

BRAHMS

SYMPHONY

NO. 1

GABRIELI / IVES / DORMANN

February 15 & 16, 2025

SUNSET CENTER, CARMEL

Sponsored by Bill and Nancy Doolittle
and Beverly Hamilton

Jayce Ogren, Music Director and Conductor
Simone Rubino, percussion

Canzon septimi toni No.2

[running time 5']

Giovanni Gabrieli

(1554/7–1612)

The Unanswered Question [6']

Charles Ives

(1874–1954)

Eternal Rhythm [25']

Avner Dorman

(b. 1975)

INTERMISSION [20']

Symphony No.1 in C minor, Op. 68 [45']

Johannes Brahms

(1833–1897)

- I. Un poco sostenuto –
Allegro – Meno allegro
- II. Andante sostenuto
- III. Un poco allegretto
e grazioso
- IV. Adagio – Più andante –
Allegro non troppo, ma con
brio –Più allegro

Hungarian Dance No. 5 in G minor [3']

featuring Carmel Dance Festival

Johannes Brahms

*The February concert will be rebroadcast on KAZU's HD2 Classical station
on March 8th and 9th, 2025, both at 4 PM.*

Program Notes

By Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli

FEBRUARY 15–16, 2025

Concert Synopsis

Renaissance refrains echo from a glorious brass ensemble in Giovanni Gabrieli's *Canzon septimi toni* No. 2, written while the composer served as organist of Venice's vaunted St. Mark's cathedral. American maverick Charles Ives asks "the perennial question of existence" in his deeply contemplative *The Unanswered Question* of 1908, a work that looked far into the musical future. A battery of bells, drums, and wood forges a striking contrast in Avner Dorman's lively percussion concerto *Eternal Rhythm*. Johannes Brahms' passionate Symphony No. 1 firmly established the Romantic master as a worthy successor to Beethoven. Brahms' *Hungarian Dance* No. 5, one of classical music's greatest hits, provides a rousing conclusion.

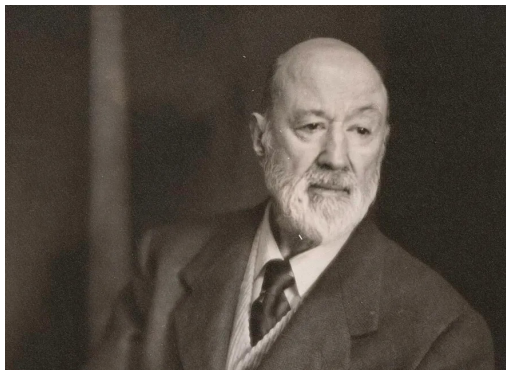
Canzon septimi toni No. 2 (1597)

Giovanni Gabrieli (1554/7–1612)



Born during the Italian Renaissance, composer Giovanni Gabrieli is closely associated with the city of Venice. The organist and principal composer at St. Mark's cathedral from 1585 until his death, Gabrieli is a key figure in the musical transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque era. His *Canzon septimi toni* is from a collection of brass music published as *Sacrae symphoniae*. The *septimi* or "seventh" tone refers to the mixolydian mode—a scale built on the seventh note above C. The *Canzon*'s main feature is antiphony, created by dividing the ensemble into groups placed throughout the space to foster a musical conversation in what we today call "surround sound."

The Unanswered Question (1908)
Charles Ives (1874–1954)



On its surface, the life of composer Charles Ives appears perfectly ordinary. He grew up in the idyllic Connecticut town of Danbury, attended Yale University, and enjoyed a successful career in Manhattan selling insurance. On nights and weekends, however, Ives composed some of America's most radical and visionary music. Inspired by the self-reliant and hyper-individual philosophy of New England Transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, Ives' unencumbered imagination produced music without equal in its originality and prescience—anticipating polytonality, tone clusters, random “chance” elements, and other techniques that would later become commonplace. To paraphrase his biographer Jan Swafford, the only way to describe Ives' music is “Ivesian.”

The Unanswered Question is a contemplative musical collage. It begins with a bed of placid strings evoking, in the composer's words, “the silence of the Druids.” Against this backdrop a solo trumpet intones “the perennial question of existence” and a quartet of woodwinds portray “the fighting answers.” As the title suggests, the brief drama is left unresolved and the strings disappear in “undisturbed solitude.”

