

BEETHOVEN BUZZ

SEPTEMBER 24 AND OCTOBER 15, 2006



ORCHESTRA *Seattle* CHAMBERSINGERS
GEORGE SHANGROW, MUSIC DIRECTOR

MARK SALMAN, PIANIST

Hailed as a "heroic virtuoso," Mark Salman's performances have been described as "powerful," "astonishing, exacting and evocative," "dramatic," "wildly imaginative" and "touchingly lyrical." Of his performance of Beethoven's Hammerklavier sonata one authority stated, "there are probably only five or six pianists in the world who can play [it] as perfectly."

Mr. Salman's performances have taken him to Europe, Asia, Canada and throughout the United States. He has performed in Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York City, has been the subject of profiles in The New York Times and has been featured in numerous radio and television broadcasts in the U.S. and in China. His account of his meetings with and playing for Vladimir Horowitz appears in David Dubal's book, *Evenings with Horowitz*. Mr. Salman is a co-founder of the Delmarva Piano Festival in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, which recently completed its fourteenth season. Recent performances have included his debut at the Newport Music Festival in Newport, Rhode Island, an eight recital series devoted to the works of Franz Liszt, and three recitals featuring Schubert's final three sonatas this past season. Mr. Salman is a Steinway artist.

Besides his wide-ranging repertoire, Mr. Salman is perhaps best known for his expertise on Beethoven, having performed the complete cycle of the thirty-two piano sonatas on both coasts as well as in 18 broadcasts on KING-FM in Seattle. Currently in production is Beethoven and his 32 Piano Sonatas – A Musical Universe, a

sixteen-part video series featuring Mr. Salman's performances of the complete sonata cycle, hosted by the noted author and commentator, David Dubal. DVD volumes one and two have recently been released on the Great Composers label, www.greatcomposers.us.

Mr. Salman's recordings include *The Transcendental Piano*, featuring works by Alkan, Beethoven and Liszt on Titanic Records, Mozart's Piano Concertos K. 488 and K. 503 with the Northwest Sinfonietta conducted by Christophe Chagnard on the Immortal Classics label, an all-Chopin CD on Great Composers, as well as *American Interweave*, featuring contemporary American works for cello and piano on Ambassador Records. Soon to be released is the first disc in Mr. Salman's Beethoven cycle, featuring the *Moonlight*, Op. 2, No.1 and Op.101 sonatas.

Mr. Salman is a native of Connecticut, where he began his studies at the age of eight and made his recital debut at eleven. A graduate of The Juilliard School, he studied with Richard Fabre and Josef Raieff. He previously attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for two years, where he concentrated on chamber music and composition, studying with the noted composer, John Harbison.

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Thomas Nesbitt
Vic Royer
Brian Russell
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* principal ** concertmaster

“BEETHOVEN BUZZ I”

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2006 – 3:00 PM
FIRST FREE METHODIST CHURCH

featuring

MARK SALMAN

and

ORCHESTRA SEATTLE
George Shangrow, conductor

PROGRAM

LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN (1770-182)
Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Opus 19
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Rondo: Molto allegro
Mark Salman, piano

LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)
Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Opus 15
Allegro con brio
Largo
Rondo: Allegro
Mark Salman, piano

– Intermission –

LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)
Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Opus 73 “Emperor”
Allegro
Adagio un poco mosso
Rondo: Allegro
Mark Salman, piano

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Use of cameras and recording equipment is not permitted in the concert hall.

“BEETHOVEN BUZZ II”

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2006 – 3:00 PM
FIRST FREE METHODIST CHURCH

featuring

MARK SALMAN

and
ORCHESTRA SEATTLE
SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS
George Shangrow, conductor

PROGRAM

LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN (1770-182)

Piano Concerto No. 3 in c minor, Opus 37

Allegro con brio

Largo

Rondo: Allegro

Mark Salman, piano

LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Opus 58

Allegro moderato

Andante con moto

Rondo: Vivace

Mark Salman, piano

– Intermission –

LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Choral Fantasy, Opus 80

Adagio;

