debut in the orchestra's season-opening performances of Verdi's Requiem led by Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos in September 2002. Last week she sang the role of Amelia Grimaldi in the BSO's concert performances under James Levine of Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*. This coming Monday she joins Maestro Levine and the BSO in Carnegie Hall in New York for a performance there of this week's program.