

Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers

George Shangrow, Music Director

present

Musical Feast II

Symphony No. 35, K. 385 "Haffner"
-Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Allegro con spirito

Andante

Menuetto

Finale-presto

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Opus 26
-Sergel Prokofiev

Andante

Andantino

Allegro ma non troppo

Peter Mack, piano soloist

Intermission

Music for the Theatre
-Aaron Copland

Prologue

Dance

Interlude

Burlesque

Epilogue

Overture to *William Tell*
-Gioacchino Rossini

Sunday, November 17, 1991 3:00p.m.

Kane Hall, University of Washington

This concert is co-sponsored by
Western Planos and Classic KING-FM

*Kawai is the official piano of Orchestra Seattle/Seattle Chamber Singers.
Today's piano has been graciously supplied by Western Planos.*

Program Notes

by
George Shangrow

If I could think of a more delightful and diverse concert program, I sincerely don't know what it would be! The first half is concert music: a Mozart Symphony originally composed for an ennoblement of a famous son of a former Burgomaster of Salzburg (at the request of Mozart's father, Leopold) and a great 20th century piano concerto by one of the finest of the Russian composers, Prokofiev, and played, incidentally, by one of the best instrumentalists living here in the Pacific Northwest. The second half is "show" music: Copland's youthful "Music for the Theatre" incorporating jazz idioms and tunes, commissioned by Koussevitzky, and irritating to the staid patrons of the Boston Symphony in its 1925 premiere, plus the overture to Rossini's final opera, *William Tell*, with its music reminiscent to all from both Saturday morning cartoons and the Lone Ranger TV and radio series. What fun! I really hope that you enjoy!

Mozart Symphony No. 35 In D Major "Haffner"

In July of 1782 Mozart's father, Leopold, wrote to him requesting a symphony to celebrate the ennoblement of Mozart's childhood friend Sigmund Haffner the younger, son of a former Salzburg Burgomaster. Mozart replied that it was a particularly busy time for him as his opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* had just premiered and he had to arrange much of the music for wind instruments because selling the music in this form yielded a considerable profit. He also was in the process of changing homes because on August 4th he and Constanze Weber were to be wed in Vienna. Nonetheless by August 7th Leopold had received the four movements we play tonight (in the first version without clarinets and flutes) as well as an extra minuet and a march. The only instructions read "The first Allegro is to be played with great fire, the last — as fast as possible."

Precisely when the party for the ennoblement took place, we do not know, but the work had either been performed in Salzburg prior to August 24, 1782 or Leopold had studied it and given his approval, for it was on that date that Mozart responded, "I am delighted that the symphony is to your taste."

In early December Mozart began corresponding with his father for the return of the "Haffner" symphony so that he might present it on one of the "academies" (concerts) he was to give on March 23, 1783. After much delay, Wolfgang finally wrote on February 15th, "Most heartfelt thanks for the music you have sent me...My new Haffner symphony has positively amazed me, for I had forgotten every single note of it. It must surely produce a good effect."

Mozart then proceeded to rework the score adding flutes and clarinets to the first and last movements as well as making a few other changes. The concert took place on Sunday, March 23, in the Hofburgtheater — and the Emperor was in the audience. The program was as follows:

1. The first 3 movements of the Haffner symphony (K.385)
2. "Se il padre perdie from *Idomeneo* (K. 366)
3. A piano concerto in C major (K. 415)
4. A recitative and aria (K. 369)
5. A sinfonia concertante (2 movements from K. 320)
6. A piano concerto in D Major (K. 175 with the finale K. 382)
7. "Parto m'affretto from *Lucio Silla* (K. 135)
8. A short fugue ("because the Emperor was present")
9. Variations on a tune by Paisiello (K. 398) — and as an encore to that
10. Variations on a tune by Gluck (K. 455)
11. Recitative and Rondo "Mia speranza" and "Ah, non sai,

qual pena" (K. 416)

12. The finale of the Haffner symphony (K. 385)

Mozart conducted from the fortepiano. The Emperor stayed for the entire concert — as did the capacity audience. The Emperor gave 25 ducats, and the receipts, as the review stated, amounted to 1,600 gulden in all!

