

May 30 and 31 and June 1, 2014

NICHOLAS MCGEGAN, CONDUCTOR
YE-EUN CHOI, VIOLIN

ANTONIO VIVALDI

The Four Seasons for Violin and Orchestra,
Opus 8, Nos. 1-4

- I. SPRING (R. 269): Allegro — Largo e pianissimo sempre —
Danza Pastorale (Allegro)
 - II. SUMMER (R. 315): Allegro non molto — Adagio — Presto
 - III. AUTUMN (R. 293): Allegro — Adagio — Allegro
 - IV. WINTER (R. 297): Allegro non molto — Largo — Allegro
- Ms. Choi**

Intermission

WOLFGANG AMADÉ
MOZART

Chaconne from *Idomeneo, Rè di Creta*, K. 367

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Symphony No. 103 in E-flat major, "Drumroll"

- I. Adagio — Allegro con spirito
- II. Andante più tosto allegretto
- III. Menuet
- IV. Finale: Allegro con spirito

PROGRAM NOTES BY DR. RICHARD E. RODDA

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Born 4 March 1678 in Venice; died 28 July 1741 in Vienna.

The Four Seasons for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 8, Nos. 1-4 (before 1725)

PREMIERE OF WORK: unknown

PSO PREMIERE: 4 March 1993; Heinz Hall; Andres Cardenes, leader and soloist

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 39 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION: continuo and strings

The *Gazette d'Amsterdam* of December 14, 1725 announced the issuance by the local publisher Michele Carlo Le Cène of a collection of twelve concertos for solo violin and orchestra by Antonio Vivaldi — *Il Cimento dell'Armonia e dell'Inventione*, or "*The Contest between Harmony and Invention*," Op. 8. The works were printed with a flowery dedication typical of the time to the Bohemian Count Wenzel von Morzin, a distant cousin of Haydn's patron before he came into the employ of the Esterházy family in 1761. On the title page, Vivaldi described himself as the "*maestro* in Italy" to the Count, though there is no record of his having held a formal position with him. Vivaldi probably met Morzin when he worked in Mantua from 1718 to 1720 for the Habsburg governor of that city, Prince Philipp of Hessen-Darmstadt, and apparently provided the Bohemian Count with an occasional composition on demand. (A bassoon concerto, RV 496, is headed with Morzin's name.)

Vivaldi claimed that Morzin had been enjoying the concertos of the 1725 Op. 8 set "for some years," implying earlier composition dates and a certain circulation of this music in manuscript copies, and hoped that their appearance in print would please his patron. The first four concertos, those depicting the seasons of the year, seem to have especially excited Morzin's admiration, so Vivaldi made specific the programmatic implications of the works by heading each of them with an anonymous sonnet, perhaps of his own devising, and then repeating the appropriate verses above the exact measures in the score that they had inspired. *The Four Seasons* pleased not only Count Morzin, but quickly became one of Vivaldi's most popular works. A pirated edition appeared in Paris within weeks of the Amsterdam publication, and by 1728, the concertos had become regular items on the programs of the Concert Spirituel in Paris. The *Spring* Concerto was adapted in 1755 as an unaccompanied flute solo by Jean Jacques Rousseau, the philosopher and dilettante composer who was attracted by the work's musical portrayal of Nature, and as a motet (!) by Michel Corrette to the text "Laudate Dominum de coelis" in 1765. Today, *The Four Seasons* remains Vivaldi's best-known work and one of the most beloved compositions in the orchestral repertory.

For their publication of *The Four Seasons* in 1725, Vivaldi prefaced each of the concertos with an explanatory sonnet. These poems are given below with a note describing the music relating to the particular verses:

Spring, Op. 8, No. 1 (R. 269)

The spring has come, joyfully

(the vivacious opening section for full orchestra — the "ritornello" — that returns between episodes and at the end of the movement)

The birds welcome it with merry song

(trills and shakes, violins)

And the streams, in the gentle breezes, flow forth with sweet murmurs.

(undulating violin phrases)

Now the sky is draped in black,

Thunder and lightning announce a storm.

(tremolos and fast scales)

When the storm has passed, the little birds

Return to their harmonious songs.

(gently rising phrases and long trills in the violins)

And in the lovely meadow full of flowers,
To the gentle rustling of leaves and branches,
The goatherd sleeps, his faithful dog at his side. (*Movement II*)

To the rustic bagpipe's merry sound,
Nymphs and shepherds dance under the lovely sky
When spring appears in all its brilliance. (*Movement III*)

Summer, Op. 8, No. 2 (R. 315)

In the heat of the blazing summer sun,
Man and beast languish; the pine tree is scorched.

