Program and notes from the original program book of August 17, 2013

Saturday, August 17, 2013, 8:30pm
The Jean Thaxter Brett Memorial Concert

BERNARD HAITINK conducting

MOZART Violin Concerto No. 5 in A, K.219
Allegro aperto
Adagio
Tempo di menuetto—Allegro—Tempo di menuetto
ISABELLE FAUST

MAHLER Symphony No. 4 in G
Bedächtig. Nicht eilen. [Deliberately. Do not hurry.]
In gemächlicher Bewegung. Ohne Hast.
[With easygoing motion. Without haste.]
Ruhevoll (Poco adagio)
[Serene (Somewhat slow)]
Sehr behaglich [Very comfortably]
CAMILLA TILLING, soprano

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Wolfgang Amadè Mozart (1756-1791)
Violin Concerto No. 5 in A, K.219


In 1775, the main fact of Mozart’s professional life was that he was obliged to provide music for a perfectly disagreeable patron, Archbishop Colloredo of Salzburg. The relation eventually came to a violent end—literally, with the Archbishop’s chamberlain kicking the composer down the staircase of the archiepiscopal palace—but meanwhile, one of Mozart’s more delightful tasks must have been the composition of a series of concertos for the gifted Salzburg concertmaster, Antonio Brunetti. The A major concerto, K.219, is the last of these.

A major is always a special key for Mozart. It is the farthest he moves out toward the sharp side—there are individual movements in E, but no large-scale works, and there is none in B, F-sharp, or beyond—and the music for which he chooses it almost always partakes of a special and softly moonlit luminosity. Mozart marks the first movement “Allegro aperto,” a designation used apparently only by him and only in three other places, one being the first movement of his D major concerto for flute, K.314(285d). As a non-standard term, it appears in no reference works or tutors of the time, and one must try to infer from the music itself what
Mozart meant by an “open” Allegro—something, one would imagine, not too fast, with a sense of space between the notes, and also with a certain Beechamesque swagger. At the beginning, Brunetti would have played along with the orchestral violins; the audience would have waited for him to detach himself and take off in solo flight. The first solo entrance in a concerto was always, for Mozart, apt to be an occasion for special wit and ingenuity. Here in fact Mozart gives us a double surprise, first the Adagio entrance with those murmuring strings and delicately accented woodwind chords that look ahead to the “Soave sia il vento” trio in Così fan tutte, then the resumption of the quick tempo with a brand-new idea. As a kind of counterweight to these delightful contrasts, Mozart makes sure that there is also some cousinship among the themes.

The second movement is a real Adagio, rather rare in Mozart, and its soft wave-patterns recall the brief and poetic Adagio surprise in the first movement. The finale is an ever so slightly flirtatious minuet, but its courtly gestures are interrupted by piquant country dance music, contrasting in both mode and meter, from somewhere more than a few miles east of Salzburg or even Vienna.

MICHAEL STEINBERG

Michael Steinberg was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1976 to 1979, and after that of the San Francisco Symphony and New York Philharmonic. Oxford University Press has published three compilations of his program notes, devoted to symphonies, concertos, and the great works for chorus and orchestra.

**Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)**

**Symphony No. 4 in G**


Many a love affair with Mahler has begun with the sunlit Fourth Symphony. Mahler himself thought of it as a work whose transparency, relative brevity, and non-aggressive stance might win him new friends. In the event, it enraged most of its first hearers. Munich hated it, and so did most of the German cities—Stuttgart being, for some reason, the exception—where Felix Weingartner took it on tour with the Kaim Orchestra immediately after the premiere. In a letter of September 1903, Mahler refers to it as “this persecuted stepchild.” It at last made the impression he had hoped for at a concert he conducted in October 1904 with the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam (the program: Mahler Fourth—intermission—Mahler Fourth).

The very qualities Mahler had banked on were the ones that annoyed. The bells, real and imitated (in flutes), with which the music begins! And that chawbacon tune in the violins! What in heaven’s name was the composer of the Resurrection Symphony up to with this newfound naïveté? Most of the answers proposed at the time were politicized, anti-Semitic, ugly. Today we perceive more clearly that what he was up to was writing a Mahler symphony, uncharacteristic only in its all but exclusive involvement with the sunny end of the expressive range.

