

**Beethoven, Mozart & Schubert**

**Thursday, January 24 – 7:30 pm**

**Bernhard Gueller**, conductor  
**Charles Richard-Hamelin**, piano

**BEETHOVEN**

***Leonore Overture No. 3, Op.72b*** (12')\*

**SCHUBERT**

***Symphony No. 3 in D Major, D 200*** (27')\*

Adagio maestoso – Allegro con brio

Allegretto

Menuetto: Vivace

Presto vivace

**INTERMISSION** (20 minutes)

**MOZART**

***Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K.491*** (33')\*

Allegro

Larghetto

(Allegretto)

program subject to change

\*indicates approximate performance duration

***Leonore Overture No. 3, Op.72b***

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

(b. Bonn, 1770 / d. Vienna, 1827)

First performance of the overture:

Last ESO performance: Symphony Under the Sky 2015

The libretto which Jean-Nicolas Bouilly (1763-1842) conceived about a woman (Leonore) who disguises herself as a man in order to free her wrongly jailed husband (Florestan) from an oppressive Spanish regime formed the basis for Ludwig van Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*. Its themes of universal

brotherhood and freedom certainly struck a chord for Beethoven – despite the fact that Bouilly himself was head of the military commission in Tours during the Reign of Terror following the French Revolution.

The opera, originally called *Leonore* (she assumes the identity of Fidelio while disguised as a man), went through several revisions before its final form; so too, there were several overtures written for various productions early on. The overture known as *Leonore Overture No. 3* has become a concert hall staple. It is about twice the length of the actual *Fidelio* overture, and captures many of the moods and colours of the drama itself. The clarinet melody of the opening section, for example, is taken from Florestan's Act II aria, in which he states the reason for his unjust imprisonment: "I dared to tell the truth, and my reward is these fetters." The overture's middle section intertwines music from the opera's climax: the proud trumpet call of Florestan's freedom, and the tender melody of the couple's reunion.

### ***Symphony No. 3 in D Major, D 200***

**Franz Schubert**

(b. Vienna, 1797 / d. Vienna, 1828)

Composed: Summer, 1815 (work remained unpublished until after his death)

Last ESO performance: October 1979

At the age of 18, Franz Schubert was apprenticing, so to speak, as headmaster at the school at which his father taught. He didn't care for it, and friends described finding him in his unheated, badly-lit room in a miserable state. But through it all, he composed, steadily. In fact, during his two-year stint as an aspiring teacher, he found time to compose nearly 400 pieces of music. Most were shorter works: songs, , brief instrumental works; but he also composed four of his early symphonies.

The D Major Symphony is shorter and certainly briefer and sunnier than the two symphonies that surround it. At this time in Vienna, Beethoven was certainly the rising star, but Mozart's music – underappreciated during Mozart's life – had come to be regarded quite highly, and Schubert's youthful symphonic works certainly bear much more of Mozart's influence than anyone else's. Except this symphony, that is, which has echoes of another great forebear: Haydn. Certainly, the stern, minor-key Adagio with which the symphony opens, complete with timpani rolls and a sense of expectation – almost an opera curtain-raiser. By contrast, the D Major Allegro con brio which follows has that same love for rustic Austrian dance Haydn so loved, led by an infectious flute call, leading to a rousing and rhythmic main section. The second movement is a brief Allegretto – the slowest movement in the work – much gauzier and more understated than the first, a playful A-B-A structure with strings dominating the A section, while the B is given to the woodwinds.

The third movement also has the hallmarks of a Haydn minuet and trio movement, even to the extent of pitting a Ländler-like folk dance minuet against a much more restrained trio, again dominated by

woodwinds. The final movement is a careening and infectious Presto vivace, a no-holds-barred dash to the finish, lighthearted and full of energy.

***Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K.491***

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

(b. Salzburg, 1756 / d. Vienna, 1791)

First performance: April 3, 1786 in Vienna

Last ESO performance: September 2012

Of the 27 concertos for solo piano Mozart composed, only two are in minor keys. The stark drama and passion of the C minor work is unique in his output. The work's drama is apparent with the first notes, heightened by a lack of harmony in the opening phrase, just octaves as a descending figure capped with a single, syncopated rising interval is presented. This brief theme and its rhythmic structure dominates the entire first movement: stepwise down then a single step up. There is a minor tempest in the opening orchestral statement, and the piano enters, presenting a completely different idea than the orchestral opening, and in the relative major (E-flat). It does at last take up the orchestral idea, expanding upon it and bringing in a sense of order to the unsettledness of the first few minutes. A second main idea is introduced sparsely by the piano about halfway through, but it still competes with the stepwise motif of the opening for its rightful place. That contest is matched by the piano's tendency to always be in major keys against the darker hues of the orchestra's minor-key material. Following the ruminative, almost brooding cadenza, the piano joins the orchestra for the coda – not typical at that time, but an idea Beethoven copied in the piano concerto he wrote in the same key.

The Larghetto second movement is in C minor's relative major, E-flat. It has an aria of quiet, even sad dignity to it, with a slight processional feel to its metre. The central section has some wonderfully detailed and rich writing for the expanded wind section Mozart used for this concerto. For the final movement, Mozart eschewed his usual Rondo format for a series of variations back in the concerto's minor home key. The main theme of the variations has a certain dramatic link to the main motif of the first movement and, unlike his only other minor key piano concerto, this one stays in the minor right to the end – though a few of the variations lighten the overall gravitas of the movement. The brief cadenza of this movement begins in a whisper, though its own momentum spurs it forward as the orchestra rejoins, ushering in the final, declarative cadence.

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