Finale. Allegro – Meno allegro – Allegro molto –

Adagio, ma non troppo – Marcia, assai vivace – Allegro –

Allegretto, ma non troppo, (quasi Andante con moto) – Presto

Mark Salman, piano

Eleanor Stallcop-Horrox, Peggy Kurtz, sopranos

Emily Lunde, mezzo-soprano; Ralph Cobb, tenor

Steve Tachell, bass

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PROGRAM NOTES

When Johann Sebastian Bach "invented" the keyboard concerto in the mid 1730s, he had no idea where it would go in the hands of such musical descendents as Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Chopin. The composer who probably did the most to advance the form was Beethoven. His five concerti, written over just fifteen years, went from a late Mozart style to a romantic free-form style that would be emulated even a century later! It is in the spirit of this musical journey that we embark upon two programs comprising these wonderful works.

The most famous of Beethoven's piano students (and Liszt's teacher), Carl Czerny (1791 – 1857), had this to say of his master's keyboard skills:

"Beethoven's playing was notable for its tremendous power, unheard of bravura and facility. He had practiced day and night during his youth, and worked so hard that his health suffered. Beethoven's playing of slow and sustained music made an almost magic impression on the listener and, so far as I know, has never been surpassed."

And at a later time, Czerny noted:

"His improvisation was most brilliant and striking. In whatever company he might chance to be, he knew how to produce such an effect upon every hearer that frequently not an eye remained dry, while many would break out into loud sobs; for there was something wonderful in his expression... After ending an improvisation of this kind he would burst into loud laughter and banter his hearers on the emotions he had aroused in them. 'You are fools!' he would say."

Well, let us be fools then, for we can all get lost in the talent of this legendary composer and performer.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827) began his musical studies at an early age with his father, a tenor at the court of the Elector of Bonn. Beethoven's father was a strict and violent man, making his youth extremely painful. At 11, he was removed from school to study music exclusively. He learned to play the organ, piano, violin, and viola and also began composing. His first music was published at the age of 12 and he was appointed second organist in the Electoral chapel in Bonn at age 14. He continued in that position and had numerous other musical engagements in the city until 1792 when he settled permanently in Vienna.

The "second" concerto actually was composed before the C Major concerto, but was not published until 1801. Beethoven personally referred to it as "not one of his best," but it was wildly successful in Vienna, adding to the composer's credit as one of the finest new artists in town. Beethoven used it as a vehicle for his virtuosic talent, making him stand out as something more than just another young musician from Bonn.

The *Allegro con brio* presents its themes in a sonata-like construction. As in the works of Haydn and Mozart, the orchestra announces the themes in a large (90 measures) symphonic opening after which the piano introduces a new theme in an entirely different register. The themes are tossed back and forth between the orchestra and piano in a similar fashion to his later works of Mozart. Beethoven was clearly writing music to show his own prowess at the keyboard! The cadenza for the first movement was composed (written out) in 1809 – the time of the composition of the "Emperor" concerto. In the cadenza it is easy to see the work of the more mature Beethoven as he manipulates the several themes from this opening movement.

The *Adagio* has that Beethoven slow movement touch: a very simple tune infused with high emotional content. The movement unfolds with the piano doing florid variations on the melody as the orchestra accompanies peacefully. The ending is particularly poignant. Finally, the *Allegro molto's* sonata-rondo construction takes its theme from Viennese folklore, its rhythm rendering onomatopoeic images of spring. A romp of the first order, the ending shows typical Beethoven humor.

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15

Beethoven's Piano concerto No. 1, composed in 1797, owes much to Mozart's heroic style. As mentioned above, this was not the first concerto he had written, but the first to be published. Beethoven performed it himself at his Viennese debut in 1800, and it must have seemed larger than life to the public at the time. Both of these first concerti were received by the Viennese public with great gusto.

The large orchestral introduction marked *Allegro con brio* presents two themes, the first, (similar to the march theme in Mozart's Concerto No. 25), is a joyful theme for full orchestra, while the other is softer and more lyrical. Borrowing a technique from Mozart's manner of composition, the piano does not start with the theme presented by the orchestra, but with an innovative musical idea, and the themes proper are later presented by the instrumental soloists. The piano at last gets a chance at the more lyrical second theme. All of the themes are beautifully exhibited in the cadenza. The *Largo* theme is stated by the piano with some support from the strings. As the movement develops, it becomes a melodious duet between the piano and the clarinet. This slow movement has a particularly fine coda (ending).