“Turning cliché into event” is how Theodor W. Adorno characterized Mahler’s practice. Ideas lead to many different conclusions and can be ordered in so many ways: Mahler’s master here is the Haydn of the London symphonies and string quartets of the 1790s. The scoring, too, rests on Mahler’s ability to apply an original and altogether personal fantasy to resources not in
themselves extraordinary. Trombones and tuba are absent; only the percussion is on the lavish side. Mahler plays with this orchestra as though with a kaleidoscope. He can write a brilliantly sonorous tutti, but he hardly ever does. What he likes better is to have the thread of discourse passed rapidly, wittily from instrument to instrument, section to section. He thinks polyphonically, but he enjoys the combining of textures and colors as much as the combining of themes. He values transparency, and his revisions, over ten years, of the Fourth Symphony are always and consistently in the direction of achieving a more aerated sound.

He could think of the most wonderful titles for the movements of this symphony, he wrote to a friend, but he refused “to betray them to the rabble of critics and listeners” who would then subject them to “their banal misunderstandings.” We do, however, have his name for the scherzo: “Freund Hein spielt auf” (“Death Strikes Up”). Alma Mahler amplified that hint by writing that here “the composer was under the spell of the self-portrait by Arnold Böcklin, in which Death fiddles into the painter’s ear while the latter sits entranced.” Death’s fiddle is tuned a whole tone high to make it harsher (the player is also instructed to make it sound like a country instrument and to enter “very aggressively”). Twice Mahler tempers these grotesqueries with a gentle Trio: Willem Mengelberg, the Amsterdam conductor, took detailed notes at Mahler’s 1904 rehearsals, and at this point he put into his score that “here, he leads us into a lovely landscape.” (Later, at the magical turn into D major, with the great harp chord and the violin glissandi crossing in opposite directions, Mengelberg wrote “noch schöner” [“still more beautiful”].)

The Adagio, which Mahler thought his finest slow movement, is a set of softly and gradually unfolding variations. It is rich in seductive melody, but the constant feature to which Mahler always returns is the tolling of the basses, piano under the pianissimo of the violas and cellos. The variations, twice interrupted by a leanly scored lament in the minor mode, become shorter, more diverse in character, more given to abrupt changes of outlook. They are also pulled more and more in the direction of E major, a key that dramatically asserts itself at the end of the movement in a blaze of sounds.

Working miracles in harmony, pacing, and orchestral fabric, Mahler, pronouncing a benediction, brings us back to serene quiet on the very threshold of the original G major, but when the finale almost imperceptibly emerges, it is in E. Our entry into this region has been prepared, but it is well that the music sounds new, for Mahler means to us that understanding that now we are in heaven.

On February 6, 1892, Mahler had finished a song he called “Das himmlische Leben” (“Life in Heaven”), one of five Humoresques on texts from Des Knaben Wunderhorn (The Boy’s Magic Horn). Des Knaben Wunderhorn is a collection of German folk poetry, compiled in nationalistic and Romantic fervor just after 1800 by two poets in their twenties, Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim. That, at least, is what it purports to be: in fact, the two poets indulged themselves freely in paraphrases, additions, and deletions, fixing things so as to give them a more antique and authentic ring, even contributing poems all their own. However that may be, their collection, whose three volumes came out between 1805 and 1808, made a considerable impact, being widely read, discussed, criticized, and imitated.

A number of composers went to the Wunderhorn for texts, none more often or more fruitfully than Mahler, who began to write Wunderhorn songs immediately after completing the First Symphony in 1888 (he had already borrowed a Wunderhorn poem as the foundation of the first of his Traveling Wayfarer songs of 1884–85). The Wunderhorn then touches the Second, Third, and Fourth symphonies. The scherzo of No. 2 was composed together and shares material with a setting of the poem about Saint Anthony of Padua’s sermon to the fishes, and the next movement is the song “Urlicht” (“Primal Light”). The Third Symphony’s fifth movement is another Wunderhorn song, “Es sungen drei Engel” (“Three Angels Sang”), and until about a year before completing that symphony, Mahler meant to end it with “Das himmlische Leben,” the song we now know as the finale of the Fourth. That explains why the Third appears to “quote” the Fourth, twice in the minuet, and again in the “Drei Engel” song:
those moments prepare for an event that was not, after all, allowed to occur (or that did not occur until five years and one symphony later).

