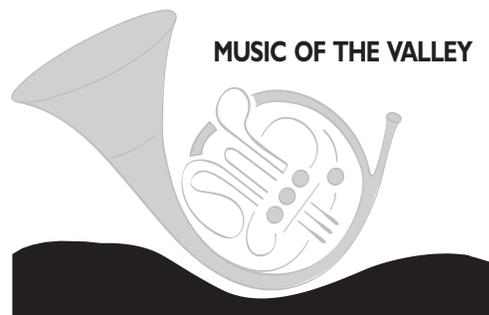


# Livermore-Amador Symphony

Arthur P. Barnes, Music Director

December 5, 2009, 8 p.m.

Bankhead Theater, Livermore



Overture to *Le nozze di Figaro*  
(*The Marriage of Figaro*)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756–1791)

Variations on a Theme by Haydn

Johannes Brahms  
(1833–1897)

Chorale St. Antoni	Andante
Variation I	Poco più animato
Variation II	Più vivace
Variation III	Con moto
Variation IV	Andante con moto
Variation V	Vivace
Variation VI	Vivace
Variation VII	Grazioso
Variation VIII	Presto non troppo
Finale	Andante

Made in America

Joan Tower  
(b. 1938)

INTERMISSION

Piano Concerto No. 3

Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninoff  
(1873–1943)

Allegro ma non tanto, Allegro, Moderato, Allegro, Allegro molto  
Adagio

Alla breve, Allegro molto, Scherzando, Lento, Alla breve, Vivace, Vivacissimo, Presto

Marilyn Thompson, piano

## CONDUCTOR

Arthur P. Barnes

## ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

Bob Williams

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Kristina Anderson

*Concertmaster*

Kathi Allee

Norman Back

Feliza Bourguet

Phillida Cheminais

Judy Eckart

Lana Massoud

Lana Patterson

Clara Teufel

## SECOND VIOLIN

Ursula Goldstein

*Principal*

Lisa Burkhart

Jeana Ernst

Denise Leddon

Jackie McBride

Virginia McFann

Margaret Morrad

Nissa Nack

John Strader

## VIOLA

Hazelle Miloradovitch

*Principal*

*Frances Fischer*

*Chair*

Lynda Alvarez

Kathleen Fasenfest

Audrey Horning

Laura Gilliard Miller

Marilyn Taylor

## CELLO

Nick Dargahi

*Principal*

Naomi Adams

Jim Aikin

Sharon Greene

Joanne Lenigan

Dave Walter

## STRING BASS

Robert Cooper

*Principal*

Elizabeth Foort

Alan Frank

Patty Lay

Joe Taylor

## FLUTE

Marianne Beeler

Nan Davies

## PICCOLO

Nan Davies

## OBOE

Eva Langfeldt

Larry George

## ENGLISH HORN

Larry George

## CLARINET

Lesley Watson

Kathy Boster

## BASSOON

Bruce Shay

Lynn Stasko

## HORN

Christine-Ann

Immesoete

Richard Lamb

Bryan Waugh

Bob Williams

## TRUMPET

Michael Portnoff

Hank Finn

## TROMBONE

Chuck Smith

Mark Hil

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Betsy Hausburg

## TIMPANI

April Nissen

## PERCUSSION

Peter Curzon

Paul Kasameyer

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**Overture to *Le nozze di Figaro*  
(*The Marriage of Figaro*)**

**W. A. Mozart  
(1756–1791)**

Unanimously regarded as a child prodigy, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart has been labeled by many as the epitome of musical genius and one of the greatest composers who ever lived. His long list of works is astonishing, especially since he lived for only 35 years. Operas, symphonies, concertos, sonatas, string quartets: these are just a few of the Classical genres in which Mozart composed. One can only imagine what else could have sprung from his gifted mind had he lived longer.

In 1781 Mozart moved to Vienna. In his first few years there, he performed his own piano concertos in a popular series of concerts. However, when the public's interest began to wane, Mozart was left to reinvent himself and soon found a measure of success in writing operas.

Mozart composed the opera *Le nozze di Figaro* in 1786. He took the story from Pierre Beaumarchais' comedy *Le mariage de Figaro*—a play whose revolutionary ideas had stirred up the political environment throughout Europe. Unfortunately for Mozart, Joseph II, the Holy Roman emperor, banned the play. Only after the librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, removed all political references was Mozart allowed to put the work on stage.

The premiere took place at the Burgtheater in Vienna on May 1, 1786. Although it was well received, Joseph II allowed the opera to be repeated only eight more times.

*The Marriage of Figaro* takes place in Seville, Spain. It follows the events of *Le barbier de Séville* (*The Barber of Seville*), Beaumarchais' earlier play, which later became famous, in 1816, when Rossini used the story for his opera of the same name.

