

**Music of the Mozarts: Father & Son**

**Wednesday, May 23 – 7:30 pm**

**Robert Uchida**, leader & violin

**Robin Doyon**, trumpet

**Eric Hongisto**, alto trombone

**W.A. MOZART**

***Divertimento No. 1 in D Major, K.136 “Salzburg Symphony No. 1”*** (13’)\*

Allegro

Andante

Presto

**W.A. MOZART**

***Violin Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Major, K.207*** (21’)\*

Allegro moderato

Adagio

Presto

**INTERMISSION** (20 minutes)

**L. MOZART**

***Serenade for Trumpet and Trombone in D Major*** (43’)\*

Intrada: Molto allegro

Andante

Menuetto

Andante

Allegro moderato

Adagio

Menuetto

Allegro

Presto

program subject to change

\*indicates approximate performance duration

**Mozart: Father and Son**

Nearly every father-son relationship is multi-layered, but when that fraught mix is compounded with the roles of teacher, talent agent, and impresario, it becomes a morass of complications. **Leopold Mozart** (1719-1787) was a talented, if not gifted, professional musician who plied his trade in several Austrian towns, and composed a number of pieces, prior to finding employment in Salzburg in 1743. He married Anna Maria Pertl in 1747, and had seven children, of whom only two survived infancy. Both of those children, however, were enormously gifted musicians.

Probably Leopold's greatest success in the field of music was as a pedagogue. His treatise on violin playing – published the year his son Wolfgang was born – was successful enough to go through two German printings, as well as translations into Dutch and French. The bottom line is, Leopold was a competent, professional musician – so he recognized talent when he saw it. And when it came to his daughter Maria Anna (1751-1829), and especially his son **Wolfgang** (1756-1791) – he saw it. Moreover, he saw opportunity.

Leopold Mozart exploited the extraordinary talents his two surviving children displayed, and became their manager and agent. Billing them as the amazing child prodigies they surely were, he sought his fortune by taking them on tour after tour, dazzling noble and respectable audiences throughout Europe. Before his age had reached double digits, Wolfgang had crisscrossed the continent, and there was seemingly no musical challenge with which he could be presented that he would not master. When young Wolfgang began making up his own compositions, Leopold became his transcriber, notating the juvenile works until Wolfgang himself had learned to do so.

But child prodigies grow up, and the novelty wears off. As Wolfgang reached his teens, his father realized that the next step would be for his son to obtain employment in a plum church or courtly position – good, steady work, such as Leopold had found in the relatively little town of Salzburg. But for whatever reason, such work always seemed to elude Wolfgang, despite repeated attempts to find it. Wolfgang was, for his father, a disappointment, and the relationship between the two showed the strain. In 1781 at the age of 25, and much against his father's wishes, Wolfgang moved to Vienna to follow his own career path. The following year, he married – also much against his father's counsel. Leopold Mozart died in 1787, without the two of them ever achieving a true reconciliation. Wolfgang himself lived only another four years.

As a composer, not many works by Leopold Mozart survive, and he is remembered chiefly for two novelty numbers: the *“Toy” Symphony*, and his *Musical Sleigh Ride*. Yet he wrote much more, and if his output does not match his son's for genius and facility, at its best it measures up to the high standards of its time.

It is thought that Leopold wrote the ***Serenade in D Major*** for an outdoor celebration of some kind in Salzburg. Serenades of the day were multi-movement pieces written strictly to provide entertainment for the occasion for which they were written, and were certainly not expected to have a life beyond that. So there must have been a particular reason for the unusual structure of the piece, in which

orchestra-only sections (Movements 1, 2, 3, & 9) are fused with what amount to mini-concertos for trumpet (Movements 4 & 5) and trombone (Movements 6, 7 & 8). Some scholars believe that this work may have served as an influence on Wolfgang's "Posthorn" *Serenade* of 1779.

The two works on tonight's program by Wolfgang were both written during his teenage years. The earlier of the two is the *Divertimento in D Major, K.136*. What we do not know about the work is at least as enticing as what we do. We know that it is written for string instruments in four parts, for example, but we don't know if it was originally written as a string quartet, or for the larger string complement with which it is known now. We know that Mozart wrote this along with two other so-called divertimentos (K.137 & K.138) when he was 16, but every other work that Mozart called a "divertimento" contained at least one minuetto movement – this work has none. It is possible that these were works written for expediency: ready to be pulled out should an occasion arise on tour, for example – yet pliable enough that wind parts could be added relatively easily to flesh them out into symphonies should those be necessary. K.136 has come down to us in a three-movement, fast-slow-fast format – a charming and effervescent work: truly "diverting," as its name suggests.

There is a man, Wolfgang Plath, who has made a study of the development of Mozart's handwriting. According to Plath, Mozart completed his *First Violin Concerto* two years before it was thought to have been written – in 1773, not 1775. That means Mozart would have been 17 when he composed it – likely for himself. An astounding keyboardist pretty much from infancy, Mozart also became a more than accomplished violinist. "I said recently that you played the violin quite passably," Mozart's father once wrote to his son, "and (Salzburg Concertmaster Antonio Brunetti) cried out, 'Rot! He can play anything!'" Both Wolfgang and Brunetti played and toured Mozart's violin concertos.

Based on the theory that the dating of 1773 is correct, this means that tonight's concerto is one of the first Mozart ever wrote, for any instrument. Yet it contains, according to Mozart scholar Robert Levin, elements which exist right up to Mozart's final concerto (K.622 for clarinet). The opening movement, for example, has what Levin refers to as "seven structured ideas, some of which consist of similar motivic material." This would indicate a sense of structural integrity not common at the time. Making this even more astounding is that we know that at this time, young Mozart was simultaneously working on three symphonies and a divertimento!

All three movements are in typical Mozart concerto formats, and the jolly first movement also features an unusual "stuttering" rhythm, reminiscent of some of the works of Johann Christian Bach, whose music Mozart admired. The second movement features a characteristic aria-like solo line over sparse orchestral accompaniment. The final movement contains not only a taxing cadenza before the Recapitulation, but two shorter ones before we get there. In Mozart's day, this type of "mini cadenza" was called an *Eingang*, or "lead-in." Only brief moments of lyricism intrude on the merry rondo which dominates the finale.

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