

THE BROADWAY SYMPHONY

George Shangrow, conductor

IN CONCERT

March 5, 1989

Kane Hall, University of Washington

Overture to "The Marriage of Figaro"

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Symphony No. 1 in D Major, WQ 183

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach

Allegro di molto

Largo

Presto

Orpheus

Igor Stravinsky

Premiere Tableau

Orpheus weeps for Euridice

Air de Danse

L'Ange de la Mort et sa Danse

Interlude

Deuxieme Tableau

Pas des Furies

Air de Danse

Interlude

Air de Danse

Pas d'Action

Pas de Deux

Interlude

Pas d'Action

Troisieme Tableau

Apotheose d'Orphee

INTERMISSION

Road Ode

Huntley Beyer

55-MPH

Slow Curves

Slippery When Wet

Scenic Route

Bumpy Roads Forever

The Broadway Symphony and Seattle Chamber Singers are artists-in-residence at University Unitarian Church.

Performance of Stravinsky's "Orpheus" is by permission from Boosey and Hawkes, Inc.

PROGRAM NOTES

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart - Overture to "The Marriage of Figaro"
Lorenzo da Ponte, the librettist for Mozart's renowned opera buffa "The Marriage of Figaro," offered the following description of how the opera came to exist:

"Talking one day with Mozart, he asked me if I could turn Beaumarchais' *Noces de Figaro* into an opera. The idea was to my taste, and its success was immediate and universal. For some time this play had been forbidden by the Emperor because of its immorality. How then to propose it anew... I awaited the opportune moment to propose the poem either to the Intendant or, if I had the courage, to the Emperor himself."

"As fast as I wrote the words, Mozart wrote the music, and it was all finished in six weeks. The lucky star of Mozart willed an opportune moment and permitted me to carry my manuscript directly to the Emperor. 'What's this?' said Joseph to me. 'You know that Mozart, while remarkable for his instrumental music, has with one exception never written for song, and the exception is not much good.'"

"I answered timidly, 'Without the kindness of the Emperor, I should have written only one drama in Vienna.'"

"True. But I have already forbidden the German company to give this play, Figaro."

"I know it; but in turning it into an opera, I have cut out whole scenes, shortened others, and been careful everywhere to omit anything that might shock the conventionalities and good taste. In a word, I have made a work worthy of the theater honored by His Majesty's protection. As for the music, as far as I can judge, it seems to me a masterpiece."

"Very well," said the Emperor. "I trust to your taste and prudence. Send the score to the copyists."

First performed in Vienna in May of 1796, "The Marriage of Figaro" was personally coached by Mozart. Based on Beaumarchais' comedy of manners *Le Mariage de Figaro, ou la Folle journee*, the work was a great success. It caught on with its audiences immediately.

Michael Kelley, an Irish tenor who took part in the first performance provides an interesting glimpse of the company's experience with Mozart: "I shall never forget his little animated countenance, when lighted up with the glowing rays of genius; it is as impossible to describe as it would be to paint sunbeams."

English translations became hits in both The United States and England, with the first American performance occurring in 1824.

The overture to the opera has become a favorite in its own right. The rapid passage that begins the work is familiar to all concert goers. Following a subsidiary theme, the violins introduce the bright second theme, completing the exposition of a condensed sonata form. There is no development section nor is there a free fantasy section which appears in many overtures of the period. A longer than typical coda brings the work to its delightful finish.

-Gary Fladmoe

Igor Stravinsky - Orpheus

Over the course of music history the myth of Orpheus has provided an oft-used subject for musical setting. The story of the young musician who descends into Hades to bring back his beloved Eurydice has proved fruitful material for composers of both opera and ballet. Peri and Caccini combined their composing skills to set Rinuccini's *Euridice* to music in 1600, resulting in what is commonly regarded as the first opera. Seven years later Monteverdi staged his first opera, *Orfeo*, giving us another treatment of the famous myth.

Christoph Willibald Gluck brought the story to life in the

Classical tradition with his 18th Century dramatic opera, "Orpheus and Eurydice", produced in 1762. Jacques Offenbach found yet another outlet for the Can-Can, converting the serious theme to the comic opera in 1858 with his "Orpheus in the Underworld".

The music of Igor Stravinsky epitomizes nearly every significant trend embraced by music in the first half of the 20th Century. He exerted an influence, not only upon his own generation, but upon the generation which followed him, perhaps exerting as much influence on the music of his time as Wagner did in his own era.

In 1947, nearly 100 years after Offenbach set the Orpheus myth in his opera, Stravinsky would offer a setting of the myth for the ballet. First performed by the Ballet Society of New York on April 28, 1948, Stravinsky's "Orpheus" has found additional audiences in the symphony concert hall. The first concert performance of the work was played without any alteration to the score by the Boston Symphony on February 11, 1949 with Stravinsky himself conducting.

A brooding melancholy seems to pervade the music. The scoring is austere, suggesting the economy of the Neo-classic stylistic period of Stravinsky's career which spanned the time from about 1923 to 1951.

The following program is provided with the score: "Orpheus weeps for Eurydice...Friends pass bringing presents and offering sympathy. *Air de Danse*. Dance of the Angel of Death. Interlude (The Angel and Orpheus reappear in the gloom of Tartarus). *Pas des Furies* (their agitation and their threats). *Air des danse* (Orpheus). Interlude (the tormented souls in Tartarus stretch out their fettered arms towards Orpheus and implore him to continue his song of consolation). *Air de Danse* (Orpheus). *Pas d'action* (Hades moved by the song of Orpheus, grows calm. The Furies surround him, bind his eyes and return Eurydice to him). *Pas de deux* (Orpheus and Eurydice before the veiled curtain). Interlude.

