Chapel Hill Philharmonia

Hill Hall — University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

3:00 p.m. Sunday, February 16, 2014

Donald L. Oehler, Music Director

Showcasing Middle Europe

Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884)

Šárka from *Má vlast (My Homeland)*

Wolfgang Mozart (attributed) (1756-1791)

Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat for Four Winds, K. 297b

Allegro

Adagio

Andantino con Variazioni

Mérida Negrete, clarinet; Judy Konanc, oboe;
Chris Myers, bassoon; Garth Molyneux,
Rick Lehner, Sandra Svoboda, French horn

Intermission

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Third Piano Concerto in E major

Allegretto

Adagio religioso

Allegro vivace

Greg McCallum, piano

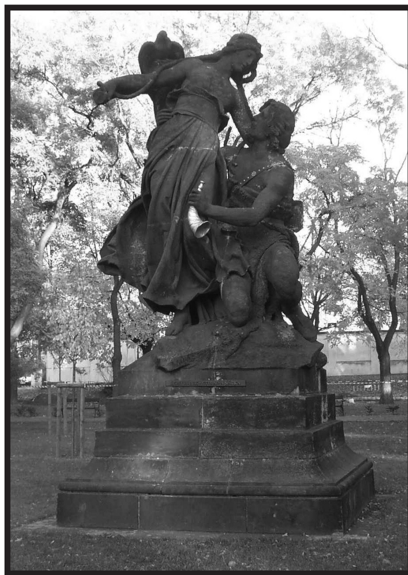
Showcasing Middle Europe

For three centuries central Europe, *Mitteleuropa*, has been the source of most of our core symphonic repertoire. Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadé Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Johannes Brahms, Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg, and dozens more composers were drawn inexorably to Vienna, Austria as to the sun in a heliocentric cosmos. Despite ethnic diversity and shifting political boundaries, Bohemia (including territory of the modern Czech Republic), capital Prague, and Hungary, capital Budapest, remained important satellites, coloring the musical universe with their distinctive national characters. Our program showcases three composers who represent these key middle European cultural centers. In addition it highlights the artistry of members of the Philharmonia's woodwind section and of guest pianist Greg McCallum.

Smetana: *Šárka*

Bedřich Smetana, the father of Czech nationalist music, was born in Litomyšl, east of Prague. He dreamed to become a "[Franz] Liszt in [piano] technique and a Mozart in composition." In his late teens Smetana began advanced music studies in Prague. However, financial success eluded him, and he depended on music teaching for a modest living. With a move to Göteborg, Sweden in 1856, Smetana became a more prosperous fish in a parochial musical pond. The growth of a Czech national movement attracted him back to Prague in 1862. Having been educated exclusively in German, he worked hard to become proficient in Czech. In 1866 he was appointed conductor of the Royal Provincial Czech Theater, primarily a venue for opera, and later became its artistic director. Smetana nurtured new operas by Czech composers and made his own contributions to the genre, the best known being *The Bartered Bride*. He also inspired a member of the Theater's orchestra to follow in his footsteps. Antonín Dvořák, then an obscure violist, ultimately became known internationally as the greatest Czech composer.

The catastrophic onset of deafness forced Smetana to resign from the Provincial Theater in 1874. He retired to a Bohemian village, but continued to compose. With the autobiographical string quartet 'From My Life', Smetana sublimated the tragedy of his hearing loss into one of his finest works. His nationalist sentiments found a new channel in six tone poems for orchestra written between 1874 and 1879. These were composed as stand-alone works, but comprise a connected cycle called *Má vlast* ("My Homeland"). The poems derive from Bohemian landmarks and legends. The poem *Vltava* (German *Die Moldau),* after Prague's river, is Smetana's best-known composition.



Šárka and Ctirad statue
Vysehrad, Prague

Šárka (pronounced Shar-ka), the third 'chapter' of *Má vlast*, evokes a spectacular wooded gorge on the outskirts of Prague. A popular legend holds that a female warrior threw herself to death from its cliffs. Historians speculate that the story traces to the 6th or 7th century when Slavic settlements arose in the Divoká Šárka ("Wild Sarka") valley. The tale begins with the death of Libuše, the last in a line of rulers of a matriarchal society. Men led by her widowed husband Prince Premsyl seize power. They rule from *Vyšehrad* ("the High Castle"), the subject of the first tone poem in *Má vlast*, overlooking the Vltava. The surviving women set up a rival colony on the opposite riverbank and a war ensues with the men. The women determine that Ctirad, the Prince's

