

Berkeley Symphony Orchestra
2002-2003 Season
Kent Nagano, Conductor/Music Director

8:00 pm, Tuesday, April 29, 2003
Zellerbach Hall Auditorium
Berkeley, CA

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Overture to *Don Giovanni*, K. 527 (Concert version)

Unsuik Chin
Concerto for Violin and Orchestra
I. Quarter-note = ca. 92-100
II. Quarter-note = ca. 60
III. Eighth-note = ca. 176
IV. Dotted quarter-note = ca. 132-140
(U.S. Premiere)
Tibor Kovác, *violin*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Concerto in C Minor for Piano and Orchestra, K. 491
Allegro
Larghetto
Allegretto
Benedetto Lupa, *piano*

Intermission

Régis Campo
Symphony No. 1
(World Premiere)

Concerto in C Minor for Piano and Orchestra, K. 491
Overture to *Don Giovanni*, K. 527 (Concert version)

W. A. Mozart (1756–1791)

Johann Chrysostom Wolfgang Amadè Mozart (he only used the form “Amadeus” when in a mock-pompous mood) was born on January 27, 1756 in Salzburg, at that time an independent archbishopric within the Austrian Empire. He died on December 5, 1791, in Vienna. Mozart composed the C Minor piano concerto in early 1786, completing it on March 24. Mozart gave an “Akademie,” or subscription concert, in the Burgtheater on April 7; it is presumed that this work enjoyed its first performance then, with the composer presiding at the keyboard. Its first publication took the form of parts issued by J. André in Offenbach in 1800 (André had obtained the original manuscripts for many of Mozart’s piano concertos from his widow). The score was first published by Richault of Paris, also around 1800. The work is scored for piano, flute, pairs each of oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets, plus timpani and strings.

Don Giovanni was commissioned by the directors of the Nostitz Theater in Prague, Bohemia, in January of 1787. Mozart asked Lorenzo da Ponte to provide the libretto, and together they worked on the opera through the spring and summer of 1787. Mozart departed for Prague on October 1 with the opera mostly written; but it was not ready in time for the planned October 14 premiere, which was postponed to October 29. He composed the Overture last, as was his habit, finishing it the day before the premiere (or two days before; the original sources differ on this point). The opera’s first Vienna performance was on May 7, 1788. During the course of 1789 it was rapidly taken up by other opera companies throughout Germany, usually in translation. It reached other countries more slowly, and usually in butchered versions: Amsterdam in 1794, Paris in 1805, London in 1817. The first publication of the Overture as a separate item was by André of Offenbach in 1796, in parts. The key of the Overture is D minor/major, but just before the end it modulates to F major in order to lead into the first scene. Mozart himself provided the alternative ending for concert use, which allows the Overture to end in the key in which it began. The work is scored for pairs each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets, plus timpani and strings.

At the age of 25, Mozart was a free man, on his own in the big city (having finally been released from service to his childhood employer, the Archbishop of Salzburg). At first he flourished, supporting himself by teaching and performing, but of course his ultimate goal was to compose operas. In the eighteenth century, the only true road to fame and fortune was through the theater, and he devoted much of his energy to trying to break into the business. Success was still several years off, however, and in

the meantime he attained great fame as a pianist (his contemporaries considered him to be the first to have mastered the instrument, still in his infancy), and to showcase his talent he wrote a number of concertos for piano and orchestra. The series eventually grew to include more than two dozen works, and the dozen or so he wrote in Vienna after 1784 have long been held to represent the summit of Mozart's achievement in instrumental music. He performed most of these works at concerts, generally organized by himself for his own benefit, that usually took place during Advent or Lent. These are penitential seasons in the church calendar, and in Vienna (as in many other places) theatrical performances were banned for the duration. There was no proscription against concerts, however, and Mozart seems to have made the most of the opportunity. As his father wrote to Mozart's sister in the spring of 1785:

Every day there are concerts; and constant teaching, performing, composing, etc. I feel rather out of it all. If only the concerts were over! It is impossible for me to describe the rush and bustle. Since my arrival [about a month before] your brother's fortepiano has been taken at least a dozen times from the house to the theater or to some other house. He has had a large fortepiano pedal made, which stands under the instrument and is about two feet longer and is extremely heavy. It is taken to the Mehlgrube [Theater] every Friday and has also been taken to Count Zichy's and to Prince Kaunitz's.

Letter of March 12, 1785;

translation by Emily Anderson

By 1785, Mozart was finally making progress in his operatic quest. He teamed up with the Imperial Court Poet, Lorenzo da Ponte, and the two of them managed to swing a commission from the Emperor for a new comic opera: *Le Nozze di Figaro* (*Figaro's Wedding*). Composing and producing the opera took much of Mozart's energy for the rest of 1785 and early 1786, and from this point on his output of piano concertos begins to dwindle. Lent of 1786 saw two marvelous new piano concertos, one in A major (K. 488) and the C minor work (K. 491) heard tonight.