The *Allegro scherzando* is a rondo with a danceable refrain. The first contrasting theme is lyrical and predictable until Beethoven shifts into dramatic mode during which we can almost see the arch-villain tying the maiden to the railroad tracks! The second contrasting theme is highly chromatic – almost romantic. It leads to a tune so reminiscent of Hungarian dance style, but just a bit funny. One wonders what Beethoven's variations on "Hernando's Hideaway" might be like! Beethoven isn't quite

sure how to end the work, and he seems to stumble just a bit. A final tentative oboe meandering leads us to believe there might be a bit more to this movement, but no, just a quick chuckle, and we're through.

Piano Concerto No. 5 ("Emperor") in E-flat Major, Op. 73

While Beethoven's first two piano concertos were perhaps more classical in style, the fifth is truly revolutionary. Beethoven composed the concerto in Vienna in 1809, dedicating it to the Archduke Rudolph. Its first public performance featured the 25 year-old pianist, Friedrich Schneider, with the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig on November 28, 1811. In addition to the solo piano, the concerto is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets, timpani, and strings.

No one knows for certain how Beethoven's final piano concerto came to be known as the "Emperor." Although an oft-repeated story attributes the nickname to a French cavalry officer at the first Vienna performance who rose to his feet and shouted "*C'est l'empereur!*," it is more likely the invention of a publisher in search of a catchy title. Certainly Beethoven was not responsible for the appellation. Although he had originally intended to dedicate his earlier *Eroica* Symphony (also in Beethoven's "heroic" key of E-flat) to Napoleon, he tore up the title page in disgust when the French general declared himself Emperor. By the time Beethoven was at work on his fifth piano concerto, Napoleon's armies were invading Vienna – and the increasingly deaf composer was forced to bury his head under pillows to save what little remained of his hearing from the constant military bombardment.

The concerto itself is conceived on a grand scale, and is unlike anything that had come before. Glenn Gould called it a "symphony with obligatory piano," and indeed, the work is longer than Beethoven's earlier Fifth Symphony. The mammoth opening movement begins not with an orchestral introduction, but with solo piano passages separated by bold chords from the orchestra. Instead of the expected first and second subject, Beethoven presents no fewer than five separate themes that will each be developed and recapitulated. For the first time in any of his concertos, Beethoven wrote out a cadenza as an integral part of the score, appending the note, "Do not make a cadenza [i.e., do not improvise one of your own], but attack the following immediately."

The comparatively brief slow movement is cast in B major – the key furthest removed from E-flat, but one foreshadowed enharmonically by an extended C-flat major episode in the development section of the first movement. Rather than reaching a formal conclusion, Beethoven uses a device he first employed in the "Appassionata" piano sonata, linking the slow movement to the finale without pause. Woodwinds and horns intone a unison B natural, then sink a half step to B-flat. While the horns sustain a B-flat pedal, the piano muses about an E-flat major triad, forming the tune that will become the recurring melody of the final movement. The solo piano introduces this syncopated 6/8 tune, which launches the rondo finale in palindromic A–B–A–C–A–B–A form.

While Beethoven would live for another 18 years, he would not complete another concerto. Later sketches for a sixth piano concerto in D major were abandoned. Certainly his loss of hearing was a contributing factor, but perhaps – having reinvented the concerto form itself – he turned to transforming other musical forms, most notably the symphonic, a decade and a half later with his Symphony No. 9.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15TH

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37

Beethoven began sketching his third piano concerto during the 1790s, but most of the work was done in 1800. The composer was the soloist at its first performance in Vienna on April 5, 1803. The score calls for pairs of woodwinds, horns and trumpets, timpani and strings.

The concerto was introduced at a concert in the sort of marathon affair Beethoven loved: in addition to the concerto, the *Symphony No. 2* and the oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives* were also given their premieres, and the already-familiar *Symphony No. 1* was heard as well.