For that matter, Mahler had to plan parts of the Fourth Symphony from the end back, so that the song would appear to be the outcome and conclusion of what was in fact composed eight years after the song. From a late letter of Mahler’s to the Leipzig conductor Georg Göhler, we know how important it was to him that listeners clearly understand how the first three movements all point toward and are resolved in the finale. The music, though gloriously inventive in detail, is of utmost cleanliness and simplicity. The solemn and archaic chords first heard at “Sankt Peter in Himmel sieht zu” (“Saint Peter in heaven looks on”) have a double meaning for Mahler; here they are associated with details about the domestic arrangements in this mystical, sweetly scurrile picture of heaven, but in the Third Symphony they belong with the bitter self-castigation at having transgressed the Ten Commandments and with the plea to God for forgiveness. Whether you are listening to the Fourth and remembering the Third, or the other way around, the reference is touching. It reminds us, as well, how much all of Mahler’s work is one work. Just as the symphony began with bells, so it ends with them—this time those wonderful, deep single harp-tones of which Mahler was the discoverer.

MICHAEL STEINBERG

GUSTAV MAHLER Symphony No. 4 (Finale)

Das Himmlische Leben
Wir geniessen die himmlischen Freuden,
D’rum thun wir das Irdische meiden.
Kein weltlich’ Getümmel
Hört man nicht im Himmel!
Lebt Alles in sanftester Ruh’!
Wir führen ein englisches Leben!
Sind dennoch ganz lustig daneben!
Wir tanzen und springen,
Wir hüpfen und singen!
Sankt Peter im Himmel sieht zu!

Johannes das Lämmlein auslasset,
Der Metzger Herodes drauf passet!
Wir führen ein geduldig’s,
Unschuldig’s, geduldig’s,
Ein liebliches Lämmlein zu Tod!
den Ochsen thät schlachten
Ohn’ einig’s Bedenken und Achten,
Der Wein kost kein Heller
Im himmlischen Keller,
Die Englein, die backen das Brot,
Gut’ Kräuter von allerhand Arten,
Die wachsen im himmlischen Garten!
Gut’ Spargel, Fisolen
Und was wir nur wollen!
Ganze Schüsseln voll sind uns bereit!
Gut’ Äpfel, gut’ Birn’ und gut’ Trauben!
Die Gärtnner, die Alles erlauben!

Life in Heaven
We enjoy heavenly pleasures
And therefore avoid earthly ones.
No worldly tumult
Is to be heard in heaven.
All live in gentlest peace.
We lead angelic lives,
Yet have a merry time of it besides.
We dance and we spring,
We skip and we sing.
Saint Peter in heaven looks on.

John lets the little lamb out,
And Herod the Butcher lies in wait for it.
We lead a patient,
Innocent, patient,
Dear little lamb to its death. Sankt Lucas
Saint Luke slaughters the ox
Without any thought or concern.
Wine doesn’t cost a penny
In the heavenly cellars.
The angels bake the bread.
Good greens of every sort
Grow in the heavenly vegetable patch.
Good asparagus, string beans,
And whatever we want!
Whole dishfuls are set for us!
Good apples, good pears, and good grapes,
And gardeners who allow everything!
Willst Rehbock, willst Hasen,
Auf offener Strassen sie laufen herbei.

Sollt ein Fasttag etwa kommen
Alle Fische gleich mit Freuden angeschwommen!
Dort läuft schon Sankt Peter
Mit Netz und mit Köder
himmlischen Weiher hinein.
Sankt Martha die Köchin muss sein.
Kein Musik ist ja nicht auf Erden,
The uns’rer verglichen kann werden.

