

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
2017-2018 Mellon Grand Classics Season

April 6 and 8, 2018

BERNARD LABADIE, CONDUCTOR
JAN LISIECKI, PIANO

HENRI-JOSEPH RIGEL

Symphony in C minor, Opus 12, No. 4

- I. Allegro assai
- II. Largo non troppo
- III. Allegro spiritoso

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
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Concerto No. 1 in C major for Piano and Orchestra, Opus

- I. Allegro con brio
 - II. Largo
 - III. Rondo: Allegro scherzando
- Mr. Lisiecki**

Intermission

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Symphony No. 98 in B-flat major

- I. Adagio — Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Menuet: Allegro
- IV. Finale: Presto

PROGRAM NOTES BY DR. RICHARD E. RODDA

HENRI-JOSEPH RIGEL

Symphony in C minor, Opus 12, No. 4 (pub. 1774)

Henri-Joseph Rigel was born in Wertheim am Main, Germany on February 9, 1741, and died in Paris on May 2, 1799. He composed his Symphony in C minor, Opus 12, No. 4 in 1774, and it was premiered in Paris with Rigel conducting sometime that year. These performances mark the PSO premiere of the symphony, as well as the first performances of any composition by Henri-Joseph Rigel. The score calls for two oboes, bassoon, two horns and strings.

Performance time: approximately 15 minutes

London, Vienna and Paris were the centers of the orchestral world in the late 18th century. There had long been a tradition of music-making in churches, theaters and noble enclaves, but the first public concert-giving series was begun in London in 1672 by composer and violinist John Bannister (who had apparently been fired from the royal employ when he made impertinent remarks about the French musicians King Charles II favored). Several other London series followed in the 18th century, notably one begun in the 1760s by Bach's son Johann Christian and the concerts headed by Johann Peter Salomon and Giovanni Viotti at which Haydn created a sensation in the 1790s. Vienna hosted a plethora of musical gatherings during the 18th century (when Mozart bolted from the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg in 1781 to try his luck in the city, he wrote to his father that it was "the best place in the world for his profession"), but they were almost entirely informal or sponsored by the nobility until the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* ("Society of the Friends of Music") was founded in 1814.

The most important and sophisticated 18th-century concert series in Europe was the Concert Spirituel, established in 1725 by the composer Anne Danican Philidor, scion of a family that had figured prominently in French music for nearly a century. The series was primarily known for its performances of instrumental music, but its curious name came from the fact that Philidor was originally granted permission to rent the city's theaters during Easter season and other religious holidays, when theatrical performances were forbidden. He was required, however, to program some sacred Latin-texted vocal music, so the whole venture became known as the Concert Spirituel. Philidor's musicians were the best in Paris, drawn from the Opéra, Chapelle Royale and the leading Parisian churches, and the Concert Spirituel became famed throughout Europe for the quality of its performances and the grand size of the orchestra (whose musicians were glad to get work during their previously slow times). The series drew musicians from across Europe (Mozart wrote his Symphony No. 31 in D major, K. 297 ["Paris"] and Sinfonia Concertante for Winds in E-flat major, K. 297b for the Concert Spirituel), and among those who settled permanently in the city under its influence was Henri-Joseph Rigel.

Rigel was born in 1741 in Wertheim am Main, Germany, sixty miles southeast of Frankfurt, into a musical family (his father was director of opera and theater at the local court) and trained sufficiently in the discipline that he published seven symphonies and a violin concerto in 1767. Rigel subsequently studied in Stuttgart with the Neapolitan composer Niccolò Jommelli, who was working there as *Kapellmeister*, and (probably) with violinist, composer and conductor Franz Xaver Richter in Mannheim, then a hotbed of orchestral composition and performance. By 1768, Rigel had moved permanently to Paris, where he got married, bought a house, and started publishing his music. He quickly established himself in the city's musical life with performances of his sonatas, quartets, concertos and symphonies, and in 1774 first had a symphony of his performed at the Concert Spirituel. That same year he branched out to write the oratorio *La sortie d'Égypte* (whose French language the Concert Spirituel by then allowed), which was performed at least 27 times during the following decade. He went on to write another oratorio (*La destruction de Jéricho*), fourteen operas (most short, with spoken dialogue), sacred works, chamber music, concertos and sonatas, and remained one of the most respected musicians in Paris — listed among the ten "*compositeurs de Concert Spirituel*" and as the ensemble's *chef d'orchestre* in 1783, a founding faculty member of the Paris Conservatoire, on the staff of the Paris Opéra — until he died on May 2, 1799.

It has been estimated that only about 8% of late-18th-century symphonies are in minor keys — just two of Mozart's 55 and 11 of Haydn's 104 are in minor tonalities — so Rigel's Symphony in C minor, Op.

