



# Redwood Symphony

Eric Kujawsky, Music Director





## Music Director Eric Kujawsky

Eric Kujawsky established Redwood Symphony in 1985 after receiving his Doctorate in Conducting from Stanford in 1985.

His teachers have included Samuel Krachmalnick, Paul Vermel and Andor Toth. He has performed with the Aspen Music Festival, several Bay Area orchestras and choruses, and with TheatreWorks in Palo Alto, Ramshead Productions at Stanford, and the Cañada College Drama Department.

Dr. Kujawsky made his Davies Symphony Hall debut with Redwood Symphony and the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus in June 1996. He is equally at home with symphony, opera, musical comedy or jazz, and is recognized as one of the Bay Area's foremost conductors.







## Brief history of Redwood Symphony

Redwood Symphony was founded by Eric Kujawsky in 1985, as an outgrowth of the Stanford Summer Orchestra, started by Dr. Kujawsky at Stanford University where he was a doctoral student (DMA in Conducting, 1985). The orchestra initially performed at Foothill College but moved to Cañada College in Redwood City in August 1987.

Redwood Symphony has maintained an unusual profile throughout its history. From the onset, Dr. Kujawsky started with several unusual premises that have been key to the orchestra's success.

The first was that, in an area like the San Francisco Peninsula, with its many highly educated professionals and musical ensembles, there would be many amateur musicians who had grown bored playing the standard repertoire and would enthusiastically embrace a group dedicated to playing works normally associated with professional orchestras. The result is a volunteer group of uncommonly good quality, rarely supplemented by paid personnel other than featured guest soloists. The quality is good enough to have allowed the orchestra to record six studio CDs.

The second premise is that an orchestra, even a community orchestra, should enthusiastically promote contemporary music to keep classical music relevant in an age dominated by pop music. Redwood Symphony has a strong record not only of premieres but of also doing the first local performances of important works after they've been premiered by the San Francisco Symphony or Cabrillo Music Festival. Besides Mahler symphonies, Redwood Symphony has performed most of the major orchestral works of Igor Stravinsky and Béla Bartók, as well as music by John Adams, Michael Daugherty, Aaron Copland and other 20th and 21st Century composers.



The third premise is that Redwood Symphony would strive to differentiate itself from the competition not only in repertoire, but also in concert format and dress, to appeal more to audiences that are new to classical music. Dress is "formal casual" — black with a "splash of color," with jackets and ties generally eschewed. Encores and extra small works are often slipped into the programming, and the orchestra is used to demonstrate important points. Comedy bits — including an ongoing series of recorded reminders to turn off cell phones — are interpolated. Unlike other symphonies or venues, Redwood Symphony is noted for allowing the silent use of mobile devices with lighted screens from within a designated seating area during performances.

Redwood Symphony is also dedicated to educational outreach, introducing and fostering an appreciation of classical and contemporary music especially by youth. In order to reach new and younger audiences, Redwood Symphony enthusiastically offers children under 18 free admission to most performances when accompanied by an adult. It also features an annual Meet the Orchestra night at its Family Concert, where the orchestra sections move into separate rooms to meet audience members before the performance and demonstrate their various instruments, sounds and techniques, while answering questions. At this same Family Concert, a limited number of lucky children have a brief opportunity to actually conduct the Redwood Symphony under the tutelage of Dr. Kujawsky.



# Highlights of Redwood Symphony's history

A complete Mahler symphony cycle (and a nearly complete second cycle), including two different versions of the complete Tenth Symphony.

John Corigliano's Symphony No. 1 ("Of Rage and Remembrance")(1993)

Charles Ives's Symphony No. 4 (1998)

Michael Daugherty's Metropolis Symphony (2002)

H.K. Gruber's Frankenstein!! (2004)

Olivier Messiaen's Turangalila Symphony (2008)

Performances of complete concert operas, including Porgy and Bess, Candide and Don Giovanni.



## Notable premieres

Concerto for Orchestra ("Jubilee Games"), Oct. 11, 1991 — West Coast premiere of Leonard Bernstein's last orchestral work

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, Oct. 11, 1992 — Bay Area premiere of a play with actors and orchestra by Tom Stoppard and André Previn

Serenada Schizophrana, Oct. 2, 2005 — West Coast premiere of Danny Elfman's first symphonic work

Il Sogno, Oct. 8, 2006 - West Coast premiere of Elvis Costello's first orchestral work





## Mission Statement

Redwood Symphony enriches the lives of its musicians and the community by presenting spirited, high-quality performances of ambitious orchestral music in an innovative, educational and entertaining format.