The C minor concerto has several notable features that set it apart from Mozart's other piano concertos: it is one of only two works set in a minor key; it is the only concerto to employ both oboes and clarinets, providing a richer palette of colors; and the first movement is unusually long. Indeed, this movement (and the concerto as a whole, to a lesser extent) caused Mozart a great deal of trouble. Mozart's usual compositional procedure was to work out a piece in his head; he only committed it to paper when it was essentially finished. The autograph manuscript of this work tells a different story: many passages are stricken out and rewritten, and an entirely new section was inserted into the opening orchestral ritornello.

The work was written while Mozart was deep in preparations for *Figaro*, and shows the influence of dramatic thinking. While it is always dangerous to apply extra-musical interpretations to instrumental music, the conventions of Classical era key relationships allow Mozart to paint a very clear theatrical scenario. To borrow the words of Maynard Solomon (who was speaking of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, but his insights are applicable here), the musical events that occur in the course of the first movement of Mozart's concerto "do not spell out a literal narrative, but they vibrate with an implied significance that overflows the musical scenario, lending a sense of extramusical narrativity to otherwise untranslatable events." In this specific case, the long, elaborate opening ritornello in the tonic minor establishes the orchestra as a sort of grim authority figure. When the soloist finally enters, a lone, small voice, it is with entirely new melodic material, setting it apart from the orchestra. As the soloist presents further material, it effects the modulation to the relative major key (the usual thing to happen at this point in a concerto). The orchestra begins to share the soloist's melodic material, in the major key, giving the impression that it has been "persuaded" to come around to the soloist's point of view. Alas, in the course of the development section, the old, minor key orchestra persona returns with a vengeance. When the soloist repeats its material from the opening, now entirely cast in the minor mode (again, perfectly in line with conventional concerto form), it sounds defeated. It is as if some noble soul has had its spirit crushed.

The remaining movements are not so dramatic, but no less remarkable. The Larghetto is a lovely idyll in the relative major. Formally, it is an unpretentious rondo, similar to the slow movements of some of Mozart's piano sonatas. He treats his expanded wind band as almost a second orchestra with its own material, leaving the strings to accompany the piano. Indeed, the writing for winds in this movement exudes more than a whiff of *Figaro*; it is reminiscent especially of the music Mozart wrote for the Countess. The finale is a grim double-variation set. The main marchlike tune, as stated by the orchestra, is made up of short, clipped phrases. It is up to the piano to fill in the gaps, to smooth over the rough edges, to allow the melody to expand and flow. The polarization between tutti and solo becomes extreme in this movement; there are long passages where the piano goes off on its own, without the involvement of the orchestra at all. Finally, the piano decides to thumb its nose at the whole business, turning the march tune into a jaunty melody in 6/8 meter as if to say "take that!"

Meanwhile, *Figaro* (which premiered in Vienna in May of 1786) was a huge success. Later that year, it was taken up by the Nostitz Theater in Prague, and played to packed houses. The theater director, thrilled with his good fortune, commissioned Mozart to write another opera, and suggested as a subject the old story of Don Juan. Specifically, he recommended

Giovanni Bertati's libretto for a one-act comic opera, which had recently been staged in Venice, with music by Giuseppe Gazzaniga, to great acclaim. Upon his return to Vienna, Mozart asked his *Figaro* collaborator, Lorenzo da Ponte, to transform Bertati's libretto into a suitable full-length entertainment.

The basic story of *Don Giovanni* had been common stage fodder for centuries: An incorrigible rake roams the land, seducing anything in skirts. One of his *rendezvous* goes awry; the father of the lady in question intervenes to protect her honor, and is skewered by the Don for his trouble. The Don continues to go about his business, but comes across the memorial statue of his victim, which addresses him by name. Undaunted, Don Giovanni gallantly invites the statue to sup with him. Later, in the final scene, Don Giovanni sits down to a sumptuous feast, and a knock is heard at the door. It is none other than the statue, who offers to return the favor. Don Giovanni accepts the invitation to dine with the statue, and is called upon to repent for his crimes. After repeated refusals, the ground opens up, and the Don is dragged down into Hell.

Bertati's libretto had played the story for laughs, and da Ponte mostly follows him in this regard; though his rewriting unquestionably deepens the characters and enriches the plot. Da Ponte combines characters from different theatrical traditions, according to station. The servants are pure *opera buffa* (comic opera), and the nobles are drawn as figures from *opera seria* (the high-art serious opera of the 18th century). Because of this mixture of genres, Da Ponte called this comedy a *drama giocoso*, a genre described by the Venetian playwright Carlo Goldoni earlier in the century. It has fascinated observers over the past two hundred years that Mozart saw the story very differently from da Ponte. At many points, Mozart's music underlines the serious, tragic side of the story, taking especial delight in the mysterious, supernatural elements of the libretto.

