



# Grant Park Music Festival

Seventy-fifth Season

Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus

Carlos Kalmar, *Principal Conductor*

Christopher Bell, *Chorus Director*

**Eleventh Program:** Bruckner's Fourth

**Wednesday, July 8, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.**

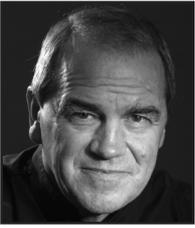
Jay Pritzker Pavilion

GRANT PARK ORCHESTRA

Hans Graf, *Conductor*

MOZART      Overture to *The Magic Flute*, K. 620

BRUCKNER      Symphony No. 4 in E-flat major, "Romantic"  
(1878-1880 Version)  
Bewegt, nicht zu schnell  
Andante quasi Allegretto  
Scherzo: Bewegt – Trio: nicht zu schnell, keinesfalls  
schleppend  
Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell



Known for his wide range of repertoire and creative programming, the distinguished Austrian conductor **HANS GRAF** is one of today's most highly respected musicians. Mr. Graf was chosen to be the Music Director of the Houston Symphony in 2000 and began his tenure with the orchestra in September 2001. Prior to his appointment in Houston, he was the Music Director of the Calgary Philharmonic, the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine and the Mozarteum Orchestra. Hans Graf is a frequent guest with all of the major North American orchestras and his recent and upcoming guest engagements include appearances with the Cleveland and Philadelphia Orchestras,

the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, and the San Francisco, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Detroit, Atlanta and National symphonies among others. Internationally, Hans Graf conducts in the foremost concert halls of Europe, Japan and Australia and has appeared with the Vienna Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra as well as with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphony Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Orchestra and the Rotterdam Philharmonic. He has participated in such prestigious European festivals as the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Bregenz, Aix en Provence, Orange and Savonlinna in Finland and appeared at the Salzburg Festival for twelve consecutive seasons. Hans Graf has recorded for the EMI, Orfeo, CBC, Erato, Capriccio and JVC labels. He has been awarded the Chevalier de l'ordre de la Legion d'Honneur by the French government for championing French music around the world as well as the Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold for Services to the Republic of Austria.

**OVERTURE TO THE MAGIC FLUTE, K. 620 (1791)****Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

*The Overture to The Magic Flute calls for pairs of woodwinds, horns and trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings. The performance time is seven minutes. The Overture to The Magic Flute was first performed by the Grant Park Orchestra on July 21, 1936, Richard Czerwonky conducting.*



Early in 1791, Mozart was deeply in debt, troubled by the disinclination of the Viennese public to embrace his recent music and concert appearances, and suffering from the kidney failure that would take his life before the year was out, so when Emanuel Schikaneder, a slightly shady actor and theater entrepreneur, suggested in May that they collaborate on a new opera that was sure to be a hit, the composer jumped at the chance. The Viennese public was especially fond at that time of comic pieces with Oriental or fantastic settings, and Schikaneder had achieved a fine success soon after he had arrived in town in 1789 with the “magic opera” *Oberon* by Paul Wranitzky. For a sequel he proposed a *Singspiel* called *Die Zauberflöte* — *The Magic Flute* — a comic musical with spoken dialogue based on Liebeskind’s story *Lulu* from Wieland’s 1786 collection of Oriental fairy-tales called *Dschinnistan*.

Mozart threw himself into composing the music for *The Magic Flute* in May and June. Most of the composition was completed by July, when he received two more commissions — one for an *opera seria* on Metastasio’s old text, *La Clemenza di Tito*, to commemorate the coronation in Prague of the new Emperor, Leopold II, as King of Bohemia; the other, a mysterious order for a Requiem Mass, the work which was to cast such an ominous pall over Mozart’s last months. As *Tito* was needed for performance on September 6th, he had to begin the music immediately, and he was still composing the score when he and Constanze left for Prague in mid-August, only three weeks after she had given birth to Franz Xaver. When they returned to Vienna a month later, Mozart began the final preparations for the premiere of *The Magic Flute*, which included composing the Overture, always the last part of his operas to be written. The full score was finished on September 28th, and the premiere given successfully on September 30th.

