

# Orchestra

TOSHIYUKI SHIMADA  
Music Director & Conductor

## OF THE SOUTHERN FINGER LAKES

### Season Finale & Toast to the Schumanns

Saturday, May 13, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Clemens Center Elmira, NY

#### *Program*

Clara Schumann (1819—1896) arr. Cowdery [11']  
Abendferi in Venedig (Ave Maria)  
Vorwärts (Onward)  
Gondoliera (Gondola Song)

Johannes Brahms (1833—1897)  
Schicksalslied “Song of Destiny”, Op. 54 [18']  
I. Langsam und sehnsuchtsvoll  
II. Allegro  
III. Adagio

Clara Schumann  
Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 7 [23']  
I. Allegro maestoso  
II. Romanze  
III. Finale

*Benjamin Pawlak, piano*

#### *Intermission*

Robert Schumann (1810—1856)  
Symphony No.1 “Spring” in B flat Major, Op. 38 [30']  
I. Andante unpoco maestoso—Allegro molto vivace  
II. Larghetto  
III. Scherzo. Molto vivace  
IV. Allegro animato e grazioso

## *Featured Soloist*

**Benjamin Pawlak** is a graduate of The Juilliard School, where he studied under Jonathan Feldman and Lydia Brown. A 2019 graduate of Texas Christian University, he received a Master of Music in piano performance there while studying with John Owings. He holds a Bachelor of Music in piano performance from Ithaca College where he studied with Vadim Serebryany, Jennifer Hayghe, and the late Greg DeTurck.



Since graduating, Benjamin has played with the New York Philharmonic, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra. He was also a featured musician in the Nashville Chamber Music Society's summer 2022 concert series and will be returning to play with them in 2023.

At Juilliard, he performed as a member of the Juilliard Orchestra and AXIOM, and he appeared in ChamberFest during the winter term of 2020 and the spring of 2022. During his time in New York City, Benjamin has also performed at David Geffen Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Hall at the Kaufman Center, and Carnegie Hall.

In the summer of 2021, Benjamin attended the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California. There he was a collaborative piano fellow studying under Jonathan Feldman, Margaret McDonald, and Natasha Kislenko. He will again attend the Music Academy as a 2023 fellow this year. Other festival appearances include the Brancaloni International Music Festival in Piobbico, Italy, The Brevard Music Center, and Credo Chamber Music.

Alongside his piano studies at Juilliard, he pursued film scoring with composers Edward Bilous and Nathan Prillaman. He had three scores for independent short films screened at Art of the Score at Lincoln Center in November 2022, and has recently completed work on two additional films to be screened at festivals this fall. Benjamin placed as a finalist in the 2020 Indie Film Music Contest, and has performed his own solo piano works in both the United States and Europe.

Outside of composition, Benjamin has written about film scores as well. His work was presented for the first time in December 2022 at the Université de Versailles in Paris as a presentation for their symposium on John Williams.

Benjamin, a native of Big Flats, New York, lives in Manhattan where he works as a pianist and composer.

# Chorus of the Southern Finger Lakes

William Cowdery, Conductor

## *Soprano*

Wendy Alberg  
Sunwha Choi  
Patt Defendorf  
Andi Dietrich  
Kathy Gill  
Mary Griffin  
Joy McFarland  
Becky Rima  
Pamela Swieringa

## *Alto*

Carol Begeal  
Louise Bush  
Barbara Condon  
Tina Klein  
Barbara O'Brien  
Patricia Peters  
Irene Peterson  
Pam Schmitt  
Cari Stage  
Judy Thomas

## *Tenor*

Diane Edwards  
Tom O'Brien  
Barry Winters  
John Zollweg

## *Bass*

Gary Brown  
Matt Burroughs  
William Cowdery  
Jeff DeMeritt  
Scott Frye  
Walt Personius  
Dave Rapplepe  
Cameron Spicknall



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# Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes

Toshiyuki Shimada, Music Director and Conductor

## *Violin I*

Augusto Diemecke, concertmaster  
Debrah Devine, assistant concertmaster  
Craig Evans  
Jessica Tae Anthony  
Lisa Lantz  
Rei-Chi Liao  
Chet Chang  
Lydia Werbizky

## *Violin II*

Denise Nosewicz, principal  
Don Webster  
Gary Chollet  
Tracey Ingerick  
Erica Nick  
YuRay Chu  
Alyssa McDonald