Mozart makes this clear to us with the very first notes of the Overture. The grimness of this opening, with block chords in D minor and chromatic lines swirling over a ponderously rising bass line, puts the audience on notice that this story is not all fun and games. Indeed, we will hear this D minor music again at the end of the opera, when it accompanies the arrival of the statue at Don Giovanni's banquet. The Allegro that follows the slow introduction switches to D major and cranks up the energy level, but the mood is still not one of unalloyed gaiety. The main theme is marked by a rising chromatic line, a quotation from the great sextet in Act 2, when the tenor sings to his lover (the daughter of the man killed at the start of the opera) "the ghost of your father should take pity on your grief"; another reminder that divine justice will be meted out eventually. Mozart introduces more festive melodies, which allude to the many parties in the opera, but

the severe treatment given all of the themes in the course of the development section tells us that this show is deadly serious.



Concerto for Violin and Orchestra

Unsuk Chin

Unsuk Chin was born in Seoul, Korea in 1961. Since 1988, she has lived and worked in Berlin, primarily in association with the electronic music studio of the Technical University of Berlin. Her Violin Concerto was commissioned by Kent Nagano for the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester, where she was composer-in-residence during the 2001–2002 season. She completed the composition on August 12, 2001. The work was written with the violinist Viviane Hagner in mind, and she gave the world premiere in Berlin on January 20, 2002, with Kent Nagano conducting. It receives its American premiere this evening. The work is scored for 2 flutes (second doubling on piccolo), 2 oboes (second doubling on English horn), 2 B-flat clarinets (second doubling on E-flat clarinet), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, celesta and harpsichord (played by the same person), 2 harps, strings, and an impressive battery of percussion, requiring a number of players: glockenspiel, 2 vibraphones, xylophone, 2 marimbas, antique cymbal, temple bells, cowbells, small triangle, small cymbals, 3 suspended cymbals, large thundersheet, metal blocks, Javanese gong in D, 3 timpani, bass drum, small tambourine, 2 snare drums, steel drum, 3 gong drums, kalimba, guiro, and claves.

A Classical era concerto, such as the Mozart work also heard on this evening's program, operates under a certain set of conventions, which govern the relationship between the soloist and the orchestra, among other things. It is part of the formal grammar and syntax of these works that orchestra and soloist are distinct entities, and that there are certain sections of the work in which the orchestra will predominate, and others in which the soloist will primarily be heard. These conventional relationships can be exploited for dramatic purposes, and often orchestra and soloist are treated like characters with personalities, whose relationship can be collaborative or combative. Nineteenth-century composers, beginning with Beethoven (no surprise there!), began to break down these conventions, and came up with a variety of schemes for building concertos. The formal separation of the roles of solo and tutti became more fluid, less stereotyped, and sometimes soloist and orchestra seemed to merge into a single unit.

Unsuk Chin's Violin Concerto represents one of the possible products of this line of evolution. The orchestra now hardly has an independent persona to call its own; it exists to accompany the soloist. The soloist dominates this concerto as in few others. The violin enters in the second measure of the piece and has hardly a moment's rest until the end. This leaves the orchestra precious little opportunity to assert itself or to define its character. It presents very little melodic material, and mostly provides

harmonic support for the soloist. But it does serve another important function: to balance the constant presence of solo violin sound by providing a wide range of color. Chin masterfully uses the orchestra to create a wide variety of timbres, often by unusual and inspired combinations of instruments. The vast percussion section comes in particularly handy here, extending the palette of the traditional orchestra by leaps and bounds. Of course, this is not to suggest that the solo violin part is monochromatic. Chin uses the full range of the instrument, from the earthy G string at the bottom to the brilliant E string at the top. Moreover, she keeps the soloist busy, calling for all the possible playing techniques in the violinist's arsenal: *pizzicato*, *col legno* (striking the string with the wooden part of the bow), multiple stops (playing on more than one string at a time), and a special favorite in this work, harmonics (gently touching the string to cause one of the string's overtones to sound out by itself).

