

## Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

*A founding member of the Robert W. Woodruff Arts Center*

**ROBERT SPANO**, Music Director

**DONALD RUNNICLES**, Principal Guest Conductor

## DELTA CLASSICAL SERIES CONCERTS

Thursday, Friday and Saturday, October 1, 2 and 3, 2009, at 8 p.m.

**ROBERT SPANO**, Conductor

**DEJAN LAZIC**, Pianist

ADAM SCHOENBERG (B. 1980)

***Finding Rothko*** (2006)

I. *Orange*

II. *Yellow*

III. *Red*

IV. *Wine*

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

**Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Major**, Opus 77 (1878)

(transcribed, Lazic)

I. *Allegro non troppo*

II. *Adagio*

III. *Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace*

DEJAN LAZIC, Piano

*World Premiere of Version for Solo Piano and Orchestra*

### INTERMISSION

MODEST MUSSORGSKY (1839-1881)

(Orchestrated by Maurice Ravel—1923)

***Pictures at an Exhibition*** (1874)

*Introduction: Promenade*

I. *Gnomus*

*Promenade*

II. *Il vecchio castello*

*Promenade*

III. *Tuileries*

# Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

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Major funding for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra is provided by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners under the guidance of the Fulton County Arts Council.

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This performance is being recorded for broadcast at a later time. ASO concert broadcasts are heard each week on Atlanta's WABE FM-90.1 and Georgia Public Broadcasting's statewide network.

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IV. *Bydlo*

*Promenade*

V. *Ballet of Little Chicks in their Shells*

VI. *Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle*

VII. *The Market Place in Limoges*

VIII. *Catacombæ—Cum mortuis in lingua mortua*

IX. *Baba-Yaga—The Hut on Hen's Legs*

X. *The Great Gate of Kiev*

“INSIDE THE MUSIC” preview of the concert, Thursday at 7 p.m.,  
presented by Ken Meltzer, ASO Insider and Program Annotator.

The use of cameras or recording devices during the concert is strictly prohibited.

# NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

By Ken Meltzer

## ***Finding Rothko*** (2006)

**ADAM SCHOENBERG** was born in Northampton, Massachusetts, on November 15, 1980. The first performance of *Finding Rothko* took place at the Germantown Performing Arts Center in Germantown, Tennessee, on January 13, 2007, with Michael Stern conducting the IRIS Chamber Orchestra. *Finding Rothko* is scored for two piccolos, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, vibraphone, marimba, glockenspiel, crotales, four tom-toms, bass drum, five temple blocks, three suspended cymbals, tam-tams, three triangles, slap stick, piano/celesta and strings. Approximate performance time is seventeen minutes.

*These are the first ASO Classical Subscription Performances.*

## **Adam Schoenberg**

**A**merican composer Adam Schoenberg is a Doctor of Musical Arts candidate at The Juilliard School, where he studied with John Corigliano and Robert Beaser. He received his Master of Music degree in 2005 from Juilliard, and his Bachelor of Music degree from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 2002.

Recently completed commissions include pieces for the IRIS Chamber Orchestra, Sybarite Chamber Players, Baldwin High Symphonic Band and harpist Gretchen Van Hoesen of the Pittsburgh Symphony. Upcoming commissions include the Kansas City Symphony and Blakemore Trio for premieres in 2010 and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in 2011.

Adam Schoenberg was the First Prize winner at the 2008 International Brass Chamber Music Festival for best Brass Quintet, resulting in the publication of his quintet by Brass Chamber Music. In 2007, he was awarded ASCAP's Morton Gould Young Composer Award, Juilliard's Palmer-Dixon Prize for Most Outstanding Composition, and a Meet the Composer Grant from the Southern Arts Federation. He received the 2006 Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and has garnered further acclaim from ASCAP and the Society for New Music.

Mr. Schoenberg's music has been performed throughout the United States at such venues as Alice Tully Hall (Lincoln Center), the Benedict Music Tent (Aspen Music Festival), the Midwest Composers' Symposium, and the Merce Cunningham Studio, as well as broadcast on WCNY. Next year, the American Brass Quintet will release a CD of Schoenberg's brass quintet, which was commissioned by and premiered at the Aspen Music Festival as part of a recording celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Mr. Schoenberg is a member of BMI and his official website is [www.adamschoenberg.com](http://www.adamschoenberg.com).

