

76TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

DECEMBER 3, 2017 / NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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Cover Cornelis Ploos van Amstel after Hendrick Avercamp, *The Winter King on the Ice* (detail), 1766, National Gallery of Art, Gift of Sherwood B. Smith, Jr.

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Program

Inna Faliks, piano
Daniel Schlosberg, piano

DECEMBER 3, 2017 / 3:30
WEST BUILDING, WEST GARDEN COURT

Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)

Symphony no. 6 in A Minor
Arr. for piano, four-hands, by Alexander von Zemlinsky

Allegro energico, ma non troppo. *Heftig, aber markig*

Andante moderato

Scherzo: *Wuchtig*

Finale: Sostenuto; Allegro moderato; Allegro energico

The Musicians

INNA FALIKS

Described as “adventurous and passionate” by the *New Yorker*, Ukrainian-born pianist Inna Faliks has established herself as one of the most exciting, committed, communicative, and poetic artists of her generation. Renowned for her versatility, she is equally at home with great concerti, standard solo repertoire, chamber music, interdisciplinary projects, and the work of contemporary composers. After her acclaimed debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, she has performed on world stages with numerous orchestras, in solo appearances, and with conductors such as Leonard Slatkin and Keith Lockhart. Critics have praised her “signature blend of lithe grace and raw power” (*Lucid Culture*), “poetry and panoramic vision” (*Washington Post*), and “riveting passion, playfulness” (*Baltimore Sun*).

Faliks’s career has taken her to recitals and concerti in prestigious venues in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Winner of many competitions, including the Pro Musicis International Award, she has been featured on radio and international television and has performed at New York’s Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Le Poisson Rouge, and also at Salle Cortot, Paris, and Tchaikovsky Hall, Moscow.

An artist committed to genre-bending and new music, as well as to the core repertoire, Faliks is working on *Reimagine: Ravel and Beethoven*, a project that is commissioning today’s leading composers, such as Timo Andres, Richard Danielpour, Billy Childs, and Paola Prestini, to create responses to pieces by Ravel and Beethoven. Faliks is the founder and curator of *Music/Words*, a series that pairs live performances with readings by established contemporary poets. The series has been heard and seen nationwide for eight seasons. Faliks teaches piano at the University of California, Los Angeles.

DANIEL SCHLOSBERG

Daniel Schlosberg has been described as an “expert pianist” (*Boston Globe*), and his performances have been praised for their “intellect and passion” (*Washington Post*). As a collaborative pianist, he was noted by the *Baltimore Sun* for being “a model accompanist, bringing out the remarkable richness of the piano writing.”

Schlosberg enjoys a multifaceted relationship with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, appearing on numerous chamber music and new music concerts. He can be heard on many recordings, including Stephen Andrew Taylor’s *Quark Shadows* (Albany Records) with members of the Pacifica Quartet and the Chicago Symphony. Last year saw the release of Augusta Read Thomas’s solo 2013 work *Starlight Ribbons* (Nimbus Records) and *Gaul Me Maybe: French Baroque Keyboard Works* (Centaur), Schlosberg’s second solo album. His most recent recording is of Lei Liang’s *Inkscape* with Third Coast Percussion (New World Records).

Schlosberg is an avid proponent of new music and has collaborated with Eighth Blackbird, Third Coast Percussion, and the International Contemporary Ensemble. He was also a founding member of Yarn/Wire. In 2009, he gave the US premiere of renowned composer Kaija Saariaho's *Calices* with violinist Austin Wulliman.

On harpsichord, Schlosberg has participated in the world premiere of Anna Clyne's *Of Sudden Shut* on MusicNOW; the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's new music series; the continuo and recitative for *Le nozze di Figaro* for Opera Notre Dame; and excerpts from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* with Itzhak Perlman at Carnegie Hall.

Program Notes

So much attention has been paid to the psychological and emotional turmoil of Gustav Mahler the person, and the way his music both bids farewell to the nineteenth century and sounds the alarm for the upcoming calamities of the twentieth, that we forget what amazing *structures* some of his symphonies are, the Sixth Symphony in particular. The scholar Richard Atkinson—who has a wonderful music theory YouTube channel—insists that the finale of the Sixth is the greatest of all Mahler symphony movements, and while such grand pronouncements are an old-fashioned type of metric, he may be right. “A Symphony must be like the world, it must contain everything,” Mahler said to Sibelius in 1907, a year after the premiere. The Finale of the Sixth contains an extremely wide range of emotions, all within a compositional framework that, despite all of the excesses of the medium and the time, makes architectural sense.

