

Temple University Symphony Orchestra
Luis Biava, conductor

Zachay Boeding, oboe
Anthony Carrone, bassoon
Azer Damirov, violin
Jeeyoun Yoo, cello

November 1, 2009 at 3:00pm – Upper Darby Performing Arts Center

About the Program

Sinfonia Concertante in B-flat Major, Hob. I/105

Franz Josef Haydn (1732-1809)

The *sinfonia concertante* is a genre from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries usually for two, three, or four solo instruments and orchestra. It is thus a hybrid of the Baroque concerto grosso and the Classical symphony. The soloists usually carry the thematic material and the genre uses Classical forms rather than the Baroque ritornello format, which is essentially an alternation between tutti and solo sections. There are usually either two or three movements. In the latter, the pattern is Fast-Slow-Fast with the first movement using sonata procedure and the final movement a Rondo. The character of this type of work is often lighthearted, like the Divertimento, using major mode and tuneful melodies. From ca. 1770-1790 the *sinfonia concertante* was primarily Parisian (representative composers include Gossec, Pleyel, and Cambini). Composers from the famous Mannheim School, such as Cannabich and Karl Stamitz, also contributed, as well as J. C. Bach in London and in Vienna Wagenseil, Vanhal, and Dittersdorf. Boccherini was one of the few Italians representative of the genre.

The two examples most well-known today are this work by Haydn for orchestra with solo group of violin, cello, oboe, and bassoon, and Mozart's 1779 *Sinfonia concertante* in Eb major for violin and viola soloists, K. 364. Haydn wrote well over 100 symphonies and a number of concertos and undoubtedly learned a lot about concerto procedure from Mozart's masterly concertos for piano, for he and Mozart had a close bond and greatly admired and learned from each other's work. The particular occasion for which Haydn composed this piece was his first trip to London. The impresario and violinist Johann Peter Salomon brought Haydn to London twice, the first time from 1791-1792 and the second time from 1794-1795. He almost literally brought him the first time: they traveled together from Vienna through Bonn, Salomon's native city, where Haydn met the young Beethoven (and it was determined that Beethoven would come to Vienna to study with Haydn), to London. The major works Haydn produced for these two London seasons were his last twelve symphonies, Nos. 93-104, grand works with dramatic slow introductions, expanded wind sections, and full of "surprises," but he also had to produce many other types of pieces as he was in great demand at private houses and in smaller concert venues.

Haydn's first London season was frantic and exhausting for him. He was fêted constantly, even getting an honorary degree from Oxford University. He was constantly working under great pressure to finish a number of works, and trying to outdo the great popularity of his former pupil and now rival with the public, Ignaz Pleyel. The Haydn scholar H. C. Robbins Landon notes that "the autograph shows that the work was composed or at least put down on paper in considerable haste and under a certain amount of stress." Nearly everything Haydn composed and performed during this time, however, was a great success. The *Sinfonia concertante* is a charming, witty piece that is vintage Haydn. *The Morning Herald* reported on 12 March 1792 that "A new concertante from HAYDN combined with all the excellencies of music; it was profound, airy, affecting, and original and the performance was in unison with the merit of the composition. SALOMON particularly exerted himself on this occasion in doing justice to the music of his friend Haydn."

A particular feature of this work is that Haydn expands the timbral possibilities of the genre by choosing two string instruments and two wind instruments and using the soloists in various color and register combinations. If the outer movements are orchestral, the middle, slow, movement has the quality of chamber music. The flurry of the third movement is interrupted by quasi-operatic violin cadenzas that were especially noted by *The Morning Chronicle* when the piece was performed again on 25 February 1794: "A concertante of HAYDN'S was performed, the last movement in particular of which gave infinite pleasure by a musical expression of tenderness and joy, the first expressed at intervals in recitative, and the latter in the melody, which was delightfully animating."

Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes of Carl maria von Weber

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

The *Symphonic Metamorphoses* was composed in 1943, a time when Hindemith, having left Nazi Germany initially for Switzerland, had been living in the United States for several years. The choreographer and dancer Léonard Massine suggested to Hindemith that he compose a ballet based on the music of Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826). Hindemith studied some of Weber's music and agreed, but subsequently discovered Massine was planning on using sets and costumes designed by Salvador Dali, whose work Hindemith found profoundly distasteful. Furthermore, seemingly every idea that Hindemith presented was rejected by Massine, who really wanted an orchestral arrangement of the original themes. Hindemith was insulted at being offered the job of a hack orchestrator. Because these themes by Weber, the composer of the great "German national opera" *Der Freischütz*, were not profound, or even Weber's best music, Hindemith wanted to take great liberties with them, which he did brilliantly in the *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, an orchestral piece composed in lieu of ballet music for Massine. Hindemith and his wife had played Weber's music for two pianists and he used some of these little-known works. The venerable critic Olin Downes stated with some humor: "As for what Mr. Hindemith has done with the Weber themes he must take the full responsibility. He has remarked that because these are by no means the best of Weber's themes, he has felt the freer to treat them as he pleases! Nothing like frankness between friends, and the wonderful Carl Maria is safely in his grave!"

The work is in four movements, and is in fact a kind of concerto for orchestra, in that it demands high levels of virtuosity from many members of the ensemble. It is a brilliantly woven tapestry of difficult melodic, and rhythmic, passages. It was first performed on 20 January 1944 in New York City with Artur Rodzinski conducting the New York Philharmonic and has been one of Hindemith's most popular works since then. The opening movement, an *Allegro*, uses the fourth of Weber's *Eight Pieces for Piano Duet*, Op. 60. Weber's piece is marked "All' ongarese" (in the Hungarian manner) and Hindemith works the Weber material into a kind of Eastern European polka, very colorfully orchestrated. The high strings play an exotic descending "Gypsy" scale and a sixteenth-note gesture, often with trills, is passed around the orchestra, this colorful exchange of material a characteristic of the entire piece.

The second movement presents an introductory fantasia, a set of variations, and a fugue based on a modified form of the theme, in a jazzy style. The theme had been taken by Weber from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's eighteenth-century *Dictionnaire de musique*, where he quotes a melody from the famous Sinologist Father Jean-Baptiste Duhalde. This "Oriental" melody was used by Weber in his *Turandot Overture*, part of the incidental music he wrote for a play by Carlo Gozzi based on the legend of the icy Chinese princess. Weber was known for using "exotic" Eastern European folk and Asian materials in his music, just as Rousseau was an early proponent of using material from "world musics." In Hindemith's setting, the theme is introduced in the solo flute and repeated throughout by many different color combinations, building dynamically as in Ravel's *Bolero*. As the movement continues, Hindemith gradually adds various elements into the theme, notably trills, pizzicato effects, a line in triplet rhythms. After the jazzy fugue, the movement is rounded off with a steady decrescendo. Listen for the presentation of the theme in augmentation by the chimes as part of the Asian-sounding "metallic" orchestration.

The *Andantino* is based on the second of Weber's *Six Easy Pieces* for piano duet, Op. 3, and is written in a lyric, lilting, siciliano style. A beautiful melody is presented in various instruments with an added obbligato line by the flute. As with the second movement, the shape is based on a crescendo building to a climax, and then a decrescendo representing disintegration of sound and rhythm. The final movement, a March based on Weber's piano duets, Op. 60, uses the *Marcia* (no. 7 of 8), as well as elements from the second of the duets. Here the orchestration shows evidence of Hindemith's neo-Classical style in its clarity and detachment but the piece ends grandly.

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Beethoven made a practice of working simultaneously on contrasting compositions. Thus it was with his fifth and sixth symphonies, the first terse, intense, at times even violent, with a relentless progress towards victory; and the latter, with the genre title "Pastoral," calm, lyrical, and consolatory. Yet within each symphony there is also a dichotomy of aggression and serenity: Symphony No. 5 has a broad, *cantabile* second movement (which, in turn, has its own martial outbursts in the brass) and Symphony No. 6 has the vivid "Storm Scene" in the parallel minor, a direct relic of French "horror" or "rescue" opera. Beethoven only composed one opera, *Fidelio*, and it was a German setting of a French "rescue" opera text, in which the young heroine (Leonore) disguises herself as a young man (Fidelio) in order to work at a state prison where she believes her husband (Florestan), who has spoken out against tyranny, is imprisoned. She encounters great trials and dangers in order to save him in a daring last-minute rescue. Beethoven may have only completed one opera but he used the "rescue" opera as a theatrical, psychological, and musical model for a number of his symphonies, starting with Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, the "Eroica" or "Heroic," premiered in 1804. In this way, he provides a kind of program, or at least what has been called a "psychological journey" for a multi-

movement instrumental work that in the Classical period had been considered “absolute” music—music with no extramusical connotations. This also shifts the weight of the symphony to the Finale—the “rescue”—whereas the Classical symphony focused most seriously on the first two movements with the final two often light and tuneful.

