

Classics 1: Program Notes

The Sights and Sounds of Stockton: Cityscape

John Wineglass

and San Joaquin Delta College media students

In accordance with its mission to inspire joy and build community through music—and with the aim of generating community pride and awareness through art—the Stockton Symphony teamed up with award-winning composer John Wineglass and San Joaquin Delta College media students under the direction of Adriana Brogger and Kirstyn Russell

to create a project titled *The Sights and Sounds of Stockton*. The Delta College media students, all of whom are from the area and live in the various quadrants of our city, fanned out into the community to gather pictures and videos of their daily environment. They brought the raw footage to class and collaborated to edit the “sights” of Stockton into a feature approximately ten to twelve minutes long.



Wineglass visited Stockton several times to get a feel for the area, and he worked with the students on the overall scope of the project as well as details of compilation to achieve a compelling outcome. He then composed the accompanying symphonic score for tonight’s live performance with the Stockton Symphony. This week he has also been meeting with composition students to discuss the composition process and how a composer works with visual components, and he engaged in a public forum with students and members of our community to discuss his work on this project.

Winner of three Daytime Emmy Awards and recipient of four additional Emmy nominations, John Wineglass has performed on five continents, before five U.S. presidents, and for world leaders such as former King Hussein of Jordan and Chancellor Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union. He has collaborated with myriad Oscar and Grammy Award–winning artists, among them Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, and Jamie Foxx. His works have been commissioned and performed by organizations ranging from the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music led by Marin Alsop to the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Wineglass made his debut as a solo violist with the DC Youth Orchestra in his native Washington, D.C., at the age of eleven, graduated from American University with a major in composition and a minor in viola, and earned his master’s degree in composition, specifically film scoring for motion pictures, television and multimedia at New York University. His proficiency as a gospel and contemporary jazz pianist added to his performing opportunities worldwide, and he has served as conductor under the direction of such conductors as Kurt Masur of the New York Philharmonic and Samuel Wong of the Hong Kong Philharmonic.

In addition to his Daytime Emmy Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Music Direction and Composition for a Drama Series, Wineglass has received three ASCAP Film and Television Music Awards. He has served as composer and conductor for the Film Society of Lincoln Center's Silent Film Festival and has captured the attention of independent feature filmmakers through his scores for documentaries, major-network commercials, and international campaigns for the American Red Cross and U.S. Army.

Stockton Symphony Executive Director Don Nelson conceptualized, created, and facilitated the *Sights and Sounds of Stockton* project. Music Director Peter Jaffe, with his long history of collaborations, realized that the perfect composer for such a multimedia project would be John Wineglass, who had come to his attention at conferences of the Association of California Symphony Orchestras. Don Nelson secured grants from the Stockton Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, and the *Sights and Sounds of Stockton* project was launched.

John Wineglass writes: "From the landscapes of the Delta to the diverse peoples of Stockton—like the first responders and even just regular but distinctive citizens—through the photos of the next generation and my own personal visits delving even into some history—I paint a musical symphonic picture of my first impressions of this innermost waterway of the state of California."

—compiled by Jane Vial Jaffe

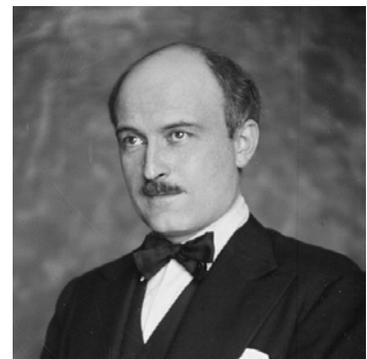
Scored for 2 flutes, 2nd doubling piccolo, 2 oboes, 2nd doubling English horn, 2 clarinets, 2nd doubling bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, alto saxophone, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, snare drum, suspended and crash cymbals, piano, harp, and strings

Flute Concerto

Jacques Ibert

Born in Paris, August 15, 1890; died in Paris, February 5, 1962

Jacques Ibert is best known for his successful symphonic suite *Escales* (Ports of Call) and the present Flute Concerto, but he also wrote operas, ballets, vocal pieces, chamber music, and many more orchestral works. Following his studies at the Paris Conservatory, Ibert served in the navy during World War I. In 1919 he won the Prix de Rome on his first try with his cantata *Le poète et le fée*—a remarkable achievement after the four-year interruption in his musical activities. During his stay in Rome he wrote *Escales* (1922) and later spent much of his career there as director of the Académie de France of Rome (1937–60). His music shows both an Impressionistic and Neoclassic orientation, colorful harmonies and instrumentation, and often a sense of humor.



Ibert composed his Flute Concerto in 1932–33 for celebrated French flutist Marcel Moyse, who gave the first performance in Paris in 1934, conducted by Philippe Gaubert. Both Moyse and

Gaubert had been students of the famous flutist Paul Taffanel, founder of the modern French school of flute playing that so influenced the music world. The Concerto was well received, and the third movement immediately became a test piece at the Paris Conservatory, but wider recognition was slow in coming. Possible reasons may have been that Moyse performed it only rarely, or simply that it was considered too difficult. In the second half of the twentieth century, however, the Flute Concerto was taken up by many flutists and began to receive its due.

Laid out in the standard three movements, fast-slow-fast, the Flute Concerto shows the tendency Ibert exhibited in all his works for solo instrument with orchestra—to write with a chamber music-like texture so that the soloist could project. He was also concerned with the individual qualities of the solo instrument. He said, “I have given to my instruments, in my concertos, themes appropriate to their sonorous qualities, and which respect their expressive possibilities.” After a spicy orchestral announcement, the first movement takes off in fast running passages for the flute that offer scarcely any chance to breathe. Occasionally the orchestra takes over the fast motion or the flute enters into a brief dialogue with other instruments, but the general impression is a headlong rush until the big bang of the ending.