On the day of the performance, Beethoven was discovered at 5:00 AM copying out trombone parts for the oratorio. The one and only rehearsal for the event commenced at 8:00 AM, running non-stop until mid-afternoon when Prince Carl von Lichnowsky, Beethoven's patron, sent out for cold cuts and wine to soothe the disgruntled musicians. After their meal, the Prince requested that they run through the oratorio "just one more time." The concert, which was to have begun at 6:00 PM, was so long that some music scheduled for the program was dropped. Nevertheless, the fame of the young 32-year-old composer drew a sold-out house, even though the usual prices had been doubled – and, for the box seats, tripled – for the occasion.

In Thayer's *Life of Beethoven*, Ignaz von Seyfried recalls how he was recruited to turn pages for Beethoven while the composer played the solo part in his new concerto:

"[B]ut heaven help!—that was easier said than done. I saw almost nothing but empty leaves; at the most on one page or the other a few Egyptian hieroglyphics wholly unintelligible to me scribbled down to serve as clues for him; for he played nearly all of the solo part from memory, since, as was so often the case, he had not had time to put it all down on paper. He

gave me a secret glance whenever he was at the end of one of the invisible passages and my scarcely concealable anxiety not to miss the decisive moment amused him greatly and he laughed heartily at the jovial supper which we ate afterwards."

The first movement opens with a lengthy exposition of the principal themes by the orchestra alone, a passage so thoroughly symphonic in character that Donald Francis Tovey called it "something that dangerously resembled a mistake," because "it rouses no expectations of the entry of a solo instrument." After a quick return to the tonic key of C minor and a dramatic fermata, the piano finally enters with three explosive scales, leading to its own rendition of the opening theme.

In contrast to the energy of the opening movement, the central slow movement – in the distant key of E major – seems to make time stand still. The finale, a combination of sonata and rondo forms, returns to C minor, although Beethoven briefly flirts with E major in the middle. The delightful coda is in C major and moves to a new time signature (6/8), just as Mozart did in his own C minor concerto.

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58

The earliest concept sketch for the opening theme of this concerto's first movement appeared in the Eroica sketchbook in 1804. Beethoven waited until after *Lenore* was completed to focus fully on the fourth concerto (1805-6). When completed, he had challenges trying to find a soloist for a premiere public performance. The first soloist complained that the music was too difficult to learn quickly, the second soloist agreed. In the end, Beethoven himself played the solo part at a concert at the Akademie on December 22, 1808, along with the Fifth and Sixth symphonies, parts of the C Major Mass and the Choral Fantasy. This work is dedicated to Beethoven's friend, student, and patron Archduke Rudolph of Austria.

The Fourth Piano Concerto leads the genre into a new phase of thought, feeling, beauty and sensitivity. Beethoven accentuates the feeling of lightness and grace by setting the concerto in G major, a key he often uses for lighter chamber music and piano sonatas. A major element of this work is serenity, this mood is established from the very beginning when the piano opens alone.

There has been some discussion about the slow movement's relationship to the legend of Orpheus. Nineteenth-century theorist Adolf Bernhard Marx described the scene of Orpheus confronting the shade of Hell and later as Orpheus taming the wild beasts with his lyre. Although there is no evidence of programmatic inspiration for this movement, Czerny states that "there is no doubt that in many of his most beautiful works, Beethoven was inspired by similar visions or pictures from his reading or from his own lively imagination." Beethoven sets the solo piano against the strings in a fierce dialogue. As the movement progresses, it becomes obvious that the piano is winning the argument and the strings are reduced to timid, pizzicato utterances. The final movement, a rondo in G major, brings the opposing forces back together with an abundance of energy. There is a striking beginning in C major that makes the listener question which tonality will prevail to the final cadence. In the end, the graceful G major triumphs.

Fantasy in C minor for Piano, Chorus, and Orchestra, Op. 80

The *Choral Fantasy* was the finale to a four-hour concert on December 22, 1808, that also premiered the fourth piano concerto and the C-minor Symphony (No. 5), and included an aria (*Ah! perfido!*), a Hymn with Latin text, and several improvisations for piano alone and with orchestra. The concert was an epic event by anyone's standards. Even more impressive, the Fantasy was composed days before it was premiered, poet Christopher Kuffner was commissioned shortly before the performance to write the text to fit the music, and the performers had one afternoon's rehearsal after having participated in a benefit concert for musicians' widows earlier in the day. Beethoven quarreled with the soprano soloist and had to find a replacement at the last minute. The theater had no heat and was bitterly cold. During the performance, the piece had to be stopped in the middle and restarted. According to Beethoven's biographer, Anton Schindler, the *Choral Fantasy*, as might be expected, "simply fell apart."

