

Livermore-Amador Symphony

Lara Webber, Music Director & Conductor
Arthur P. Barnes, Music Director Emeritus
Saturday, April 14, 2018, 8 p.m.
Bankhead Theater, Livermore



The Human Spirit and the Natural World

Prelude Talk at 7 p.m. by Lara Webber

The Unanswered Question

Charles Ives
(1874–1954)

Violin Concerto in D Major
Opus 35

Erich Wolfgang Korngold
(1897–1957)

- I. Moderato nobile
- II. *Romance*: Andante
- III. *Finale*: Allegro assai vivace

Madeline Adkins, soloist

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, "Pastoral"
Opus 68

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

Awakening of cheerful feelings on arrival in the countryside:
Allegro ma non troppo

Scene by the brook: Andante molto mosso

Merry gathering of country folk: Allegro

Thunder. Storm: Allegro

Shepherd's song. Cheerful and thankful feelings after the storm: Allegretto

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

Orchestra

Conductor

Lara Webber

Second Conductor

on the Ives

Robert Williams

First Violin

Kristina Anderson

Concertmaster

Juliana Zolynas

Assistant

Concertmaster

Norman Back

Feliza Bourguet

Judy Eckart

Lana Hodzic

Susan Ivie

Jackie Maruskin

Jutta Massoud

Doug Morrison

Nicholas Travia

Second Violin

Anthony Blea

Acting Principal

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Viola

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Principal

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Cello

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Principal

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Chris Jackson

Joanne Lenigan

Sarah Morgan ¹

Paul Pappas

Joseph Swenson

String Bass

Markus Salasoo

Acting Principal

Alan Frank

Patricia Lay

Aaron Plattner

Flute

Marianne Beeler

Principal

Nan Davies

Beth Wilson

Piccolo

Nan Davies

Oboe

Eva Langfeldt

Principal

Jeff Lenigan

English Horn

Eva Langfeldt

Clarinet

Lesley Watson

Principal

Kathy Boster

Ives: offstage conductor

Bass Clarinet

Phil Pollard

Bassoon

Doug Stark

Principal

Katie Brunner

Contrabassoon

Katie Brunner

Horn

Christine-Ann Immesoete

Principal

James Hartman

Bryan Waugh

Robert Williams

Trumpet

Michael Portnoff

Principal

Steven Anderson

Trombone

Diane Schildbach

Principal

Marcus Schildbach

Timpani

April Nissen

Percussion

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Harp ²

Constance Koo

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¹ High school student

² The Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild is underwriting the cost of providing harp players at LAS concerts during the 2017–2018 season.

Program Notes

The Unanswered Question

Charles Ives
(1874–1954)

Charles Ives was one of the few artists with the luxury of exercising his full creative energies unimpeded by the need to eke out a living from his art. He was the son of a Connecticut bandleader who had started his career as the youngest bandleader in the Union Army but who wanted his son to be a concert pianist. From his father, Charles developed an appreciation for musical games, such as singing in one key and playing in another or playing the same piece in two keys simultaneously. Perhaps it was this penchant for duality that led him to embark on a double life. He had an enormously successful career in insurance, applying his creativity and idealism to develop important new concepts for the life insurance industry while at the same time experimenting and composing in his idiosyncratic musical style.

Ives composed “The Unanswered Question” in 1906. It was the first of *Two Contemplations* (the other being “Central Park in the Dark”), which employ the techniques of polytonality and polyrhythm. Ives claimed to have become fascinated with simultaneous contrasting rhythms and tonalities from having heard two or more bands playing different tunes within earshot of each other at parades. The work consists of three separate, musically unrelated performers: a string orchestra playing a series of long, whispering chords in traditional harmony; a solo trumpet repeating six times the same five-note atonal motive in a totally foreign “key”; and a quartet of woodwinds providing increasingly frenzied responses to the trumpet with yet another atonal series of notes. In a later revision of the work, Ives provided a brief interpretation of the piece, which may or may not have been in his mind at the time of its original composition.

