CU Symphony Orchestra

Gary Lewis, conductor

Allyson Stibbards, viola

Join us after the concert this evening for a celebration of the CU Symphony Orchestra's recent CD release with the Indigo Girls! Refreshments will be served and CDs will be for sale for $15. Stop by to meet Director of Orchestras Gary Lewis and members of the symphony and have Maestro Lewis sign your copy of the CD!

7:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 29, 2018
Macky Auditorium

College of Music
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

CU PRESENTS

Program

Diamond Rain (2018) — Roshanne Etezady (b. 1973)

Concerto for Viola and Orchestra — Béla Bartók (1881-1945)
I. Moderato
II. Adagio religioso
III. Allegro vivace

Allyson Stibbards, viola

Intermission

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 73 — Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
I. Allegro non troppo
II. Adagio non troppo
III. Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino)
IV. Allegro con spirito

Program notes

Diamond Rain

In the summer of 2017, I read that scientists recreated atmospheric conditions on Neptune in order to prove a curious meteorological phenomenon. The process, involving artificial "lightning" activating particles of carbon and hydrogen in the "atmosphere," resulted in proof that diamonds can rain down out of the sky on certain planets in the outer reaches of our solar system. The idea—or, at least my layperson's understanding of the idea—brought wonderful musical imagery to my mind. *Diamond Rain* is my vision of what it might be like to hover in the sky of a planetary ice giant, like Neptune, as lightning strikes and tiny diamonds crystallize and fall to the ground. Floating, ephemeral musical figures are juxtaposed with grounded, angular material in this imaginary journey.

Diamond Rain was commissioned and premiered by Maestro Leonard Slatkin and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.
—Notes by Roshanne Etezady

Concerto for Viola and Orchestra

William Primrose, maybe the most important violist of modern times, asked the then-ailing Bartók to write a concerto for his use in 1945. Since emigrating from Hungary to the United States in 1940, Bartók had endured a period of terrible neglect, poverty and homesickness. Howard Hanson, the reactionary and xenophobic president of the Eastman School of Music, had turned away Bartók's application for a teaching position in spite of his reputation as possibly the most important living composer and ethnomusicologist of his day. Word of Bartók's desperate situation

finally reached Serge Koussevitzky, the visionary music director of the Boston Symphony, who did as much as any conductor in the 20th Century to commission and premiere important new works. In 1942, upon hearing that Bartók was both ill and destitute, Koussevitzky doubted Bartok would be up to the strain of writing a major work, but also knew that Bartók would not accept charity. Koussevitzky commissioned Bartók to write a showpiece for the Boston Symphony, and Bartók was so overjoyed at the opportunity that he quickly forgot his problems and embarked on the writing of his Concerto for Orchestra, a joyous and brilliant piece universally acknowledged as one of the masterpieces of the 20th Century. After this, Bartók's creative powers returned to full strength, even as his body started to fail. Commissions began to pour in, and Bartók turned to work on a third Piano Concerto, a Sonata for Solo Violin and the Viola Concerto. By 1945, his health was rapidly failing, and it became clear while working on the third Piano Concerto and the Viola Concerto that he would not finish either work. Bartók hoped the Piano Concerto would provide a source of income for his wife, the pianist for whom it was written, and so made a great push to complete the work before succumbing to leukemia. Bartók entrusted the completion of the Viola Concerto to his friend and former pupil Tibor Serly, who also completed the third Piano Concerto. Like the Concerto for Orchestra and the last Piano Concerto, the Viola Concerto is a profoundly lyrical, spiritual and life affirming work. In those sad, final years, Bartók found within himself a capacity for expressing warmth and joy that listeners continue to marvel at 50 years later. The first movement is the most complete and fully developed and shows Bartók at the height of his musical powers. The lyrical second movement is deeply spiritual in feeling, but the folk-music inspired fire of the finale is no less full of life. Sadly, the finale shows the most evidence of Serly's hand—in spite of the richly promising musical material the movement is less completely developed that one would expect in a mature work of the master. Still a brilliant conclusion to the greatest work in the viola repertoire, its slightly weakened musical finish is a poignant reminder of the fate of its creator, who did not live to complete it or hear it performed.
—Notes by Kenneth Woods

