

Livermore-Amador Symphony

Lara Webber, Music Director & Conductor
Arthur P. Barnes, Music Director Emeritus
Saturday, February 20, 2016, 8:00 p.m.
Bankhead Theater, Livermore



Color and Romance

Prelude Talk at 7 p.m. by Lara Webber

Rainbow Body

Christopher Theofanidis
(b. 1967)

Cello Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major
Opus 107— 1st movement

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906–1975)

Jiho Choi, soloist

“Danse Bacchanale”
from *Samson and Delilah*

Camille Saint-Saëns
(1835–1921)

————— **INTERMISSION** —————

with entertainment in the lobby by Element 116

Violin Concerto in D Major
Opus 35— 1st movement

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840–1893)

Dong Hui (Tony) Kim, soloist

Variations on a Theme of Joseph Haydn

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

Thema	Andante
Variation I.	Poco più animato (Andante con moto)
Variation II.	Più vivace (Vivace)
Variation III.	Con moto
Variation IV.	Andante con moto (Andante)
Variation V.	Vivace (Poco presto)
Variation VI.	Vivace
Variation VII.	Grazioso
Variation VIII.	Presto non troppo (Poco presto)
Finale	Andante

*The audience and performers are invited
to enjoy cookies, champagne, sparkling cider, and coffee in the lobby
after the concert at a reception hosted by the Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild.*

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Conductor

Lara Webber

First Violin

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Juliana Zolynas

Assistant

Concertmaster

Norman Back

Feliza Bourguet

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Judy Eckart

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Anthony Westrope*

Second Violin

Ursula Goldstein

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English Horn

Eva Langfeldt

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Michael Portnoff

Steve Anderson

Bob Bryant

Trombone

Diane Schildbach

Marcus Schildbach

Bass Trombone

Forrest Jones

Tuba

Betsy Hausburg

Timpani

April Nissen

Percussion

Scott Jackson

Jarret Laffleur

Stacie Manuel

Harp**

Constance Koo

Keyboard

Janet Holmes

* *High school student*

** *The Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild is underwriting the cost of providing a harp player at every LAS concert during the 2015–2016 season.*

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Program Notes

Rainbow Body

Christopher Theofanidis
(b. 1967)

In the words of the composer:

Background

“Rainbow Body” was the coming together of two ideas—one, my fascination with Hildegard von Bingen’s music (the principal melody of Rainbow Body is loosely based on one of her chants), and, two, the Tibetan Buddhist idea of “Rainbow Body,” which is that when an enlightened being dies physically, his or her body is absorbed directly back into the universe as energy, as light. This seemed to me to be the metaphor for Hildegard’s music as much as anything.

Program Notes

In the past few years I have been listening to the music of medieval mystic Hildegard von Bingen a great deal, and as simple and direct as this music is, I am constantly amazed by its staying power. Hildegard’s melodies have very memorable contours which set them apart from other chants of the period. They are wonderfully sensual and set up a very intimate communication with the divine. This work is based on one of her chants, “Ave Maria, O Auctrix Vite” (“Hail Mary, Source of Life”).

“Rainbow Body” begins in an understated, mysterious manner, calling attention to some of the key intervals and motives of the piece. When the primary melody enters for the first time, about a minute into the work, I present it very directly in the strings without accompaniment. In the orchestration, I try to capture a halo around this melody, creating a wet acoustic by emphasizing the lingering reverberations one might hear in an old cathedral.

Although the piece is built essentially around fragments of the melody, I also return to the tune in its entirety several times throughout the work, as a kind of plateau of stability and peace within an otherwise turbulent environment. “Rainbow Body” has a very different sensibility from the Hildegard chant, with a structure that is dramatic and developmental, but I hope that it conveys at least a little of my love for the beauty and grace of her work.

“Rainbow Body” is dedicated to Glen Rosenbaum, without whose support and encouragement I would not be composing.

