

2012 - 2013 Season

La Jolla Symphony & Chorus

Mandeville Auditorium

November 3-4, 2012

Angle of Repose



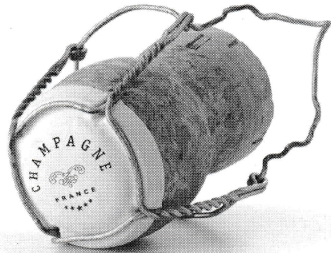
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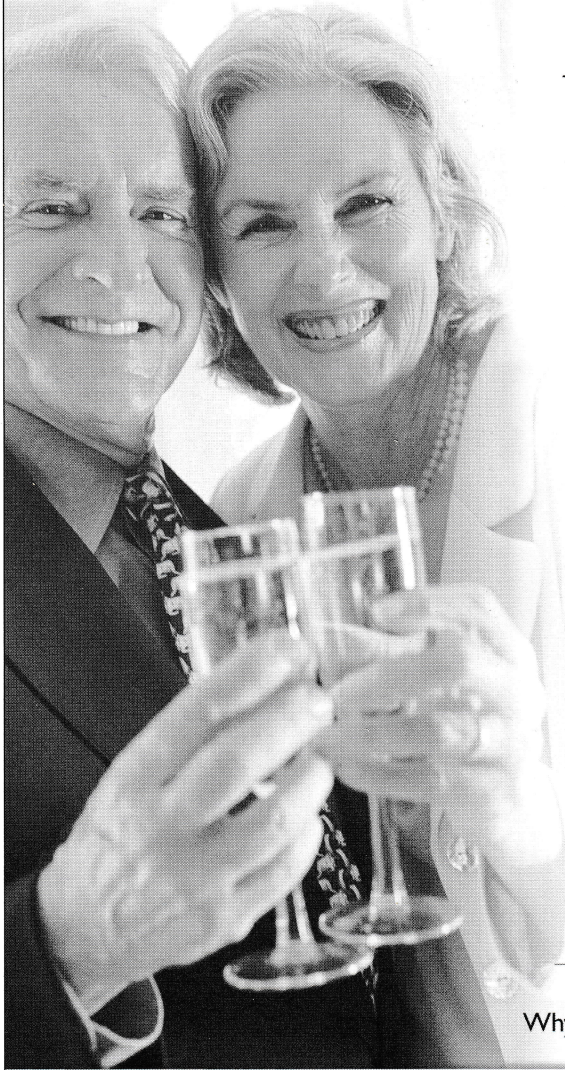


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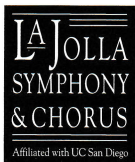
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Saturday, November 3, 2012, 7:30pm | Sunday, November 4, 2012, 2:00pm
Mandeville Auditorium, UCSD

Steven Schick conducting

MAZZOLI **Violent, Violent Sea** WEST COAST PREMIERE

CAGE **Aria**
Jessica Aszodi, soprano

CAGE **101**

INTERMISSION

CAGE **4'33"**

BEETHOVEN **Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Opus 55 "Eroica"**
Allegro con brio
Marcia funebre: Adagio assai
Scherzo: Allegro vivace
Finale: Allegro molto; Poco andante

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FROM THE CONDUCTOR



Angle of Repose

There is a luminous moment near the beginning of Wallace Stegner's magnificent novel, *Angle of Repose*, that is so ripe with implication, so profoundly musical, that to me the experience of reading it felt more like turning a long-forgotten melody over in my mind than wading into a major piece of literature. In a fresh take on the Doppler Effect Stegner wrote that an approaching "train, say—or the future—has a higher pitch than the sound of the same thing going away." Time, he was suggesting, like all approaching and receding objects, makes sound. What a grand arc of thought! That you can *hear* life coming at you! That history was not a mere recitation of events, but an accelerating, upwardly arching glissando that connects the past to the present!