## ***Finding Rothko***

The composer provided the following commentary on *Finding Rothko*, which receives its ASO premiere at these concerts:

In February of 2006, I visited several museums in Manhattan seeking inspiration on which to base a new commission from the IRIS Chamber Orchestra. When I came across a few Rothko paintings housed in the Museum of Modern Art, I had a very strong, visceral reaction to them and decided that Rothko's art would be the 'muse' for my piece. I felt I needed to see for myself each of the Rothko paintings I would ultimately be setting to music. Having neither the time nor the resources to travel around the world, I decided to choose among those works that would be the most readily accessible. After spending a significant amount of time researching Rothko's entire catalog, I found four works that resonated with me: *Orange*, *Yellow*, *Red* and *Wine*. These four paintings appealed to me because of their distinct characteristics as well as their similarities, allowing me to create a narrative for the music.

*Orange* [Untitled (Violet, Black, Orange, Yellow on White and Red), 1949, oil on canvas] is housed permanently in the Guggenheim Museum in New York City, where I live. *Yellow* [No. 5/No. 22, 1949, oil on canvas] is at the Museum of Modern Art, also in New York City, while *Red* [No. 301 (Reds and Violet over Red/Red and Blue over Red), 1959, oil on canvas] is at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, which I visited over the summer. The most elusive painting was *Wine* [No. 9 (White and Black on Wine), 1958, oil on canvas]. To me, this painting was the most evocative of the four, but it also required the greatest amount of detective work to locate. When I started looking for *Wine*, it was housed in a private collection and I had no idea how to view it. I spent a month searching for this painting. My investigation led me to: Rothko's gallery, PaceWildenstein; Christie's of New York, where it was purchased anonymously in May 2003; the Getty Institute in Los Angeles; and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. I eventually discovered that the painting was at the newly constructed Glenstone Museum in Potomac, Maryland, which at the time was still closed to the public. The proprietors of the Glenstone were kind enough to arrange a private viewing for me in September 2006.

*Finding Rothko* explores the wonders of Mark Rothko's paintings. Each movement represents a painting, but the piece is played without pause. In order to make an aural distinction between movements, I created a theme, which I dubbed 'Rothko's theme,' that appears before the beginning of each movement.

In my mind, *Orange* represents a reflective moment yet to be fully realized, whereas *Yellow* is the realization of that moment. Therefore, it seemed natural to begin with *Orange* and follow it with *Yellow*. As the color palette of *Yellow*

exhibits a streak of red, I instantly felt a transition into the third movement. The enormity and brilliance of *Red* struck me, and I knew this would be the musical climax of the entire composition. *Wine* naturally became the last movement — the culmination of the rest of the paintings — both because I found it incredibly haunting and because my journey in finding it exemplified the spirit of the work. The music comprising *Wine* is ‘Rothko’s theme’ developed.

The indelible beauty of Rothko’s work lies in its luminosity and ability to captivate the imagination. I hope I have managed to capture the essence and spirit of his work in this piece. I would like to thank the Glenstone Museum, Jeffrey Weiss, Thomas Crow, John Corigliano, Katrina Walter and Steven Schoenberg.

— Adam Schoenberg

## **Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Major,** Opus 77 (1878)

**JOHANNES BRAHMS** was born in Hamburg, Germany, on May 7, 1833 and died in Vienna, Austria, on April 3, 1897. The first performance of the Brahms Violin Concerto took place at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, Germany, on January 1, 1879, with Joseph Joachim as soloist and the composer conducting. In addition to the solo violin (solo piano in the Lazic transcription), the Concerto is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings. Approximate performance time is forty-two minutes.

*These are the first ASO Classical Subscription Performances of the Dejan Lazic transcription for solo piano and orchestra.*

*First ASO Classical Subscription Performance of the Violin Concerto: March 10, 1952, Robert Harrison, Violin, Henry Sopkin, Conductor.*

*Most Recent ASO Classical Subscription Performances: January 8, 9 and 10, 2009, Gil Shaham, Violin, Roberto Abbado, Conductor.*

### **The Brahms Violin Concerto**

**J**ohannes Brahms composed his only Violin Concerto during the summer of 1878, while vacationing in Pörtschach, a tiny Austrian village on Lake Wörth. Brahms wrote the Concerto for his dear friend, the Austro-Hungarian virtuoso violinist, composer and conductor, Joseph Joachim (1831-1907). The correspondence between the two reveals that Joachim offered a great deal of counsel and advice in the creation of the solo violin part. Joachim also composed a cadenza for the opening movement that, to this day, remains the preferred version among violinists.

