UC DAVIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
D. KERN HOLOMAN, CONDUCTOR

David Moschler, Assistant Conductor

Christian Baldini, Conductor Designate

FOR THE UC DAVIS DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC PRESENTS

Syphony Orchestra
D. KERN HOLOMAN, CONDUCTOR

FAMILY CONCERT
7 PM, TUESDAY, 2 JUNE 2009
JACKSON HALL, MONDAVI CENTER

PROGRAM

Violin Concerto in E Minor, op. 64
Felix Mendelssohn
(1809–87)

Symphony No. 6 in F Major (“Pastoral”), op. 68
Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

The Barber of Seville
Overture
Gioachino Rossini
(1792–1868)

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Phil Daley, events and publicity manager
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Rudy Garibay, designer
Christina Acosta, editor
John Abdallah, violin, is a graduating major in Music and Economics. He started his musical studies at age five with piano in his hometown of Fresno, then began playing violin at age nine. At UC Davis he reached the front desks of the orchestra in his first year and has anchored trios, quartets, and larger chamber ensembles ever since. Last season his all-star string quartet (with Yosef Farnsworth, Kimberlee Uwate, and Lucas Chen) worked closely with the Kromos Quartet, becoming widely known as the Kleine Kromos. A longtime student of Dan Flanagan, Abdallah is also employed by Flanagan’s new Sacramento School of Music, where (among many other things) he helped ready the splendid J Street Victorian for its new life. John Abdallah is Damian Siu Ming Ting Associate Concertmaster of the UCSDSO. The first decision on the 2008–09 season was that our Mendelssohn year would conclude with Abdallah playing the Violin Concerto.

With this performance D. Kern Holoman brings to a close his final year as the fourth conductor of the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra, having led it for 30 consecutive seasons. As a musicologist, Holoman’s work has focused on the music of the 19th-century French composer Hector Berlioz. He is a co-author, among other titles, Berlioz (Harvard University Press, 1989); Evening With the Orchestra: a Norton Guide for Concert-Goers (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992), The Société des Concerts du Conservatoire (1828–1867) (University of California Press, 2004). His recently completed book chronicling the career of conductor Charles Munch will be published in 2010 or early 2011. Holoman has also served as an advisor, program annotator, or performance commentator for the Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras as well as the San Francisco Opera. He was founding dean of the Division of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies, and in 1995 was awarded the UC Davis Prize for undergraduate teaching and remarkable scholarly achievement, presented by the UC Davis Foundation.

David Moschler is a candidate for the Master of Arts degree in conducting at UC Davis, where he studies with D. Kern Holoman and Jeffrey Thomas. He holds the Barbara K. Jackson Graduate Fellowship in Conducting. Originally from North Carolina, Moschler earned bachelor’s degrees in music and physics from UNC, Chapel Hill. For the past four seasons he has been principal conductor for the College Light Opera Company on Cape Cod, where in 2008 he conducted performances of Wozzeck and The Threepenny Opera. This fall, Moschler returns to conduct performances of Braddock and Canaletto. In May 2009 he led the highly acclaimed run of Oklahoma!, a lavish and loving production he helped shape from first concepts to final curtain. This fall, he will be the musical director for the Grammy Players production of The Threepenny Opera in Berkeley. Long familiar to members and audiences of the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra and University Chorus through his work as assistant conductor, he has also led contemporary works performed by the Empyrean Ensemble—naturally including the recent premiere of Pablo Ortiz’s score to accompany the film Ramona (1910).

Christian Baldini becomes the fifth conductor of the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra on July 1, 2009. An Argentinian of Italian extraction, he is soon to receive a Ph.D. in music composition from the University at Buffalo, State University of New York. Selected as the first assistant conductor of the Britten-Pears Orchestra, he has collaborated with conductor Alexander Polianichko and has worked with soloists of some of the world’s premier orchestras. His music has been performed with great acclaim in festivals and venues throughout Europe, South America, North America, and Asia, and has been recognized by several awards in global competitions, including the Seoul International Competition for Composers, the UNESCO Tribune of Music, the Asia International Competition, and the São Paulo Orchestral International Conducting Competition, and the National Conducting Institute at the Kennedy Center. In January 2008, he gave rave reviews after conducting Stravinsky’s Soldier’s Tale with members of the Buffalo Philharmonic. This past May 2009, Baldini’s score Elapog Twilight Shades was performed by the Memphis Symphony Orchestra. Baldini is married to the conductor Matilda Holman and is father of a six-month-old son, Dante.

