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Orchestral Conducting: Study and Performance of Orchestral Works by Haydn, Wagner, Strauss and Martinů

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Orchestral Conducting: Study and Performance of Orchestral Works by Haydn, Wagner, Strauss and Martinů

Jan Honza Červenka

Honors Project
Advisor: Mark Mandarano
Macalester College Music Department

Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA
2013
Abstract

Orchestral Conducting: Study and Performance of Orchestral Works by Haydn, Wagner, Strauss and Martinů

This project served as an immersive experience in orchestral conducting, which encompassed score study, ensemble organization, rehearsal and performance. The project was split into two distinct parts: First, in the fall semester of 2012, I rehearsed the Macalester Orchestra in Bohuslav Martinů's Memorial to Lidice and conducted the work in December of 2012. The second part occurred in the spring semester of 2013, when I assembled a chamber orchestra of Macalester students and community members to rehearse and perform a concert of three works: Franz Joseph Haydn’s Notturno in C Major, Hob. II:25, Richard Wagner’s Siegfried Idyll and Richard Strauss’s Serenade for Winds, Op. 7.
Macalester College Department of Music Presents

Fall Orchestra Concert
Mark Mandarano, Conductor
Jan Červenka ‘13, Guest Conductor

Saturday, December 1st, 2012
8:00 pm
Mairs Concert Hall
Free
Program

Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)
  Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, “The Unfinished”
    i. Allegro moderato
    ii. Andante con moto

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)
  Four Dances (from 12 German Dances, WoO. 8)
    No. 1 in C Major
    No. 3 in F Major
    No. 10 in D Major
    No. 12 in C Major

Intermission

J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750)
  Prelude and Fugue in D Major for organ
    (transcribed for orchestra by Ottorino Respighi)

Bohuslav Martinů (1890 – 1959)
  Memorial to Lidice

    conducted by Jan Červenka

Antonín Dvořák (1841 – 1904)
  Slavonic Dances, Op. 46
    No. 3 in A-Flat Major, Poco Allegro
    No. 8 in G Minor, Presto
Notes on the Program
by Mark Mandarano

More than forty years passed between the time Schubert composed the two movements of his Symphony in B Minor and their premiere performance. Why these two movements, composed in 1822 with such originality and assurance, remained unaccompanied by the requisite Scherzo and Finale remains a mystery and a cause for much speculation. So rigid were the symphonic conventions of the era, that this music, absent the complete sonata-cycle structure, remained unknown for decades, the sole manuscript score in the possession of one individual. By the time it was finally heard by the Viennese public in 1865, Schubert had long since been recognized as an unassailable master and no excuses needed to be made on its behalf; the greatness of the music was obvious to everyone in the room, its truncated form a kind of testament to the miraculous achievements and tragic brevity of Schubert’s life.

The two movements of the “Unfinished” form a study in complementary opposites. The Allegro moderato begins in darkness. A low, ominous figure emerges in the cellos and contrabasses, followed by a rustling in the upper strings and a clear, plaintive melody like a lied in the oboe and clarinet: the essential elements of Romanticism presented starkly, as never before in an orchestral work. The first movement proceeds to unveil as its the second theme perhaps the most memorable symphonic tune of all time. The orchestra thunders, shudders, issues heroic challenges and pleads for mercy, all within the confines of a classically proportioned and logical symphonic form. Sweetness, poise and geniality prevail in the sunny E major second movement. A pastoral mood is awakened when the clarinet (later the oboe) sings out a simple, floating vocalise over syncopated strings. The dark struggle with destiny is never completely out of sight, however, and powerful tutti passages threaten to overturn the calm. Nevertheless, though alternative byways are explored, the movement ends in serene repose.

As a counterweight to Schubert's momentous opening movements, Beethoven's German Dances supply the right amount of lightness, humor and grace. Like many composers in their early years, Beethoven composed music on demand to supplement his income, to hone his craft and to make his name known to the public. His catalogue abounds with dozens of minuets, contradances, ländler and marches—Beethoven's equivalent to the many divertimenti of Mozart and Haydn. All of the German Dances feature seemingly straightforward melodic lines, typically in the first violins, and clear, inventive textures in the accompaniment; yet, each dance is enlivened by unexpected accents, dynamic contrasts and harmonic inflections. Some highlights include: the Trio of No. 3, in which two horns come to prominence; the sudden shift to a D minor drone in No. 10, with sharp accents reinforced by percussion; and, in No. 12, the long symphonic coda in C major, complete with blazing trumpet fanfares.

