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CONCERTOS OF THE PAST

HANDEL & HAYDN

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2009 — 3:00 PM
FIRST FREE METHODIST CHURCH

PROGRAM

GEORG FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)
Concerto a due cori in F Major, HWV 334 “Concerto in Judas Maccaebaeus”
Allegro
Allegro ma non troppo
Adagio
Andante larghetto
Allegro

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)
Triple Concerto in a minor, BWV 1044
Allegro
Allegro non troppo, e dolce
Allemande
Lisa Lewis, harpsichord; Shari Muller-Ho, flute; Stephen Provin, violin

INTERMISSION —

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)
Symphony No. 87 in A Major “Paris” — 1785
Vivace
Adagio
Menuet & Trio
Finale: Vivace

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 added to a completely transformed and greatly enlarged and enhanced solo harpsichord part.

The first movement of the concerto, based on the prelude portion of BWV 894, features tumbling triplet figures, energetic dotted rhythms, and sprightly pizzicatos. The harpsichord’s music rakes like a river drawer through a stream. In the early spring, bounding and romping over rocks and rapids, foaming and splashing into pools, and then dashing on its way again while the flute and violin dart and soar and hover about it like birds or butterflies. The main theme of light and shadow play along the river’s banks. In the concerto’s transitional middle movement (which is to be played "slowly, but not too much so, and perfectly"), the torrent of harpsichord triplet figures is held in a restless rippling pool above which the violin and flute fluttering and sing. A fugue of harpsichord figures, the second movement, which is based on BWV 894’s fugal section; soon after the counterpoint’s initial appearance, however, a fresher of harpsichord music suddenly bubbles out of the reflective interlude on its own. Throughout the movement, it continues to break into and drench the fugue as the flute and violin, like playful woodland creatures, cavort among the trees, chasing one another and the harpsichord’s sparkling sprays of notes. At last, the harpsichord’s cadence spills like a glittering cataract over an extensive pedal point to the shade of the fugue’s fall as the concerto concludes.

—Notes by Lorelle Knowles

FRANZ-JOSEPH HAYDN

"Paris" Symphony No. 87 in A Major

By the year 1785, Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was already a celebrated composer and music director of the Esterhazy court, where he served the Esterhazy family for nearly 50 years. He was not only one of the greatest composers of his time but also an innovator who played a significant role in the development of symphonic music. His "Paris" Symphony No. 87 in A Major, written in 1790, is considered an example of Haydn's mature style and one of his most sophisticated works. The symphony is rich in formal diversity and technical brilliance, and it marked a turning point in the development of the classical four-movement form.

The first movement is a fast sonata form in sonata allegro, with a strong emphasis on the development section. Haydn's handling of the material is masterful, and the movement is a prime example of the composer's ability to create a seamless flow of ideas.

The second movement is a slow, lyrical Adagio, marked by a sensitivity to the emotional content of the music. The movement is a testament to Haydn's ability to convey deep emotion through his music.

The third movement is a minuet and trio, with a charming and dance-like quality. The minuet is marked by its elegance and grace, while the trio is marked by its playful and lighthearted nature.

The fourth movement is a fast allegro con brio, with a driving energy that propels the music forward. The movement is a display of Haydn's virtuosity and his ability to create a sense of excitement and tension.

Haydn's "Paris" Symphony No. 87 in A Major is a masterpiece of the classical era and a testament to Haydn's genius as a composer. It continues to be performed and enjoyed by musicians and music lovers around the world.

—Notes by Andrew Kohler

PROGRAM NOTES

GEORG FRIEDRICH HANDEL

Concerto a duo cori in F Major, BWV 334

Concerto in Dijas Maccabeus

Over the course of his remarkable career, Georg Friedrich Handel wrote hundreds of works for every conceivable instrument, chorus, and the stage. In addition to his many operas and oratorios, Handel also made a small but significant contribution to the concerto form. His Concerto a duo cori in F Major (BWV 332, 333, and 334). Frederick Hudson, editor of the Barenreiter edition, writes that these pieces "are arguably the largest-scale and most weighty of Handel’s keyboard music". They are based on a late period of his creative genius in which he appears to have been attracted to the greatly endangered possibilities of the appointment of choirs and orchestra in the concertos in the years 1746 and 1747, to be played at the intermissions of his operas. A "handsome" concerto in this style is the famous "overture" for his desire for virtuosic display. The third of these concertos, BWV 334 F Major, was written in connection with the oratorio Maccabeus (hence its nickname, "Concerto in Maccabeus Osannum"). The inspiration of the work is its concept of the "Art of Musicians", reports that, as many of his compositions, Handel here incorporates themes from previous works, notably the grand bass that occurs in his Queen Anne Birthday Ode, and which is also incorporated into his Esther of 1732. Despite this borrowing from himself, Hicks notes that the third concerto contains the most original music of the three.

