

John Storgårds, conductor
Ingrid Fliter, piano

Friday, November 30, 2018 at 10:30AM
Saturday, December 1, 2018 at 8:00PM

MENDELSSOHN

(1809-1847)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor, op. 25 (1830-1831)

Molto allegro con fuoco -

Andante -

Presto; Molto allegro e vivace

Ingrid Fliter, piano

INTERMISSION

BRUCKNER

(1824-1896)

Symphony No. 9 in D minor (1891-1894)

Feierlich, Misterioso

Scherzo: Bewegt, lebhaft

Adagio: Langsam, feierlich

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2018/2019 Classical Series is presented by **World Wide Technology** and **The Steward Family Foundation**.

John Storgårds and Ingrid Fliter are the **Essman Family Foundation Guest Artists**.

The concert of Friday, November 30, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Mr. Robert L. Williams**.

The concert of Saturday, December 1, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Dr. Cora E. Musial**.

Pre-concert conversations are sponsored by **Washington University Physicians**.

PROGRAM NOTES

BY TIM MUNRO

Outwardly, Felix Mendelssohn and Anton Bruckner could not be more different. Mendelssohn, a refined, cosmopolitan, bookish German, born into wealth. Bruckner, an unsophisticated, pious, conservative Austrian, born into a humble home.

Mendelssohn, a child prodigy composer and performer, whose musical voice is present from the very first notes of his teenaged Octet. And Bruckner, a late-bloomer who did not find his unique style until well into middle age.

Each is represented here by strikingly different works. Mendelssohn's sparkling First Concerto is concise, crowded with drama. Bruckner's towering final symphonic cathedral is epic, uncompromising.

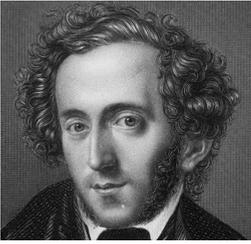
Yet, scratch the surface and these two are twinned.

Both were old-fashioned in their time. Mendelssohn with his outmoded love of Bach, Bruckner with his adoration for Renaissance masters. Religion was central to both composers: Lutheranism for Mendelssohn (who had strong Jewish roots); Catholicism for the pious Bruckner.

And in 1847 a young Anton Bruckner first encountered Felix Mendelssohn's music, through the oratorio *St. Paul*. Its effects reverberated in Bruckner's music for years to come. A critic at the time wrote that *St. Paul* was "written in the spirit of the great ancients but not according to their letter." The very same could have been written about Bruckner.

We might hear (faintly, very faintly) Mendelssohn's fingerprint on Bruckner's Ninth Symphony. The deeply personal final movement of Bruckner's symphony adopts a sequence of notes known as the "Dresden Amen." Mendelssohn used the same sequence in his Fifth Symphony.

This sequence, sung to the word "Amen," implies a sense of finality. And tragically, neither composer would hear these two symphonies performed in their lifetimes.



FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Born February 3, 1809, Hamburg, Germany

Died November 4, 1847, Leipzig, Germany

Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor, op. 25

Felix Mendelssohn could not abide virtuoso display. Complaining about a popular set of piano variations, he wrote, “They give me as little pleasure as rope dancers or acrobats. I only wish I were not constantly told that the public demands that kind of thing.”

Writing his own concertos, Mendelssohn hemmed and hawed, balancing virtuosity with musical integrity. So in the First Piano Concerto, his first mature work in the genre, Mendelssohn simply created his own new form.

He started the drama right away, dispensing with the redundant double-introduction. He glued the expected three movements into one, connecting them with brass fanfares. And he brought back the concerto’s opening melody in its finale. Ambitious moves for a 22-year old.

When he wrote the work, the young Berlin musician was on a two-year jaunt, taking in the sights and sounds of Europe. The original goal of the journey was to find a future home, but it was soon transformed, as Mendelssohn performed to acclaim in England, painted Swiss mountains, met artists in Italy.

And in Munich? There he fell in love. Delphine von Schauroth was an exceptionally gifted pianist and composer. She was universally lauded, wrote Mendelssohn, and “ministers and counts trot around her like domestic animals in the hen yard.” Mendelssohn was besotted.

The two met often to “play duets on the piano” (a contemporary euphemism. . .), but Mendelssohn stopped short of proposing marriage. The two parted, and likely never spoke again. But not before Mendelssohn could dedicate this concerto to her.

