



French Connections

SEPTEMBER 23-24, 2023

| Daniel R. Martin Masterworks Series | French Connections

Saturday, September 23, 2023

Sunday, September 24, 2023

Paul Shaghoian Memorial Concert Hall

Rei Hotoda, conductor & piano

William Eddins, piano

Valerie Coleman

Umoja: Anthem of Unity

Mozart

Symphony No. 35 in D major, K. 385
(Haffner)

Allegro con spirito
Andante
Menuetto
Presto

Intermission

Poulenc

Concerto for Two Pianos in D minor

Allegro ma non troppo
Larghetto
Finale

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| Orchestra Roster

VIOLIN I

Stephanie Sant'Ambrogio, *Concertmaster*

Jay Zhong

Calvin Lewis

Lianna Elmore

John Morrice

Erin Adams

Shawyon Malek-Salehi

Yuliya Hess

Jackson Snead

Claire Tatman

Kim Hain

VIOLIN II

Caitlin McSherry, *Principal*

Cynthia Stuart

Darren Sagawa

Chinh Le

Gaylene Debra Joe

Barbara Schaefer

Lisa Lhee

Brandon Morris

Julie Metz

Calvin Gregory

VIOLA

Alex Volonts, *Acting Principal*

Roz Gratz

Lynn Grants

Martha Brody

Matthew Smoke

Alex Navarro

Claudia Shuih

CELLO

Dieter Wulfhorst, *Acting Principal*

Alicja Blanquart

Judy Robinson

Alana Shannon

Boris Nixon

Emma Hill

Eric Sheaffer

Nicholas Anton

BASS

Andy Butler, *Principal*

Sukyung Chun

Heidi Franklin

Keith Biondi
Benjamin Green
Sheldon Schlesinger

FLUTE

Janette Erickson, *Principal*
Pamela Thoman Ellzey
Colleen Fernandez

OBOE

Rong-Huey Liu, *Principal*
Marissa Honda

CLARINET

Peter Nevin, *Principal*
Lea Steffens
Kathryn Nevin

BASSOON

Katherine Oliver, *Acting Principal*
Wendy La Touche

HORN

Lauren Varley, *Acting Principal*
Elisha Wells

TRUMPET

Nathan Sobieralski, *Acting Principal*
Ron Franklin

TROMBONE

Bruce Chrisp, *Principal*
Dillon MacIntyre

TUBA

Luke Storm, *Acting Principal*

TIMPANI

Soojin Kang, *Acting Principal*

PERCUSSION

Corey Ritter, *Principal*
Tammy van der Paardt
Craig Cory

HARP

Laura Porter, *Principal*

PIANO

Kathryn Eames, *Principal*

Program Notes



VALERIE COLEMAN (B. 1970)

Umoja: Anthem of Unity

Composer and flutist Valerie Coleman is a native of Louisville, Kentucky. She is a graduate of the Mannes School of Music and Boston University, and is currently on the Flute Performance and Music Composition Faculty of the Mannes School. Last year she premiered Jennifer Higdon's Flute Concerto with the Chicago Philharmonic. Most of her compositions involve the flute.

In 1996, while still a student, Coleman became one of the founding members of the Imani Wind Quintet, staying with it until 2018. Explaining the reason for starting the ensemble in an interview on NPR, she said that as a child she used to be in the youth orchestra, and there were so many African Americans. But somewhere along the line, when she got to college, she was the only one in the orchestra. So, she wondered what in the world happened, and she realized that role models were needed.

Umoja – unity in Swahili – started life some decades ago as a simple song for a women's choir, to celebrate the first day of Kwanzaa. A few years later, after starting the Imani Wind Quintet, Coleman reworked *Umoja* into a wind quintet, and finally, in 2019, she arranged and expanded it for symphony orchestra on commission from the Philadelphia Orchestra. This version brings an expansion and complexity to the simple original tune, reminiscent of Appalachian style music. After many iterations and complex transformations, including some harsh jazzy versions, the original theme returns with full orchestra.



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756 - 1791)

Symphony No. 35 in D major, K. 385 (Haffner)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Symphony No. 35 did not start life as a symphony. Its history gives us an insight into the practice of musical recycling. Some of the most illustrious composers were well known self-borrowers, with Bach and Handel – weighed down with musical and extra-musical obligations – among the most frequent practitioners of the art. Mozart, with his facility for generating and developing original ideas, seldom indulged in this kind of shortcut, so that the back stories for each recycled piece are noteworthy.

In 1776 Mozart received a commission from the family of Salzburg's former mayor, Sigmund Haffner, for a large serenade to be played at his daughter's wedding (known today as the Haffner Serenade, K. 250). The family was pleased, and in the summer of 1782, a year after Mozart finally moved to Vienna to seek his fortune as one of Europe's first free-lance musicians, it commissioned a similar work to celebrate Haffner's elevation to the aristocracy. Busy with his own wedding and the staging of his opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Mozart dragged his feet but finally – after his father's constant nagging – sent the Haffners a new work.

Half a year later, while planning for a series of subscription concerts (*Akademien*) in Vienna, Mozart asked his father to return the manuscript. He removed the opening and closing marches and the repeat of the first movement's exposition, rewrote the minuet, and added flutes and clarinets to the outer movements, repackaging it as Symphony No. 35. Destined to become a perennial favorite, the Symphony was likewise a great success at the sold-out concert of its premiere; even the Emperor applauded heartily, giving the young composer a gift of 25 ducats – although ever in a financial pinch, Mozart had hoped for more.