## *Viola*

Max Buckholtz, principal  
John Paul Tobin  
Ashley English  
Keegan Donlan  
Katie Marshall  
Megan Wike

## *Cello*

Christine Lowe-Diemecke, principal  
Hannah Pietra  
Gilbert Antoine  
Eric Johnson  
Rintaro Wada

## *Bass*

Mario Pietra, principal  
Nic Mathisen  
Leo Gonta

## *Flute*

Jeanne Sperber, principal  
Laura Campbell

## *Oboe*

Susan Laib, principal  
Anita Pawlak

## *Clarinet*

Emily Dobmeier, principal  
Laurie Dobmeier

## *Bassoon*

David Resig, principal  
David Zimet

## *Horn*

Tyler Ogilvie, principal  
Terry Martens  
Rebecca Dodson-Webster  
Linda Bergstrom

## *Trumpet*

Frank Gabriel Campos, principal  
Lindsey Burroughs

## *Trombone*

Duane Smith, principal  
Sarahjane Harrigan  
Craig Harrigan

## *Timpani*

John Allis, principal

## *Percussion*

Simon Bjarning, principal

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**Choral Translations**  
*Translations by William Cowdery*

**Three Choruses on Poems of Emanuel Geibel (sung in English)**  
**By Clara Wieck-Schumann**

**I. Vespers in Venice**

Ave Maria! Now from every tower  
O'er hill and dale an evening chime doth  
toll.  
Ave Maria! Now a peaceful hour  
Bids us to pray to her with heart and soul.  
The host of heaven now lays its lilies down  
Before a Father's high and mighty throne;  
Their holy songs float down to us from  
over,  
And softly clouds like roses rise and hover.

O holy wisdom, filling every heart,  
And lifting all things heavenward in pray-  
er!  
O blest devotion, calling us apart  
From every toil and woe and daily care!  
Our earthly joys and triumphs now are  
done,  
Our earthly sorrows glimmer and are  
gone.  
Ave Maria! echoes through the even,  
And spirit, song, and soul are one with  
heaven.

**II. Onward**

Leave your fears and past behind you, for  
a future you shall know;  
Leave the dreaming that would bind you;  
onward, onward you must go.  
Falter not, though snares befall you,  
though the way unbending seems;  
Tarry not, though sirens call you; onward  
rise to nobler dreams!

Onward, onward, ever singing, mid the  
perils of this world,  
Till a shout of joy be ringing, and its  
banner be unfurled,

Till the dark be past forever, and the light  
of truth be known,  
And its flame extinguished never, and you  
find a laurel crown!

Onward, though the pain be stinging,  
though the strife be hard and long;  
On to heaven ever winging, "Onward!  
onward!" all our song!

**III. Gondola Song**

Away you go where stars do shine, gliding  
along with me,  
Aboard a gondola so fine, upon a silver  
sea.  
The night lies soft upon the air, the moon  
shines bright above.  
A sweet guitar makes music fair and tells  
us how to love.

*Away you go where stars do shine, glid-  
ing along with me,*

*Aboard a gondola so fine, upon a silver  
sea.*

How sweet the hour for only two, sailing  
the billowing deep,  
The heavens arched in bluest blue, and all  
below asleep.  
And as all sleeps an eye meets eye, and  
says what none can say,  
And lip meets lip, and sea meets sky, and  
all is dreamed away.

*Away you go where stars do shine, glid-  
ing along with me,*

*Aboard a gondola so fine, upon a silver  
sea.*

***Choral Translations***  
*Translations by William Cowdery*

**BRAHMS**

**Schicksalslied (Sung in German)**

Ihr wandelt droben im Licht,  
Auf weichem Boden, selige Genien!

Glänzende Götterlüfte  
Rühren euch leicht,  
Wie die Finger der Künstlerin  
Heilige Saiten.

Schicksallos, wie der schlafende Säugling  
Atmen die Himmlischen;  
Keusch bewahrt  
In bescheidener Knospe  
Blühet ewig ihnen der Geist,  
Und die seligen Augen  
Blicken in stiller, ewiger Klarheit.

Doch uns ist gegeben  
Auf keiner Stätte zu ruhn;  
Es schwinden, es fallen  
Die leidenden Menschen  
Blindlings von einer Stunde zur andern,  
Wie Wasser von Klippe  
zu Klippe geworfen,  
Jahrlang ins Ungewisse hinab.