The world premiere of the Brahms Violin Concerto took place at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig on New Year’s Day, 1879. Joachim, to whom Brahms had dedicated the work, was the soloist. Brahms and Joachim continued to work on revisions to the score, which was finally published

in October of 1879. In time (thanks in great part to Joachim's sterling advocacy), the Brahms D-Major secured its place as one of the greatest violin concertos, a veritable Mt. Everest of technical and interpretive challenges. As with many of Brahms's finest works, it is also a brilliant and immensely satisfying synthesis of Classical form and Romantic passion.

### **Dejan Lazic's Transcription for Solo Piano**

These concerts feature the world premiere of Dejan Lazic's transcription of the Brahms Concerto for solo piano and orchestra. Mr. Lazic, who is also the piano soloist in these concerts, provided the following commentary:

My source of inspiration was a joint one: the piano versions of the Violin Concertos of Bach and Beethoven, which were made by the composers themselves.

I started working on this project in early 2003 and completed it in 2008. The violin was always a favorite love, and I continue to hold violinists in high esteem, realizing just how wonderful their literature is. Thus far, I have been tremendously lucky to have had many an opportunity to perform with some wonderful colleagues. And it is with a degree of pride that I present — after Bach and Beethoven — the third “great B” in the present arrangement.

Subjectivity plays a role of course, and I have always found this particular Concerto, along with Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, to be amongst the best instrumental concertos ever written. Naturally, I felt the challenge to arrange or transcribe the Brahms early on. I was intrigued by the idea of rendering it in an idiomatic version for piano and orchestra. The ultimate aim was clear: I wanted to perform it myself!

In my piano version of the Brahms Violin Concerto, I composed a new cadenza, for the simple reason that there is no extant Brahms cadenza. Added to which, the attempts by Joachim, Kreisler or Heifetz remain stubbornly suited to the violin, and are not really pianistic in their conception of the music; any arrangement of these would detract too much from their very essence. Besides, should not every cadenza be sort of a “free area”, one in which every soloist ought to be able to improvise on material previously heard?

The desire to arrange a violin concerto as a piano concerto just because one envisages donning the garb of the soloist, is not a good enough motive to take on this challenge. But I also do not feel there is any other romantic violin concerto that would survive the transformation.

At a musicological level, the correspondence between Brahms and his dedicatee Joseph Joachim played a major role for me. After numerous changes, much good advice, and actual corrections by Joachim it remains quite clear that Brahms had always composed as a pianist (at the piano) and therefore felt this music as a pia-

nist, if also as a symphonic composer (originally, Brahms wrote the Violin Concerto in four movements, which was typical for a symphony). It is quite obvious that the Violin Concerto had its roots in both friendship and practicality: his aim was to write a concerto *for* Joachim, from which we can infer the term concerto took on a greater significance than the violin itself. But we are skating on thin ice here, what I mean to say is that it is quite justified to speculate about what would have happened if Joachim had been a cellist or a clarinetist, or even ... a pianist!

What emerges from the text most readily is a liberal dose of difficulty that is simply not in the nature of the violin: Brahms remained first and foremost a pianist and thus on the outside of the world of a violin virtuoso.

But another — possibly more important — question pops its head above the parapet: is one actually “allowed” to make such an arrangement?

With the benefit of hindsight, we know that Brahms made countless arrangements and transcriptions of his and other composers’ works. I am convinced these were more than justified; hence, I hope that Brahms himself would not have anything against my idea. Let us dwell for a moment on Brahms and his contemporaries (not least Franz Liszt), who made a plethora of transcriptions, arrangements, variations, and produced much else besides. Nowadays, we seem to fail to cherish this great tradition. Maybe I am behaving here more as a composer than a performer — the line that divides production and reproduction is obviously an extremely thin one. At the end of the day, this is about music and not about the institutionalization of music ...

What lingers is the rhetorical question of what is a transcription, what makes an arrangement, what may be defined as a new version. The key to this conundrum is that I sought to construct anew the violin part, recomposing the voice in a thorough-going Brahmsian style and adding my own cadenza. Of great import is that the orchestral score remains entirely unchanged!

With this arrangement, my main goal was to translate Brahms’ unique musical language into a new setting without losing any of its original musical value and, in addition, to give pianists an equal chance to perform and enjoy this wonderful music the same way violinists have done for exactly 130 years now ...

Dejan Lazic, Spring 2009.

## **Musical Analysis**

I. *Allegro non troppo* — Brahms launches his Violin Concerto in traditional fashion, with a purely orchestral exposition of the movement’s principal themes. The bassoons, violas, and cellos, with support from the horns, state the noble first theme. A more flowing theme will

reach its full development with the appearance of the soloist. The strings play an agitated and forceful closing motif. The soloist makes a fiery entrance and then, after the mood calms, proceeds to offer embellished statements of the principal themes. The extended development features a wide range of moods and technical hurdles for the soloist. A triumphant orchestral statement heralds the varied recapitulation. The soloist's cadenza leads to the final coda, which begins with the utmost serenity. However, the coda soon builds to a powerful climax, with the soloist offering a grand concluding flourish.