12, No. 4 (published in 1774) is something of an outlier in the literature of that time. (Two of his twelve published symphonies are in minor keys; his quartets, intended mainly for private consumption, have a higher percentage.) As such, his C minor Symphony would have had an effect more dramatic when it was new than it does today, especially given the dark harmonic colors, agitated rhythms, sharp accents and unremitting drive of its sonata-form outer movements, which Robert Sondheimer, who edited Rigel's symphonies for modern publication, characterized as indicating a "passionate and yearning disposition." Emotional and formal contrast is provided for the work by the sweetly pastoral *Largo*, which Sondheimer wrote represents Rigel's "sweet grace and loveliness with every tone of touching affection."

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Concerto No. 1 in C major for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 15 (1795, revised 1800)

Ludwig Van Beethoven was born in Bonn on December 16, 1770, and died in Vienna on March 26, 1827. He composed his First Piano Concerto in 1795, later revising it in 1800, and it was premiered in Vienna with Joseph Haydn conducting and Beethoven as soloist on December 18, 1795. The Pittsburgh Symphony premiered the concerto in Carnegie Music Hall with conductor Emil Paur and soloist Myrtle Elvyn on November 12, 1909, and most recently performed it with music director Manfred Honeck and soloist Lars Vogt on February 22, 2015. The score calls for flute, pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets, timpani and strings.

Performance time: approximately 37 minutes

"His genius, his magnetic personality were acknowledged by all, and there was, besides, a gaiety and animation about the young Beethoven that people found immensely attractive. The troubles of boyhood were behind him: his father had died very shortly after his departure from Bonn, and by 1795, his brothers were established in Vienna, Caspar Karl as a musician, Johann as an apothecary. During his first few months in the capital, he had indeed been desperately poor, depending very largely on the small salary allowed him by the Elector of Bonn. But that was all over now. He had no responsibilities, and his music was bringing in enough to keep him in something like affluence. He had a servant, for a short time he even had a horse; he bought smart clothes, he learned to dance (though not with much success), and there is even mention of his wearing a wig! We must not allow our picture of the later Beethoven to throw its dark colors over these years of his early triumphs. He was a young giant exulting in his strength and his success, and a youthful confidence gave him a buoyancy that was both attractive and infectious. Even in 1791, before he left Bonn, Carl Junker could describe him as 'this amiable, lighthearted man.' And in Vienna he had much to raise his spirits and nothing (at first) to depress them." Peter Latham painted this cheerful picture of the young Beethoven as Vienna knew him during his twenties, the years before his deafness, his recurring illnesses and his titanic struggles with his mature compositions had produced the familiar dour figure of his later years.

Beethoven came to Vienna for good in 1792, having made an unsuccessful foray in 1787, and he quickly attracted attention for his piano playing. His appeal was in an almost untamed, passionate, novel quality in both his manner of performance and his personality, characteristics that first intrigued and then captivated those who heard him. It was for his own concerts that Beethoven composed the first four of his five mature piano concertos. (Two juvenile essays in the genre are discounted in the numbering.) The opening movement of the First Piano Concerto is indebted to Mozart for its handling of the concerto-sonata form, for its technique of orchestration, and for the manner in which piano and orchestra are integrated. Beethoven added to these quintessential qualities of the Classical concerto a wider-ranging harmony, a more openly virtuosic role for the soloist, and a certain emotional weight characteristic of his large works. The second movement is a richly colored song with an important part for the solo clarinet. The rondo-finale is written in an infectious manner reminiscent of Haydn, brimming with high spirits and good humor.

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Symphony No. 98 in B-flat major (1791-1792)

Franz Joseph Haydn was born in Rohrau, Lower Austria on March 31, 1732, and died in Vienna on May 31, 1809. He composed his Symphony No. 98 from 1791-1792, and it was premiered in London with Haydn conducting on March 2, 1792. The Pittsburgh Symphony premiered the work at Syria Mosque under the direction of Fritz Reiner on January 1, 1943, and most recently performed it with former music director Mariss Jansons on December 6, 1998. The score calls for flute, pairs of oboes, bassoons, horns and trumpets, timpani, fortepiano and strings.
Performance time: 28 minutes

When Haydn first arrived there, in 1791, London was one of the world's greatest cities of music. In addition to considerable activity at the traditional performance sites of church and court, London had boasted an active operatic life since well before Handel settled there in 1710; regularly enjoyed public concerts, including the "Bach-Abel Concerts," produced by Johann Christian Bach (Johann Sebastian's youngest son) and Carl Friedrich Abel between 1765 and 1782, and the series run after 1786 by Johann Peter Salomon, who had enticed Haydn to visit London following the death of Prince Nicolaus Esterházy in September 1790; kept busy a knowledgeable band of critics to report in the press on all important musical events; and was home to a large and faithful body of discriminating patrons, both aristocratic and middle class, who eagerly supported a wide variety of worthwhile undertakings. Within a week of Haydn's landing in England on New Years' Day 1791, the *Public Advertiser* published a schedule detailing the wealth of music available in the city for the first six months of the year: Sunday — The Noblemen's Subscription, held every week in a different house; Monday — The Professional Concerts (Salomon's chief rival); Tuesday — opera; Wednesday — "ancient music" (i.e., Corelli, Vivaldi, Handel, etc.) at rooms in Tottenham Street; Thursday — concerts of music and dance at the Pantheon and programs by the Academy of Ancient Music; Friday — Salomon's concerts at the Hanover Square Rooms; Saturday — opera.

