

SYMPHONY NO 40 in G MINOR
(K 550) (Original Version)W A MOZART
(1756-91)

Mozart's last three symphonies were all composed in the amazingly short time of seven weeks during the summer of 1788 and are three absolute masterpieces of entirely contrasted character. It was not Mozart's habit to compose major works during the summer months. Neither were they written in response to any pressing commission or imminent concerts requiring fresh works. Rather they appear to have sprung from a deep, personal artistic need. Taken as a whole they represent the apotheosis of the classical symphony. Taken separately they appear to possess few connecting links, as we shall see, and it is unlikely that Mozart conceived them as an integral set.

Allegro molto
Andante
Menuetto (Allegretto)
Finale (Allegro assai)

With the 40th symphony we are plunged into a world in which the composer's emotions are laid bare in a manner which seems far ahead of its time. One of the most remarkable aspects of this truly astonishing work is the sense of reserves of power, despite the economy of scoring. Trumpets and drums are banished altogether, and in the original version he used only five woodwind instruments. After the work was already complete Mozart added clarinet parts, recasting and drastically curtailing the oboe parts to suit. This revision of the score is rare in Mozart as the music usually took shape in all its details in his mind before he had written a note. In emotional content it steps right outside the conventional gestures of the classical period and reaches out into the romantic school of the nineteenth century. Despite this apparent conflict the symphony is, as always with Mozart, perfectly proportioned. The first movement begins without any preamble, the repeated quavers in the divided violas initiating the very restless, agitated character of this movement which persists throughout. There is a complete absence of conventional 'public' gestures. The second movement hints at a tranquillity which somehow it never quite achieves. The trio of the menuetto provides one of the few moments of real repose in the work. The finale however offers no such comfort and brooks no obstacles in its relentless path.

One unusual point of orchestration is worthy of note here concerning the horns. The instruments of Mozart's time were extremely primitive, and a horn pitched in a given key, determined by the insertion of crooks of different lengths, could only play a limited number of notes related to the common chord of that key. By having the second horn-player insert a different crook, Mozart ensured that many extra notes were available. Thus when the music is in G minor the second horn bears most of the responsibility and when the key shifts to the relative major the first horn (pitched in Bb) takes over. Perhaps surprisingly to us, this was a very novel idea at the time, and reached its zenith in some of the works of Berlioz, who would write a long chromatic melody shared between four horns, each contributing what notes he might.

ANDANTE AND VARIATIONS FOR TWO PIANOS
TWO 'CELLOS AND HORN

ROBERT SCHUMANN
(1810-56)

Soloists: Kathleen Uren and Gillian Gray

The Andante Con Variazioni for two Pianos, two 'Cellos and Horn did not appear in print in Schumann's lifetime. In 1893 it was included in the supplement to his complete works and was finally performed by Clara Schumann and Brahms no less, in Vienna in 1868. To fill in the background:

Schumann was intensely busy composing chamber works for various combinations around 1842 and the present work was a product of this period. Schumann tried the new composition out but felt unhappy not only about the success of the unusual combination of instruments but also the musical material itself. "I have only heard the variations once, but they did not go particularly well. That sort of thing needs to be studied. It has something of the spirit of an elegy; I think I was rather melancholy when I composed it."

Schumann subsequently reworked it for two pianos only and it was published in this version. Tonight's performance provides a rare opportunity of hearing the original version.

INTERVAL

METAMORPHOSEN FOR 23 SOLO STRINGS

RICHARD STRAUSS
(1864-1949)

Strauss composed Metamorphosen between the end of 1944 and early 1945 although some sketches go back to October 1943 immediately after the Munich Opera was destroyed. (The sketches were labelled "Trauer Am München"). He was a tired and heartbroken old man, devastated by the bombing of so many of Germany's cultural landmarks including the opera house of Vienna, Berlin and Dresden where his works had been performed frequently over the years.

There is nothing quite like this intense outpouring of grief anywhere else in Strauss' large number of works. Each of the twenty three players has his own separate line; so this is really chamber music on the largest scale, although, of course, by doubling instruments an orchestral sononity is possible.