“The strings are the silences of the Druids, who know, see, and hear nothing.” Over this background, the trumpet “poses the perennial question of existence; and the winds are ‘the fighting answerers’ who flounder around, even frantically restating the question as if to clarify it, but, in their distortion of the motive, showing that they never understood it in the first place.” There is a lack of communication between the three ensembles—hence the lack of resolution to the question.

Violin Concerto in D Major Opus 35

Erich Wolfgang Korngold
(1897–1957)

“Erich, how about my violin concerto?” was a question frequently asked by the Polish violinist Bronisław Huberman of his friend Erich Wolfgang Korngold during the early 1940s. Korngold, however, never answered; he had resolved not to compose any concert music as long as the Second World War, which had made him an exile, raged in Europe and restricted his activities to composing the film music on which his reputation now largely rests. This changed in 1945, when, in response to another asking of the question, Korngold went to the piano and played a theme that would become part of the first movement of the long-requested concerto. From this point, Korngold worked quickly and had soon completed two movements. However, the project stalled after an unsuccessful rehearsal with another violinist, Bronisław Gimpel, who found the solo part too demanding. Korngold was further discouraged by Huberman’s reluctance to commit to a date for a first performance until he had seen the finished work. The deadlock was broken by the agent Rudi Polk, who arranged a rehearsal with his client Jascha Heifetz. Heifetz took to the work much more positively and actually

insisted that the solo part be made more difficult. The great violinist's enthusiasm spurred the composer on, so it came to pass that the concerto was premiered with Heifetz as soloist in 1947, to great popular, if somewhat lukewarm critical, acclaim. The *New York Times* dismissed it as a "Hollywood concerto," but Heifetz continued to champion the work, and his 1953 recording of it has become a classic, cementing the concerto's place in the violin repertory.

Korngold had made frequent use of his prewar concert music for many of his film scores, but the concerto takes the opposite route, recasting themes from several films on which he had worked, in a lush, Romantic symphonic context. Thus the first movement makes use of themes from *Another Dawn* and *Juárez*, the slow movement takes its main theme from the score for *Anthony Adverse*, and the finale's origins lie in *The Prince and the Pauper*. The soloist's immediate entrance recalls Mendelssohn's violin concerto, which acts as a model for much of Korngold's concerto. The lush Romantic style of the music certainly brings to mind the swashbuckling films Korngold wrote for, but its roots go back further, to the turn-of-the-century Viennese Modernism from which Korngold first emerged as a child prodigy, and this is reflected in the concerto's dedication to an early champion of his, Mahler's widow, Alma Mahler-Werfel.

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, "Pastoral" Ludwig van Beethoven Opus 68 (1770–1827)

Even by nineteenth-century standards, the historic concert on December 22, 1808, in Vienna was something of an endurance test. That night Beethoven conducted the premieres of both his Fifth Symphony and "Pastoral" Symphony; played his Fourth Piano Concerto (conducting from the keyboard); and rounded out the program with the "Gloria" and the "Sanctus" from the Mass in C, the concert aria "Ah! Perfido," improvisations at the keyboard, and the *Choral Fantasy*—written in great haste at the last moment as a grand finale.

If concertgoers that evening had read a printed program—the luxury of program notes still many decades in the future—they would have found the following brief guide to the Sixth Symphony, in Beethoven's own words:

Pastoral Symphony, more an expression of feeling than painting.

1st piece: pleasant feelings that awaken in men on arriving in the countryside.

2nd piece: scene by the brook. 3rd piece: merry gathering of country people, interrupted by 4th piece: thunder and storm, into which breaks 5th piece: salutary feelings combined with thanks to the deity.

Although Beethoven wasn't by nature a man of words (spelling and punctuation led a perilous existence in his hands), he normally said what he meant. We must then take him at his word, believing that he had good reason (for the only time in his career) to preface his music with a few well-chosen words and that curious disclaimer "more an expression of feeling than painting." Perhaps Beethoven was anticipating the controversy to follow, for in 1808 symphonies weren't supposed to depict postcard scenes or bad weather.