powerful right-hand man, must be eliminated. The task falls to Šárka, a beautiful, fierce young warrior. In one form of the legend she seduces Ctirad, aided by liberal amounts of mead, and, when he falls into an alcohol-induced sleep, slays him. In an even more lurid version Šárka is bound naked to a tree along a path that Ctirad must travel and claims she has been set there as punishment for opposing her queen. Ctirad releases the "damsel in distress", and Šárka tricks him into blowing a horn that alerts her hidden troops. The women capture Ctirad and torture him to death. However, Premsyl's forces ultimately prevail and mercilessly slaughter the female rebels. Šárka leaps to her death from the cliff (now named Divci Skok – "Girl's Jump"). Some storytellers attribute her suicide to grief and guilt after having fallen in love with Ctirad. Others aver that on the point of being captured by the enemy she chose a rapid death over surrender.

Mozart: Sinfonia Concertante for Winds

My father…wanted me only to be a merchant like himself. As anonymous as he was.
When I told him I wished I could be like Mozart, he would say, Why? Do you want to be a trained monkey?
Would you like me to drag you around Europe doing tricks like a circus freak?

Old Salieri in *Amadeus* by Peter Shaffer

Wolfgang Amadé Mozart was pushed in his musical development by an ambitious, micromanaging father. Leopold Mozart, deputy *Kapellmeister* (music director) to the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, Austria, became known as an educator with the publication in 1756 of a *Treatise on Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing,* featuring moral as well as technical instruction. In the same year his wife Anna Maria gave birth to their soon-to-be legendary son. Leopold homeschooled Wolfgang and his older sister Marianne and shaped their musical talents. In an age that glorified prodigies he also seized an economic opportunity. Having established his offspring's "wow factor" before Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna, he embarked with the entire family in 1763 on a concert tour through Germany, Holland, Belgium, England and France. The "Grand Journey" lasted 3 years, 5 months and 20 days. Biographer Maynard Solomon estimates that its profits amounted to 50 times Leopold's annual salary. While this guaranteed the family's financial security, the elder Mozart's standing as a mid-level court employee never changed.

What did evolve were Wolfgang's musical skills and his aspirations for artistic independence. By age 13 his first opera was performed in Vienna and he was appointed a Salzburg court musician. He continued to tour with his father, mainly in Italy, and became respected as a miraculously gifted musician, not a mere "trained monkey". Yet the transition from child prodigy to artist proved challenging. Salzburg remained a musical backwater. Moreover, with the appointment of the dour Hieronymous Colloredo as Archbishop in 1772, the relationships of Mozart father and son with their employer became strained. However, their repeated efforts to find a better situation bore no success.

As Wolfgang approached his 22nd birthday in 1777, he embarked on another job-seeking tour, traveling with his mother as Leopold stayed behind to placate Colloredo. Key stops included Munich, Mannheim, with its outstanding orchestra of well-paid musicians, and Paris. Again, Mozart failed to find a satisfactory job. The trip turned tragic in July 1778 when Anna Maria died suddenly in Paris. Mozart soon returned home, his tail between his legs, to become court organist and concertmaster. Solomon notes, "It is remarkable to contemplate how drastically Leopold Mozart had now lowered his sights for his son's future as a creative musician and composer..." Only after chafing for 3 more years under the dual thumbs of Colloredo and his father, did Mozart finally escape Salzburg (discharged with a kick in the rear from the Archbishop's steward) to become a freelance musician in Vienna.

As Mozart traveled, his father maintained a vigorous correspondence, intending to use the material in a self-aggrandizing book on the education of his *wunderkind* son. In his letters Wolfgang described works in progress,

including a *Sinfonia Concertante* – a concerto for multiple different instruments with orchestra – a faddishly 'hot' genre in Paris. In March 1778 Mozart reported to Leopold that he was writing such a work for Joseph Legros, a famous opera singer and director of the *Concerts Spirituel*. It would be played by four great wind soloists, the principal flute, oboe and bassoon players from the Mannheim Orchestra plus Europe's leading French horn player, Giovanni Punto (an Italianized pseudonym). The performance never materialized. Three weeks later Wolfgang offered Leopold a disjointed explanation, blaming a conspiracy between Legros and one Giuseppe Cambini, whose formulaic *symphonies concertantes* were at the heart of the current Parisian craze. Before departing Paris in October, Mozart wrote that Legros had purchased the only copy of the score. But Leopold need not fret, as "I still have [the piece] fresh in my head, and as soon as I get home I shall write [it] again." However, no documentary evidence exists that Mozart rewrote this *Sinfonia Concertante* or that the work was performed in his lifetime. Nor is there any record of what Legros might have done with the manuscript for which he allegedly paid.

