



Nova Vista  
Symphony

Anthony Quartuccio  
Music Director

# Nature and Youth

**Johannes Brahms Academic Festival Overture**

**Max Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1**

with Riona Zhu, violin

**Robert Schumann Symphony No. 3 "Rhenish"**

**Saturday, September 16, 2023**

**7:00 PM Pre-concert talk**

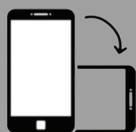
**7:30 PM Concert**



**Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts**

**500 Castro Street**

**Mountain View, CA**



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## **Anthony Quartuccio**

### **Music Director**

Anthony Quartuccio is associate conductor of the San Jose Chamber Orchestra and is music director of the Gavilan College / South Valley Symphony in Silicon Valley. Quartuccio is also founding music director of the Bay Shore Lyric Opera in Capitola, where he conducted critically acclaimed productions including

*La Bohème, Rigoletto, Le Nozze di Figaro, La Traviata, and Die Fledermaus.* Some of his appearances include the Santa Clara Chorale, the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, the Winchester Orchestra of San Jose, The Japanese Choral Federations of Northern and Southern California, and The Rimrock Opera in Montana. His commitment to the arts in the Bay Area is evident in his having received an Honorary Doctorate degree from Santa Clara University in 2006, representing 150 years of arts graduates. The same year he was given a lifetime achievement award in the arts from the Italian-American Heritage Foundation in conjunction with commendations from the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and the California State Senate.

Quartuccio is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he studied conducting with Otto-Werner Mueller, and was awarded a personal career grant from David Packard, benefactor of the Packard Foundation, for advanced studies. While at Curtis, he served as an assistant to eminent conductor of the Metropolitan Opera and Cincinnati Symphony Max Rudolf and also completed studies in piano and music theory. As a member of the Curtis conducting department, he actively participated in frequent master classes and seminars with some of the world's leading conductors, including Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Andre Previn, Kurt Masur and David Zinman. Gary Graffman, the Institute's former president, describes Quartuccio as "Gifted and serious with the highest standards of excellence, both musically and personally."

Quartuccio graduated *cum laude* from Santa Clara University and soon after joined Gunther Schuller to study at the 1987 Festival at Sandpoint. Mr. Quartuccio, the youngest member of the conducting class, made his professional conducting debut at age twenty-two leading Copland's *El Salon Mexico* with the Spokane Symphony Orchestra. Soon after, he was appointed as assistant conductor of the award winning San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra, an apprentice position created for him, and later accompanied the orchestra on a highly praised tour of Asia in 1989. Subsequent training in conducting includes studies at the International Workshop for Conductors in the Czech Republic with the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic, advanced classes with the Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, and classes at the Tanglewood Music Center under Gustav Meier.



## Nature and Youth

### Academic Festival Overture

Johannes Brahms

### Violin Concerto No. 1

Max Bruch

**Riona Zhu**, violin

Winner of the 2023 Nova Vista Symphony  
Mary Jane Beck Young Artist Concerto Competition

INTERMISSION

### Symphony No. 3 “Rhenish”

Robert Schumann

- I. Lebhaft
- II. Scherzo: Sehr mäßig
- III. Nicht schnell
- IV. Feierlich
- V. Lebhaft

**Nova Vista Symphony**

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**Wearing a mask is recommended**

## **Riona Zhu** **Soloist**

**Violinist, winner of the 2023 Nova Vista Symphony  
Mary Jane Beck Young Artist Concerto Competition**

Riona Zhu is a fourteen-year-old violinist from Pleasanton, CA. She is currently studying with Elbert Tsai. Zhu began violin at the age of eight and was admitted as the youngest member of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra two years later. She has been in the pre-college division at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music for 5 years. Zhu has participated in Heifetz International Music Institute and Center Stage Strings at the University of Michigan. She was awarded grand prize in the Silicon Valley Music Competition and was one of four finalists of the California Youth Symphony Concerto Competition. Zhu will be studying with Lucie Robert at the pre-college program of the Manhattan School of Music this Fall.



