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CARNEGIE HALL
presents

NEW YORK STRING ORCHESTRA
Jaime Laredo, Conductor

Wed, Dec 24, 2008 at 7 PM

Sun, Dec 28, 2008 at 2 PM

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Wed, Dec 24, 2008 at 7 PM

Isaac Stern Auditorium / Ronald O. Perelman Stage

NEW YORK STRING ORCHESTRA

Jaime Laredo, Conductor

Augustin Hadelich, Violin

WOLFGANG AMADEUS Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786)

MOZART

(1756–1791)

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219, "Turkish" (1775)

Allegro aperto

Adagio

Rondo

AUGUSTIN HADELICH, Violin

Symphony No. 40 in G Minor, K. 550 (1788)

Molto allegro

Andante

Menuetto: Allegretto

Allegro assai

This evening's program will be performed without intermission.

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CARNEGIE HALL

CARNEGIE HALL presents

Sun, Dec 28, 2008 at 2 PM

Isaac Stern Auditorium / Ronald O. Perelman Stage

NEW YORK STRING ORCHESTRA

Jaime Laredo, Conductor

Alon Goldstein, Piano

Joseph Kalichstein, Piano

Shai Wosner, Piano

JOHN HARBISON

(b. 1938)

The Most Often Used Chords (1992–1993)

Toccata

Variatione

Ciaccona

Finale

WOLFGANG AMADEUS

MOZART

(1756–1791)

Concerto for Three Pianos in F Major, K. 242 (1776)

Allegro

Adagio

Rondo—Tempo di Minuetto

JOSEPH KALICHSTEIN, Piano

SHAI WOSNER, Piano

ALON GOLDSTEIN, Piano

INTERMISSION

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

(1809–1847)

Symphony No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 56,

"Scottish" (1829–1842)

Andante con moto—Allegro un poco agitato

Vivace non troppo

Adagio

Allegro vivacissimo

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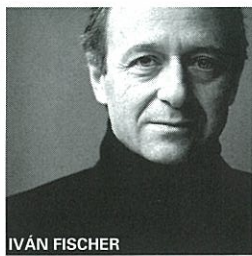
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New School Concerts expresses sincere gratitude to Mr. Hadelich for his participation in the December 24 concert; and to Mr. Goldstein, Mr. Kalichstein, and Mr. Wosner for their participation in the December 28 concert.

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CARNEGIE HALL

At a Glance

THE MUSIC DECEMBER 24

This all-Mozart program spans over a decade's-worth of the composer's lauded works. The exemplary Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*—which served the purpose of exposing the audience to the opera's ethos—fittingly commences the program, followed by the longest and most significant of young Mozart's violin concertos, full of "poise, feeling, and spirit." The well-known opening theme of Mozart's Symphony No. 40, which Robert Schumann once proclaimed carried "a sort of Greek lightness and grace," is now considered tragic in tone.

DECEMBER 28

A Mozart work appears again in this second performance, this time wedged between a relatively new work by John Harbison "where theory meets fantasy" and Mendelssohn's "Scottish" Symphony.

THE ARTISTS NEW YORK STRING ORCHESTRA

This young orchestra comprises highly gifted students—all under age 23—selected by audition for the New York String Orchestra Seminar, a 10-day training program of Mannes College The New School for Music. Culminating with performances at Carnegie Hall, the seminar counts among its alumni such artists as conductor Marin Alsop, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and violinist Gil Shaham.

JAIME LAREDO

A veteran conductor with America's major orchestras, Jaime Laredo has also led orchestras throughout Europe, including the London and BBC symphonies. He is currently both Music Director of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra and Artistic Advisor of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic.



The Program

December 24, 2008

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*

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

The prominent woodwinds and the motivic sparkle are idiomatic features of opera buffa, but the setting is entirely original. Mozart doesn't limit himself to the expedients of comic opera, achieving instead an immediacy of expression hitherto unknown. Captivating figurations

and unexpected turns abound. After the second theme, a rising melodic line in the first violins has a sudden chromatic jolt; the bassoon repeats and completes the figure, mockingly carrying on for a few bars. This shading is the essence of Figaro's world: a momentarily darkened mood, an occasional thwack, all of which dissolve in the delirious gaiety of the 18th century.

At the end of the recapitulation, an extended coda concludes the piece. Just as the closing theme is repeated, the first violins return to the murmur that started the Overture; the second violins engage in a canon; the bassoons enter in rising thirds; then the oboes and horns join the exciting crescendo, bringing the Overture to a triumphant close.

Performance time: approximately 4 minutes

Composed in 1786, the Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* received its Carnegie Hall premiere on May 7, 1891, with the New York Symphony Orchestra and Walter Damrosch, conductor, during the Opening Week Music Festival.

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219, "Turkish"

Among Mozart's concertos for violin, the concerto in A major is the longest and most significant of the five. Mozart's father, Leopold, who was one of the most renowned violin teachers of the 18th century, and who

was never loath to criticize his son, said of Mozart's violin playing, "when you do yourself justice and play with poise, feeling, and spirit—indeed, [you play] as though you were the foremost violinist in Europe."