Right from the opening (“very briskly, with fury”), piano soloist and orchestra are joined passionately. Virtuosity serves the drama, building tension. The music takes time to settle, to allow beauty to seep in. But nothing will halt the momentum of this lean, dramatic music, not even piano solos, which only help to turn the screw.

The pianist’s heart, clearly still racing, struggles to shed the intensity of the first movement. It is the cello section that sings its calming cradle song to the soloist, who soon joins in. Fitted with a sacred text, this sweet melody could have made a hymn that Bruckner himself would have admired.

In a letter to his sister, Mendelssohn said that Schauroth herself had suggested a passage in the concerto “that makes a startling effect.” Was he referring to the magical transition to the second movement? The heavenly

fluttering end of the *Adagio*? What other secrets might be contained within this work?

Letters between Schuaroth and Mendelssohn have not survived. All that is left of this short, passionate affair is this piano concerto, perhaps a musical love letter to a beloved.

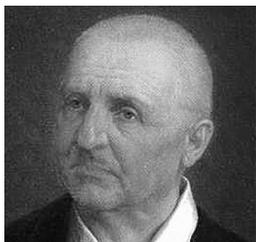
First Performance October 17, 1831, Munich, Mendelssohn as soloist

First SLSO Performance February 25, 1912, Max Zach conducting with Agnes Hope Pilsbury as soloist

Most Recent SLSO Performance November 22, 2009, Nicholas McGegan conducting with Stephen Hough as soloist

Scoring solo piano, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings

Performance Time approximately 21 minutes



ANTON BRUCKNER

Born September 4, 1824, Ansfelden, Austria

Died October 11, 1896, Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 9 in D minor

Unfinished

Strings tremble at the edge of audibility. A low wind note lands awkwardly, covered by a slow, distant brass fanfare. Nothing is hurried. Bruckner marks the opening of his Ninth Symphony's first movement "mysterious, solemn." Slowly, steadily, intensity builds. Suddenly, raw force is unleashed, tearing the fabric of sound. Then silence.

In 1896, Anton Bruckner died. Unfinished at his work desk lay the Ninth Symphony, which had cost him a decade of toil, which he had fought with until his final day.

Severe diabetes meant that Bruckner struggled with trembling hands, lost teeth, a shaky walk. A debilitating mental illness sapped energy and confidence. And he spent much of these years revising old works, to please supporters, to appease an obsessive nature.

But it may have been Bruckner's own perfectionism that ultimately stood in the way. Years before, he told a student that his final symphony would be in D minor, the same key as his central musical inspiration, Beethoven's Ninth

Symphony. Could it be that Bruckner's progress was halted by the knowledge that this work would be his last will and testament, the culmination of a lifelong quest?

Life's work

Bruckner's nine mature symphonies divide opinion. They are long, straining musicians' stamina and concentration. Their shapes are ambiguous, supported by obsessive repetition, jolted by sudden shifts, halted by unexpected silence. Their harmonies are strange, floating from the known into the unknown.

Together they try to answer an elusive question that only Bruckner truly understood. And in the course of three decades of answering, he managed to create a strange, compelling musical universe.

Bruckner found himself out of time, out of place. The son of a rural Austrian schoolmaster, this humble, uncomplicated, and unpretentious man was uncomfortable in cosmopolitan Vienna. He stood out for his height and bulky dress, and for the bluntness of his native rural accent.

Lacking ambition, Bruckner desired better jobs only to achieve financial stability. Through his entire life, he received no fees for any of his published and performed symphonies. Bruckner lived only to create music and to worship God.

Caught on a powerful musical quest, Bruckner continued studies in counterpoint and composition well into his 40s. He rifled through archaic tool-boxes, reaching into the past for outmoded techniques and genres. He wrote arias like a baroque composer, choral works like a Renaissance master.

Then, in middle age, he turned to the creaky, outmoded genre of the symphony, made unfashionable by the swashbuckling tone poems and heaven-storming solo works of the nineteenth century. He would devote the rest of his energy to this old-fashioned genre.

Bruckner: The obsessive

The second movement of the Ninth Symphony is a *scherzo*. This word means "joke" or "jest" in Italian, and many *scherzos* capture playfulness. Not here. To look at Bruckner's score is to see machine-like repetitions, to see Bruckner's obsessive markings asking for emphatic attacks, resulting in a sound like tight fists pounded on a heavy door.

Numbers seemed to hold answers for Bruckner. He listed and categorized them, whether it was the number of prayers he uttered, or stairs he climbed, or building ornaments he passed, or pretty girls he danced with.

