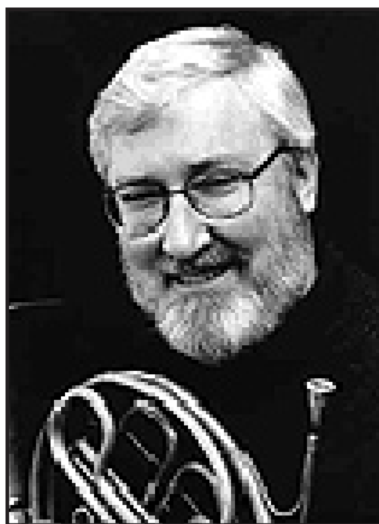
Horn soloist **Kurt Kellan** was born and raised in Chicago and attended Indiana University, where he studied with Philip Farkas. While at Indiana, he was principal horn with the Indiana Philharmonic Orchestra and Indiana Wind Ensemble. He has performed in orchestras for the Joffrey Ballet, New York City Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre, and for the Lyric Opera of Chicago. In 1973 he became Second Horn with the Milwaukee Symphony, and in 1976 Principal Horn of the Regina Symphony. From 1979-2000 Kellan served as Principal Horn with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. He has been guest first horn for the Indianapolis Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Toronto Symphony, and the Vancouver CBC Orchestra. Kellan continues to do solo performances and has frequently been heard as a soloist with the CBC.



Long in demand as a music teacher, Kellan taught at the University of Calgary from 1982-2000, Mount Royal College from 1986-1999, and the University of Regina from 1976-1979. Presently, he is Associate Professor in the School of Music, University of Victoria, British Columbia. Kellan also has taught in North Carolina, participating annually as a coach in the Chapel Hill Chamber Music Workshop, directed by the CH Philharmonia Music Director Donald L. Oehler.

Chapel Hill Philharmonia

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Kim Ashley
Regina Black
Cary Eddy
Edith Gettes
Judy Jordan
Katharine Liang
David O'Brien
Michael Peach
Kamakshi Rao
William Slechta
Susan Strobel

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Elizabeth Johnson*
Tom Anderson
Tom Beale
Celina Charles
Cheryl Harward
Lindsay Lambe
Heather Morgan
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Sally Rohrdanz
Laura Rusche
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Harriet Solomon
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Margaret Vimmerstedt
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Jennifer Arnold
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Norton Dickman
Benjamin Filene
Catherine Fowler
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Pamela Klein
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Peggy Sauerwald
Pat Tennis

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Jim Dietz
Len Gettes
Janet Hadler
Keith Hayes
Megan Katsaounis
Courtney McAllister
Blair Reeves
Jessica Ryan
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Jim Baird*
Dan Thune

Flute
Denise Bevington*
Pat Pukkila
Mary Sturgeon

Piccolo
Mary Sturgeon

Oboe
Judy Konanc*
John Konanc

English Horn
John Konanc

Bassoon
Chris Myers*
Colette Neish

Clarinet
Merida Negrete*
Wayne Carlson
Steve Furs

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Katrina Grigsby
Garth Molyneux
Sandy Svoboda
Adams Wofford

Trumpet
Dave Goodman*
Kohta Ikegami
Melissa Kotacka
David Marable

Trombone
Mark Johnson*
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Chapel Hill Philharmonia

Hill Hall — University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

7:30 pm December 14, 2008

Donald L. Oehler, Music Director

"Classical Cornucopia"

Ludwig van Beethoven **(1770 - 1827)**

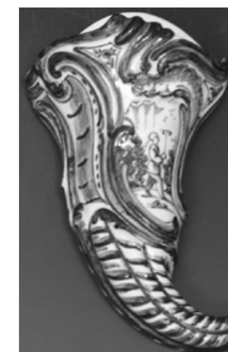
Overture to Goethe's Tragedy "Egmont", Op. 84

Wolfgang Amadé Mozart **(1756 - 1791)**

Horn Concerto No. 3 in E-flat, K. 477

Allegro
Romanze: Larghetto
Allegro

Kurt Kellan, French horn



Intermission

Antonin Dvorák **(1841 - 1904)**

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95, "From the New World"

Adagio – Allegro molto
Largo
Scherzo: Molto vivace
Allegro con fuoco

Classical Cornucopia

The cornucopia, a curved goat's horn overflowing with fruit and ears of grain, symbolizes today's program in at least two ways. Literally, its shape prefigures the elegant brass sweep of the French horn, the solo instrument in the concerto by **Wolfgang Amadé Mozart** performed by guest artist **Kurt Kellan**. The 'horn of plenty' also represents abundance – the musical richness of the heritage of Mozart, **Ludwig van Beethoven**, and **Antonin Dvořák**. Without stretching too far, it also may stand for the wealth of ideals and hope embodied in Dvořák's "Symphony from the New World."

