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Concert: Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Octavio Más-Arocas

Kin Szeto

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Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Octavio Más-Arocas, music director and conductor
Kin Szeto, conductor

Ford Hall
Sunday, December 9th, 2018
7:00 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Fragments of Tchaikovsky

Malachi Brown
(b. 1997)

World Premiere, IC Orchestras Fanfare Project

Tragic Overture

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Kin Szeto, conductor

Lontano

György Ligeti
(1923-2006)

Octavio Más-Arocas, conductor

Intermission

Fanfare for a Brass Quartet

Ian Soderberg
(b. 1996)

Symphony No. 6 in B Minor, op. 74,
"Pathétique"

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)

- I. *Adagio - Allegro non troppo*
- II. *Allegro con grazia*
- III. *Allegro molto vivace*
- IV. *Adagio lamentoso*

Octavio Más-Arocas, conductor

Program Notes

Johannes Brahms: Tragic Overture

In summer of 1880, Brahms composed the only two overtures he ever wrote: *Academic Festival Overture* and *Tragic Overture*. He often worked simultaneously on two works of contrasting character, such as his First and Second Symphonies, and these overtures are another example of that process. The former, written as a gift to University of Breslau for awarding him an honorary doctorate, is full of jovial tunes. On the other hand, *Tragic Overture* starts with two thunderous chords followed by a unison and hushed melody in the strings. The calm doesn't last too long before the storm erupts and the once-quiet theme comes back with much more aggressively. Though it is an overture, it does not have any program behind it, and when some suspected that it may have connections to Goethe's *Faust*, Brahms denied the connection.

Brahms was a traditionalist, and in this overture, he conforms to the confines of sonata form. However, he creates such diverse sound colors through masterful orchestration and the way he welds one phrase into the next, seamlessly turning a mysterious standstill moment into a lyrical melody sung by the violins then into energetic declamations by the entire orchestra. To craft a dramatic arc and heighten the tragic mood, he makes one important alteration in the traditional sonata form. In the recapitulation, the tuneful second theme comes back first, reminding the listener of its beauty. But that beauty disappears when the pounding chords from the opening return, and the piece ends with fierce drive to the end.

György Ligeti: Lontano

One of the most important composers of the 20th century, György Ligeti developed an early resistance to systems and ideology from his encounters with Nazi and Stalinist governments. The world of Western Classical music at the time was also dominated by ideology, particularly ones with serialist influences. Ligeti sought to create something different; music that worked with different qualities of sound and rhythm in a more visceral way. He also looked beyond the Western musical landscapes to the music of Caribbeans, central Africa, and East Asia.

Initially though, much of his musical output, publicly at least, were choral settings of folk music, as demanded by the nationalist mood of Hungary at the time. Once he left Hungary and moved to Cologne, Germany, he acquainted himself with new styles and techniques, at once employing them and criticizing their limitations. Though he

worked outside the bounds of tonal harmonic progressions, he resisted serialism as well and looked to orchestral clusters with unmeasured rhythms in order to create his amorphous sound world. *Atmosphères*, famously featured in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, is a notable example of orchestral colors and micropolyphony, a technique that uses long, individual lines to create slowly shifting dissonant harmonies, creating diverse orchestral colors.

Later on, he experimented with micropolyphony in rhythm as well in pieces such as *Continuum*, a piece for harpsichord that requires rapid repeated notes that shift over time to create different sounds. He also experimented with micropolyphony without pitch in *Poème symphonique*, in which a hundred mechanical metronomes wind down at different speeds, until they all come to a slow halt at different moments.