The work is laid out in the traditional four-movement symphonic scheme: a fast and complex first movement, a slow second movement, a fast and scherzo-like third movement, and a quick finale. Overall cohesion is reinforced by the use of melodic material that is shared among the movements. Much of the thematic material of the concerto is derived from the sound of the interval of the open fifth, in homage to the basic sound of the violin (whose strings are tuned in a series of fifths). This "fifth" sound permeates not only the writing for the soloist, but also the contributions of the orchestra. The work begins with an introductory section that starts simply, with the marimbas, gong drum, and double bass sustaining a mysterious cloud of sonority. Out of this cloud emerges the solo violin, playing only octaves and fifths, the basic elements of sound. The texture builds slowly in complexity until it cuts off abruptly. A cadenza-like passage for the soloist ensues, marked by a series of perfect fifths played in double stops, beginning with the open strings of the violin then moving on to stopped strings. This establishes the groundwork for what is to follow. The movement proceeds in distinct sections like a theme and variations; the sections are distinguished from each other by changes in the texture and figuration of the solo part, and by new color combinations in the orchestral writing. Only once does the soloist drop out completely and allow the orchestra to take a section on its own. Bits of this agitated passage, almost entirely for strings and in constant sixteenth-notes, will crop up again in other movements. The solo takes command again, and concludes the movement by playing the note D on both the open D string and the stopped G string. The finger stopping the G string slides to the end of the string and then releases it, so that the last sound heard is the perfect fifth, G-D, played on the open strings of the violin.

The slow movement is played out in the upper reaches of the sonic spectrum. Harps, celesta, and the brighter percussion instruments combine

to create a sparkly sonority. The instruments are used pointillistically, playing single, isolated notes, rather than continuous melodies. Occasionally, the ethereal serenity is interrupted, like a cloud passing across the moon, by the agitated sixteenth-note music from the first movement, but only for a moment. The violin stays in its upper range, and the part calls for extended use of harmonics, adding to the celestial atmosphere. The third movement is dominated by plucked sounds. Soloist and orchestral strings play mostly pizzicato, and are joined by harps and that mother of all pluckers, the harpsichord. When the strings aren't playing *pizzicato*, they use the *col legno* technique, so there are hardly any notes played by ordinary bowing. The finale synthesizes all that has come before: the high tessitura and pointillistic orchestration of the slow movement, the rhythmic vigor of the third movement, and the structural principle of the first movement. The soloist launches the movement with a jazzy, syncopated melody in 12/8 time, and this melody is subjected to a series of variations, each one supported by a different orchestral color. One variation is marked "softly and elegantly"; another employs parallel fifths in the solo part throughout. Finally, the intensity and virtuosity of the solo part reach a point that cannot be sustained, and the last variation collapses in mid-sentence. Out of the debris emerge the simple octaves and fifths from the introduction to the opening movement. This too dissolves into a series of sustained fifths, the elemental units of sound.

Symphony No. 1

Régis Campo

Régis Campo was born in Marseille on June 6, 1968. After the Berkeley Symphony's September 2001 premiere of Campo's work Lumen, Kent Nagano and the composer agreed that they wanted to continue their collaboration. To that end, Nagano asked Campo to provide a longer, more ambitious work for the orchestra. Campo's Symphony No. 1 is his response to Nagano's commission. He began work on the composition in 2002, using material sketched while in residence at the Villa Medici in 1999-2000, and completed it in February of 2003. Tonight's performance marks the world premiere of the work. The symphony is scored for 3 flutes (first and second doubling on piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, harp, piano/celesta, and strings. The work also requires a large percussion section, with one player on timpani and 3 more players using a variety of instruments:

crotales, xylophone, bass drum, suspended cymbal and triangle; glockenspiel and triangle; vibraphone, marimba, and triangle.

The composer has provided the following comments:

A symphony is a world: it is in following this phrase that I composed my first symphony. I was so delighted with the very warm welcome accorded the September 2001 world premiere of *Lumen* by the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, the audience, the California press, and of course Maestro Kent Nagano. Our immediate wish was to pursue our collaboration with a much longer and more ambitious work.

My first symphony is written as a single large movement of 26 minutes, and is conceived as the opening of a long symphonic cycle. The work starts with an homage to the beginnings of Beethoven's Ninth and Mahler's First symphonies: the creation of a world beginning with very simple material (a succession of fifths, pentatonic scales, a very diatonic writing style).

Little by little, numerous adventures will lead the orchestra toward a great whirlpool of descending scales. The music then calms down and arrives at a large slower section played principally by the strings. This section, which is truly the soul of the work, intensifies and brings us to a grand melody that concludes in a great climax played by the entire orchestra.

Then comes the last large section of the symphony, its resolution. This section is more lively, more optimistic, at times even humorous, where one expects at certain moments to hear echoes of an imaginary and jubilant Beethoven scherzo. The entire last section brings us ineluctably toward a great apotheosis, where all the orchestra expresses my faith in the capacity of mankind to create great works.

The listener will hear many references to great works of the symphonic repertory, as well as to the aesthetics of the twentieth century—encompassing both the New World and the European tradition—from which I tried to elaborate a coherent fusion.

At the beginning of the new millennium, we are entering a great period of tumult on a global scale, of crises leading to a great change in civilization. It is up to artists of all nationalities to watch this new upheaval carefully, and to give great hope to future generations. My symphony speaks of this.

I dedicate this work to the memory of my mother, Anne-Marie Campo (1944-1999).

—translation by Michel Taddei

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