

Silicon Valley Symphony

Michael Paul Gibson, Music Director and Conductor

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Viola Norin Saxe* Anton Petrenko Irene Saxe	Piccolo Doreen Wilson	Trombone Brendan Lai-Tong* Kevin Harper
Cello Scott Krijnen* Sara Spieth** Cyrus Behroozi Debra Fenzel-Alexander Jonathan Humphries Susan Williams-Gibson Grace Worthington	Oboe Claudia Engel* David Bloom	Bass Trombone Wesley Broadnax
	English Horn Jaleen Seshadri	Tuba Jay Perry
	Clarinet Laura Vandenbogaart* Jerry McBride Doug Zuehlke	Timpani Kenny Lavoie
	Bass Clarinet Jerry McBride	Percussion Kenny Lavoie* Dominic Moisant
	Bassoon Lettie Smith* Ron Bobb	Harp Krista Strader
	Contra Bassoon Ron Bobb	Piano/Keyboard Susan Williams-Gibson

* denotes principal player. String players thereafter are listed alphabetically.

** denotes associate principal player.

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tribute to
Lawrence Granger

Silicon Valley Symphony

Peter Wyrick, cello soloist

**Michael Paul Gibson,
music director and conductor**

Friday
20 November 2009
7:30 pm

**Presbyterian Church
of Los Gatos**

Saturday
21 November 2009
7:30 pm

**Holy Trinity
Episcopal Church,
Menlo Park**

Ticket Donation \$20/\$15/Children 12 and under free with adult

PROGRAM

Symphony No.2 in D Major, Op. 73

by Johannes Brahms

Intermission

Cello Concerto No.1 in A Minor, Op. 33

by Camille Saint-Saëns

Peter Wyrick, cello soloist

Nutcracker Suite

by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

I Overture miniature

II Danses caractéristiques:

- a) March
- b) Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy
- c) Russian Dance (Trepak)
- d) Arabian Dance (Coffee)
- e) Chinese Dance (Tea)
- f) Dance of the Mirlitons

III Waltz of the Flowers



Johannes Brahms

Given his revered status as one of the all-time great German composers, and with a name to be uttered in the same breath as Bach and Beethoven, it might be tempting to assume that writing symphonies

came naturally to Brahms. In fact, the second symphony did come with relative ease while Brahms was enjoying summer break at a lakeside

Foundation, and past Music Director of the Foothill Orchestra. While serving in the United States Air Force, Gibson played in the Norad Band and Air Force Academy Band.

He founded and was Music Director for the Colorado Springs Chamber Music Society from 1971 - 1974, which received tremendous local recognition, attracted audiences of 1200, appeared in a 30 minute TV show on KRDO Television, and did numerous radio broadcasts on KRDO Radio.

Gibson has created many electronic music compositions and arrangements. Maestro Gibson has had master classes with Georg Solti and Carlo Maria Giulini working with the Chicago Symphony, Neville Marriner with the Los Angles Chamber Orchestra, Pinchas Zukerman at San Francisco State University, and

Peter Schickele (PDQ Bach) with the Denver Symphony. He studied orchestral conducting with Bernard Rubenstein (NU), John Miller (Denver Sym.), and Lazlo Varga (SFSU); instrumental conducting from John Paynter(NU); and choral conducting with Margaret Hillis (Chicago Symphony Chorus) at Northwestern University from which he holds Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting degrees. He played trombone in the Denver Symphony, Bohemian Club Orchestra, and the San Francisco 49ers Band. He also offers expertise in business, operating his own company, BACH to Music. Please visit his web site (www.bachtomusic.com) for details and resume.



Symphony No.2 in D Major, Op. 73 (1877)

by Johannes Brahms

I. Allegro non troppo

II. Adagio non troppo

III. Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino)

IV. Allegro con spirito

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Larry and Pam Sweet

work than his previous ballet "The Sleeping Beauty" almost to the extent of despising it. Nevertheless, the music, contains some of his most memorable melodies including the instantly recognizable Russian dance, the Trepak, the Waltz of the Flowers, and the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy. In order to convey the heavenly sound he wanted for the sugar plum fairy, Tchaikovsky took much delight in introducing a celesta, a new keyboard instrument he had found in Paris although given the difficulties of finding a celesta, a piano is often used as an alternative.

The Nutcracker Suite you will hear tonight is the abridged version of the ballet the composer himself made that consists of eight pieces culled from the ballet beginning with a miniature overture and finishing with the joyfully heart warming "Waltz of the Flowers."

