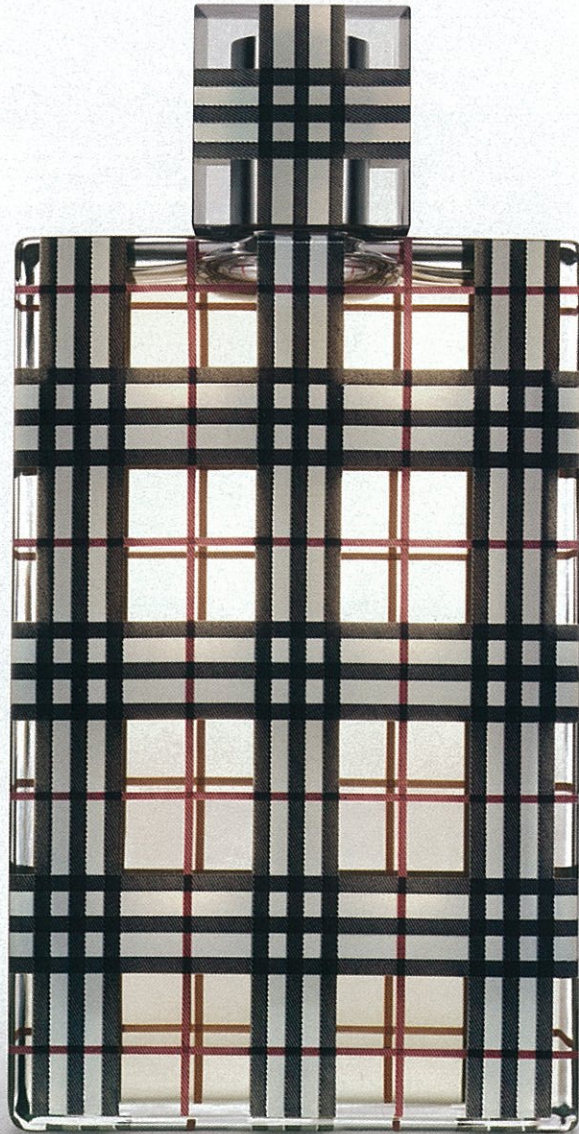


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CARNEGIE HALL presents

Saturday, December 24, 2005, at 7 PM
Isaac Stern Auditorium

NEW YORK STRING ORCHESTRA

JAIME LAREDO, *Conductor*
JONATHAN BISS, *Piano*

-
- WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791) Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786)
- Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467 (1785)
I. Allegro maestoso
II. Andante
III. Allegro vivace assai
JONATHAN BISS, *Piano*
- Serenade in D Major, K. 320, "Posthorn" (1779)
I. Adagio maestoso—Allegro con spirito
II. Menuetto
III. Concertante: Allegro, ma non troppo
IV. Andantino
V. Menuetto—Trio I—Trio II
VI. Finale: Presto

This concert will be performed without intermission.

This concert is made possible, in part, by an endowment fund for young artists established by Stella and Robert Jones.

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New School Concerts expresses sincere gratitude to Mr. Biss for his participation in this concert.

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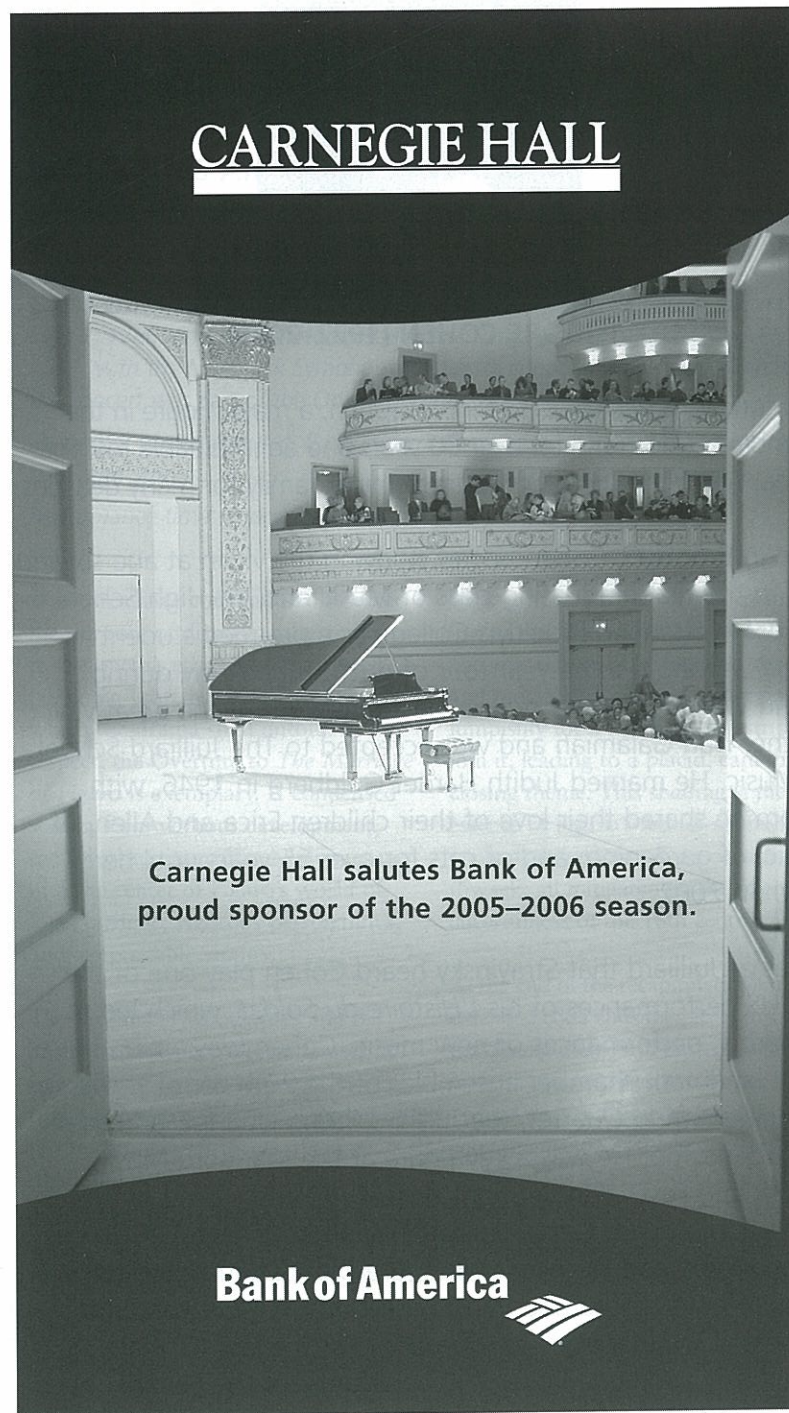
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ISIDORE COHEN (1922–2005)

