

Thursday, January 23, 2014, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Emanuel Ax, *piano*
Anne Sofie von Otter, *mezzo-soprano*

PROGRAM

Brahms and Beyond

- Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) Erlaube mir, feins Mädchen,
WoO33, No. 2 (1893–1894)
- Es wohnt ein Fiedler, WoO33, No. 36
(1893–1894)
- Ach, und du mein kühles Wasser!,
Op. 85, No. 3 (1878)
- Tor Aulin (1866–1914) Til en ros (1903)
- Brahms Da unten im Tale, WoO33, No. 6 (1893–1894)
- Brahms Intermezzo in A minor, Op. 118, No. 1 (1893)
Intermezzo in A major, Op. 118, No. 2 (1893)
- Brahms Auf dem Kirchhofe, Op. 105, No. 4 (1888)
- Es schauen die Blumen alle,
Op. 96, No. 3 (1885)
- Sommerabend, Op. 85, No. 1 (1878)
- Juchhe!, Op. 6, No. 4 (1852)
- Von ewiger Liebe, Op. 43, No. 1 (1864)
- Ständchen, Op. 106, No. 1 (1888)

INTERMISSION

Missy Mazzoli (b. 1980) Bolts of Loving Thunder (2013)*

Nico Muhly (b. 1981) So Many Things (2013)*

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The framing lyrics are by Constantine P. Cavafy, translated by Daniel Mendelsohn.

- Brahms Nachtwandler, Op. 86, No. 3 (1877)
- Am Sonntag Morgen, Op. 49, No. 1 (1868)
- Ruhe, Süßliebchen, im Schatten, from
Die schöne Magelone, Op. 33, No. 9 (1868)
- Brahms Intermezzo in B-flat minor,
Op. 117, No. 2 (1892)
- Romanze in F major, Op. 118, No. 5 (1893)
- Brahms From *Zigeunerlieder*, Op. 103 (1887–1888)
1. He, Zigeuner, grieve
 2. Hochgetürmte Rimaflut
 3. Wisst ihr, wann mein Kindchen
 4. Lieber Gott, du weisst
 5. Brauner Bursche führt zum Tanze
 6. Röslein dreie in der Reihe
 7. Kommt dir manchmal
 11. Rote Abendwolken ziehn

* Commissioned by Cal Performances; the Los Angeles Philharmonic;
Symphony Center Presents, Chicago; and Carnegie Hall.

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Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) Songs

Though Brahms is most widely famed as an instrumental composer, more than half of his opus numbers are devoted to vocal works—solo songs, song cycles, duets, quartets, cantatas, folksong arrangements, canons, psalms, and choral pieces, both accompanied and unaccompanied. He was greatly experienced regarding vocal performance, appearing frequently as piano accompanist in song recitals and conducting choruses in Germany and in Vienna with great success, and his texted music is rooted directly in the sound and nature of the human voice. (Choral conducting was the only vocation at which he ever held a regular job.) Brahms's output of original solo songs totaled nearly 200 separate items to texts by some 60 authors; his folksong arrangements add half again that number of pieces to his catalog. These compositions span his career, from the early Op. 6 Songs, created when he was only 20, to the final set of folksongs, issued three years before his death. Though these songs cover a wide stylistic and expressive spectrum, they have in common several characteristics: the primacy of the voice and the melodic line, a quality grown from Brahms's lifelong infatuation with the directness and lyricism of folksong; the use of the piano to provide a richly harmonized counterpoint to the melody; clarity of form; integration of voice and accompaniment; and a generally conservative idiom. As may be surmised from this stylistic litany, Brahms's chief concern in his songs was musical and expressive, not poetic or philosophical. He held that the more perfect the poem, the less chance there was for music to enhance it. The literary quality of the verses that he chose was therefore less important to him than their ability to inspire music, and the names of Goethe, Eichendorff, Rückert, and Mörike fare poorly numerically against those of Geibel, Daumer, Hebbel, and Flemming among his works. Still, Brahms is among the most highly regarded practitioners of the 19th-century *Lied*, equaled in this

genre only by Schubert, Schumann, and Wolf. "While Brahms does not contribute markedly to intensifying the ideals of musico-poetic relationships in the Romantic era," summarized Donald Ivey in his survey of the art song, "he most assuredly does make a significant contribution to the repertory of song."

Tor Aulin (1866–1914) *Til en ros*

Composed in 1903.