Program notes by Julian Brown

ARTISTS

Peter Wyrick served as San Francisco Symphony Assistant Principal Cellist from 1986 to 1990, returned to the Orchestra in 2000, and is now Associate Principal Cellist. He has also served as principal cellist of the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra and associate principal cellist of the New York City Opera Orchestra. As a member of the Ridge String Quartet, he performed throughout the world and recorded the Dvořák piano quintets with pianist Rudolf Firkusny, an RCA recording that won France's Diapason d'Or and a Grammy nomination. He has also recorded the Fauré cello sonatas with pianist Earl Wild for dell'Arte records.

Mr. Wyrick has participated in Finland's Helsinki Festival, the Spoleto Festival (both in this country and in Italy), and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, among many others, and he appears regularly in the San Francisco Symphony's Chamber Music Series. He has been soloist with the Orchestra in music from Tan Dun's Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon and Pierre Boulez's *Messagesquisse*.

Michael Paul Gibson is the Music Director, Conductor and founder of the Silicon Valley Symphony. He was the Director of Music Ministry for the Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos from 2004 - 2009. He is the founding Music Director of the Menlo Park Chorus, and conducted the group from 1998 - 2005. He has performed hundreds of school concerts as Music Director of the Bay Area Little Symphony, a professional orchestra, is the Music Director and CEO of the Bay Area Music

retreat in the Austrian Alps only a year after putting the finishing touches on his first symphony, a work by contrast that he had struggled for nearly two decades to write. Why that huge difference?

The proclamation by his fellow composer Robert Schumann that the young Brahms was to be the next Beethoven probably did not help. Imagine his quandary: how to write something that lives up to the colossus of Beethoven's symphonic output including the monumental ninth? Mired in self-doubt he eventually delivered his first symphony at the age of 43 but presumably relieved to have finally broken past that psychological barrier his next symphonies followed in rapid succession.

If the first symphony was to be thought of as "Beethoven's Tenth", Brahms' second is sometimes compared to Beethoven's "Pastoral" symphony. Although the link is somewhat tenuous the sunny disposition of Brahms' Alpine vacation certainly appears to permeate the work. The composer was clearly not without a sense of humor because he informed his publisher that the symphony would be "so melancholy that you will not be able to bear it. I have never written anything so sad, and the score must appear with black borders and in mourning."

In fact, the second symphony turned out to be almost the antithesis of the stormy and heroic first. Written in sunny D major the genial and bright mood of the work surprised audiences. The famous critic Eduard Hanslick upon hearing the symphony at its first performance in Vienna called it "a great, unqualified success," a piece that "extends its warm sunshine to connoisseurs and laymen alike."

However, it would be a mistake to think of the second symphony as relentlessly cheerful. Deeper undercurrents are clearly in evidence in the first two movements with sudden mood contrasts and moments of intense passion. The slow second movement in particular begins with a striking theme in the cellos that is followed by passages that suggest brooding loneliness and melancholy. The tone changes dramatically in the third movement in which the spring-like pastoral quality of the symphony comes to the fore exemplified by the mellifluous melody sung by the oboe over string pizzicato.

The theme forms the basis of inventive harmonic modulations and capricious changes of rhythm. But it's in the fourth and final movement where we discover momentous things are afoot. The opening theme starts with great tranquillity only to be over swept by an explosive outpouring from the orchestra. The finale forges its way through various recapitulations and harmonic digressions eventually returning us to the D major key in an exuberant and triumphant ending.



Cello Concerto No.1 in A Minor, Op. 33 (1873) by Camille Saint-Saëns



Camille
Saint-Saëns

Renowned for his precocious brilliance, the French composer Saint-Saëns had an inauspicious start when his father, a government clerk, died while he was only three months old. Fortunately, he fell under the influence of an enlightened aunt who introduced him to the piano. By age four he was composing for the instrument and at age 10 he gave an astonishing debut recital in which as an encore he offered to play any of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas from memory. He wrote his first symphony when he was 16 and on hearing his second, Hector Berlioz amusingly remarked "he knows everything, but lacks inexperience". In addition to his phenomenal musical talent, his erudition in geology, archeology, astronomy, botany, and mathematics, and his literary publications including a volume of poetry and a farcical play elevated Saint-Saëns into a class of intellectual superstars who could hold their own with leading scientists and literary scholars of the day.

It might come as little surprise then that his concertos all demand virtuoso skills of the highest order and his first cello concerto is no exception. The work, which he wrote when he was 37 for the Belgian cellist August Tolbeque, is in the dark key of A minor like the cello concerto by Robert Schumann. Unusually, though, instead of taking the form of a standard three movement concerto, the work consists of just one continuous movement. One might argue that the movement still retains three distinct sections but these sections share many related ideas and indeed the opening theme is to be heard recurring throughout the piece.

