

Chapel Hill Philharmonia

Donald L. Oehler, Music Director

3:00 p.m., Sunday, February 14, 2016

Carrboro High School Auditorium

Masterworks for Orchestra, Large and Small

Overture to *Rienzi*

Richard Wagner (1813-83)

Symphony in G minor, K 550

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91)

Allegro Molto

Andante

Menuetto, Trio—Allegretto

Allegro Assai

Intermission

Boléro

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Please silence all electronic devices

In this program the Chapel Hill Philharmonia presents works for orchestra, large and small. Two works use the full classical orchestra; one of them requires unusual additional instruments. In the other work the strings are joined by only a small band of winds; no trumpets, no drums.

Wagner, Overture to *Rienzi*

Cola di Rienzi, a 14th century Italian revolutionary figure, was a man well ahead of his time. His vision to unify Italy under a newly glorious Rome presaged the *Risorgimento* movement that did unify Italy in the 19th century. But his revolution, which descended into a brutal dictatorship, was undone when the people turned against him and he was murdered by an angry mob.

Richard Wagner's first successful opera was based on the 1835 novel *Rienzi* by Edward Bulwer-Lytton — he of the infamous opening sentence starting "It was a dark and stormy night..." *Rienzi* has been called "the best opera Meyerbeer wrote" because of the influence the Parisian composer had on Wagner, musically and personally. Meyerbeer was instrumental in getting Wagner appointed director of the opera in Dresden where *Rienzi* received its premiere in 1842.

With intermissions, the original five act version of *Rienzi* lasted six hours. It would be impossible to mount that version today. The performance score burned along with the Dresden opera in the bombings of 1945. The manuscript, given as a 50th birthday present to Adolf Hitler, presumably perished with him in the Berlin bunker. (According to a boyhood friend, Hitler's reaction to seeing the opera in his late teens inspired his own ambition to rally the German speaking peoples to unity and glory.) Today there are only sporadic revivals of shorter versions of the opera,

But the overture has never lost its popularity. It begins with a single note from a trumpet, played three times, with responses from other parts of the orchestra: perhaps a distant call to arms, to the people of Rome. The introductory section continues with a solemn Wagnerian melody:



(Several decades later Wagner would recycle the first part of this melody, with somewhat different intervals, into a *Leitmotiv* associated with Brünnhilde in *Die Götterdämmerung*.)

In the main section that follows a triumphant march theme is introduced as the second subject. The themes are developed, reprised and combined, and the overture ends in typical grand opera fashion in blazing D major. There is no hint of Rienzi's eventual rejection and downfall.

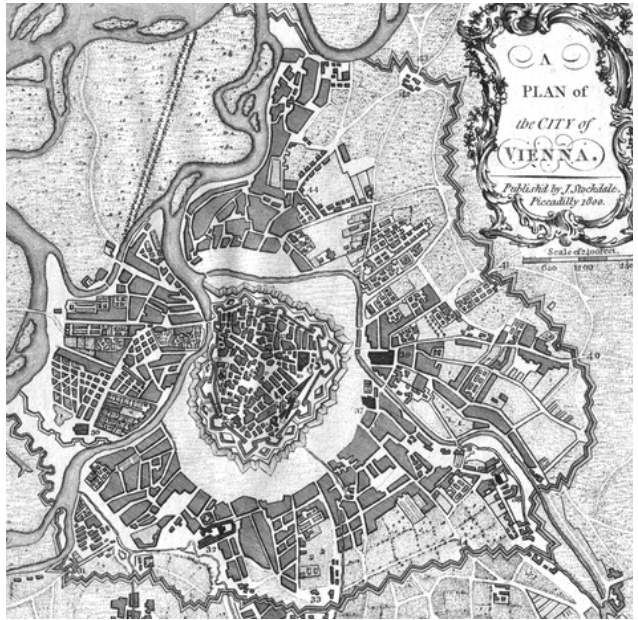
Mozart, Symphony in G Minor, K 550

G minor! Mozart's only minor mode symphonies are both in that key. What difference does the choice of key make? First, those who hear music in their heads, as Mozart did, hear it in particular keys; Second, for each composer, keys and emotional moods often fit together. What about G

minor and Mozart? He set many works in that key. For example: Pamina's aria lamenting lost love (*Ach, ich fühl's*) in *Die Zauberflöte*; a piano quartet and string quintet, in each of which the first movement has a cast of sadness. One can surmise that the key connoted somber feelings for him.