*Friedrich Hölderlin, 1799*

**Song of Destiny**

Ye tread on pathways of light,  
Through fields of azure, spirits beyond the  
skies!

Soft, balmy breezes lightly  
Fan your white robes,  
Like the fingers that wake the harp's  
Blest and benign inspiration.

Free from fate, like a babe in its slumber  
The heavenly spirits breathe;  
In their hearts,  
Like the rosebud enfolded,  
Burns the flame forever enshrined;  
And their vision celestial  
Gazes serene on light everlasting.

But we have been fated  
To find on earth no repose;  
They vanish, they falter,  
Our suffering, sorrowing brothers,  
Blindfold, from hour to hour they are driven,  
Like water is dashed  
'Gainst the rocks by the tempest;  
Darkly the unknown lures us below.

***Program Notes***

*by William Cowdery*

**Clara Wieck-Schumann *Three Choruses on Poems of Emanuel Geibel***

Clara Schumann wrote this charming set of songs in 1848 as a surprise birthday gift for her husband Robert. She rehearsed them secretly with singers from his own local choir, the Chorgesangverein (Choral Union) of Dresden. These fine musicians serenaded Robert on the morning of his 38th birthday, June 8, 1848. The songs remained otherwise largely unknown until their publication in 1989, over 140 years after Clara composed them.

Emanuel Geibel (1815-1884) was one of the most popular and prolific lyric poets of his day. The Schumanns knew Geibel personally, and Robert had already set several of his verses to music, both as solo Lieder and choral part-songs. Clara's choice of lyrics would seem to reflect three special facets of her love for Robert, the spiritual (Vespers in Venice), the revolutionary (Onward), and the romantic (Gondola Song). Together they bespeak her deep and uncanny insight into Robert's many-sided personality.

Tonight, we will sing these songs in English rather than the original German. We also give them a light orchestral accompaniment, rather than keeping them a cappella as they were originally sung at Robert's breakfast. We hope they sound as fresh as they did a hundred and seventy-five years ago.

### ***Program Notes***

*by Sarah Fritz*

#### **Johannes Brahms *Schicksalslied* Op. 54**

Johannes Brahms began composing his *Schicksalslied* (Song of Destiny) in 1869, the year after the premiere of his famous German Requiem. Though only in his thirties, he wrote many pieces about the starkness of human mortality with an uplifting outlook toward a heavenly afterlife. Despite being raised in the German Lutheran tradition, his text are totally agnostic

After the premature tragic death of her husband, Clara Schumann was overwhelmed by grief for many years. Johannes, her professional colleague and beloved friend for the next forty years, wrote her comforting letters: "Do not imagine that life has little more in store for you... Why do you suppose that humanity was given the divine gift of hope?" He sent Clara his first choral work about death, a gravesong in 1857, and she replied, "I have had it in my mind for days. I should like to have it sung at my grave someday—I believe that in writing it you must have thought of me."

The *Schicksalslied* was begun around the time when Clara realized her oldest son was afflicted with a mental health disorder so severe, she'd be forced to commit him to a sanatorium. She wrote to Johannes, "It is really a hard fate... but I have such a strong conviction that I have to go on... the happiness that yet remains to me on earth does after all outweigh the pain." When Johannes completed the work, he brought it to Clara. Her response is part of another diary entry about her son: "He is in a hopeless state... I often feel stunned when I think of him—I, an old woman, enjoy life yet, and a poor young fellow like that is condemned to pass it in darkness... Johannes gave me great pleasure with a new composition, Hölderlin's *Schicksalslied*, a beautiful work for chorus and orchestra."

It begins with a slow heavenly orchestral introduction depicting the altos' angelic first line of text, "Ye tread on pathways of light, Through fields of azure, spirits beyond the skies!" The middle section transitions to an angsty minor key with fast notes in the strings, and the descends into a dark melancholy,

“But we have been fated; To find on earth no repose.” After the final verse full of suffering comes an ethereal orchestral postlude, returning to the beauty of the introduction and a promise of hope.

