

Letter to the Audience

- about *iPalpiti* and the orchestral ensemble program at Walt Disney Concert Hall, July 7, 2018

“Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy” – Ludwig van Beethoven

Dear Friends,

Music is a gift that enables us to muse without words. *“Music is the shorthand of emotion.” - Leo Tolstoy*

The name of the orchestral ensemble, *iPalpiti* - THE HEARTBEATS - is a spiritual child of my belief in music as a reflection of the psyche and the soul, as a manifestation of the divine. Genuine music comes from within; it comes from the heart. I perceive the art of music-making as a poetic idiom, a fascinating inspiration, and a cultural component to express a broader spectrum of emotional, intellectual, and philosophical experience.

I impart these principles in my interaction with *iPalpiti*.

An ancient Jewish work of mystical lore identifies three dimensions of human experience that the Divine reveals in the world: space, time, and soul. All of these elements are essential to music.

True music contains multiple levels of meaning, a potential of a greater dimension. A composer is a vessel who absorbs and translates the highest impulses into music, often with a more complex meaning than at first appearance. Nowadays, we are admonished repeatedly to find a fixed and certain meaning in a work of art. And yet, all interpretation is relative, no matter how impartial the artist may try to be. There is no art in absolute exactness; it survives poorly in a changing world.

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the minds, flight to the imagination, and life to everything” - Plato

“Imagination is greater than knowledge because knowledge is limited...” - Albert Einstein

If a “correct” interpretation were to be found, only one performer and no critics would be needed. The opportunity to experience a new view of a familiar work should be cause for celebration. At a time when the spiritual dimension of the creation and re-creation of music is evaporating, it is our intention to replenish souls with loving energy, beliefs, and ideas by infusing music with positive spirit.

“To love alone can music ever yield, and love is melody” – A.S. Pushkin

We have selected the compositions to be performed in the hope of inspiring you, the listener, to explore the interconnections among the pieces as you discover the immeasurable potential of these beautiful works of art.

“Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but preservation of fire” – Gustav Mahler

Given the current obsession with “authentic” performance practice, you might be surprised at our equanimity in offering a program that includes arrangements of two masterworks of great composers: Bach’s *Chaconne* and Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

To understand our purpose, one must look at these re-creations in the light of our artistic mission to act as a “purveyor” of music. As creative artists, we believe that our duty to the music is far from delivering an exact reproduction of the notes in the printed score. We see it as a matter of being faithful to the composer’s intentions.

The size of the halls in which music was performed increased inordinately during the 19th and 20th centuries. Listeners nowadays prefer not to hear compositions for solo instruments in one of the larger concert halls. Our decision to perform solo compositions in orchestral *versions* is an attempt to compensate for the changes in performing conditions, and to bring immortal music not only to exclusive, but to wider audiences as well.

Today’s attempts at “period” performances of classical works might seem merely symptomatic of a particular stage in musical history. On the other hand, the belief that there is only one historically correct way of performing the music of any period is certainly a mistaken one. After all, music only exists through the perception of the listener, at the moment it is heard. It must therefore always be tied to the present and cannot be reproduced in the same way time after time. As Kurt Blaukopf has said, *“it is still not generally recognized that reproducing the original sounds is no guarantee of producing the same effect as when those sounds were first heard.”* Even if we use period instruments and perform in the very rooms whose acoustics the composers had in mind, we are still faced with the question once

asked by Wilhelm Furtwängler, “Can we be sure that people today hear in the same way as people did two hundred years ago?” We should not sacrifice music on the altar of style.

Toward the end of the Romantic period, an era before the existence of radio and television and when the gramophone industry, still in its infancy, was incapable of reproducing much more than mechanical noises, it was common practice to seek out forms of musical entertainment that seem strange to a modern listener. Above all, there existed arrangements of every conceivable kind, often significant reductions of massive orchestral scoring. The opposite has happened since the time of Hans von Bülow (German virtuoso pianist and composer of the Romantic Era, one of the most famous conductors of the 19th century); solo and chamber music has been “enlarged” so it could be performed in huge concert halls. And for this reason we introduce to you - with admiration and love - the program I title as **MAJESTIC CLASSICS**.

Johann Sebastian Bach: Chaconne in D-minor BWV 1004

“I play the notes as they are written, but it is G-d who makes music” – J.S. Bach

J.S. Bach’s Chaconne is one of the most transcribed compositions in history. It is regarded as a “classic of the classics” in the violin recital repertory. “A triumph of spirit over matter” is the manner in which Phillip Spitta* sums up this great work. To the French Bach scholar Albert Schweitzer, the piece “conjures up a whole world we seem to hear contending with pain, till at last, they blend in a mood of profound resignation.”