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 73

Brahms composed his Symphony No. 2 in the summer of 1877; Hans Richter conducted the first performance in Vienna on December 30, 1877. The score calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani and strings. Performance time is approximately 40 minutes. Within months after the long-awaited premiere of his Symphony No. 1, Brahms produced another one. The two were as different as night and day—logically enough, since the first had taken two decades of struggle and soul-searching and the second was written over a summer holiday. If it truly was Beethoven's symphonic achievement that stood in Brahms' way for all those years, nothing seems to have stopped the flow of this new symphony in D major. Brahms had put his fears and worries behind him. This music was composed at the picture-postcard village of Portschach, on the Worthersee, where Brahms had rented two tiny rooms for his summer holiday. The rooms apparently were ideal for composition even though the hallway was so narrow that Brahms' piano couldn't be moved up the stairs. "It is delightful here," Brahms wrote to Fritz Simrock, his publisher, soon after arriving, and the new symphony bears witness to his apparent delight. Later that summer, when Brahms' friend Theodore Billroth, an amateur musician, played through the score for the first time, he wrote to the composer at once: "It is all rippling streams, blue sky, sunshine, and cool green shadows. How beautiful it must be at Portschach." Eventually listeners began to call this Brahms' Pastoral Symphony, again raising the comparison with Beethoven. But if Brahms' Symphony No. 2 has a true companion, it is the violin concerto he would write the following summer in Portschach—cut from the same D major cloth and reflecting the mood and even some of the thematic material of the symphony. When Brahms sent the first movement of his new symphony off to Clara Schumann, she predicted that this music would fare better with the public than the tough and stormy Symphony No. 1, and she was right. The first performance, on December 30, 1877, in Vienna under Hans Richter, was a triumph, and

the third movement had to be repeated. When Brahms conducted the second performance, in Leipzig just after the beginning of the new year, the audience was again enthusiastic. But Brahms' real moment of glory came late in the summer of 1878, when his new symphony was a great success in his native Hamburg, where he had twice failed to win a coveted musical post. Still, it would be another decade before the Honorary Freedom of Hamburg—the city's highest honor—was given to him, and Brahms remained ambivalent about his birthplace for the rest of his life. In the meantime, the D major symphony found receptive listeners nearly everywhere it was played. (Theodore Thomas, who would later found the Chicago Symphony, introduced the work to the United States on October 3, 1878, at a concert in New York City.) From the opening bars of the *Allegro non troppo*—with their bucolic horn calls and woodwind chords—we prepare for the radiant sunlight and pure skies that Billroth promised. And, with one soaring phrase from the first violins, Brahms' great pastoral scene unfolds before us. Although another of Billroth's letters to the composer suggests that "a happy, cheerful mood permeates the whole work," Brahms knows that even a sunny day contains moments of darkness and doubt—moments when pastoral serenity threatens to turn tragic. It's that underlying tension—even drama—that gives this music its remarkable character. A few details stand out: two particularly bracing passages for the three trombones in the development section, and much later, just before the coda, a wavering horn call that emerges, serene and magical. This is followed, as if it were the most logical thing in the world, by a jolly bit of dance-hall waltzing before the music flickers and dies. Eduard Hanslick, one of Brahms' champions, thought the *Adagio* "more conspicuous for the development of the themes than for the worth of the themes themselves." Hanslick wasn't the first critic to be wrong—this movement has very little to do with development as we know it—although it's unlike him to be so far off the mark when dealing with music by Brahms. Hanslick did notice that the third movement has the relaxed character of a serenade. It is, for all its initial grace and charm, a serenade of some complexity, with two frolicsome presto passages (smartly disguising the main theme) and a wealth of shifting accents. The finale is jubilant and electrifying; the clouds seem to disappear after the hushed opening bars, and the music blazes forward, almost unchecked, to the very end. For all Brahms' concern about measuring up to Beethoven, he seldom mentioned his admiration for Haydn and his ineffable high spirits, but that's who Brahms most resembles here. There is, of course, the great orchestral roar of triumph that always suggests Beethoven. But many moments are pure Brahms, like the ecstatic clarinet solo that rises above the bustle only minutes into the movement, or the warm and striding theme in the strings that immediately follows. The extraordinary brilliance of the final bars—as unbridled an outburst as any in Brahms—was not lost on his great admirer Antonín Dvorák when he wrote his *Carnival Overture*.
—Notes by Phillip Huscher

Biographies

Allyson Stibbards

Allyson Stibbards is a violist from Longmont, Colorado. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Colorado Boulder with Erika Eckert and Geraldine Walther. Currently, Stibbards is working on her master's degree at the New England Conservatory with Cathy Basrak. Stibbards has won and placed in several concerto competitions on violin and viola. In 2015 and 2016, she participated in the New York String Orchestra Seminar and, in the summer of 2017, the Aspen Music Festival. Stibbards is pursuing a career as an orchestral musician. In addition to music, Stibbards enjoys hiking in the mountains with her dog, Ryder.