### **Clara Wieck-Schumann** *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 7*

Clara Wieck-Schumann was a child prodigy who began composing at age nine and writing for orchestra at age thirteen. She completed this concerto, her first, at age fifteen, premiered and published it at age sixteen—at a younger age than any other famous classical music composer, including Mozart. Felix Mendelssohn conducted the premiere with the composer at the piano in Leipzig, Germany in 1835. It is a work of a confident young composer full of ingenuity, sparking with virtuosic fireworks, and overflowing with romantic melodies. Not only was Clara an internationally famous touring virtuoso by the age of eighteen, who some believed superior to Franz Liszt, she was also a young woman falling in love for the first time. She and her future fiancé, Robert had their first kiss a month after her concerto’s premiere.

Just twenty minutes in length, the concerto’s genius is in its brevity—three-movements tied seamlessly together with no breaks. The first movement begins with a deceptively simple march in the orchestra, and the piano enters in a storm of upward moving octaves. (Turned upside down, this will remind listeners of the opening of her husband’s concerto composed a decade later.)

The middle movement transforms the march into a beautiful bel canto piano solo—revealing how much young Clara was a fan of Bellini operas. Throughout this movement the orchestra sits silently until a solo cello enters, likely symbolizing her beloved Robert in a duet with Clara at the piano. (This revolutionary use of an intimate cello solo within the slow movement of an orchestral concerto was used by many composers after Clara—including her husband, Liszt, and Brahms.)

Without pause, heralded by trumpets, the third movement dances forth in a Chopin-esque polonaise—still using the same note pattern as the opening March. (This skipping melody so closely resembles that of the last movement of Johannes’s Brahms’s first concerto, he likely used it for inspiration.) The technical virtuosity is among the most difficult in the repertoire with an explosive, edge-of-your-seat finale.

Despite the brilliance of the work, Clara only performed it seven times. Audiences lauded it, but critics reviewed it with bias against Clara for being a woman. Even her future husband Robert allowed it to be dismissed as “lady’s work” in his newspaper.

Clara vehemently defended her concerto, but the unfair criticisms influenced her to never write for orchestra again. She went on to compose many other great works—a piano trio and sonata, exquisite romanzas for piano and wonderful German songs—but we will forever wonder what symphonies she may have written had she been lucky enough to be born a man.



**Robert Schumann** *Symphony No. 1 “Spring” in B-flat Major, Op. 38*

Clara Schumann begged her fiancé Robert for a symphony during their engagement, and he began it four months after their marriage in 1841. He’d written her years before that he wanted nothing more in life than to be married to her and to write symphonies as great as Franz Schubert.

Robert called it the “Spring Symphony” from the start, the idea materializing in the darkest months of winter from a keen longing for spring—and the same month Clara learned they were expecting their first daughter, Marie. Clara wrote in the marriage diary which the couple kept together, “When a man composes a symphony one really can’t expect him to concern himself with other things—thus even his wife must accept herself as set aside!” Four days later, the symphony’s first sketch was completed. “My poor Robert has already spent several sleepless nights,” Clara wrote.

The writing of the instrumental parts began immediately, but his requirement that Clara not distract him by her piano playing weighed on her. “I don’t get to play at all nowadays,” she wrote. “If only it were possible to resolve the evil of the thin walls.” Her own composing was put on hold for his, though Robert was grateful for her sacrifice. He wrote in the diary, “Were I to describe all the loving deeds Clara bestowed on me with such a willing heart during this time, I’d never get to the end of it.”

Within the month, he played the symphony for Clara and their friends. She wrote that it “truly inspires one with gusts of warm spring air...the tiny buds, the scent of the violets, the fresh green leaves, the birds in the air, all the things one sees living and spinning with the most youthful energy...the poetic breath of this work has deeply penetrated my innermost being.” She closed her praise with, “I kiss you most affectionately—not merely on account of your symphony, but also because of the heart from which it sprang.”

But his fevered exertions took their toll. “I feel the way a young woman must feel who has just delivered a baby,” he wrote. “So relieved, happy, and yet sick and in pain.” Clara described his vegetative state and encouraged him not to get depressed, especially when her father accused Robert of writing the symphony just to prove himself worthy of Clara.

Felix Mendelssohn approved the symphony with few corrections and conducted the premiere at the end of March. Clara performed on the same program for the first time since her marriage, making it their first joint concert as a married couple—and her debut as Clara Schumann.

*Sarah Fritz is a musician and musicologist specializing in Clara Wieck-Schumann. Her writings about Clara have appeared in many publications, including the New York Times. She also teaches at the Westminster Conservatory in Princeton, NJ.*

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