



The Sixty-seventh Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,727th Concert

The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra
Kim Allen Kluge, *conductor*
Alessandra Marc, *soprano*

May 3, 2009
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

Overture to *Tannhäuser* (1845)

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

Vier Letzte Lieder (1948)

Frühling

September

INTERMISSION

Strauss

Vier Letzte Lieder

Beim Schlafengehen

Im Abendrot

Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Symphony No. 5 (1888)

Andante; Allegro con anima

Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza

Valse: allegro moderato

Andante maestoso; Allegro vivace

The Musicians

THE ALEXANDRIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1954 and has established a reputation for thematic and inter-arts programming that features a mix of classical and contemporary music. The ASO's move in 2002 to the critically acclaimed Schlesinger Center established its reach and reputation as one of the region's leading arts institutions. Under the baton of Music Director Kim Allen Kluge, the Symphony has distinguished itself through powerful performances marked by poetry and vision.

KIM ALLEN KLUGE

Kim Allen Kluge, the music director of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, has made a lasting impression on audiences and critics alike through the dramatic impact of his powerful conducting style. A popular and successful guest conductor, his extensive accomplishments also include appearances with the Baltimore Lyric Opera, the Boston Pops Orchestra, the Mannheim Chamber Orchestra, the Sinfonietta de Paris, and Les Solistes Parisiens. Throughout Kluge's versatile career, he has worked as arranger, chamber musician, chorus director, composer, concertmaster, concerto soloist, organist, orchestral keyboardist, recitalist, singer, vocal coach, and wind player. He is a valedictorian of the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, where he served as concertmaster of the Oberlin Chamber Orchestra and received the coveted Arthur Dann Award for Outstanding Pianist and the Pi Kappa Lambda Scholarship for Musical Excellence. He pursued graduate studies in piano and conducting from the University of Maryland and received a conducting diploma from the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena. He participated in the prestigious Tanglewood conducting program, where he studied with Roger Norrington, Seiji Ozawa, and Simon Rattle. Maestro Kluge is widely recognized throughout the region as an orchestra builder. Noting his accomplishments in this regard, the *Washington Post* said: "Kluge has fashioned an ensemble with tremendous musical responsiveness, and every instrumental group... bears the mark of his intelligence and drive."

ALESSANDRA MARC

“Une étoile est née (A Star Is Born),” headlined *Le Figaro* on the occasion of Alessandra Marc’s Paris debut in 1992. *The New Yorker* proclaimed: “an instrument of unsurpassed beauty and impact and perhaps the richest, fullest, most beautiful big soprano voice around.” A frequent guest of the world’s leading opera houses and orchestras, she has collaborated with the most eminent conductors of our time, including Daniel Barenboim, Sir Colin Davis, Christoph von Dohnanyi, Christoph Eschenbach, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Seiji Ozawa, Gerard Schwarz, and Sir Georg Solti. Marc collaborated most frequently with the late Giuseppe Sinopoli, and she was called upon to sing at his funeral mass in Rome in April 2001. Her Metropolitan Opera debut saw her in the title role of *Aida*, which she has also sung at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the San Francisco Opera, and the Vienna State Opera. Of her 2004 Metropolitan Opera performance as *Turandot*, the *New York Times* reported: “She displayed burnished tone and enormous volume, especially in climactic phrases that soar above the orchestra and chorus.” She repeated the role in 2005 and 2006 in Lisbon, Barcelona, Florence, and Tokyo.

Alessandra Marc’s discography is equally impressive. Delos Records issued her first aria recital recording, *American Diva*, and her many releases include four on the Teldec label: Schoenberg’s *Erwartung*, Berg’s *Altenberg Lieder* and *Lulu Suite*, with Sinopoli and the Dresden Staatskapelle, and the final scene of Richard Strauss’ *Salome* with the North German Radio Orchestra. This evening’s concert marks Alessandra Marc’s sixth appearance at the National Gallery. Her debut recital at the Gallery occurred in January 1991, and her second appearance came just two months later, when she stepped in at the last minute for the ailing Arleen Auger to sing Richard Strauss’ *Four Last Songs* with the National Gallery Orchestra under George Manos. The concert was a critically acclaimed triumph and a fitting observation of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Gallery and its 2,000th Sunday concert, both of which came together on March 17, 1991.

Program Notes

The overture to Wagner's *Tannhäuser* is one of the most well-known of the opera repertoire and is frequently performed in concert, separately from the opera itself. Wagner drew from multiple sources for the plot of his opera (*Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg*, or "Tannhäuser and the Singers' Contest at Wartburg"), which was first produced in Dresden in 1845. He was originally inspired to compose it while visiting the castle of Wartburg in Thuringia in 1842. The overture tells the story of Tannhäuser, the "minnesinger," commencing with the song of the pilgrims, and moving into the magic spells of the "Venusberg," which seduce the protagonist until we hear the return of the pilgrim's music. Wagner described the music as follows, "This divine song represents to us the shout of joy at his release from the curse of the unholiness of the Venusberg. Thus all the pulses of life palpitate and leap for joy in this song of deliverance; and the two divided elements, spirit and mind, God and nature, embrace each other in the holy uniting Kiss of Love."