It seems to me that such an idea could only have been born in the American West—in a place of such capacious dimensions that an individual must triangulate his or her position amongst crisscrossing vectors by means of sound. In a vast and complex space one *hears* rather than sees his or her place. As the music director of an orchestra and chorus of the far American West I began to wonder whether in Stegner's novel there lay the seeds for a program or even a season of programs. And in spite of Susan Sontag's famous warning that there are no happy marriages between the arts, we are doing exactly that.

Our listeners should be warned: there are no simple translations from literature to music in store this season. The time Oliver and Susan spend in Mexico will not be represented by Copland's *El Salon Mexico* or *Sinfonia India* by Carlos Chavez. Lovers of the novel's grand depictions of western beauty will not find their musical representations here either: not in the picturesque *Grand Canyon Suite*; not even in Olivier Messiaen's revelatory *Des canyons aux étoiles*. Our main interest is Lyman Ward—in many ways a typical American man of the mid-20th century—and in his project of writing a biography of his grandmother, Susan Burling Ward. Largely cut off from contemporary society, he is uncomfortable in the present but feels at home in the past, where his grandmother's letters and his own memories of her have presence and weight. Of course living in the past has its limitations, and Lyman soon settles into a weightless temporal environment where he does not belong to the present and cannot belong to the past. As a result *Angle of Repose* resonates with a peculiar and melancholy sense of historical estrangement that may not feel completely foreign to an early 21st-century reader. Lyman wonders, as we sometimes do, whether his forbearers along with their problems, hopes, and dreams have simply disappeared with the passing of time, or whether past and present co-exist as active agents in contemporary life; in Stegner's words, as less "continuous than synonymous."

The title “angle of repose” comes from engineering (and therefore refers throughout to Oliver’s chosen profession). It describes the steepest angle of slope that a conical pile of granular material like soil or grain can maintain when it has been poured onto a flat surface. But in Stegner’s treatment this idea moves far beyond the physical world and describes the final position of rest that awaits all emotional and historical struggle. Like Lyman, those who come later see only the position of repose and not the struggles that led to it. So Stegner’s novel leads us through an archeological investigation of the psyche of the present in search of clues to its past.

As we in the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus take up a similar project in musical terms we also seek to interrogate the cool tableaux of history in order to reconstitute the tumultuous events that produced them. Here our sole question is this: can we re-imagine the passions that formed the music of our past in such a way that they connect to the passions that drive our present? That’s a good question, but how can Stegner’s novel help us understand today’s musical situation? In search of an answer we’ll take a glimpse into Susan Ward’s longing for her patrician friends in the East while

making her home in the wildness of the American West in a concert called “Old Worlds/New World.” To achieve this idea in music we’ll counterpoise the great music of Europe (Richard Strauss) with upstart revolutionaries from America (Edgard Varèse and Chou Wen-chung.) In a concert called “Dark/Bright” we’ll interrogate coloristic and textural aspects of music as synonyms for the passing of seasons and the dramatic moments in the lives of families. Here we’ll perform Brahms’s jubilant music for chorus and orchestra and pair it with duskier emotional hues of Schoenberg and Dallapiccola. And in this our opening concert set we’ll present “Hero/Anti-hero,” an in-depth look at the heroic impulses in the 19th century and their manifestations, or lack thereof, in the music of today.

Hero/Anti-hero

We’ll begin this concert and our season with the subtle drama of Missy Mazzoli’s *Violent, Violent Sea*. This is an enchanting work of subtle harmonies and wavelike instrumental textures. It is grand music in the tradition of *La Mer* and other sweeping works inspired by the sea. However, in the role of hero we cast the ultimate heroic music of the 19th century, Beethoven’s stentorian

STEVEN SCHICK conductor

For more than 30 years Steven Schick has championed contemporary music as a percussionist and teacher by commissioning and premiering more than 100 new works. Schick is a professor of music at the University of California, San Diego and in 2008 was awarded the title of Distinguished Professor by the UCSD Academic Senate.

