

PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-flat Major, K. 482

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

***"Your son is the greatest composer I know personally or by reputation."
(Franz Joseph Haydn to Leopold Mozart, 1785)***

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born on January 27, 1756 in Salzburg, Austria to Leopold and Anna Marie Mozart. At the time of Mozart's birth, Leopold was employed by the Archbishop of Salzburg as the vice-Kapellmeister of his orchestra. When Leopold realized that his son was a child prodigy, he decided to showcase Mozart's talents all over Europe. However, this did not help him in securing a decent employment in the Viennese court later on in his life. In fact, at the time of his death, he was so deep in debt that he had to borrow money from his close friends to pay his bills. Mozart died on December 5, 1791; the cause of his death is unknown. During his lifetime, Mozart wrote over 600 compositions including 27 piano concerti, 5 violin concerti, numerous operas such as *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute*, 41 symphonies, several sonatas for piano and violin, and his final work, *The Requiem*.

Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-flat Major, K. 482, was completed on December 16, 1785 and premiered by Mozart himself on December 23 at the Burgtheatre in Vienna. The original manuscript is kept in the Jagiellońska Library, Kraków, Poland. It is scored for flute, two clarinets, bassoons, two French horns, two trumpets and strings, and has three movements. Musicologist and an authority on Mozart's piano concertos, Cuthbert Girdlestone observed, ***"Of all his concertos, this one is the queenliest. Combining grace and majesty, the music unfolds like a sovereign in progress....."***

The majestic opening movement, *Allegro*, begins with a long exposition and consists of numerous interplays between different groups of instruments such strings and woodwinds, strings and bassoons, etc. before the solo enters. The opening bars also remind the listeners of Mozart's own concertante for violin and viola, K. 364. The timbre and texture of the music also gives the audience a new sound to Mozart's composition because it was first time that Mozart has included the clarinets in his orchestration.

The second movement, *Andante*, is a theme and variations. The melody is somewhat melancholy and with the muted strings, it gives the movement a totally different feeling than the previous movement. This movement opens with a duet between the piano and muted strings; then a 30 plus bars of woodwinds only interlude follows by a string-accompanied duet between the flute and bassoon. The movement comes to end with a final coda. This movement was so well received at the premiere that the audience begged for an encore.

The final movement is a Rondo and is written in 6/8 time. The music is lively and full of energy with a very demanding solo part; its orchestration reminds the listeners of his concerto for French horn, K. 447.

Symphony No. 3 ("Rhenish") in E-flat Major, Op. 97

Robert Schumann (1810 – 1856)

Robert Alexander Schumann was one of the greatest German composers of the Romantic period who wrote mainly music for the piano and voice. If it wasn't for his wife's, Clara, encouragement, he might never have written any orchestral works in his entire life.

Schumann was born on June 8, 1810 in Zwickau, in the Kingdom of Saxony, to Joanna Christiane and August Schumann, a bookseller and publisher. He began taking music lessons at the age of seven with Johann Gottfried Kuntzsch, a high school teacher in Zwickau. Unlike parents of other famed composers, Schumann's father actually believed the cultivation of literature and music was an integral part of a person's development. It is because of this that Schumann was also a fine writer of novels and poetry.

After his father passed away when Schumann was only 16 years old, his guardian urged him to study law at Leipzig University. Unfortunately, this only lasted a year before Schumann completely emerged himself into music and composing. It was at this time that he met Friedrich Wieck, an exceptional piano teacher who attempted to help Schumann to become a piano virtuoso. But due to Schumann's health problems, this never materialized. Schumann later dedicated himself to composition and wrote many notable piano works and lieder.

Due to Schumann's talents and good looks, it made him a lady's man and was involved in many romantic relationships. But there was none sweeter than his romance with Clara Wieck, his mentor's daughter. Even though her father, Friedrich, objected their union, they eventually got married one day before Clara turned 21. Together they had seven children; one of them, Eugenie, lived until 1938.

Towards the end of his life, Schumann began exhibiting symptoms of mental illness. Apparently, he was suffering from "psychotic melancholia", began hallucinating and complained about constantly hearing the note A5 in his head. He admitted himself into an Enderich Asylum near Bonn in 1854 and passed away in late 1856.

Notable works of Robert Schumann include his four symphonies, Piano Concerto in A Minor, Cello Concerto in A Minor, Violin Concerto in D Minor, his famous song-cycle *Dichterliebe*, and numerous piano works such as the *Kinderszenen*, chamber music and lieder.

Schumann's Symphony No. 3 was composed in a span of five weeks during the late fall of 1850 (November 2 - December 9) and was premiered on February 6, 1851 in Dusseldorf with the composer conducting. It was a time when the Schumanns were most happy because Schumann has just been appointed as the conductor of the City of Dusseldorf Orchestra and his responsibilities were to conduct the orchestra and writing new compositions. Also, the life in Dusseldorf seemed less hectic and the locals were friendlier than other places that the Schumanns had stayed before. Unfortunately, he failed miserably as a conductor and was let go by his employer within a year.

The symphony is scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 trumpets, 4 French horns, 3 trombones, timpani and strings. It is actually Schumann's final symphony because his Second (Fourth) Symphony was published after his Third. The title "Rhenish" refers to the Rhine Valley in Dusseldorf. There is no question that the symphony reflects the composer's love of the Rhineland and the various movements clearly shows his attempts to depict the sceneries and people in the area.

The first and final movements of the symphony are extremely lively and full of energy; and they both have the same tempo marking "*Lebhaft*", which means Allegro. The materials in these two movements are closely related and are easily identified. The second movement is a playful *Scherzo*. Schumann originally gave the title "Morning in the Rhine." But he later scratched it out. The third movement is an idyllic *Intermezzo* with woodwinds and French horns serenading a lyrical melody with string accompaniment. Schumann gave the fourth movement a simple title *Feierlich* ("solemn"); his original title was "In the character of an accompaniment to a solemn ceremony." Scholars believed that Schumann dedicated this movement to the opening of a nearby cathedral. This fanfare-style movement gives both the woodwinds and brass an excellent opportunity to shine.

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