

WUSTL **MUSIC**

Sunday, February 19, 2023 - 7:00 P.M.
E. Desmond Lee Concert Hall, 560 Music Center

In Recital: Mark Sparks, flute and Orli Shaham, piano

Program

Sonata No. 1 in G Major, Op. 78 "Regensonate"
(1878-1879) (originally for violin and piano)

- I. *Vivace, ma non troppo*
- II. *Adagio*
- III. *Allegro molto moderato*

Johannes Brahms
(1833 - 1897)

Intermission

Regenlied, Op. 59, No. 3 (1872)
(originally for voice and piano)

Johannes Brahms

Three Romances for solo piano (1853)

- I. *Andante*
- II. *Allegretto*
- III. *Agitato*

Clara Schumann
(1819 - 1896)

Adagio and Allegro (1849)
(originally for horn and piano)

Robert Schumann
(1810 - 1856)

Sonata in B minor (1878)
(originally for violin and piano)
III. *Allegro molto vivace*

Amanda Röntgen-Maier
(1853 - 1894)

Regenlied, Op. 59, No. 3

Text by Klaus Groth (1819 - 1899)

Regenlied

Walle, Regen, walle nieder
 Wecke mir die Träume wieder,
 Die ich in der Kindheit träumte,
 Wenn das Nass im Sande schäumte!

Wenn die matte Sommerschüle
 Lässig stritt mit frischer Kühle,
 Und die blanken Blätter tauten
 Und die Saaten dunkler blauten,

Welche Wonne, in dem Fliessen
 Dann zu stehn mit nackten Füßen!
 An dem Grase hinzustreifen
 Und den Schaum mit Händen greifen,

Oder mit den heissen Wangen
 Kalte Tropfen aufzufangen,
 Und den neu erwachten
 Düften Seine Kinderbrust zu lüften!

Wie die Kelche, die da troffen,
 Stand die Seele atmend offen,
 Wie die Blumen, düftetrunken,
 In dem Himmelstau versunken.

Schauernd kühlte jeder Tropfen
 Tief bis an des Herzens Klopfen,
 Und der Schöpfung heilig Weben
 Drang bis ins verborgne Leben.-

Walle, Regen, walle neider,
 Wecke meine alten Lieder,
 Die wir in der Türe sangen,
 Wenn die Tropfen draussen klangen!

Möchte ihnen wieder lauschen,
 Ihrem süßen, feuchten Rauschen,
 Meine Seele sanft betauen
 Mit dem frommen Kindergrauen.

Rain Song

Cascade, rain, cascade down,
 Wake for me those dreams again,
 That I dreamed in childhood,
 When water foamed on the sand!

When oppressive summer heat
 Contended idly with cool freshness,
 And shiny leaves dripped with dew
 And crops turned a darker blue,

How blissful then it was to stand
 With naked feet in the flow!
 Or to brush against the grass
 Or grasp the foam in both hands,

Or to catch the cold drops
 On my glowing cheeks,
 And to bare my boyish breast
 To fresh-awakened scents!

Like the dripping chalices,
 My breathing soul stood open,
 Like the flowers drunk with fragrance,
 Drowned in heaven's dew.

Each shuddering drop seeped through
 And cooled my beating heart,
 And creation's sacred weaving
 Penetrated our secret lives.—

Cascade, rain, cascade down,
 Wake in me those old songs
 That we sang in the doorway
 When outside the drops resounded!

I'd love again to listen
 To their sweet, moist murmuring,
 And softly bedew my soul
 With innocent childlike awe.

Program Notes

As you enjoy tonight's program, I invite you to listen for a meeting of friends and colleagues. These composers—Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), Clara Schumann (1819-1896), Robert Schumann (1810-1856), and Amanda Röntgen-Maier (1853-1894)—knew one another and one another's work. The relationship between the Schumanns and Brahms is well-established. Archival evidence suggests that Röntgen-Maier and her composer-pianist husband, Julius Röntgen, hosted both Brahms and Clara at their home salon performances in Amsterdam. I am struck by the intricate web of personal and professional relationships represented by tonight's concert. These are pieces that the composers sent to one another for feedback, incorporated into their repertoire, and performed for and with one another.