The Overture to *The Magic Flute*, rich in sonority, concise in construction, profligate in melodic invention and masterful in harmonic surety, balances the seemingly polar opposites of the opera — profundity and comedy — with surpassing ease and conviction. The introduction opens with the triple chords associated with the solemn ceremonies of the priests, the Overture’s only thematic borrowing from the opera. The *Allegro* is built on a tune of *opera buffa* jocularly treated, most remarkably, as a fugue. The complementary theme, initiated by the flute, is characterized by its sensuous ascending chromatic scales. The balance of the Overture follows the traditional sonata form, with the triple chords of the priests reiterated to mark the beginning of the development section.

**SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN E-FLAT MAJOR, “ROMANTIC” (1874, REVISED 1878-1880)****Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)**

*Bruckner’s Symphony No. 4 is scored for pairs of woodwinds, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani and strings. The performance time is seventy minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed this Symphony on July 21, 1971, with Sergiu Comissiona conducting.*

The music of Bruckner is unique in the history of the art. He has been called the “Wagner of the Symphony,” after the mortal whom he revered above all others, but this appellation implies that his work is more derivative than can be substantiated by the musical scores or by his life. Bruckner, scion of generations of Catholic peasants, passed most of his life in a sort of ceaseless religious ecstasy and fervent humility that held him aloof from the exigencies of everyday life. Even Wagner, as mean and self-serving as any musician who ever lived, could not resist the guileless simplicity and utter sincerity of this extraordinary man. Bruckner’s early works

were mostly service music, plainly intended to praise God. When he turned to orchestral music later in life — his First Symphony did not appear until he was 42 — the intent and philosophy of his sacred compositions were transferred into his newly adopted genre. The music created by such a visionary as Bruckner needs special care from the listener. His symphonies have been called “cathedrals in sound,” and the phrase is appropriate both for the mood that they convey and for their implication of grandeur. Such works by their very nature must be large in sonority and temporal duration if the vision is to be realized — a twenty-minute Bruckner symphony would be as ludicrous as the massive baldachino of St. Peter’s dropped onto the altar of the neighborhood parish church. It is this very striving toward the infinite, toward the transcendent, that raises Bruckner’s best works to a plane achieved by few others in the history of music. Those willing to meet Bruckner on his own terms, to partake of the special hour that he grants the listener in each of his symphonies, find an experience as fulfilling and deeply satisfying as any that the art has to offer. Wrote Lawrence Gilman, “He was and is a seer and prophet. Sometimes, rapt and transfixed, he saw visions and dreamed dreams as colossal, as grandiose, as awful in lonely splendor, as those of William Blake.”

The Fourth Symphony, one of Bruckner’s finest achievements of spirit and craftsmanship, could be (and has been) the subject of extensive analysis. (Robert Simpson’s consideration runs to 22 pages.) Suffice it to say for the technically minded that the first movement is in leisurely sonata form, the *Andante* is built from three themes which recur in sequence, the galvanic *Scherzo* is provided with a sharply contrasting central trio reminiscent of an Austrian *Ländler*, and the Finale draws together themes from all the preceding movements for a cyclical summation of the entire Symphony. The most fruitful approach for those who prefer to listen without labels, however, is to be swept along by the glorious tide of sound, at some times small and intimate and reverential, at others, mighty and heaven-storming. It is from the building of long, controlled climaxes to move from the tiny to the great that the Symphony derives much of its power, as though these rising lines of musical tension were the machines slowly, inexorably opening the cathedral vault to the visionary sky above. Deryck Cooke wrote, “The essence of Bruckner’s symphonies is that they express the most fundamental human impulses, unalloyed by civilized conditioning, with extraordinary purity and grandeur of expression; and that they are on a monumental scale which, despite many internal subtleties and complexities, has a shattering simplicity of outline.” Perhaps Bruckner was right — perhaps his talent did, indeed, come directly from God.

©2009 Dr. Richard E. Rodda