The lighthearted overture to *Figaro* does not contain any thematic material from the opera itself. Instead, as a testament to Mozart's masterful skills, it captures the essence of the opera superbly. There is a rumor that Mozart planned to include a slow interlude—in keeping with Italian tradition—just before the recapitulation but omitted it only because, in typical Mozart fashion, he ran out of time to write it down. However, the ultimate charm of this beloved curtain-raiser suggests that Mozart decided not to amend it in any way.

**Variations on a Theme by Haydn      Johannes Brahms  
(1833–1897)**

Like Mozart, Johannes Brahms displayed prodigious musical talent early in life. He received his first training from his father, Johann Jakob Brahms, a master of the horn and double bass. Brahms was so self-critical that he destroyed many of his early compositions, but Eduard Marxsen, one of his early teachers, held him in great esteem and proclaimed him Mendelssohn's successor.

By the age of 40, Brahms had established himself as an important composer of brilliant piano music; fine chamber works; and several works for chorus and orchestra, including

the magnificent *German Requiem*. However, in sharp contrast to Mozart, who wrote 41 symphonies, Brahms had still not written a full-scale work for orchestra alone.

Brahms was an avid music historian who deeply admired the compositions of Haydn. In the 1850s, he wrote to his dear friend Clara Schumann of his immense enjoyment in playing through Haydn's piano trios as duets with his violinist friend Joseph Joachim. Eventually the Haydn scholar C. F. Pohl showed him a set of six suites scored for military band that were attributed to Haydn. Brahms found himself attracted to the second movement of the last suite, which was based on the old Austrian folk hymn "Chorale St. Antoni." Current historical research now suggests that the suites were not written by Haydn but most likely by one of his students, Ignaz Pleyel. This discovery, however, does not detract from the merit of the tune or the brilliant ways Brahms developed his variations, displaying his mastery of variation form.

Brahms conducted the premier with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra on June 2, 1873. The piece begins with a statement of the St. Antoni theme, exactly as in the original suite, followed by eight variations and a magnificent Baroque-style passacaglia, in which a repeated bass phrase is continuously enhanced until it becomes a triumphant declaration by the whole orchestra. The work ends gloriously with a final majestic restatement of the St. Antoni theme.

**Made in America**

**Joan Tower  
(b. 1938)**

Joan Tower was born in New Rochelle, New York, and grew up in South America, where her father worked as a mining engineer. When she returned to the United States, she attended Bennington College in Vermont and Columbia University. She founded the Da Capo Players and served as their pianist for 15 years until her composition career skyrocketed.

In recent years, Tower has become one of America's most significant composers. Her first orchestral work, "Sequoia," was the only American work on the 1982 United Nations Day concert of the New York Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, and it quickly entered the repertory. She spent three years (1985–88) as composer-in-residence at the St. Louis Symphony as part of its Meet the Composer residency program. "Silver Ladders," composed during that period, won the 1990 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition.

Tower's work has garnered grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, and the Fromm Music Foundation. Tower was also the subject of a nationally broadcast television documentary produced by WGBH-TV that won honorable mention at the American Film Festival. She is currently Asher Edelman Professor of Music at Bard College, where she has taught since 1972.

"Made in America" was commissioned in 2004 by the League of American Orchestras, a national network of

professional and volunteer orchestras. The League wanted a work that would become known through performances by community and semiprofessional orchestras rather than the internationally famous major American orchestras. By the end of 2007, it had been performed 83 times for a total audience of more than 75,000—a unique achievement for a new work.

Tower was the first composer to be selected for the “Ford Made in America” program, a partnership of Ford and the orchestra league, and she chose to use the title of the project for her new piece. Here she explains its significance for her:

*When I was nine, my family moved to South America (La Paz, Bolivia), where we stayed for nine years. I had to learn a new language, a new culture, and how to live at 13,000 feet! It was a lively culture with many saints’ days celebrated through music and dance, but the large Inca population in Bolivia was generally poor and there was little chance of moving up in class or work position. When I returned to the United States, I was proud to have free choices, upward mobility, and the chance to try to become who I wanted to be. I also enjoyed the basic luxuries of an American citizen that we so often take for granted: hot running water, blankets for the cold winters, floors that are not made of dirt, and easy modes of transportation, among many other things. So when I started composing this piece, the song “America the Beautiful” kept coming into my consciousness and eventually became the main theme for the work. The beauty of the song is undeniable and I loved working with it as a musical idea. One can never take for granted, however, the strength of a musical idea—as Beethoven (one of my strongest influences) knew so well. This theme is challenged by other more aggressive and dissonant ideas that keep interrupting, interjecting, unsettling it, but “America the Beautiful” keeps resurfacing in different guises (some small and tender, others big and magnanimous), as if to say, “I’m still here, ever changing, but holding my own.” A musical struggle is heard throughout the work. Perhaps it was my unconscious reacting to the challenge of, “how do we keep America beautiful?” (Joan Tower, spring 2005)*

### **Piano Concerto No. 3**

**Sergei Rachmaninoff  
(1873–1943)**

In 1909 Sergei Rachmaninoff embarked on the first of his several tours of the United States. For this occasion, he wrote his Piano Concerto No. 3, completing it just in time for his first performance of the work with the New York Symphony Society under the direction of Walter Damrosch on November 28, 1909.