Tor Aulin, one of Sweden's leading violinists, conductors and composers in the decades surrounding the turn of the 20th century, was born in Stockholm in 1866 and studied at the Swedish Royal Academy of Music from 1877 to 1883 (violin with C. J. Lindberg and theory with Conrad Nordqvist) and in Berlin from 1884 to 1886 (violin with Émile Sauret, composition with Philipp Scharwenka). Aulin worked as an orchestral violinist upon his return to Sweden, and in 1887 he founded the Aulin Quartet, which for the next 25 years toured Scandinavia and northern Europe playing not only the established string quartet repertory (especially the works of Beethoven) but also compositions by Berwald, Grieg, Sjögren, Stenhammar, and other Scandinavian composers. (Stenhammar was often a guest pianist with the quartet.) In 1889, Aulin was appointed concertmaster of the Swedish Royal Orchestra, a position he occupied until 1902, when he left to devote himself to conducting and composition. From 1902 to 1909, he was conductor of the Stockholm Concert Society, which he helped found, and then served as music director of the Göteborg Orchestra for three years. He died in the Stockholm suburb of Saltsjöbaden in March 1914.

Til en ros ("To a Rose") is one of the *Fyra serbiska folksånger* ("Four Serbian Folk Songs") of 1903 that Aulin based on texts from a collection of *Songs of the Serbs*, published by the Bohemian-born Austrian writer Siegfried Kapper in 1852.

Brahms Piano Works, Opp. 117 and 118

Composed in 1892–1893.

Brahms was a gifted pianist who toured and concertized extensively in northern Europe early in his career. He made his recital debut in Vienna in 1862, and returned there regularly until settling permanently in that city in 1869. By then, his reputation as a composer was well established, and he was devoting more time to creative work than to practicing piano. He continued to play, however, performing his own chamber music and solo pieces both in public and in private, and even serving as soloist in the première of his daunting Second Concerto on November 9, 1881, in Budapest. His last public appearance as a pianist was in Vienna on January 11, 1895, just two years before he died, in a performance of his Clarinet Sonatas with Richard Mühlfeld.

Brahms's pianism was noted less for its flashy virtuosity than for its rich emotional expression, fluency, individuality, nearly orchestral sonority, and remarkable immediacy, and his compositions for the instrument are marked by the same introspection, seriousness of purpose, and deep musicality that characterized his playing. His keyboard output, though considerable, falls into three distinct periods: an early burst of large-scale works mostly in Classical forms (1851–1853: three Sonatas, Opp. 1, 2, and 5; the *Scherzo* in E-flat minor, Op. 4; and the *Four Ballades*, Op. 10); a flurry of imposing compositions in variations form from 1854 to 1863 on themes by Schumann, Haydn, Handel, and Paganini; and a late blossoming of 30 succinct *Capriccios*, *Intermezzos*, *Ballades*, and *Rhapsodies* from 1878–1879 and 1892–1893, issued as Opp. 76, 79, and 116–119. To these must be added the dance-inspired compositions of the late 1860s: the *Waltzes* (Op. 39) and the *Hungarian Dances*. Brahms's late works, most notably those from 1892 and 1893, share the autumnal quality that marks much of the music of his ripest maturity. "It is wonderful how he combines passion and

tenderness in the smallest of spaces," said Clara Schumann of this music. To which William Murdoch added, "Brahms had begun his life as a pianist, and his first writing was only for the pianoforte. It was natural that at the end of his life he should return to playing this friend of his youth and writing for it. This picture should be kept in mind when thinking of these last sets. They contain some of the loveliest music ever written for the pianoforte. They are so personal, so introspective, so intimate that one feels that Brahms was exposing his very self. They are the mirror of his soul."

Missy Mazzoli (b. 1980) *Bolts of Loving Thunder*

Composed in 2013. Premiered on January 5, 2014, at the University of Denver by Emanuel Ax.

Missy Mazzoli is a gifted artist of wide-ranging talents whose works, according to her publisher, the distinguished New York firm of G. Schirmer, "reflect a trend among composers of her generation to combine styles, writing music for the omnivorous audiences of the 21st century." Mazzoli was born in 1980 in the Philadelphia suburb of Abington, and studied at Boston University, Yale University School of Music, and Royal Conservatory of the Hague; her composition teachers included Louis Andriessen, Martijn Padding, Richard Ayres, David Lang, Martin Bresnick, Aaron Jay Kernis, Charles Fussell, Richard Cornell, Martin Amlin, and John Harbison. Mazzoli taught composition at Yale in 2006 before serving for the next three years as Executive Director of the MATA Festival in New York, an organization dedicated to promoting the work of young composers; in 2010, she was appointed to the faculty of New York's Mannes College of Music. She was a Composer-Educator Partner with the Albany Symphony in 2011–2012 and currently holds residencies with Opera Philadelphia, Gotham Chamber Opera and Music Theatre Group. She is also active internationally as a pianist, and often performs with

Victoire, an ensemble she founded in 2008 to perform her own compositions; the group's debut CD, *Cathedral City* (2010), featuring eight of her works, earned positive reviews from both the classical and indie rock communities. Mazzoli has received four ASCAP Young Composer Awards, a Fulbright Grant to the Netherlands, the Detroit Symphony's Elaine Lebenbom Award, and grants from the Jerome Foundation, American Music Center and Barlow Endowment. Her current projects include a full-length stage work for Opera Philadelphia's 2015–2016 season.