Haydn was swept at once into the artistic and social whirl of the capital upon his arrival. On January 8th, he wrote to Maria Anna von Genzinger in Vienna that he was "occupied in looking at this endlessly huge city of London, whose beauties and marvels quite astonished me. I immediately paid the necessary calls, such as to the Neapolitan Ambassador and to our own [Austrian ambassador]; both called on me in return two days later, and four days ago I lunched with the former.... My arrival caused a great sensation throughout the whole city, and I went the round of all the newspapers for three successive days. Everyone wants to know me. I had to dine out six times up to now, and if I wanted, I could dine out every day; but first I must consider my health and second my work." Haydn was soon befriended by an entire battalion of admirers from all social classes, including musicians, scholars, businessmen — even the royal family. He received an honorary doctorate from Oxford University in July 1791, had more invitations for dinners, parties, social engagements and weekends at Britain's best town houses and country manors than he could possibly accept, gave lessons to members of some of the city's finest families, and made so much money that, as he later told his biographer Griesinger, "My eyes popped out of my head." The focal point for the English mania surrounding Haydn was Salomon's series of Friday concerts at the Hanover Square Rooms, which ran from March 11th to May 16th, and featured a work by Haydn at every performance. The Symphonies Nos. 95 and 96 were composed in London in 1791 and first heard at the concerts that spring. The entire venture proved to be such a success that Haydn was easily convinced to stay for another season the following year, and to return again in 1794-1795.

For Salomon's 1792 concerts, which ran from February 17th to May 18th, Haydn devised four new symphonies — Nos. 93, 94 ("Surprise"), 97 and 98. The Symphony No. 98 in B-flat major was begun the previous summer at Roxford, the estate of the banker Nathaniel Brassey near Hertingfordbury in Hertfordshire, and completed in London sometime before its premiere at Salomon's concert on March 2, 1792. The Symphony's reception by the London press and public, as was almost invariable for Haydn's new works, was rapturous. "One of the richest treats of the season," exclaimed the *Morning Herald*. "One of the grandest compositions we ever heard," added the *Morning Chronicle*. "It was loudly applauded; the first and last movements were encored." Salomon and Haydn repeated the work at their concert the following week, and offered it yet again on April 13th. Haydn included it on his Vienna concerts in December 1793 to benefit the widows and orphans of deceased members of the *Tonkünstler Societät*, the city's musicians union.

Haydn had long labored to bring formal and thematic unity to his large instrumental compositions, and the Symphony No. 98 binds together the slow introduction and the sonata-form main body of the first movement by beginning each section with the same arch-shape motive — foreboding and chromatic in the introduction, playful and diatonic as the main theme. Haydn's mastery of motivic development — of extrapolating a logical, organic, balanced, pleasing movement from the permutations of a few pregnant melodic cells — is abundantly demonstrated by the rest of the movement, nowhere with more

inventiveness and expressive power than in the dramatic central development section, which Haydn authority H.C. Robbins Landon said assumed “the proportions of an intellectual struggle.”

Mozart died in Vienna on December 5, 1791, and Haydn was stunned by news of the passing of his friend and colleague when word of the tragedy reached London. He seems to have translated both his sorrow and his admiration into the somber and dignified music of the B-flat Symphony’s *Adagio*, whose form and passionate chromatic harmonies are a tribute to the emotional world and the characteristic techniques of Mozart’s mature works. The *Menuet* stands at the end of a historical evolution for which Haydn himself was largely responsible — the development of a little dance form of courtly elegance into a movement of symphonic breadth and cogent expression. Formal balance and instrumental contrast are provided by the central trio, based on a charming melody led by the bassoon. The finale, a full-fledged sonata form rather than one of the lighter rondo types that Haydn so often used to close his symphonies, is music of both wit and seriousness, the complementary emotional states that have been evoked throughout the Symphony. Haydn, however, was not a man of morbid sensibilities, either in his personality or in his music, so the dashing coda contains a delightful surprise, a tinkling ribbon of arpeggios that the composer himself would have played on the keyboard with which he bolstered the orchestra at all his London performances.

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