



A Symphony Supreme

APRIL 20-21, 2024

Daniel R. Martin Masterworks Series | A Symphony Supreme

Saturday, April 20, 2024

Sunday, April 21, 2024

Paul Shaghoian Memorial Concert Hall

Rei Hotoda, conductor

Timothy McAllister, saxophone

John Adams

The Chairman Dances

Guillaume Connesson

A Kind of Trane

- I. There is none other
- II. Ballade
- III. Coltrane on the Dancefloor

Intermission

Brahms

Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Andante
- III. Poco allegretto
- IV. Allegro

2023 - 2024 Season Major Support Provided by

Daniel R. Martin Family Foundation, Henry Barkett & Octavia Diener, Bonner Family Foundation, California Arts Council, Dr. & Mrs. Bernard K. Karian, J.P. Lamborn Co., Patricia B. Libby, Dr. J.D. Northway, and Leon S. Peters Foundation

Program Notes



John Adams (B. 1947)

The Chairman Dances

John Adams is generally associated with minimalism, a style of composition pioneered by Terry Riley, Phillip Glass and Steve Reich in which short musical motives are repeated, although undergoing gradual transformations in melody, harmony or rhythm one note at a time.

While repetition in the works of Riley, Glass and Reich can seem interminable, Adams adds more drama and musical direction, as well as a more accessible tonal and melodic language to his scores.

Born in Worcester, MA, Adams studied at Harvard University before settling in California. From 1979 to 1985, during his tenure as composer-in-residence with the San Francisco Symphony, he established a fine reputation in the musical establishment with such works as *Harmonium*, settings of one poem by John Donne and two by Emily Dickinson. In September of 2003 Adams succeeded Pierre Boulez as Composer in Residence at Carnegie Hall.

In the 1980s, Adams's collaboration with stage director Peter Sellars catapulted him into international fame with the Grammy-winning opera *Nixon in China*, based on Richard Nixon's breakthrough trip in 1972. It became one of the most performed contemporary operas in recent history.

The Chairman Dances, composed in 1985, had been intended for *Nixon in China* but was dropped in the final version. According to Adams, it began as a quasi flashback for Chairman Mao and his bride, Chiang Ch'ing (Jiang Qing), former movie star, firebrand, revolutionary, executioner, and architect of China's calamitous Cultural Revolution.

Adams composed *The Chairman Dances* according to the following scenario: It is set in Beijing's Great Hall of the People where Nixon is hosting a huge banquet for his Chinese counterpart:

"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..."

Program notes by:

Joseph & Elizabeth Kahn

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Guillaume Connesson (B. 1970)

A Kind of Trane

French composer Guillaume Connesson claims his musical inspiration comes from all ages and all directions, from François Couperin to Igor Stravinsky, to Olivier Messiaen to John Adams and John Williams. He has composed in most genres, but as yet not in opera. He is currently Composer in Association with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Connesson composed *A Kind of Trane* in 2015 for the World Saxophone Congress in Strasbourg, where it was premiered by three famous saxophonists, each playing one movement.

The concerto is an homage to John Coltrane (hence the name) emulating his incredible technique and free-wheeling style of playing. While the first and second movements try to bring out the emotional and technical capabilities of the saxophone, the third brings out the instrument's dance capabilities. The first and second movements in particular, show a strong influence of Debussy and Ravel, while the third emulates American jazz styles, and is technically challenging.

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Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90

Unlike Beethoven, Johannes Brahms allowed not a trace of his compositional process to be revealed to the public. Any sketches, drafts or pre-orchestrations were consigned to flame, along with early works the composer considered inferior. We know, therefore, virtually nothing about the genesis of the Symphony No. 3, only that it was composed during the summer of 1883 in the German town of Wiesbaden, some six years after the Second Symphony. There has been some discussion about one of the composer's many infatuations, this time with a talented young contralto, Hermine Spies, with whom the fifty-year-old composer kept up an intense – but almost certainly chaste – relationship for several years. He apparently spent the fruitful summer in Wiesbaden because of her, but, beyond a number of vocal works, the extent of her influence on his creative output of that period is impossible to ascertain.

The Symphony, premiered on November 9, 1883 in Vienna. It was a stupendous success, far greater than anything Brahms had ever experienced. Apparently, he was more than a little unnerved by the acclaim, remarking, "The reputation [it] has acquired makes me want to cancel all my engagements."

The Third is the shortest of Brahms's symphonies, containing thematic interrelationships among the movements that to some degree determine its compact structure. It is unusual also in the fact that three of its movements are in sonata form, in the absence of a true scherzo/trio and in the general uniformity of tempi of all but the final movement.