Lontano (“far” in Italian) begins with a lone flute entering on A-flat, and gradually, other flutes and clarinets join on the same pitch. Ligeti demands that every instrument “enter with an imperceptible attack,” a daunting challenge for certain instruments of the orchestra. Every player has a highly individual line—in the first violin section alone, there are 9 different lines—that consists of its own dynamics that do not coincide with other parts. Though the lines are seldom apparently melodic, Ligeti asks that everything be played with “great expression,” likely referring to how individual tones and swells contribute to the way the total color of the orchestra evolves through the piece. At the end, the sense of pulse and tempo vanishes completely (he marks, “without tempo, hold for 10 to 20 seconds,”) and the sound evaporates as gradually as it began.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6 in B Minor, "Pathétique"

Completed just nine days before his death in 1893, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony is his last work to be premiered in his lifetime. Though the first performance received only a lukewarm response, the second performance, just 12 days after his death, brought much more emotional depth, and the piece began to be recognized as one of his finest works. He said that he has a clear program in mind for the symphony but chose not to reveal it, only titling the work “A Program Symphony.” Later, he changed his mind to use the word *Pateticheskaya*. The piece was ultimately published with the French translation *Pathétique*, meaning “moving, in a melancholic way” but the original Russian is more accurately understood as “passionate.”

Though a popular myth suggests that this symphony was a suicide note by Tchaikovsky, that he was condemned to death by a court of honor at the School of Jurisprudence, it is not grounded in any factual evidence; his brother's account of the death states that Tchaikovsky drank unboiled water, which gave him cholera. Others claim that the symphony is a reflection of the composer's struggle with depression. Though the exact program of this symphony will remain a mystery as Tchaikovsky wanted, we have learned from his letters that he was in good spirits as he was writing his last symphony, claiming that he has never been so pleased in his life, "in the knowledge that I have written something good."

Nonetheless, this symphony presents a grim narrative. Unlike his Fourth and Fifth Symphonies that both begin in minor keys but triumph in major keys by the finale, *Pathétique* falls to a heartbreaking abyss in the last movement. Despite this tragic ending, the work contains some of Tchaikovsky's most lyrical and Romantic moments as well. After the solemn then tempestuous beginning of the first movement, he writes an impassioned melody—*pateticheskaya*—first played softly by the violins before it blooms into full passion. It dies away in the softest dynamic notated in this work, *pppppp*; though Tchaikovsky wrote these four notes for a bassoon, many choose to perform it with a bass clarinet to achieve the dynamic. An intense middle section follows this tender moment, but once again comes to a close with the return of the second theme.

The mood brightens in the second movement with the uneven waltz in 5/4 time, often found in Russian folk music, though the contrasting middle section tinges it with sorrow. The third movement is a cheerful scherzo that begins playfully and culminates in an exhilarating march, whose end sounds like it could be the end of the symphony. Then comes the lamenting finale. The listener is quickly transported from the pinnacle of joy to morbid pizzicatos in the cellos and the basses, quietly and solemnly bringing the piece to an end.

Program notes by Andrew J. Kim

Biography

Octavio Más-Arocas

Octavio Más-Arocas is a versatile and dynamic conductor whose achievements demonstrate his talent and musicianship. Más-Arocas is currently the Music Director and Conductor of the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra in Ohio, Principal Conductor of the Marquette Symphony Orchestra in Michigan, the Director of Orchestras and Professor of Orchestral Conducting at Ithaca College in New York, Conductor-in-Residence at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California, and conductor of the Interlochen Philharmonic at the Interlochen Arts Camp in Michigan.

An award-winner conductor, Mr. Más-Arocas won the Robert J. Harth Conducting Prize at the Aspen Music Festival, the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Award, given by Kurt Masur, is the recipient of the Thelma A. Robinson Award from the Conductors Guild, a Prize Winner of the Third European Conductors Competition, and a winner of the National Youth Orchestra of Spain Conductors Competition. In 2012, Mr. Más-Arocas was selected by the League of American Orchestras to conduct the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in a showcase event during the League's National Conference in Dallas.

Chosen by Kurt Masur, Mr. Más-Arocas was awarded the prestigious Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Scholarship. Consequently, he worked as Maestro Masur's assistant with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Helsinki Radio Orchestra, and made his German conducting debut with the Leipziger Symphonieorchester. The offer came after Mr. Más-Arocas' New York debut concert sharing the podium with Maestro Masur and the Manhattan School of Music Symphony.