Brahms, Clara, and Robert constitute a favorite tragic trio in the annals of music history. Although the exact nature of the relationships between the three remains one of speculation and disagreement, we can confidently say that the three meant a great deal to one another both personally and musically. Clara's father, Friedrich Wieck, taught Robert piano. Clara and Robert bonded over each other's music before they married in 1840. Robert championed Brahms as a composer from early in their friendship. Scholars argue that both Robert and Brahms wove "Clara themes" into their music. When Robert was institutionalized for his mental illness, Brahms helped Clara run her household and oversaw her children's education while she toured to support her family. Robert kept a sketch of Brahms with him in the asylum and continued to read and respond to Brahms' compositions. The deep friendship between Brahms and Clara persisted until her death in 1896, and Clara consistently championed the younger composer's works. Sharing music formed a core of the bond between these three composer-performers. The pieces tonight show this musical reciprocity.

Scholars frequently group Brahms' Violin Sonata in G (Op. 78) with Brahms' Second Symphony in D (Op. 73) because of their musical similarities. The two works share pastoral first movements that contrast with somber slow second movements. The violin sonata's third movement begins with a quotation of Brahms' song *Regenlied* (Op. 59, No. 3) in G minor. After the minor opening, listen for the second movement's main theme in major. Clara reacted to this piece with effusive praise, writing to Brahms that "Many others could perhaps understand and speak about it better but no one could feel it more than I do—the deepest and most tender strings of the soul vibrate to such music."

Regenlied, or *Rain Song*, is the third song in a set of eight that Brahms composed in 1872. Brahms sets poems by several different authors in Op. 59, including the ever-popular Goethe. However, the texts for *Regenlied* and three other songs in the collection were penned by Brahms' friend Klaus Groth. The song's lyrics address the rain directly, beginning "Pour, rain, pour down; reawaken in me the dreams that I dreamt in childhood when the moisture foamed in the sand." The singer recounts how the summer rain broke the stifling heat and revitalized the nature around them, penetrating to their heart and soul in an ecstatic sensory experience. The singer wishes to return to this feeling of hope, newness, and awe. The song communicates

nostalgia and melancholy for the impossibility of returning to an idyllic, innocent past. In addition to the lyrical focus on rain, both the voice and the accompaniment mimic the sound of raindrops throughout the piece. Listen for several persistent "raindrop" motives. The piano suggests rain with the running eighth notes that dominate accompaniment and the frequent staccato figures that mimic the sound of raindrops against a surface. The melody and the piano share another "rain" motif—a dotted rhythm that marks the "A" section of the piece. The piano immediately introduces this rhythm at the song's beginning; then the voice begins each phrase in the first section of the song with this long-short figure. Listen for the dotted rhythm to return toward the end of the song in both the melody and the accompaniment.

Clara wrote her *Three Romances* for solo piano in 1853. This composition exemplifies the deep interrelationship between Clara, Robert, and Brahms in microcosm. Clara dedicated these *Three Romances* to her "dear friend Johannes" on the occasion of his twenty-second birthday. Then, in the middle of the third movement, Clara quotes eight measures from Robert's *Carnaval* (Op. 9, No. 1). No record exists of Clara performing this piece in public, though Brahms performed the *Andante* in 1856. Of this piece, Clara wrote in her diary, "I myself was so sad when I wrote it." Clara was composing amidst several years of upheaval. The Schumann family had recently moved to Düsseldorf and Robert's mental illness was worsening. In fact, Robert would be institutionalized in 1854, just one year after Clara composed her *Three Romances*.