Beethoven's idea itself was neither novel nor his own. In 1784 (when Beethoven was only 14), an obscure composer named Justin Heinrich Knecht advertised his newest symphonic creation: *Le portrait musical de la nature* (*A musical portrait of nature*). It had five movements, including a depiction of the peaceful countryside, the approach of a storm, and general thanksgiving to the Creator once the clouds had passed. (Why has Knecht remained obscure while Beethoven turned the music world upside down? That will be obvious to anyone who listens to even a few measures of Knecht's music.) The descriptive writing and pastoral subject

matter of the Sixth Symphony are a throwback to the Baroque era—or at least to Haydn’s oratorios *The Creation* and *The Seasons*.

The symphony has a combination of novelties: Beethoven’s descriptive titles, the “extra” movement, the programmatic element, and pictorial details such as the bird calls in the second movement and the village band in the third. But Beethoven was also right in trusting that “he who has ever had a notion of country life can imagine without too many descriptive words what the composer has intended.”

Our familiar picture of Beethoven, cross and deaf, slumped in total absorption over his sketches, doesn’t easily allow for Beethoven the nature lover. But he liked nothing more than a walk in the woods, where he could wander undisturbed, stopping from time to time to scribble a new idea on the folded sheets of music paper he always carried in his pocket. “No one,” he wrote to Therese Malfatti two years after the premiere of the “Pastoral” Symphony, “can love the country as much as I do. For surely woods, trees, and rocks produce the echo that man desires to hear.”

They’re all here in his Sixth Symphony. The most surprising thing about the opening allegro is how quiet it is: seldom in these 500 measures of music (well over 10 minutes) does Beethoven raise his voice. Surely no composer—including the so-called minimalists—has so clearly understood the impact of repeating a simple idea unaltered or slowing the rate of harmonic change to a standstill. When, near the beginning of the development section, Beethoven changes the harmony only once in the course of 50 measures, the effect of that shift from B-flat to D is breathtaking. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this spacious, relaxed, blissfully untroubled movement is that it comes from the same pen that gave us—at the same time, no less—that firecracker of a symphony his Fifth, in C minor.

Musicologists could not find a better word to describe Beethoven’s slow movement than “lazy.” We can be sure that the laziness is intentional, and it’s amazing how much this least restful of composers seems to enjoy the drowsy pace, the endless dawdling over details, the self-indulgent repetitions of favorite sections, and the unchecked meandering through the byways of sonata form. Beethoven begins with a gentle babbling brook (one of those undulating accompaniment figures that Schubert would later do to perfection) and ends with notorious bird calls. The only problem with the birds is that Beethoven calls so much attention to them, bringing the music—and the brook—to a halt and then specifying first the nightingale (flute), then the quail (oboe), and finally the cuckoo (clarinet). But as many a writer has pointed out, the birds are no more out of place here than a cadenza in a concerto—the nightingale even provides the final obligatory trill.

The third movement is dance music, with a plain, homely, rustic peasant dance for a midsection trio. But the fun is cut short by dark clouds and the prospect of rain. There’s probably no more impressive storm in all of music—the whole orchestra surges and shakes, trombones appear (for the first time) to emphasize the down-pour, and the timpani show up just to add thunder. This is, of course, no extra movement at all but merely a lengthy, rapid introduction to the finale. The clouds finally roll away; the oboe promises better things to come in a wonderfully heartfelt phrase; and the flute, with its staccato scale, raises the curtain on Elysium. And so, to the yodeling of clarinet and horn, we willingly believe F major to be the most beautiful key on earth. The moment is parallel to the great triumphant sunburst that marks the arrival of the finale of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, and, although the means could hardly be less similar, the effect is just as wondrous.

program notes compiled by Kathy Boster from Internet sources

edited by Eva Langfeldt

Violin Soloist Madeline Adkins

Madeline Adkins has established herself as equally at home in the spheres of solo performance, chamber music, and orchestral playing.

