SUMMER FESTIVAL IN SEATTLE

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 28**

**Antonín Dvořák**
Terzetto for Two Violins and Viola in C Major, Op. 74
*Introduzione: Allegro, ma non troppo*
*Larghetto: Dolce, molto espressivo*
*Scherzo: Vivace*
*Tema con variazioni: Poco adagio—Molto allegro*
Stefan Jackiw, violin   Emily Daggett Smith, violin   Richard O'Neill, viola

**Samuel Barber**
Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 6
*Allegro ma non troppo*
*Adagio*
*Allegro appassionato*
Jeremy Turner, cello   Ran Dank, piano

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
Andante and Variations for Piano, Four Hands in G Major, K. 501
Ran Dank, piano   Anton Nel, piano

**Johannes Brahms**
Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano in C Major, Op. 87
*Allegro*
*Andante con moto*
*Scherzo: Presto*
*Finale: Allegro giocoso*
Ida Levin, violin   Robert deMaine, cello   Anton Nel, piano

**Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)**
Terzetto for Two Violins and Viola in C Major, Op. 74 (1887)

Dvořák's disarming Terzetto resulted from a request from two friends, rather than from a commissioning organization or publisher. Two friends—an amateur violinist/chemistry student named Josef Kruis and the young man's teacher, violinist Jan Pelikan—hoped the already acclaimed composer would provide them with something within the compass of the talented student and his more assured teacher. (Dvořák intended to play the viola part.) Alas, Kruis' technique was not up to the challenge of the new piece, despite the composer's wish to create something the student could handle. Dvořák placated him by

composing even simpler pieces originally designated as *Bagatelles*, Op. 75a before their eventual arrangement by the composer for violin and piano as the oft-played *Romantic Pieces*, Op. 75.

Unaffected Bohemian rusticity infuses the opening movement, *Introduzione: Allegro, ma non troppo*. To avoid the trap of cloying sweetness, Dvořák wisely inserted a brief agitated mini-episode in the introductory "A" section that is expanded in the emphatically phrased "B" section. A truncated reprise of the initial music provides a transition to the second movement, which begins *attacca* (i.e., without pause).

Marked *Dolce, molto espressivo*, this *Larghetto* creates a peaceful and distinctly rural atmosphere, which in Dvořák's case suggests a quasi-religious sense of quiet rapture that one might term "pantheistic" were it not for the composer's comfortable Catholicism. Here too, as in the first movement, an animated central section fueled by dotted rhythms provides contrast.

As is often the case, Dvořák cast the *Scherzo: Vivace* as a wild Czech dance, the *furiant*, in which the viola's pizzicatos function initially as an accompaniment. The Trio basks in gentle reverie before returning to the fiercer energy in the repeat of the opening *furiant*.

In the closing *Tema con variazioni: Poco adagio—Molto allegro*, a celebration of variation technique provides the closing gambit. The sequence is initiated by a dramatic introduction before an actual theme emerges. Ten strongly differentiated variations follow, several of which explore deeper emotions than one might expect in a piece designed for "home use." As if to emphasize the point, he sets this movement in dark-hued C minor, lifting the shades only at the end in an almost obligatory burst of C Major.

**Samuel Barber (1910–1981)**
Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 6 (1932)

Not reckoned as a child prodigy in the mold of Mozart or Mendelssohn, Samuel Barber nonetheless began composing in his youth; even in his pubescence he knew and confidently asserted his intention to write music rather than to throw himself conventionally into adolescent sports. By adulthood he had already found his composer's "voice," a neo-Romantic style he never forsook even when adopting techniques from more modern schools of composition.