Mazzoli writes: "*Bolts of Loving Thunder* was composed in 2013 for pianist Emanuel Ax. When Manny asked me to write a piece that would appear on a program of works by Brahms, I immediately thought back to my experiences as a young pianist. I have clear memories of crashing sloppily but enthusiastically through the Rhapsodies and Intermezzi, and knew I wanted to create a work based on this romantic, stormy idea of Brahms, complete with hand crossing and dense layers of chords. I also felt that there needed to be a touch of the exuberant, floating melodies typical of young, 'pre-beard' Brahms. Brahms's 'F-A-F' motive (shorthand for 'frei aber froh,' or 'free but happy') gradually breaks through the surface of this work, frenetically bubbling out in the final section. The title comes from a line in John Ashbery's poem *Farm Implements and Rutabagas in a Landscape*."

Nico Muhly (b. 1981)
So Many Things

Composed in 2013. Premiered on January 21, 2014, in Los Angeles by mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter and pianist Emanuel Ax.

As Brahms did, Nico Muhly has a great affection and affinity for vocal music, both contemporary and from the Renaissance. Born in Vermont and raised in Providence, Rhode Island, he sang in a church choir as a child, and has long loved Tudor sacred music. Muhly graduated from Columbia University with a

degree in English and from the Juilliard School with a master's degree in music. His teachers at Juilliard included Christopher Rouse and John Corigliano, and he worked for Philip Glass as a programmer and editor. He has collaborated with such indie artists as Grizzly Bear, Björk, and Antony and the Johnsons as a performer and arranger, and he has had an album of his choral music recorded by the Los Angeles Master Chorale, in addition to his own albums. Unlike Brahms, Muhly also composes for the theater. His first full-scale opera, *Two Boys*, was commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center Theater, and English National Opera, and its premières in London in 2012 and in New York in autumn 2013 have been much discussed.

So Many Things is a sort of through-composed cantata, two shorter lyrics framing a longer poem. Though in style and form little like most of the poetry that Brahms set, the subjects of love and loneliness, mortality and memory in these texts resonate harmoniously with his songs, including many on this program.

In commissioning new works for this "Brahms and Beyond," Emanuel Ax and his collaborators Anne Sofie von Otter and Yo-Yo Ma asked composers to consider the notes F, A, and F of Brahms's motto, "*frei aber froh*" ("free but happy"), as used by Brahms in the opening of his Third Symphony. Muhly references the upward thrust of that motive in some of the right hand gestures in the piano part, but he seems to have found particular inspiration in the fact that A is flattened more often than not in Brahms's opening bars. Ambivalent modality well suits Muhly's texts here, allowing muted colors that can be pierced by sudden changes of harmonic direction or gradually shifted through common tone effects.

Muhly writes: "Early in the process, Manny mentioned that he had been giving some thought to Brahms's F-A-F motive and its corollary, F-A-E ('*frei aber einsam*'—'free but lonely'). In the most abstract way, I allowed these intervallic anxieties to dictate much of the shape of the vocal lines—obsessive thirds and resolutions that displace rather than soothe."

There are many other Brahmsian allusions as well. Brilliantly activated arpeggios and widely spaced chords (with some hand-crossing) accompany the sensual reverie of the first lyric. Muhly supports the longer quasi-strophic poem with an ostinato bass and prominent three-against-two cross rhythms. Cross-relations abound in the ghostly, fluttering introduction to the final lyric, which gives the work its title and reconnects with the opening in sound and attitude, while pressing its harmonic/modal ambiguities to a faded conclusion at once logical, surprising, and utterly apt.

Brahms
Zigeunerlieder, Op. 103

Composed in 1887–1888. Premiered on October 31, 1888, in Berlin.

According to an old Hungarian saying, "Give a Magyar peasant a glass of water and a Gypsy fiddler, and he will become completely drunk." So it is not surprising that when Kossuth and his Hungarian forces rose up in 1848 against the domination of their homeland by Austria, their ardor was reinforced by the sound of fiery Gypsy music played by Ede Reményi, a young violinist whose politics were as radical as his performances were inspired. Reményi was exiled for his participation in that unsuccessful coup, and he packed his fiddle and his chauvinism off to America for a time.