Clara premiered Robert's *Adagio* and *Allegro* with horn player Julius Schlitterlau. The piece is marked by sharp contrasts in mood between the tender *Adagio* movement and fiery *Allegro* finale. Robert composed this piece alongside several other chamber pieces (most notably the *Fantasiestücke* for clarinet and piano, Op. 73). The *Adagio* section began as a romance, like the preceding set of pieces by Clara. The term "romance" has been applied to a great variety of musical pieces. Here, "romance" refers to a short instrumental piece that emphasizes lyricism. After the premiere performance, Clara wrote that "The piece is splendid, fresh and passionate, just as I like it!"

Most of us have at least a passing familiarity with the history and mythology that surrounds the bonds between Brahms, Clara, and Robert. However, perhaps Amanda Röntgen-Maier is a new name to you. Röntgen-Maier first learned violin and piano from her father. After beginning formal studies at sixteen, Röntgen-Maier graduated from Stockholm's Kungliga Musikaliska Akademien (the Royal Swedish Academy of Music) in 1873 as the first woman ever to hold the title of Director of Music. This title denoted the composer's highest distinction in her studies of violin, piano, organ, composition, counterpoint, and music history and aesthetics. She was twenty years old. Although she concentrated on the organ at the Royal Academy, Röntgen-Maier performed mainly as a violinist after graduation. Her performances, which frequently included her own works, received great acclaim from the contemporary press. Röntgen-Maier performed the violin concerto that we will hear tonight for King Oscar II of Sweden and Norway in 1876. She performed frequently throughout Sweden,



Germany, Norway, St. Petersburg, and Finland, even declining the opportunity to tour the United States in 1878.

In the same way that Robert Schumann married the daughter of his piano teacher, Röntgen-Maier married the son of her violin teacher. After her graduation from the Royal Academy, Amanda studied with Engelbert Röntgen, and became acquainted with his son, pianist and composer Julius Röntgen (1855-1932). Like Clara and Robert, Amanda and Julius initially bonded over playing one another's works. After they married in 1880, Julius and Amanda continued to play each other's music at their private musical performances, hosted in their Amsterdam home. We know that Clara and Brahms both attended these soirées, along with Edvard & Nina Grieg, Ethel Smyth, Joseph Joachim, and Anton Rubenstein. In fact, Brahms sent Amanda his Violin Sonata in D minor, which Amanda performed with Clara in 1889. Röntgen-Maier's letters with Julius suggest a very mutually supportive relationship throughout their relationship. However, Amanda rarely performed outside of their musical gatherings at home after their marriage. This dynamic persists in the lives of women composers and performers in the nineteenth-century. Scholars often explain women's withdrawal from public life after marrying in terms of cultural expectations of propriety. Generally speaking, women who performed in public tended to be regarded as morally suspect. In that sense, Clara's continuing performing career, which in fact supported her family financially, is not quite typical. Julius seems to have consistently encouraged Amanda as a composer and frequently collaborated with her on pieces. So why did Amanda perform and compose so much less after she married? One reason could be domestic obligations. In addition to running her household, Röntgen-Maier had two sons with Julius who both became professional musicians as well—Julius (1881-1951) and Engelbert (1886-1958). Furthermore, a variety of health problems dominated her final years, which may also have limited her professional output. Röntgen-Maier died in her sleep of lung disease in 1894 at the age of 41.

Tonight, we will hear the final movement of Röntgen-Maier's best-known work, Sonata in B minor, which she premiered as soloist in 1875 with Leipzig's Gewandhaus Orchestra. I hear this piece as the fiery finale to this evening's program. Scholars often compare Röntgen-Maier compositions with both Robert Schumann's and Brahms' violin sonatas. Röntgen-Maier's composition teacher, Carl Reinecke, was a Robert Schumann enthusiast and likely encouraged Amanda to shape her works after Schumann's example. Later, her friendships with Brahms and Clara may have solidified that early influence. Although the works of Brahms, Clara, and Robert intertwine with reciprocal musical influences, written reactions, and performances, Röntgen-Maier appears on the scene as a nearly forgotten part of their musical worlds.

