

Leonard Slatkin, conductor
Hila Plitmann, soprano

Friday, May 3, 2019 at 10:30am
Saturday, May 4, 2019 at 8:00pm

BARBER

(1910-1981)

Symphony No. 1 in One Movement, op. 9 (1936)

Allegro ma non troppo –
Allegro molto –
Andante tranquillo –
Con moto (Passacaille)

JEFF BEAL

(b. 1963)

***The Paper Lined Shack* (World Premiere)** (2019)

Carefree Girl
The Red Chair
The Paper Lined Shack
Our Garden
My Heart

Hila Plitmann, soprano

INTERMISSION

TCHAIKOVSKY

(1840-1893)

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, op. 74, "Pathétique" (1893)

Adagio; Allegro non troppo
Allegro con grazia
Allegro molto vivace
Finale: Adagio lamentoso

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2018/2019 Classical Series is presented by **World Wide Technology** and **The Steward Family Foundation**.

These concerts are presented by **Mary Pillsbury**.

Hila Plitmann is the **Helen E. Nash, M.D., Guest Artist**.

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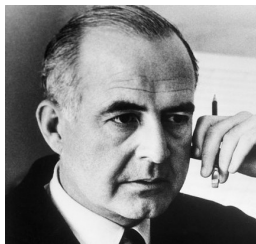
The concert of Friday, May 3, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Jim and Lois Urnes**.

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Pre-concert conversations are sponsored by **Washington University Physicians**.

PROGRAM NOTES

BY TIM MUNRO



SAMUEL BARBER

Born March 9, 1910, West Chester, Pennsylvania

Died January 23, 1981, New York City, New York

Symphony No. 1 in One Movement, op. 9

Samuel Barber's Symphony No. 1 (also known as Symphony in One Movement), was composed in Rome during the years 1935 and 1936, after Barber had been awarded the American Prix de Rome at age 25.

The symphony's Rome premiere, in December 1936, was quickly followed by a premiere in the United States. The following year, the symphony was the first symphonic work by an American composer to be performed at the Salzburg Festival. Barber later revised the symphony, and this new version was premiered in 1942 by the New York Philharmonic. The Symphony in One Movement was followed by a Second Symphony as well as three operas, several other orchestral works, and works for voice and piano and other assorted chamber works.

Barber was born in Pennsylvania in 1910 and showed an inclination for music from a young age, composing an operetta at age ten, which he set to a libretto written by his family's cook. Barber was deemed "conservative" by critics during his lifetime because he resisted the trends towards experimental styles, such as atonality and serialism, in which his contemporaries were beginning to compose.

Instead, Barber focused on lyrical, Romantic-tinged works that explored 19th-century forms while still occasionally exploring more modern elements. Barber was a prolific composer from his childhood through to his death at age 70. Some of his most well-known works, such as the *Adagio for Strings* and the First Symphony, were composed when he was only in his twenties.

Barber did not assign any extra-musical associations to his First Symphony, meaning that there is no subtitle or linguistic description attached to the roughly 20-minute symphony. Because there are no words or images guiding the listener through Barber's sonic narrative, we can hear the drama occurring fully within the music itself.

This symphony is unique in its form: music critic Richard Freed points out that one-movement symphonies were pretty much unheard-of at the time Barber composed this work, and, as such, it should not come as a surprise that ultimately the symphony "breaks down into sections more or less corresponding to those of a conventional four-movement work."

Samuel Barber's symphony opens with a soaring melody that catches the listener in an updrift and sweeps us through a tumultuous array of musical emotions: longing, regret, pensiveness, passion.

Three major musical themes recur throughout the work. Barber briefly introduces each before exploring them more fully. During an extended *Andante* (moderately slow) passage, Barber introduces the second theme; as he wrote in his own program notes: "the second theme (oboe over muted strings) then appears in augmentation." The final theme weaves itself in towards the ending, tying up loose ends and, as Barber put it, "serving as a recapitulation for the entire symphony."

First Performance December 13, 1936, Rome, Italy, Bernardino Molinari conducting the Philharmonic Augusteo Orchestra

First SLSO Performance January 8, 1970, Walter Susskind conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance January 28, 1996, Boston, Massachusetts, Leonard Slatkin conducting

Scoring 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoon, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum and cymbals), harp, and strings

Performance Time approximately 21 minutes



JEFF BEAL

Born June 20, 1963, Hayward, California

Now Lives Los Angeles, California

The Paper Lined Shack (World Premiere)

Jeff Beal's song cycle *The Paper Lined Shack* began with an accidental adventure. Beal and his wife Joan stumbled across his great-grandmother Della's diary while unpacking boxes after a move. Although they were both awestruck by her writing, they didn't find a "use" for these words until two decades later.