II. *Adagio* — The *Adagio*'s sublime opening, scored for winds and horns, features the oboe's presentation of the unforgettable central melody. The soloist follows with a delicate and wide-ranging version of the theme. After a dramatic central episode, the oboe and violin reprise the melody. A final ethereal passage for the soloist completes the *Adagio*.

III. *Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace* — The soloist immediately launches into the rondo finale's vigorous principal theme. Many commentators have viewed the music of this finale as a tribute by Brahms to Joachim's Hungarian origins. High spirits abound, with the soloist prominently featured throughout the finale. The concluding section opens with a robust march variant of the rondo theme. There is a tremendous surge of momentum, followed by a gradual *diminuendo*. However, after a brief pause, three jubilant chords mark the Concerto's triumphant conclusion.

### ***Pictures at an Exhibition*** (1874)

(Orchestrated by Maurice Ravel — 1923)

**MODEST MUSSORGSKY** was born in Karevo, district of Pskov, Russia, on March 21, 1839, and died in St. Petersburg, Russia, on March 28, 1881. The premiere of the Maurice Ravel orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* (originally composed for piano solo) took place in Paris, France, on May 3, 1923, with Serge Koussevitsky conducting. The Ravel orchestration is scored for two piccolos, three flutes, three oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, two harps, celeste, bass drum, chimes, cymbals, gong, orchestra bells, ratchet, snare drum, slapstick, triangle, xylophone and strings. Approximate performance time is thirty-four minutes.

*First ASO Classical Subscription Performance: March 10, 1953, Henry Sopkin, Conductor.*

*Most Recent ASO Classical Subscription Performances: February 28 and 29, and March 1, 2008, Roberto Minczuk, Conductor.*

*ASO Recording: Yoel Levi, Conductor (Telarc 80296)*

In 1873, the Russian artist Viktor Hartmann died at the age of 39. After Hartmann's death, the St. Petersburg Society of Architects presented an exhibition of Hartmann's works. One of the people attending the exhibition was Hartmann's dear friend, the Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky.

Mussorgsky was as profoundly impressed with the quality of Hartmann's works as he was saddened by the sudden loss of a dear friend. Mussorgsky decided to offer a tribute to Hartmann in the form of a musical representation of several of the pieces of art featured at the St. Petersburg exhibit. In 1874, Modest Mussorgsky completed his work for solo piano, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, published after the composer's death in 1881.

While many critics have suggested that Mussorgsky did not write in a particularly idiomatic fashion for the piano, the original version of *Pictures* can make a stunning impact when interpreted by a sympathetic virtuoso. Still, it was not until Maurice Ravel applied his brilliant talents to Mussorgsky's original score that the work was destined for the immense popularity it enjoys today. Conductor Serge Koussevitsky commissioned Ravel's orchestration for the annual *Paris Concerts Koussevitsky*, where it premiered, to great acclaim, on May 3, 1923. Since that time, the Mussorgsky/Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition* has been celebrated as a quintessential showpiece for orchestras and conductors alike. It is one of the most performed and recorded works in the concert repertoire.

## Musical Analysis

*Promenade: Allegro giusto, nel modo russo; senza allegrezza, ma poco sostenuto* — The *Promenade* serves as a connecting motif between the musical portrayals of the various pictures. Russian music critic Vladimir Stasov described the promenade as depicting the composer "moving now to the left, now to the right, now wandering about aimlessly, now eagerly making for one of the pictures..." The composer's unpredictable movements are reflected in the odd combinations of 5/4 and 6/4 rhythms. In Ravel's orchestration, the main *Promenade* theme is first played by the solo trumpet and, ultimately, by the full orchestra.

I. *Gnomus: Vivo* — Many of Hartmann's works disappeared during the period between the 1874 St. Petersburg exhibition and Ravel's 1923 orchestration of Mussorgsky's composition. Consequently, there is disagreement as to the exact nature of the picture that inspired this music. In the original piano edition, Stasov describes Hartmann's work: "A dwarf walks about awkwardly on crooked little legs." However, Alfred Frankenstein, longtime Music and Art Editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, engaged in a detailed search and study of the original Hartmann pictures. Frankenstein stated that "(t)he picture was a design for a nutcracker in the form of a gnome with huge jaws." In either event, the music depicting Hartmann's drawing is ominous and, at times, violent.