The symphony's additional title “Tragic” did not appear on the manuscript, or in the first editions of either the orchestral or four-hand versions, but Mahler seems to have approved of it, and may have invented it, but the history is unsubstantiated. What is clear is that after a kaleidoscopic, hour-plus of music, the Finale closes in an epically somber and grave mood. Central to the creation of that mood are the two (sometimes three) hammer blows, monumental thuds from a specially made percussion instrument (the *hammerschlag*) that signal the inevitability of fateful life/musical events. Contributing to the tragedy is the funerary tempo at the very end, and the fact that the Sixth is the only one of Mahler's symphonies to end in the minor mode, in this case the particularly repressed key of A minor.

While the Finale, quite naturally, steals the show, the other movements are also nothing short of extraordinary. The first movement alludes immediately to soldiers on the march, and follows it with a most ardent, passionate second theme that Mahler insisted referred to his wife, Alma. Later on, we hear ethereal sounds—cowbells in the orchestra version and tremolos this afternoon. The slow movement achieves a breathtaking poignancy, and one could argue that it is structurally more developed than the justly famous Adagietto from the Fifth Symphony. The Scherzo resumes the first movement's militaristic tendencies, punctuated by leisurely diversions in the friendly, charming Austrian countryside.

Much has been made over the ordering of the middle two movements. It has been generally agreed that Mahler ended up preferring the order we are using, placing the slow movement second. This version creates space between the two big A-minor movements of the first movement and the Scherzo, and of course honors Mahler's ultimate intentions.

Today's rarely performed transcription is by Alexander Zemlinsky, a close friend of Mahler and a composer of great significance in his own right. He also happened to be Alma's partner before she defected to Mahler.

It has been mentioned often, with some irony, that the "Tragic" was composed during one of Mahler's most happy and successful periods. Shortly thereafter, he experienced the loss of his job at the Vienna Opera, the death of his young daughter, and a grim prognosis for his own health. This premonitory aspect can be moving to some, irrelevant to others.

All of Mahler's symphonies are valued, but the Sixth and Ninth Symphonies have gained prominence over the past twenty years. Marin Alsop recently called the Sixth "the most fitting symphony for our time." While some may question whether a four-hand arrangement, which was not originally intended for public performance, can do the work any kind of justice, others, I hope, will find unexpected details and structures that come into greater focus.

Program notes by Daniel Schlosberg

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Sixth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, all programs take place in the West Building, West Garden Court.

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Caroling in the Rotunda
December 9, 10, 16 & 17, 1:30 & 2:30

—
The Swiss-American Musical Society
Igor Stravinsky, *The Soldier's Tale*
Christophe Sturzenegger,
The Snow Queen
Christophe Sturzenegger, conductor
Robert Baker, narrator
December 10, 3:30

—
Turtle Island Quartet
With special guest Liz Carroll
Winter's Eve
December 17, 4:00

—
Harlem Symphony Orchestra
Music by Jessie Montgomery,
James Lee III, and Mozart
January 7, 2018, 3:30

—
Juho Pohjonen, piano
Music by Bach and Mozart
January 14, 3:30

—
Piffaro, The Renaissance Band
Celebrating *Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry*
January 21, 3:30

Sybarite5
Outliers
Celebrating *Outliers and American Vanguard Art*
January 28, 3:30

—
Daniel Bernard Roumain, violin
Yayoi Ikawa, piano
Redemption Songs and Sonatas
February 4, 3:30

—
Curtis on Tour
A Celebration of Leonard Bernstein
February 11, 3:30

—
Trio con Brio Copenhagen
To Travel Is to Live
Music by Grieg, Gade, Mendelssohn,
and Tchaikovsky
February 18, 3:30

—
Narek Hakhnazaryan, cello
Noreen Polera, piano
Music by Albéniz, Brahms,
Schumann, and others
February 25, 3:30

—
Ethel
Blue Dress for String Quartet
March 4, 3:30

—
Janoska Ensemble
Classical music with jazz, gypsy, tango,
Latin, and a dash of pop
March 11, 3:30