The Paper Lined Shack was commissioned by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in honor of Leonard Slatkin and the 50th anniversary of his debut with the orchestra. Beal writes that when he received the commission from the SLSO, he "decided on a narrative song cycle for soprano Hila Plitmann (a soloist with whom [Slatkin] has collaborated frequently)." It was in the middle of a search for "a strong female-driven text for Hila" that he remembered Della's writings. Joan Beal then set about the task of constructing a libretto from passages and lines from the diary.

A song cycle in five movements, Beal's work explores the bond that develops between a conductor and orchestra. Beal explains that "a relationship between an orchestra and its conductor spanning 50 years could be thought of as a remarkable marriage; an artistic garden with deep roots for both the garden and its gardener."

Indeed, although Slatkin travels internationally for conducting engagements with orchestras all over the world, he makes his home here in St. Louis.

The song cycle is not only a musical collaboration between orchestra, conductor, and vocalist, but the product of a collaborative process between composer and librettist. There is so much “bloom” to be found in his great-grandmother Della’s writings—sweet peas bloom, hearts bloom—and these images are reflected in music that pulls listeners into its narrative, with new themes and styles sprouting at every turn.

Beal and his wife “were both deeply moved by [Della’s] description of the garden, as seen through the window of her shack, moments after her husband died—as it so perfectly expressed how loss transforms us in an instant.” Hearts and sweet peas are blooming in the shadow of grief, which can change their appearance, from bitter to sweet, in an instant. Joan used this passage from Della’s writings as a central image in the libretto: “The sun was shining, as I looked out. The sweet peas he’d planted for me were blooming. The garden looked the same, but everything had changed.”

Beal, who is probably best known for his award-winning soundtrack for *House of Cards*, is no stranger to a dramatic musical language, and his new work simmers with tension as it shifts from style to style and from emotion to emotion.

Beal’s language carries some of Samuel Barber’s Romanticism. Beal describes his music as “steeped in jazz and improvisation, orchestral trumpet playing, family music-making at the piano, art, film, dance, and the open spaces found in nature, houses of faith, and concert halls.” This stylistic versatility conveys a range of emotions; according to Beal, these emotions emulate the “playfulness and lack of self-pity in the words and attitude” of the words of his great-grandmother Della.



A photograph from 1909 of the original shack referenced in Beal’s piece.

I. Carefree Girl

I was just a carefree girl, carefree.
Our family was seven boys, my parents and myself.
Having no sisters, I played with my brothers,
And became quite a tomboy
To my mother's dismay.

Climbing, riding horse sticks, jumping rope.
My brother Jess, he had some goats and a harness
And a wagon to hitch them up.
One day, he let me ride with him
And the goats ran, ran too fast
And turned the wagon over!
That was my last goat ride.

I was used to boys,
They didn't interest me too much,
Until later.

My father bought me a girl's bicycle,
A Crawford that cost eighty-five dollars!
I was proud of it and rode and rode many miles.
I was just a carefree girl, carefree, carefree.

II. The Red Chair

Your father Franklin and I
Had been going steady for two years or more
And we were very much in love.
So, we were married, and spent our first year in Indiana
Where Glenn was born.

Glenn was our pride and joy, our pride and joy!
Your Papa said that his hat was too small
So, he bought a new one
To celebrate the occasion.

My father, known to you all as "Grosse-daddy",
He had a small red chair
He was saving for the first granddaughter.
Rosella won the red chair.
Rosella was the prize,
as there were no girls among the grandchildren.
We were so very proud of her.
Rosella and Glenn,
You children were our pride and joy,
You were our pride and joy.

Your Papa said that his hat was too small,
So, he bought a new one to celebrate the occasion.
A new hat and a red chair.

III. The Paper Lined Shack

We had only one hundred dollars and four children
When we landed here in Idaho,
And it seemed alright then.
We rented a small house,

We bought very little furniture,
Used a large box we had shipped for a table
And sat on apple boxes, rather than chairs.
And it seemed alright then.