Flash forward nearly a century to 1869. After the death of Otto Jahn, a famous Mozart biographer, his executors found a manuscript with the title "*Concertante*" for four wind soloists (clarinet, oboe, bassoon and horn, but no flute) with orchestra. This document bore no composer's name and was too recent to be a Mozart original. However, stylistic features led some scholars to attribute the work to Mozart. They inferred that it was revised from the piece described in Wolfgang's 1778 letters from Paris. The work was published in 1886, although some critics remained skeptical. In 1937 with no new data, Alfred Einstein assigned the *Sinfonia Concertante for Winds* to the main body of Mozart's work with a catalog number corresponding to the 1778 stay in Paris. However, the prevailing opinion of musicologists has now swung negatively. The latest 'official' Mozart catalog classifies the piece as "utterly dubious".

Debate continues. Robert Levin of Harvard University wrote a 500-page book, *Who Wrote the Mozart Four-Wind Concertante?* (1988). He believes that someone found the solo parts of the work Mozart composed in Paris and transcribed them for modified instrumentation (adding a clarinet as the lead voice and omitting the flute). He also concludes that the orchestral parts definitely are not by Mozart and were added to the revised solo lines to generate the score eventually obtained by Jahn. In addition, attempting to reconstruct Mozart's work, Levin has published and recorded "an extraordinary new version...which supplies a remarkably different and highly imaginative orchestral accompaniment, eliminates the clarinet, and restores the solo music to Mozart's original instrumentation" (Daniel Leeson in *The Clarinet,* 1984). Some scholars accept the conclusions of Levin's book, while others do not buy them. Richard Maunder, Levin's counterpart at 'the other Cambridge' in the UK, "…fear[s] that the answer to the question posed in the title of Levin's book must be: we don't know, but the evidence suggests it wasn't Mozart." David Schroeder, in *Mozart in Revolt* (1999) goes further. Under the heading "Lies My Son Told Me," he argues that in letters home during the 1777-78 trip Wolfgang consistently attempted to placate Leopold while seeking to subvert his father's planned book and efforts to control his son's career. "To satisfy Leopold's concern [about productivity]," Schroeder states "Wolfgang periodically informed him of works in progress, sometimes breaking off short on a letter claiming the need to get back to work on a composition in question, works there is not the least shred of evidence existed or for that matter were ever started." Schroeder concludes that the *Sinfonia Concertante for Winds* falls in this category; one might call his '*The Emperor's New Clothes'* response to Levin's question.

Regardless of who actually composed it, the present work remains a showcase for the woodwind soloists in a style that, to at least some, calls Mozart to mind. "The first movement, following a somewhat portentous opening, is alive with fine tunes, one of which is bound to remind American listeners of the *Marines' Hymn* (which, however, is based on a later work written in Paris, a duet in Offenbach's *Geneviève de Brabant*). The second movement is a romantically expansive Adagio, and the finale is a remarkably ingratiating set of virtuoso variations on the bouncy theme that leads off without introduction" (Richard Freed, notes for the National Symphony Orchestra).

Bartók: *Third Piano Concerto*

I cannot conceive of music that expresses absolutely nothing.
My own idea is the brotherhood of peoples, brotherhood despite all wars and conflicts.
I try – to the best of my ability – to serve this idea in my music.

Béla Bartók

Béla Bartók is remembered as one of the finest Hungarian composers, representing the third corner of the Middle European triangle. Yet his greater legacy may be as a world citizen whose studies in ethnomusicology illuminated the richness of folk music in diverse lands and inspired his own compositions. Bartók was born in Nagyszent-miklós, a small ethnically Hungarian town now in Romania. After Gymnasium (high school) in Pozsony (now Bratislava in Slovakia), he was accepted to the Vienna Conservatory, which was touted "the sole bastion of serious musical education." However, following the lead of his older friend Ernő Dohnányi, Bartók chose instead the Royal National Hungarian Academy of Music in Budapest, where he remained from 1899-1909.