Beethoven accepted financial support from the nobility of the Austrian empire, but he was a spiritual democrat. In 1810, a year after Vienna surrendered to Napoleon Bonaparte's fierce artillery bombardment, the composer completed incidental music for a revival of the tragedy **Egmont** by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, first staged in 1787. The play reflects the author's and composer's loathing of tyrants and their identification with martyrs to the cause of liberty. The protagonist of the drama is an actual historical figure, the 16th century Count Lamoral van Egmont. A champion of freedom (and, like Beethoven, of Flemish descent), Egmont resists the Spanish occupation of the Netherlands and the persecution of Protestants by the Inquisition. A brutal Spanish Governor-General, the Duke of Alva, imprisons Egmont and the infamous 'Blood Council' orders him beheaded. Egmont's lover Klärchen pleads for his life and seeks to mobilize the cautious burghers with a passion reminiscent of Joan of Arc: "Come! I will march in your midst! — As a waving banner, though weaponless, leads on a gallant army of warriors, so shall my spirit hover, like a flame, over your ranks, while love and courage shall unite the dispersed and wavering multitude into a terrible host." She fails and expires, but her heroism reinforces Egmont's own. As an apparition of Klärchen bathes him in light, Egmont declaims, "And now, from this dungeon I shall go forth, to meet a glorious death; I die for freedom, for whose cause I have lived and fought, and for whom I now offer myself up a sorrowing sacrifice." Per Goethe's instructions, a "Symphony of Victory" follows the hero's last words. The audience knows that Egmont's martyrdom will ignite a people's rebellion that finally overthrows the Spanish tyranny over the Netherlands — a coded reference to the opposition to French occupation. In the **Overture** to Goethe's drama, Beethoven conveys its sweep: oppression, resistance, and the hero's death, marked by soft, doleful chords, followed by the gathering national uprising and its triumphant conclusion.

The **Egmont Overture** was one of many works in which Beethoven elevated to Olympian heights the concepts of liberty, resistance to tyranny or dark fate, and universal brotherhood — consider the 3rd (*Eroica*) and 5th Symphonies, the poorly named "Emperor" Piano Concerto (in the words of pianist Alfred Brendel, "a noble vision of freedom"), the opera *Fidelio*, and the 9th Symphony with its setting of Schiller's "Ode to Joy."

As a man of the Enlightenment, **Mozart**, too, subscribed to principles of reason, equality and brotherhood. However, his espousal of these values rarely evinces Beethoven's fervor for revolutionary change. Rather, Mozart shows a genius in illuminating simpler everyday concerns, and thereby manages to raise humble humanity to the highest peaks. This is exemplified by the nobility Mozart conveys to the valet Figaro and maid

Ye who love the haunts of Nature,
Love the sunshine of the meadow,
Love the shadow of the forest,
Love the wind among the branches...
Ye who love a nation's legends,
Love the ballads of a people...
Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature...

Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* resonated with Dvořák

Hiawatha grieving at the death of Minnehaha by Frederic Remington

slow *Largo*, with its famous English horn solo (later set to words as a spiritual, "Going Home"), and the following *Scherzo* are "at least in part, tone poems based on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*." Dvořák intended these to serve as groundwork for larger works to follow, probably an opera cycle.

Longfellow published his epic in 1855, a year after leaving the Harvard faculty to focus on poetry. It derived from Ojibway Indian legends. Although often parodied for its repetitive meter, based on Finland's *Kalevala*, the poem was immensely popular. Dvořák (who read it in translation) was not alone in responding to the image of the 'noble savage' and the sad story, as Hiawatha finds love with Minnehaha then loses her in an icy famine.

Beckerman provides evidence that the 9th Symphony's *Largo* movement portrays "The Wooing of Minnehaha", and that it reflects the composer's awe at the sheer vastness of the landscape through which the young couple had to travel to reach Hiawatha's distant village. Dvořák's letters indicate that he found the enormous spaces in the American heartland deeply unsettling: "You don't meet a soul (here they ride only on horseback) and you are glad to see the huge herds of cattle in the woods and meadows which, summer and winter, are out to pasture in the broad fields.... And so it is very 'wild' here, and sometimes very sad – sad to despair." The *Largo* also may allude to the later grief-filled episode of Minnehaha's death.