It was sagebrush land,
But we had some nice grass around our shack.
There were jack rabbits everywhere.
Papa had set out a large strawberry bed,
And enjoyed it so much.

It got very cold that winter.
We didn't keep warm in our paper-lined shack.
At times we would find snow on our bed covers,
And our clothes froze to the walls.

We made you children sit on chairs
'Til we could warm you up just a little.
That was the last Christmas together with Papa
And it seemed alright then.

IV. Our Garden

Papa made a large bed,
Cabbage, tomato, sweet potato plants ready to set out.
We had a strawberry patch,
and it was beginning to have a few ripe berries.
We had plans for a fruitful summer.

I was in the garden cutting rhubarb.
A messenger boy brought me a telegram
Bearing the sad news of my mother's death.

It was my very first sorrow,
And I felt I must go to be with my father,
To be with my brothers.

I was making plans to go,
My dear husband became ill,
And on the sixth of June,
He too, slipped away from me.

The sun was shining,
As I looked out,
the sweet peas he'd planted for me were blooming.
The garden looked the same,
But everything had changed.

No words can express how lost and helpless I felt,
But life had to go on for you children.
Soon I was aware that I was pregnant
And would now have six children to love and care for.
Life had to go on.

The sun was shining as I looked out,
The sweet peas he'd planted were blooming.
The garden looked the same,
But everything had changed.

V. My Heart

My dearest children,
I leave you with these stories,
So that someday you can share my heart.

It was love that brought me from my father's house
To be your Mama.
It was love that we planted in the garden
There our hearts bloomed, and you were born.

But I could not protect my heart from deep sorrow.
I had to carry on.
It was love that saved me.

When winter comes, find kindling,
Stoke the fire.
Hold fast to one another.
You can carry my heart.

It was love that we planted in the garden
There our hearts bloomed,
Our hearts opened.
Carry my heart.

First Performance May 3, 2019, Leonard Slatkin conducting

Scoring soprano, flute, alto flute, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, percussion (snare drum, triangle, vibraphone, 2 wood blocks), harp, and strings

Performance Time approximately 25 minutes



PYOTR IL'YICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Born May 7, 1840, Votkinsk, Russia

Died November 6, 1893, Saint Petersburg, Russia

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, op. 74, “Pathétique”

The American-inflected neo-Romanticism that whets appetites during the first half of this program is satisfied with the full-fledged Romanticism of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony: a work that traverses a multitude of human emotions in the span of roughly 46 minutes.

Tchaikovsky's sixth and final symphony was given a subtitle, which in Russian means “passionate,” but which has been mistranslated into French as *pathétique*, meaning “solemn” or “emotive.” It is then further misunderstood as a false cognate of the English word “pathetic.”

The subtitle is an allusion to Beethoven's “Pathétique” piano sonata, but the symphony itself has remained an enigma for over a century; musicologists and music critics have sifted through the symphony attempting to crack the code they are convinced that Tchaikovsky left us in this work.

Tchaikovsky is often considered to be the first Russian composer to fully unite the “Russian” musical style of Glinka with the “European” style of composers like Beethoven and Schumann. Although Tchaikovsky spent much of his life traveling outside Russia, he promoted Russian music abroad and incorporated Russian folk songs into many of his compositions.

The Sixth Symphony was Tchaikovsky's penultimate work, and he conducted the symphony's premiere before falling gravely ill only five days later. His rapid decline resulted in his sudden death, the causes of which nobody can seem to agree on: Was it suicide? Cholera? Something else entirely?

Just as Tchaikovsky's cause of death has sparked lively musicological debate, many have put forth hypotheses regarding the Sixth Symphony. Most prevalent among these hypotheses is the assertion that Tchaikovsky was bidding adieu to the world with a tragic suicide note; however, musicologist Roland John Wiley writes that “the popular notion that the Sixth Symphony is rife with confession warrants challenge, as does the idea, worthy of Hollywood, that it predicts the composer's death.”

We don't know the cause of Tchaikovsky's death, and, likewise, we'll probably never know what Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony actually “means.” Like Barber, who did not assign an explicit narrative to his symphony, the final version of Tchaikovsky's Sixth does not have a meaning or message assigned to it by the composer. However, because many of Tchaikovsky's works can be linked to situations in his life, many have assumed that musical “neutrality” here is impossible.