This pronouncement is illuminating, particularly in respect to this concerto: Despite its brilliance, the concerto's virtuosity is never self-indulgent and the expression remains, in fact, full of the "poise, feeling, and spirit" that Leopold tried to impart. The thematic wealth is astounding; new motives flow effortlessly, but their nature has a common source, and the concerto is kept in a tightly bound aesthetic.

The first movement (**Allegro aperto**) has an ample orchestral exposition. Though short, it confers a certain weight to the movement. From the beginning, the power of the concerto becomes obvious from the discursive splendor of the string section, split into an accompanying section (second violins, violas, cello, double bass), and a prominent first violin section that punctuates the harmony with short, quiet yet emphatic strokes. The main themes, from which a great deal more shall be extracted, are played by the orchestra before an

abrupt pause. The solo violin enters in a totally different tempo—a slower **Adagio**, startlingly different from the orchestra's vein: the solo's brief cantilena is an apparition of lyricism in a setting of action. This paradox between soloist and orchestra is the idiomatic principle of the Concerto form and the source of its dramatic power.

The second movement is an intensely vocal **Adagio**. Mozart's admitted preference for the human voice is manifested in this lyrical movement; the cadenza has the sweep of the great opera arias of Handel, but the decorations are eminently Classical.

The concluding **Rondo** brings together apparently heterogeneous elements: The principal section maintains its Minuet structure, but the central episode is an astonishing, exotically colored A-minor **Allegro** in the style of Turkish-Hungarian music—an extreme contrast to the serene Minuet.

Performance time: approximately 25 minutes

Composed in 1775, Violin Concerto No. 5 received its Carnegie Hall premiere on January 11, 1908, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra; Karl Muck, conductor; and Carl Wendling, violin.

Symphony No. 40 in G Minor, K. 550

It is curious that one of the most tragic pieces in all symphonic literature be deemed by none other than Robert Schumann himself as possessing "a sort of Greek lightness and grace." Such equivocations show how significantly the attitude toward musical aesthetics may change. Perhaps Schumann was trumped by Mozart's proverbial effortless. Yet surely the Symphony in G Minor

is one of the mighty crowns of 18th-century music.

The Symphony in G Minor, along with the Symphony in C Major, is the culmination of a process of maturation that began in 1782. It was then that Mozart moved to Vienna and became acquainted with the music of J. S. Bach and Handel. By the summer of 1788, Mozart's

assimilating genius had mastered all the currents of the century's music, as he wrote these two great symphonies for the summer's subscription concerts. Mozart's star was at its nadir and it is uncertain whether these symphonies were played at all. It is probable that they were, for the score originally called for oboes that were later substituted for clarinets with a pending performance in mind.

The Symphony's opening theme is one of the most well-known in music, yet its irregularity is often overlooked: It begins on an upbeat with an initial two-note motive that has thematic, harmonic, and rhythmic repercussions throughout the movement. This powerful unity is important to emphasize because Mozart's music has been thought—and with reason—to be less economical. In other words, composers such as Haydn or Beethoven have written music that expends the themes' possibilities

by ransacking their pieces and utilizing them in every possible way. Mozart's music, on the other hand, because of his inexhaustible imagination, captures the listener with its abundance. But pieces such as the Symphony in G Minor or his Piano Trio in E Major, K. 542, are so tightly constructed that they easily stand with Beethoven's most obsessively theme-driven music: Listen for the two-note motive at the beginning of the Symphony that can later be heard in an astounding number of transformations—in the bass and woodwinds especially.

The **Andante** is a movement of inward sweetness. The sighing figures in the woodwinds, intensified by the strings, cause emotions to overflow—just as in the first movement. The musical colors, too, are remarkable with sudden tonal tears that pour unexpected hues on the serene canopy that this movement is laid on.

Performance time: approximately 30 minutes

Composed in 1788, Symphony No. 40 received its Carnegie Hall premiere on January 6, 1893, with the New York Symphony Orchestra and Walter Damrosch, conductor.

—Cody Franchetti

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December 28, 2008

JOHN HARBISON (b. 1938)

The Most Often Used Chords

John Harbison's *The Most Often Used Chords* is a "work of play, taking place where theory meets fantasy"; its four movements are based on the titles of blank musical manuscript notebooks, as Harbison helps to explain:

Toccata: "Here are the two scales you need: major and minor ... Use these charts to form chords in any key—major, minor, diminished, and augmented. To make one chord from another, just change one or more tones one half-step ... There are seven modes; each begins on a different white key."

Variazione: "The chord of chords is the triad, for example C-E-G."

Ciaccona: In the notebook, the 10 "most often used chords" were displayed separately, in C, then transposed upwards by half-steps. Their Italian chroniclers never meant them to be played in sequence. Nevertheless, here they form a base from which a melody emerges. This melody presses to break free, succeeding (for a while) after the sixth Chaconne statement. Then the "found object" resumes in another world of feeling.

Finale: "The Circle of Fifths" is easy to memorize: Starting with

F and moving clockwise, the keys can be learned by saying "Fat Cats Go Down Alleys Eating Bread." The keys counterclockwise are learned by repeating "Boys Eat Aging Dogs Good Cold Food." Also present in this movement are the Table of Contracting Note Values and the Table of Expanding Intervals (coincidentally all 12 tones).