In the opening, fiery Allegro, Mozart's newfound interest in counterpoint comes to the fore. A single turbulent theme dominates the movement which, after its initial statement by the full orchestra, constantly reappears, with either subsidiary motives, or with itself. The slow movement is light and flowing and follows a typical sonata-allegro form using a charming second theme in the 2nd violins and violas. The Menuetto is festive and is offset beautifully by the almost pastorale Trio for winds and strings. The finale, about as close to a Rondo as one might want, whirlwinds about with striking syncopations and a very attractive contrasting theme. It is always fascinating to hear how Mozart gets us back to the main theme! A fun bit of Mozart-humor comes near the end of the movement with the silly grace notes in the first violins and then the brief return to the opening of the movement before swiftly hurrying on to the true ending. No wonder the Emperor had such a good time!

Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 3 In C Major, Opus 26

Prokofiev is credited by some for beginning the Neoclassical movement in music with his Classical Symphony presented in 1917. It is interesting that this forerunner of the whole neoclassical movement of the 1920's and 30's came from a great composer who, in his earlier days, exhibited a dislike, perhaps even a disdain, for the boring, predictable music of Mozart!

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His Third Piano Concerto, premiered in 1921, was written concurrently with parts of the Classical Symphony and, indeed, puts forth many values of the classical period and certainly follows in the grand tradition of Mozart's amazing piano concerto output. Prokofiev himself was the keyboardist when the work was first presented with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. And what a premiere! As one listener put it, "To hear Prokofiev play the piano was an utterly shattering experience; the piano seemed to bend and sway under the impact of Prokofiev's assault, and yet his playing was monumental in its clarity and in the sharp, steely planes of sound of which it was made."

The work was mostly written during the summer of 1921 while staying at St. Brévin-les-Pins, a small village on the Atlantic coast of Brittany. The end of the first movement was written in 1911, the theme for the variations (2nd movement) was composed in 1913, the variations themselves and the two opening themes produced in 1916-17, but the finished work left Prokofiev's studio only at the end of that summer in 1921. During the time of this work's composition, he also composed the 3rd and 4th Piano Sonatas, the ballet *Le Bouffon*, and the opera, *The Love for Three Oranges*, he also started the opera, *The Flaming Angel*, which he completed in 1927.

The work is dedicated to the well-known Russian poet Balmont, who was living not too far from the Prokofievs at that time. He was so impressed with the music when Prokofiev played it for him that he then and there wrote a sonnet in honor of the music; in return, he received the dedication.

The first movement begins with a gorgeous slow section leading directly to a *moto perpetuo* where the piano and the winds vie for attention. The huge piano writing style is at times almost maniacal in its presence and difficulties. There are many different sections to this opening movement, but the tunes seem to move so well from one to the other that one hardly no-

tices the "variety-show" aspects of the music. The *moto perpetuo* section returns at the end for a thrilling coda.

The variations on a typical Prokofiev march tune are a tour-de-force of composition: not only is the piano writing a study in idiomatic perfection, the many different ways in which the composer "sneaks in" the theme defies one's imagination. There is a galumphing variation, a sad variation, a silly variation, a virtuoso variation, even a spooky variation! I am especially fond of the way the final variation trades the short eighth-note chords off from the winds to the piano, and the winds take up the march tune (written out in double augmentation, but played twice as fast) exactly as it first appeared! The final movement starts out as a sort of fugue and remains quite polyphonic but once again is full of contrasting sections. As the theme keeps returning, it also keeps getting faster and faster until the scales in major seconds toward the end seem to be just a great wash of sound. The concerto ends with a great fanfare played by piano against orchestra.

Copland: Music for the Theatre

Serge Koussevitzky commissioned Copland to write what was to become "Music for the Theatre" when the composer was only 25 years old. What an honor for a young, innovative American composer from Brooklyn, New York! The work received its premiere during Boston Symphony season on November 20, 1925. Koussevitzky programmed Copland's work after Mozart's Overture to *The Magic Flute* and Beethoven's Symphony No. 4, and before Wagner's *Prelude and Love-Death* from *Tristan and Isolde*.

Copland composed the work during the summer of 1925 mostly at the MacDowell Colony for artists, and completed it in September on Lake Placid at the summer camp of his then piano teacher, Clarence Adler. Adler

built a special shack up on a hillside for Copland, and he described the young man's working style: "I have listened (at some distance, of course) to Copland in the throes of composition, and it is something to hear! He bangs and hammers at the piano, at the same time singing in shrill, dissonant tones."