Composed between 1946 and 1948, the *Vier letzte Lieder* of Richard Strauss are presumed to be the last compositions he wrote. Not originally intended as a song cycle per se, the songs were put in a specific order (different from the order in which they were composed), named, and premiered posthumously in 1950. The sweeping melodies and rich harmonic textures of the songs represent the pinnacle of the composer's abilities, both in his orchestration technique and his mastery of the *lied*. Touched by the poetry of Hermann Hesse and Joseph von Eichendorff, Strauss seems to show a peaceful acceptance of the inevitability of his own death in these songs, meditations on life, death and the transition from one to the other.

Frühling

In dämmrigen Grüften
träumte ich lang
von deinen Bäumen und blauen
Lüften,
Von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.

Nun liegst du erschlossen
In Gleiß und Zier
von Licht übergossen
wie ein Wunder vor mir.

Du kennst mich wieder,
du lockst mich zart,
es zittert durch all meine Glieder
deine selige Gegenwart!
~Hermann Hesse

September

Der Garten trauert,
kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
still seinem Ende entgegen.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt
nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt
In den sterbenden Gartentraum.

Lange noch bei den Rosen
bleibt er stehn, sehnt sich nach Ruh.
Langsam tut er
die müdgeword'nen Augen zu.
~Hermann Hesse

Spring

In shadowy crypts
I dreamt long
of your trees and blue skies,
of your fragrance and birdsong.

Now you appear
in all your finery,
shining brilliantly
like a miracle before me..

You recognize me,
you entice me tenderly.
All my limbs tremble at
your blessed presence!

September

The garden is in mourning.
Cool rain seeps into the flowers.
Summertime shudders, still
quietly awaiting his end.

Golden leaf after leaf falls
from the tall acacia tree.
Summer smiles, astonished and
feeble
at his dying dream of a garden.

For just a while he tarries
beside the roses, yearning for repose.
Slowly he closes die
his weary eyes.

Beim Schlafengehen

Nun der Tag mich müd' gemacht,
soll mein sehnliches Verlangen
freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.

Hände, laßt von allem Tun,
Stirn, vergiß du alles Denken.
Alle meine Sinne nun
wollen sich in Schlummer senken.

Und die Seele, unbewacht,
will in freien Flügen schweben,
um im Zauberkreis der Nacht
tief und tausendfach zu leben.

~Hermann Hesse

Going to Sleep

Now that I am wearied of the day,
I will let the friendly, starry night
greet all my ardent desires
like a sleepy child.

Hands, stop all your work.
Brow, forget all your thinking.
All my senses now
yearn to sink into slumber.

And my unfettered soul will in
wishes to soar up freely
into night's magic sphere
to live there deeply and thousandfold.

Im Abendrot

Wir sind durch Not und Freude
gegangen Hand in Hand;
vom Wandern ruhen wir
nun überm stillen Land.

Rings sich die Täler neigen,
es dunkelt schon die Luft.
Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen
nachträumend in den Duft.

Tritt her und laß sie schwirren,
bald ist es Schlafenszeit.
Daß wir uns nicht verirren
in dieser Einsamkeit.

O weiter, stiller Friede!
So tief im Abendrot.
Wie sind wir wandermüde—
Ist dies etwa der Tod?
~Joseph von Eichendorff

Evening

We have gone through sorrow and
hand in hand;
Now we can rest from our wandering
above the quiet land.

Around us, the valleys bow;
the air is growing darker.
Just two skylarks soar upwards
dreamily into the fragrant air.

Come close to me, and let them
flutter.
Soon it will be time for sleep.
Let us not lose our way in dieser in
this solitude.

O vast, tranquil peace,
so deep at sunset!
How weary we are of wandering—
Is this perhaps death?

Tchaikovsky let more than a decade pass between the composition of his fourth and fifth symphonies. During these years he took to revising earlier works, such as his *Second Symphony*. He also used this time to experiment with various other forms, such as his one and only *Piano Trio*, all of his orchestral suites, a “symphonic poem in four parts” that he based on Byron’s *Manfred*, but chose not to include in his symphonic cycle, and the *Concert Fantasy* for piano and orchestra. In keeping with his idea (conceived during the composition of the *Fourth Symphony*) that a symphony should have a “program,” prior to writing his *Fourth Symphony*, he laid out in great detail, to his patroness and dear friend, Nahdezda von Meck, the programmatic content of the piece. For the fifth, he was not so open about it before the fact, though it is evident that a single motif runs through all four movements. In the 1950s a few sentences were found among his sketches that might explain his intentions of a theme for the fifth symphony. They read, “Introduction. Complete resignation before Fate, or, which is the same, before the inscrutable predestination of Providence. Allegro (1) Murmurs, doubts, complaints against xxx. (2) Shall I throw myself into the embrace of faith???” The “xxx” presumably refers to Tchaikovsky’s only secret, his homosexuality, and the Fifth Symphony represents his resignation to that aspect of his fate.

In the opening of the first movement, the motto theme, which will be heard throughout all four movements, is introduced immediately by the clarinet, which gives way to the slow, march-like *allegro*. The second movement contains the emotionally heavy theme that was later borrowed by André Kostelanetz in the song “Moon Love.” The “fate” motif appears in this movement, abruptly and powerfully, followed by a quiet, resigned ending. In the third movement, a waltz based on an Italian song Tchaikovsky had heard as a child, the appearance of the motif is more subdued, to accompany the general melancholy feeling of the movement. The finale, preceded by a majestic introduction, turns into a celebration of sounds, with variations on the motif and a triumphal ending.

Program notes by Danielle DeSwert

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Nancy Peery Marriott, soprano

David Chapman, pianist

Music by Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and other composers

May 10, 2009

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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