

Maestro Cobbs Brings Authenticity to Performances



PAUL-ELLIOTT COBBS
CONDUCTOR

Authenticity is a hallmark of Maestro Paul-Elliott Cobbs' performances – whether he conducts the works of African American composers or the works of the European masters. How did Brahms intend for his works to be played? What did Beethoven really want?

Maestro Cobbs brings to concerts of European masterworks the intimate perspective of his education in Vienna, the cradle of both classicism and romanticism, at the Akademie für Musik, and in Germany.

Renowned in the region where he learned the secrets of the masters, Maestro Cobbs is a popular guest conductor and appears frequently with such orchestras and ensembles as Vienna's Festival Chamber Orchestra, members of the Dresden and Leipzig Opera, and the orchestra's of Poland: Filharmonia Szczeńska, Szczecin; Filharmonia Opolska, Opole; Filharmonia Bałtycka, Gdansk; and the Artur Rubinstein Philharmonic Orchestra, Lodz.

Considered an expert in classicism and romanticism in Germany, he is recognized for the authority of his interpretations. He owes this, he says, to listening to the oral traditions passed down by musicians who worked with the original composers.

"The Vienna Philharmonic played the original manuscripts of Brahms and Mahler. They have the insight into the way the composer wanted it," Cobbs says.

For example, one of the traditions passed on but not written down is the correct tempo for a Beethoven Symphony. "Essentially, it should be played with each tempo relating to a single 'tactus' or pulse," Cobbs says. "Beethoven learned this from the Baroque composers. When you play it with one tempo the entire symphony becomes a unified whole."

Cobbs' sensitivity to oral tradition may come in part from his musical heritage as the grandson of a Baptist Minister in Detroit, where his formal music education contrasted with the Gospel music that steeped his family life. Years later, during his doctoral thesis work, he recognized the importance of oral tradition as he taught an orchestra of largely Scandinavian background to perform Grant Still's African American Symphony with cultural authenticity.

"Black music depends on oral tradition. Unless the conductor has a sense of how it should be performed, all you get is what's written and you miss the essence of the style. Most of the stylistic things in black music are not things written on the page," Cobbs says.

This same attention to unwritten nuance encouraged Cobbs to talk with the musicians he met while studying in Vienna and Germany.

"I listened to the retired philharmonic musicians who lectured me on how to conduct Brahms, knowing that their teachers in the 1890s were just young musicians playing under Brahms while he was alive," he says.

"It was also good to have conducting teachers who were students of Richard Strauss and students of Mahler. They'd say 'Mahler meant this. Straus wanted it this way.' These are insights you can't get any other way than from these oral traditions," Cobbs says.

Selected Repertoire (on reverse side)



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Selected Repertoire

Viennese Composers

Beethoven, Ludwig Van	Symphonies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9
Brahms, Johannes	Symphonies 1, 2, 3, & 4
Haydn, Franz Joseph	Symphonies 31, 45, 85, 86, 88, 92, 94, 96, 100, 103 & 104
Mozart, Wolfgang A.	Symphonies 25, 29, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40 & 41
Schubert, Franz	Symphonies 3, 4, 5, 8 & 9

Other 19th Century Works

Dvorak, Antonin	Symphonies 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9
Rachmaninoff, Sergei	Symphony 2
Tschaikovsky, Pjotr Iljitsch	Symphonies 2, 4, 5, 6, Fancesca da Rimini

Also

Mendelssohn, Felix	Symphonies 3, 4 & 5
Schumann, Robert	Symphonies 1, 2, 3 & 4
Strauss, Richard	Don Juan, Till Eulenspiegel, Tod and Verklarung

Additional performance information available upon request.

For more information on Maestro Cobbs' programs of European masterworks,
please call: 800-788-7405
or write info@pauelliottcobbs.com