Despite its noble style, melodic invention, supreme balance and richness of expression, musicians have concerns that performance of the Chaconne on violin solo often leaves a sense of unfulfillment, sometimes even pain, because of the disproportion between the natural resources of the violin alone, limited by its four strings, and the amplitude of the piece in sonority, polyphony, and orchestral implication.

As we celebrate J.S. Bach’s 333rd birthday, you will hear this magnificent composition in a transcription for strings.

*1841-1894. German music historian and musicologist, best known for his 1879 biography of J.S. Bach. Friend of Johannes Brahms.

Anton Webern: Langsamer Satz

“Earth is the right place for love” – Robert Frost

Langsamer Satz [Slow Movement] is a miniature masterpiece inspired by love. This rare composition, dating from 1905, is rooted in Brahmsian Romanticism and tonality. It expresses strong emotions from yearnings to dramatic turmoil to a tranquil peaceful resolution.

Anton Webern, a future protégé student and significant follower of Arnold Schoenberg, was only 21 when he enjoyed an idyllic spring holiday with his cousin Wilhelmina, who had captured his heart. The transcendent exaltation he experienced, as noted in his diaries, describes this music perfectly: “Our love rose to infinite heights and filled the universe. Two souls were enraptured...When everything fell, the skies cleared up more and more - and then the moon rose, its silvery beam lit up the dreamy world - what came now was a dream.

A walk in the moonlight on flowery meadows - what the night gave to me, will long make me tremble.”

This composition reveals that Webern, like his teacher Schoenberg, was capable of writing very fine music in a tonal idiom if he chose.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: Variations on a Rococo Theme for cello and orchestra, Op. 33

“Beauty in music manifests itself, not in merely compiling together as many harmonic effects as possible for amusements or curiosities, but in simplicity and natural spontaneity.” –P.I. Tchaikovsky

P. I. Tchaikovsky, a Romantic composer to the core, was deeply moved by 18th-century music long before neoclassicism became a fashionable trend at the beginning of the 20th century. He created a composition called “Variations on a Rococo Theme” with a specific soloist in mind: Wilhelm Fitzenhagen, his colleague and cello professor in the Moscow conservatory. Composed during the years 1876-1877, the piece became the closest he ever came to writing a full concerto for cello and orchestra. It was premiered on November 30, 1877, under the baton of Nicholas Rubinstein, director of the conservatory.

The “Rococo” theme was composed by Tchaikovsky himself. He did not emulate or duplicate the style, but rather portrayed a sort of fantasy about its courtly charm. It was influenced not only by the early music of Mozart, whom Tchaikovsky worshipped, but also by Schumann, and is written in strictly classical mode. Fitzenhagen made changes

to the score and the cello part – by now standard emendation – which are respected and performed by leading cello soloists. *Tonight, you will hear this deeply moving music in that version.*

Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition*

“A painter paints on canvas. But, musicians paint their pictures on silence” – Leopold Stokowski

Mussorgsky’s masterpiece - *Pictures at an Exhibition* - was originally composed for solo piano after the composer visited an exhibition of 400 pictures of his greatly admired friend Victor Hartmann. Being inspired as well as possessing great imagination, Mussorgsky wrote a piano suite describing ten of these pictures with a brilliance, originality, and intricacy of rhythmical structure far ahead of his time. The power of the music engendered countless arrangements, the best-known of which is by Maurice Ravel.

Tonight you will hear this amazing composition in a transcription for string orchestra and percussion.

Although a chamber orchestra cannot compete with the might of a full symphony orchestra, more consistent tone colors and sustained harmonies bring the music closer to the original piano version.

*Read description of each picture in program on page xxx

*“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts” – William Shakespeare*

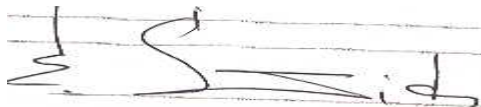
Follow us, Dear Listener. Talent is a mission and must be repaid to the Creator through people. The most beautiful things in the world can only be felt with the heart.

*“It is only with the heart one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible for the eye.”
– Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*

We are in accord with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who said, *“it is the union of hearts which constitutes their felicity.”*

These inspired young musicians from various countries, the members of iPalpiti, are united in their hope of bringing beauty into your life through celestial sound, vital rhythm, and eternal emotional energy. May we all be blessed by the touch of higher harmony!

*And long will people fondly call to mind my story
About the kindly feelings which my lyre awoke
That in my cruel age, I sang of Freedom’s glory
And mercy for the fallen spoke.
[From a poem by Alexander Pushkin]*



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