Cello Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906–1975)

Opus 107—1st movement

“The major work in my immediate plans is a cello concerto,” Shostakovich informed a friend in the spring of 1959, when the First Concerto was still in embryonic form. “Its first movement, an Allegretto in the nature of a scherzo-like march, is ready. I think the concerto will have three movements, but I am at a loss to say anything definite about its content.... It often happens that in the process of writing a piece, the form, expressive media, and even the genre of a work undergo a marked change.” His early reluctance to predict the form proved justified, for in the end, the concerto assumed a shape that was indeed unique.

Shostakovich created both of his cello concertos for Mstislav Rostropovich, the peerless Russian cellist with a big, vibrant tone who continued to champion the cause of the composer’s music long after Shostakovich’s death, in 1975. When the concerto was finished, Rostropovich rushed to Leningrad with his accompanist and received the score from Shostakovich. Four days later, he went to the composer’s

dacha in Komarovo to play the concerto for him. Shostakovich rummaged around for a music stand, but Rostropovich told him he didn't need one — he had completely memorized the piece in four days.

The composer said of this work, “I took a simple little theme and tried to develop it.” This quizzical little four-note motive, stated brusquely by the solo cello in the opening bars of the concerto, is clearly related to the composer's personal musical monogram — D-Eb-C-B (or D-S-C-H in German notation) — and appears again in the tragic String Quartet No. 8. Shostakovich called the first movement “a jocular march,” but its humor is darkly grotesque and acerbic, rudely punctuated by four loud blows from the timpani.

“Danse Bacchanale” from *Samson and Delilah* Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

Camille Saint-Saëns' grand opera *Samson and Delilah* comprises three acts and four scenes. The French libretto, by Ferdinand Lemaire, based on the biblical tale of Samson and Delilah, presents Samson as an inspiring leader and Delilah as a manipulative, merciless avenger. Franz Liszt conducted the opera's premiere in Weimar at the Grossherzogliches (Grand Ducal) Theater (now the Staatskapelle Weimar) on December 2, 1877, in a German translation. The pivotal “Danse Bacchanale” (Act 3, Scene 2) is often performed separately as an orchestral piece.

Saint-Saëns creates an exotic-sounding piece by employing an unusual scale based on the Arabic *hijiz* mode — whose unique sound comes from the augmented interval between the second and third notes of the scale — and much use of percussion to evoke the barbarism of the Philistines. In the opening measures, the rhapsodic oboe solo evokes the Middle East with the sounds of a muezzin's call to prayer. Subsequently, when the dance begins, a more savage and wilder atmosphere develops.

A brief interlude reprises Delilah's ode to spring from Act 1, but the piece resumes an unrelenting rhythm, building tension to the ultimate, destructive, and fatal culmination of the opera. As the revelry reaches its climax, Samson calls on God for vengeance and, with a supreme effort, brings down the pillars and the temple, crushing himself and his enemies. The score allows little more than five seconds between Samson's mighty exertion and the descent of the curtain.

Violin Concerto in D Major Opus 35 — 1st movement

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto belongs to that illustrious group of masterpieces that were savaged by uncomprehending critics at their premiere. Nearly all the critics at its first performance — in Vienna on December 4, 1881, with Russian violinist Adolf Brodsky as soloist, backed by the Vienna Philharmonic — gave the work negative reviews, but the one penned by the notoriously conservative Eduard Hanslick was so vicious that it stung Tchaikovsky for years thereafter. “Tchaikovsky is surely no ordinary talent, but rather, an inflated one...lacking discrimination and taste.... The same can be said for his new, long, and ambitious Violin Concerto.... The violin is no longer played; it is tugged about, torn, beaten black and blue.”

Because of its flamboyant language and mind-boggling wrong-headedness, this is the review that has come down to us from a city that was generally unsympathetic to Tchaikovsky's Russian intensity. A much fairer judgment of the concerto's worth came from an anonymous Viennese critic for the *Wiener Abendpost*: “The first movement, with its splendid, healthy themes; the mysterious, quiet middle movement (who could fail to be reminded by this of Turgenev's female characters!); and the wild peasant dance make up a whole for which we would claim an outstanding place among contemporary compositions.”