It was his original intention not to have the composition performed until after his death but he relented and it was first given in Zurich in January 1946 by Paul Sacher and his Basle Chamber Orchestra.

One of the most remarkable features of this work is the quotation - which Strauss claimed was unintentional - from the Funeral March of Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony. Fragments of it appear throughout and it is not until the end that Strauss quotes it fully. (in the bass.) under it he writes "In Memoriam".

Despite all this, it should not be thought that the Metamorphosen is entirely without more carefree moments: There is a major key section which might be likened to reminiscences of happier times.

CONCERTO IN Eb FOR TWO PIANOS
(K 365)

W A MOZART
(1756-91)

This Concerto was written in Salzburg in 1780 and was intended for performance by the composer and his sister Nannerl. However, for reasons which are not clear, the second part was taken not by her but by one Josephine Aurnhammer. It was not a happy collaboration as they quarrelled more than once before the concert in Vienna in November 1781.

Mozart wrote of Fraulein Aurnhammer "If a painter wanted to portray the devil to life, he would have to choose her face. She is as fat as a farm wench and goes about so scantily clad that you can read, as plain as print, 'Pray, do look here'." Einstein avers that she set her cap at Mozart but that he was already smitten with Constanza whom he subsequently married. He did however, have the grace to admit that her piano playing "Wasn't too bad".

There is no attempt at great profundity in this concerto but rather wit and sparkle in abundance. It may be of interest to note that one of the minor key episodes is the finale was used a decade later in the 'Magic Flute' for Papageno.

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GILLIAN GRAY studied jointly at Manchester University and the Royal Manchester College of Music with the late Franz Reizenstein and with David Wilde. Whilst still a student she performed the Rachmaninov Paganini Variations under the direction of Muir Mathieson. Since moving to Edinburgh she has performed in music clubs throughout Scotland with the John Currie Singers, and more recently with the Edinburgh quartet in the Queens Hall. At present she is on the staff of Lothian Region's Specialist Music Scheme and George Watson's College.

KATHLEEN UREN studied jointly at Manchester University and the Royal Manchester College of Music with Derryck Wyndham and Rsyard Bakst. Shi is in great demand as an accompanist having given many concerts both at home and abroad including broadcasts for local and BBC network radio. As well as giving many concerts and recitals, she regularly performs with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra as pianist in such works as Stravinsky's "Petrouchka". She is also a tutor at Manchester University.

The two pianists last performed the Mozart Concerto together during their student years.

SINFONIA

Leader Michael Rigg
 Conductor Neil Mantle

Violins I

Michael Rigg
 Annaliese Dagg
 Richard Heathwood
 Anne Giles
 Bridget Blackmore
 Michael Eggar

Violins II

Elizabeth Clement
 Judith Dean
 Julia Fowler
 Morvyth Davies
 Daniel Bell

Violas

Alison Lucas
 Anne Parker
 Kevin Haggart
 Julia Campbell
 Elizabeth Mathison

Cellos

Angela Griffiths
 Sam Coe
 Deborah McCoy
 George Reid
 Suzanne Patterson

Double Basses

Walter Carlton
 James Robb
 Jennifer Sharp

Flute

Barbara Richerby

Oboes

Margot Cruft
 Morven Bell

Bassoons

Barbara Mooney
 Keith Ellis

Horns

David Rimer
 Marian Kirton

Librarians

Bridget Blackmore
 Anne Giles
 Elizabeth Mathison
 Suzanne Patterson

Secretary

Margot Cruft

Orchestral Manager

John Willmett

NEXT CONCERT

SUNDAY 25 NOVEMBER

QUEEN'S HALL
 7.45pm

Berlioz Le Carnival Romain
 Dvorak Cello Concerto
 Shostakovich Symphony No 10 in E minor

William Conway Cello
 Neil Mantle Conductor

Tickets available from the Queen's Hall Box Office and the Usher Hall
 Box Office.