(the enervated "ritornello")

The cuckoo raises his voice

(wide, fast leaps in the solo violin)

Soon the turtledove and goldfinch join in the song.

(A solo violin episode with leaps and trills)

A gentle breeze blows

(quick triplets, violins)

But then the north wind battles with its neighbor

(rushing scales, full orchestra)

And the shepherd weeps

(expressive, chromatic theme for solo violin and continuo)

As above him the dreaded storm gathers, controlling his fate.

(forceful scales and figurations in the full orchestra)

His weary limbs are roused from rest

By his fear of the lightning and fierce thunder

And by the angry swarms of flies and hornets.

(Movement II, alternating bittersweet complaints from the solo violin with quick, repeated note interjections by the full orchestra)

Alas, his fears are borne out

Thunder and lightning dominate the sky

Bending down the tops of trees and flattening the grain.

(the tempestuous third movement)

Autumn, Op. 8, No. 3 (R. 293)

The peasant celebrates with dance and song

The joy of a fine harvest

(the merry opening "ritornello")

And filled with Bacchus' liquor

(inebriated arpeggios, scales, trills and figurations from the solo violin alternating with the "ritornello" theme)

He ends his fun in sleep.

(progressively slower notes in the solo violin until the music stops completely before ending with the "ritornello" theme)

Everyone is made to leave dancing and singing

The air is gentle and pleasing

And the season invites everyone

To enjoy a delightful sleep. (*Movement II*)

At dawn the hunters set out

With horns, guns and dogs.

(the bounding main theme)

The hunted animal flees, the hunters follow its tracks

(arpeggiated triplets in the solo violin)
Terrified and exhausted by the great noise
Of guns and dogs.
(violent, shaking figures in the orchestra)
Wounded, it tries feebly to escape,
But is caught and dies.
(flashing scales by the soloist cut short by the violent interjections of the orchestra)

Winter, Op. 8, No. 4 (R. 297)

Freezing and shivering in the icy darkness
(the chordal, almost motionless main theme)
In the severe gusts of a terrible wind
(rushing scales and chords in the solo violin)
Running and stamping one's feet constantly
(a brief, repeated note motive alternating with a leaping figure)
So chilled that one's teeth chatter.
(tremolo)

Spending quiet and happy days by the fire
While outside the rain pours everywhere. *(Movement II)*

Walking on the ice with slow steps
(the plaintive main theme, solo violin)
Walking carefully for fear of falling
(slow, steady chords in the orchestra)
Then stepping out boldly, and falling down.
(quick scales and then several brief descending flourishes)
Going out once again onto the ice, and running boldly
(steady motion up and down the scale in the solo violin)
Until the ice cracks and breaks,
(snapping, separated figures)
Hearing, as they burst forth from their iron gates, the Scirocco,
(a smooth melody in close-interval harmony)
The North Wind, and all the winds battling.
This is winter, but such joy it brings.
(rushing figurations close the work)

WOLFGANG AMADÉ MOZART

Born 27 January 1756 in Salzburg; died 5 December 1791 in Vienna.

Chaconne from *Idomeneo, Rè di Creta* ("Idomeneo, King of Crete"), K. 367 (1780-1781)

PREMIERE OF WORK: Munich, 29 January 1781; Cuvilliers Theater of the Munich Residenz; Wolfgang Amadé Mozart, conductor

THIS PERFORMANCE MARKS THE PSO PREMIERE

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 9 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION: pairs of flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns and trumpets, timpani and strings

By 1780, Mozart's duties in the musical establishment of the Salzburg Archbishop had become almost unbearably irksome to him. Among his greatest frustrations was that the small provincial city allowed him no opportunity to indulge his greatest creative desire — to write operas. Much of the fame he gained as a teenager had come from the successes his stage works enjoyed in Milan and Vienna, but he had not composed an opera since *Il ré pastore* in 1775, and he was painfully eager to prove his growing artistic mastery to the world. It was therefore with great excitement that he received a

commission in the summer of 1780 for a grand *opera seria* from the Elector Carl Theodor to be performed during the Munich carnival season early the next year. Mozart saw the commission as a chance to establish his fame and international standing, and perhaps gain a much-desired position at the Bavarian court or some other musical capital of Europe. The following year he bolted from what he rather injudiciously called his "Salzburg captivity" and took up the life of a free-lancing musician in Vienna.