The art of transcription has a long and complex history from the time of Bach and Handel, who thought nothing of re-tooling movements and even complete works in various contexts, through the 19th century, when composers regularly scaled large works down to four-hand piano arrangements for performance in the home. In the 20th century, especially in the United States where the symphony orchestra rose to pre-eminence, many works for piano or organ that previously would have been heard at home or in church were more likely to find an audience of listeners crowded around a radio during a weekly program by one of the major orchestras. Conductor Leopold Stokowski was a pioneer at promulgating his own dazzling arrangements of Bach's organ works, notably in the opening of the Disney movie Fantasia. Not one to be outdone, rival conductor Arturo Toscanini commissioned his countryman, composer Ottorino Respighi, to
create arrangements of Bach’s works. Respighi, as an organist, knew intimately not only the musical inner workings of Bach, but also the immense tonal variety and power of the organ. It didn’t hurt that Respighi, as an orchestrator, had achieved international recognition for the spectacular sonic splendor of such tone-poems as *The Pines of Rome*. The transcription of Bach’s *Prelude and Fugue in D Major* was created in 1929 and captures the power and brilliance of Bach’s organ writing as well as the independence of the contrapuntal lines in vivid orchestral color. The multi-part *Prelude* ranges widely from the jubilation of the opening to the full-throated cries of its close. The *Fugue* is founded on a drollly spry and repetitious subject, the countersubject of which offers its own nearly comic interjections. Bach’s contrapuntal wizardry passes through moments of profound quiet and finally roars to a celebratory close of grand magnificence.

Antonín Dvořák was aided in his early years by Johannes Brahms who introduced the young, unknown Czech composer to his publisher and encouraged Simrock to bring Dvořák’s music to the wider world. The *Slavonic Dances* for four-hand piano, so rich with the composer’s exotic (for the time) national background, were among Dvořák’s first pieces published and the sensation they created brought him to international attention. The orchestral arrangements remain among the most frequently performed of his works. With a gently swinging rhythm and a delightfully innocent song for woodwinds, Dance No. 3 seems wafted by country breezes. A brashly contrasting quick section, which alternates with the initial lilt, later gains prominence to end the dance in a frenzy of acceleration. Dance No. 8 is a *furiant*, a dance in three taken at a frenetic pace, with a rhythm that spreads across the bar-line. The tonality switches between major and minor with lightning-quick speed as the entire ensemble plunges onward full-tilt for most of its duration. The central section dramatically thins the texture to reveal a quietly expressive legato idea in the oboe and flute, a peaceful oasis that is swept away by the mad intensity of the primary dance.

**Note on Martinů’s “Memorial to Lidice” by Jan Červenka**

In 1942, Czech resistance fighters assassinated Reinhard Heydrich, nicknamed the "Butcher of Prague", who was the Deputy Protector of Bohemia and Moravia. As a punishment, Hitler ordered his soldiers to slaughter the village of Lidice, where the assassins were falsely suspected to hide. Over 500 people were killed, including 105 children. Martinů, who was a Czech ex-patriot living in the USA, wrote this piece as their memorial within a few days in 1943.

The composition begins with a violent uproar that is immediately juxtaposed with a distant chorale in the clarinets and bassoons. It is a variation on the overly nationalist chorale *Ktož jsú boží bojovníci* (Ye Who Are Warriors of God), which was used most famously in the 16th century by the heroic Hussite warriors. Here the context is different: it is not a hymn of victors, but of the defeated. The war is omnipresent in the composition, which relies heavily on juxtaposing different sections of the orchestra, depicting perhaps the fight between the Czechs and Germans.

