



‘Music that can captivate you’

Tenor Zach Borichevsky joins The Philadelphia Orchestra to perform Mahler tonight in Beaver Creek

By Chris Freud
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BEAVER CREEK — Like many, tenor Zach Borichevsky knows someone who’s not a big Mahler fan.

“My dad is one of those skeptics,” Borichevsky said. “He says that it’s so long and boring. It’s interesting to me. There are different types of music and with some music, there is less instant gratification. But that’s the type of music that can captivate you. If you listen to it a few times and get over that hump, it’s all the more gratifying and fascinating in how all the parts come together.”

Borichevsky, mezzo-soprano Theodora Hanslowe, with Bravo!’s own Anne-Marie McDermott on the piano, conductor Rossen Milanov and selected members of The Philadelphia Orchestra present Mahler’s “Das Lied von der Erde” or “The Song of the Earth” tonight at 6 at the Vilar Center in Beaver Creek as the Vail Valley Music Festival continues its summer-long chamber series.

The mortality of life

Some background first. “Das Lied” is poet Hans Bethge’s work “The Chinese Flute” set to music, translated from Chinese and eventually into German. (In his research for this performance, Borichevsky viewed the original Chinese manuscript, though he does not speak or read Chinese.) It is a song cycle and symphony combined into the so-called “song-symphony.” Originally written in 1907-08 for a full symphony, tonight’s performance is Arnold Schoenberg’s arrangement for approximately 18 musicians.

“I read somewhere that some said that Mahler liked to take all the instruments to the extreme, the violin to its highest note, the cello to its lowest,” Borichevsky said. “He does the same with the voice as well to the outermost extreme ranges. I’m glad for one thing that we’re doing the Schoenberg version, instead of the full orchestra, so I have a chance to warm up!”

Borichevsky, of course, was joking about “warming up,” but in his humor there is some

truth. For the performer, Mahler’s demanding score requires the soloist to be perfect in technique to meet the range of the piece. For the listener, “Das Lied” can be intimidating because of its scale of orchestration when presented in full. Tonight’s performance of the Schoenberg orchestration, as well as super titles (translated lyrics displayed on a screen), will make the piece a more intimate experience.

And as complicated as all of this may sound, “Das Lied” ponders the basic questions of the mortality of life, the passing of time and the pursuit of love. One example of this is the third movement, “Of Youth.” While a stereotypical portrayal of the Chinese in the early 20th century, the piece and the entire work illustrate common themes among cultures.

“The poetry is reminiscent of any German Romantic,” Borichevsky said. “(The common refrain of) ‘dark is the life and dark is the

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LEFT: Tenor Zach Borichevsky makes his Vail debut and his debut performance of Mahler’s “Das Lied von der Erde” at 6 p.m. today at the Vilar Performing Arts Center. SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

RIGHT: Members of The Philadelphia Orchestra are included in tonight’s Bravol program. ZAGH MAHONE | Special to the Daily

if you go ...

What: “Das Lied von der Erde” with members of The Philadelphia Orchestra and conductor Rossen Milanov.

Where: Vilar Performing Arts Center, Beaver Creek.

When: 6 p.m. tonight. Pre-concert lecture at 5 p.m. in the Vilar lobby.

Cost: \$27. More information: Call 877-812-5700 or www.vailmusic.org.

BRAVO!

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death' could be any German poet of the time. Regardless of Mahler's views of the Chinese, he's showing the similarities of culture. Everyone thinks the same thing when they sing drinking songs."

Borichevsky will be not only making his Bravo! debut tonight, but will be performing in Colorado for the first time. He's arrived early, spending some time in Crested Butte and Vail to get used to the altitude.

"It's very important," he said. "I'm out here a few days early to get used to it. I think Colorado is my 44th or 45th state, but it's just gorgeous, I'm glad to be here."

Other Bravo! news

- The festival has many pre-performance talks with performers and music experts. Milanov will be talking about "Das Lied" in the lobby of the Vilar tonight at 5.

- Bravo! and The Philadelphia Orchestra had a very touching observance Saturday of the death of former first lady Betty Ford. Bravo! Executive Director John Giovando recalled

before Saturday's concert that the Fords were regular concertgoers. He remembered one time introducing from the stage former President Ford and "Betty Alpine Ford," mixing up the first lady and the gardens named for her nearby. Mrs. Ford took the miscue with humor at the time, but just as Giovando was recalling that faux pas Saturday, a clap of thunder came from the sky, as if the former first lady was giving him a rap on the knuckles from the beyond for good measure.

The Philadelphia Orchestra played a feeling rendition of "Nimrod" from Elgar's "Enigma Variations" before Saturday's concert in tribute to Ford.

- OK, we're biased. We love piano concertos, so we're still wowed by Yuja Wang (Rachmaninoff's Third) and Jean Yves-Thibaudet (Liszt's Second). Far too much fun for mortals to have.

- It's a weekend of great storytelling with Bravo! Check out Strauss' "Ein Heldenleben" (A Hero's Life) on Friday and Orff's "Carmina Burana" on Saturday with The Philadelphia Orchestra.

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ZACH MAHONE | Special to the Daily
Maestro Rossen Milanov will lead members of The Philadelphia Orchestra, guest vocalists and Bravo's artistic director and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott in Mahler's "Das Lied von der Erde." This is the Vail debut of Mahler's famed composition.