Personnel

Violin
Jackson Bailey
Kimberly Bill
Seth Bixler
Maggie Brady
Benjamin Ehrmantraut
Mary Evans
Jonathan Galle
Grace Harper
Megan Healy
Robbie Herbst
Lindey Hoak
Mackenzie Hoffman
Marisa Ishikawa
Ryan Jacobsen
Sun Mi Jin
Lindsie Katz
Hannah Kennedy
Jenna Kramer
Paul Kim
Michael Miller
Kristen Olsen
Ava Pacheco
Autumn Pepper
Elizabeth Potter
Natalie Smith
Caitlin Stokes
Kashmira Tata
Sophia Thaut
Brandon Wu

Viola
Jonathan Asbury
Javier Chacon
Ariel Chien
Jaryn Danz
Abigail Dreher
Autumn Greenlee
Jordan Holloway
Jessica Kus
Elizabeth Macintosh
Breana McCullough
Stephanie Mientka
Erin Napier
Conrad Sclar
Sophia Wonneberger

Cello
Chas Barnard
Ethan Blake
Hannah Brown
Edward Cho
Dakota Cotugno
Kamila Dotta
Eliot Johnson
Nicholas Johnson
Jessica Lee
Elisabeth Murphy
Whitman Poling
Gabriel Ramos
Jacob Saunders
Haley Slaugh
Emily Taylor
Nelson Walker

Double Bass
Justine Barrera
Alex Bozik
Timothy Chen
Eleanor Dunlap
Portia Pray
Nick Ten Wolde
Jason Thompson
Jordan Walters

Flute
Kaleb Chesnic
Indigo Fischer
Joshua Hall
Brice Smith
Mara Riley

Oboe
Brittany Bonner
Hannah Harm
Curtis Sellers
Grace Stringfellow
Kristin Weber

Clarinet
Colby Bond
Anoushka Divekar
Jade Garcia
Maggie Greenwood
Daniel Mills
Rachel Wood

Bassoon
Michelle Chen
Gyungsun Im
Jay Million
Kristina Nelson
Ethan Shuler

Horn
Maggie Barnes
Josh East
Erika Hollister
Spencer Koscik
Kieran Scruggs
Benjamin Shafer
Chandler Spoon
Erin Zinda

Trumpet
Luke Finaldi
Max McNutt
Sam Milam
Drew Ziemba

Trombone
Ben Garcia
Evan Johnson
Alison Orthel
Kenny Ross
Aaron Zalkind

Tuba
Patrick Young

Percussion
Taylor Edwards
Mallory Graves
Alberto Ortega
Ryan Pride
Andrew Quinlan
John Sevy

Harp
John McColley

Celesta
Sarah Thune

music+performance

Upcoming performances

Ⓢ Ticketed events Ⓛ Live broadcast at cupresents.org

Friday, Nov. 30
Early Music Ensemble Ⓛ
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Saturday, Dec. 1
West African Highlife Ensemble Ⓛ
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Sunday, Dec. 2
Japanese Ensemble Ⓛ
2 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Gamelan Ensemble Ⓛ
4:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Dec. 7-9
Holiday Festival Ⓢ
Macky Auditorium

Monday, Dec. 10
Concert Band and Campus Orchestra Ⓛ
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Monday, Dec. 17
Artist Series
Canadian Brass Ⓢ
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Thursday, Jan. 31
Artist Series
Silkroad Ensemble Ⓢ
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Thursday, Feb. 7
Wind Symphony and Symphonic Band Ⓛ
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Tuesday, Feb. 12
CU Symphony Orchestra Ⓛ
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Thursday, Feb. 14
Anderson Competition Finals
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Concert Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Ensemble II Ⓛ
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Friday, Feb. 15
Spring Festival of Choirs
7:30 p.m., Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, 1318 Mapleton Ave, Boulder

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