Redwood Symphony is an American orchestra based in Redwood City, California, in the San Francisco Bay Area. It is the Orchestra in Residence at Cañada College. Redwood Symphony is an all-volunteer orchestra dedicated to the creation of an alternative model of the symphony orchestra in the 21st Century.

To accomplish this goal, the orchestra concentrates on ambitious, contemporary repertoire, experiments with the concert format and adopts a more informal mode of dress than most other groups.







## Redwood Symphony Recordings

*Stravinsky: Petrushka / The Soldier's Tale, 1992, Clarity Records.* In the Redwood Symphony's first CD, Kujawsky uses his own hybrid of *Petrushka*, combining the original 1911 version with the composer's 1947 revision.

*Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring/Les Noces, 1995, Clarity Records.* This is the only version of *Les Noces* available in English.

*Rodeo/Fanfare for the Common Man/An American in Paris, 1998, Redwood Recordings* — A rare recording of the complete *Rodeo* ballet score.

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice/Pictures at an Exhibition/The Creation of the World, 1998, Redwood Recordings.* Kujawsky's *Pictures* includes some scoring revisions (including contrabass clarinet, extra brass in the finale), and transition from the descending eighth-note passage in *Great Gate of Kiev* rewritten by George Yefchak.

*Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra, 2000, Redwood Recordings.* Both of Bartók's endings are included. Includes *First Rumanian Rhapsody* by Enesco.

*Conga Line in Hell, 2002, Redwood Recordings.* This includes World Premiere recording of Miguel del Aguila's *Conga-Line in Hell*. Also Debussy's *Afternoon of a Faun*, Copland's *El Salon Mexico* and Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel*.





## Critical Reviews

February 9, 2013

San Francisco Classical Voice

<http://www.sfcv.org/reviews/redwood-symphony/mighty-redwood-symphony-takes-on-young-works>

### Mighty Redwood Symphony Takes on Young Works

By David Bratman

The Redwood Symphony and its music director, Eric Kujawsky, stepped boldly into the aisles of recent music for their Saturday concert at Cañada College in Redwood City. The three works on the program, all by established American composers, are not brand-new. They were written between 1985 and 1999, so they're at the stage of their history when today's musicians and audiences are beginning to consider whether they'll be regarded in the future as among the masterworks of their time.

Walking the paths of programming recent music can be tricky. The ideal goal is to avoid sterile, academic claptrap on the one side and soggy, lowest-denominator hackwork on the other, finding work that can both appeal to listeners and display intellectual heft. All three of these compositions manage to thread that narrow path, I think. Not that John Corigliano's Symphony No. 1 is at all immediately accessible on first listening; certainly, I had not found it so. Lou Harrison's Piano Concerto With Selected Orchestra and Jennifer Higdon's *blue cathedral* (yes, it's spelled without capital letters) are more inviting, yet still remain something of a challenge.

All three intrigue sufficiently on first hearing to invite further encounters, and they then repay that interest by becoming even more enriching on repetition. That process, I believe, is the mark of a masterpiece-in-waiting. For me, as a listener who'd heard all three works before (though the Harrison only on CD), the Redwood Symphony performances were steps on that road to understanding.

Corigliano wrote his symphony in memoriam for AIDS victims he knew. He alternates between anger at these untimely deaths and sorrow at the loss of his friends. Sometimes the anger takes the form of massive outbreaks of chaos. Here is where the nonprofessional musicians of the Redwood Symphony shone the best. They're not afraid to run a little ragged in the service of art, and they know how to do it. The passage in the frantic "Tarentella" second movement, where the composer directs the solo winds to ignore the conductor's beat and drift to a confused stop, and the concluding primal scream, were both vivid and punchy. So were the muted trumpets, as well as the section of "primeval," deep, wind solos beginning with Mia Stormer's contrabassoon and Bill Menkin's contrabass clarinet. Of the movement's intermittent cheerful dancing solos, Joan Hebert's clarinet came out the most fluidly.

Corigliano alternates between anger at these untimely deaths and sorrow at the loss of his friends.

