University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Department of Music and Theatre Arts

presents the

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

NOBUYOSHI YASUDA | CONDUCTOR

Sunday, November 9, 2008
2:00 p.m.
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Excellence. Our Measure, Our Motto, Our Goal.
Program

Symphony No. 7 in A major, op. 92 .....Ludwig van Beethoven 
(1770-1827)

I. Poco sostenuto – Vivace
II. Allegretto
III. Presto
IV. Allegro con brio

Intermission

Four Sea Interludes ........................................ Benjamin Britten 
from the opera Peter Grimes, op. 33 
(1913-1976)

I. Dawn; Lento e tranquillo
II. Sunday Morning; Allegro spiritoso
III. Moonlight; Andante comodo e rubato
IV. Storm; Presto con fuoco

Symphonic Metamorphosis ......................... Paul Hindemith 
on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber 
(1895-1963)

I. Allegro
II. Turandot, Scherzo
III. Andantino
IV. Marsch
To define in words the uniqueness of any Beethoven symphony is difficult, no matter how well we know intuitively what makes it special. Yet many who have fallen under the spell of Beethoven's masterpieces have felt compelled to try the impossible--to express verbally the essence of the music. The Seventh Symphony has, more than other pieces, suffered the platitudes of well-meaning critics, interpreters, and program annotators. Carl Iken, a contemporary of the composer, wrote an essay “demonstrating” that the symphony portrays a political revolution. A. B. Marx saw it as a story of Moorish knighthood, including a warriors' festival. Alexandre Oulibischev labeled it a masquerade of drunkards. Robert Schumann recognized a rustic wedding in the second movement. Emil Ludwig found in it a woodland festival, a priest's march, dance ceremonies, and a bacchanale. Hector Berlioz found in the work a peasant dance.

Whether or not Beethoven had in mind an image of a festival is irrelevant. Whether or not he consciously intended a theme of freedom does not matter. For whatever reasons, he created a symphony with extraordinarily liberating rhythmic drive. In order to emphasize the rhythm, Beethoven limited his melodic muse. Thus we find figures based on the reiteration of single tones: the main motive of the opening movement is a telegraphic repeat of one pitch, the second movement is pervaded by a simple rhythm on one note, and the finale starts with a reiterated rhythm. The third movement, the most overtly dance-like part of the symphony, has a trio section in which one pitch is sustained with only the slightest ornamentation throughout, first in the violins and then in the trumpets. It is this emphasis on rhythm, often at the expense of melody, that gives this composition an impetuous, exuberant vitality that has reminded many commentators of carnivals. (Jonathan Kramer)
Britten’s opera *Peter Grimes* tells of a brutish nonconforming fisherman and his failure to relate to his fellow citizens in an English seacoast village, Borough. These four pieces are all interludes designed to reflect the stage action: setting the tone before the rise of the curtain or developing the events of a previous scene while the curtain is down and the set being changed.

“Dawn,” following the opera’s prologue, evokes the grey, cold light on an East Anglian coastline, the lonely cry of gulls and surge of the tide. “Sunday Morning,” the prologue to Act II, suggests the waves under sparkling sunshine, clamorous seabirds and church bells. “Moonlight,” preceding Act III, is serene: the waters almost calm under clouds and lunar radiance. The final “Storm” interlude comes from Act I and is a furious orchestra toccata depicting the forces of nature and the emotional opposition between Grimes and the Borough citizens. The temporary lull towards the end is an instrumental transcription of Grime’s despairing question “What harbour shelters peace?” (Ethan Madden)

**Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber (1943)**

by Paul Hindemith

Paul Hindemith was a phenomenally talented musician. He was a professional violinist and violist and, by the 1920’s, was recognized as the finest German composer of his time. Soon after, he was being reviled by officials of the Nazi party. In 1938, his works were included in a notorious exhibition in Dusseldorf called *Entartete Musik* (“Degenerate Music”); it criticized the compositions of modernist, atonal composers, especially those of Jews such as Arnold Schönberg. Though he was not himself Jewish, Hindemith’s works were included.
with prominent Jews for vilification by the Nazis, who gave the exhibition the motto “Who eats with Jews, dies of it.” In September of 1938, he left Berlin to take refuge in Switzerland and in February of 1940, he arrived in the United States.

_Symphonic Metamorphosis_ was composed during World War II in the summer of 1943. The piece originally began as a ballet Hindemith was to write. It came as a suggestion by the impresario Leonide Massine to investigate the music of Carl Maria von Weber as possible material for a ballet. The two had a falling out when Hindemith discovered that Massine intended to use costumes and a set by Salvador Dali, an artist he despised. Hindemith saved the music he had written and later reshaped it into _Symphonic Metamorphosis_.

This composition appears simply to be skillful variations on Weber's melodies however Hindemith has implied more important messages in it. Like Dmitri Shostakovich has often done in his symphonies, _Symphonic Metamorphosis_ is in fact Hindemith’s testimony of his horrifying experience living in Nazi Germany.

The first movement is based on No. 4 of Weber’s piano duet _Huit Pièces_ (Eight Pieces), op. 60, marked “All’ Ongarese” (Gypsy-like). Hindemith’s use of this piano melody should not be viewed as mere coincidence since Gypsies were among the persecuted during the holocaust. The pound of Timpani at the opening of the movement under the Gypsy melody evokes the horrifying Nazis executioner. Throughout the opening movement, Hindemith frequently uses musical quotes from Shostakovich’s symphonies, particularly from No. 5, “Revolution,” and No. 7, “Leningrad”; a ridiculous and grotesque scherzo in which Shostakovich depicts the Russian dictator Stalin. Hindemith ridicules the German dictator Adolph Hitler with a terrifying brass fanfare in the middle section to evoke the rise of the Third Reich.

The second movement has a title, “Turandot, Scherzo” and utilizes a melody from the overture Weber contributed to the
incidental music for Schiller's play *Turandot*. The use of the "Turandot" melody in the second movement is intentional. The play depicts Turandot as a cruel princess: “Any man who desires to wed Turandot must first answer her three riddles. If he fails, he will be beheaded.” The movement begins with a rather innocent appearance of the Turandot melody until the percussion, as a sign of military power, break in. Now the Turandot melody develops into a form of variations. It begins small and intensifies, as actually happened in Nazi Germany, as the crazed masses burst into a vortex of madness. The movement ends with a long diminuendo of percussion, flute, and piccolo similar to Shostakovich's *Seventh Symphony*.

The haunting melody of the third movement is an arrangement of a gentle siciliano from Weber's *Pieces Faciles* for piano, Four Hands, op. 3. This movement is a lament for victims of the holocaust.

The final movement opens with an alternation between vigorous brass fanfare and grotesque muted horn sound. This represents a battle between justice and evil. After the main theme is presented it is then transformed into a fighting song. The ultimate vibrant closing melody appears next. It is actually a funeral march derived from No. 7 of *Huit Pièces*, op. 60. This movement has a musical quote from a Gustav Mahler symphony and can represent Mahler's ultimate goal of art: to be liberated from and to rise above sorrow. This spirit is echoed throughout the finale of *Symphonic Metamorphosis* as a journey from defeat to victory as the movement reaches an outburst of jubilation and a proud stride within a triumphant march. *(Nobuyoshi Yasuda)*
**University Symphony Orchestra**  
Nobuyoshi Yasuda, conductor

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