This concert is dedicated to Isidore Cohen, a major figure in the chamber music world for over 50 years and an invaluable member of the New York String Orchestra Seminar family for many decades.

Born in Brooklyn, Cohen began studying the violin at age six and was in the first graduating class of Music and Art High School in 1940. He attended Brooklyn College as a pre-med student before serving a three-year tour of duty in the Army during World War II. Upon his return, he auditioned for the great violin teacher Ivan Galamian and was accepted to The Juilliard School of Music. He married Judith Harriet Goldberg in 1946, with whom he shared their love of their children Erica and Allen, of music, of gardening, and of cats for over 55 years until her death in 2002.

It was at Juilliard that Stravinsky heard Cohen play one of the first US performances of his *L'Histoire du Soldat*, which led to numerous performances of new music. Cohen was a member of three landmark chamber ensembles of the 20th century: the Schneider String Quartet, the Juilliard String Quartet, and the Beaux Arts Trio. He was a key figure at the Marlboro Music School and Festival in Vermont since 1966 and served on the faculties of Aspen, Curtis, Juilliard, Mannes, Princeton, SUNY Stony Brook, and, in recent years, the Manhattan School of Music. He was a chamber music coach at the New York String Orchestra Seminar since its inception. For the last 13 years, he generously auditioned over 250 applicants for the Seminar each year in cities across the country.

Notes ON THE PROGRAM

BY CODY FRANCHETTI

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria; died December 5, 1791, in Vienna.

Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*

Completed in 1786, *The Marriage of Figaro* was first performed in Vienna on May 1, 1786, and the Overture received its Carnegie Hall premiere on May 7, 1891, with the New York Symphony Orchestra conducted by Walter Damrosch; the concert was part of the Opening Week Music Festival.

Scoring: 2 oboes, 2 flutes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Performance time: approximately 4 minutes.

Overtures have conventionally served the purpose of disposing the audience to the opera's ethos—of effectively “opening” the theatrical vista in which the drama shall unfold. In this respect, the Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* is exemplary. A condensed sonata form without development, the Overture immediately plunges us into the center of Figaro's world of love, intrigue, vigorous personalities, and irrepressible vitality.

The prominent woodwinds and the motivic sparkle are idiomatic uses of *opera buffa*; but the setting is entirely original. Mozart does not limit himself to the spirited expedients of comic opera but achieves instead an immediacy foreign to any previous work: sinewy figurations and unexpected turns abound. After the second theme,

for example, a rising unison melodic line in the first violins has a sudden chromatic twist. The bassoon repeats and mocks the figuration, carrying on lumpishly for a few bars; the strings join it, leading to a placid, cantabile closing theme. This shading is the essence of Figaro's world—a momentarily darkened mood, an occasional thwack, all mitigated by the relentless cheerfulness of the 18th century.

At the end of the recapitulation, an extended coda ends the piece. Just as the closing theme is repeated, the first violins return to the soft murmur that opened the Overture; the second violins enter in a canon at the lower third; then the bassoons join in rising thirds; the oboes and horns finally sound too, and crown the exciting crescendo, bringing the Overture to a rousing close.

Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467

Composed in 1785, the *Piano Concerto No. 21* received its Carnegie Hall premiere on January 13, 1927, with pianist Walter Giesecking and the New York Symphony Orchestra conducted by Otto Klemperer.