Symphony No. 5 may be seen as a rescue opera without words. It is no coincidence that the work has been identified with victory, most specifically during World War II. The most significant way Beethoven moves from challenge/despair to victory/joy is to proceed gradually but inexorably from C minor to C major over the course of four movements. The arrival at and establishment of C major in the fourth movement, allied with the brass instruments, is the outcome for which the listener has been waiting. The symphony is one of the most tightly unified in all of Western music, with a persistent rhythmic motive, an overarching tonal plan, themes built on triads, and recurrence of previous material. Beethoven uses nearly the smallest amount of motivic material possible for its imposing structure: two different pitches tied to a rhythmic motive of three short notes followed by a long one. This rhythm is persistent throughout the work, and is one that he used in different ways in other works of this period (1804-1809), such as the Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major and the “Appassionata” Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 57.

In Symphony No. 5 the rhythmic motive is loaded with so much pregnant energy that Beethoven must control its speed. It has the energy potential of a large ball of snow rolling down a mountain. He begins by stating the motive and immediately stopping, with a fermata over the long note; he repeats the motive a step lower and stops again. When he lets the motive off its leash, it builds up in sequence to a tremendous dynamic climax. Just as in a last-minute rescue, he waits until the very last moment for the modulation from C minor to E-flat major, announcing the new, major mode theme in the French horns. There continues to be scarcely a measure in which the rhythmic motive does not appear or does not insinuate itself in the listener’s memory. The Development section is notable for its intensity and the ultimate fragmentation of already sparse motives: the horn call is reduced to two notes passed around in sequential imitation, and then eventually to one note. The next step is silence, oblivion, which Beethoven’s music also suggests. The Recapitulation is stopped by an even bigger braking device than a fermata: an oboe cadenza! With a braking device of this magnitude, Beethoven can only be planning an astonishing buildup of volume and speed to end the movement. This cadenza is not the only surprise, nor the first departure from Classical procedure: the Recapitulation is in C major, which at this point in the symphony is only a temporary victory and must only happen definitively in the fourth movement. In the first movement, then, Beethoven’s solution to his self-imposed problem is to go into “overtime” with a Coda, re-establishing the tonic of C minor. Beethoven had inherited a Classical tradition in which instrumental movements had short codas. He lengthened them for his own purposes and in this movement the Coda is equally as long as any other section, Exposition, Development, and Recapitulation. Beethoven’s view of both his life and his art was one of intense struggle and suffering, both necessary in order to replace problems-obstacles-chaos with solutions-victory-order.

The second movement opens with a long-breathed melody in A-flat major, a melody that Beethoven reworked numerous times, as evidenced in his compositional sketchbooks. The beginning of the movement has a pastoral flavor, with hymn-like cadences in the woodwinds, but, as in the first movement, there is an abrupt, even startling, modulation, and C major makes its entrance in this movement, in martial manner in the brass. The movement continues as a set of variations on both themes, combined with a certain amount of developmental procedure, a typical mixture for Beethoven by this time in his life. It concludes with much gentle cadencing in A-flat. The third movement, opening with a “rocket” theme from the bass upwards, is a Scherzo and Trio with these sections in C minor and C major respectively; the Scherzo is then repeated, reorchestrated in a “ghostly” manner, thus ending the movement in C minor, except that Beethoven links this movement to the Finale in a “mysterious” passage with a huge crescendo, another way in which the multi-movement structure of the symphony is unified. The Finale is a sonata-allegro movement establishing C major conclusively and emphatically as the new tonic. The brass play a definitive role. It is in this movement that Beethoven adds for the first time in his symphonies three instruments associated with the opera orchestra: the trombone, the piccolo, and the contrabassoon. In Beethoven’s aesthetic, victory is always hard-won and he often uses psychological devices such as reminding himself and the listener of past adversity just at the point of resolution: here, in a tremendous braking device, the “ghostly” part of the Scherzo (with the three shorts and a long rhythm) returns in C minor to mark the arrival at the Recapitulation in C major, normally the ultimate resolution of the movement. Beethoven, however, adds a victorious, loud, fast, Coda, one that serves not just for this movement but for the entire symphony. The Coda is one of exaltation and almost demands physical reaction from the listener. Is it a sure victory or a manic rejection of past suffering in which the composer protests too much?

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