Though its first performance may have been disastrous, the *Choral Fantasy* was a truly original work. It is a combination of fantasy for solo piano, variations on a song (Beethoven's own *Gegenliebe* – "Mutual Love," 1795) and a piano concerto, culminating in a grandiose, festive "something or other" for piano, chorus and orchestra and foreshadows the revolutionary grandeur of the Ninth Symphony's "Ode to Joy" theme written 16 years later.

The first movement begins with a slow, virtuosic 26-bar piano introduction. The minor tonic key modulates to major and back again. The main part of the piece, marked "Finale", begins with an *allegro* theme played by the cellos and basses. Next, the solo piano introduces the choral theme in an ornamented version. Variations on the theme are then played by the flutes, oboes, clarinets, and string soloists. A full orchestral version of the theme leads into a more lyrical piano line.

Pounding eighth notes resonate from the piano, accompanied by the orchestra, as the piece modulates back to C major. A serene, flowing A-major section ending with a call-and-response section between double reeds, horn, and piano leads into the *Marcia*, or march, in F-major. A reprise of the instrumental theme from the first *allegro*, transitions into the choral entrance.

The sopranos and altos sing the main theme in lovely triads before the tenors and basses take their turn. The entire chorus is joined by the orchestra in an energetic rendition of the theme, and a *presto* coda with orchestra, chorus, and piano brings the piece to a close.

It is a shame that as Beethoven grew more and more deaf, he could not hear the praise and excitement his pieces

elicited in his audiences. As he withdrew from the hearing world, he retreated more and more inside himself, where the thunder of his music echoed in memory. He once said: "My heart is full of many things... there are moments when I feel that speech is nothing after all." Nothing indeed, for his thoughts and feelings were expressed musically, in a language completely free of the need to speak, or for him, to hear.

--Notes by Jana Marlow, Jeff Eldridge, Laurie Medill, and George Shangrow

Schmeichelnd hold und lieblich klingen
unsres Lebens Harmonien,
und dem Schönheitssinn entschwingen
Blumen sich, die ewig blühn.
Fried und Freude gleiten freundlich
wie der Wellen Wechselspiel.
Was sich drängte rau und feindlich,
ordnet sich zu Hochgefühl.

Wenn der Töne Zauber walten
und des Wortes Weihe spricht,
muss sich Herrliches gestalten,
Nacht und Stürme werden Licht.
Äuss're Ruhe, inn're Wonne
herrschen für den Glücklichen.
Doch der Künste Frühlingssonne
lässt aus beiden Licht entstehn.

Großes, das ins Herz gedrunge,
blüht dann neu und schön empor.
Hat ein Geist sich aufgeschwungen,
hallt ihm stets ein Geisterchor.
Nehmt denn hin, ihr schönen Seelen,
froh die Gaben schöner Kunst:
Wenn sich Lieb und Kraft vermählen,
lohnt den Menschen Göttergunst.

With grace, charm and sweet sounds
The harmonies of our life,
And the sense of beauty engenders
The flowers which eternally bloom.
Peace and joy advancing in perfect accord,
Like the alternating play of the waves;
All harsh and hostile elements
Render to a sublime sentiment.

When the magic sounds reign
And the sacred word is spoken,
That strongly engender the wonderful,
The night and the tempest divert light,
Calm without, profound joy within,
Awaiting the great hour.
Meanwhile, the spring sun and art
Bathe in the light.

Something great, into the heart
Blooms anew when in all its beauty,
Which spirit taken flight,
And all a choir of spirits resounds in response.
Accept then, oh you beautiful spirits
Joyously of the gifts of art.
When love and strength are united,
The favour of God rewards Man.

Mark Salman is a Steinway Artist. Today he plays a Concert Grand Steinway Piano.

We wish to extend our heartiest thanks to Sherman Clay in downtown Seattle for supplying today's instrument.