The ensuing *Scherzo,* in Dvořák's words, "was suggested by the [following] scene at the [wedding] feast in *Hiawatha* where the Indians dance, and is also an essay I made in the direction of imparting the local color of Indian character to music." Some listeners imagine tom-toms in the rhythmic pulse. The dancer in the *Scherzo* is identified as the magician Pau-Puk-Keewis, an adversary to Hiawatha, used by Longfellow as an Antichrist figure. Furthermore, it can be argued that the Symphony's "finale, with its propulsive triplets, matches Pau-Puk-Keewis's headlong flight from Hiawatha, who finally kills him." Longfellow shows his biases further, as the poem ends with the arrival of a Christian missionary to convert the tribe members. Hiawatha departs alone.

How did Dvořák transform the noble, albeit outdated, sensibility of Longfellow's poem to a portrayal of the New World that, even with sad moments, infuses contemporary audiences with a particularly American sense of optimism? "The key," says Beckerman, "may lie in [Dvořák's] fondness for trains and pigeons." Rather than "a sign of his childlike simplicity," it showed that this humble man from a provincial background had a universalist outlook. He desired to "travel, crisscrossing invisible lines of passage, forging connections with distant realms," and was willing "to...network, both in his imagination and in reality." "Today," Beckerman concludes, "when society seems threatened by a massive balkanization on the basis of race, ethnic group, gender, religion and class, we should perhaps keep Dvořák in mind....he was speaking for humanity...and beautifully, too."

– Mark Furth

Suzanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*. The celebration of the common man shows, likewise, in the heroism of the comic bird catcher Papageno, ostensibly a cowardly simpleton, in *The Magic Flute.* Ironically, it is Papageno, not Prince Tamino, who slays a dragon and rescues the kidnapped Princess Pamina.

In this spirit we may understand how the composer could inscribe a French horn concerto written for Joseph Leutgeb with the devastating dedication: "Wolfgang Amadé Mozart takes pity on Leutgeb the ass, ox, and fool." This "ass" was, in fact, a beloved friend of the Mozart family, and a splendid musician. Mozart composed for him four concertos and a quintet for horn and strings, which to this day rank among the best works for the instrument. Leutgeb (1732 – 1811) was a contemporary of Joseph Haydn, and Wolfgang's senior by a quarter century. A popular soloist in Vienna in the 1760s, Leutgeb later moved to Salzburg and became a colleague of Leopold Mozart and, with time, his astonishing son, as members of the court orchestra of the ruling Archbishop. A childhood letter from Wolfgang already indicates a fondness for Leutgeb. The horn player, appreciated as a soloist in Europe's major cities, accompanied the Mozarts in a tour of Italy in 1773. Leutgeb returned to Vienna in 1777, helped by money borrowed from Leopold to become established in "a little snail-shell of a place" where he assisted his father-in-law selling cheese. When Wolfgang, bridling at the provincialism of Salzburg and the authoritarianism of the Archbishop, escaped to Vienna in 1781, he renewed a life-long friendship with Leutgeb and began to compose pieces for him.

The **Concerto No. 3 in E-flat major for Horn and Orchestra, K. 447** probably was written in 1783-4. The work, in three movements, is both graceful and harmonically advanced. Mozart uses clarinets and bassoons to impart a mellow, velvety tonal coloring. The first movement is in sonata form. Musicologist Michael Steinberg cites its development as the "boldest flight of poetry… [beginning] in dreamily remote D-flat major, making [its] way back to the home key by way of a succession of magic modulations..." In Mozart's time the French horn lacked valves (introduced around 1820), and resembled the ancestral hunting horn. On such 'natural' horns only a limited series of pitches in a related harmonic series could be produced, by varying the lip tension. Changes of key generally were accomplished by inserting tubing segments (crooks) of varying length, a clumsy process. Leutgeb was one of the first artists to fill in the missing notes in the scale, and even to modulate between keys, by inserting his hand into the horn's bell to vary the length of the resonating air column. Accurate performance of the opening movement of Mozart's concerto, therefore, represented a true *tour de force*.