Schick was one of the original members and percussionist of the Bang on a Can All-Stars of New York City (1992-2002). He has served as artistic director of the Centre International de Percussion de Genève in Geneva, Switzerland, and as consulting artist in percussion at the Manhattan School of Music. Schick is founder and artistic director of the acclaimed percussion group, red fish blue fish, a UCSD ensemble composed of his graduate percussion students that performs regularly throughout San

Diego and has toured internationally. He also is founding artistic director (June 2009) of “Roots & Rhizomes”—an annual international course for percussionists hosted by the Banff Center for the Arts in Canada.

As a percussion soloist, Schick has appeared in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, The Royal Albert Hall (London), Centre Pompidou (Paris), The Sydney Opera House and Disney Hall among many other national and international venues.

Schick is a frequent guest conductor with the International Contemporary Ensemble (Chicago and New York City), and in 2011 he was appointed artistic director and conductor of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. Schick has been music director and conductor of the La Jolla Symphony & Chorus since 2007.

"Eroica" symphony. This work, dedicated to the ideals of the Enlightenment, and at one point literally to Napoleon Bonaparte personally, remains one of the most significant and singular utterances in the symphonic repertoire. Today it is difficult to imagine a musical world in which the *Eroica* is not a beloved and undeniable classic. However, in its day it was a bewildering and complex journey that many listeners found forbidding.

We should envy them. The problem today is that it is very hard to *hear* the *Eroica*. I do not mean that it is hard to find a performance—that's certainly not the case. In fact Beethoven's *Third Symphony* is heard so often that we sometimes put our brains on autopilot as we listen and don't hear it at all. We listen the way someone might collect memories while walking down a very familiar path. Our strategy for hearing this symphony afresh is to pair its heroic grandness with the ultimate anti-hero of the 20th century, the great experimentalist John Cage. Where Beethoven is dramatic Cage is Zen-like; where Beethoven is controlling Cage embraces indeterminacy; where Beethoven is form-conscious and hierarchical Cage is even-handed and accepts all sounds as equals.

We'll hear three Cage works: his *101* written for that many orchestral musicians in which each player has very simple music to play and the simple instruction to begin a note or phrase within a given time frame and end within another. With this temporal flexibility and the lack of a conductor on the podium it's a given that no two performances will sound alike. With a brief, but alluring side-trip to his virtuosic *Aria* for solo voice and assorted noisemakers, we'll listen to Cage's most remarkable, revolutionary, and controversial piece: *4'33"*. You know from tonight's program notes that this is a work scored for four minutes and thirty-three seconds of completely undetermined sound—the performers on stage won't make a peep. I would say it's a piece of silence, but Cage avers that since human beings make their own sounds, silence does not exist in the human world. The work then is equally about whatever sounds happen to happen, and about the radically increased responsibility the listener must shoulder to make musical sense out of them. In our performance we will open the doors to the Mandeville Auditorium during *4'33"* to let the outside sounds in and then, without a pause, play the Beethoven.

I am extremely eager to experience all of this. I hope that Missy Mazzoli's emergence as an important composer of her time will resonate with Beethoven's emergence as a figure in his own era. I also hope that hearing the opening chords of the *Eroica* out of the silence of *4'33"* will help us experience them again with fresh ears, that briefly we'll be able to hear the famous opening again as it must have seemed to its first listeners: dramatic, unexpected, and jarringly loud. I also hope that in the confrontation of generations between Beethoven and Cage that we will feel the presence of Lyman Ward as he comes to terms with his grandmother's life and tries to make sense of it today. And I most sincerely hope that it will prompt for you, our intrepid listeners, reflections on how we have become who we are, following a strategy as the poet Wendell Berry suggests, of "eating our history, day by day."

