



Gustav Meier
Music Director
64th Season

4th Subscription Concert
Klein Memorial Auditorium
Saturday, March 6, 2010
8:00 p.m.

Gustav Meier, Conductor
David Shifrin, Clarinet

MOZART Divertimento, K. 136
Allegro
Andante
Presto

MOZART Clarinet Concerto in A, K. 622
Allegro
Adagio
Rondo; Allegro
David Shifrin, Clarinet

Intermission

MOZART Eine Kleine Nachtmusik K. 525
Allegro
Romanze: Andante
Minuetto: Allegretto
Rondo: Allegro

MOZART Symphony no. 35 in D, K. 385 (Haffner)
Allegro can spirito
Andante
Menuetto: Allegretto
Finale: Presto

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the Bank of America, the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism,
and WSHU Public Radio Group.*

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photographic equipment or recording devices is strictly prohibited.*

PROGRAM NOTES

Salzburg nestles along one or two miles of the Salzach, modest as rivers go, and is ringed by the stony cliffs of the Salzkammergut, also modest as examples of their kind, but these proportions add up to one of the most beautiful settings in the world. This perfection notwithstanding, in Mozart's day the city was only a provincial seat subject to the ecclesiastical and temporal power of its Prince-Archbishops whose fiscal well-being came from the salt mines of the region, a circumstance which had given some of them hope of one day rivaling Rome. The composer's father was himself a musician in the employ of the current Archbishop and author of an important method of violin study that was highly respected all over Europe. Here his prodigally talented son could get a start, but had no long run opportunities that could match his seeming ability to absorb what was around him in minutes. The father saw to it that trips to all major and many minor European music centers advanced the boy's education (the Internet was two centuries away!) and managed a pay-as-you-go pattern to finance these journeys through the performing prowess of Wolfgang and his sister, Nannerl: astonished aristocratic listeners made generous gifts.

Childhood and triumphs over, no long-term employment offer came along except with the Archbishop where in 1781 Mozart found himself in Vienna "sitting at table above the cooks but below the valets" as part of the Archbishop's entourage for the coronation of the reform-minded Emperor Joseph. The Archbishop wouldn't allow him to give any concerts, one of which would have been before the Emperor himself and earned him half his yearly Salzburg salary. Mozart balked and was literally kicked out, becoming by this act one of the first composers to try to earn a living on his own through performances, writing and teaching. This went well for several years: Mozart was writing piano concertos for his own performances at concerts, events to which the aristocrats flocked and works that still astonish for their variety

and expressiveness. However, there are no more attempts to organize public concerts after 1787. Rather than the public having become "tired of him overnight," it seems equally likely that "his soaring genius was guiding him toward a new land no longer dominated by the taste of a single social grouping... a land on whose horizon Beethoven's art had already started to glimmer. It is hardly surprising that so few of his listeners could follow him." (Abert: *W. A. Mozart*). The "land" to which Abert refers includes "the last three great Symphonies" (not known to have been performed in the composer's life) and the opera, *Don Giovanni!* But this situation made Mozart's last years somewhat of a financial desert. By 1789 he was writing to his Masonic friend, Michael Puchberg, for loans, - "picture to yourself my condition, ill and consumed by worries and anxieties." Fortunately Puchberg always responded. There were signs of alleviation of these problems in the last months before he died - in fact in ten months of his last year (1791) "besides completing or recycling earlier music Mozart (had) composed two full length operas, a large part of a requiem mass and a substantial number of other works" (Solomon) - but by then his health was giving out. Even so he could still write to his wife "I will work - work so hard that no unforeseen accidents will ever reduce us to such straits again."

The child had grown up to be a composer who could be compared to Shakespeare as a playwright - both were creators whose achievements have resonated through the ages, transcending time and place, even though both also existed in a time and place. They were able to let characters speak for themselves in dramatic works, illuminating in the process how the world runs and the inner compulsions of its inhabitants.

After all the ups and downs of his life (including strained relationships with his father who never accepted his wife or his desire for independence) and posthumous reputation, (the Romantics, for instance, saw mostly charm, delicacy, gracefulness and adorable melody in his music - almost

never the pathos or humanity) four major 20th century studies of Mozart pretty well permanently recognize wherein his greatness lies. Hermann Abert ended in 1923 by quoting Goethe, who was 41 when Mozart died: "What is genius if not the creative force by which acts arise that can reveal themselves before God and nature? ..All Mozart's works are of this kind." In 1945 Alfred Einstein concluded with, "the fact that all the reproductions of his death mask which would have shown him as he really was have crumbled to bits seems symbolic. It is as though the world-spirit wished to show that here is pure sound, conforming to a weightless cosmos, triumphant over all chaotic earthliness, spirit of the world spirit." Maynard Solomon in 1995 observed that "we are left with the unexceptional utopian affirmations - love, brotherhood, innocence, virtue, reconciliation - and a need to believe in the power of music. For awhile Mozart succeeds in offsetting fears of separation, betrayal and silence. These affirmations may be defective, but they are all we have. We will have to make do." Robert Gutman signed off in 1999 with "he had the power to ransom the soul. Beloved of youth with its infinite longings and no less so of age with its failed aspirations, he confronted his time and he confronts posterity as a universal touchstone. Like all geniuses of his rank, he stands as a law unto himself: incommensurable, incalculable, sublime."

To have deserved such comments two hundred and more years after one has lived is rare indeed!