Elftausend Jungfrauen
Zu tanzen sich trauen
Sankt Ursula selbst dazu lacht!
Cäcilia mit ihren Verwandten
Sind treffliche Hofmusikanten!
Die englischen Stimmen
Ermutern die Sinnen!
Dass Alles für Freuden erwacht.

From “DES KNABEN WUNDERHORN”
Trans. MICHAEL STEINBERG

Artist biographies from the original program book of August 17, 2013

ARTISTS

Bernard Haitink
With an international conducting career that has spanned nearly six decades, Amsterdam-born Bernard Haitink is one of today’s most celebrated conductors. Mr. Haitink was for twenty-seven years Chief Conductor of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; he is now their Conductor Laureate. In addition, he has previously held posts as music director of the Royal Opera—Covent Garden and Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and as principal conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the London Philharmonic. Mr. Haitink was appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Boston Symphony in 1995 and since 2004 has been the LaCroix Family Fund Conductor Emeritus of the BSO. He has made frequent guest appearances with most of the world’s leading orchestras. During the 2012-13 season he led the Berlin Philharmonic and visited the United States twice—for two weeks of concerts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in October, and for two weeks of subscription programs to close the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s 2012-13 season. In February/March 2013 he returned to Asia for a three-week tour of Korea and Japan with the London Symphony Orchestra, preceded by concerts in London. Other highlights of the current season have included engagements with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and projects with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe in Lucerne and Frankfurt. Mr. Haitink has recorded widely for the Philips, Decca, and EMI labels, with the Concertgebouw, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. His discography also includes many opera recordings with the Royal Opera and Glyndebourne, as well as the Bavarian Radio Orchestra. Most recently he has recorded extensively with the London Symphony Orchestra for the LSO Live label, including the complete Brahms and Beethoven symphonies, and also with the Chicago Symphony for its Resound label. He received Grammy Awards for his recordings of Janáček’s Jenůfa with the Royal Opera, and for Shostakovich’s
Symphony No. 4 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. With the Boston Symphony Orchestra he has recorded Brahms’s four symphonies and Alto Rhapsody, orchestral works of Ravel, and Brahms’s Piano Concerto No. 2 with soloist Emanuel Ax. Mr. Haitink has received many international awards in recognition of his services to music, including both an honorary Companion of Honour in the United Kingdom, and the House Order of Orange-Nassau in the Netherlands. Bernard Haitink made his Boston Symphony Orchestra debut in February 1971. In addition to concerts in Boston, he has led the orchestra at Tanglewood (where he appeared for the first time in 1994), Carnegie Hall, and on a 2001 tour of European summer music festivals.

Isabelle Faust
Violinist Isabelle Faust’s perspective on music reflects her wide variety of experiences and discoveries. Ms. Faust founded a string quartet when she was just eleven; her early chamber music experiences imbued in her a fundamental belief that performing is a give-and-take process in which listening is just as important as expressing one’s own personality. When she was just fifteen, her victory at the 1987 Leopold Mozart Competition brought with it the prospect of a solo career; but the guiding principles instilled in her as a chamber musician remained strong. In Christoph Poppen, the longtime first violinist of the Cherubini Quartet, she found a teacher who shared and fostered her own musical convictions; whether performing sonatas or concertos, she constantly sought dialogue and the exchange of musical ideas. After winning the 1993 Paganini Competition Ms. Faust moved to France, where she grew to love the French repertoire, particularly Fauré and Debussy. Here she also came to international attention with her first recording—sonatas by Bartók, Szymanowski, and Janáček—and gradually refined her command of the most important works for violin. In 2003 she released her first recording of a major Romantic work for orchestra—the Dvořák Violin Concerto, which she had first performed at age fifteen under Yehudi Menuhin, and which remains a mainstay of her repertoire. In 2007 she released a critically acclaimed recording of the Beethoven Violin Concerto, a recording reflecting her awareness of period performance not as dogma, but as a challenge and incentive to reassess the substance of the music at hand in a way that enables convincing performance both with period ensembles and with large symphony orchestras.

