

Virtuosity!

February 27-28, 2010

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Symphony No. 10 in G Major, K.74 (1770)

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro

Movements I & II played without pause.

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Sinfonia Concertante in B-Flat Major, Hob.I:105

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro con spirit

?, violin

Ramona McConkie, cello

Nancy Brown, oboe

Shirley Plumer, bassoon

INTERMISSION

Jorge Cardoso
(b. 1949)

Suite Indiana

- I. Argentina
- II. Venezuela
- III. Paraguay
- IV. Brasil

Dos Américas Guitar Duo

Jim Bosse

Alejandro Dávila

Carl Maria von Weber
(1786-1826)

Symphony No. 1 in C Major, J.50

- I. Allegro con fuoco
- II. Andante
- III. Scherzo: Presto
- IV. Finale: Presto

I declare to you before God, and as an honest man, that your son is the greatest composer I know, either personally or by name. —Joseph Haydn, to Leopold Mozart.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) showed such a prodigious talent for music in his early childhood that his father, also a composer, dropped all other ambitions and devoted himself to educating the boy and exhibiting his accomplishments. Between ages six and fifteen, Mozart was on tour over half the time. By 1762, he was a virtuoso on the clavier—an early keyboard instrument and predecessor of the piano—and soon became a good organist and violinist as well. He produced his first minuets at the age of six, and his first symphony just before his ninth birthday, his first oratorio at eleven, and his first opera at twelve. His final output would total more than 600 compositions. Much has already been said and studied in the popular media about Mozart's roguish lifestyle and apprehension of conformity. It was this aspect of his personality that never won him the support of royalty or the church, which, at that time, was critical to any composer's survival. As such, Mozart died young, ill, poor, and relatively unappreciated ... only to become the mostly widely acknowledged orchestral composer in history.

Mozart's **Symphony No. 10 in G major, K.74**, was probably written during his first journey to Italy in the spring of 1770. The symphony is scored for two oboes, two horns and strings, and is really an overture in the fast-slow-fast Italian style, with the first two movements played without a break. No tempo assignments appeared in the autograph score, but the Italian overture form made frequent appearances in Mozart's works and easy enough to distinguish. The autograph also bears the remark "Overture zur Oper *Mitridate*" (Overture to the opera *Mitridate*) by the hand of Johann Anton André, which is struck out except for the word "Overture". An early publisher of Mozart's works, André was under the impression that this piece was originally planned as an overture to *Mitridate, re di Ponto* (which has an overture of its own, different from this symphony).

I know that God has bestowed a talent upon me, and I thank Him for it. I think I have done my duty and been of use in my generation by my works. Let others do the same.—Haydn

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was born in the Austrian town of Rohrau, and in 1761, after a conspicuously ordinary early life, was engaged as vice-Kapellmeister by Prince Paul Esterházy, a Hungarian nobleman. He remained exclusively in that family's employment for the next thirty years, working for Prince Paul and then for his son Nikolaus. Unlike Mozart, whose relationships with his patrons were neither easy nor consistent, Haydn lived happily within the confines of his master's world and benefited enormously from seclusion and from having a permanent orchestra with which to work. Haydn later remarked, "There was no one there to confuse me, so I was forced to become original." In 1790, Nikolaus died and the court musicians were dismissed by his successor. Haydn moved to Vienna, but shortly afterward received an invitation to visit England, where he proved incredibly successful in 1791-92. Oxford University even gave Haydn an honorary degree. Having returned from London, he bought a house in Vienna where he taught Beethoven and others, but in 1794 he returned to England, this time with even more success. He returned to Europe again in 1795, returning to employment with the Esterházy family and concentrating all of his time on composing. His health began to fail in 1802, and after a long struggle, Haydn died in 1809. In some ways, Haydn was more radical than Mozart, experimenting with unusual-length phrases and using unconventional forms in his symphonies. Above all, Haydn is the most humane and comforting of composers. In his own words, he wrote music so that "the weary and worn, or the man burdened with affairs, may enjoy a few moments of solace and refreshment."

It was during Haydn's London years, while he was writing his greatest symphonies, that the **Sinfonia Concertante in B-Flat Major, Hob.I:105** was first heard at a concert on March 9, 1792,

at the Hanover Square Rooms. Haydn's pupil Ignace Joseph Pleyel had been engaged by William Cramer to lead a rival series of concerts in London, also at the Hanover Square Rooms, and provided works in this unusual but popular form. This probably prompted Johann Salomon, the impresario who had brought Haydn to London, to ask Haydn to write something of the same kind. Haydn's new concerto for violin, cello, oboe and bassoon was premiered with Salomon playing the violin solo. Declared by the Morning Herald as "profound, airy, affecting and original," the piece would nonetheless fall into obscurity until the renewed interest in Haydn's music after World War II. The work is a masterpiece of its genre, with graceful melodies, brilliant orchestration, and a well-balanced dialogue between the four soloists and the ensemble.

There never was a more German composer than you; ... the Briton does you justice, the Frenchman admires you, but only the German can love you. You are his own, a bright day in his life, a drop of his blood, a particle of his heart.— Richard Wagner, in a funeral oration for Carl Maria von Weber.

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826) was born near Lübeck in Northern Germany to a musical and theatrical family, and was a cousin of Mozart's wife Constanze. The fact that his childhood circumstances—raised in music and theatre—were similar to those of Richard Wagner is all the more significant, given that Weber is seen as the pioneer of German Romantic opera who paved the way for Wagner. Weber's music studies began with the piano and included lessons with Franz Joseph Haydn's brother Michael in Salzburg.

Weber began composing when he was twelve, and composed his first opera at thirteen, though the manuscript was destroyed in a fire just after it was completed. At seventeen, he won a post as Kapellmeister of the Breslau theatre, but had to resign from the hectic schedule after two years when he accidentally drank engraver's acid. He would then embark on a career as a virtuoso pianist until 1813, when he was given the directorship of the Prague opera house. In 1817, he was appointed Royal Saxon Kapellmeister in Dresden. His primary focus in Dresden was the development of a new style of German opera, which met with much antagonism as Italian opera was all the rage. Everything changed with the premier of Weber's *Der Freischütz* in 1821 in Berlin, which was a complete success and immediately swept through Germany and much of Europe.

Sadly, Weber would never have another major operatic success, since he would never have a libretto as good as *Der Freischütz*. Just after the premiere of *Oberon* in London in 1826, his long years of ill health caught up with him and he died the day before he was to return home. He was buried in Moorfields Chapel, but Wagner arranged for his body to be moved to Dresden in 1844.

The realm of symphonic composition was a treacherous place when Weber wrote his two symphonies. Beethoven's Third Symphony had changed everything and his Fourth was powering its way through Europe when Weber completed his two symphonies in 1807. In the shadow of Beethoven, Weber's symphonies can be seen as an act of bravery, yet Weber didn't opt for the unconventional. Instead, he followed the tradition of Mozart: elegant orchestration, spellbinding melodies, grace over boldness, and a strict adherence to form. **Symphony No. 1 in C Major, J.50** was dedicated, on its publication in 1812, to Gottfried Weber, who befriended Weber after his dismissal from Württemberg in 1810. The first three movements were completed by Christmas Eve 1806, while the final Presto was finished at midnight on January 2, 1807. Weber's operatic sensibility pervades the entire work, which unfortunately was overshadowed by Beethoven's revolutionary symphonies and did not find a place in the repertoire until the mid-twentieth century.