DIVERTIMENTO IN D, K. 136 (1756 - 1791)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

In the 18th century the divertimento was a small multi-movement work that would include several dances and function as a serenade. The *Divertimento, K. 136* with its fast-slow-fast three-movement scheme is more a string quartet or small symphony and is so listed in the New Grove Dictionary of Music. Possibly it and its two companions (*K. 137 - 138*) were composed to have instrumental scores ready for the Mozart's last trip to Italy in 1772. They are "simply

symphonies for strings alone" Einstein: *Mozart*.

The outer movements of *K. 136* are written in the sprightly key of D major, the first "rather a virtuoso piece for the violins" (Einstein) and the last more dashing and rondo-like in form. The middle movement, a quiet Andante, is restful and charming.

CLARINET CONCERTO IN A, K. 622 Mozart

The clarinet is an invention of the early 18th century: its most intense development took place in the early 19th. Mozart did not use it in the full orchestra until the 1780's and "the pieces by which he changed the history of the clarinet" (Grove's Dictionary) were written for his friend, the virtuoso Anton Stadler. They include the *Concerto, K. 622*, played this evening, which to this day many still consider to be the greatest ever written for the instrument.

The first movement was originally sketched for basset horn, a kind of tenor clarinet, (not a brass instrument) which could play lower notes than the standard clarinet. Stadler had his clarinet fitted with extra keys to accommodate them. The *Concerto* has been adapted to be played on a modern instrument, but tonight's performance will be done on an elongated clarinet in A, allowing Mozart's original score to stand intact. This would be a very similar instrument to the one Stadler used in the first performance. It is especially effective in the lower, chalumeau range which has a rich, dark tone color.

"The greatness and transcendent beauty of this work are such as its high Kochel number would lead us to expect" (Einstein) - the composer would be dead within two months of its completion. The first production of his last opera, *The Magic Flute*, was also happening at the same time.

The charm of the first movement is touched with melancholy one layer down and characterized as well by the close interweaving of solo and orchestral parts. The latter display also the "utmost possible vitality." The lyric Adagio which follows is reflective. Descending melodic

lines and bittersweet 'leaning notes' are also important. The final rondo begins cheerfully, but occasional accents on chords, falling notes at the ends of phrases and the like color this mood. All the registers of the instrument are exploited in this work. Mozart is credited with being the first to find its soul, helping define its future course.

EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK, K. 525 Mozart

The exact event for which *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* was written in August 1787 is unknown, but it is one of Mozart's most familiar pieces. He was working on the 2nd Act of *Don Giovanni* at the time. There is no record either of its performance, but it originally had five movements there were two minuets - although now heard with only one "A true occasional serenade with all the festive pomp but also the delicate charm of such a piece, it is a sparkingly brilliant masterpiece" (Abert).

Einstein also feels the work is "supreme mastery in the smallest possible frame, (although) nothing very personal is said." The opening Allegro is a bit formal, but upbeat. The following Romanze has an innocence about it that is touched with a little restlessness in the middle. The Minuet is robust at the start and tender in its Trio. The final Rondo is pleasantly energetic.

SYMPHONY NO. 35 in D, K. 385 (Haffner) Mozart

The Haffners of Salzburg were a wealthy merchant family and friends of the Mozarts. In 1776 the composer had written a Serenade for the wedding of the daughter of Siegfried Haffner, then mayor of the city. In 1782 another Serenade was urgently requested for the celebrations following the election to the nobility of Siegfried's son, Sigismund. Mozart was hard at work on arrangements for wind instruments of music from his opera, *Die Entf\u00fchrung aus den Seraglio*, the production of which was an early success following his move to Vienna, but he wrote his father "I will spend the night over it...only one cannot do what one cannot."

He gradually sent 6 movements, - an opening March, 2 Minuets, an Allegro, Andante and Finale. When he needed a new symphony for Lenten concerts in Vienna in 1783, he asked his father to send this score back to him for adaptation. Acknowledging its arrival, he wrote, "My new Haffner Symphony has positively amazed me, for I had forgotten every single note of it. It surely must produce a good effect." Mozart dropped the opening march, one of the minuets and enriched the sound by adding pairs of flutes and clarinets to create a four movement work of unsurpassed energy and elation. By this time Mozart had been introduced to the contrapuntal, largely "through-composed" music of Handel and Bach as well as the new "classical" direction of that of his son, Karl Phillip, at the home of Baron van Swieten, a rich amateur and prefect of the Imperial Library. He also knew better the architectural skill in developing motifs of his great friend, Joseph Haydn. These influences are apparent in the score.

The opening of the *Symphony* is "magnificent (with its) tremendous leaps, commanding unisons, violins' crackling grace notes, whirring trills and dynamic silences" (Steinberg: *The Symphony*). The movement is monothematic (characteristic of Haydn, but unusual for Mozart) as this one idea is developed and extended in the same vein. After this "adventure" the second and third movements are more in a "Salzburg party music vein" - the Andante quietly balancing its strong opening with a delicate trio. The last movement is vibrant, a kind of variation on one of the harem-keeper Osmin's arias in the opera *Das Entf\u00fchrung aus den Seraglio* then being produced in Vienna. It is "naughty, conspiratorial (and) full of surprising extentions" (Steinberg). Of this *Symphony* Mozart wrote, "the first Allegro must be played with great fire, the last - as fast as possible."

- Burton Hatheway