

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
2017-2018 Mellon Grand Classics Season

November 3 and 5, 2017

MANFRED HONECK, CONDUCTOR
LORNA MCGHEE, FLUTE
GRETCHEN VAN HOESEN, HARP

WOLFGANG AMADEUS
MOZART

Concerto for Flute and Harp in C major, K. 297c [K. 299]

- I. Allegro
- II. Andantino
- III. Rondo: Allegro

Intermission

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Symphony No. 9 in C major, "Great" (D. 944)

- I. Andante — Allegro ma non troppo
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace
- IV. Finale: Allegro vivace

PROGRAM NOTES BY DR. RICHARD E. RODDA

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Concerto for Flute and Harp in C major, K. 297c [K. 299] (1778)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg on January 27, 1756, and died in Vienna on December 5, 1791. He composed Concerto for Flute and Harp in 1778, and it was premiered sometime that summer, possibly performed in Paris by Adrien-Louis de Bonnières, Duc de Guines (flute), and his daughter, Marie-Louise-Philippine (harp). The Pittsburgh Symphony premiered the concerto at the Syria Mosque on February 8, 1952, with conductor Paul Paray and soloists Edward Druzinsky (harp) and Bernard Goldberg (flute), and most recently performed it on subscription on November 18, 1979, with conductor Sergiu Comissiona and soloists Bernard Goldberg (flute) and Gretchen Van Hoesen (harp). The score calls for two oboes, two horns and strings.

Performance time: approximately 29 minutes

Mozart went to Paris in 1778 looking for work. Dissatisfied with the lack of opportunity in Salzburg, especially the absence of a local opera house, he thought that the music lovers of the sophisticated French capital might recognize his genius and provide him with a prestigious position that would allow him to write for the stage. He left Salzburg in September 1777, with his mother as chaperone, and proceeded through the towns of Augsburg (birthplace of his father, Leopold) and Mannheim. Mannheim was one of the great centers of instrumental music at the time, and Mozart learned much about the most recent advances in the art of the symphony — both in composition and in execution — during his stay. He also fell in love there with Aloysia Weber, an attractive singer whom he courted seriously but was discouraged from marrying by his father. After Wolfgang had dawdled in Mannheim longer than business dictated, Leopold ordered him on to Paris in no uncertain terms. Reluctantly, he left, and mother and son arrived in Paris on March 23, 1778.

With the help of Baron Friedrich Grimm, whom Mozart had met on his first trip to Paris as a *Wunderkind* of seven in 1763, he was introduced to a number of the aristocracy, though his treatment at their hands was something less than he had hoped for — his letters home often complain of being kept waiting in drafty anterooms and of having to perform on wretched harpsichords. His greatest wish was to be asked to compose an opera, the musical genre closest to his heart throughout his life, but the Gluck-Piccini feud contesting the merits of French versus Italian opera was still in full flare at the time, and since, according to Abraham Veinus, “his appearance was unheralded by even a tidbit of interesting personal scandal, the great ladies who ruled Parisian society could scarcely be expected to show enthusiasm” at the arrival of this young German musician. He called at several noble houses, but made little progress, as he wrote to his father: “On foot it is too far everywhere — or too muddy, for the filth in Paris is not to be described. To go about in a carriage, one has the honor of riding away four or five *livres* daily, and in vain. For people will make fine compliments, and that is all. They appoint me for such and such a day; I play, and then it is: *O, c’est un prodige, c’est inconcevable, c’est étonnant*, and with that, good-bye.... What annoys me most of all here is that these stupid Frenchmen seem to think that I am still seven years old, because that was my age when they first saw me.”

Paris was expensive and the money he brought from home was quickly spent, so Mozart had to take on students to sustain himself and his mother. One especially promising client introduced to him in April 1778 by Baron Grimm was Adrien-Louis de Bonnières, Duc de Guines, a music-loving diplomat who had most recently been the French ambassador to England. Mozart reported to his father that the Duke was a talented flutist and his daughter, Marie-Louise-Philippine, who was to be his pupil in composition, played the harp “*magnifique*” and possessed an astonishing musical memory that enabled her to learn 200 pieces by heart. A course of study for the girl, with a handsome payment, was agreed upon. Mozart found her to be a quick study on technical matters but utterly devoid of creative imagination, and he complained to Leopold, “I wrote down four bars of a minuet and then said to her: ‘Look what an ass I am. I’ve begun a minuet and cannot even finish the first part. Please be good enough to do it for me.’ She thought this was impossible, but finally after great effort something appeared.” The girl’s mind, it seems, was not on minuets that summer but on marriage, which Mozart learned one August afternoon when he went to give her a scheduled lesson and collect his promised payment. The housekeeper explained that the Mademoiselle was out making preparations for her wedding and that the Duke had left the city to go

hunting and that all the money she had in the house was three *louis d'or* and would he take that even though it was only half the agreed amount and please call again later for the rest, thank you. Mozart refused the money and stormed off in an understandable huff. It is not known how much, if any, payment he eventually received from the Guines family.

Soon after he met the Guines, *père* and *fille*, Mozart composed for their use and delectation a Concerto for Flute and Harp with a view toward currying their favor in his quest for a local position. Though Mozart was not at all fond of either instrument, he produced for them, according to Alfred Einstein, "an example of the finest French salon music" and one of his most delightful pieces. Mozart set the Concerto in C major, the most congenial of harp keys, and filled it with an abundance of attractive melodies shared by the paired soloists. The sunny opening movement follows the familiar sonata-concerto structure that Mozart did so much to bring to maturity in his many concerted works, though this score largely eschews the counterpoint and wide range of emotional expression that mark his later realizations of the form in favor of a bounty of charming melodic episodes. "The *Andantino*," wrote Alfred Einstein, "is like a François Boucher painting, decorative and sensuous but not lacking in deeper emotions." The closing Rondo is one of those characteristically Mozartian movements so rich in melody that they once brought the following jealous response from the Viennese composer Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf: "I have never yet met with a composer who had such an amazing wealth of ideas: I could almost wish he were not so lavish in using them. He leaves his hearer out of breath; for hardly has he grasped one beautiful thought when one of greater fascination dispels the first, and this goes on throughout."