There will certainly be some listeners who don't want the Beethoven *Third Symphony* to be refreshed. It is after all so much more agreeable as a dusty museum piece. And there are certainly those who will scratch their heads at the oddity of a piece of music in which no one plays. I can almost hear my father with his (considerably more colorful) version of "what's the world coming to?" But *4'33"*, this fantastical and revolutionary piece now at age sixty, is one of the most courageous revisions of the basic rules of music since the Machaut *Mass*. It deserves to be heard and not just mentioned as an historical footnote. Stegner's protagonist, looking backward through time at his grandmother's life and deeply suspicious of the vagaries of the next generation, might not have been able to formulate such a statement, but I am happy that John Cage could. "I can't understand why people are frightened of new ideas," he said. "I'm frightened of the old ones." ■

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PROGRAM NOTES

by Eric Bromberger

VIOLENT, VIOLENT SEA

MISSY MAZZOLI

Born 1980, Abington, Pennsylvania



(The following note has been supplied by the composer.)

Violent, Violent Sea was commissioned by the Barlow Endowment and the League of Composers Chamber Orchestra. This work began with more of an emotional impression than a precise musical idea. My early notes for the piece look something like this:

LOUD BUT SLOW. LIGHT BUT DARK. VIBRAPHONE. HOW TO DO THIS?

To my relief I eventually did figure out “how to do this.” The work evolved significantly from these early sketches but my idea of creating a loud, dense work with conflicting light and dark sides remained intact. The result is a ten-minute piece with a deceptively sparkling exterior and dark, slow-moving chords at its core. These chords grind against each other, dissolve into glissandos and crescendo into surprising dissonances under the glistening patina of vibraphone and marimba. This work is dedicated to Sheila Mazzoli, who loves the sea more than anyone. ■

MISSY MAZZOLI

Recently deemed “one of the more consistently inventive, surprising composers now working in New York” (*New York Times*) and “Brooklyn’s post-millennial Mozart” (*Time Out New York*), Missy Mazzoli’s music has been performed all over the world by the Kronos Quartet, eighth blackbird, the American Composers Orchestra, New York City Opera, the Minnesota Orchestra, and many others. In June, she was selected as composer-in-residence with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, where she is working on her second full-length opera.

Ms. Mazzoli is an active pianist and keyboardist, and often performs with Victoire, an “all star, all-female quintet” she founded in 2008 dedicated to her own compositions. Their debut full-length CD, “Cathedral City,” was named one of 2010s best classical albums in *Time Out New York*, NPR, the *New Yorker*, and the *New York Times*.

Ms. Mazzoli attended the Yale School of Music, the Royal Conservatory of the Hague, and Boston University.



JESSICA ASZODI soprano

Jessica Aszodi, 26, holds a master of music performance from UC San Diego and a bachelor of music performance from the Victorian College of

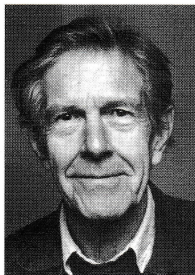
the Arts, and in 2009 she completed the Young Artist Program at the Victorian Opera Company. Aszodi’s performances have been praised for their “virtuosic whimsy” (*New York Times*), “imagination for colour and dramatic presentation” (*Sydney Morning Herald*) and “utmost security and power” (*Chicago Tribune*). Her performance

practice takes in opera, chamber music, experimental, conventional, and contemporary-classical music. Passionate about performing new music, she has given more than 40 premiere performances. Aszodi has performed with ensembles as diverse as ICE (International Contemporary ensemble), Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Center for Contemporary Opera, Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Orchestra, Bang on a Can, and Eighth Blackbird. Her operatic roles include Elliot Carter’s *Rose (What Next?)*, Mozart’s *Elvira (Don Giovanni)*, and the title role in Satie’s *Socrates*, to name a few.

JOHN CAGE

Born September 5, 1912, Los Angeles

Died August 12, 1992, New York City



In 1925 Harvard University established the Charles Eliot Norton Professorship of Poetry, an annual series of lectures on some aspect of the arts. Harvard used the term “poetry” in its broadest sense, and those invited to give the Norton

lectures have included writers, visual artists, musicians, and scholars. Among the composers invited to give these lectures have been Stravinsky, Hindemith, Copland, Chavez, Sessions, Bernstein, and Berio. For the 1988-89 academic year, the university made a daring choice for its Professorship of Poetry, inviting John Cage, an artist, composer, musician, poet, and writer whose ideas had challenged every assumption that underlies Western art music (and, more broadly, art in general). Characteristically, Cage titled his series of lectures I-VI.