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Sherman Clay is delighted to support this event. We invite you to contact us if you have any piano questions at all. Please reach us at 206.622.7580 or via email:

seattle_info@shermanclay.com.

We'd be delighted to hear from you!

Reflections on performing all the Beethoven piano concertos

by Jeffrey Kahane, Music Director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra

Note: This piece was written by Jeffrey Kahane on the occasion of his performance of the five Beethoven piano concertos with the Santa Rosa Symphony in November, 2000, and with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in December, 2001. Mr. Kahane again performed these five concertos at the Oregon Bach Festival in July, 2003, and in two concerts with LACO at the Hollywood Bowl in August, 2003. These notes are reprinted with his permission.

Why, a listener might well ask, would anyone want to perform all the Beethoven piano concertos in the space of two evenings, and – perhaps the more important question – what is to be gained from listening to them in this way? Is it just a highbrow stunt meant to impress, or is there a serious purpose behind the project? It seems only proper to acknowledge at the outset that the concerto form naturally has an inherent element of display, a quality of "let me show you what I can do." Nonetheless, there is a deeper intent in the greatest works in the genre, beginning with the solo concerti of Bach and even more so in the late concertos of Mozart, continuing through those of Beethoven and Brahms and on through Dvorak, Schumann, Sibelius, Bartok and others, the intent to provide the soloist not only with a showcase for virtuosity, but with a structure within which to say something meaningful, and sometimes deeply personal. We forget, too often, that the Latin root "virtus" of the Italian word "virtuoso" implies not only excellence (i.e., technical achievement), but courage and virtue. In other words, the phrase "empty virtuosity" which we sometimes use to refer to a dazzling display of technique, is in fact an oxymoron: there is no true virtuosity without "virtue" in the deepest sense of the word. In one way, the Beethoven Concertos, seen as a whole, describing an arc of personal growth that over a period of more than a decade begins to some extent with "let me show you what I can do" and finally becomes "let me tell you what I have to say...." Indeed, with Beethoven the soloist evolves into a symbol for the individual striving to excel, to act nobly, to inspire.

When I taught conservatory students, I tried to instill in them, with only occasional success, the fundamental principle that one could not really understand a composer's language fully without knowing the greater part of his work. Although of course one can appreciate any great piece of music to some extent simply on its own terms, I don't believe anyone can fully appreciate a Beethoven string quartet without knowing all of his quartets to at least some degree, because in one sense they constitute a single, magnificent musical autobiography; one might say they constitute and describe one of the most profound spiritual journeys ever expressed in any art form. This is also true to a great extent of Beethoven's piano sonatas. It is, to be sure, less true of his symphonies and concertos, perhaps because they are more "public" music, less suited to the intimate communication characteristic of his music for smaller forces. Even so, the five piano concertos, performed and experienced as a whole, do tell a story, and do describe an extraordinary evolution in style, technique, and in the growth and development of Beethoven's soul and intellect.

Beethoven inherited from Mozart's concerto a form so perfectly developed in every respect, that we can actually observe in the first three concertos his struggle to fashion his own identity with respect to the form. On hearing a performance of Mozart's C minor Concerto in Vienna, Beethoven is said to have remarked to his pupil Cramer, "Ah, Cramer, we will never be able to do anything like that." In his first two concertos Beethoven does not even attempt to match the profundity of that work, choosing consciously instead (for the most part) to imitate the jovial, brilliant, songful side of Mozart's concerto style, itself an outgrowth of the language of comic opera. If the first two concertos do not achieve the absolute perfection or profundity of the great late Mozart concerti, they nonetheless contain a tremendous amount of sublime (and occasionally outrageous) music – not to mention that fact both were written by a man in his early twenties!

In the third concerto, the young, ebullient and successful young virtuoso gives way to the troubled but increasingly masterful and mature composer. (The first signs of Beethoven's deafness manifested themselves after the first two concertos were composed.) The Third Concerto, Janus-faced, manages to pay overt tribute to Mozart and his C minor Concerto while creating something entirely new, a kind of proto-Romantic concerto, which, interestingly, would serve in turn as one of the models for Brahms in his D minor Concerto half a century later. The Third Concerto is, in fact, one of the first of the composer's orchestral works that could never be mistaken for Mozart or Haydn. It is one of Beethoven's first steps on his inward journey of exploration.