Two months later, Rachmaninoff had another opportunity to perform the concerto, with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Gustav Mahler. Rachmaninoff recalled: “Mahler touched my composer’s heart straightaway by devoting himself to my concerto until the accompaniment, which is rather complicated, had been practiced to the point of perfection, although he had already gone through another

long rehearsal. According to Mahler, every detail of the score was important—an attitude that is unfortunately rare among conductors.”

Cast in the traditional concerto form, this rhapsodic work is unified by having the opening theme of Slavic melancholy return in various guises within each of the three movements.

The first movement begins with a two-measure orchestral introduction that establishes a touchstone rhythm before the soloist enters with the simple Slavic tune of the opening theme. An air of mystery yields to a foreshadowing of a second theme in the horns and trumpets. After a brief cadenza, the second theme is exposed in a dialogue between piano and orchestra. A complex development leads to an accompanied cadenza: one of two cadenzas provided by the composer. The movement ends as the shroud of mystery closes over the music once more.

The strings begin the second movement by suggesting the main theme, first presented in its entirety by the solo oboe. This beautiful melody of free tonality has been characterized as “tender and melancholy yet not tearful.” After several variations by soloist and orchestra, the clarinet and bassoons begin a contrasting idea, accompanied by pizzicato strings. A gentle reminiscence of the opening theme is suddenly interrupted by the piano’s impatient dash to the finale.

Continuing without pause, the finale contains several themes derived from those of the first movement. The nervous vitality is momentarily interrupted by a *lento* passage, but the movement soon picks up again, charging on to its fiery conclusion.

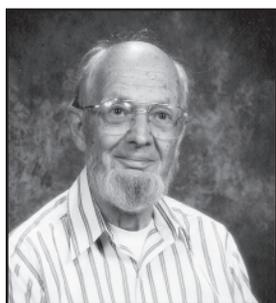
*Program notes compiled by Jeff Pelletier*

*Program booklet edited by Eva Langfeldt*

## **MARILYN THOMPSON**

Piano Soloist

Pianist Marilyn Thompson received her bachelor’s degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where she was a student of Adolph Baller. She was awarded a Fulbright grant to the Vienna Academy of Music and subsequently received her master’s degree from Stanford University, where she studied as recipient of the Helen Evans Memorial Scholarship. While at Stanford, she gave the West Coast premier of Roger Sessions’ piano concerto. She has given countless recitals in the United States and abroad, has been the featured soloist playing concertos by numerous composers, and has performed virtually the entire standard chamber music repertoire. In the 1980s she was the pianist member of the Chamber Soloists of San Francisco and the San Francisco Trio. Now Ms. Thompson is the pianist of the Navarro Trio. Marilyn Thompson has taught at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the College of Holy Names (in Oakland), and the University of California at Santa Cruz; she is presently on the faculty of Sonoma State University, where she has taught since 1976.



## ARNOLD CLARK, 1916–2009

The Livermore-Amador Symphony mourns the death of Arnold Clark, who died in November. Arnold and his wife, Marion, were charter members of the Symphony. Arnold retired as a string player from the orchestra after the 2005–2006 season, at age 90. Marion continues to perform as a violist with the orchestra (although not at this concert). She invites Arnold's friends to a gathering of "Music and Memories" in the Fellowship Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, Livermore, starting at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 23, 2010.

### NEXT CONCERT

#### FEBRUARY 13, 2010—YOUTH AND ADVENTURE

Britten: The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra  
Bob Williams, narrator

Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade  
Kristina Anderson, violin solo

*plus solos by winners of the  
2009–2010 Competition for Young Musicians:*



Frank Shin will perform as the clarinet soloist in the 3rd movement of Concerto No. 2, Opus 74, by Weber

Curtis Kim will perform as the cello soloist in the 1st movement of Concerto No. 1 in B Minor, Opus 104, by Dvořák



### DRAWING FOR WALL HANGING

The Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild will hold a drawing in the foyer after tonight's concert. The drawing will be for a lovely quilted Christmas-themed wall hanging, designed and quilted by Mary Rizzo. Tickets will be available at intermission and briefly after the concert.

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*The Livermore-Amador Symphony Association gratefully thanks our donors.*

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