In 1988, as part of his residency at Harvard, Cage composed a work for the Boston Symphony Orchestra that he titled *101* (as with so many of Cage’s works, that numerical title denotes the

number of performers required), and the Boston Symphony gave the premiere on April 6, 1989. *101* is “Cagean” in many meanings of that term. Cage intended that it should be performed without a conductor, though he specified that the conductor might participate in rehearsals and with the overall preparation of the piece. To some extent, *101* is a study in sonority: the 101 players are divided into three discrete groups, each with its own characteristic sound and responsibilities. Strings and woodwinds create a smooth, resonant, and sustained sound. Brass and lower woodwinds intrude on that sustained palette of sound with outbursts of their own: strident, powerful, and aggressive. Arrayed against these sharply-different sounds is the orchestra’s huge percussion section, which offers a prominent role for the piano and includes a variety of exotic instruments (among them the contrabass marimba and whirring bullroarer). There is no score, the existence of which would imply a measure of artistic control. Instead, there are only the orchestral parts, and performers have a certain latitude in presenting their individual sounds and events across the dozen-minute span of this music. *101* may be understood in quite different ways: as a study in contrasted sonorities, as an exercise in the individualism of its performers, as a demonstration of the infinite possibilities built into Cage’s conception. No two performances of this music should ever be the same, and that is exactly as Cage wished it. ■

4’33”**JOHN CAGE**

John Cage’s *4’33”* is one of the most profoundly revolutionary pieces ever written—and certainly the quietest. In the years after World War II Cage studied Zen Buddhism, read the *I Ching*, and became interested in art created outside the process of rigid artistic control, outside the imposition of an external structure, an art in which chance was a generative force. This was the period when serial music and composing with complex systems had begun to take over Western art music, and Cage was in part reacting against the tyranny of systems and order. He began to employ chance as one of his compositional approaches, and he set out to avoid imposing external order, artistic consciousness, ideology, form, or specific restraints on his

music and its performers. Cage’s ideas produced strong reactions at both ends of the artistic spectrum. Witold Lutoslawski spoke of the liberating effect on his own music of Cage’s use of chance as a compositional method, but Cage’s friend Pierre Boulez angrily dismissed the notion of doing without exact artistic control in any work of art.

Cage’s deepening interest in an art free of externally-imposed order began to shape his own music in the post-war years, and it reached its most dramatic statement (if we can use that phrase) in his *4’33”*, composed in 1952. *4’33”* was originally conceived as a piece for performer and harpsichord, but Cage specified that it could be performed by any instrument or combination of instruments. The idea of the piece was stark in its simplicity: the performer was to come out, seat himself at his instrument, and then do nothing for

four minutes and thirty-three seconds. David Tudor gave the first performance in Woodstock, New York, on August 29, 1952, and since that moment this composition has continued to produce violently different reactions. It has been jeered by traditionalists and denounced as anarchic by those who feel that art requires imposing some form of order on chaos. At the other extreme, it has been greeted with gleeful delight by those who welcome its challenge to authority, order, and concert decorum. These proponents hail *4'33"* as an act of defiance, a form of dadaism (or perhaps "nada-ism") that undercuts the entire Western concept of art.

But Cage was after something entirely different in this composition made up of silence, because he argued that there was no such thing as "silence"—it doesn't exist. Cage pointed out that during every performance of *4'33"* the "silence" was in fact full of the ambient sound that is part of being alive—distant traffic noise, the sound of the air-conditioning system, the rustle of program books or of people shifting in their seats—and this sound (different at every performance) was an integral part of the experience. In *4'33"* Cage was inviting his audience really to listen and to experience the sounds

around them, the level of noise that is inevitably a part of any musical composition.