On the other hand, the G minor symphony was written in the summer of 1788 along with two others: K 543 in E flat and K 551 In C ("Jupiter"). Mozart's financial situation had become sour, perhaps reason for sadness, but the other works hardly reflect any of that.

Mozart wrote only six of his symphonies after settling in Vienna in 1782. The first three were for occasions outside Vienna. Why did he write the last three, all at once? There are hints that he was hoping for another series of subscription concerts, like those for his piano concertos; if so, the project failed. There are suggestions that he introduced the works in a new casino in central Vienna, but there is no record of any performances. Was he just inspired to write three symphonies, for no external reason? Very unlikely..



Vienna in 1800, showing the walled city surrounded by empty glacis. In 1787 Mozart moved from the center of the city to a working class suburb toward the top of the map.

Although we can't identify any performances that Mozart heard, he revised the score of the G minor symphony, adding clarinet parts, likely done for a performance, possibly involving his clarinetist friend Anton Stadler. A symphony by Mozart was performed in a concert directed by Salieri in 1791 with Stadler in the orchestra. But we don't know which symphony (K 543 also uses clarinets).

The opening of the G minor symphony is remarkable in the context of its time. Divided violas start a gentle rocking accompaniment and violins in octaves enter softly with a plaintive 16 bar melody:

Molto Allegro

Violins

Violas

p

The falling half step three note pattern that begins this melody dominates the whole movement. The second theme's many falling half steps, like sighs, create a wistful impression even though the

If one looks in detail at this one sees every note in the chromatic scale except G, the key note. Writers in the 20th century jumped on this as an early anticipation of Schoenberg's 12 tone row system of composition. But one can also see it as simply a device, like chords accompanying an operatic recitative, to make a rapid transition to D minor, where the main theme resumes the flight. The extensive development makes much use of the Mannheim rocket theme. As in the first movement, the second subject's recapitulation appearance in G minor creates a chill of foreboding. But then the whole orchestra bursts in and the flight takes off again — only to come to a rather sudden end less than a minute later. One is left wanting more, and probably the composer realized it, because he directed that the second half of the movement, beginning with the development, be repeated. This time the ending is more completely satisfying.

Ravel, *Boléro*

The first recording I owned was of this piece. LPs were new on the market, and classical music was listened to with some enjoyment by most high school kids; Khatchaturian's *Sabre Dance* even made it to the Hit Parade. One of the favorites in my group of friends was *Boléro*.

It had been a smash hit from the start. The Paris premiere included a ballet featuring Ida Rubinstein, who had asked Maurice Ravel to write something for her new company. The ballet was greeted kindly, but the music brought down the house.



Ravel, Ida Rubinstein and her company at the premiere of *Boléro*

That was 1928, shortly before Ravel fell ill and largely stopped composing. In 1929 *Boléro* was introduced to America by the NY Philharmonic, conducted by Toscanini; again the reception was

tumultuous. When that orchestra and conductor visited Paris during their European tour the next year, they performed the work with the composer in the audience. Which leads to a story.

The tempo Toscanini used was a good deal faster than Ravel intended, and when Toscanini motioned to Ravel to stand and acknowledge the ovation he refused. According to witnesses there followed a scene backstage when Ravel met the conductor. "It was too fast," Ravel said. Toscanini replied defensively "It's the only way to save the work." "Then don't play it!"