One of the attractions of this symphony is its sheer beauty of melody and lucidity of construction. The opening movement dispenses with the customary slow introduction, launching right into a "statement – response" theme, the first phrase brash and angular, the second phrase subdued. The famous "Haffner" theme reappears in ingenious transformations. It dominates the entire movement despite the brief appearance of the contrasting second theme and a closing theme.

The *Andante* is in the typical ternary (ABA) form that reigned for slow movements – although with variations – from the Baroque concerto through the nineteenth century. Mozart creates a particularly long, multi-sectioned theme, and provides an only mildly contrasting middle (B) section. His repeat of the A section contains no variation, probably because he felt that the melodic grace and complexity of the theme did not require it.

One of the distinctions between Mozart and Haydn has been that the former nearly always wrote elegant, courtly minuets, while the latter made his sound like country dances. In this Symphony, however, Mozart musters the full orchestra for a heavy Haydnesque Minuet, strongly suggesting the influence of the older composer. The Trio, for strings alone, is more graceful.

In the brief Finale, a hybrid rondo-sonata form complete with two contrasting themes, Mozart pulls a few surprises with some asymmetrical phrasing, unusual key modulations and a coda that takes off sounding as if it might be a new development.



FRANCIS POULENC (1899 - 1963)

Concerto for Two Pianos in D minor

Francis Poulenc was one of the youngest members of the six young French rebel composers of the 1920s, disciples of the

iconoclastic Erik Satie, known as *Le groupe des six*. Their only uniting credo was the right to express themselves in their own personal way. They resisted what they considered the “phony sublimity” of the Romantic style, especially the legacy of Wagner, which Satie called “sauerkraut music.” Their goal was, as Poulenc wrote, to create music that was “clear, healthy and robust – music as overtly French in spirit as Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* is Russian.”

Poulenc came from an affluent family of pharmaceuticals manufacturers, the forerunners of France’s giant chemical conglomerate Rhône-Poulenc, and was considered the black sheep of the family. Urbane, sophisticated, witty and easy-going, the model of the Paris *boulevardier* whose idea of a day in the country was a stroll down the *Champs Élysées*, his public persona was reflected in his music. But in his late 30s, his music became more serious as he turned increasingly to religious subjects. His style owed much to Ravel’s impressionism and to neoclassicism, always with a clear sense of melody. He never participated in atonal or serial music so popular among his colleagues in Paris between the wars and after.

The Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra reflects Poulenc’s lighter side, something of a romp through music history – classical and popular. It was composed in 1932 on a commission from Princess Edmond de Polignac (née Singer, as in sewing machines) and premiered in Venice the same year.

It opens with two clashing chords, followed by a sparkling entry of a four-note motive by the first piano. The second piano enters with different ideas, reflecting Poulenc’s fondness for the music hall, at times sounding like background music for a silent film, at others like French folksong. A mysterious duet for the two pianos that ends the movement supposedly reflects the sound of the Indonesian gamelan orchestra that Poulenc had heard at the Colonial Exhibition in Paris in 1931.

The slow second movement opens with a charming theme that Poulenc admitted was patterned after Mozart (most likely the second movement of the Piano Concerto No. 26 in D, K 537). But the second phrase of the theme quickly advances through the centuries, from the romantics, to the mild dissonance of the twentieth, to end on a refrain right out Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 21 in C major K. 467, used in the film score of *Elvira Madigan*.

The Finale is an exuberant piece with hints of jazz. Poulenc indulges in his love for sweeping melodies hinting at the street music of the times.

All in all, with its sudden mood shifts and its dialogue between the playful and the serious, the Concerto for Two Pianos sounds like a score for a silent film. It was probably composed, and should be listened to, with tongue firmly placed in cheek. As an added diversion, try to count the many musical quotes and parodies from classical models.



Rei Hotoda

conductor, piano

Now entering 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 Bitwise 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.



William Eddins

piano

William Eddins is the Music Director Emeritus of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and a frequent guest conductor of major orchestras throughout the world. Recent engagements include conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra with Yo-Yo Ma, and collaborations with Wynton Marsalis' Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with both the Detroit Symphony and Minnesota Orchestra.

Eddins has conducted the New York Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony, the symphony orchestras of Boston, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Detroit, Dallas, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Houston, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Internationally, Eddins was Principal Guest Conductor of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland). He has also conducted the Berlin Staatskapelle, Berlin Radio Orchestra, Welsh National Opera, and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Career highlights include taking the Edmonton Symphony Orchestras to Carnegie Hall in May of 2012, and leading the Natal Philharmonic on tour in South Africa with soprano Rene Fleming.

An accomplished pianist and chamber musician, he regularly conducts from the piano in works by Mozart, Beethoven, Gershwin and Ravel.

Mr. Eddins has performed at the Ravinia Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, the Hollywood Bowl, Chautauqua Festival, the Boston University Tanglewood Institute and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago.



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A promotional banner for Valley PBS For the Arts. The background is dark blue with a silhouette of a person playing a double bass. The text is white and yellow. At the top, "Valley PBS" is written in a large font, with the PBS eye logo in the middle. Below it, "FOR THE ARTS" is written in a smaller font. A yellow horizontal line separates the top section from the middle section. In the middle section, there are several logos and titles: "GP GREAT PERFORMANCES", "AUSTIN CITY LIMITS", "Bob Ross THE Joy of Painting", and "ONSTAGE IN AMERICA". At the bottom, there is a dark blue bar with white and yellow text: "Valley PBS Passport" on the left and "STREAM OUR LATEST CONTENT! VISIT VALLEYPBS.ORG/PASSPORT" on the right.

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