If the five concertos are viewed as five chapters of a story, then it is (as one might expect in a good story) in the next to the last chapter that the greatest surprise comes. The Fourth Concerto is not only among the most unusual, most radical works that had yet been created by anyone, it remains one of the eternally self-renewing miracles in all of composed music, indeed one of the ultimate examples of the transcendence of form. I have played it more than any other work in my repertoire; indeed I lost count long ago of the number of times I've played it, and it is as thrilling and inspiring to me now as it ever was, if not more so. In my mind, it is worth playing the five concertos together if only to highlight the extraordinary audacity of Beethoven's opening gesture of this concerto: the first time in the history of the form that the solo instrument opens a concerto alone (and, I might point out, it was many years before any other important composer tried the same gambit). In this work, the soloist as hero grows into the role of philosopher, poet, seeker, myth-maker. It is particularly worth noting that the trumpets and timpani are silent through the entire first two movements of the piece, and, even more dramatically, the second movement is for piano in a dialogue with only the string instruments. (In fact, I cannot think of another instance of this in the important piano concerto repertoire until the 20th century!) When the trumpets and drums, along with the winds who have been silent observers for the

whole second movement, finally burst out in a joyful, indeed almost raucous explosion a minute or so into the last movement, the effect is like stepping out into brilliant sunshine after spending a long and contemplative time deep in the woods, or perhaps even in a cave or underground. There is a tradition, dating back to the time of Liszt, which associates the slow movement with the myth of Orpheus taming the Furies. Whether or not there is actual substance to this, I can think of very few pages in music that come so close to articulate speech, or that so movingly reenact the power of humility and gentleness to melt the hardened and angry heart, as do those of the central movement of the G major Concerto. It is not the conquering hero but the still, small voice that wins the battle in this work.

The last concerto, which for a long time now has been known by the sobriquet "Emperor," is one of the best known and best loved works in the literature. At one time, I remember reading somewhere, there were more recordings of this piece in the catalog than any other piece of classical music. There is, of course, a danger to any work of art when it becomes so familiar that we lose sight of how remarkable and pathbreaking it is. This can certainly be said of many of Beethoven's most famous works, and the Fifth Concerto, like the Fourth, benefits particularly from being heard in close proximity to its four siblings, particularly its immediate predecessor, from which it is so utterly different that someone who didn't know Beethoven's music well might think it by another man altogether.

It is rather amazing that the journey from the earliest of the concertos (and remember that the one we call no. 2 was actually composed before no. 1, but was published later and thus bears the later number) to the last of them took only about fifteen years, and that in the process of that journey the scope, sound and in some ways the very nature of the concerto form would be changed forever. At nearly forty minutes, the Fifth concerto is substantially longer than any concerto written previously, and longer than any that would be written until those of Brahms. Not merely length but also style and tone, and, of course, the orchestration, make this the prototype of the "symphonic" concerto. Like the orchestral expositions Brahms concertos, the grand orchestral exposition that follows the soloist's opening cadenza/dialogue with the orchestra feels almost like a symphony, and I believe that was in fact, in part, the intention. It is both interesting and historically significant that in this piece, for the first time in the history of the form, Beethoven expressly forbids the introduction of a cadenza by the performer at the traditional moment towards the end of the first movement, writing in fearsome Italian, "Non si fa una cadenza, m'attacca subito il seguente." (Do not play a cadenza, but rather immediately play the following passage!) At this very moment, when one might expect a huge and grand improvisation to match the enormous scale of the first movement, Beethoven writes instead a brief but hair-raising cadenza-like passage that leads seamlessly into a coda that with perfect naturalness traverses an emotional landscape ranging from icy and remote to meltingly warm and Romantic, and, finally thrillingly triumphant. Beethoven often manages to create monuments out of the simplest building blocks, but rarely so impressively as he does in the first movement of this work.