The slow movement brings out the lyrical, singing qualities of the flute in a tender melody, with underlying support that often introduces poignant tension and resolution. Ibert’s wife told flutist Albert Tipton that the Concerto had been written shortly after the death of the composer’s father, and that this movement expressed a spirit of mourning. Particularly striking is the bluesy entrance of the flute at the outset, a slightly ominous passage in which timpani are invoked, the lush mid-movement peak, and the pensive return of the opening melody by solo violin while the flute weaves arabesques around it. The overall feeling is not so much anguish as reflection.

The jaunty entrance of the last movement dashes aside all reverie with its jazzy syncopations, fanfares, and virtuosic writing for the solo flute. Initiated by the first of two cadenzas, a lovely middle section brings back an introspective mood. Following the return of the carefree opening, the flute launches a second thrilling cadenza. The orchestra reenters briefly but lustily to round off the Concerto.

—@Jane Vial Jaffe

Scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, trumpet, timpani, and strings

Symphony No. 1 in C minor, op. 68

Johannes Brahms

Born in Hamburg, May 7, 1833; died in Vienna, April 3, 1897

“I shall never write a symphony,” Brahms said to his conductor-friend Hermann Levi. “You have no idea how the likes of us feel when we hear the tramp of a giant like



him behind us.” By “him” Brahms of course meant Beethoven. As a young man Brahms had destroyed many attempted symphonies because they were not yet up to his high standards. A hearing of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in 1854 apparently inspired Brahms to attempt a symphony in the same key, but the parts that survived eventually wound up in his D minor Piano Concerto and his *German Requiem*.

The following year, when Brahms was twenty-two, he sketched some ideas that later appeared in his C minor Symphony, and in 1862 he apparently demonstrated an early version of the first movement for Clara Schumann. Yet it was not until the summer of 1876 while Brahms was sojourning on the Isle of Rügen in the Baltic Sea that he completed the work. He was forty-three by this time and in his maturity as a composer. The sixty-seven works he had published up to this time did include orchestral compositions (serenades, variations, and concertos), just not a symphony. His waiting for the right time paid off: Brahms is one of the few composers whose first symphony is as good as his last.

As soon as the First Symphony was completed Brahms wrote to Otto Dessoff in Karlsruhe: “It was always my cherished and secret wish to hear the thing first in a small town that possessed a good friend, a good conductor, and a good orchestra.” Dessoff was naturally thrilled to conduct the first performance, which took place on November 4, 1876. The success, though not overwhelming, was enough for Brahms to schedule several more performances, which he conducted himself, in various cities.

It is tempting to speculate that much of the anguish and turmoil of the first movement had to do with Brahms’s conflicted feelings for Clara, which had been particularly intense during 1855 when some of it was sketched. Brahms’s impressive, surging introduction begins over insistent timpani beats, reinforced by bass and contrabassoon, and presents several motives that take shape in the main body of the movement—a remarkable feat given that the introduction was apparently something of an afterthought. In this Brahms was right in step with Beethoven, who often came up with a stroke of genius in the late stages of a work. Brahms creates the illusion that his introduction is returning near the end of the coda by reducing the tempo and recalling the timpani beats and rising half steps in the winds. If the introduction was an afterthought, when did he conceive of this unifying closing device?

Two other first-movement features deserve brief mention. First, just before the exposition ends, Brahms treats us to one of his ingenious signature devices: he “repeats” a short stormy passage, but with a simple exchange of voices—the bass line for the treble—which gives the eight measures an entirely new cast. Second, at the start of the development he makes an unusual plunge into a remote key. This commentator has discovered a remarkable precedent for this move in exactly the same place in the first movement of the recently unearthed First Symphony—also in C minor—of his teacher Eduard Marxsen.

After the weight of the first movement, the Andante sostenuto enters like a breath of fresh air with a lovely opening melody in a distant new key. The movement, which is not without its tinges of melancholy, again takes much of its motivic material from its opening. Two matching

sections frame a middle section signaled by the first violins alone. Partway through this centerpiece Brahms introduces a new idea with a poignant oboe solo. He concludes his ternary form by adding a coda from which horn and solo violin emerge in ethereal sweetness.

The third movement is a type of relaxed scherzo alternative that Brahms favored in many of his four-movement works. This graceful, tightly organized movement contains a trio in the traditional scherzo-trio-scherzo pattern, but the typical “agitated-lyrical-agitated” characteristics are turned inside out. Brahms indulges in his love of unusual phrase lengths right at the outset with the two opening five-bar phrases (four-bar phrases being the norm); when the same phrases return he ingeniously extends them into seven-bar phrases, and at their last appearance to eleven (although the eleven bars are so long as to be thought of in two parts).

Brahms gave added weight to the end of his Symphony by prefacing the finale with a dramatic slow introduction. As in the first movement, its motivic material spawns the main themes. The famous “liberating” horn theme in C major dates from 1868 when Brahms sent a birthday postcard to Clara from Switzerland saying, “Today the Alpenhorn blew thus.” This negates the suggestion that Brahms intended it to sound like the tower chimes at Cambridge University, which had offered Brahms a doctoral degree just before the Symphony was completed. This melody is followed by an equally arresting solemn, hymnlike phrase for trombone choir and bassoons. The celebrated main theme of the exposition prompted helpful souls to point out to the composer its similarity to the finale of Beethoven’s Ninth. Brahms’s famous retort, “Any ass can see that!” only emphasizes that what matters is how such building materials are treated—these two movements develop along their own ingenious lines. Brahms’s symphonic edifice is crowned by a substantial coda in which the gathering momentum is interrupted by the majestic reappearance of the trombone hymn, which then touches off the jubilant drive to the close.

—©Jane Vial Jaffe

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