In the first movement, the anger imagery is less chaotic and more evocative of a powerful machine. The critical moment when that machine pulsates to a halt while losing none of its power or volume came off, in the orchestra's performance, more like a runner panting across the finish line, determined to make it past every obstacle.

The second half of the symphony is more sorrowful. Cellists Aaron Baca and Tony Gansen made their way gamely through the long double solos that make up much of the third movement. Quiet backing from the other strings matched them in ardor, most conspicuously from the violas, under acting leader Frank Chang. Various wind tags displayed considerable character. At the end of the movement, the rage motifs from the first move-

ment returned with towering impact.

The brief, resigned finale is dominated by soft waves of sound from the brass. Played at a brisk tempo, these washed through nicely. The cello solos reappear, as does an offstage piano playing ghostly echoes of an Albéniz tango, first heard in the quiet middle section of the opening movement over a deliberately disconnected string melody. Orchestral pianist Delphean Quan darted off and on stage, as required, to play both this and the on-stage piano part. I'm not sure how audible the Albéniz was during the first movement for listeners who weren't expecting it; it was definitely lost during the finale against the somewhat louder brass.

### **Calling Up a Stampede**

Harrison's piano concerto is a long, rambling work featuring a lot of noodling for the tireless, even-handed soloist, Louise Costigan-Kerns. The "Stampede" second movement (title derived from the medieval dance form *estampie*) was liveliest, with the soloist's tone clusters, often for the forearm, which Harrison borrowed from his teacher Henry Cowell. Here and in the slower third movement, the accompaniment was dominated by percussion, with particularly crisp and energetic drumming from Ben Bressler. This worked better than the more string-dominated first movement.

Higdon's brief work ... is a light-toned, crystalline gem of imaginative construction and delicately luminous tones.

Harrison was interested in older tuning systems, more flavorful than our modern equal temperament, and directed his concerto to be played in one of those intonations. (Thus his "selected orchestra," consisting of strings and trombones — the instruments capable of adjusting their tunings — and unpitched percussion.) For this performance, the musicians attempted no such thing, and Costigan-Kerns played on the same Baldwin that Quan used for the onstage piano parts of the Corigliano and the Higdon, which don't call for special tuning. I would not expect these volunteer string players necessarily to have command of such delicate adjustments, anyway. The result seemed to me to be detectable in a certain lack of tang in the concerto's sound — compared to the recording with its dedicatee, Keith Jarrett — as it floated along on its rather bland, yet pleasant, way.

Higdon's brief work, which concluded the concert, is a light-toned, crystalline gem of imaginative construction and delicately luminous tones. It was the most beautiful work on the program, and, indeed, one of the most attractive recent compositions I've had the pleasure of hearing. Redwood's performance struggled a little with the fleetness and sonority of the music. Still, it contained some fine playing, particularly from Peter Stahl, a late substitute for an ill colleague, on English horn, and Michael Odynski on oboe.

*David Bratman is a librarian who lives with his lawfully wedded soprano and a wall full of symphony recordings.*



April 24, 2010

San Francisco Classical Voice

<http://www.sfcv.org/reviews/redwood-symphony/rustling-among-the-redwoods>

## Rustling Among the Redwoods

By David Bratman

Eric Kujawsky, music director of the Redwood Symphony, likes sometimes to lead his volunteer musicians into the thorny thickets of Eastern European modernism. This time, on Saturday at the Cañada College Theatre in Redwood City, nobody got seriously lost.

Bartók's Second Piano Concerto is not the one of his to play if you want to be ingratiating. (That would be the Third.) Although its structure is simple enough, the scoring is heavy, jagged, rhythmically complex — everything you expect from 1930s Bartók. The composer claimed he was trying to make the work relatively easy to play. It doesn't sound easy, yet the Redwood Symphony was able to get through it with panache. Whether all the tumbling brass themes in the first movement and the galloping rhythms in the finale were played with complete accuracy or not, they all hung together and never descended into chaos. Best of all was the slow movement, where hushed, vibrato-less strings gave the right introduction to the long, quiet, unusually scored duet between the solo piano, played by Thomas Hansen, and the orchestra's timpani, beaten with great confidence, care, and stamina by Lydia Derugin.