Lisa Pollock Mumme, PhD candidate in Musicology, Washington University in St. Louis



Biographies



A consummate musician recognized for her grace, subtlety, and brilliance, the pianist **Orli Shaham** is hailed by critics on four continents. The *New York Times* called her a "brilliant pianist," the *Chicago Tribune* referred to her as "a first-rate Mozartean," and *London's Guardian* said Ms. Shaham's playing at the Proms was "perfection."

Orli Shaham has performed with many of the major orchestras around the world, and has appeared in recital internationally, from Carnegie Hall to the Sydney Opera House. She is Artistic Director of Pacific Symphony's chamber series Café Ludwig in California since 2007, and Artistic Director of the interactive children's concert series, Orli Shaham's Bach Yard, which she founded in 2010.

Highlights of Ms. Shaham's 2022-2023 concert season include performances with the Finnish Radio Symphony, Pacific Symphony, Orlando Philharmonic, and Vancouver Symphony (USA), where she was named VSO's inaugural Artist-In-Residence. In 2022, she released Volumes 2 and 3 of the complete Mozart Piano Sonatas. Her Mozart recording project also includes Volume 1 of the Piano Sonatas, and Piano Concertos with St. Louis Symphony all of which are part of her discography of a dozen titles on Canary Classics, Deutsche Gramophone, Sony, and other labels.

Orli Shaham is a Co-Host and Creative for the national radio program *From the Top*. She is on the piano and chamber music faculty at The Juilliard School and is chair of the board of trustees at Kaufman Music Center in New York.

Orli Shaham has been a Steinway Artist since 2003.



Mark Sparks is an American solo flutist, orchestral artist, teacher, and writer. He is the former Principal Flutist of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. During his tenure (2000-2021) he served under Music Directors Hans Vonk, David Robertson, and Stéphane Denève, and appeared as soloist with the orchestra numerous times. He has toured and performed with many orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago, Dallas, Bergen Philharmonic, Detroit, Cincinnati, Houston, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras. Prior to his appointment in St. Louis, Sparks served as Associate Principal Flutist of the Baltimore Symphony, Principal Flute of the Memphis and San Antonio Symphony Orchestras, and began his professional career as Second Flute of the Caracas Philharmonic.

Sparks maintains an active solo career, having appeared in recital and with orchestras on 5 continents. He presented the world premiere of Katherine Hoover's *Four Winds Concerto* in 2014. Sparks can be heard as solo recording artist on the Summit, Pesen, and AAM labels and has recorded with many orchestras on the Sony, Telarc, Nonesuch, and Decca and other labels.

Sparks is a faculty member of DePaul University in Chicago, and the Aspen Music Festival. He has coached many of America's emerging orchestral artists at top orchestral training programs such as the New World Symphony, National Youth Orchestra, National Orchestral Institute, and the Pacific Music Festival. A frequent guest at major U.S. music schools and flute courses, many of his students occupy chairs in American orchestras. Recent activities include classes and performances at Rice University, Interlochen, New World Symphony, the Ohio Flute Festival, Eastman School of Music, London's Royal Academy of Music, the British Flute Society, Cleveland Institute, Texas Flute Society, University of North Texas, and regular coaching at the Oberlin Conservatory.

Sparks writes and publishes several acclaimed book series for flutists, including *Exploring Sound: Tone Development Through Orchestral Repertoire*, *Orchestral Excerpt Practice Books*, *Excerpt Duos*, and *Mozart X2*. He is a contributing editor of *Flute Talk Magazine*, and publishes arrangements with Theodore Presser and his own sparksflute publishing. Mark Sparks is a *Pi Kappa Lambda* graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory where he studied with Robert Willoughby, and an alumnus of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra.

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