Despite the outrage, Cage's use of silence was by no means original, and Cage was quick to point out that one of the influences on *4'33"* was the work of his friend, the painter Robert Rauschenberg. In the early 1950s Rauschenberg had painted a series of "white canvases": blank white canvases that took on a different character depending on the lighting in the room, the groups of people looking at them, the play of shadow and light in the space in which they were hung. Rauschenberg's canvases were not a nihilistic abrogation of artistic responsibility (and a number of observers pointed out that his canvases were not really blank—he had painted them with white paint). Rather, Rauschenberg's white canvases challenged an audience to look at blankness and to recognize that it was a crucial component of any artistic creation or experience. In *4'33"* Cage was making a similar challenge to his audience, asking it to acknowledge the fact that there is more to any piece of music than the notes on the page. ■

At these concerts, 4'33" is presented in its version for full symphony orchestra.

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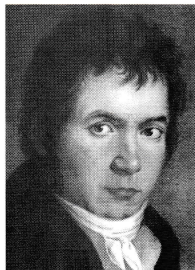
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SYMPHONY NO. 3 IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OPUS 55 "EROICA"

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Born December 16, 1770, Bonn

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna



In May 1803, Beethoven moved to the village of Oberdöbling, a few miles north of Vienna. At age 32, he had just come through a devastating experience—the realization that he was going deaf had driven him to the verge of suicide—but now he resumed work, and life. To his friend Wenzel Krumpholz, Beethoven confided: "I am only a little satisfied with my previous works. From today on I will take a new path." At Oberdöbling over the next six months, Beethoven sketched a massive new symphony, his third.

Everyone knows the story of how Beethoven had intended to dedicate the symphony to Napoleon, whose reforms in France had seemed to signal a new age of egalitarian justice. But when the news reached Beethoven in May 1804 that Napoleon had proclaimed himself emperor, the composer ripped the title page off the score of the symphony and blotted out Napoleon's name, angrily crying: "Is he then, too, nothing more than an ordinary human being? Now he, too, will trample on all the rights of man and indulge only his ambition. He will exalt himself above all others, become a tyrant!" (This sounds like one of those stories too good to be true, but it is quite true: that title page—with Napoleon's name obliterated—has survived.) Countless historians have used this episode to demonstrate Beethoven's democratic sympathies, though there is evidence that just a few months later Beethoven intended to restore the symphony's dedication to Napoleon, and late in life he spoke of Napoleon with grudging admiration. When the symphony was published in 1806, though, the title page bore only the cryptic inscription: "Sinfonia eroica—dedicated to the memory of a great man."

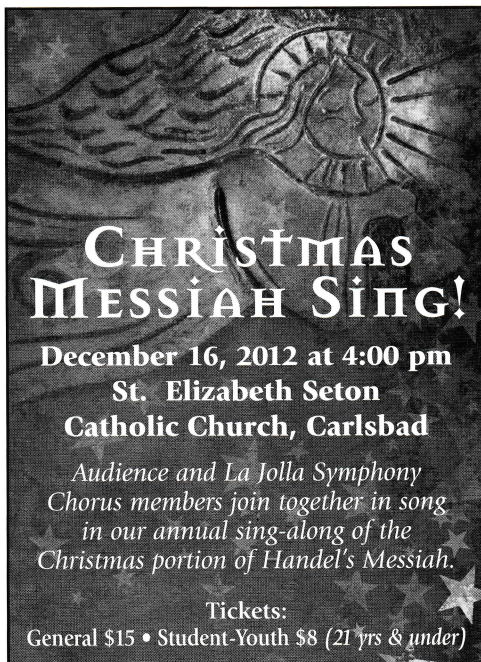
The new symphony was given several private performances before the public premiere on April 7, 1805. Early audiences were dumbfounded. Wrote one reviewer: "This long composition, extremely difficult of performance, is in reality a tremendously expanded, daring and wild fantasia. It lacks nothing in the way of startling and beautiful passages, in which the energetic and talented composer must be recognized; but often it loses itself in lawlessness... The reviewer belongs to Herr Beethoven's sincerest admirers, but in this composition he must confess that he finds too much that is glaring and bizarre, which hinders greatly one's grasp of the whole, and a sense of unity is almost completely lost." Legend has it that at the end of the first movement, one outraged member of the audience screamed out: "I'll give another kreutzer