Today this work holds a prominent place among all violin concertos. One of the more demanding works for the violin virtuoso, it is more remarkable still for its unwavering melodic inspiration and passionate expression of human feeling. Here Tchaikovsky speaks to us from the heart, using the communicative voice of the solo violin as his medium.

So prodigal is Tchaikovsky's melodic inspiration that he can afford to begin the sonata-form opening movement with a lovely little theme for orchestral violins and then—just as he did at the beginning of his First Piano Concerto—never repeat it again. The orchestra next hints at the big theme to come and provides anticipatory excitement for the soloist. After a brief warm-up stretch, Tchaikovsky launches one of his most inspired themes, one with multiple personalities. At first it is gentle, even wistful, but when the orchestra takes it up, a few minutes later, it becomes very grand: music for an Imperial Russian ball. Later still, in the development section, the soloist transforms it again with an intricately ornamented, double-stopped variation. The violin's second theme, begun in the instrument's warm lower register, retains its wistful nature. Much later, in the poignant recapitulation section, the principal theme is beautifully adopted by the solo flute.

Variations on a Theme of Joseph Haydn

Johannes Brahms

(1833–1897)

Johannes Brahms composed his *Variations on a Theme of Joseph Haydn* in the summer of 1873 at Tutzing in Bavaria. It was originally scored for two pianos but orchestrated shortly afterward. The first performance of the orchestral version was given on November 2, 1873, by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Brahms himself.

Brahms' source for the theme was a divertimento for wind instruments published under the name of Joseph Haydn. The title of its short second movement was "St. Anthony Chorale," and this movement is stated, almost unaltered, at the opening of Brahms' variations. It is now generally thought that the theme was not actually composed by Haydn, as it does not contain his stylistic traits. Some music scholars have suggested that it was written by Ignaz Pleyel, but there is no clear evidence for this. Nineteenth-century music publishers were commonly to blame for confusions of this kind, since they frequently published works by lesser composers under famous names in order to boost their sales. There is also uncertainty as to whether the composer of the divertimento actually wrote the theme or simply quoted an older theme. Because of these uncertainties, the piece is often referred to as *Variations on the St. Anthony Chorale*, rather than by Brahms' original title.

Brahms obviously intended the work to be a tribute to Haydn. In the coda of the finale, he quotes directly from the second movement of Haydn's *Clock* Symphony, which he regarded as one of the greatest symphonic movements of the Classical period.

The theme itself is notable in the fact that it uses five- rather than four-bar phrases, and this curious phrasing is repeated by Brahms throughout the variations. The finale uses a five-bar ground base derived from the theme and is itself another set of variations.

The individual variations are a rich tapestry of musical invention. They sometimes refer back to earlier eras of music, using complex counterpoint in places, yet the work remains firmly in the late Romantic style. The orchestral writing is wonderfully varied, expressing dark, brooding mystery in places and lively exuberance in others, culminating in the finale, which brings back the theme in a triumphant blaze of color.

program notes compiled by Kathy Boster from Internet sources

edited by Eva Langfeldt

Winners of the 2015–2016 Competition for Young Musicians

Jiho Choi—Cello



Jiho Choi, a member of the award-winning Konpeito Cello Quartet, made her Carnegie Hall debut at age 14 as a first-place winner of the American Protégé International Concerto Competition. During the 2014–2015 school year, she won first prizes in the state round of the 2014 Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) Junior Strings Competition in California and in the regional round in New Mexico, and she then became a national finalist in Chicago. Jiho also performed Dvořák's Cello Concerto for the International Music Competition of the Chinese Music Teachers' Association of Northern

California (CMTANC), winning a first prize, and was selected by the Junior Bach Festival to perform movements from Bach's Suite 3. She finished the school year by performing a solo recital as the winner of Fremont Symphony's Young Recitalist Competition and Kabalevsky's Cello Concerto No. 2 (2nd movement) with the Palo Alto Philharmonic as a winner of its Concerto Movement Competition.