Indeed, even Tchaikovsky himself hinted that he had a program in mind when he wrote the work. The Sixth Symphony was dedicated by Tchaikovsky to his nephew Vladimir Davydov, for whom Tchaikovsky carried a deep infatuation, and to whom he might have made coded reference in his diaries with the letter “Z” (standing in for “something indefinite,” perhaps referring to Davydov or to his homosexuality more generally).

Musicologists have combed through the music itself—which, again like Barber’s First Symphony, contains major themes which recur over the course of its four movements—for clues to a narrative. Ultimately, however, no conclusions have been drawn, and we must continue to listen in wonderment, drawing our own conclusions about Tchaikovsky’s final symphony.

First Performance October 28, 1893, Saint Petersburg, Russia, Tchaikovsky conducting

First SLSO Performance January 9, 1906, Alfred Ernst conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance February 21, 2015, Juraj Valčuha conducting

Scoring 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, tam tam), and strings

Performance Time approximately 46 minutes

HALF A CENTURY WITH THE SLSO

By Leonard Slatkin

They say that time flies when you are having fun. If that is true, time went by at supersonic speed.

It's hard to believe that it was 50 years ago that I first stepped on the podium at Powell Hall. At age 23, I was now in the same city that my grandparents immigrated to in 1911 – the same city where my father started his incredible, albeit brief, career as a violinist, conductor, composer, producer, and arranger.

The same city that catered to my alternate passion, baseball.

Walter Susskind had brought me to the Arch during his first season as Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. How much I learned from him, the administration, and the members of the orchestra! Being allowed much more freedom and flexibility than most in the assistant conductor role, I proudly founded the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. After listening to about 650 aspiring musicians, it would not be an understatement to say that the first sounds the audition winners played may have been the sweetest music I ever heard.

When I became Music Director, the legendary Principal Double Bassist Henry Loew said during my first rehearsal, “Maestro, would you like that note long or short?”

My response was, “Henry, we have known each other too long now. ‘Leonard’ will be just fine.” And the combination of collaboration, respect, and good humor prevailed throughout my 17-year Music Director tenure.

Sure, there were some tough moments. But through it all, everyone worked toward one goal: to be the best orchestra we could be. Triumphs in New York, Europe, and Asia, lucrative recording contracts, and strong attendance numbers gave the SLSO a prominent place in the musical world.

When, in 1983, *Time* magazine proclaimed that we were the second-best orchestra in the country, our reaction was that we needed to do better. Hosting the best guest artists and attracting great musicians to play in the SLSO were our goals, and for the most part, we achieved what we set out to do. My successors, Hans Vonk and David Robertson, continued to bring energy and enthusiasm to the hall. In a very nice coincidence, the SLSO's new music director, Stéphane Denève, is a conductor whom I gave a U.S. debut in Washington, D.C.

This past summer I returned as a full-time St. Louis resident, and it is my hope to contribute in any way I can to the city that started it all. My wife, Cindy, and I are thrilled to be part of the fabric of St. Louis. After all, we met here back in the '80s. My son was born here, making four generations of Slatkins who have strong connections to the fleur-de-lys.

But one question still lingers: has anyone spotted the ghost that roams the Powell Hall dungeons at night? Maybe I need another half-century to find out.

LEONARD'S LONG-LASTING LEGACY

Two SLSO musicians appointed by Leonard Slatkin reflect on the Conductor Laureate in honor of the 50th anniversary of his debut with the SLSO.

Thomas Drake was appointed the SLSO's Assistant Principal Trumpet in 1987. Felicia Foland joined the SLSO in 1990 as part of the bassoon section. Both were appointed by SLSO Conductor Laureate Leonard Slatkin during his 17-year tenure as Music Director.

Drake and Foland have appeared on many SLSO recordings under Slatkin's direction, toured with the orchestra internationally, and have participated in education and community programs championed and expanded under Slatkin's leadership.



Thomas Drake



Felicia Foland

How would you characterize Leonard's leadership style?

Drake: In my experience, Leonard's leadership style can be characterized in one word – trust. In the course of a week of rehearsals and performances, Leonard would rarely, if at all, suggest to a player how to phrase a solo. He would let the player work the passage throughout the week and trust that they would find their musical “comfort level.” He would then adjust accompaniments accordingly if necessary. Tuttiis (meaning “all instruments together”) were, of course, a different matter. He shapes phrases and sound character to his interpretation, then trusts a player's musical judgment to work within that sound if they have a solo passage that emanates from the tutti. It keeps everyone listening and helps build a cohesive sound of orchestral voices.