To this day conductors disagree about the tempo. Ravel said it should last 17 minutes. One can find on YouTube performances running from 14 to 19 minutes. In principle there is only one tempo, a slow 3/4, but some conductors let the tempo increase somewhat with the volume level.

Besides the original ballet, there have been many uses of *Boléro* in contexts other than orchestra concerts. The ice dancing team Torvill and Dean won the gold medal in the 1984 Olympics with a routine using an abridgment of the music. Some may recall the movie *10*, in which the beautiful Bo Derek asks Dudley Moore, "Have you ever done it to *Boléro*?" (He tries, with comic results.)

What about the music itself? Ravel came to regard it with some disdain, saying "I've written only one masterpiece, *Boléro*, and it contains no music." Indeed, it contains very little of the usual elements of Western music: variety of themes, development, transitions, new keys, etc. There are just two 16 bar melodies, played over an endlessly repeated two-bar rhythm (set at the start by the snare drum). The first melody (A) is a lovely sinuous Spanish style song in C major. The second (B) answers in the Phrygian mode, which sounds much like American blues. Until near the end the scheme is monotonously simple: AA, then BB, then do it again.

Two things make the scheme work. The never-varying background rhythm hypnotizes the listener, like the persistent drum off-beats in rock music. As the work progresses the instruments playing this rhythm vary and become more numerous, so the beat grows more complex and more insistent.

Then there are the many changes in the instruments playing the melodies. At first it is a single flute, playing A very softly. Then a single clarinet. The counter-melody B is introduced by a single bassoon. But as the repetitions pile up the forces increase in volume and strength. Ravel calls on the whole panoply of classical woodwinds, plus tenor and soprano saxophones. One statement of theme A is given to the bizarre combination of horn, two piccolos and celesta. The jazziest version of theme B is played by a solo trombone, which can do blues slides like no other instrument. The exquisite ear of Ravel, perhaps the greatest master of orchestral color of all time, is in full evidence.

After waiting their turn for a long time, the violins finally play the melodies, the second time in close harmony, like the Andrews Sisters. Just before the end Ravel startles the listener by a sudden shift to E major, but it only lasts eight measures. Four measures with trombones sliding almost obscenely, a final collapsing chord, and it's over.

info@twigliving.com

*Eco-friendly
Family Boutique*

99 S. Elliott Rd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
919-929-8944
www.twigliving.com



KITCHEN

BEER & WINE

Thank you for voting us the best French food of
Chapel Hill! – 2014 Chapel Hill Magazine

764 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd (919) 597-8167
Chapel Hill, NC
www.kitchenchapel hill.com



116 W. Main Street Carrboro, NC
919.968.4411
contact@yourmusicloft.com
Jim Dennis, Owner
OPEN 361 Days a Year

The
Violin & Fiddle Shop
~ *Violins Hand Crafted in North Carolina* ~

**New and Vintage Violins, Violas, Cellos
Stringed Instrument Repair & Restoration
Bow Rehairing • Rentals**

78 Hillsboro St. 919-444-4282
Pittsboro, NC www.sgmviolins.com



Deborah Davis
Cellist - Cello Teacher

484-866-0812 cell phone
984-234-0053 home phone
daviscellostudio@gmail.com

Davis Cello Studio
1413 Wildwood Dr.
Chapel Hill, NC 27517



EST. 1923
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

Mon - Fri: 7:00 am - 7:30 pm 159 E Franklin Street
Sat: 7:00 am - 4:30 pm 919 - 942 - 5161
Sun: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm



Chapel Hill-Carrboro's
News, Talk & Tar Heels Station

chapelboro.com
MORE OF WHAT YOU LIVE HERE FOR

Chapel Hill Philharmonia

Music Director Donald L. Oehler	Eric Ward Yuzixuan (Alice) Zhu Brigitte Zimmerman	Viola Katherine Stalberg* Lydia Allen Jennifer Arnold Kalman Bland Hannah Bolinger Alice Churukian Benjamin Filene Catherine Fowler Linda Frankel Lauren Johnson Aubrey Keisel Colleen Kellenberger Sally Molyneaux Christopher Scoville William Slechta Pat Tennis Stephanie Zimmerman	Rosalind V. Goodwin Julie Grubbs Janet Hadler Holly Hall Charlotte Larson Katie Newhall Jeffrey Rossman Courtney Thompson Dorothy Wright	Clarinet Merida Negrete* Richard Dryer Steve Furs Saxophone Mary Huntimer Ellen Horner	Trombone Frank Jones* Chase Baitly Steve Magnusen
Violin I Mark Furth* <i>Concertmaster</i> Anastasia Barkett* <i>Associate Concert master</i> Veronica Allen Regina Black Neil Chungfat Aurelia D'Antonio Ana-Laura Diaz Anna Geyer Gina Guidarelli Emma Griffith Sonia Hsieh Karen Lu Laura Mendelsohn Michael Peach Jane Scarlett Susan Strobel Pu Wang	Violin II Lawrence Evans* Elizabeth Johnson* Tom Beale Maren Cannon Nancy Covey Eli Danson Renu Gharpure Polly Stage Harris Rose Keith Lindsay Lambe Rebecca Lee Sarah Marks Anne Pusey Theresa Richards Harriet Solomon Clare Strayhorn Michelle Villasmil Margaret Vimmerstedt Debby Wechsler Irene Nathan Zipper	Violoncello Dick Clark* Sevan Abashian Karen Daniels Ray Falk Len Gettes	Double Bass Jim Baird* Allison Portnow Dan Thune Solomon Weiner Flute/Piccolo Denise Bevington* Pat Pukkila Mary Sturgeon Oboe Judy Konanc* John Konanc Nancy Wilson	Bassoon Paul Verderber* Clain Anderson French Horn Sandy Svoboda* Tobin Fowler Rob Kathner Rick Lehner Garth Molyneux Adams Wofford Trumpet Doug Zabor* Jim Doherty Aric Madayag Andrew Siemen	Tuba Carl Jones Ted Bissette Tympani/ Percussion Roger Halchin* Ed Logue Rosendo Pena Roz Rodman Alice Tien Harp Leigh Stringfellow Librarians Alice Churukian William Slechta * section principal

Support the Chapel Hill Philharmonia

The Chapel Hill Philharmonia relies on donations to fund its operations. We very much need and value your support. To donate by mail: please use the envelope enclosed in this program or send your check to CHP, PO Box 2853, Chapel Hill, NC 27515. To donate online: visit www.chapelhillphilharmonia.org. All donations are tax deductible.

Please patronize our advertisers – and tell them you saw their ads in this program! The Philharmonia is now scheduling advertisers for next season. For more information, please email adsphilharmonia@gmail.com.

Thank you to the Strowd Roses Foundation for their grant this year in support of the Chapel Hill Philharmonia. A full list of CHP donors will be published in the May concert program



CHMTA
Chapel Hill Music Teachers Association

Your Source for qualified, experienced, private music teachers in Chapel Hill

Whether you are in elementary, middle or high school (or even an adult) and want to learn to play an instrument, the Chapel Hill Music Teachers Association is your source for finding qualified, experienced private music teachers. All of our teachers are members of the NC Music Teachers Association and the Music Teachers National Association.

Visit www.chmta.org to browse our teacher directory.



Plan to attend our next concert.

May 1, 2016 at 7:30 pm

East Chapel Hill High School Auditorium

J Strauss II – Die Fledermaus Overture
Beethoven – Piano Concerto No. 3 in c minor
Aram Lindroth, Concerto Competition Winner
Schumann – 'Rhenish' Symphony, No. 3

The Philharmonia has open rehearsals at 9:00 am the Saturday before each concert. Children are welcome.

Sign up at www.chapelhillphilharmonia.org or after the concert for emails about CHP concerts and summer Chamber Players performances.