Eternal Rhythm (2018)
Avner Dorman (b. 1975)



Born in 1975, composer Avner Dorman is a native of Israel now living in the United States. Dorman draws on a variety of cultural and historical influences in composing, resulting in music that affects an emotional impact while exploring new territories. His percussion concerto *Eternal Rhythm* was commissioned by the North German Radio Symphony Hamburg and George Enescu Festival Bucharest. It premiered in October of 2018 in Hamburg, Germany, with soloist Simone Rubino and conductor Stefan Geiger.

Dorman provided the following program notes:

“Rhythm is, perhaps, the most fundamental aspect of music. In fact, the basic properties of rhythm express the essential signs of life. Without a pulse, we cannot live. Without pulsation and repetitive motion, the physical world cannot exist. To the best of our knowledge, the universe began with a large impulse, and the resulting oscillations, pulses, and beats, are what we still experience — an Eternal Rhythm that stretches from the beginning of time in perpetuity.

The concerto begins with a short introduction based on the harmonic series of overtones. Structured in five movements, each part is connected by a short interlude that echoes the familiar introduction. Each of the movements echoes the general idea of the harmonic series — an infinite series of oscillations — in a different way. The soloist alternates between a variety of percussion instruments, including >>>

Avner Dorman (con't)

The music of the Balinese Gamelan inspires much of the first movement, employing a limited number of pitches, yet organizing them in complex rhythmic cycles. As in Gamelan music, metallic keyboard percussion features prominently, along with a variety of flute-like melodic combinations. As the movement progresses, energy accumulates leading to a virtuosic drumming section. The movement ends with a simple tune that repeats and recalls the opening materials.

The second movement begins with an expressive chromatic melody. The accompanying figure employs spiral structures oscillating at perfect fifths (the second interval of the harmonic series). As the movement develops, more spirals and melodic lines emerge and weave together into a complex web.

Rhythmic and angular, the third movement is structured as a call and response between the orchestra and soloist. Rising scales and syncopated rhythms come together to create a movement that is both light-hearted and energetic. While the scales initially appear to be standard at the outset, every few notes, a 'wrong' interval appears. As a result, as the scale rises, the music arrives at different and unexpected places. While the harmony of the movement is completely consonant (again drawn from the natural harmonic series), the rate of change is so fast that our ears hear what they interpret as 'dissonance.'

The heart of the piece is its fourth movement. Featuring a Hebrew text from the 11th century, this movement raises deep questions regarding our interaction as conscious beings with the physical world:

Does the tear know whose cheek it runs down,
Or the heart by whom it is turned?
It turns to its light that is now in the ground,
And the ground knows not who has returned.
Returned is a grandee of our town,
A man who feared God and was upright
and learned.

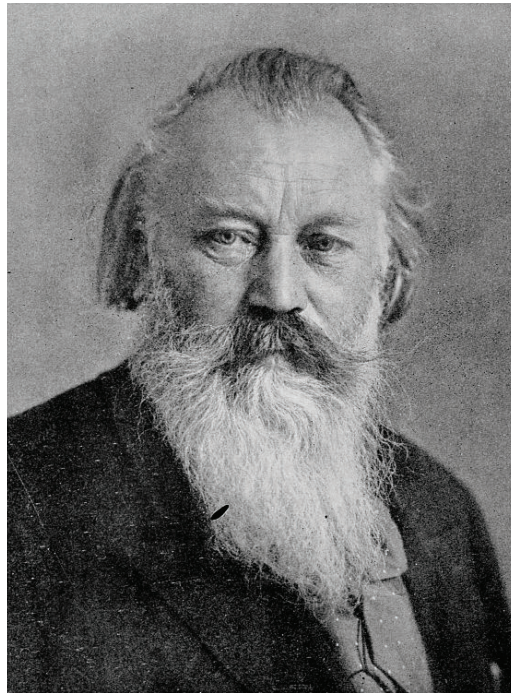
(original poem by Yehuda Halevi, translated by Hillel Halkin)

The text figuratively reverses the roles of consciousness and physicality, asking whether one's tears know who is crying them and whether the earth knows who lays in it. At this point in the piece we realize that the rhythm of life and rhythm of the universe are one and the same; our experience of the world is inevitably linked to the pulse of the universe and the oscillation of matter and energy.

The work ends with an exuberant movement: a celebration of life, energy and an ever-present and eternal rhythm."

Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68 (1924)

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)



A few years before his death in 1897,

Johannes Brahms attended the inauguration of a new concert hall in Zürich, Switzerland. He looked up and saw three faces painted on the ceiling: Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. The weight of history was first placed on the German composer at age twenty by his mentor Robert Schumann who publicly declared Brahms a "darling of the Muses" and prophesied his future fame. By the end of his life, Brahms was widely acknowledged as the last in a long line of German masters and a keeper of the flame of "absolute music" whose beauty results from the classical values of inner logic and formal integrity. The more progressive music of the day (descriptive and pictorial "program music") was the purview of his contemporaries Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner.

Brahms started sketching his Symphony No. 1 in C Minor in 1856. Sensitive to the public's high expectations, he didn't complete it until twenty years later. If Brahms was ever apprehensive, one would never know it from above it. Cellos and violins strive upward as woodwinds descend. This turbulent phrase sets the stage for the drama of the entire symphony.

The second movement is a soft, lyrical answer to the first. The striving is still present, but the orchestration is delicate. The use of intimate chamber music within the large orchestra is a practice Brahms would develop in his later symphonies and be taken up a generation later by symphonist Gustav Mahler. An exceptionally light and airy clarinet theme opens the third movement, *un poco allegretto e grazioso* ("moderately fast and graceful"). Rather than a traditional scherzo, Brahms opts for the relaxed quality of an intermezzo—literally an "in between" piece.

The weight of history was first placed on the German composer at age twenty by his mentor Robert Schumann who publicly declared Brahms a "darling of the Muses" and prophesied his future fame.

The finale is the symphony's most substantive movement and one Brahms struggled to complete. In the opening Adagio, an air of mystery returns when the violins present a fateful minor-key theme. The music tip-toes along in plucked pizzicato strings until the sun breaks through the clouds with the famous "Alpen" theme in a prominent solo French horn. This is a melody that had personal significance for Brahms. During a vacation in the Alps, he wrote the melody in a birthday card to his lifelong confidante and unrequited love: Clara Schumann, Robert's widow. After a soft trombone chorale, a noble and triumphant violin theme—perhaps a nod to Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*—delivers the symphony from darkness to light.

Brahms appears to have met the public's high expectations. In a review of the premiere, a critic referred to it admiringly as "Beethoven's 10th."

Hungarian Dance No. 5 in G minor (1869)

Johannes Brahms

Johannes Brahms embraced Hungary's "gypsy style" through the teachings of famed violinist Ede Reményi, a Hungarian whom Brahms accompanied as pianist on a concert tour in 1853. Brahms used Reményi's frenetic melodies and energetic rhythms in his set of twenty-one *Hungarian Dances* for piano published between 1869 and 1880. This concert features *Hungarian Dance No. 5* in an orchestral arrangement.

The Hungarian Dance No. 5 immediately launches into a passionate Allegro tempo led by a minor key violin theme. It bears the uncanny quality of joyous energy mixed with dark melancholy, a common trait in gypsy music. A contrasting major key section features the strings utilizing their bows to push extreme surges in volume that has a surprising effect. The opening violin theme returns and propels the dance to its exhilarating conclusion.

Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli

PROGRAM NOTES AUTHOR



Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli's innovative compositions for the concert stage, his deeply-felt scores for the studio and indie film worlds, and his skilled musical direction for artists from across the pop music spectrum earned him a reputation as a musician with a collaborative spirit and a broad vision.

His current release, *Continent's End*, received "Critic's Choice" from *Opera News*. The nine-song concert work for mezzo-soprano and piano on poems by California iconoclast Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962) "perfectly embodies with its unpredictable harmonic twists and turns and its multi-tonality Jeffers' hyper-masculine, pantheistic, often erotic poetry" (*Raphael's Music Notes*). Nominated for an Emmy Award at age twenty-one, Anderson-Bazzoli composed scores for twenty feature and short films including the Venezuelan thriller *Ellipsis* (Fox) and the technology documentary *Revolution OS* (7th Art), among others. He received a Sundance Composer Fellowship and served as copyist, music librarian, or orchestrator on over three hundred films and TV shows including *Disney's Encanto*, *The Lion King* (2019), and *Top Gun Maverick*. As a conductor he worked with top recording artists Michael Bublé, Dr. Dre, Christina Aguilera, and She & Him (Zooey Deschanel and M. Ward) and served as editor and copyist for eminent composer-conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen.

While growing up in Pacific Grove, California, Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli learned tuba at age eleven, graduated from Stevenson School, and later earned a B.A. in Tuba and an M.A. in Music Composition from UCLA. In 2022 he relocated from Los Angeles to Carmel with his wife Donna Eshelman, a neuromuscular therapist and choreographer.