Concerto soloists are sometimes the Redwood Symphony's weak link, not always being up to the challenges of the works they undertake. Hansen, a local pianist who teaches at the Crestmont Conservatory in San Mateo and Notre Dame de Namur University, was not like that. He dove into Bartók's slamming chords with full vigor, and held back in delicacy when the score allowed him to. Although his playing style was crisp and clear, there was a jangling fuzziness about the sound, almost as if the Steinway's frame was vibrating audibly as he performed.

To create such a coherent performance of this formidable masterpiece was a notable achievement. What's too bad is that the concerto may be too formidable for an audience to fully appreciate a good performance of it when they hear one.

Having gotten through that, the orchestra then faced Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony. It's a broader, smoother work than the Bartók, and it's also much more commonly played. Here the challenge was matching the many great performances that have come before. Kujawsky took the long Moderato opening movement, and the introduction to the finale, with slow broad strokes, letting the orchestra growl ominously. Redwood's cellos and clarinets, in particular, have a good line in growling. Then the musicians leapt abruptly into the fast sections: a bit too abruptly, perhaps, for in the finale I missed a certain power and grandeur, yet it and the scherzo were firm and vehement enough to be satisfying.

All the playing was on top level for a community orchestra. Very little line or rhythm was lost, intonation stayed on the good side, nobody was conspicuously weak, and ensemble was excellent. The tentativeness of some of the solo turns could be defended as appropriate for the context, and many of the bolder ones were outstanding. Top marks this time to clarinetist Richard Steinberg, who found a bit of the jazz in Shostakovich, and to hornist Greg White. . .

One more small treat rounded out the program. If the Tenth Symphony is Shostakovich cautiously poking his head out after Stalin's death in 1953 and looking around to see if the landscape is safe, then his Tahiti Trot of 1928 is the pre-Stalin Shostakovich, when he was young, carefree, and bounteously witty. This piece is the colorful orchestration of Vincent Youmans' then-current hit song Tea for Two, which Shostakovich arranged in an hour on a bet. If the Redwood Symphony played it on a bet, then they won that bet handsomely.

*David Bratman is a librarian who lives with his lawfully wedded soprano and a wall symphony recordings.*

August 7, 2012

Music News

<http://www.sfcv.org/article/music-news-aug-7-2012#anchor1>

## Mega-Concert of the Year. Or Years.

By Janos Gereben

Oscar Wilde's observation that "Nothing succeeds like excess" is true enough, as far as it goes. The unstated part is that success depends on execution; the more excessive the work, the greater the requirement for keeping up with the earth-heaven-hell-shaking forte-*forte*-*fortissimo*.

Sunday's Berlioz Requiem and more in Davies Symphony Hall — consisting of some of the "biggest" music in all literature — exceeded all expectations. Anticipation was tempered by a perusal of the components: the expanded Redwood Symphony (over 100 players), 80 singers from New York, and 140 from the San Francisco Lyric Chorus and 34 other choral groups in the Bay Area. All volunteers, coming together for this one-time event, rehearsed in *tutti* only for a couple of days. Hmm ... how did it go?

The concert started with the Fanfare from Strauss' *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Eric Kujawsky making the rafters shake with the 2001: *A Space Odyssey* "Sunrise," and the orchestra playing as one. Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture* (conducted by Eric Townell) was followed by the chorus' first, impressive entrance with the *Shepherds' Farewell* from Berlioz' *L'Enfance du Christ* (Robert Gurney).

Then came the glorious Finale of Boito's *Mefistofele* (conducted by event organizer and former San Francisco choral maven Adrian Horn), which you may experience in a similarly splendid performance here in a better-financed venue (no solo singers, sets, or costumes on Sunday, but the effect was the same).

One quibble: The Devil's derisive whistle at the angels is disruptive enough (that's the purpose), but it can and should be musical, not as crude and "atonal" as it was at this concert. The Berlioz Requiem took up the second half of the concert, the complex masterpiece conducted by Kujawsky in a consistent, unaffected, unhurried, and from-the-heart performance. The huge chorus performed well throughout the concert, especially in the Requiem, sopranos leading the way with a clear, beautiful sound. Unlike the somewhat slurred text in the Boito and the other Berlioz, diction in the Requiem was excellent.

A startling discovery, at least for me, was the orchestra. In context, it is one of the finest community orchestras around. In general, terrific performances all the way through, with first violins and woodwinds leading the way, no section slacking off, and the quickly recruited extra brass doing well.