Barber composed his Sonata for Cello and Piano in C minor, Op. 6 in 1932. The soaring cello melody that announces the opening *Allegro ma non troppo* establishes Barber's lifelong commitment to a re-invigorated Romantic impulse. This upwardly sweeping tune all but cries out to be sung and is effectively intoned by the cello's famously baritonal timbre. The ensuing *Adagio* starts in accord with its tempo indication, but Barber surprises us with a scherzo-like episode that can be parsed as a third movement in miniature. The concluding *Allegro appassionato* is a far cry from the perhaps expected virtuoso romp that constitutes a "typical" finale.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)**
Andante and Variations for Piano, Four Hands in G Major, K 501 (1786)

Before the modern, i.e., phonographic era, four-hand music could be heard not only in the concert hall but even more often in private homes. To put it simply, if you wanted to hear good music, and didn't live in an urban musical center, you'd best learn how to play an instrument. It's notable that before World War I, more than 100 piano manufacturers competed in the United State alone, from which one easily infers the presence of many students of varying degrees of competence. People actually *played* music in order to hear it, and four-hand pieces (original compositions as well as transcriptions of orchestral music) abounded. Mozart lavished his considerable gifts on a number of such pieces, including his well-known Sonata in D Major, K. 448. He also happily (or at least out of economic necessity) composed more modest works for a public eager to try their collective hands at musical performance.

In 1786, riding the crest of his popularity in Vienna, he composed like a man afire, producing a half-dozen major piano concertos, as well as the unassuming but by no means negligent Andante and Five Variations for Piano, Four Hands, K. 501. The theme is a simple, folk-like child's tune in two parts, the second of which briefly enters the minor. The first variation employs rapid notes in the primo part, upping the sensation of a quicker pace. The following section marks a distinct increase in both volume and power, and is animated by quick triplet figures. The ensuing variation ramps up the animation and playfulness even further. In G minor, the fourth variation darkens the mood and timbre, conveying a degree of Baroque solemnity. The final number returns to unsullied good spirits, offering a virtuosic romp in which the pianists take turns animating the skittering passagework.

**Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano in C Major, Op. 87 (1882)**
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Brahms' extensive and imposing canon of chamber music includes three piano trios, plus another pair using horn and clarinet respectively. Always a symphonic composer (Schumann sensitively referred to his younger colleague's sonatas as "veiled symphonies), Brahms' chamber music succeeds best when beefed up by either a piano (as in his trios, piano quartets and piano quintet) or additional string support (as in his pairs of exemplary string quintets and sextets).

The second Piano Trio in C Major, dating from 1882, is less well known than the early (though considerably revised) Op. 8 Trio, no doubt because of the earlier work's endearing youthful ardor and sweeping Romanticism. (Even Benjamin Britten, who admitted loathing Brahms' music, acknowledged a fondness for the Op. 8 work.) By contrast, Op. 87 emerges as a remarkably concise piece, yet still finds room for winning lyricism, especially in the opening *Allegro*, a cornucopia of delicious tunes vying for primacy. Its opening dotted theme, entrusted to violin and cello, implies great rhythmic energy. The two stringed instruments share this tune until the piano joins fully in the final statement. Otherwise, it is the piano that functions to galvanize the rhythms, often coming

on the off-beats. Throughout the movement there are many other melodic snippets and delectable asides, creating a rich tapestry of emotional hues.

The following *Andante con moto* celebrates Brahms' lifelong passion for Hungarian music. He was clearly influenced by youthful tours with violinist Eduard Remenyi, a kind of Hungarian Marc O'Connor—classically trained but weaned on gypsy music—as well as by his long association with violinist/composer Joseph Joachim, Hungarian but bearing a German name. The main theme evokes a bold yet melancholy Hungarian folk song, incorporating a "Scotch snap" (long-short rhythm). Here the piano often accompanies with emphatic, off-the-beat chords. Shortly after the beginning of the movement, a quiet, ruminative section expressed by the strings is seconded by rhapsodic piano commentary. The primary theme undergoes inventive variation treatment by Brahms, one of the supreme masters of that technique.

An eerie, ghostly statement opens the *Scherzo*, replete with scurrying piano runs and violin tremolos. It conjures an elfin Mendelssohn *scherzo* tinged with *Angst.* The Trio suggests a healthy, outdoorsy confidence, essentially untroubled before the return of the dark and mysterious opening section.

Though termed *Allegro giocoso*, the *Finale* is not especially jocose. The opening theme is unquestionably energetic and, at first blush, upbeat. Yet it is also rather feverish; the movement as a whole contains many darker passages. Obsessive 2 against 3 rhythms abound, as in many late Brahms works.

**Program Notes by**
**Steven Lowe**