[a small coin] if the thing will but stop!" It is easy now to smile at such reactions, but those honest sentiments reflect the confusion of listeners in the presence of a genuinely revolutionary work of art.

There had never been a symphony like this, and Beethoven's "new directions" are evident from the first instant. The music explodes to life with two whipcracks in E-flat major, followed immediately by the main ideas in the cellos. This slightly-swung theme is simply built on the notes of an E-flat major chord, but the theme settles on a "wrong" note — C# — and the resulting harmonic complications will be resolved only after much violence. Another striking feature of this movement is Beethoven's choice of 3/4 instead of the duple meter customary in symphonic first movements; 3/4, the minuet meter, had been thought essentially lightweight, unworthy of serious music. Beethoven destroys that notion instantly — this is not simply serious music, it is music of the greatest violence and uncertainty. In it, what Beethoven's biographer Maynard Solomon has called "hostile energy" is admitted for the first time into what had been the polite world of the classical symphony. This huge movement (longer by itself than some complete Haydn

and Mozart symphonies) introduces a variety of themes and develops them with a furious energy. It is no accident that the development is the longest section of this movement. The energy pent up in those themes is unleashed here, and the development — much of it fugal in structure — is full of grand gestures, stinging dissonances, and tremendous forward thrust. The lengthy recapitulation (in which the music continues to develop) drives to a powerful coda: the main theme repeats four times, growing more powerful on each appearance, and finally it is shouted out in triumph. This truly is a "heroic" movement — it raises serious issues, and in music of unparalleled drama and scope it resolves them.

The second movement brings another surprise — it is a funeral march, something else entirely new in symphonic music. Beethoven moves to dark C minor as violins announce the grieving main idea over growling basses, and the movement makes its somber way on the tread of this dark theme. The C-major central interlude sounds almost bright by comparison — the hero's memory is ennobled here — but when the opening material and tonality return Beethoven ratchets up tensions by treating his material fugally. At the end,



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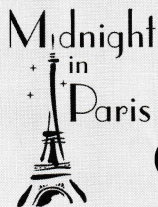
the march theme disintegrates in front of us, and the movement ends on muttering fragments of that theme.

Out of this silence, the propulsive scherzo springs to life, then explodes. For all its revolutionary features, the *Eroica* employs what was essentially the Mozart-Haydn orchestra: pairs of winds, plus timpani and strings. Beethoven makes only one change—he adds a third horn, which is now featured prominently in the trio section's hunting-horn calls. But that one change, seemingly small by itself, is yet another signal of the originality of this symphony: the virtuosity of the writing for horns, the sweep of their brassy sonority—all these are new in music.

The finale is a theme-and-variation movement, a form originally intended to show off the imagination of the composer and the skill of the performer. Here Beethoven transforms this old form into a grand conclusion worthy of a heroic symphony. After an opening flourish, he presents not the theme but the bass line of that theme, played by pizzicato strings, and offers several variations on this line before the melodic theme itself is heard in the woodwinds, now accompanied by the same pizzicato line. This tune had special appeal for

Beethoven, and he had already used it in three other works, including his ballet *Prometheus*. Was Beethoven thinking of Prometheus—stealer of fire and champion of mankind—when he used this theme for the climactic movement of this utterly original symphony? He puts the theme through a series of dazzling variations, including complex fugal treatment, before reaching a moment of poise on a stately slow variation for woodwinds. The music pauses expectantly, and then a powerful *Presto* coda hurls the *Eroica* to its close.