Returning to Europe in 1852, Reményi met a young pianist in Hamburg named Johannes Brahms, and the two lit out on foot to dazzle the world with their music. The hit of their programs was the traditional Magyar music that Reményi played "with a fire and abandon that excited his hearers to a wild enthusiasm," according to one contemporary report. Brahms took part by improvising the accompaniments. They traveled mostly through villages and byways, where they added to their repertory by watching the peasants sing and dance. Despite a certain success as a team, however, the differences between the quiet, conservative

Brahms and the flamboyant, revolutionary Reményi drove the two apart less than three months after they started their tour.

The seed planted by Reményi's playing and the enthusiastic music-making of the country villagers, however, stayed firmly rooted in Brahms's mind, and it later blossomed in such Gypsy-inspired compositions as the finale of the Violin Concerto, the closing movement of the G minor Piano Quartet (Op. 25), the *Hungarian Dances*, and the eleven *Zigeunerlieder* for Vocal Quartet and Piano—"Gypsy Songs"—that he wrote during the winter of 1887–1888. The music of the *Zigeunerlieder* is original with Brahms, but the texts were derived from Hungarian folk songs polished into rhyming German by the Viennese businessman and journalist Hugo Conrat, who frequently hosted the composer at his household musical soirées; Conrat based his finished versions on translations done by the Hungarian-born governess of his three daughters, one Fräulein Witzl. The *Zigeunerlieder* were introduced informally at one of Conrat's gatherings (before the performance began, Brahms led the modest Fräulein Witzl into the room, announced that she was the "originator" of the songs, and invited her to listen), and given their public première on October 31, 1888, at the Berlin Singakademie; Simrock published the score that same month. Brahms was pleased with what he termed "this excessively gay stuff," and he immediately sent a copy of the score to Clara Schumann, his lifelong friend and confidante, who replied, "I am quite delighted with them. How original they are, how full of freshness, charm and passion.... Let me press your hand, dear giver of joys." Clara's comments echoed public sentiment, and the popularity of the *Zigeunerlieder* encouraged Brahms to make a version of eight of them for solo voice and piano in 1889 (he omitted Nos. 8–10), and to write four more such numbers for quartet in 1892, which he included in his Op. 112 Six Quartets.

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Lisa Mare Mazzucco

pieces from composers Missy Mazzoli, Nico Muhly, Brett Dean, and Anders Hillborg all producing works linked to Brahms and commissioned jointly between the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cal Performances, the Chicago Symphony, and Carnegie Hall, with the participation of collaborators Anne Sophie von Otter and Yo-Yo Ma. To conclude the season, Mr. Ax travels to Hong Kong and Australia for a complete cycle of Beethoven concertos with incoming chief conductor David Robertson in Sydney and with Sir Andrew Davis in Melbourne.

In conjunction with Mr. Ax's multiple weeks as Artist in Residence with the New York Philharmonic during the 2012–2013 season, Sony Classical released his latest recital disc of works from Haydn to Schumann to Copland reflecting their different uses of the “variation” concept. In the spring, he joined that orchestra on their European tour conducted by Alan Gilbert. He returned to the orchestras in Los Angeles, St. Louis, Atlanta, Detroit, Washington, and Pittsburgh, where he is a beloved regular.

Highlights of the 2011–2012 season included return visits to the symphonies of Boston, Houston, Toronto, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Cincinnati; the New York and Los Angeles philharmonics; and the San Francisco Symphony, with whom he collaborated in the “American Mavericks” festival presented in San Francisco, Ann Arbor, and at Carnegie Hall. As curator and participant with the Chicago Symphony for “Keys to the City,” a two-week spring residency, he performed multiple rôles as leader and collaborator in a festival celebrating the many varied facets of the piano.