As a former precollege student at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Jiho received scholarships from Music@Menlo, which she attended in the summers of 2013 and 2014. There, she received master classes and coaching by renowned musicians such as David Finckel, Wu Han, the Danish String Quartet, Gilbert Kalish, members of the Escher String Quartet, and Laurence Lesser. She is also a 2015 merit scholarship recipient of the Meadowmount School of Music and was featured on its YouTube channel in Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 8 as the cellist of the only under-18 chamber group to perform on campus. Jiho currently studies under Jonathan Koh at the California Music Preparatory Academy.

The daughter of Seung Lee and Hyung Choi, 16-year-old Jiho is a junior at Amador Valley High School. In addition to her academic and music activities, she enjoys watching movies and microblogging. She speaks English, Korean, and Spanish fluently and hopes to study more languages in the future.

Dong Hui (Tony) Kim—Violin



At the age of 6, Dong Hui (Tony) Kim began playing the piano; two years later, he began playing the violin. He currently studies violin with Davis Law at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Tony is the concertmaster of his school orchestra and a first violinist in the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra. As a pianist and violinist, Tony has won numerous international and regional competitions. In 2013, he was a first-place winner in various categories in the United States Open Music Competition. He has also won first-place prizes in the 2013 *Korea Times* Youth Music Competition, the contemporary division of the 2014 East

Bay Piano Competition, and CMTANC's 2014 United States International Music Competition. In 2014, he was selected as a violinist in the California All-State High School Orchestra. Most recently, he was a winner of the 2015 Korean-American Music Supporters' Association Young Artist Competition and debuted as a soloist in the Spangenberg Theatre in Palo Alto.

The son of Sang and Sunny Kim, 16-year-old Tony is a junior at Dublin High School. He serves as secretary of the Bay Area Association of Visiting Musicians and has made trips for the past three years to Veterans Administration facilities in Martinez, Palo Alto, San Francisco, and Livermore, enthusiastically sharing music with hospice patients. He loves to bring each patient a special kind of comfort that the patient has not been able to experience for a long time. He looks forward to serving more patients, spreading more joy in the community, and inspiring more patients to remain hopeful about their lives.

In addition to music, Tony is extremely interested in math and science and is president of his school's Math and Olympiad Clubs. In 2014, he won third place in the Alameda County Science and Engineering Fair. He was a two-time qualifier for the American Invitational Mathematics Examinations and a 2015 National Finalist for the U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad competition.

We invite you to join the new A.P. Barnes Society

Members of the A.P. Barnes Society are dedicated supporters of the Livermore-Amador Symphony who have included the symphony in their estate plans. You can help us to:

- Sustain the artistic growth of the symphony
- Provide access and enrichment to young people
- Strengthen the financial foundation of our symphony

For more information, e-mail APBarnesSociety@livermoreamadorsymphony.org. If you have already included LAS in your estate plans, we would love to hear from you. All information is confidential.

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Would you like to be more involved with the Livermore-Amador Symphony? You can help guide and build the future of our vibrant organization. We need a few more community volunteers to join us on the Livermore-Amador Symphony Association board of directors. Our board is composed of about ten community members along with ten LAS orchestra members. We meet on Monday nights once a month. Come help us grow our future. For more info, call 925-447-6454.

Dvořák Cello Concerto—April 9, 2016, 8 p.m.

Prize-winning cellist and rising star Austin Huntington joins us to perform the magnificent cello concerto by Dvořák. Our evening begins with the introduction to *Khovantchina*, Mussorgsky's quiet musical depiction of sunrise on the Moscow River. From there, we are transported into the lives of Romeo and Juliet through the miraculous musical voice of Prokofiev.

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