

CONCERT I

Saturday, October 10, 2009 at 8 pm

Sunday, October 11, 2009 at 3 pm

Itzhak Perlman, conductor and violin

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Adagio in E Major for Violin and Orchestra, K. 261 (1776)

Rondo in C Major for Violin and Orchestra, K. 373 (1781)

Mr. Perlman

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Symphony No. 1 in D Major ("Classical"), Op. 25 (1917)

Allegro

Larghetto

Gavotta: Non troppo allegro

Finale: Molto vivace

INTERMISSION

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14 (1830)

Rêveries – Passions (Daydreams – Passions)

Un bal (A ball)

Scène aux champs (Scene in the country)

Marche au supplice (March to the scaffold)

Songe d'une nuit de sabbat (Dream of a witches' Sabbath)

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Program Notes

Adagio in E Major for Violin and Orchestra, K. 261 . . . Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(Born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg; died December 5, 1791, in Vienna)

At the height of his career, in the 1780's, Mozart was admired at least as much for his brilliant piano playing as for his compositions. Although piano was always his preferred instrument, in his youth he played the violin too, and at the age of thirteen, he became the concertmaster of the Prince-Archbishop's court orchestra in Salzburg. His father, Leopold Mozart, a violinist of distinction, always regretted his son's neglect of the violin, telling him, "You have no idea how well you play. If you would do yourself the favor of playing with boldness, spirit and fire, you would be the best violinist in Europe."

Mozart remained concertmaster until 1777, when a skilled dullard named Antonio Brunetti, one of the Archbishop's favorite musicians, succeeded him. Young Mozart wrote five violin concertos in 1775; it is not clear whether he intended them for himself or Brunetti, but the last three are exceptionally beautiful works, which posterity deems perfect. Brunetti, however, did not like them, finding the writing too *studiert* ("studied" or "affected"), and so Mozart wrote some alternate movements, still lovely but less demanding and not as lengthy, for him to play. The *Adagio, K. 261*, is one of them, composed to replace the slow movement of the *A-Major Concerto, K. 219*, the fifth and last of Mozart's violin concertos.

Rondo in C Major for Violin and Orchestra, K. 373 . . . Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

On April 8, 1781, Mozart and two other members of the Archbishop of Salzburg's musical establishment gave a concert at the Vienna residence of their employer's father. The composer wrote to his father that night about his successful appearance in the capital and his feeling that he was wasting his time in Salzburg. He mentioned that his colleague, the violinist Brunetti, had played "a rondo for a

concerto." Mozart never composed the other two movements necessary to convert this work into an entire violin concerto, but left us only this charming and gracious *Rondo*, which would have served as its finale.

Symphony No. 1 in D Major, ("Classical Symphony"), Op. 25 . . . Sergei Prokofiev

(Born April 23, 1891, in Sontzovka; died March 5, 1953, in Moscow)

The marvelous blend of economy, clarity, wit and whimsy that Sergei Prokofiev gleaned from Haydn and Mozart appears in the *Classical Symphony* as the direct result of what he learned at conservatory and the special interest that a faculty member, Nicolai Tcherepnin had in him. Tcherepnin believed that a good understanding of Haydn and Mozart would be valuable to young composers, teaching Prokofiev how the Classical composers used form and achieved grace and fluidity stylistically.

In 1916, Prokofiev began to sketch his own symphony in the classical manner, and in 1917, the year of the Czar's abdication, the October Revolution, and Lenin's rise to power, he completed it. In his words, the *Classical Symphony* is "as Haydn might have written it, had he lived in our day." Prokofiev did not desire to imitate old styles but rather to update them. He sometimes referred to this work as his *Symphony No. 1*, although he had written and discarded others in 1902 and 1908. He gave this work the title *Classical Symphony* with the "secret hope that in the course of time it might turn out to be a classic."

Humor is the symphony's predominant emotion. Prokofiev's early 20th century sensibility completely absorbs and transforms classicism, and to Western ears, the music even sounds particularly Russian. Although the symphony unquestionably echoes Haydn's wit, it also includes an irony that Prokofiev used again in his later symphonies. Much shorter than its Classical antecedents, the four movements of the symphony play with forms, melodies, phrase structures and rhythms typical of classi-

cism, twisting them around humorously.

The first movement, a perfectly shaped sonata-form, *Allegro*, begins with the violins enunciating the first theme followed by the flutes' contributions of additional melody and thematic material. The violins introduce the second subject, with the bassoons aiding them. The second movement, *Larghetto*, is a prepossessing, slow dance in triple meter much like a stately minuet. In the third movement, where Haydn and Mozart usually placed a minuet, Prokofiev writes another dance, a *Gavotte*, *Non troppo allegro*, in duple time instead of the minuet's three, displaying great good humor and grace. In its whimsical trio, low stringed instruments deliver a bagpipe-like drone. This movement was especially popular, and as a result, Prokofiev used the same idea again, enlarging it, in the *Romeo and Juliet* ballet. The speedy sonata-allegro *Finale*, *Molto vivace*, closes the work with a great flash of brilliance.

The *Classical Symphony* was first performed on April 21, 1918, in St. Petersburg, with the composer conducting the Petrograd Court Orchestra. It is scored for a classical orchestra: pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets and timpani, and a body of strings.

