



**BERKELEY
SYMPHONY**



09|10 SEASON

**JOANA CARNEIRO
MUSIC DIRECTOR**



WELCOME JOANA

A BERKELEY OPENER

ADAMS | FRANK | BARTÓK

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 7 PM | UC BERKELEY ZELLERBACH HALL

BERKELEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2009–10 SEASON



JOANA CARNEIRO
CONDUCTOR/MUSIC DIRECTOR

JAMES A. KLEINMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

7:00 pm, Thursday, October 15, 2009
Zellerbach Hall

JOHN ADAMS
The Chairman Dances:
Foxtrot for Orchestra

GABRIELA LENA FRANK
Peregrinos (Pilgrims)

Testimonio I: Arbol de Sueños (Dream Tree)
Testimonio II: Hero Brothers
Testimonio III: Fireflies
Testimonio IV: Devotional for Sarita Colonia
Testimonio V: Arbol de Sueños

West Coast Premiere

— INTERMISSION —

BÉLA BARTÓK **Concerto for Orchestra**

- I. Introduzione: Andante non troppo—Allegro vivace
- II. Presentando le coppie: Allegro scherzando
- III. Elegia: Andante, non troppo
- IV. Intermezzo interrotto: Allegretto
- V. Finale: Pesante—Presto

All audience members are invited to join us in the lobby immediately following the concert for a celebratory toast.

Patrons with Inaugural Welcome Dinner tickets are requested to proceed directly to the dinner seating area on the Mezzanine prior to the toast.

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Presentation bouquets are graciously provided by Jutta's Flowers.

**Tonight's concert will be broadcast on KALW 91.7 FM,
Sunday, February 7, 2010 at 4:00 p.m.**

Berkeley Symphony is a member of the League of American Orchestras
and the Association of California Symphony Orchestras.

Program Notes

The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra

JOHN COOLIDGE ADAMS

(b. 1947)

John Adams was born in Worcester, Massachusetts on February 15, 1947. Subtitled 'Foxtrot for Orchestra,' The Chairman Dances was composed in 1985 on a commission from the Milwaukee Symphony. The piece is scored for two flutes (doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet), two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, a sizable percussion section (consisting of timpani, bell tree, castanets, claves, crotales, four kinds of cymbals, bass drum, snare drum, glockenspiel, sandpaper blocks, tambourine, triangle, vibraphone, wood blocks, and xylophone), harp, piano, and strings. Duration ca. 12 min.

The composer has provided the following comments:

The *Chairman Dances* was an “out-take” of Act III of *Nixon in China*. Neither an “excerpt” nor a “fantasy on themes from,” it was in fact a kind of warm-up for embarking on the creation of the full opera. At the time, 1985, I was obliged to fulfill a long-delayed commission for the Milwaukee Symphony, but having already seen the scenario to Act III of *Nixon in China*, I couldn’t wait to begin work on that piece. So *The Chairman Dances* began as a “foxtrot” for Chairman Mao and his bride, Chiang Ch’ing, the fabled “Madame Mao,” firebrand, revolutionary executioner, architect of China’s calamitous Cultural Revolution, and (a fact not universally realized) a former Shanghai movie actress.

In the surreal final scene of the opera, she interrupts the tired formalities of a state banquet, disrupts the slow moving protocol, and invites the Chairman, who is present only as a gigantic forty-foot portrait on the wall, to “come down, old man, and dance.” The music takes full cognizance of her past as a movie actress. Themes, sometimes slinky and sentimental, at other times bravura and bounding, ride above in bustling fabric of energized motives. Some of these themes make a dreamy reappearance in Act III of the actual opera, *en revenant*, as both the Nixons and Maos reminisce over their distant pasts. A scenario by Peter Sellars and Alice Goodman, somewhat altered from the final one in *Nixon in China*, is as follows:

“Chiang Ch’ing, a.k.a. Madame Mao, has gatecrashed the Presidential Banquet. She is first seen standing where she is most in the way of the waiters. After a few minutes, she brings out a box of paper lanterns and hangs them around the hall, then strips down to a cheongsam, skin-tight from neck to ankle and slit up the hip. She signals the orchestra to play and begins dancing by herself. Mao is becoming excited. He steps down from his portrait on the wall, and they begin to foxtrot together. They are back in Yenan, dancing to the gramophone . . .”

