THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC PRESENTS

UC DAVIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

JEFFREY THOMAS, CONDUCTING

with

Steven Bailey, piano

Sunday, 22 November 1998
8:00 p.m.
Freeborn Hall
**UCD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**  
Jeffrey Thomas, conducting  
Steven Bailey, piano

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<table>
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<th>PROGRAM</th>
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| **Overture to “Die Weihe des Hauses”, op. 124**  
(Consecration of the House) | Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770–1827) |
| **Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in A Minor, op. 54**  
Allegro affettuoso  
Intermezzo: Andantino grazioso  
Allegro vivace | Robert Schumann  
(1810–1856) |
| Steven Bailey, piano |  |

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**—INTERMISSION—**

| I pini di Roma (The Pines of Rome), Symphonic Poem | Ottorino Respighi  
(1879–1936) |
| I pini di Villa Borghese (The pine trees at the Villa Borghese) |  |
| Pini presso una catacomba (Pines trees near a Catacomb) |  |
| I pina del Gianicolo (The pine trees of the J aniculum) |  |
| I pina della via Appia (The pine trees of the Appian Way) |  |

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**NOTES**

**Beethoven: Overture to Consecration of the House**

On 31 August 1822, Beethoven began work on music for the opening of the new Josephstadt Theatre in Vienna. The commission came from the theater's director, Carl Friedrich Hensler, who was a respected friend of Beethoven's. The librettist, Carl Meisl, had written two theatrical pieces for the opening, scheduled for 3 October 1822, not coincidentally the name day of the Emperor. The first of these pieces (Die Weihe des Hauses, or “The Consecration of the House”) was a paraphrase of Die Ruinen von Athen by Kotzebue, for which Beethoven had composed music in 1811 and 1812. Meisl had made many alterations, however, to Kotzebue's original, creating difficulty for Beethoven to fit the new words with the old music. Furthermore, additional scenes were added. So, Beethoven wrote some new music (for a choral dance), and revised and altered much of the older. And, instead of recycling the original overture to “The Ruin of Athens,” he chose to write a new piece.

However, even in mid-September he was still trying to find ideas for the musical motives that would become the new overture. It was on a walk with his nephew and his friend Anton Schindler that the ideas surfaced. Having asked the two to go ahead and meet him later, Beethoven was suddenly inspired with the themes he had so urgently sought. When he met up with his friends, he was full of excitement and enthusiasm, not just for the motives themselves, but also for his plan regarding their execution. He proposed treating
them in either a free style or in a more strict and Handelian fashion. While his nephew was equally in favor of either course, Schindler recommended the more formal of the two, knowing that Beethoven had long cherished a plan to write in such a style.

The new orchestra of the Josephstadt Theatre received the overture on October 2nd, only one day before the festivities. However, the parts were riddled with copyists' errors. The single rehearsal, which took place just before the performance and in the presence of the almost filled house, hardly afforded enough time to correct even the worst of the innumerable mistakes. Despite this, however, Beethoven conducted the rather successful performance seated at a piano with his left ear to the stage; this was one of the last occasions on which he could still hear. While Beethoven's music was well received, perhaps Meisl's theatrical treatments were not. The overture was repeated a year and a half later at the premiere of the Ninth Symphony, in 1824, and was published in 1825.

Beethoven's plan to emulate the style of Handel is indeed well executed. The work's opening theme—marked Maestoso e sostenuto—evokes the feeling of Handel's greatest and most regal works. This is interrupted, though, by trumpet fanfares accompanied by brisk bassoon solos and punctuating string chords. A more freely composed transitional section brings us to the final and rather substantial Allegro con brio, emulating a fugue, but characterized by dynamic contrasts in a fashion known to us mostly through the great opera overtures of Rossini.

—JT

Schumann: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in A Minor, op. 54

Though it is not so overtly autobiographical as Berlioz's Fantastique, Schumann's great Piano Concerto must be heard as the most ineffable of love musics, equal to all the century's Romeo and Julies combined. For this is Clara's work, written for her and under her watchful eye during the time of their bliss together. It was she who played it and with whom its personality is intimately entangled. Schumann and Clara (and later Brahms) communicated and recorded their affections for each other in their music by a network of motivic borrowings and allusions: their music was often, above all, about their lives with each other. In this concerto one has the sense of the piano and pianist as the female character, and the orchestra as the male. It is a work without struggle, radiant with passion, abandon, and perhaps a degree of coquetry.

Like Beethoven's Fifth and Berlioz's Fantastique, Schumann's Concerto is cyclic: material from earlier movements returns in later ones. In this case the cyclicism amounts to reminiscences of the opening theme: either as a motive drawn from its beginning, or (for the third movement) a transformation of the theme from its pregnant beginnings to a thing of merriment and dance.

The first movement is in a lax sonata form, seeking less to find symmetry and balance, or resolution to conflict, than to plumb the atmospheres and moods implicit in the given material. Likewise of its era is the obsessive reference to the main theme that becomes clear as the movement goes on. One result of this process is that the arrival of the first-movement cadenza seems especially thrilling, as though the pianist has at last broken free of the orchestra and can indulge in unfettered revery.

Schumann dallies, too, with your sense of expectation and recall. Toward the end of the last movement the piano literally sails away in what feels like some determined effort to avoid closure. When this happens the second time you know the effect is purposeful, and mentally join into the few moments of perpetual motion, as reluctant as is the composer to see it come to an end.
Respighi: The Pines of Rome

From his violin masters in Bologna, Luigi Torchi and Giuseppe Martucci, Respighi absorbed that city's musical heritage, as old as the violin itself. In the first years of the new century he visited St. Petersburg, where he played viola in the opera orchestra, and met Rimsky-Korsakov, with whom he studied composition. After further and rather pointless studies with Max Bruch in Berlin, he moved in 1913 to Rome, where he taught and composed for the rest of his life. For a time he was a professor and then director of the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia, but resigned in 1925–26 to devote his career to composition and conducting. During that season and again in 1932 he made concert tours of the United States.