The tensions rise and fall until the seemingly celebratory fanfare in E-Flat Major. To Martinů this signified the hope for the ultimate victory of the Czech people. He was, however, aware of the struggle still ahead, which comes alive in the last violent uproar quoting the theme from Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony*. Once the violence is exhausted, the piece comes to a peaceful cadence. The chorale occurs one last time and pays homage to the undying Czech resistance.
## Orchestra Personnel

### Violin I
Kaarin Evens, *Concertmaster*
Sinta Fergus
Alison Fisher
Kathryn Hathaway
Anish Krishnan
Gwyneth Volkmann
Allison Wildenborg

### Violin II
Tyler Skluzacek, *Principal*
Maya Burroughs
Jesse Cutter
Alan Farnsworth
Kerry Hartwick
Karen Weldon
Carmen Whitehead

### Viola
Kathryn Klein, *Principal*
Nicholas Whittredge, *Assistant Principal*
Natalie Izzo
Madisen Stoler

### Cello
Alvin Kim, *Principal*
Aryeh Blumenreich
Elizabeth Coffield
Margo Faulk
Michael Jones
Samuel Naden
Elizabeth Nelson
Alexander Weberg

### Bass
James Lindgren
David Van Den Brandt

### Flute
Ida Nitter, *Co-principal*
Samuel Tygiel, *Co-principal*
Wilson Merrell

### Oboe
Olivia Sparks

### Clarinet
Rebecca Boylan
Lydia Brosnahan
Samantha Horn
Courtney Nussbaumer

### Horn
Ann Kezar, *Principal*
Allison Einolf
Ian Gallmeister
Kendra Komoto
Nicholas Scallon

### Trumpet
Aaron Dawson
Margaret Molter
Daniel Ross

### Trombone
Noah Gladstein
John Verkuilen

### Tuba
Hannah Johlas

### Timpani
Chanen Hanson

### Percussion
Iris Micklavzina

### Piano
Anna Graziano
Anna McFall

### Harp
Samantha Horn
Upcoming Concerts

**Mac Jazz**
*Friday, December 7, 7:30 pm, Mairs Concert Hall*

**Macalester African Music Ensemble**
*Saturday, December 8, 8:00 pm, Mairs Concert Hall*

**Macalester Chamber Ensembles**
*Sunday, December 9, 3:00 pm, Mairs Concert Hall*

**Macalester Orchestra’s Concerto Concert** featuring student soloists
*Saturday, February 23, 8:00 pm, Mairs Concert Hall*

**Macalester’s Spring Orchestra Concert** featuring works by Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Mendelssohn, and more
*Friday, May 3, 8:00 pm, Mairs Concert Hall*
## Musicians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name, instrument</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lydia Brosnahan, recorder</td>
<td>Concord, Massachusetts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clemens Pilgram, recorder</td>
<td>Munich, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ida Nitter, flute</td>
<td>Oslo, Norway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samuel Tygiel, flute</td>
<td>San Francisco, California</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lane Manke, oboe</td>
<td>Hastings, Minnesota</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Marshak, oboe</td>
<td>Dayton, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydia Brosnahan, clarinet</td>
<td>Concord, Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Bacarella, clarinet</td>
<td>Brynt Mawr, Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Zurlo, bassoon</td>
<td>Milwaukee, Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carole Mason-Smith, bassoon</td>
<td>Lincoln Park, Michigan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jolena Zabel, horn</td>
<td>Hastings, Minnesota</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ian Gallmeister, horn</td>
<td>Bay Area, California</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ann Kezar, horn</td>
<td>Farmington, Minnesota</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kendra Komoto, horn</td>
<td>Rice Lake, Wisconsin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aaron Dawson, trumpet</td>
<td>Haverford, Pennsylvania</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Verkuilen, euphonium</td>
<td>Green Bay, Wisconsin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaarin Evens, violin</td>
<td>Duluth, Minnesota</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Norman, violin</td>
<td>Boulder, Colorado</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicholas Whittredge, viola</td>
<td>Northampton, Massachusetts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathryn Klein, viola</td>
<td>Bellingham, Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Nelson, violoncello</td>
<td>Grand Rapids, Michigan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Lindgren, contrabass</td>
<td>Grinnell, Iowa</td>
</tr>
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</table>
A great number of people come to mind as my honors project draws to a close. First I need to thank the musicians. Words cannot express the gratitude I feel towards you for the many hours you dedicated to the project in rehearsal and practice. You are the ones who brought this wonderful music to life.