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Symphony No. 9 in C major, "Great" (1825-1828)

Franz Schubert was born in Lichtenthal, near Vienna on January 31, 1797, and died in Vienna on November 19, 1828. He composed his C major Symphony from 1825 to 1828, and it was premiered by the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra under the direction of Felix Mendelssohn on March 21, 1839. The Pittsburgh Symphony first premiered the work at Carnegie Music Hall with Victor Herbert on December 9, 1898, and most recently performed it under the direction of Gianandrea Noseda on March 29, 2009. The score calls for woodwinds, horns and trumpets in pairs, three trombones, timpani and strings.

Performance time: approximately 54 minutes

One of the pleasures of visiting Vienna in years gone by, as it remains today, was the chance to commune with the shades of the great masters — to breath the air of the *Wienerwald*; to stop for a leisurely *Kaffee mit Schlag* at some ancient café; to stand misty-eyed and pensive before silent gravestones. Robert Schumann was not immune to these charms when he went to Vienna in the autumn of 1838. He was looking to improve his fortunes from those he had known in Germany, and he thought the imperial city of the Habsburgs might prove to be a lucky place. It was not to be. As with many men of genius, Vienna threw up a cold shoulder to him, and Schumann's residency lasted only a few months.

Two of the places Schumann was most eager to visit when he arrived in Vienna were the gravesites of the composers who stood above all others in his estimation. This was easily accomplished as Beethoven and Schubert were buried side by side in the Währing Cemetery. (In later years, the bodies were moved to Vienna's vast Central Cemetery.) Schumann, full of Jean-Paul's fantasies and bursting with heady Romanticism, found a steel pen on Beethoven's grave and took it to be an omen. It was with this enchanted instrument that he composed his First Symphony. Standing before Schubert's grave had no less effect. In those early years after Schubert's death at the age of 31 in 1828, his works were known only to a limited but devoted following of music lovers who were determined to see that he received the recognition he deserved. As one of that enthusiastic band, Schumann had his resolve strengthened as one of Schubert's most ardent disciples by his visit to Währing Cemetery.

Franz Schubert's brother, Ferdinand, a teacher of organ at a local conservatory, had become custodian of the unsorted piles of manuscripts that were left at the composer's death. Ferdinand, whom Schumann described as "a poor schoolmaster, entirely without means and with eight children to support," was trying to have Franz's works performed and published, and he was probably happy to arrange a visit with Schumann, better known at the time as the editor of the important periodical *Neue Zeitschrift für*

Musik ("New Journal for Music") than as a composer. The two men met on New Year's Day 1839 and Schumann set about digging through the musty stacks of manuscript paper. Among the many treasures waiting to be salvaged from this pile, Schumann discovered one of Schubert's greatest jewels — the wondrous C major Symphony. As Schumann excitedly turned the pages of the bulky manuscript, he realized that he had in his hands something of surpassing beauty, perhaps Schubert's greatest work. He had a copy of the score made and sent to Felix Mendelssohn, then director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, with an urgent plea for the work's performance. Mendelssohn at once realized the extraordinary nature of the Symphony, and he revealed it to the world in a performance only three months after Schumann had unearthed the score.

Little is known of the circumstances of the composition of the C major Symphony. Schubert had no commission for the work, and it was certainly too difficult for the amateur musical societies for which most of his earlier symphonies had been written. The finished score was dated in March 1828, but when the composition was begun is uncertain. It seems likely that Schubert hoped for a performance of the C major Symphony by the orchestra of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna. A friend reported that Schubert had decided at the time that he was finished with song writing, and would devote himself henceforth to opera and symphony. The score was submitted to the Viennese organization, which accepted it for consideration. It is uncertain if they held a trial run-through of the work (if they did, it would have been the only time Schubert could have heard any of this music), but it was decided that the piece would not be performed publicly because of its length and difficulty. It was a full decade before Schumann again brought the score to light.

Schubert's C major Symphony opens with a broad introductory melody intoned by the horns. The strings provide a complementary phrase before the trombones restate the opening theme. The main part of the movement begins, at a quicker tempo, with the presentation of the main theme by the strings; the Gypsy-flavored second theme is given by the oboes and bassoons. The exposition closes with a grand, lyrical theme for full orchestra. The development is a masterful construction into which are woven all of the themes of the movement. The recapitulation returns all of the earlier materials in heightened settings. The form of the introspective second movement is subject to more than one interpretation (sonatina — sonata without development — is perhaps the closest description), and the best way to listen to this music is as a series of splendid melodies, carefully balanced in mood, tonality and emotional weight. The *Scherzo*, bursting with the vibrant energy of a peasant festival, is a complete sonata structure, containing a full development section that explores some wonderful Romantic harmonies. The central trio encompasses one of the most inspired melodies in all of the symphonic literature, a triumph of Viennese *Gemütlichkeit*, sentiment and sensuality. The finale bristles with a barely contained riot of unquenchable high spirits. The movement's every page is part of a logical progression leading to an ending that is satisfying, overwhelming and seemingly inevitable.