Mr. Ax has been an exclusive Sony Classical recording artist since 1987. His recent releases include Mendelssohn trios with Mr. Ma and Itzhak Perlman, Strauss's *Enoch Arden* narrated by Patrick Stewart, and discs of two-piano music by Brahms and Rachmaninoff with Yefim Bronfman. Mr. Ax received Grammy Awards for the second and third volumes of his cycle of Haydn's piano sonatas. He has also

made a series of Grammy-winning recordings with Mr. Ma of the Beethoven and Brahms sonatas for cello and piano. His other recordings include the concertos of Liszt and Schoenberg, three solo Brahms albums, an album of tangos by Ástor Piazzolla, and the première recording of John Adams's *Century Rolls* with the Cleveland Orchestra for Nonesuch. In the 2004–2005 season, Mr. Ax also contributed to an International Emmy Award-winning BBC documentary commemorating the Holocaust that aired on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

In recent years, Mr. Ax has turned his attention toward the music of 20th-century composers, premiering works by John Adams, Christopher Rouse, Krzysztof Penderecki, Bright Sheng, and Melinda Wagner. Mr. Ax is also devoted to chamber music, and has worked regularly with such artists as Young Uck Kim, Cho-Liang Lin, Mr. Ma, Edgar Meyer, Peter Serkin, Jaime Laredo, and the late Isaac Stern.

Mr. Ax resides in New York City with his wife, pianist Yoko Nozaki. They have two children together, Joseph and Sarah. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and holds honorary doctorates of music from Yale and Columbia universities.

Mr. Ax is managed exclusively by Opus 3 Artists, 470 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016, www.opus3artists.com. He plays the Steinway piano. For more information, please visit www.emanuelax.com.



Ewa-Marie Runquist

Internationally acclaimed Swedish mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter has long been considered one of the finest singers of her generation. A lengthy and exclusive relationship with Deutsche Grammophon has produced a wealth of recordings and numerous awards, including an International Record Critics' Award (recording artist of the year), a Grammy Award (best classical vocal performance) for Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, and a Diapason d'Or for a recording of Swedish songs with her long-time accompanist, Bengt Forsberg. She collaborated with pop legend Elvis Costello on the disc *For the Stars*, and in October 2010 released her first recording with the Naïve label, *Love Songs*, a collaboration with renowned jazz pianist Brad Mehldau. Her 2012 disc *Sogno Barocco*—a collection of Italian baroque arias, scenes, and duets with Leonardo García-Alarcón and Cappella Mediterranea—was nominated for a Grammy, and her fourth disc for Naïve, *Douce France*, was released in November 2013.

Ms. von Otter earned an international reputation as an outstanding Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) with performances at the Royal

Opera House, Bayerische Staatsoper, Opéra National de Paris, and the Wiener Staatsoper. She also performed the role as part of a series of engagements with James Levine and the Metropolitan Opera, and in Japan under Carlos Kleiber (available on DVD). Other seminal opera recordings include *Le nozze di Figaro* under Mr. Levine; *Idomeneo*, *La clemenza di Tito*, and *Orfeo ed Euridice* under John Eliot Gardiner; Handel's *Ariodante* and *Hercules* under Marc Minkowski; and *Ariadne auf Naxos* under Giuseppe Sinopoli.

Recent opera highlights have included Clytemnestre (*Iphigenie en Aulide*) in Pierre Audi's production for De Nederlandse Opera, conducted by Mr. Minkowski (available on DVD); Geneviève (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) under Philippe Jordan for Opéra National de Paris (available on DVD); Countess Geschwitz (*Lulu*) at the Metropolitan Opera, conducted by Fabio Luisi; and her role début in Charpentier's *Médeé* for Oper Frankfurt. She appeared in *Giulio Cesare* at the 2012 Salzburg Festival with an all-star cast that included Cecilia Bartoli and Andreas Scholl. This season, she appears in Christoph Marthaler's production of *Les contes d'Hoffmann* at Madrid's Teatro Real, in *Götterdämmerung* at Deutsche Oper Berlin under Sir Simon Rattle, and in *The Rake's Progress* at Theater an der Wien under Michael Boder. The diversity of this ever-evolving repertoire has played a key role in sustaining her international reputation as an operatic force.

A busy concert schedule takes Ms. von Otter to all corners of the globe. Last season, she appeared with the Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra under David Robertson, the New York Philharmonic under Alan Gilbert, the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Daniele Gatti, Washington's National Symphony Orchestra under Christoph Eschenbach, and the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra under Sakari Oramo. She performed *Wesendonck Lieder* with Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse under Mr. Minkowski and with the hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt under Paavo Järvi, as part of the Wagner bicentenary. In 2011, she appeared with Jonas Kaufmann and the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Claudio Abbado for a televised performance of *Das Lied von der Erde* on the 100th anniversary of Mahler's death.

Current season concert highlights include a European recital tour to accompany the release of *Douce France* and a U.S. recital tour with Emanuel Ax performing Brahms plus a new work by Nico Muhly. She performs Sibelius songs with the Minnesota Orchestra under Osmo Vänskä, *Die sieben Todsünden* and songs by Weill with Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France with HK Gruber, and she gives a special New Year's Eve performance with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin at the Tempodrom in Berlin.