I must also thank the music professors here at Macalester. My immense thanks go to Mark Mandarano, my advisor, for providing me with indispensable advice and the opportunity to conduct Martinů's Memorial to Lidice with the Macalester Orchestra in the Fall. Thank you for polishing my technique, enhancing my expressivity and always demanding more. Equal thanks go to the rest of the music department: Mark Mazullo, Randy Bauer, Victoria Malawey, Lauri Nichols, Lawrence Henry, Cary Franklin, Mike McGaghie, Matt Mehaffey and Eugene Rogers. Be it in the classroom, rehearsal, private lessons or over a cup of coffee, you have inspired me with your insights and passion for music.

Thanks must also go to my Czech family and my Minnesota family. Without the support from my parents and siblings I would have never been able to leave home and study at Macalester. They flew here all the way from the Czech Republic to hear this concert--their first since I became a music major. Lara, Brian, Sam and Benny: There is no way I would call Minnesota my home if it had not been for you. I knew from our very first meeting that you would become a family to me.

Finally, my thanks go to my all of my friends who are here today. I do not want to name you out, but you know who you are and how much I love you. Thanks to you I was not just a bookworm who studied endlessly (not that there was a high chance at that anyway), but a person who knew that every day at Macalester would be spent in good company.

Much love to you all and thank you so very much for coming. And--please come to my Senior Recital on April 14th at 3pm; I will sing the entire Dichterliebe song cycle by Robert Schumann.

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Program

Serenade for Winds, Op. 7
Richard Strauss
1864 - 1949

Notturno No. 1 in C Major, Hob. II:25
Franz Joseph Haydn
1732 - 1809
Marcia
Allegro
Adagio
Finale, Presto

Siegfried Idyll, WWV 103
Richard Wagner
1813 - 1883

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Macalester Chamber Orchestra
Honza Červenka, conductor
Richard Strauss was a German composer that bridged late romanticism and early modernism. He was born into a very musical family; his father was the principal hornist at the Court Opera in Munich. Strauss’s early music education was conservative, because his father detested any “modern” music. Fortunately, that opinion was not hereditary and Strauss became one of the most progressive composers of his generation. He is equally celebrated for his innovative orchestration and extended harmonic language. Many of Strauss’s operas are considered to be masterpieces as well as his orchestral tone poems and art songs.

The Serenade, however, was written at the beginning of Strauss’s career; he was merely 18-years-old when the piece was premiered. It is scored for double woodwinds and four horns with the aid of a contrabassoon or tuba, here replaced by a euphonium. It is organized in a sonata form, with a beautifully lyric main theme. The piece begins in the key of Eb Major, but enters a particularly colorful episode in a minor key before it transitions to the second theme. Two clarinets and the first horn play the melody of that theme and blend in a fragrant combination of timbres. Listen carefully to the “bubbly” commentary of the first bassoon--its triplet figure recurs a number of times throughout the rest of the composition.

The development section begins with an oboe solo over a quietly rich harmonic foundation in the brass instruments. What follows is a struggle between an ascending off-beat figure in the bassoons and the rest of the orchestra, which culminates in a powerful outburst that brings the piece to its climax. Strauss saved a special treat for the final section of the Serenade--tipping the hat to his father’s instrument--and begins the recapitulation with a repeat of the main theme played by a horn chorus. At that point one’s mind easily wanders to a warm summer evening with a glass of wine; a perfect companion to this outstanding opus.

Franz Joseph Haydn was a prolific composer of the Classical era. He was born in 1732 in Austria and left his home as a child to study music from a relative in Hainburg. His most famous professional appointment was that of a kapellmeister (music director) at the court of the Prince Esterházy in Hungary, which lasted for 30 years. After the prince’s death, Haydn often traveled abroad, including two trips to England, where he was greeted with much enthusiasm. He is often regarded as the “father of the symphony” having written over 100 works of the genre.

