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Pacific Chamber Orchestra's spring concert offers breathtaking Brahms

By Sophie Braccini



Cellist Nina Flyer will perform with the PCO.
Photo provided

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solist. Flyer is a lecturer in cello and chamber music at the University of the Pacific Conservatory of Music. Her UOP in-residence ensemble, Trio 180, performs and tours all over the world. She was also a lecturer in Cello at Cal State East Bay and taught at the Reykjavik School of Music.

The maestro adds that both Elgar and Brahms were influenced by Dvorak's incredible sense of the natural-sounding folk-like melodic line. "Indeed Brahms used to humorously note that one could write entire symphonies based upon melodies that Dvorak discarded," says Kohl. The maestro adds that Elgar also has this sense of expressive long melodic lines that intertwine with each other's without the listener perceiving any seam.

It took Brahms 10 to 21 years -depending on his own depiction- to write his first symphony. Kohl explains that this work is sometimes called Beethoven 10th because Brahms uses some of Beethoven notes, not as plagiarism, but as an homage to his predecessor. However, in contrast to how Beethoven utilizes powerful small chunks, or discrete blocks to build his works, Brahms creates undercurrents and layers going on at the same time, creating a rich texture.

Where Beethoven would utilize the sound of a shepherd horn on a hill to create a panoramic impression of nature, Brahms will appeal to the senses and render the feeling of pleasure in nature felt by the shepherd on a hill, overlooking the immense panorama so that we feel the shepherd's joy. "That is what makes it a romantic work," says Kohl. He adds that Brahms still has a sense of restraint and contained emotions that makes him the most classic of the romantics.

Breathtaking Brahms will be played at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 22. Tickets are available at www.pacificchamberorchestra.org.

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