The Most Often Used Chords takes full advantage of the orchestral pedagogy of the last several hundred years by layering sonically familiar orchestral quotes in compelling ways, utilizing all the tricks that a high-caliber orchestra is capable of achieving. The swelling string melodies and the orchestration contrast with the sharper, staccato sections where woodwinds and percussion take center stage. Harbison's dissection of the pamphlet on "the most often used chords" (from where the tonal material is deduced) shades this piece with certain qualities of common tonalities. At the same time he resists using more obvious mechanisms to reference specific time periods and composers long-dead. *The Most Often Used Chords* is a tour de force of orchestral writing.

Performance time: approximately 20 minutes

Composed between 1992 and 1993, *The Most Often Used Chords* receives its Carnegie Hall premiere this evening.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Concerto for Three Pianos in F Major, K. 242

The Concerto for Three Pianos, K. 242, was written for countess Lodron and her two daughters, Aloysia and Josepha. It is dated February 1776, a time that saw the flourishing of two other important piano concertos, K. 238 and K. 243, "Lutzow." The aristocratic circles of Salzburg required society music; he obliged them with these concertos—models of refinement, affability, and levity.

This Concerto is in the style of a concerto grosso where the *solis* sections consist of a handful of instruments and the alternating *tutti* sections are equally balanced. The third piano part of this concerto is subordinate to the other two; it only serves as a *ripieno*, filling in the harmony and adding a few echo effects. Because of its slight capacity, Mozart suppressed this part in his revision a few months later without substantially altering the original.

Experiments with sonority are favored over thematic development in this concerto—a piece that achieves astonishing combinations

through the engagement of the solo instruments.

The overall mood of the first movement is jovial, verging on the humorous; its solo parts are constantly engaged in an amusing quarry. The simple sonata form has few peculiarities, though the cadenza is of interest for its motivic rather than generic extemporization with both pianos alternating beguilingly. Sound and its sonic possibilities alone are the second movement's focus in a seemingly perpetual state of dream. The **Adagio** is indeed one of Mozart's most original conceptions. At one point during the cadenza, the pianos seem to literally take flight in an air of fantastic rococo evanescence.

The brief finale is a rondo marked in a moderately paced **Tempo di Minuetto**. The solo figurations recall Clementi's obliging piano trios where urbanity prevails over emotion; though this finale seems at times formulaic in expression, much of it is characteristically superb.

Performance time: approximately 20 minutes

Composed in 1776, Concerto for Three Pianos received its Carnegie Hall premiere on April 20, 1929, with the New York Music Week Association Orchestra; Hans Lange, conductor; and Evelyn Braverman, Victor Tallarico, and Alma Olschwager, pianos.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

Symphony No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 56, "Scottish"

"Everything [here] is crumbling and decaying; the roof is open to the sky. I think today I may have found the beginning of my Scottish Symphony here." Mendelssohn's

letter written in 1829 while at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh leaves no doubt about the influence of this symphony's surroundings. In fact, there and then Mendelssohn

jotted down the somber Andante opening theme with instrumental cues for the orchestration. Just as the atmospheric Fingal's cave in the Hebridean island of Staffa stimulated the composer's inspiration, so did Edinburgh's moldering, ivy-colored ruins: Both the Hebrides Overture and the "Scottish" Symphony were going to occupy Mendelssohn for a number of years. The latter he withheld from publication in his lifetime, owing—he said—to his will to revise the finale, though this is hard to believe of a work combining such spontaneity and craftsmanship.

The first movement's gloomily scored **Andante** is unequivocally charged with the Nordic temperament that was so frequently idealized in the Romantic period, following the fashions of writers such as Ossian and Walpole. This "arboreal" dream had seized most of the German society of the time who saw it as a celebration of the German present and its memories of a Scottish past. This explains the dark hues, open-spaced chords, drone-like fifths, and trudging harmonic progressions.

Performance time: approximately 40 minutes

Composed between 1829 and 1842, Symphony No. 3 received its Carnegie Hall premiere on December 4, 1892, with the New York Symphony Orchestra and Walter Damrosch, conductor.

—Cody Franchetti

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The celebrated second movement (**Vivace non troppo**) is a typical Mendelssohnian scherzo, rapid and spirited; the clarinet intones a vivacious theme that is eventually picked up by the other instruments.

The **Adagio**, like the slow movement of the "Italian" Symphony, was written with a procession in mind—in this case, one Mendelssohn had witnessed at Rome.

The unruly Saltarello (a bouncy Neapolitan dance akin to a Tarantella) is agitated and in the minor mode; at the very end Mendelssohn adds a finale in A-major with striking brass writing that casts a bronzed ray of hope over the work.

There have been a number of interpretations about a possible programmatic narrative for the Symphony and indeed Mendelssohn himself called the outer movements of the "Scottish" introduction and Allegro guerriero (warlike Allegro) in the foreword to the Symphony's first edition, but the evocative sounds of this work are to be heeded individually.

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