If the master could be accused of displaying a bit of machismo in the first movement of the Fifth, nowhere in all his music does he show greater tenderness than in the second movement, perhaps a cross between a nocturne and a hymn, which to my ear prefigures both Chopin and Brahms. In yet another significant step towards the Romantic concerto, Beethoven chooses (as he does often in later works, and as Mendelssohn, Schumann and Liszt would imitate) to link the final two movements with a magically inspired, but characteristically simple transition passage, rather than risking a pause between movements which would break the mood. The Rondo finale ends the cycle in a spirit of unbridled fun and good humor, but not without another astoundingly visionary stroke of genius, in the brief but breathtaking passage where the piano and timpani alone (how few composers have written for the kettledrums with such respect and imagination!) appear to be winding down this grandest of concertos to a most unlikely peaceful and restful conclusion, only to have the piano change its mind at the last moment in a final burst of athletic brilliance.

Finally, what are we to make of the fact that Beethoven, after creating five masterpieces, did not write another piano concerto after 1809, although he lived almost another twenty years? As a matter of fact, there are, tantalizingly, sketches for a later piano concerto, in D major, but, like the sketches for a tenth symphony, they leave us only with a glimpse of what might have been. There is, for those who are interested, another "piano" concerto, which is simply an arrangement for piano and orchestra of the violin concerto which Beethoven made largely for financial reasons, but which (for reasons that mystify this pianist) some pianists actually enjoy playing. There also exists another little work which occasionally surfaces in concert from time to time, a rondo in B flat major of about 8 minutes which was apparently the original and discarded last movement of the 2nd Concerto.

These five works, which run an expressive gamut that ranges from impish schoolboy humor to aching tender romance to soulrending grief to transcendent joy, have been my friends, companions, teachers, since I first started performing publicly almost thirty years ago, and my primary reason for this project is to bring them all together and allow them, metaphorically speaking, to "talk to one another." The very first concerto I ever performed with an orchestra was the Third, with the San Francisco Conservatory Orchestra when I was 16, and of course I have played all of them many times since, but they remain evergreen to me, which, it seems to me, is the very definition of a classic. I hope that the experience of hearing the five concertos as a cycle will provide even the most seasoned listener with at least an occasional new perspective on these beloved works.

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Sunday, September 24, 2006 – 3:00

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C, Opus 15
Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat, Opus 19
Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat, Opus 73
("Emperor")
Mark Salman, piano

• BEETHOVEN BUZZ II

Sunday, October 15, 2006 – 3:00 p.m.

Piano Concerto No. 3 in c minor, Opus 37
Piano Concerto No. 4 in G, Opus 58
Choral Fantasia, Opus 80
Mark Salman, piano

• BACH CANTATAS

Sunday, November 5, 2006 – 3:00

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, BWV 80
Nach dir, Herr, verlangst mich, BWV 150
Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir, BWV 131
Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir, BWV 38
Sinfonia from Wir danken dir Gott, wir danken dir, BWV 29

• MESSIAH

Sunday, December 3, 2006 – 3:00

Handel: *Messiah*

• HOLIDAY

Monday, December 18, 2006 – 7:30 – Meany Hall

Johann Sebastian Bach: *Magnificat*, BWV 243
Robert Kechley: Holiday arrangements
Family sing-along

• WINTER BAROQUE

Sunday, February 4, 2007 – 3:00

Franz Joseph Haydn: Symphony No. 45 in F-sharp minor ("Farewell")
George Friderich Handel: Organ Concerto in G minor
Antonio Vivaldi: Choral Work TBA
Bryan Johanson: Guitar Concerto [World premiere]
Michael Partington, guitar

• ORCHESTRAL INSPIRATION

Sunday, March 18, 2007 – 3:00

Murl Allen Sanders: Accordion Concerto No. 2
[World premiere]
Murl Allen Sanders, accordion
Igor Stravinsky: *Agon*
Antonin Dvorák: Symphony No. 9 in E minor,
Opus 95
("From the New World")

• ST. MATTHEW PASSION

Good Friday, April 6, 2007 – 7:00

J.S. Bach: *St Matthew Passion*

• CHORAL INSPIRATION

Sunday, May 6, 2007 – 3:00

Huntley Beyer: *Songs of Illumination*
[World premiere]
Johann Rosenmüller: Sonata da camera
Antonio Vivaldi: Quintet in g minor
Johann Sebastian Bach: Double Concerto in D minor,
BWV 1043
Heinrich Schütz: Instrumental Sonata TBA

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