Haydn’s Notturno in C boasts an intriguing history: It was written in 1786 for King Ferdinand IV of Naples and the Twin Sicilies, and originally showcased two lire organizzate—an instrument that is obscure today, but was the King’s favorite (it was essentially a hurdy-gurdy with a built-in organ). The two lire were accompanied by two horns, two clarinets, two violas, violoncello and double bass. When Haydn went to England in 1790, he reorchestrated the piece for flute and oboe solos, accompanied by two horns and a battery of strings. What you will hear today is a hybrid of the two versions: We will play homage to the "Italian" version by replacing the two lire by two alto recorders, which closely resemble them in sound and timbre. The rest of the ensemble is taken from the "London" instrumentation and features a string sextet and two horns.

Although a nocturne might be seen as synonymous to a serenade (they are both intended to be played in night time), this piece could not be more different from Strauss’s Serenade. The first movement is a lively march, followed by a cheerful second movement. The third movement is a relaxing Andante, with strings softly caressing a calm melody in the recorders. The fourth movement brings the piece to a close with razor-sharp dynamic changes and a constant call-and-response between the recorders and the rest of the ensemble. This is 18th century party music at its best.
Richard Wagner was one of the preeminent composers of the Romantic era. He is best known today through his operas, or "music dramas," as he liked to call them. Wagner wrote his first opera at the age of 20, but the more famous ones, such as Der Ring des Nibelungen, Parsifal or Tristan und Isolde, were written decades later. He enriched the world of classical music with many innovations and is often credited with extending the harmonic language of music. Many consider his opera Tristan und Isolde to be the be the genesis of post-tonal music.

The Siegfried Idyll had a particularly fruitful inception that begs to be shared. Meet the love triangle: Wagner and Cosima Liszt (pictured on the next page; daughter of Franz Liszt, the famous Hungarian composer) fell in love with each other in 1863. Cosima, however, was already married to Hans von Bülow, who was a prolific conductor and a great admirer of Wagner's music. Cosima left von Bülow for Wagner and gave birth to their first child, Isolde, in 1865. So blind was Bülow's awe of Wagner that he accepted Isolde as his own child in order to avoid scandal. A second child fathered by Wagner followed, but von Bülow's admiration for Wagner was not shaken; he continued to perform (and often premiere) Wagner's works.

In 1868 Cosima finally left von Bülow and moved with her children to Tribschen, Wagner's home in Switzerland. She gave birth to their third child, Siegfried in 1869. Wagner composed the Idyll in 1869, while Cosima was still formally married to von Bülow. Wagner presented the piece as a gift to Cosima for her birthday the following year. She awoke to the sounds of 15 musicians playing the Idyll that morning. Wagner conducted and the orchestra sat on the steps of the main staircase of the house. Wagner wrote a short trumpet part for the climax of the piece and it was played by--try to guess--none other than Hans von Bülow, who learned how to play the trumpet for the occasion. One can hardly think of a more absurd situation than Wagner conducting as von Bülow played the trumpet solo in what was Wagner's ultimate love testament to Cosima, then still von Bülow's wife.

Absurd as the situation was, the music reflects none of it and is filled with genuine love that Wagner and Cosima felt for each other. It incorporates a number of leitmotifs (recurring themes that are associated with a person, place or an idea) that were Wagner's signature tool. The piece begins as a soft string quartet that outlines the principal theme--listen carefully to its particularly colorful use of a rising triplet figure that flows through the entire composition. Strings dominate the sound until a good minute or two into the Idyll, when they are first joined by the flute, then oboe, clarinets and, eventually, the whole ensemble that brings the piece to its first climax.

The rest of the piece is quite sectional. Wagner travels to many different moods and sounds, but a careful listener will be able to trace at least some basic aspects of the opening theme in even the most remote sections. Those are perhaps a metaphor for the many complications that their relationship had to endure--a pending divorce for Cosima, negative public opinion and even loss of essential patrons for Wagner. The Idyll is abundant with key and time signature changes. But, no matter how foreign and perplexing some parts of the piece sound, Wagner always finds his way back to the main love theme.

The Idyll ends just as it began: with a quiet string quartet outlining the theme into its last caressing moments. The winds join the strings on the final chord and sweeten the ending sound. No matter what challenges they faced, and how perplexing the start of their relationship was, Richard and Cosima loved each other for the rest of their lives and their eventual marriage was happy. Wagner originally intended the Idyll to remain a private piece, but was forced to publish it due to financial hardship in 1878. Despite its publication, it remains a beautiful testament to their love and one of Wagner's most beloved compositions.