## **Program Notes**

### **Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)**

#### **Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80**

In 1880 the University of Breslau notified Brahms that they were going to award him an honorary doctorate. Brahms, who disliked public displays, felt that a handwritten note thanking the University would be sufficient. However, the Director of Music, Bernhard Scholz, who had nominated Brahms for the degree, said that protocol required Brahms to “compose a fine symphony.” In response Brahms composed an overture that consisted of several student drinking songs, some of which had been banned by the university.

The overture begins with quiet hints of the songs to come with a soft, dark combination of strings and horns. The trumpets then start the academic procession and the full orchestra enters with the first song, “Wir hatten gebauet ein stattliches Haus” (We have built a stately house). Brahms weaves three other drinking songs into the piece before the grand finale, a reworking of the song “Gaudeamus igitur” (Therefore, let us be merry).

The Overture was premiered in Breslau in January 1881 with the composer conducting.



## **Max Bruch (1838–1920)**

### **Violin Concerto No. 1**

Bruch began working on the violin concerto when he was 19 but it took 11 years before he had a final version with which he was happy. The celebrated violinist, Joseph Joachim, who had a hand in helping Bruch with the final version, called the concerto the “richest, the most seductive” of the great romantic violin concertos. While the work is divided into three movements, the first two are played without pause. The concerto opens with a powerful and dramatic orchestral introduction, setting the stage for the solo violin’s entrance.

The violin then takes center stage with a soulful and passionate melody that showcases the soloist’s technical brilliance. The second movement is soulful and lyrical while in the finale the violin bursts into an energetic display of virtuosity.

The first version of the concerto was premiered in April 1866 by Otto von Königslow with Bruch conducting. The revised version was premiered by Joseph Joachim in January 1868 with Karl Martin Rheinthalder conducting.



## **Robert Schumann (1810–1856)**

### **Symphony No. 3 “Rhenish”**

In September 1850, Robert Schumann, his wife Clara, and their seven children moved to Düsseldorf, where the composer had accepted a position as the city’s Music Director. Düsseldorf was very different from the places Schumann had lived before. They lived in the heart of the city and found the noise and chaos distracting and not conducive to composing. In September of that year they took a trip to Cologne in the south.

Schumann was so impressed by the cathedral there that he used it as an inspiration for a movement in his new symphony which would be published as Symphony No. 3, “Rhenish.” Feeling a renewed energy, he sketched out the whole symphony in five weeks, using the Rhine River as his muse and dedicating the fourth movement of the five movement work to the cathedral.

The five movements are Lebhaft (Lively), which plunges right into the main theme with a glorious fanfare evoking the rush of water in the Rhine; Scherzo, Sehr mäßig (Moderate Time) which introduces the softer, flowing Rhine theme in the cellos; Nicht schnell (Not Fast) begins with a lyrical theme in the clarinet then moves gently between woodwinds and strings; Feierlich



(Solemn) is a rich, majestic chorale that was inspired by the grandness of the Cologne cathedral; Lebhaft (Lively again) joyously finishes the symphony as it repeats earlier themes in a spirited dance.

The symphony premiered in Düsseldorf in February 1851 with the composer conducting.

— Program notes by Nancy Sitton

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Nova Vista apologizes in advance for any errors or omissions.*

**Nova Vista Symphony wishes to thank the following  
people and organizations who helped make this concert happen:**

Russell Hancock: *Pre-concert lecture*  
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George Yefchak: *Associate Conductor*  
Pat Blackie & Lani Cliff: *Venues*  
David Lee: *Personnel* • Joyce Jones: *Website*  
George Yefchak, Nancy Sitton: *Design and marketing*

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Eva Ching  
Joyce Jones  
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John Thomson  
Tamara Ucar

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Joshua Kaye  
Makiko Mizukami  
Karen Salzer  
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