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Peregrinos

GABRIELA LENA FRANK (b. 1972)

Gabriela Lena Frank, Berkeley Symphony’s newly named Creative Advisor, was born in

and currently resides in Berkeley. Peregrinos was commissioned by the Indianapolis Symphony, which premiered the work in February 2009. It is scored for two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, cymbals, two marimbas, triangle, chimes, gong, bass drum, tamtam, harp, piano, celesta, and strings. Duration ca. 20 min.

The composer has provided the following comments:

Peregrinos (Pilgrims) is inspired by my two-year composer’s residency with the Indianapolis Symphony (2007-2009) in which I was privileged to an inside glimpse of the city’s thriving and quickly-growing Latino community. During this time, the Indianapolis Symphony brilliantly brokered meetings with Latino reverends, local politicians, nurses, young parents, “at-risk” youth, carpenters, ESL teachers, community activists, librarians, salsa musicians, and many others who were stunningly generous in sharing their experiences as immigrants. Many had only recently arrived to the States, and many were undocumented. All impressed me deeply as to their humor, their perseverance, and their humanity in the face of daunting odds including the U.S.’s inconsistent policies regarding immigration. As the daughter of an immigrant from Perú myself, this experience resonated with me deeply.

The inspiration to cast each movement of *Peregrinos* as a *testimonio* stems from my friendship with the members of the Latino Youth Collective, a grassroots organization that mentors young Latinos and inspires them to enroll in college. In addition to acquiring the skills to create film documentaries on a myriad of subjects, participants in the program learn to speak publicly, formally sharing their stories—*testimonios*—with others.

The five *testimonios* of *Peregrinos*

encapsulate some basic themes of hope and challenge that emerged during my journey within Latino Indianapolis. They are:

Testimonio I: Arbol de Sueños

(Dream Tree): A community art project started by the Indianapolis-based Theater of Inclusion, the Dream Tree is a simply constructed laundry drying rack to which brightly-colored flagging tape is tied and allowed to stream in the wind. On each of the tape ribbons are handwritten messages of hope and aspiration by people from all walks of life. Throughout the many activities of my residency, Dream Trees were slowly added to as people, with shyness or skepticism nicely in check, contributed their personal hopes. I was also struck by the coincidence of a “dream tree” figuring prominently in many Latin American creation myths and, accordingly, there is a hint of Latin American *música folklórica* in this movement.

Testimonio II: Hero Brothers:

While becoming acquainted with the aforementioned Latino Youth Collective, I became friends with KS, an undocumented eleven-year-old originally from Mexico, already attuned to social justice and college-bound. His road is somewhat more difficult than his little brother who was born in the States and who consequently carries enormous guilt on his young shoulders. The bond between the brothers, however, is tight, as with the Hero Brothers Hunahpu and Xbalanque of ancient Mayan myths whose adventures feature the two overcoming morally questionable supernatural beings. This movement is flavored with the sound of marimbas, an important instrument of Central America, and is robust, powerful, and optimistic in its spirit.

Testimonio III: Fireflies: The majority of the *testimonios* shared with me during my time in Indianapolis were about difficult experiences. On one occasion, a young woman described for me her

passage across the Mexican border. After a good number of hours in the trunk of a car with two other women, she was let out somewhere in Arizona to stretch her legs. Momentarily blind from the long hours of darkness, she rubbed her eyes to encourage her vision to return, eventually realizing that the sparks flying crazily in front of her in the evening air were actually fireflies dancing across cemetery tombstones. These fireflies would come back to haunt her in ongoing dreams of disorientation and anxiety that she could never shake.