Pas d'action (the Bacchantes attack Orpheus, seize him, and tear him to pieces). Apotheosis of Orpheus. Apollo reappears. He wrests the lyre from Orpheus and raises his song heavenward."

As Stravinsky would say of himself: "I hold that it was a mistake to consider me a revolutionary. If one only need break habit in order to be labeled a revolutionary, then every artist who has something to say and who in order to say it steps outside the bounds of established convention could be considered revolutionary."

We leave it to you, our listeners, to determine the wisdom of Stravinsky's statement as you hear and interpret "Orpheus" for yourselves.
-Gary Fladmoe

Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach - Symphony in D Major

When one thinks of composers who epitomize the Classical ideals, Franz Joseph Haydn comes to mind immediately. However, there is a composer to whom the title of founder of the Classical Style might more accurately be given. Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach, the second son of Johann Sebastian Bach, must be regarded as one of the most influential musicians of the period of transition between the Baroque and Classical periods of music history.

The young Bach had only one music teacher, his father. While a student at the University in Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, he founded a choral group with which he introduced some of his first compositions. In 1738, at the age of 24, he settled in Berlin and directed himself to the dual career of clavier player and composer. In 1740 he became a court musician for Frederick the Great and stayed in that position for 27 years. In 1768, Bach became music director of the five most prominent churches in Hamburg.

His fame as a keyboardist and composer was so widespread that during his lifetime and for years thereafter, mention of the name of Bach brought to mind Carl Philipp Emmanuel and not his now more famous father.

Although his reputation as a composer is based in his keyboard works, Bach wrote eighteen symphonies, 52 concerti for keyboard and

orchestra, and numerous other concerti for solo instruments and orchestra. He was a craftsman who respected formal structure (even though his improvisations and keyboard fantasias reportedly stirred his audiences to excitement), yet he tended to bring fresh lyricism and comfortable but sometimes surprising harmonies to his music.

Formally he tends to be closer to Haydn and Beethoven than to Mozart. He favored the three-movement (Fast-Slow-Fast) structure in his larger works. As his career progressed the slow middle movement of his extended compositions such as sonatas and symphonies tended to become abbreviated bridges between the two faster movements.

The parallel with Haydn is further emphasized in looking at Bach's movements in sonata form. Generally these movements have the two themes typical of the form. However, there is usually little contrast between the two, instead highlighting unity between the two through mood and musical material. Contrast is achieved through almost immediate development of the thematic materials in the body of the exposition. The actual development section was typically short.

The above discussion serves to highlight the Symphony in D Major as a classic example of C. P. E. Bach's style. It is in the standard three-movement structure with the Fast-Slow-Fast contrast of tempi. The first movement, Allegro di molto is a sonata form of two brief themes, exposed, briefly developed and recapitulated in a concise movement. The dazzle comes from the string writing where the strings display a combined virtuosity.

The second movement, Largo, is a short connecting link to the final movement, Presto. Sparkle and virtuosity return and drive the symphony to a quick and exciting close. We hope you share our delight upon hearing this infrequently performed gem.

-Gary Fladmoe

Road Ode

This is a symphony in five movements. The road sign titles for the movements do not point to programmatic content: the music does not describe Arizona, Vermont or Interstate 5. Rather, the signs humorously point to different ways that feelings can be put together. They signify various "inescapes" or contours of the life of a feeling.

"55-MPH" presents a string of themes and characters, each faster than the preceding one. The music moves like gears shifting, or like a '53 Packard turning into a new Ferrari. The successive themes are not always new ones, yet as old themes repeat, they take on new emotional tones due to their greater speed.

"Slow Curves" offers, as does "55-MPH," a number of different themes and characters, but not in an expressly linear design. Rather, the design is somewhat circular. Different instrumental groups have different themes which recur. Sometimes, themes occur/recur together in a layered manner. Usually the themes repeat statically, but sometimes a theme will unexpectedly flower into different material. The strings have an "eternal" motive which develops at one point into a very romantic line. The brass have an ironic, partly inebriated quality which, at one point, evolves into sobriety and then into a blues-filled ease. The woodwinds and first trumpet have sensuous, slowly curving lines. Eternity, irony and sensuality mix in a form of curves, where ideas turn and return upon each other.

"Slippery When Wet" is marked "fast and dangerous." The melodic material most often consists of two and three part canons. The accompanimental material consists of interlocking patterns. One can hear these patterns, for example, at the start of the movement where, one by one, patterns from 1/2 to four measures in length begin. These patterns continue as a two-part canon, with the woodwinds and brass joining in octaves. The primary way that ideas are related in this movement is by repetition, which at high speeds, is dangerous.

"Scenic Route" is basically a sequence of big, expansive orchestral chords that is constantly interrupted and contrasted by lighter, chamber-group sections. The focus of the music thus shifts (as does the focus of

consciousness sometimes) between the obvious and the subtle, the one and the many, the general and the specific, the familiar and the new, the large and the small. Or, to use a scenic metaphor, the focus shifts between a panoramic, placid-looking landscape to the various detailed activities which, on closer inspection, are going on in that landscape.

"Bumpy Roads Forever" is in the traditional rondo form, with a main theme, stated in the beginning by the clarinet and alternating with several other themes. There are a few bumps now and then as things get off course - and at one point one ends up in a "Strawberry Field." But all ends well with the full orchestral force bringing back the first theme with a joyous, full sound.

-Huntley Beyer

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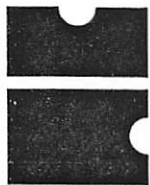
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