When I first read the Redwood Symphony repertory, I was surprised and a bit wary (two Mahler cycles, lots of difficult, big, and contemporary works over the years), but after the Davies Hall concert, I'll be heading south to the peninsula to hear the orchestra for myself. If the expanded Redwood Symphony could do this well with Boito and Berlioz, the regular core group must be heard to be believed.

And look at the 2012-2013 season: Corigliano, Beethoven, Theofanidis, Revueltas, Bernstein, Brahms, Rodriguez, Gruber, Daugherty, Debussy, and a concert version of *Sweeney Todd* ... Goodness gracious me! (Are you reading this, big, commercial orchestra to the north?)

A comment from Kujawsky about the Sunday concert, something that may well be suspect of self-aggrandizement otherwise, is simply the truth in this case: "It was the kind of concert one dreams about having as a peak musical experience, which most musicians never experience. Only with volunteers!"

To give credit at least to the first-chair players: Heather Katz, concertmaster; Sarah Moskovitz, second violins; Doug Tomm, viola; Ellis Verosub, cello; Brian Link, bass; Patti Harrell, flute/piccolo; Joan Hebert, clarinet; Doug McCracken, bassoon; Jim Millar, horn; Larry Heck, trumpet; Erik Dabel, trombone; Dave Silon, tuba; and no principal in the program, but 11 percussionists.



## Recent Concerts

### Redwood Symphony

Eric Kujawsky, Music Director  
TWENTY-EIGHTH SEASON

**November 17, 2012**  
**8 P.M.**

H. K. Gruber  
*Charivari*

Michael Daugherty  
*Hell's Angels*  
with Infernal Fagotti,  
bassoon quartet

Ludwig van Beethoven  
Symphony No. 7  
as 'retouched' by Mahler

Cañada College Main Theatre  
Farm Hill Road at I-280  
Redwood City



**Season Opener** **September 29, 2012**  
8 P.M. Saturday

**Revueltas:**  
Troka

**Bernstein:**  
Serenade for Violin  
with Robin Sharp

**Brahms:**  
Symphony No. 4

### Redwood Symphony

Eric Kujawsky, Music Director  
TWENTY-EIGHTH SEASON

Cañada College Main Theatre  
Farm Hill Road at I-280, Redwood City



# Redwood Symphony

Eric Kujawsky, Music Director  
TWENTY-EIGHTH SEASON

**February 9, 2013**  
**8 P.M.**

Jennifer Higdon  
*Blue Cathedral*

Lou Harrison  
Piano Concerto  
with Louise Costigan-Kerns

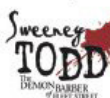
John Corigliano  
Symphony No. 1

Pre-concert lecture at 7 P.M.

Cañada College Main Theatre  
Farm Hill Road at I-280  
Redwood City

# Liberating the Soul

Special Events Coming this Summer — Save these dates!



**June 1 & 2, 2013**  
Tickets available now

**August 10, 2013**

The Santa Cruz  
White Album Ensemble

Redwood Symphony Presents  
Eric Kujawsky, Music Director  
TWENTY-EIGHTH SEASON

# Family Halloween Concert

Rodriguez: A Colorful Symphony based on  
"The Phantom TollBooth"  
Visual display by Matthew Bain  
and narration by Valerie Sarfaty

**COME IN COSTUME!**

October 27, 2012, 3 p.m.  
Cañada College Main Theatre  
4200 Farm Hill Blvd,  
Redwood City

Redwood Symphony  
Eric Kujawsky, Music Director  
TWENTY-SEVENTH SEASON

**June 2, 2012**  
William Schuman:  
*New England Triptych*  
Kristin Link, conductor  
Wyman: *Heart's Gate* (world premiere)  
with Mark Goldstein, marimba lumina  
in celebration of the Golden Gate Bridge 75th Anniversary  
Stravinsky: *Pulcinella* (complete ballet score)

Mark Goldstein

**Benefit Concert for  
New Steinway Piano**

**June 30, 2012**  
Gershwin: Concerto in F  
with Richard Glazier, piano  
Copland: An Outdoor  
Overture  
Plus music from *E.T.*,  
*Les Misérables*, and more!

George Gershwin

Cañada College Main Theatre  
Farm Hill Road at I-280, Redwood City

This could be your LAST POSTCARD. See other side for details.