Music for the Theatre was written with no specific play in mind, Copland began writing the work as though it were for incidental music to a certain play, were the right play at hand. The title was chosen after the ideas for the five short movements were developed. Copland describes the work: "The 'Prologue' has a certain brashness about it that was typical of my age and the times. It begins rather suddenly with a trumpet solo followed by a tenderly lyrical passage leading into an allegro mid-section with obvious jazz influence before a return to the lyrical material. (I am told that this resembles the nursery tune 'Three Blind Mice,' but there was no conscious intention on my part in quoting it.) 'Dance,' short and jazzy, quotes the familiar popular tune 'East Side, West Side'; 'Interlude,' a kind of song without words, is built on a lyric theme repeated three times with slight changes. 'Burlesque,' best described by its title, emphasizes another characteristic of the twenties—the love of grotesquerie achieved by a liberal use of harmonic dissonance. It was partly inspired by the popular comedienne Fanny Brice. The 'Epilogue' incorporates music from the first and third movements and recaptures the quiet mood of the 'Prologue.'"

Koussevitzky had difficulties conducting the work, as he really knew nothing of American popular music or jazz—these idioms simply were not in his Russian bones. Copland worked with him every evening for a week before the concert, familiarizing him with rhythms typical of American music and assisting him in discovering the rhythmic ideas in his work.

The review in the Boston *Post* the day after the premiere said: "*Music for the*

Program Notes

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Theatre is a sort of super jazz.... The conductor exploded a tonal bombshell that left in its wake a mingling of surprise, perplexity, indignation, and enthusiasm." Copland discovered early in his career not to take reviews too seriously, even though his father, a non-musician, remarked "After all, Aaron, those fellows get *paid* for their opinions. They must know *something* about music!" Aaron's feelings about it were a little different: "Those dumbbells, they'll see, just give them time." For several years after it was written conductors programmed *Music for the Theatre* more often than any other pieces by Copland. The final judges, after all, are the listeners.

Rossini: Overture to *William Tell*

Perhaps the most famous anecdote concerning Gioacchino Rossini describes his notorious and incorrigible laziness: Rossini is composing in bed (a favorite place), a page he is working on falls to the floor; Rossini prefers to

rewrite the composition rather than get out of bed to recover the page! Does this describe why the 37 year old composer, author of 39 (mostly very successful) operas, chose to quit composing even though he was to live nearly 40 years more? What must it have been like in 1804 at age 12 to make one's debut as a boy soprano, to have composed the six famous string sonatas as well as an opera by this time. And what should one think about the amazing vitality and excitement that seems to flow from every pore of Rossini's music?

William Tell was his last opera. It was composed for the Paris Opera in 1829, and was received with great acclaim as the pinnacle of French-style grand opera of the period. To the public of the day the purpose of the overture was not necessarily to provide a preview synopsis of the opera or to familiarize one with the tunes in the opera. Rather it was designed to shower the ears with brilliant display by means of arresting orchestration, memorable tunes, and, with regards to Rossini, immense rhythmic vitality culminating

in energetic, tension-filled crescendos. It is no wonder that Rossini is often dubbed "Il Signor Crescendo!"

The Overture to *William Tell* is an orchestral masterpiece containing all the elements mentioned above, and a little bit more. It is in symphonic form, slow-fast-slow-fast, and has a sort of program: it opens with an air of somber romanticism, a poetic description of a beautiful Swiss countryside, then follows a tremendous storm, a section of pastoral peace (with some incredible orchestration: a duet between the English horn and the flute), and finally a section indicating martial glory and the ultimate triumph of patriotism (the famous part). By the way, this last, most famous section was originally written as a quick-step for a Viennese military band seven years before the opera!

I like to program overtures because they are fun. This one, with all of its marvelous sections and contrasts is an especial delight. I hope you enjoy hearing the **complete *William Tell*** overture. Hi, Ho, Silver....Away!

Our Soloist

Peter Mack, a native of Dublin, Ireland, has developed a reputation for powerful and sensitive performances and playing technique that the *Los Angeles Times* described as "perfect...all but infallible." He has won a number of other competitions: the 1989 Young Keyboard Artists International Piano Competition (with a Lincoln Center recital as the prize); the 1985 Sherman Clay Piano Competition (with a Steinway grand piano as the prize); and the 1985 Cincinnati College

Conservatory of Music Concerto Competition. Mack's orchestral, chamber, and solo performances range from recitals at the National Performance Hall in Dublin to the Governor's Mansion in Olympia. He received his training at Dublin's Trinity College, the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, and the University of Washington. Mr. Mack has made several appearances

with Orchestra Seattle, most recently in the fall of 1990 playing Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2*.

Peter immigrated to the U.S. as an "alien of exceptional merit and ability in the performing arts" early last year. He plans to continue combining his concert career with teaching and is a faculty member at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle.

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George Shangrow, Music Director

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