**NOTES**

The Violin Concerto proved to be Mendelssohn’s last orchestral work, and is probably his most influential. The solo part is, to be sure, for a virtuoso, but its technical challenges draw less attention than the overall strength and solidity of Mendelssohn’s compositional craft. Much is clear from the opening measures. After a bar and a half of restless accompanimental figuration (much in the mold of Mozart’s G-Minor Symphony), the solo violin enters with an extended soaring melody in the upper register—and, moreover, pointing the fall of the second subject. A low G introduces the new theme, in the woodwinds, pianissimo and tranquillo. By the end of the exposition the main theme has returned, to be confirmed in the new, major key. In a novel twist, the solo cadenza is between the development and recapitulation. Nor does the cadenza end conventionally, instead the orchestra creeps in with the recapitulation beneath the soloist’s arpeggiated passagework. Roles have thus been reversed: the theme is now in the orchestral violins as the soloist provides the accompaniment.

The Andante continues without interruption, a solo bassoon having held the transitional pitch from the first movement’s final chord into the progression that introduces the next. This is an aria form, A–B–A, with an extended, developmental cello section that embraces moments of sadness and agitation. At its conclusion the soloist and orchestra muse quietly on the theme of the first movement and dissolve into the Allemande. Mendelssohn is prepared to rely on his scarpandering idiom: insisting throughout on the dancing first theme, which quite overshadows the little march that passes for a second subject.

What happiness Beethoven enjoyed during his mostly horrible life he discovered during his long daily walk and frequent holidays in the country. The ‘Pastoral’ Symphony speaks of these rustic delights: the simple, Breathe-easy joys of the countryfolk, first the beauty and then the unamedy fury of Nature. Beethoven’s use of descriptive titles and an extra movement—the storm—that describes a manifestation of Nature are two novel strokes in their own way as epoch-making as the idea of the funeral waltz was in the “Eroica.” The Sixth is dominated by bright, airy keys and textures appropriate to its programmatic intent. The tunes are coupled in simple thirds and sixths, as following often is, and the predominance of drones and other village-band-like orchestral ploys is meant to be suggestive of rusticity. For this family concert, we play the third, fourth, and fifth movements, with a short demonstration of the birdcalls that conclude the second.

The third movement is a scherzo-and- trio, contrived to order. The merry horn-and-bassoon call of the trio makes that this part of the “Pastoral” is the most tuneful. While the opening two themes are syncopated and rather primitive tune stated first by the oboe. For a trio Beethoven suggests a contradiction, the scherzo returns and picks up speed, only to be interrupted by the blowing up of a thunderstorm from the distance. It begins gently, then erupts into a full-scale, petrifying tempest with lightning and thunder, and finally fades away as summer storms will do. And, as likewise it inevitably will do, the country life resumes again, here with a song of thanksgiving built from an open-intervalled melody some shepherd’s horn might manage.

Rossini composed his opera like lightning; it is said that he would rather write a new page than get out of bed to pick up a leaf that had fallen to the floor. The overtures came last of all, usually during the rush before opening night. Thus, while not exactly writing by formula, the composer often built them of tried and true organizational principles. Typically they begin with ainas nelle, or slow introduction, or an orchestral recitative, briskly, in sonata fashion: first and second themes, a prominent closing theme, brief modulatory transition, recapitulation, and a coda piu mosso. The closing themes, both in the exposition and recapitulation, are the occasion for the celebrated Rossini crescendos, in which successive reiterations of four- or eight-bar phrase groupings grow from piano to a climactic forte, thickening dramatically in texture and orchestration as they go. The Barber of Seville is Rossini’s comic masterpiece, and its overture measures up to the accomplishment in every respect, with witty themes and memorable writing for solo woodwind and French horn. The four-note repetitions in the theme of the Maestro recur in the crescendo to excellent effect. —DKH