One cannot discuss the Symphony without spending some time on the dramatic opening measures whose major-minor ambiguity pervades the entire work. Brahms's biographer, Jan Swafford, notes the strong similarity, especially in rhythm, between the theme and the opening theme of Schumann's Symphony No. 3. Given the close personal relationship between the two composers during Brahms's youth, Swafford considers the thematic relationship as probably deliberate.

In the second movement *Andante*, Brahms continues to play with the major-minor ambiguity. In the recapitulation, he omits repeating the second theme altogether, saving it for the Symphony's final movement.

The third movement was the "hit" of the entire Symphony and was frequently encored at performances in Brahms's time, when such concert etiquette as applause between movements and internal encores were common. Its triple meter and slightly contrasting middle section are all that remain of the traditional classical minuet or scherzo and trio. More of a *romanza*, it opens with a wistful, almost longing theme, replete with sighing figures.

In the Classical symphony, the first movement is nearly always the most substantial, raising "issues" that are finally resolved in an exciting finale. After Beethoven's Ninth, composers frequently appended to the finale a triumphant coda, as did Brahms in his First Symphony.

The Third Symphony exemplifies a slightly different take on the custom. Certainly, the darkest and most tempestuous movement in the Symphony, the finale begins clearly in minor, accentuating the major/minor ambiguity that Brahms had set up from the start. Immediately after the fluid opening theme, Brahms brings back in slightly altered form the second theme from the second movement that he had omitted in the recapitulation. But this symphony is not a Beethoven's Ninth nor even a Brahms's First: rather than concluding in a resounding climax, the darkness and ambiguity dissolve gently in the final measures.

Program notes by:

Joseph & Elizabeth Kahn

Artist Biographies



Rei Hotoda

conductor

Now in her sixth season as Music Director of the Fresno Philharmonic, conductor Rei Hotoda has been hailed as an inexhaustible dynamo with a deep commitment to reimagining the 21st century concert experience. Her vision can be seen through her thought-provoking programming, passionate allyship to marginalized artists, advocacy for arts education, and an unwavering commitment to presenting the music of our times.

Her success as the Music Director of the Fresno Philharmonic since 2017 has resulted in the extension of her tenure through the 2025 season. She has worked tirelessly to build first-time and unique connections with the Fresno community with an eye toward reaching different audiences with a new music concert series, *Proxima*, and special concerts at South Stadium. She has reimagined the post-concert experience by creating the ever popular *Stay Tuned* series, and her programming continues to push through the preconceived notions of the classical concert-going experience, offering audiences works by often marginalized composers and today's leading voices in the field. Through her efforts, she has successfully broken down the barriers that often exist between artist and listener and reestablished the Fresno Philharmonic as a leader in the community it serves.

Rei has appeared as a guest conductor with many of today's leading ensembles, including the Symphony Orchestras of Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, Detroit, Toronto, Winnipeg, Louisville, Hawaii and Utah as well as the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, among others. Her interpretations of such epic centerpieces of the classical canon such as Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8 and Britten's War Requiem, make her one of the most sought-after conductors of today. She is a tireless advocate for the music of our time, and most recently conducted the world premieres of Derek Bermel, John Wineglass, Kenneth Froelich, Cynthia Lee Wong, Kevin Day, Dinuk Wijeratne as well as works by seminal composers such as Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, Jessie Montgomery and Hawaiian composer, Michael-Thomas Foumai to much acclaim. As a champion of today's living composers and an artist that is dedicated to amplifying marginalized voices, Rei's innovative programming and interdisciplinary collaborations continue to position her as a leader in the industry.

Rei is also an active and critically acclaimed keyboardist and embraces her time conducting from the piano and harpsichord. One of her many recent highlights was leading the Fresno Philharmonic from the piano in Beethoven's monumental Triple Concerto as part of the orchestra's *Beethoven @250* celebration and from the harpsichord in Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 as part of their Digital Masterworks series. In the 2021-22 season, she conducted both the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Fresno Philharmonic from the keyboard in Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos in E-flat major.

Rei is the proud recipient of several prestigious awards, including the 2006 Taki-Alsop Conducting Fellowship, created by Marin Alsop to mentor women conductors. Additionally, she has received a Peabody Career Development Grant, the Women's Philharmonic Scholarship, and an Illinois Arts Council International Arts Exchange Grant. Her teachers and mentors include Gustav Meier, Marin Alsop, Jaap van Zweden and Thierry Fischer.