Adkins was appointed concertmaster of the Utah Symphony in September 2016 following ten years as associate concertmaster of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, which she had joined in 2000 as assistant concertmaster. She was also the concertmaster of the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra from 2008 to 2016. She has been guest concertmaster of the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Oregon Symphony, and the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra in Chicago.

A frequent soloist with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Adkins was hailed as “deliciously exuberant” by the *Baltimore Sun*. She has won first prize in the Stulberg International String Competition, the National Solo Competition of the American String Teachers Association, and the New England Conservatory Concerto Competition, plus second prize in the Irving Klein International String Competition. For the 2018–2019 season, Adkins will serve as the music director of the NOVA Chamber Music Series in Salt Lake City in addition to continuing as Utah Symphony concertmaster.



Adkins received her bachelor’s degree summa cum laude from the University of North Texas and her master’s degree from the New England Conservatory, where she studied with James Buswell.

Adkins’ CD of the complete works for violin and piano by Felix Mendelssohn with pianist Luis Magalhães was released in August 2016 by TwoPianists Records. She is also heard on recordings of the Adkins String Ensemble, with which she played violin and viola with some of her siblings: Adkins is the youngest of eight children, six of whom are professional musicians.

Adkins performs on the “ex-Chardon” Guadagnini violin of 1782, graciously loaned by Gabrielle Israelievitch to perpetuate the legacy of the late Toronto Symphony concertmaster Jacques Israelievitch.

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Contact the Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild to manage your next estate sale. We have years of experience, and all of our profits go to the Symphony and its activities. Call Marie at 925.447.5521 for more information.

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Members of the A.P. Barnes Society bequeathed donations to the symphony or have included the symphony in their estate plans. For information, please contact APBarnesSociety@livermoreamadorsymphony.org.

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(Corrections? Please contact Judy Eckart, judy@justjudy.com.)

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Sipping with the Symphony on May 24

Come to Page Mill Winery on Thursday May 24 from 4:30 to 8 p.m. for Sipping with the Symphony, a fundraiser event of the LAS Symphony Guild. This will be an evening to enjoy wine tasting, yummy snacks, an exciting raffle, and beautiful music performed by LAS orchestra members. There will also be wine-related Guild estate sales items for purchase.

Your \$10 tasting fee and a portion of Page Mill Winery sales will help support LAS programs. Page Mill is at 1960 S. Livermore Avenue in Livermore.

Register for the LAS Youth Orchestra by May 15

LASYO, a summer orchestra established by the Symphony Association, is open to musicians ages 11 (or in 6th grade) through 21 who play violin, viola, cello, string bass, flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, or percussion.

For 2018, LASYO offers a four-week session with rehearsals Tuesday and Thursday evenings from July 10 to 31 plus Friday August 3 with conductors Göran Berg and Don Adkins, culminating in a free public concert on August 4. Repertoire will include the Karelia Suite by Sibelius, Suite for Strings by Janáček, the first movement of Symphony No. 3 by Schubert, and more. See livermoreamadorsymphony.org/lasyo for detailed schedule and audition information and a link to the registration form. Registration forms are due by May 15.

Please direct questions to Betsy Hausburg, program coordinator, at vdt.director@gmail.com.

Competition for Young Musicians, 2018–2019

The 46th annual LAS Competition for Young Musicians will take place in October. The winners will perform as soloists with the Symphony on February 23, 2019, and will receive a cash award.

The competition is open to instrumentalists and vocalists who reside in Alameda County, Contra Costa County, the City of Tracy, or the community of Mountain House. The maximum age is 19. See livermoreamadorsymphony.org/competition for information.

If you have questions, you may contact Jutta Massoud at juttamassoud@comcast.net or 925.525.6070.

Next Concert: June 2, 2018

The LAS concert on June 2 will feature Tchaikovsky's "Little Russian" Symphony No. 2, "Roman Carnival Overture" by Berlioz, and soloist Jennifer Kloetzel playing the Elgar cello concerto. Join us for a rousing conclusion to our season!

Livermore-Amador Symphony is a member of the Livermore Cultural Arts Council and a resident company of the Bankhead Theater. See the Cultural Arts Calendar at www.independentnews.com.

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