Testimonio IV: Devotional for

Sarita Colonia: The belief in a higher protective spirit would also come up many times in people's stories. During my residency, I learned about Sarita Colonia, a young Peruvian woman from the mountains who migrated to the coast for a better life early in the 20th century. She encountered only more difficulties before eventually dying of sickness, and was later sainted for her work with the poor. She is regarded as an *especial* protector of immigrants. During the writing of *Peregrinos*, I made one of my frequent visits to Perú, and encountered Sarita's image and name on highway billboards and on rearview mirror decorations in taxi cabs.

Testimonio V: Arbol de

Sueños: Throughout the residency, the theme of hope and vision persisted in spite of the difficult realities posed for immigrants. This final *testimonio* is a return to the opening lyrical portrait of a community's aspirations.

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Concerto for Orchestra, BB 123

BÉLA VIKTOR JÁNOS BARTÓK (1881–1945)

Béla Bartók was born in the small town of Nagyszentmiklós in Austro-Hungary (now

Sânnicolau Mare, Romania) on March 25, 1881, and died in New York on September 26, 1945. Concerto for Orchestra was composed in 1943 and premiered in December 1944 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. It is scored for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), three oboes (one doubling English horn), three clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet), three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, two trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, one percussionist, two harps, and strings. Duration ca. 36 min.

The stimulation provided by the commission from the Koussevitzky Foundation for the Concerto for Orchestra may well have prolonged Bartók's life. Ill, weak, and with no means of financial support in sight, Bartók was visited in his hospital room in 1943 by Koussevitzky, acting on a suggestion by Joseph Szigeti and Fritz Reiner. He was offered a \$1,000 commission—\$500 to begin with, the remainder on completion of the score. Worried that Bartók would refuse anything resembling charity, and unwilling to consider that Bartók might be too ill to complete it, Koussevitzky told him he couldn't refuse as the board of trustees had made an irrevocable decision.

Bartók became well enough to spend the summer at Saranac Lake, New York, where he completed the work. Koussevitzky conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the premiere on December 1, 1944. The composer, whose doctor permitted him to attend rehearsals and the performance, was thrilled by the great success of the work, and by Koussevitzky's enthusiasm for it. Bartók quoted the conductor as saying that "[the Concerto] is 'the best orchestral piece of the last twenty-five years' (including the works of his idol Shostakovich!)." The turnabout in his fortunes that the work occasioned sadly came too late. He grew weaker and died

less than a year after its first performance.

The Concerto for Orchestra is one of the pillars of twentieth-century orchestral literature. It shows off not only individual instruments but an entire realm of combinations, as well as the power of the whole. Its tunefulness and combined force made it readily accessible to audiences, and its masterful construction has given analysts a field day—at least two entire monographs are devoted to this one work. Bartók described the Concerto for Orchestra in his program note for the premiere:

The general mood of the work represents, apart from the jesting second movement, a gradual transition from the sternness of the first movement and the lugubrious death song of the third to the life assertion of the last one.

The title of this symphony-like orchestral work is explained by its tendency to treat single instruments or instrumental groups in a concertante or soloistic way. The "Virtuoso" treatment appears, for instance, in the fugato sections of the development of the first movement (brass instruments) or in the *perpetuum mobile*-like passage of the principal theme in the last movement (strings), and, especially, in the second movement, in which pairs of instruments consecutively appear with brilliant passages.

As for the structure of the work, the first and fifth movements are written in a more or less regular sonata form. The development of the first fugato contains sections for brass; the exposition in the finale is somewhat extended, and its development consists of a fugue built on the last theme of the exposition.

Less traditional forms are found in the second and third movements.

The main part of the second movement consists of a chain of independent short sections; I used here wind instruments, which are consecutively introduced in five pairs (bassoons, oboes, clarinets, flutes and muted trumpets). . . . A kind of trio—a short chorale for brass instruments and side drum—follows, after which the five sections are repeated in a more elaborate instrumentation.