Given her affinity for wide-ranging musical idioms, she is also much in demand as a performer of contemporary music; she has premiered works by composers extending from Olivier Messiaen to Werner Egk and Jörg Widmann. She is a fervent proponent of music by György Ligeti, Morton Feldman, Luigi Nono, and Giacinto Scelsi, and also of such forgotten works as French composer André Jolivet’s violin concerto. In 2009 she premiered works dedicated to her by composers Thomas Larcher and Michael Jarrell. Ms. Faust can be heard with her duet partner, the pianist Alexander Melnikov, in chamber music repertoire recorded for harmonia mundi. Their recording of the complete Beethoven violin sonatas garnered the ECHO Klassik Award and the Gramophone Award, among others, as well as a Grammy nomination. Her latest solo recording, featuring the partitas and sonatas of J.S. Bach, was honored with the Diapason d’Or de l’année 2010, among other awards. In recent years, she has developed fruitful artistic partnerships with, among others, Claudio Abbado, Charles Dutoit, Daniel Harding, Heinz Holliger, Mariss Jansons, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Munich Philharmonic, the Orchestre de Paris, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the BBC orchestras, and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. Isabelle Faust performs on the 1704 “Sleeping Beauty” Stradivarius on loan to her from Germany’s L-Bank Baden-Württemberg.

Camilla Tilling
A graduate of the University of Gothenburg and London’s Royal College of Music, Swedish soprano Camilla Tilling launched her international career at New York City Opera as Corinna in Rossini’s Il viaggio a Reims and, by the end of the subsequent two seasons, had made debuts at the Royal Opera House—Covent Garden, the Aix en Provence, Glyndebourne, and Drottningholm festivals, La Monnaie in Brussels, and at the Metropolitan Opera. Highlights of
2013-14 include *Orfeo ed Euridice* with Les Musiciens du Louvre Grenoble under Marc Minkowski, *Le nozze di Figaro* at Covent Garden, and a role debut in *Daphne* at the Théâtre du Capitole, Toulouse. In concert she performs Strauss’s Four Last Songs with the Vienna Symphony under David Zinman, Berg’s Seven Early Songs with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Lionel Bringuier, the *St. Matthew* Passion and *St. John* Passion with the Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle, and *Waisenhausmesse* with the Orchestre de Paris under Giovanni Antonini. Recent major engagements on both sides of the Atlantic include Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Dorinda (*Orlando*), Oscar (*Un ballo in maschera*), Arminda (*La finta giardiniera*), and Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) at Covent Garden; Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) and Nannetta (*Falstaff*) at the Metropolitan Opera; Ilia (*Idomeneo*) at Teatro alla Scala; Sophie for Lyric Opera of Chicago; Sophie, Susanna, the Princess (*L’Enfant et les sortilèges*), and Donna Clara (*Der Zwerg*) at Bayerische Staatsoper; Oscar and Susanna for Opéra National de Paris; Susanna at San Francisco Opera; the Angel (*St. François d’Assise*) at Teatro Real Madrid, and her role debut as Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. She has collaborated with such conductors as Antonio Pappano, Andrew Davis, James Levine, Daniel Harding, Seiji Ozawa, John Eliot Gardiner, Semyon Bychkov, and Charles Mackerras. Recent concert highlights include Mahler’s Symphony No. 4 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Bernard Haitink; Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 in Gothenburg and with the Berlin Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall; Strauss’s Four Last Songs with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra; Haydn’s *Die Schöpfung* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Beethoven’s *Ah! perfido* in Stockholm. Ms. Tilling has recorded Cherubini’s Mass in D minor with Riccardo Muti (EMI); Mahler’s Symphony No. 4 with Benjamin Zander (Telarc); Belinda in Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* and the Angel in Handel’s *La resurrezione* with Emanuelle Haïm, as well as Grieg’s *Peer Gynt* with Paavo Järvi (all Virgin Classics), and Mozart’s Mass in C minor and Beethoven’s *Ah! perfido* with Paul McCruesh (DG Archiv). Her two solo discs with Paul Rivinus are “Rote Rosen,” a selection of Strauss Lieder, and a selection of Schubert songs entitled “Bei dir allein!” (both BIS).