*Promenade: Moderato commodo e con delicatezza* — A more introspective statement of the *Promenade* theme serves as a bridge to the following picture.

II. *Il vecchio castello: Andante* — The painting depicts an old Italian castle, before which a lute-bearing troubadour stands. The troubadour's melancholy ballad, principally intoned by the saxophone, is set to an undulating 6/8 rhythm.

*Promenade: Moderato non tanto, pesante* — A brief, weighty restatement of the *Promenade* leads to:

III. *Tuileries: Allegretto non troppo, capriccioso* — Mussorgsky’s own subtitle for this section is “Children Quarreling After Play.” The painting depicts the Parisian Tuileries gardens, where children play under the watchful eye of their nurses. The action is portrayed in a fleeting, airy section that, in Ravel’s orchestration, prominently features the woodwinds.

IV. *Bydło: Sempre moderato pesante* — “Bydło” is the Polish word for “cattle.” Hartmann’s watercolor depicts an ox-drawn cart with massive wooden wheels. The lumbering movement of the cart is reflected in the plodding 2/4 rhythm and dark orchestration, including an extended tuba solo.

*Promenade; Tranquillo* — A short reprise of the *Promenade* serves as a bridge to:

V. *Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells: Scherzino: Vivo leggiero* — The sketch that inspired this delightful miniature scherzo was made by Hartmann for the ballet, *Trilby*. It features costumed children impersonating chicks newly emerging from their shells. Ravel’s filigree scoring of Mussorgsky’s tripping rhythm is sheer magic.

VI. *Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle: Andante* — The title of this section is the creation of Stasov — Mussorgsky’s original reads, “Two Polish Jews; one rich, the other poor.” This episode appears to be based upon a Hartmann drawing of the Sandomir ghetto. Mussorgsky owned the drawing and loaned it to the St. Petersburg exhibit. The exchange between the wealthy Goldenberg (lower strings supported by woodwinds) and Schmuyle (muted trumpet) eventually erupts into argument as the two simultaneously attempt to express themselves.

Here, Ravel omits Mussorgsky’s repetition of the *Promenade* and proceeds to:

VII. *The Market Place in Limoges: Allegretto vivo sempre scherzando* — Hartmann’s watercolor portrays the façade of the Limoges Cathedral. Mussorgsky focused on a small portion of the watercolor, depicting market women engaged in lively conversation. The quicksilver musical portrayal of their gossip is interrupted by:

VIII. *Catacombæ: Sepulchrum Romanum; Largo* — The painting depicts Hartmann and a friend standing in a Paris catacomb, observing a pile of skulls illuminated by a guide’s lantern. Brass pronouncements alternating loud and soft dynamics lead directly to:

*Cum mortuis in lingua mortua: Andante non troppo, con lamento* — Mussorgsky’s own footnote to this section’s title reads: “A Latin text: ‘With the Dead in a Dead Language.’ Well may it be in Latin! The creative spirit of the departed Hartmann leads me to the skulls, calls out to them, and the skulls begin to glow dimly from within.” The bond between Hartmann and Mussorgsky is made clear by the repetition of the *Promenade* theme, played over mysterious string tremolos. The theme is played first by the oboes and English horn, then by the bassoons and contrabassoon.

A moment of silence is shattered by:

IX. *Baba-Yaga — The Hut on Hen’s Legs: Allegro con brio, feroce — Andante mosso — Allegro molto* — Baba-Yaga is a mythical Russian witch who lured victims into her hut. There, Baba-

Yaga ground her prey's bones with a giant mortar that she also used to transport herself through the air. Hartmann's drawing is a representation of a huge clock in the shape of the witch's hut that, according to legend, stood on four chicken feet, thereby allowing the quick capture of each new victim. Mussorgsky's musical portrayal of the witch's grotesque hut and her flight leads without pause to:

X. *The Great Gate of Kiev: Allegro alla breve. Maestoso. Con grandezza* — The final picture represented Hartmann's entry in a competition to erect a gateway in Kiev. The gateway was intended to serve as a memorial to Czar Alexander II's escape from assassination. Hartmann envisioned a massive and ornate structure, featuring a cupola in the form of a Slavonic war helmet. Mussorgsky's music, enhanced by Ravel's orchestration, evokes the epic grandeur of Hartmann's design, as well as images of ceremonial processions through the extraordinary gate. The *Promenade* theme returns in triumphant fashion, leading to one of the most thrilling conclusions in all of concert music.