And the symphony was Bruckner's ultimate numerical research laboratory. Here he tested his theories, perfected his treatments. Bruckner logged repetitions, phrase lengths, bar numbers in his scores. He was seeking the ideal, finding the ideal structure to hold his ideas, the ideal harmonies to fit these moments.

Bruckner: The mystic

Violins mass on their lowest string with a "rugged, broad" sound. Their first note is expected, but the second and third are alien. Bruckner marks this third movement "mysterious." Violas, cellos, and basses join, but from a different harmonic universe. All fan out, violins reaching higher, cellos digging lower.

Bruckner never intended for the symphony to end with this third movement. He simply died before completing the finale. But it is hard not to hear in this

exploration of music's outer reaches a search for something inexplicable. Something transcendent. As he wrote these notes, Bruckner surely knew that he was dying.

Bruckner's business-like letters give little away about the Ninth Symphony's intentions. But he told his doctor that the work was dedicated to God, "the majesty of all the majesties." Indeed, the music of this final movement alludes to Bruckner's own *Te Deum*, whose text begins: "We praise thee, O God. All the earth doth worship thee."

The music passes unexpected chords, hovers over "wrong" notes. There are long silences, moments when a flute or an oboe seems to float in thin air. The path may be unclear, but somehow we always find our way back to some sort of solid ground.

Bruckner had sketched much of the Ninth Symphony's fourth movement before he died. Several completions of the finale exist, but these are not commonly performed. As originally intended, the finale returns to the troubled atmosphere of the symphony's opening, asks anxious questions, flings technical challenges at the orchestra, ends in majesty.

So does this three-movement version do justice to Bruckner's vision? What does it mean to end with the strange visions of the third movement, not the power and victory of the intended fourth?

Near the end of the third movement, a screaming crisis lays waste, opening out onto a quiet, radiant vista. Perhaps this soft conclusion to Bruckner's final complete symphonic movement is enough. It might allow us to conjure an image: of the composer, sitting in contented rest after a long career, with his feet up and a glass of his favorite pilsner in hand.

First Performance February 11, 1903, Vienna, Ferdinand Löwe conducting

First SLSO Performance January 24, 1969, Ferdinand Leitner conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance October 17, 1998, Madrid, Hans Vonk conducting

Scoring 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 8 horns (5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th doubling Wagner tuba), 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings

Performance Time approximately 1 hour and 3 minutes



INGRID FLITER ON MENDELSSOHN

ADAPTED FROM A VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH LINN RECORDS

“If you look around you, you find that everything can inspire you. Even the things you don’t like can inspire you. Life is interesting, human feelings are endless, and art gives you the opportunity to be whoever you want to be.

“Mendelssohn was a painter. Mendelssohn is an observer. Always a *chevalier* (knightly, chivalrous), with elegance and noblesse. He was a marvelous painter himself. He described scenes or landscapes. In this piece he wants everyone to be smiling. It’s really a celebration of life.

“When I play I try to become the character I believe the composer was thinking of. So it’s a chance to be someone else you never knew you could be. To feel feelings you never thought you would.

“Through the artistic experience, you can discover a large range of energies and colors that enriches yours and the listener’s soul. It is such a privilege to be in possession of a magic key that opens the doors of parallel realities that you haven’t suspected [you would] discover.”



JOHN STORGÅRDS ON BRUCKNER

ADAPTED FROM A VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH THE CASA DA MÚSICA, PORTUGAL

“With Bruckner it’s all about taking care of the big architecture of his music. The big shapes, and to handle them very carefully. To have the nerve to wait for the really important big climaxes. Not to overdo things, not to lose, during the big journey, the enormous tension.

“It’s about looking for a lot of gentle sounds, and also to have a sort of simplicity in the way you work with this music. And if all this works, and the flow is ongoing, and you get this big shape, then it’s fantastically effective music.

“Bruckner had the same concept for almost all of his symphonies, in the way they’re built up. He has certain, even mathematically precise, ways that he structures. In terms of numbers of bars, he is much more precise than people know. And, still, every symphony has its own soul.

“The musicians, physically, have to be careful. There is a lot of strong things to do in a Bruckner symphony. You have to be careful with your [physical] forces. For the strings there is a lot of tremolo. They have to be careful. It’s all about making sound in the right way, and you can still keep a kind of relaxation in how you physically produce this music.