—Notes by Andrew Kohler

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Triple Concerto in a minor, BWV 1084

This "Triple Concerto" is probably composed sometime after 1730 in Leipzig, either for one of his sons, Friedemann, violin, and harpsichord with string orchestra and basso continuo.

Johann Sebastian Bach was born in a family that had produced church and town-band musicians for over 150 years. Orphaned at ten, he was raised by an older brother who was an organist, and who taught young Johann to play the organ. As we know, his parents were passionate about music, and his father was an "art, I had to work hard," he said; "Anyone who works as hard will just as much get the crown."

Bach began his professional musical career at the age of 18, when he was appointed organist at a church in Arnstadt. At 23, he became court organist and chamber musician to the Duke of Weimar, in which position he held from 1708 to 1717, he gained fame as an organ virtuoso and a composer. For the next six years, Bach served the Prince of Ahlcott, producing results, conducting, teaching, and composing. In 1723, he returned to his home city of Leipzig, where he was appointed professor of music and organist of St. Thomas' Church. In this post, which he held for the rest of his life, Bach produced monumental musical masterworks, including the Christmas Oratorio (1734), St. Matthew Passion (1749), and the Mass in B Minor (1749).

The Musical Offering, and The Art of the Fugue, though he was occupied by the custom of his family and circle of friends, the tasks of a very busy professional life, the duties of study, and the ordinary life of school, and church who never recognized that they were dealing with perhaps the greatest genius that had ever lived. The concerto of Bach, "all too easily lived as living 'summit celebration, envy, and persecution,' " he remained in Leipzig for 27 years. At last, his eyesight failed, and he submitted to surgery. About his work, he said, "I die only leaving a very modest material estate, but bequeathing to us a wonderful wealth of musical treasures."

Bach composed his Six Concertos for strings in the midst of his most successful period. The concerto for strings is one of the most unusual of all Baroque concertos, Bach used the same forces as those he deployed in his famous Fugue in G Major. The Concerto for Strings is a colorful combination of solo strings. Bach seems to have composed this concerto, based on two of his earlier works, well after he arrived in Leipzig, and it is one of the most beautiful and technically demanding works of Bach. The Concerto for Strings is a wonderful concerto for orchestra and, cadenzas and tute phrases. The material of the primary theme returns for the remainder of the work, and the concerto ends with its final cadence while the entire orchestra joins them subsequently those instruments continue to have a prominent role throughout the movement. This movement is in A 4 B A form, and it in the B section that Handel explores different themes in the orchestra and violin, with the harpsichord playing a sustaining role. While the minor mode adds depth to the music, however, it does not dispel the gaiety; the A section is played through again, and the piece ends with a flourish.

—Notes by Andrew Kohler
FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

"Paris" Symphony No. 87 in A Major

By the year 1785, Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was already a celebrated composer, having served as long-term Kapellmeister at the Esterházy court since 1761, and was to remain in that position until 1790, during which time he wrote an impressive number of masterpieces. Especially in the "Paris" Symphonies, Haydn defined the Classical style, a style that was largely set, but not limited to the court alone. Among the works Haydn wrote outside his court duties were the six symphonies, No. 82-87, commissioned by the Count von Orsini in 1788 for performances in the Sala Terrena at the Palazzo Colonna, and the Concerto de La Loggia Olympia. The last of the six "Paris" Symphonies, No. 87, is celebrated for being the first of a symphony to use the classical four-movement paradigm: fast first movement in sonata form, slow movement, minuet, and fast finale (here also in sonata form). The first movement, a sonata-allegro form is marked Allegro and marked Vivace, although it is not evidently the performance the wind instruments were likely at least double to balance the large string orchestra of the Parisian orchestra, the orchestra was divided into smaller sections, each with its own distinct sound, which improved the clarity of the music. The exposition of the first movement begins by being brusque, yet imparts a sense of urgency and excitement. The development section makes use of characteristic motifs from the exposition, expectations with his famous nickname, sometimes through unexpected harmonic shifts. The quiet ending of the exposition is one such example, as it provides a bridge either back to the beginning for the exposition repeat or to the development section after the second time through. The development section is the most interesting part of the movement. The exposition and development develop the expected modulation to E major, the dominant key, which sets up the return to A major at the repeat. In the development, Haydn begins just as in the exposition, only this time the motivic development is complete. The key modulations, key excursions, and the music's overall form, is often seen as a perfect synthesis of the Classical style, characterized by the use of simple, well-defined themes and the clear articulation of musical ideas. Haydn's use of the sonata-allegro form in this movement is a testament to his genius and his ability to create music that is both新鲜和富有深度。
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