Mr. Más-Arocas served as Principal Conductor of the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, Wisconsin, and held the positions of Director of Orchestral Studies and Opera Conductor at the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music in Wisconsin, Director of Orchestral Studies and Associate Professor of Conducting at the Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Music in Ohio, Director of Orchestras at the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, Resident Conductor of the Sewanee Summer Music Festival in Tennessee, and Assistant conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra in Colorado. In 2013, simultaneously to his work with the Lawrence Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Más-Arocas was the Resident Conductor of the Unicamp Symphony Orchestra in Campinas, Brazil, where he also was a Visiting Professor of conducting at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas. Mr. Más-Arocas spends part of his summers in the Grand Traverse area, where he continues his association as conductor at the Interlochen Center for the Arts. In addition, he has worked with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra as a regular cover conductor.

In the last few years Mr. Más-Arocas has conducted orchestra across North and South America and Europe including the Filarmonica George Enescu in Romania, the Orquesta de Valencia and Granada City Orchestra in Spain, the Leipziger Symphonieorchester in Germany, the Orquestra Sinfônica da Unicamp in Brazil, the Green Bay, Traverse City, Bluewater, Fort Worth, Spokane, Toledo, Phoenix, Memphis, Kansas City, and San Antonio Symphonies, the National Repertory Orchestra, the Manhattan School of Music Symphony, the orchestras of Viana do Castelo and Artave in Portugal, the Interlochen Philharmonic, the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico Philharmonic, the Rosario Symphony in Argentina, Kharkov Symphony in Ukraine, the National Youth Orchestras of Portugal and Spain, the Pescara Symphony in Italy, the Amsterdam Brass in the Netherlands, and the Ciudad Alcala de Henares Symphony. In addition, Mr. Más-Arocas has served as assistant conductor at the Madrid Royal Opera House.

Mr. Más-Arocas was assistant conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra, which he conducted in subscription, family, and pops concerts. As the Resident Conductor at the Sewanee Summer Music Festival he conducted the Festival, Symphony, and Cumberland Orchestras. Other festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, the Festival Internacional Carlos Gomes in Campinas, Brazil, the Interlochen Music Festival, the Bach Festival at Baldwin Wallace University, and the MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music.

His ability to work, inspire, and transform young talents has lead him to be a frequent guest conductor with prominent music education organizations and ensembles around the world. He has worked with the World Youth Symphony Orchestra, the national youth orchestras of Portugal and Spain, has conducted All-State Honor Orchestras, and has been in residence with university orchestras in Chicago, Portugal, and Brazil. Mr. Más-Arocas has lead tours with the National Youth Orchestra "Templarios" of Portugal, the Interlochen Symphony, the Baldwin Wallace Symphony, and toured Argentina with the Silleda Wind Symphony.

Mr. Más-Arocas is in demand as conducting teacher. He is on faculty on two of the world most competitive conducting workshops, the Cabrillo Festival Conducting Workshop and the Ithaca International Conducting Masterclass, and he leads the very selective graduate orchestral conducting program at Ithaca College.

Mr. Más-Arocas is an alumnus of the prestigious American Academy of Conducting at Aspen, where he studied with David Zinman. He completed doctoral studies and his main mentors include Kurt Masur, Harold Farberman, and Emily Freeman Brown.

Kin Szeto

Kin Szeto began his conducting training at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts as a student of Perry So, First Prize winner of the Fifth International Prokofiev Conducting Competition and former Associate Conductor of Hong Kong Philharmonic. His other conducting mentors include maestros Larry Rachleff, Donald Schleicher, Markand Thakar, Kirk Trevor and Tomas Netopil. In his early career, Szeto served as a professional performer in traditional Chinese music. He was formerly the youngest member in the world-famous Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra. Szeto holds a Bachelor's degree in Erhu and Gaohu. Drawing upon his experience with Chinese music, Szeto pursues a distinct and extraordinary conducting style.

As a recipient of the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme and the Ithaca College Scholarship, Szeto is now pursuing his Master's degree in Orchestral Conducting at Ithaca College under the mentorship of Professor Octavio Más-Arocas. Szeto is the co-director of the Ithaca College Sinfonietta, guest conductor of the Ithaca College Contemporary Music Ensemble, and cover conductor of the Cornell Chamber Orchestra. He is also a graduate assistant for the Ithaca College Orchestras and conducting classes. In addition, Szeto was awarded the title of "Hong Kong Scholars" and "Hong Kong Ambassador" by the Hong Kong government for his supreme performance in the industry.