“It might be important to not be too much in a hurry for a Bruckner symphony. [He smiles.] If the performance has the right kind of nerve and intensity, the audience will definitely be with the music.”



John Storgårds most recently appeared with the SLSO in November 2017.

JOHN STORGÅRDS

Essman Family Foundation Guest Artist

Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra as well as Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, John Storgårds has a dual career as a conductor and violin virtuoso and is widely recognized for his creative flair for programming. He additionally holds the titles of Artistic Director of the Chamber Orchestra of Lapland and Artistic Partner of the Munich Chamber Orchestra, and served as the Chief Conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic from 2008–2015.

Internationally, Storgårds appears with such orchestras as the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin, WDR Symphony Orchestra in Cologne, Bamberg Symphony, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National de France, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra of Italy's RAI Torino, as well as all of the major Scandinavian orchestras and the Sydney, Melbourne, and New Zealand symphonies. Soloists with whom he collaborates include Yefim Bronfman, Colin Currie, Sol Gabetta, Håkan Hardenberger, Gil Shaham, Christian Tetzlaff, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Frank Peter Zimmermann.

Storgårds made his North American debut with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra during the 2005/2006 season. Since then, he has appeared with the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood, the Cleveland Orchestra at Blossom, and the Toronto, Detroit, Atlanta, Montreal, Cincinnati, Vancouver, Baltimore, and Houston symphonies. Highlights of Storgårds' 2017/2018 season in North America include his debut with the Chicago Symphony; re-engagements with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and a three-concert series celebrating the 150th anniversary of Canada and the 100th anniversary of Finland with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, in which he conducts, performs the Sariaho Violin Concerto, and leads the North American debut of his Chamber Orchestra of Lapland. In addition, he is the Artistic Director of the Montreal Symphony's Nordic Spring Festival, conducting music of Russian, Scandinavian, and Canadian composers.



Ingrid Fliter most recently appeared with the SLSO in October 2015.

INGRID FLITER

Essman Family Foundation Guest Artist

Argentine pianist Ingrid Fliter has won the admiration and hearts of audiences around the world for her passionate yet thoughtful and sensitive music making played with an effortless technique. Winner of the 2006 Gilmore Artist Award, one of only a handful of pianists and the only woman to have received this honor, Fliter divides her time between North America and Europe.

Fliter made her American orchestral debut with the Atlanta Symphony, just days after the announcement of her Gilmore award. Since then she has appeared with the Cleveland and Minnesota Orchestras, the San Francisco, Detroit, National, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Seattle, Vancouver, Puerto Rico, and Utah symphonies and the National Arts Centre Orchestra among others, as well as at the Mostly Mozart, Grant Park, Aspen, Ravinia, Blossom, and Brevard summer festivals. She was also the featured soloist on the Youth Orchestra of the Americas Canadian tour in summer 2015. Equally busy as a recitalist, Fliter has performed in New York at Carnegie's Zankel Hall, the Metropolitan Museum and the 92nd Street Y, at Chicago's Orchestra Hall, and in Boston, San Francisco, Vancouver, and Detroit, as well as for the Van Cliburn Foundation in Fort Worth.

In Europe and Asia, Fliter has performed with orchestras and in recital in Amsterdam, London, Berlin, Frankfurt, Salzburg, Cologne, and Tokyo, and participated in festivals such as La Roque D'Antheron, Prague Autumn, and The World Pianist Series in Tokyo. Recent international engagements include appearances with the Rotterdam, Israel, Hong Kong, Monte Carlo, Osaka, Helsinki and Royal Stockholm Philharmonics, the Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony, and the Proms in London, as well as the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Danish Radio and Danish National Symphony Orchestras, and the Scottish and Swedish Chamber Orchestras; and recitals in Paris, Barcelona, Milan, Prague, Stockholm, Lisbon, Sydney, and in London at both Wigmore Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Kevin McBeth, conductor
Leslie Odom, Jr., vocals

Sunday, December 2, 2018 at 7:00PM

An Evening with Leslie Odom, Jr.

Program will be announced from the stage.

There will be one intermission.



Kevin McBeth is Director of the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus and Holiday Festival Chorus.

KEVIN MCBETH

Kevin McBeth was appointed Director of the IN UNISON Chorus in January 2011, and is also the founding Director of the St. Louis Symphony Holiday Festival Chorus. He serves as the Director of Music and Worship at Manchester United Methodist Church in suburban St. Louis. He was recently Adjunct Professor in Choral Music at Webster University.

