

THE BERKELEY DAILY PLANET

THE EAST BAY'S INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Symphony Premiere

By *BEN FRANDZEL* *Special to the Planet*
Friday April 25, 2003

With a world-class, world-hopping conductor at its helm in Kent Nagano, the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra enjoys a connection to the global music community that is rare for an orchestra of its size.

The orchestra will make the most of this stature next Tuesday, April 29, with its third concert of the season at Zellerbach Hall on the UC Berkeley campus at 8 p.m. Demonstrating the vitality and diversity of new orchestral music today, the Berkeley Symphony will roll out a pair of world premieres by two "rising-star" composers from France and Korea, and will spotlight two renowned European instrumental soloists.

Last season, young French composer Régis Campo made a splash in Berkeley when the orchestra presented the premiere of his work, "Lumen," to great audience and critical acclaim. This time the orchestra will unveil a more substantial piece, his "Symphony No.1." This work, Campo says, draws its inspiration from his first visit to California.

Nagano and company also will introduce the American premiere of the "Violin Concerto" by Berlin-based Korean composer Unsuk Chin. Chin is at the forefront of a group of notable young composers who have emerged from Korea over the past two decades.

Chin's music is noted for its lyrical qualities and colorful instrumental combinations. She draws upon a range of influences from outside Western classical tradition, from jazz and pop to the music of Korean shamanic rituals.

Nagano conducted the premiere of the "Violin Concerto." The soloist will be Slovakian violinist Tibor Kovác. He is the principal second violin of the Vienna Philharmonic, and also pursues a noted solo career.

The Berkeley Symphony also will perform two works by Mozart. Nagano will lead the ensemble in "Piano Concerto no. 24, in C minor," written in 1786. It's a work of great dramatic power, anticipating the stormy emotions of Beethoven and his followers.

Mozart's "Overture to Don Giovanni" rounds out the program.

The symphony will spotlight local creativity this weekend, on their Under Construction concert series. This free program takes place Sunday, April 27, at 8 p.m. at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Berkeley. Under Construction is a free concert series in which the orchestra does an open rehearsal and run-through of works-in-progress by Bay Area composers.

The pieces are conducted by Berkeley Symphony associate conductor George Thomson, and Kent Nagano serves as host. After the performance of each piece, Thomson and Nagano lead a discussion between the featured composer, the orchestra and the audience.

Tickets for Tuesday's concert are \$45, \$32, \$21. Call (510) 841-2800, visit www.berkeleysymphony.org, or purchase them at the door.