Bartók excelled as a pianist and in 1907 became the Hungarian Academy's Professor of Piano. His passion for composition was kindled initially by the Romantics Richard Wagner, Richard Strauss, and Franz Liszt. Those influences waned as Bartók sought both a novel approach to modernity and a way to express a new Hungarian nationalism. However, as noted by Bard University President Leon Botstein (*The Musical Quarterly*, 1995), Bartók wanted something distinct from the "nineteenth-century romantic allegiance to myths of a nation of Magyar nobles…Aristocratic nationalism was, to [his] generation, compromised by its accommodation with the Habsburg monarchy and…its essentially German character." Similarly, "Bartók had little use for the urban Gypsy-inspired traditions of so-called Hungarian folk music — the *style hongroise* so popular in Budapest and all over the world," which had influenced Brahms's *Hungarian Dances* and Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*.

Exposure to more authentic folk music came when Bartók heard a peasant girl, Lidi Dósa, sing in the modal style of her native Transylvania. He and Zoltán Kodály embarked on the systematic collection of such music in villages largely untouched by urban influence throughout the Carpathian Basin. "The outcome of these studies," Bartók reported, "was of decisive influence upon my work, because it freed me from the tyrannical rule of the major and minor keys. The greater part of the collected treasure, and the more valuable part, was in old ecclesiastical or old Greek modes, or based on more primitive (pentatonic) scales, and the melodies were full of most free and varied rhythmic phrases and changes of tempi, played both *rubato* and *giusto*…This…eventually led to a new conception of the chromatic scale, every tone of which came to be considered of equal value and could be used freely and independently." Bartók's scientific study of folk music continued for the rest of his life and led him in 1935 to give up his Academy professorship and join the Hungarian Academy of Science. (For samples of Bartók's field recordings, see http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/alexross/2010/01/bartoks-folk.html.) He applied his methods to broad swaths of East-Central Europe, Turkey and North Africa.

Béla Bartók, 4th from left, collecting folk music

Bartók and his wife Ditta Pásztory emigrated to the United States in 1940 because of Hungary's alliance with Nazi Germany. Columbia University in New York offered him temporary work editing a Serbo-Croation folksong collection and awarded him a Doctorate of Music, but composition lagged and his music was largely ignored in

America. In 1942 Bartók began to suffer symptoms of leukemia. Even so, a commission from Serge Koussevitzky for the Boston Symphony Orchestra enabled him to write the highly successful *Concerto for Orchestra* (1943). This launched both more performances of his work and a last wave of exceptional compositions. Aware of Bartók's medical difficulties, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) arranged for him to spend five months in Asheville, NC in the winter and spring 1943-44. He stayed at the Albemarle Inn, where the room he used still bears the brass plaque "Bartók's Retreat".

The *Third Piano Concerto* was Bartók's final completed composition, intended as a birthday gift for Ditta in October 1945, with the hope that its performance would ensure her an income stream. As described by Michael Steinberg (notes for the San Francisco Symphony), the concerto "begins gently, with the piano unwinding a ruminating melody over a quiet accompaniment…Bartók allows his fantasy to travel back to Hungary with unabashed nostalgia. There is contrasting material of lighter weight, a brief development, a recapitulation more regular than any he had written in Budapest, and a magical coda in which the music dissolves in a touching exchange between flute and piano."

The second movement, *Adagio religioso*, recalls one of the late works of Ludwig van Beethoven. Written in 1825 after the composer recovered from an illness, the slow movement of the *String Quartet in A minor*, Opus 132, is a "Sacred Hymn of Thanksgiving from a Convalescent to the Deity". Feeling stronger, with his disease partially in remission, Bartók "was ready to sing his own hymn, closely modeled on Beethoven's. The piano has the chorale, and the strings provide the connecting tissue." As Bartók often adopted folk-like modal tonality descended from Gregorian chant, so too Beethoven cast his '*Heiliger Dankgesang'* movement in the ancient Lydian mode. In a contrasting middle section Bartók adds a characteristic element of his own – "night music" featuring the twittering and rustling wings of birds, specifically, "the Baltimore oriole and the various warblers whose songs [he] had notated the previous spring in Asheville…The chorale returns in one of Bartók's most beautifully fresh reprises, the song now in the orchestra and the crescendo of rhapsodic commentary in the piano" (Steinberg).

"The cheerful main theme of the finale uses a rhythmic pattern derived from a certain type of Hungarian folksong that Bartók had discussed at length in his ethnomusicological writings. The movement is cast in rondo form, with fugal episodes that…pay homage to Bach" (Peter Laki).

Four days after writing *vége* (The End) at the bottom of the score, on September 26, 1945, Bartók passed away in a New York hospital. His apprentice Tibor Serly filled in the last 17 bars of orchestration. Former student György Sándor performed the premiere in February 1946. Ditta returned to Hungary and finally recorded the work in 1964.