***Symphonie Fantastique* ("Fantastic Symphony"), Episode in the Life of an Artist, Op. 14 . . . Hector Berlioz**

(Born December 11, 1803, in La-Côte-Saint-André, France; died March 8, 1869, in Paris)

In 1830, just three years after Beethoven's death, the little known 26-year-old composer, Hector Berlioz, composed *Symphonie Fantastique*, a work that revealed him to be an original musical thinker. Remarkable for its musical imagery and emotional representation, it became a model for Liszt, Wagner, and Strauss. Berlioz took many musical conventions beyond their limits, but still called his work a symphony. Beethoven's symphonies and Shakespeare's plays were formative influenc-

es on him that were expressed in *Symphonie Fantastique*.

In 1827, at an English company's performance in Paris of *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Berlioz fell passionately in love with Harriet Smithson, a beautiful Irish actress who played both Ophelia and Juliet. Finally, five years later he arranged for her to attend his symphony's performance and for them to meet. She had no idea she had inspired his symphony until she saw his programme in which he longs for "the Juliet, the Ophelia for whom my heart cries out." They married the following October, but his "eternal and inextinguishable passion" soon died, and within a few years, they separated.

Symphonie Fantastique is renowned for its brilliant orchestration and for its use of a single melody, pervading all five movements. The work varies from traditional four-movement symphonic form by the insertion of a waltz before the slow movement and a march after it. Berlioz, who felt his work followed naturally from Beethoven's, used his "idée fixe," his hallmark melody, in every movement as a germ from which themes grow and as a link binding the whole work together. A persistent obsession, it represents the beloved, Harriet.

The symphony also reflects his fascination with the supernatural and the grotesque. Berlioz innovated with orchestration, creating novel tone colors and sounds suggesting an infinite variety of emotions, but he neglected standard motivic development. The first movement, *Rêveries – Passions* (*Daydreams – Passions*), has main thematic material that suggests reveries and passions. The violins articulate the "idée fixe" melody, a forlorn statement of longing, after the protracted introduction. By the movement's end, the anxiety subsides into consolation with repeated, sustained hymnal amens.

In the second movement, *Un bal* (*A Ball*), a traditional waltz incorporates the "idée fixe" with the harps and the woodwinds adding special color. This movement shifts the focus away from an emotional experience toward an invocation of the surroundings, yet Berlioz deftly

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blurs the boundary between interior and exterior when his hero finds himself briefly confronted by his beloved.

The slow third movement, *Scène aux champs* (Scene in the country), *Adagio*, includes birdcalls and intermittently flowing rhythmic patterns, indebted to the “scene by the brook” movement of Beethoven’s *Pastorale Symphony*. In sonata form, the movement

als and signifying Judgment Day, part of the Requiem Mass and well known to audiences of the time, interrupts the revelry. The “*idée fixe*” and *Dies irae* mix in a grotesque *Ronde du Sabbat* (Sabbath Round Dance), which eventually becomes a fugue. The large orchestra explodes with full energy in the coda.

Berlioz completed the symphony in 1830, but reworked it until 1832, adding the first

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includes the “*idée fixe*” as a secondary theme. It opens with an English horn-oboe exchange simulating shepherd calls of the *ranz des vaches*, or alphorn, sounding “the tune used by the Swiss to call the flocks together.” The scene buoys the musician’s imagination, but with the beloved’s reappearance and intimations of her faithlessness, darkness gathers. At the equivocal close, the shepherd falls silent, as the muffled timpani suggest distant thunder, effectively preparing the way for a nightmare.

Recalling Beethoven’s *Pastorale*, the fourth and fifth movements are scored for large orchestra with a full brass ensemble. The garish *Marche au supplice* (March to the scaffold) serves as prologue to the witches’ Sabbath finale *Songe d’une nuit de sabbat* (Dream of a witches’ Sabbath). The march, *Allegretto non troppo*, tonally and temperamentally provides an effective transition from vague foreboding to the unleashing of horror in which the Beloved (the “*idée fixe*”) becomes a hideous witch, a shrieking clarinet leading the spirits on the witches’ Sabbath. The “*idée fixe*,” grotesque with grace notes and trills, meets the witches’ laughter. Eventually the bell sounds, and the melody of the *Dies Irae*, a medieval melody used for funer-

movement’s *religioso* coda and several versions of the descriptive program. He headed it *Episodes from the Life of an Artist*, adding *Symphonie Fantastique* later as a subtitle. By 1855, he had recast his original program so that the musician takes a dose of opium at the beginning, making the symphony an opium dream. The beloved transforms into a melody, like an “*idée fixe*,” which he hears everywhere. His final program is different: “A young musician of morbid sensibility and ardent imagination poisons himself with opium in a fit of despair over love. The narcotic dose, too weak to bring him death, plunges him into a heavy sleep accompanied by the strangest of visions, in which his sensations, sentiments and recollections are translated, in his sick mind, into musical ideas and images. Even his beloved has become a melody for him, an obsession that he finds and hears everywhere.”

The instruments required are two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, three clarinets and small clarinet in E-flat, four bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, two tubas, timpani, percussion, two harps and strings.

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