The concerto also starts in an unusual way: instead of the traditional longish orchestral introduction, the piece begins with one brief strident chord from the orchestra. The cello then bursts upon the scene articulating the main motif of the concerto. Counter melodies erupt back and forth between the orchestra and soloist with the turbulent opening section finally giving way to an exquisitely delicate minuet accompanied by muted strings. The minuet is punctuated by a brief cello cadenza and what follows begins with a recapitulation of material from the first section, Saint-Saëns

ushers in his final flourish with a new idea first stated by the solo cello and then taken up by the rest of the orchestra.

It is fitting that as the composer of "The Swan", probably the most famous piece ever written for the Cello, Saint-Saëns should also be remembered for having composed one of the great warhorse concertos for the instrument. Shostakovich and Rachmaninoff considered this concerto to be one of the greatest of all cello concertos and the work has since become a favorite among many leading cellists including Larry Granger to whom this concert is dedicated.

Nutcracker Suite (1891-1892) by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky



Pyotr Ilyich
Tchaikovsky

- I. Overture miniature
- II. Danses caractéristiques
 - a. March
 - b. Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy
 - c. Russian Dance (Trepak)
 - d. Arabian Dance (Coffee)
 - e. Chinese Dance (Tea)
 - f. Dance of the Mirlitons
- III. Waltz of the Flowers

If you are looking for a modern reference to understand the fairy-tale story of the Nutcracker on which Tchaikovsky based his beloved ballet, think perhaps of Tim Burton's "Nightmare Before Christmas" only with much of the scary stuff

turned on its head. The two act ballet has a dream-like quality in which one of the children Clara, after falling asleep on the eve of Christmas, wakes at midnight to a frightening scene. The house, Christmas tree, and toys all seem to be getting larger while mice dressed in army uniforms begin to circle the room. Suddenly the toys including her favorite, the Nutcracker shaped in the form of a soldier, come to life. After saving the Nutcracker in an ensuing battle with the Mouse King, Clara is delighted to see her Nutcracker soldier turn into a human prince. Clara and the prince then depart on a journey through a snow forest and a land of sweets, a magical place in which they encounter all kind of treats including the Sugar Plum Fairy. The journey culminates in a great festival that includes the delightful Waltz of the Flowers. The dream like spell evaporates upon Clara's waking under the Christmas tree holding her Nutcracker toy in her arms.

While Tchaikovsky's score has become a perennial mainstay of the Christmas season, the great Russian composer was less satisfied with the

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Lawrence Granger was originally scheduled to play as cello soloist with the Silicon Valley Symphony for this concert.

Larry, cellist in the San Francisco Symphony for 30 years, donated his time as Principal Cello at many rehearsals, inspiring the section and raising the spirit of the entire orchestra. He also gave numerous musical and personnel recommendations that have contributed significantly to increased quality performance.

Sadly Mr. Granger passed away on Sunday, June 14, 2009. He was diagnosed with cancer earlier in the week, underwent surgery that was seemingly successful, but succumbed to heart failure two days later. The entire musical community has lost a great man and he will be missed by all.

We dedicate this concert to the memory of Lawrence Granger.

Dear Music Lover,

The Silicon Valley Symphony is at an all-important crossroads in its history. We are significantly increasing the impact of our previous full house concerts by adding a second performance of each of our three concert sets. We are also collaborating for the first time with the San Jose Dance Theatre playing the complete Nutcracker Ballet at the San Jose Center for the Performing Arts in two weeks time.

Music Director Michael Paul Gibson has donated his time, as have most of the musicians to make the SVS the great success it is today. As you may know, Maestro Gibson's position as full-time Director of Music Ministry job at PCLG was eliminated at the end of June 2009.

We are now at a place where we need to pay the Music Director, and we are looking for volunteers to help with fund raising and advertising for the orchestra. Our growth and financial success is more crucial than ever.

Please consider donating time, good ideas, personal contacts, or providing a gracious financial donation in any sum to help us continue to provide great music experiences to our community. In order to make a donation please fill out the form on the center page of this program.

Both the SVS and the SJDT are 501(c)(3) non-profits, where all financial donations are tax deductible as prescribed by law.

Wishing you a beautiful holiday season and a happy new year,

Silicon Valley Symphony

Next concerts

Return of the Prodigy

Friday 12 March 2010: 7:30 pm & Saturday 13 March 2010: 7:30 pm

Dvořák: Carnival Overture

Prokofiev: Classical Symphony

Brahms: Violin Concerto in D Stephen Waarts, Violin Soloist

Soli & Sibelius

Friday 4 June 2010: 8:00 pm & Saturday 5 June 2010: 8:00 pm

Saint-Saëns: Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso Eric Leong, Violin Soloist

Rossini: Finale to William Tell Overture (including conducting lessons for children)

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Michael Dailey, Tenor Soloist

Rebecca Davis, Lyric Soprano Soloist

Sibelius: Symphony No. 2 in D Major

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Contact: Michael Gibson, Music Director, SVS

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