Respighi’s work is that of an adroit craftsman, pleasant, unthreatening, successful—but without the psychological complexity that usually attends artistic greatness. His genius is his sense of typically Italian melodic beauty, which he expresses with an orchestrational vigor similar to that of Rimsky-Korsakov and Richard Strauss. I Pini di Roma is a symphonic poem in four movements played without pause. Composed in Rome in 1923 and 1924, the work was premiered on 14 December 1924 by the Augusteo Orchestra conducted by Bernardino Molinari, and published the following year by the G. Ricordi & Co. of Milan. Highly programmatic, it is based on the following text:

I. The pine trees at the Villa Borghese

Children are at play in the pine groves of Villa Borghese; they dance round in circles, they play at soldiers, marching and fighting, they are wrought up by their own cries like swallows at evening, they come and go in swarms. Suddenly the scene changes, and...

II. Pine trees near a catacomb

...we see the shades of trees fringing the entrance to a catacomb. From the depth rises the sound of mournful psalm-singing, floating through the air like a solemn hymn, and gradually and mysteriously dispersing.

III. The pine trees of the Janiculum

A quiver runs through the air: The pine trees of the Janiculum stand distinctly outlined in the clear light of a full moon. A nightingale is singing.

IV. The pine trees of the Appian Way

Misty dawn on the Appian Way: solitary pine trees guarding the magic landscape; the muffled, ceaseless rhythm of unending footsteps. The poet has a fantastic vision of bygone glories: Trumpets sound and, in the brilliance of the newly-risen sun, a consular army bursts forth toward the Sacred Way, mounting in triumph toward the Capitol.

The belvedere near the Villa Borghese, atop the Spanish steps, commands a breathtaking vista of the Eternal City; Repighi suggests as well (according to notes supplied by his librettist, Claudio Guastalla) rowdy boys playing soldier. The pines near a catacomb are redolent with memories of the Christians who assembled there to pray in secret and who lie buried
in the vaults beneath. A funeral dirge in the wind choirs alludes to their chanted prayers. The Janiculum is one of the seven hills of Rome, where you may wander through ageless gardens and past magnificent palaces: the movement evokes such a midnight promenade, the warm night air filled with the song of a distant nightingale. The fourth scene treats the approach, down the ancient Appian Way, of Roman legions. Fierce rhythmic ostinatos and insistent brass and percussion define the unseen army; with a great crescendo, the procession comes into view. Respighi and his large orchestra revel in the panoply of sonic and visual images, with opulent orchestration, good tunes, and a strong sense of the composer’s almost childlike glee as he turns the pages of his picture book. It was above all the permanence of the pines that attracted Respighi: the fact that they had presided over these comings and goings for centuries. He called his country villa The Pines.

—D. Kern Holoman

BIOGRAPHIES

STEVEN BAILEY (piano) was awarded Grand Prize, as well as first places in five categories at the 1997 San Francisco Concerto Orchestra’s Bay Area Pianists Competition. He has performed with the San Francisco Concerto Orchestra, the Midsummer Mozart Festival Orchestra and with members of Magnificat Baroque, collaborated in chamber music concerts with members of American Bach Soloists, the Alexander, Arlekin and Sausalito String Quartets. Mr. Bailey performed recently in SMuin Ballet’s productions of “Stravinsky Piano Pieces”, and has also appeared on Mornings on Two on the Fox network. Mr. Bailey has performed in masterclasses given by Robert Helps, John Wustman, John Browning, Menahem Pressler, Garrick Ohlsson and Walter Klien. He is continuo player for the San Francisco Bach Choir, and has featured as soloist on their season concerts. He is also a vocal and instrumental coach at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. With his duo-pianist partner Lori Lack, Mr. Bailey collaborates in recitals of masterworks written for two pianists. Mr. Bailey earned the degree of Master of Music in Piano Performance at Boston University as a pupil of Anthony di Bonaventura.

JEFFREY THOMAS (conductor) is assistant professor and director of choral ensembles at UC Davis. Educated at Oberlin Conservatory and The Juilliard School, Thomas has achieved international recognition as music director of the American Bach Soloists, with whom he has directed and conducted recordings of more than 25 cantatas, the Mass in B Minor, The Musical Offering, motets, chamber music, and works by Schütz, Pergolesi, Vivaldi, Haydn, and Beethoven. He has performed world wide and with most major U.S. symphonies and Baroque orchestras. His extensive discography of vocal music includes dozens of recordings of major works for Decca, EMI, Erato, Koch International Classics, Denon, Harmonia Mundi, Smithsonian, Newport Classics, and Arabesque. He has presented master classes at the New England Conservatory of Music, San Francisco Conservatory, SUNY at Buffalo, Swarthmore College, and Washington University, and is also an avid exponent of contemporary music.
UCD Symphony Orchestra
1998–99

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SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA
D. KERN HOLOMAN, CONDUCTOR

Beethoven
Overture to “Die Weihe des Hauses”, op. 124
(Consecration of the House)

Schumann
Piano Concerto in A Minor, op. 54
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Respighi
Pines of Rome

Jeffrey Thomas, conducting

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General admission $5/students and children $2.50
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