The structure of the third movement is also chain-like; three themes appear successively. These constitute the core of the movement, which is enframed by a hazy texture of rudimentary motifs. Most of the thematic material of the movement derives from the introduction of the first movement. The form of the fourth movement—Intermezzo interrotto—could be rendered by the letter symbols A-B-A-Interruption-B-A.

In his comments Bartók matter-of-factly gave some of the musical details, but modestly refrained from elucidating some of the work's great wonders, a few of which are touched on below. The overall symmetry of the five-movement structure is masterful: the two outer movements, which carry most of the structural weight, surround the lighter-textured, more relaxed movements two and four, which in turn encircle the central slow movement.

For all the work's tunefulness and accessibility, Bartók's melodic and harmonic vocabulary still relies on sequences and combinations of fourths—the first movement opens with these intervals that he so favored. They are followed by sections beginning in half-steps, fanning out to clusters, and retracting again. Other notable features of the first movement include: the three-measure groupings near the beginning of the movement, which return in the coda in a new metrical

pattern that makes them seem extended; the uneven but symmetrically mapped-out phrase lengths; the folklike rhythms in tiny patterns of ones and twos that are almost equivalent with the limited melodic range and stepwise motion of his folklike tunes; the great expansion of the long notes of the main theme in the development so as to almost interrupt the flow; and last, but not least, the wonderful sonority of the harp clusters.

To Bartók's description of the second movement, we should add that the pairs of instruments proceed in parallel motion, each pair at a set interval that they maintain throughout: bassoons in sixths, oboes in thirds, clarinets in sevenths, flutes in fifths, and trumpets in seconds against a wonderful backdrop of tremolos and glissandos. When this section returns, the interval structure is preserved, but in his striving for constant variation, other instruments at other intervals have been added to the texture. Both the title "Game of pairs" (*Presentando le coppie*) and the tempo marking "Allegretto scherzando" point to Bartók's lighthearted approach.

In deriving his motivic material for the third movement from the first movement introduction, Bartók relied heavily on inversion (turning a melodic line upside-down). The inversion is not always exact, but its presence suggests another kind of symmetry—a kind of mirror effect around a horizontal axis. An example of Bartók's celebrated "night music"—flutterings, whisperings, rustlings—adds color to the middle of the movement.

His brief structural outline of the fourth movement is helpful, but cannot transmit the loveliness of his melodic invention in the second subject, which unfolds in what could be called his own take on the harmonic circle of fifths. According to the composer's son Péter, the interruption that ensues is an intentionally

raucous theme that Shostakovich had used in his Seventh Symphony, which Bartók heard while working on the Concerto and decided to burlesque here. Péter Bartók later wrote that as they had been listening to the radio broadcast of the Shostakovich they had thought the theme sounded like a Viennese cabaret song. He didn't know whether his father had made any connection between hearing the Shostakovich theme during the war and including it in his Concerto, but he was quite certain that his father was quoting a cabaret song and not Shostakovich.

The technically demanding finale is a wonderful tour-de-force for the orchestra. Bartók briefly mentions the great fugue—the string repeated-note interruptions at the end of the fugue are particularly memorable. Equally striking are the wind effects created in the section in triplets when the strings are playing *sul ponticello* (on the bridge) and the great brass chorale near the end, which is based on the fugue theme in augmentation (longer note values).

Bartók was not the first to write a concerto for orchestra. Beginning in 1925 with Hindemith's Concerto for Orchestra, composers began writing works recalling the Baroque concerto grosso. One of the first concertos for orchestra without a specified solo group or *concertino* was Kodály's, a one-movement work that Bartók brought with him to the United States in 1940. Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra, however, created an outburst of concertos for orchestra. More than twenty noted composers have added substantial contributions—Witold Lutosławski, Thea Musgrave, Elliott Carter, Roger Sessions, Michael Tippett, Karel Husa, Gunther Schuller (with three), Shulamit Ran, and many others—but it is Bartók's work that orchestras continually strive to perform and record as a symbol of achievement.

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