He has conducted honor, festival, and touring choirs in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. Previous appointments include assistant conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus and music director of the St. Louis Metro Singers.

With the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, he has conducted concerts with Oleta Adams, Jennifer Holliday, and Boyz II Men, as well as the July 4th Celebration under the Gateway Arch. McBeth recently led concerts at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and is a frequent presenter at regional and national conferences for the American Choral Directors Association. His orchestral conducting credits include performances with the Indianapolis Symphony, Houston Civic Symphony, the New England Symphonic Ensemble, and the Distinguished Concerts Orchestra of New York. Most recently, McBeth conducted a concert tour to Italy, with a performance at St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City.



Leslie Odom Jr. debuted with the SLSO in December 2017.

LESLIE ODOM, JR.

Tony and Grammy Award-winning performer Leslie Odom, Jr. has taken the entertainment world by storm across a variety of media – spanning Broadway, television, film, and music.

Odom Jr.'s self-titled debut album was partially funded by a successful Kickstarter campaign and released in 2014 by Borderlight Entertainment, Inc. In June 2016, the album was re-released with additional material and charted at #1 on the Billboard Jazz chart. In winter 2017, he re-released *Simply Christmas* as a deluxe edition with new arrangements and new songs. The holiday album hit #1 on iTunes and Billboard Jazz Charts.

Best known for his breakout role as Aaron Burr in the smash hit Broadway musical, *Hamilton*, Odom Jr. received a 2015 Drama Desk Award nomination and won the Tony Award for “Best Actor in a Musical” for his performance. He also won a Grammy Award as a principal soloist on the original cast recording. He made his Broadway debut in *Rent* and starred in the stage adaptation of *Leap of Faith*. Off-Broadway he appeared in *Venice* and the original staging of *Hamilton*, both at the Public Theater. He also starred opposite Lin-Manuel Miranda and Karen Olivo in a 2014 City Center Encores! revival of Jonathan Larson’s *Tick, Tick ... Boom!*

Odom Jr. was most recently seen on the big screen starring alongside Johnny Depp, Daisy Ridley, Penelope Cruz, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Judi Dench in Kenneth Branagh’s *Murder on the Orient Express* for Twentieth Century Fox. Previous film work includes the 2012 historical drama, *Red Tails*, executive produced by George Lucas and co-starring Terrence Howard, Cuba Gooding, Jr., and David Oyelowo, among others.

On the small screen, Odom Jr. starred on the cult-classic musical drama series, *Smash*, created by Theresa Rebeck. He had recurring roles on NBC’s *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* and CBS’ *Persons of Interest* and *CSI: Miami* and made guest appearances on such shows as *The Good Wife*, *Gotham*, and Showtime’s *House of Lies*.

In December 2017, Odom Jr. returned to the New York City stage in a solo concert at Jazz at Lincoln Center. The cabaret-style performance was crafted around signature songs and music that shaped this artist’s journey, all performed with a world-class band in front of a live audience. The show was filmed for broadcast as an hour-long PBS special as part of the 17-time Emmy Award-winning series, *Live From Lincoln Center*, and will premiere April 24, 2018.

This spring, Odom Jr. added the title of “Author” to his resume with the release of his book *Failing Up: How to Take Risks, Aim Higher, and Never Stop Learning*. Written in the style of a commencement speech, the book brings together what Odom Jr. has learned in life so far, tapping into universal themes of starting something new, following your passions, discovering your own potential, and surrounding yourself with the right people. *Failing Up* is about unlocking your true potential and making your dreams come true even when it seems impossible.

Odom Jr. currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife, fellow actress Nicolette Robinson, and newborn daughter.

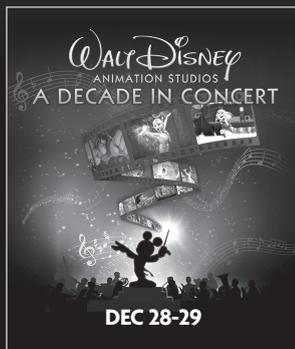
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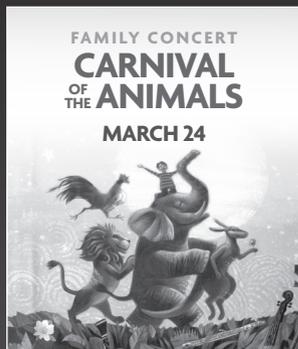
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