Foland: When I think of how few American “Maestros” there were anywhere in the world when Leonard began his tenure as Music Director of the SLSO, I concur that he invented what may be considered the American Orchestra Maestro role himself. It consisted of all the European hallmarks of artistic excellence for an orchestra along with working as a partner with other St. Louis-area musicians found in churches, schools, choruses, and colleges. This was a huge departure and the birth of an era of renewed relevance for the orchestra. I cannot imagine how less rich my work would be without the IN UNISON Chorus concerts or our Community Partnership concerts and educational programs.

What do you see as Leonard's biggest legacy with the SLSO?

Drake: Leonard's legacy is two-fold. First, he put the SLSO on the national and international stage with tours of the Far East, Europe, along with both coasts of the United States, weekly national radio broadcasts on NPR, and an extraordinary amount of recording. Secondly, his deep interest in "forgotten" American composers led to many Grammy-nominated recordings, thereby leading to a resurgence of interest in music that might have gone unnoticed and ignored. The orchestra recorded extensively under his tenure with many different labels, at one time releasing as many as six CDs a year.

Foland: I think of two features when I consider Leonard's legacy with the SLSO. One feature that has become a beacon for area regional young musicians is, of course, the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra, which Leonard founded in 1970. This one orchestra, the "YO" as we refer to it, feeds orchestras far beyond our city with its alumni, while nourishing young minds with the satisfaction of learning to make music and play an instrument. I cannot think of a better way for a young person to spend their time, nor a better investment in our future generations.

Leonard also introduced the orchestra to the world with recordings (Grammy Award-winning recordings), tours, and press. The orchestra was always exceptional, yet not well known before Leonard shared us with the world. This is, in part, why tours and recording are so very vital to the health of an orchestra. It also allows and enables us to share what is among the best of St. Louis with the world!

Is there any particular performance Leonard led with the SLSO that left you moved? What was special about that performance?

Drake: I remember a performance of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* performed in the Berliner Philharmonie while on tour. The stage is tiered. The trumpets were on the second to last tier right in front of the bass drum and timpani. This is a piece that Leonard does particularly well and the performance was going very well. *Rite* is an extremely dynamic piece – very loud, very soft. In Part II, we get to the 11/4 bar, which is scored for timpani, bass drum, and strings – with eleven quarter notes in succession. All forte or fortissimo depending on your instrument. Notice that I said bass DRUM. Leonard wanted TWO! Or at least he didn't object when former SLSO percussionist John Kasica played it that way. The sound was beyond thrilling. It rattled the soul.

Foland: I have many very wonderful memories of great concerts with Leonard, including a stunning *The Rite of Spring* in Berlin. The orchestra was so very vibrant, and Leonard's *Rite* was live, fresh, and truly exciting. Stravinsky would have loved it.

How would you describe Leonard's personality?

Foland: Leonard is one very smart guy and has a good sense of humor. Over the years, I have seen an increasingly playful and warm person emerge. I have a special fondness for Leonard as he accepted me in the Youth Orchestra when I was 14, then accepted me in the SLSO when I was 32! I have seen him grow over the years, as he has me. I am not unbiased!

Any other Leonard memory that sticks out in your mind?

Drake: During my first season with the orchestra, we were to take Stravinsky's *Petrushka* on an East Coast tour from Florida to Carnegie Hall. There's a part toward the end that calls for two very high trumpets to answer each other. For various reasons, I was asked to play both parts, doubling the difficulty. It went well in rehearsals, but by the time the first performance in St. Louis came, I had run out of good luck. It didn't go very well. Nor did it on the second night... or on the first performance of the tour. We were to take two programs on tour and before a performance of the second program, Leonard summoned me into his dressing room. I was ready to be fired. On the contrary, Leonard offered me a "pep talk" explaining how he knew that I could play the passage and to trust myself. From then on, with his encouragement and that of my colleagues, performances went very well for the remainder of the tour – and taught me a very humbling lesson.