For his subject, Mozart chose the old French libretto *Idomeneo* by Danchet that André Campra had set in 1712, and he enlisted the Salzburg Court Chaplain, Giambattista Varesco, to adapt the story into Italian. In the plot, the fleet of King Idomeneo of Crete is ravaged by a storm, and he vows to sacrifice the first person he meets on shore if the gods allow him to reach safety. That person turns out to be his son, Idamante. Idomeneo tries to send Idamante away in an attempt to save him, but a fearsome tempest erupts and a terrible sea monster rises from the depths as the ship is about to embark. Idomeneo recognizes these signs as punishment by the gods, and he confides everything to the High Priest. Idamante declares himself ready to be sacrificed, but his beloved, Ilia, offers herself in his place. The High Priest announces that Idomeneo will be forgiven everything if he abdicates in favor of Idamante and if Ilia marries the new king. This being done, the opera comes to a happy conclusion.

One of the outstanding elements of *Idomeneo* is Mozart's superb handling of the orchestra. For the premiere, he had at his disposal the legendary Mannheim Court Orchestra, supplemented by some of Munich's best players, and he made the most of the opportunity by supplying the opera with some of his finest instrumental writing. It is unknown where or how Mozart inserted his ballet music into *Idomeneo*, though the score indicates the name of the choreographer (Le Grand, the dance master at the Munich court) and clearly differentiates between the solo dances (even noting the performers' names) and the sections for the *corps de ballet*. The *Chaconne*, which does not use the repeating harmonic pattern traditional in the Baroque genre, is a festive sonata-form movement with a wistful contrasting episode.

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Born 31 March 1732 in Rohrau, Lower Austria; 31 died May 1809 in Vienna.

Symphony No. 103 in E-flat major, "Drumroll" (1794-1795)

PREMIERE OF WORK: London, 3 March 1795; King's Theatre; Franz Joseph Haydn, conductor

PSO PREMIERE: 5 January 1900; Carnegie Music Hall; Victor Herbert, conductor

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 29 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION: pairs of woodwinds, horns and trumpets, timpani and strings

In 1786, the German violinist and impresario Johann Peter Salomon initiated a series of concerts in London. He was always searching for new attractions to present, and when word reached him that the death of Prince Nicolaus Esterházy had released Joseph Haydn from his long employment with that noble family, he set off for Vienna immediately to entice the distinguished composer to Britain. He was successful, and Haydn made his first visit to London from January 1791 to June 1792, composing there six symphonies for Salomon's concerts and leading their premieres. The venture was a triumph. Haydn went home to Vienna, but it was not difficult for Salomon to convince him to return to London. His second visit began in February 1794 and again lasted for a year and a half, and its success matched that of the first.

Haydn wrote three symphonies (Nos. 99-101) for Salomon's concerts of spring 1794. He spent the summer months touring through the British countryside, and returned to London in the early autumn to make preparations for the next season. Salomon, however, was having difficulties arranging for the performers necessary to ensure the high quality of his concerts because the Reign of Terror then sweeping France made travel and financial dealings risky, and he was forced to cancel his performances. However, the rival "Opera Concerts" was not about to let pass the opportunity of displaying England's most distinguished musical visitor, so the Italian violinist and composer Giovan Battista Viotti, director of the operation, arranged for Haydn to compose and direct three symphonies for his programs. The second of these, the penultimate one in the series of 106 with which Haydn brought the genre to its formal and expressive maturity, was the Symphony No. 103 in E-flat major, the "Drumroll."

Following the distinctive opening gesture that earned the E-flat Symphony its sobriquet, a somber introduction seems to promise something dramatic, perhaps even tragic. What follows in the sonata-form

main part of the movement, however, is a delightful and witty essay built largely upon a chipper tune first entrusted to the violins. The music is worked into a climax that includes an up-tempo reference to the introduction's motive before a lilting waltz-like melody is brought in for thematic contrast. The development section, which draws upon both the main and introduction themes, suggests the encroaching Romantic sensibility in its daring harmony and depth of expression. The recapitulation of the earlier thematic materials appears to be running its expected course when it suddenly pauses on an unresolved harmony to allow for a reminiscence of the somber music of the introduction. According to the need for formal closure and the taste of Haydn's era, however, this *Allegro* could not end with such music, so the quick tempo and the chipper theme return to round out the movement.

The *Andante* is a dual set of variations on two Hungarian folksongs, one minor, the other major. The variations, one of which is an elaborate solo originally written for Viotti, principal violinist (and impresario) of the Opera Concerts, alternate between the contrasting themes and keys until they are concluded by a harmonically adventurous coda. The *Menuet* is one of Haydn's broad country versions of the old dance, here enfolding a central trio that features the clarinet, an instrument still new to the standard orchestral ensemble in 1795. The finale's theme, a lively, four-measure phrase presented by the violins after an opening hunting call from the horns, is constantly in evidence until the joyous closing measures of the Symphony.