In this summer, with great honor, Szeto was invited to participate in conducting workshops in the renowned Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music and the inaugural season of Music in the Alps International Music Festival.

Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

Reuben Folly
Emily Scicchitano
Gabiella Stout
Anna Lugbill
Jenna Trunk
Daniel McCaffrey
Harris Andersen
Lily Mell
Helen Newell
Peter McGarry
Peter Nowak
Henry Smith
Yana Onufriyчук
Rowan Whitesell

Violin II

Julia Plato
Timothy Ryan
Parham
Tyler Bage
Masakazu
Yasumoto
Leland Chan
Caroline Ryan
Rachel Steiner
Marybeth MacKay
Allison Quade
Katelyn Levine
Hannah Brule
Ashley Apanavicius
Amanda Cain
Kathryn Andersen

Viola

Karly Masters
Alora Foster
Jessica Herman
Simone Cartales
Maria Dupree
Jacob Shur
Sarah Nichols
Tristan Vinzons
Christopher Chen
Molly Crocker
Sam Stein
Carter Kohler
Matthew Rizzo

Cello

Grace Dashnaw
Hideo Schwartz
Malachi Brown
Caroline Andrews
Dylan Costa
Aidan Saltini
Charlie Siegener
Elizabeth Carroll
David Shane
Jennie Davis
Colleen d'Alelio
Emma Scheneman
Katelyn Miller

Bass

Thomas Brody
Emani Barber
Matthew Suffern
August Bish
Ryan Petriello
Brandon Kulzer
Zane Carnes
Jonathan Hoe
Sam Higgins
Trevor
Satchell-Sabalja

Flute

Krysten Geddes §
Abby Ferri
Dana Herbert (picc.)
Claire Park ◦

Oboe

Sarah Pinto §
Stefanie Nicou ◦
Bethany Cripps
Raelene Ford •

Clarinet

Erin Dowler §
Daniel Jaggars
Alec Targett
(bass.) ◦
Bryan Filetto
(contra.)

Bassoon

Emily Roach §
Seth Barrett ◦
Eden Treado •
Cam Billings
(contra) •

Horn

Jacob Factor
Emma
Brown-Shaklee
Elijah Zelaya
Baily Mack
Owen Lundeen
(asst.)

Trumpet

Matt Brockman §
Shaun Rimkunas +
Austin Rannestad •

Trombone

Andrea Dollinger
Matthew Flores
Johanna Wiley
(bass.)

Tuba

Jasmine Pigott

Timpani

Dan Syvret

Percussion

Grace Asuncion
Jordan Braverman

• Ligeti Only
§ Principal in
Tchaikovsky
+ Principal in Ligeti
◦ Principal in
Brahms

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Upcoming Events

December 11th, 2018 at 8:15pm - Lecture Recital: Andrew J. Kim with Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra in Ford Hall

J. Brahms: *Tragic Overture*

P. I. Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6 in B Minor, Op. 74, "*Pathétique*"

I. Adagio—Allegro non troppo

Andrew J. Kim, conductor

February 17th, 2019 at 4pm - Ithaca College Orchestras in Ford Hall

W. A. Mozart: Sinfonia Concertante for Four Winds and Orchestra in E-flat, K297B

with faculty soloists: Paige Morgan, Michael Galván, Christin Schillinger, Alexander Shuhan

Missy Mazzoli: Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres) for Orchestra

Witold Lutoslawski: Symphony No. 3

Octavio Más-Arocas, conductor

Andrew J. Kim, conductor

March 7th, 2019 at 8:15pm - Graduate Conducting Recital: Kin Szeto with Ithaca College Orchestras in Ford Hall

D. Shostakovich: Chamber Symphony, op. 110a (arr. R. Barshai from String Quartet No. 8)

L. v. Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, op. 73, "Emperor"

A. Dvorak: Symphony No. 9 in E minor, op. 95, "From the New World"

Octavio Más-Arocas, conductor

Kin Szeto, conductor