Timothy McAllister

saxophone

Today's most celebrated classical saxophonist TIMOTHY McALLISTER is an acclaimed soloist, soprano chair of the GRAMMY® winning PRISM Quartet, and champion of contemporary music credited with over fifty recordings and two hundred premières of new compositions by eminent and emerging composers worldwide. McAllister has appeared with more than forty of the world's most prominent orchestras in over twenty countries, from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Proms. Following his premiere of John Adams's Saxophone Concerto with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra under the baton of the composer, he performed the Concerto and Adam's City Noir on the 2015 GRAMMY® Award-winning recording with the St. Louis Symphony and David Robertson. His recent recordings of Kenneth Fuchs's Saxophone Concerto, Rush, with JoAnn Falletta and the London Symphony Orchestra and his reprise of City Noir with the Berlin Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel both appeared on 2019 GRAMMY® Nominated albums, with the Fuchs winning for "Best Classical Compendium." Recent performances included the China Premiere of the Adams Saxophone Concerto with Edo de Waart and the Hong Kong Philharmonic and the Belgium Premiere of Guillaume Connesson's Saxophone Concerto: A Kind of Trane under Stéphane Denève and the Brussels Philharmonic, on the Deutsche Grammophon label.

As guest soloist, other recent engagements include the symphonies of Albany, Buffalo, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Seattle, St. Louis, among many others. In 2022, he premiered John Corigliano's Triathlon: Concerto for Saxophonist and Orchestra with Giancarlo Guerrero and San Francisco Symphony to widespread acclaim. 2023 featured the U.S. Premiere of Tyshawn Sorey's Adagio (For Wadada Leo Smith) for alto saxophone and orchestra with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

A widely-respected teacher of his instrument, McAllister is Professor of Saxophone at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance, and he appears at summer festivals and courses worldwide. He holds degrees from the University of Michigan, having studied with legendary saxophonist, Donald Sinta.

Orchestra Roster

VIOLIN I

Stephanie Sant'Ambrogio, *Concertmaster*

Jay Zhong

Lianna Elmore

John Morrice

Amy Lindsey

Rebecca Ward

Rudolfina Sjostrand

Erin Adams

Yuliya Hess

Vera Dragicevich

Calvin Gregory

VIOLIN II

Caitlin McSherry, *Principal*

Cynthia Stuart

Chinh Le

Gaylene Debra Joe

Barbara Schaefer

Benjamin Porter

Keidi Sada

William Chen

Lisa Lhee

Jay Gunasekera

VIOLA

Alexandra Simpson, *Acting Principal*

Martha Brody

Heather Gardner

Tianna Heppner

Paula Karolak

Keith Lawrence

Betsy London

Lisa Ponton

CELLO

David Eby, *Acting Principal*

Alicja Blanquart
Alana Shannon
Boris Nixon
Emma Hill
Nicholas Anton
Eric Sheaffer
Miguel Pereira Muruchi

BASS

Andy Butler, *Principal*
Heidi Franklin
Keith Biondi
Benjamin Green
Sheldon Schlesinger
Nicholas Vegas

FLUTE

Janette Erickson, *Principal*
Pamela Thoman Ellzey
Colleen Fernandez

OBOE

Marissa Honda, *Acting Principal*
Cat Cantrell

CLARINET

Peter Nevin, *Principal*
Larry Honda

BASSOON

Jordan Farber, *Acting Principal*
Katherine Ruiz
Lindsey Bartlett

HORN

Elisha Wells, *Acting Principal*
Alex Camphouse
Sarah Ference
Jennie Blomster
Maya Norman

TRUMPET

Nathan Sobieralski, *Acting Principal*
Ron Franklin

TROMBONE

Phil Keen, *Acting Principal*
Sam Wamhoff
Todd Eams

TUBA

Cody Forcier, *Acting Principal*

TIMPANI

Tim Dent, *Acting Principal*

PERCUSSION

Corey Ritter, *Principal*

Matthew Darling

David Gabrielson

Harp

Vincent Pierce, *Acting Principal*

Piano

Kathryn Eames, *Principal*



A promotional graphic for Valley PBS For the Arts. The background is dark with a silhouette of a person playing a double bass. The text is white and yellow. At the top, it says 'Valley PBS FOR THE ARTS'. Below that, there are logos for 'GREAT PERFORMANCES', 'AUSTIN CITY LIMITS', 'Bob Ross THE Joy of Painting', and 'ONSTAGE IN AMERICA'. At the bottom, it says 'Valley PBS Passport | STREAM OUR LATEST CONTENT! VISIT [VALLEYPBS.ORG/PASSPORT](https://valleypbs.org/passport)'.

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