The *Eroica* may have stunned its first audiences, but audiences today run the greater risk of forgetting how revolutionary this music is. What seemed “lawlessness” to early audiences must now be seen as an extraordinary leap to an entirely new conception of what music might be. Freed from the restraint of courtly good manners, Beethoven found in the symphony the means to express the most serious and important of human emotions. It is no surprise the composers over the next century would make full use of this freedom. Nor is it a surprise to learn that late in life—at a time when he had written eight symphonies—Beethoven named the *Eroica* as his own favorite among his symphonies. ■

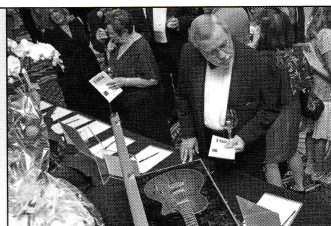


Thank You Gala Guests!

On Saturday, October 13th, guests gathered at the Marriott Del Mar to celebrate the start of the La Jolla Symphony & Chorus 2012-2013 Season and to pay tribute to “Arts Angel” Bonnie Wright. Thank you to all who attended, to our auction donors, and to all who contributed to our Gala’s success!

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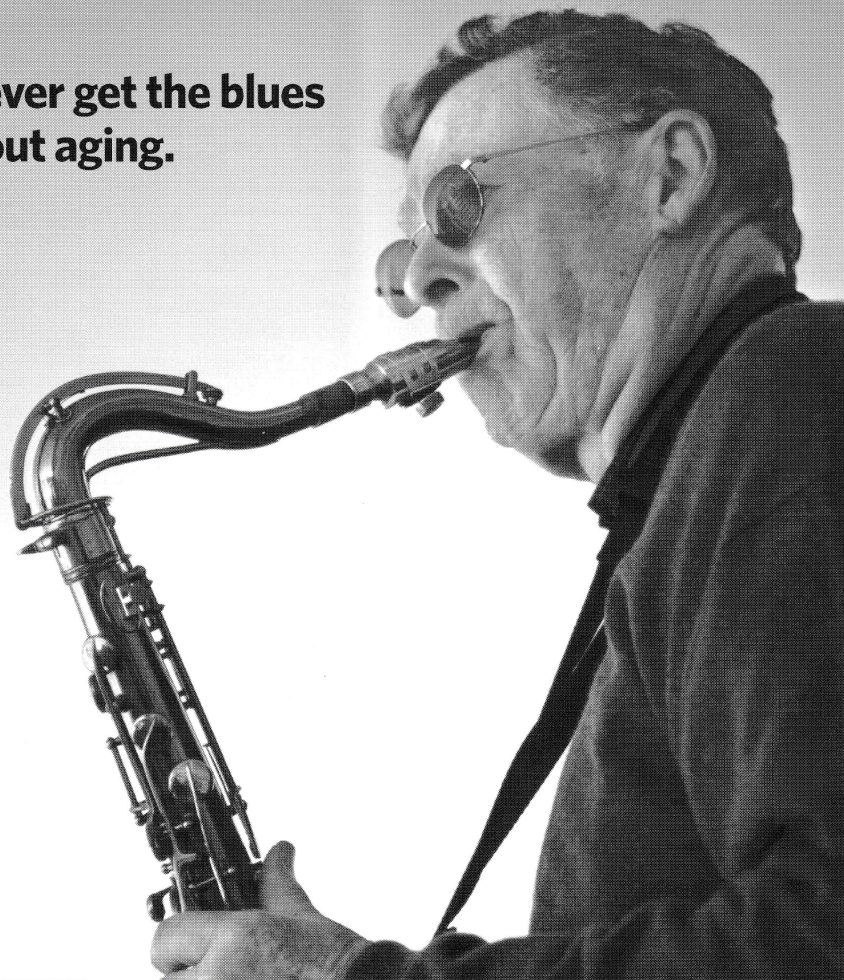


Steven Schick, Alison Wright, “Arts Angel” Bonnie Wright, Diane Salisbury



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