Program Notes by Mark Furth, PhD © 2014

Mérida Negrete, clarinet, is originally from Texas. She holds degrees in music education from The University of Michigan and Southern Methodist University. She taught in public schools of Texas, Florida and North Carolina. Since 2002 she joined the faculty of The University of North Carolina in 2002 and serves as Lecturer in Music, Director of Undergraduate Studies in Music, and Faculty Advisor for the College of Arts and Sciences. She performs regularly with the Chapel Hill Philharmonia, the Raleigh Civic Symphony, the Triangle Wind Ensemble, and the North Carolina Chamber Players, and has played with many other groups including the North Carolina Symphony and the Durham Savoyards. One of her passions is organizing chamber music concerts with friends.

Judy Konanc, oboe, was inspired to make music by band director Jack Bigelow and taught how to by master oboe teacher Sahl Spano of Los Angeles and bassoonist Simon Kovar at the Music Academy of the West. A long-term member of the Chapel Hill Philharmonia, she also plays with the Sweet Zephyrs Woodwind Quintet and the

Ars Longa Trio of piano, flute and oboe. A retired clinical psychologist from UNC School of Medicine and private practice, Judy plays as much music as she can and continues to unravel the mysteries of reed-making.

Chris Myers began his studies on the **bassoon** while attending junior high school in Washington D.C. This is the only instrument on which he has had any formal training. With the exception of a few years in the U.S. Navy and working for the State of North Carolina, he has continued to play this woodwind in various small and large ensembles around the Triangle. He resides in Cary, North Carolina.

Garth Molyneux, French horn, earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in Music Composition from Arizona State University and his Doctorate in Music Composition from the University of Texas at Austin. He has won the ASCAP writer's award every year since 1990. He has been a member of the horn section of the Chapel Hill Philharmonia since 2006. He also sings with the UNC Men's Glee Club and with the Senior Choir at Christ the King Lutheran Church, where his wife Dr. Sally Molyneux is the Director.

Rick Lehner, French horn, earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Indiana University in Bloomington. He has taught there and is a former faculty member of The University of Florida in Gainesville. A member of the International Horn Society, he has played with the Chapel Hill Philharmonia and many other orchestras and chamber music groups in North Carolina, Indiana, and Florida. These include the Duke Medicine Orchestra, the Triangle Wind Ensemble, the Durham Community Concert Band, Brassimisso Brass Quintet, the Carolina Wind Symphony, Excalibur Brass Quintet, the Gainesville Chamber Orchestra, and the Gainesville Brass Quintet. He has also performed with the University of Florida Symphony, the Bloomington Symphony, and the Indianapolis Philharmonic.

Sandra Svoboda, French horn, holds a music education degree from Indiana University and an MBA from Elon College. She taught middle school band in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro schools, and has been teaching French horn and trumpet privately for over 30 years. She also conducts the Piedmont Youth Orchestra Wind Ensemble. Sandy owns Allegro Music Sales, Inc., which sells sheet music for brass and woodwinds. She plays with the Mimosa Winds, the Durham Savoy Opera Orchestra, the Chapel Hill Brass Ensemble, and other groups. Her 'day job' is Purchasing Officer/Budget Analyst for the Town of Carrboro.

Greg Mccallum

Pianist Greg McCallum has performed on four continents in some of the world's most prestigious concert halls. He plays a wide range of repertoire from Bach to Brubeck, and has been praised by critics for his "deeply felt, sensitive playing" (*Die Main Post*, Germany) and "consummate technical and artistic skill" (*The Spectator*, Raleigh, NC). McCallum received music degrees from the University of Maryland at College Park, the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, and the Hochschule für Musik in Würzburg, Germany. He has won many honors in competitions, including most recently being selected as a finalist in the 2010 Web Concert Hall International Competition. McCallum frequently appears on radio and television, and records for the MSR Classics label. Currently he is working on an international recording project that includes residencies abroad and documents cultural and musical evolution through the piano and its diverse repertoire. His recent release in this series, *Voyage à Paris*, explores the development of French piano music around the turn of the twentieth century. His previous release, *Southern Quilt*, documents his own American heritage. A dedicated teacher, McCallum maintains a private studio of advanced students who have won honors in regional and international piano competitions. In both his performing and teaching, McCallum has been greatly influenced by the *Feldenkrais Method*® of somatic education. For more information please visit his website, www.gregmccallum.com.