Natural (valveless) horn, ca 1760

The middle movement, a *Romance* reminiscent of a vocal aria, showcases the horn's warm tone. The finale, a brisk *Rondo* in 6/8 time, evokes the hunting horns from which the concert instrument evolved. (The similarly spirited 'chase' movement of Mozart's Horn Concerto No. 4, K. 495, inspired the British comedy team Flanders and Swann to create lyrics: "I once had a whim and I had to obey it,/ To buy a French horn in a second-hand shop./ I polished it up and I started to play it, / In spite of the neighbours who begged me to stop...") In a clever touch Mozart brings back the main theme of the *Romance* as one of the *Rondo's* sparkling iterations.

Superficially, **Antonin Dvořák** seems more akin to the down-to-earth Leutgeb than to the musical giants Mozart and Beethoven. He was born in 1841 into the family of a butcher and innkeeper in a small Bohemian village 25 km from Prague, in the Austrian Empire (now the Czech Republic). Dvořák received little formal training, but as a teenager bootstrapped his musical education. He eventually spent three years at the Organ School in Prague, then worked as a violist in the Prague National Theater orchestra. For 7 years the conductor was Bedrich Smetana, Bohemia's leading composer, and a role model for Dvořák. When his cantata *Hymnus* ("The Heirs of the White Mountain") achieved recognition in 1873, Dvořák quit the orchestra to compose full time. Johannes Brahms, a juror for state competitions, recognized his talent and championed his work. Dvořák's use of folk material was appealing, and he gained popularity at home and abroad, notably in England. In 1891 he received an honorary Doctorate of Music from Cambridge University. In the same year he was appointed Professor at the Prague Conservatory. A homebody (his wife Anna bore 9 children) who enjoyed simple pleasures (beer, train cars and locomotive engines, and breeding pigeons), and a Czech nationalist, Dvořák withstood pressure from Brahms and others to take a more prestigious position in a German conservatory in Vienna.

Dvořák (pigeon and train lover) caricatured by Ralph Steadman

However, in September 1892 a remarkable opportunity induced Dvořák to move, not to the imperial capital, but across the Atlantic Ocean. Jeannette Thurber, a wealthy philanthropist, offered the composer a 15-fold pay increase to become director of a new National Conservatory in New York City. Beyond the salary, which guaranteed lifetime security, Dvořák rose to the unique challenge. Thurber saw that by marshaling indigenous sources Dvořák had enhanced his homeland's musical identity. The Conservatory's goal was to achieve a comparable end in America. As Dvořák expert Michael Beckerman (University of California at Santa Barbara) puts it, "He was a master chef who had cooked up Bohemian music. Now they wanted him to cook up American music to a similar recipe."

Dvořák embraced the charge and pondered the central question, what is American? Descended from peasant stock and a member of an ethnic minority, the composer's fundamental instincts were egalitarian. The National Conservatory admitted students of all races and social classes. Dvořák reached out, embracing music he had never heard before, searching for national roots. A statement attributed to him in the *New York Herald* drew strong responses, both positive and negative: "In the Negro melodies of America I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music." It now appears that a zealous yellow journalist manufactured this quote. Nevertheless, Dvořák was certainly influenced by his excellent black students, such as Henry Burleigh who exposed him to spirituals. Dvořák also sought out Native American music, particularly during travels from his summer base in Spillville, Iowa, a Czech settlement.

115 years ago, almost to the day, in a keenly anticipated concert in New York's Carnegie Hall, Dvořák unveiled the first fruit of his American explorations – his "**Symphony from the New World**." The work was applauded wildly, and remains popular world-wide. Then debate began about its sources. *New York Times* critic W.J. Henderson, and many since, perceived a strong African-American thread linked to the sad history of our country's 'peculiar institution': "Out of the heart of this slavery arose the spontaneous musical utterance of a people. That folk-music struck an answering note in the American heart. If those songs are not national, then there is no such thing as national music." Some suggest this same thread extends forward to 20th century American music of Aaron Copland, George Gershwin and Duke Ellington. Others find that, beyond a brief hint in the first movement of "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" played by the flute, connections to specific spirituals or blues are far from obvious. They cite the music, and statements from the composer, to suggest that the folk elements in Dvořák's **Symphony No. 9**, like those in works he wrote in Europe, are quintessentially Czech.

Pressured for comment by reporters, Dvořák gave a clue that now has been worked out in detail by Michael Beckerman. This musicologist takes it as "indisputable fact" that the Symphony's two middle movements, the