Scoring: solo piano, flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Performance time: approximately 28 minutes.

In the introductions to his editions of Mozart's piano concertos, Friedrich Blume attempted a comprehensive view by describing their chronology as the disappearance of musical conventionalism in favor of unbridled inspiration. In his view, the succession of Mozart's works is seen as a gradual path, from polite entertainment to an absolutely new concentration of form and individuality.

But Mozart's piano concertos are not a journey from stimulating discourse to poetry: they are both at once. This miraculous coexistence is the key to Mozart's protean genius. Mozart was aware of the ambivalence of his music's appeal, and his letters reveal his efforts to fulfill the requirements of society music as well as his own. This might well explain Mozart's matchless ease with the concerto form. In fact, the contrast between a single voice and the orchestra, which is the principal dramatic property of the concerto, is analogous to Mozart's own struggle for popularity and personal expression.

The Concerto in C Major, K. 467, is emblematic of the dual attraction of Mozart's music; it is frivolous and forceful, extemporizing and meditated, prodigal and parsimonious.

The first movement's orchestral exposition has the character of a brilliant march. It follows the rather usual pattern of presenting two themes in the tonic, but after a fanfare-like conclusion, it modulates to G major; the piano enters on the dominant in a protracted cadenza. This is Mozart's only concerto that employs a solo cadenza at its entry (a device later dramatized by Beethoven at the beginning of the "Emperor" Concerto). After the solo reaches the tonic, it engages in at least seven distinguishable themes. This astonishing thematic wealth must not be mistaken for facile inventiveness. Mozart astounds us with complex figurations, which spring up from each other ineffably. Furthermore, by making an emphatic modulation to G minor before reaching the expected second theme in G major, Mozart polarizes the tonic/dominant opposition conspicuously.

This is one of Mozart's most taxing concertos; it possesses some of the most intricate passagework Mozart ever wrote for the keyboard. There are no known original cadenzas. The *Andante* is perhaps Mozart's most famous second movement. It is so well known that it has unfortunately acquired a reputation for being

hackneyed; but it is extremely individualized, despite its exterior plasticity and accessible beauty. In a revealing analysis Carl Schachter has shown this movement's idiosyncratic tonal design and form: through a combination of sophisticated rhythmic, harmonic, and motivic devices, Mozart achieves a sense of "constant flow despite phrasal and sectional articulations" effectively making of a series of sectionalized melodies an unending lyrical utterance.

The third movement is in rondo form. Its theme has a rhythmic ambiguity

that is exploited by employing the theme both as a downbeat and an upbeat. This movement is more economical than the preceding ones—all its motives being derived from the A theme. The orchestral sections are disengaged here, more than in other movements; the sonority is spacious. The B section is an interplay between the oboe and the bassoon, which both contradict and conspire with each other humorously. The deftly constructed movement has a short cadenza before a loud *tutti* interrupts the piano's running final scales with sudden force.

Serenade in D Major, K. 320, "Posthorn"

Composed in 1779, the "Posthorn" Serenade received its Carnegie Hall premiere on October 2, 1930, with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Erich Kleiber.

Scoring: 2 flutes (including piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, posthorn, timpani, and strings.

Performance time: approximately 40 minutes.

Mozart's "Posthorn" Serenade was commissioned by the University of Salzburg as "Finalmusik"—that is, a piece celebrating the end of the academic year. Mozart completed it on August 3, 1779; it was played presumably shortly thereafter. Serenades were a very popular form of entertainment in Salzburg; Mozart's father, Leopold, wrote at least 30 of them. The fact that none survive shows that serenades were considered little more than entertainment: they were played outdoors in the evening. Usually, serenades consisted of a first movement in sonata allegro form, two slow movements, a couple of minuets and trios, and an allegro or presto finale. The number of

movements could vary anywhere from five to ten.

The "Posthorn" Serenade derives its nickname from the use of a horn called "Corno di Posta" in the second trio of the sixth movement. Though this piece is more conventional than many of Mozart's other works, its inventiveness is still surprising, especially in the third and fourth movements (*Andante grazioso* and *Rondeau*). These, in fact, are titled "concertante" and were also performed separately by Mozart in Vienna in 1783. They are in the vein of polite entertainment like his Rondo for Piano and Orchestra, K. 382. The *Andante* is a gracious,

slow dance with the same rhythm of the minuet in the Act I finale of *Don Giovanni*. It is based on the lyrical exchanges between various sections of the orchestra. The *Rondeau's* airy sonority recalls that of the Concerto for Flute and Harp, K. 299. The most inventive movement is the fifth. It is an elegiac *Andantino* in D minor in sonata form. The first violins' descending, chromatic figurations have a particularly somber effect and are punctuated by the whole orchestra's forte exclamations. The sixth

movement is a stately minuet of distinctive Haydnian influence. The final *Presto* has a prominent string section in the exposition of considerable brilliance (this movement, too, is in sonata form). The development employs contrasting episodes between the strings and woodwinds. More than any other, this movement displays Mozart's assimilation of the Mannheim style. Its deft passage-work with staccato, trills, and leaps clearly shows the influence of the virtuosic school.

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