Foland: My favorite memory I have of Leonard that best illuminates something about him and his work was a concert at Powell Hall years ago on the night a beloved stage hand, Marty McManiss, retired from his work. Marty was a big, gruff, teddy-bear of a guy who sort of looked like a rock and was a sweetheart underneath. Leonard called Marty to the stage after the applause, introduced him to the audience, and then gave him his retirement gift, which was a performance of "Danny Boy." Marty cried like a baby from the front of the stage and it was one of the most beautiful things I have witnessed on stage. It said a lot about both Leonard and Marty while displaying the power of music.



LEONARD SLATKIN

Conductor Laureate

Internationally acclaimed conductor Leonard Slatkin is Conductor Laureate of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Music Director Laureate of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO), and Directeur Musical Honoraire of the Orchestre National de Lyon (ONL). He maintains a rigorous schedule of guest conducting throughout the world and is active as a composer, author, and educator.

Highlights of the 2018/2019 season include a tour of Germany with the ONL; a three-week American Festival with the DSO; the Kastalsky Requiem project commemorating the World War I Centennial; Penderecki's 85th birthday celebration in Warsaw; five weeks in Asia leading orchestras in Guangzhou, Beijing, Osaka, Shanghai, and Hong Kong; and the Manhattan School of Music's 100th anniversary gala concert at Carnegie Hall. He will also conduct the Moscow Philharmonic, Balearic Islands Symphony, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Louisville Orchestra, Berner Symphonieorchester, Pittsburgh Symphony, RTÉ National Symphony in Ireland, and Monte Carlo Symphony.

Slatkin has received six Grammy awards and 33 nominations. His recent recordings include works by Saint-Saëns, Ravel, and Berlioz (with the ONL) and music by Copland, Rachmaninoff, Borzova, McTee, and John Williams (with the DSO). In addition, he has recorded the complete Brahms, Beethoven, and Tchaikovsky symphonies with the DSO (available online as digital downloads) and conducted the London Symphony Orchestra for an album featuring violinist Anne Akiko Meyers.

A recipient of the National Medal of Arts, the highest award given to artists by the United States government, Slatkin also holds the rank of Chevalier in the French National Order of the Legion of Honor. Moreover, he has received Austria's Decoration of Honor in Silver, the League of American Orchestras' Gold Baton Award, and the 2013 ASCAP Deems Taylor Special Recognition Award for his debut book, *Conducting Business*. His second book, *Leading Tones: Reflections on Music, Musicians, and the Music Industry*, was published by Amadeus Press in 2017.



HILA PLITMANN

Helen E. Nash, M.D., Guest Artist

Grammy award-winning vocalist and actress Hila Plitmann is a glittering jewel on the international music scene, known worldwide for her astonishing musicianship, light and beautiful voice, unique expressive quality, and the ability to perform challenging new works. She has performed with many leading conductors, including Leonard Slatkin, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Thomas Adès, Carl St. Clair, Giancarlo Guerrero, Robert Spano and JoAnn Falletta, working with the the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, The National Symphony and London Symphony Orchestra.

Plitmann is also emerging as a unique crossover artist, and her own songs and arrangements can be heard and seen on YouTube and live in concert. She has accumulated an impressive catalogue of varied recordings, including Hans Zimmer's Grammy-winning soundtrack for *The Da Vinci Code*, Eric Whitacre's *Goodnight Moon* with the London Symphony Orchestra, and Oscar-winner John Corigliano's song-cycle *Mr. Tambourine Man* with the Buffalo Symphony (for which she won a Grammy Award for Best Female Vocalist). Some of her recent discs are Richard Danielpour's *Toward A Season of Peace* and Corigliano's *Vocalise*, both released to critical acclaim on NAXOS.

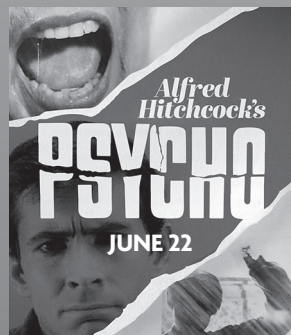
In constant demand as a singer of new and contemporary music, Plitmann shines as a soloist in many world premieres, including Frank Zappa's orchestral staged version of *200 Motels* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; the Dallas Opera world premiere of Mark Adamo's opera *Becoming Santa Claus*; Yuval Sharon and Annie Gosfield's *War of the Worlds* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Richard Danielpour's *The Passion of Yeshua* with Buffalo Symphony Orchestra under JoAnn Falletta.

She has a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and lives with her son and their cat in Los Angeles.

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