

WINTER FESTIVAL



JANUARY 25, 2015

3:00 PM

SEATTLE
CHAMBER
MUSIC
SOCIETY

PROGRAM

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Quintet for Piano and Winds in E-flat Major, K. 452

Largo—Allegro moderato

Larghetto

Rondo: Allegretto

Ben Hausmann oboe / **Sean Osborn** clarinet / **Seth Krinsky** bassoon / **Jeffrey Fair** French horn /
Anne-Marie McDermott piano

INTERMISSION

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Concertos from "L'Estro Armonico", Op. 3

Concerto in A Major, Op. 3 No. 5, RV 519

Allegro

Largo

Allegro

Concerto in A minor, Op. 3 No. 8, RV 522

Allegro

Larghetto e spiritoso

Allegro

Concerto in B minor, Op. 3 No. 10, RV 580

Allegro

Largo e spiccato

Allegro

Concerto in D minor, Op. 3 No. 11, RV 565

Allegro

Adagio e spiccato

Allegro

Largo e spiccato

Allegro

James Ehnes violin / **Erin Keefe** violin / **Amy Schwartz Moretti** violin / **Arnaud Sussmann** violin /
Rebecca Albers viola / **Cynthia Phelps** viola / **Robert deMaine** cello / **Jordan Anderson** bass /
Luc Beauséjour harpsichord

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

(1756-1791)

Quintet for Piano and Winds in E-flat Major, K. 452 (1784)

By 1784 Mozart was enjoying a steady ascent to financial security and widespread acclaim among his Viennese constituency that included aristocratic patrons, music lovers and both professional and amateur musicians looking for new music to perform. Well aware of his increasing mastery as a composer he wrote to his father that his Quintet for Piano, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Horn, K. 452, was his finest work so far—quite a statement from someone who had already produced 450-plus scores in virtually every genre. The three-movement work drew similar praise from no less than Beethoven, who modeled his Op. 16 Quintet, including instrumentation, on Mozart's glowing masterpiece.

After a throat-clearing wind chord, a stately *Largo* opens as the pianist presents a graceful and touching theme that prompts sequential comments from the individual winds, each folded into the fabric of the overall ensemble. The piano launches the ensuing *Allegro's* main theme as well, which is answered immediately by the winds. A short development leads to a recapitulation where materials from the exposition of the *Allegro* are mixed and matched. In the coda, Mozart accommodates the horn player with a display of virtuosic runs, which are much more challenging on that instrument than when first heard on piano.

The *Larghetto* second movement in A-B-A song form contrasts with the opening movement; the winds initiate the first theme, soon accompanied by arpeggios from the piano. In the middle section a new and beguiling tune emerges from the horn before a sequence of wind chords reprises the movement's opening material.

A *Rondo* marked *Allegretto* serves as the finale. The piano serves up the primary melody before being seconded by the winds. The oboe has its day in court with a second theme. Unusual for a *rondo*, Mozart adds a cadenza for all five instruments. An obligatory trill from the oboe signals the end of the cadenza and marks the return of the principal theme to bring closure to this sublime chamber work.

ANTONIO VIVALDI

(1678-1741)

Concertos from "L'Estro Armonico", Op. 3 (ca. 1700)

Concerto in A Major, Op. 3 No. 5
Concerto in A minor, Op. 3 No. 8
Concerto in B minor, Op. 3 No. 10
Concerto in D minor, Op. 3 No. 11

Antonio Vivaldi spent most of his productive years as a lay priest at the Musical Seminary of the Hospital of Mercy in Venice, a home and school for illegitimate or orphaned girls. His duties covered all musical bases from teaching a variety of instruments, to composing and serving as superintendent of music. In the almost four decades (1704-1740) at the Seminary, Vivaldi wrote enormous quantities of music, availing himself of the services of his well-trained students, using these resources to explore all manner of instrumental effects. The stability of the environment proved cordial; the unending supply of young talent provided him with a virtual musical laboratory.

The set of 12 concertos known as *L'Estro Armonico* ("Harmonic whim" or "The Musical Fancy" were two rough translations of the title) helped establish the Venetian as a major force in early 18th-century composition. His Dutch publisher Estienne Roger came up with the title, believing with good reason that a catchy name would help sales. These and Corelli's Op. 6 concertos were the best-known instrumental works of the day. Among Baroque musicians who knew these works

from having perused Roger's edition was J.S. Bach, who esteemed Vivaldi sufficiently to transcribe a number of the Italian's concertos into freshly minted solo organ pieces. Even more to the point, Bach adopted Vivaldi's three-movement fast—slow—fast format, the standard for centuries to come.

The opening *Allegro* of the A-Major Concerto, No. 5 draws much of its energy from the octave drops in the *ritornello's* main theme. Dancing and skipping, the two solo violins weave garlands of rapid counter-tunes around the ensemble. Marked *Largo*, the second movement proceeds with stately chords from the supporting group balanced against lovely cantabile commentary from the soloists. The energetic *Allegro* finale again finds the soloist strutting their stuff while the ensemble largely alternates tonic-dominant harmonies throughout the movement.

In A minor, No. 8's opening and closing *Allegros* dazzle with scalar runs for the two violin soloists, flanking a fascinating *Largo* where the main orchestral motif—with its descending octave drops—imparts an austere quality offset by the intensely lyrical operatic duet between the soloists. This concerto possesses an overall darkness emphasized by its relentless minor-key grounding in all three movements.

The tenth concerto, in B minor opens with an *Allegro* whose mercurial theme leaps and drops and provides yet another example of Vivaldi's ability to create energy in his fast movements. Here the four violin soloists share the virtuosic episodes. In the slow movement, *Largo e spiccato*, stark dotted minor-key chords from the general ensemble alternate with the group of four violinists. The closing *Allegro* maintains the overall minor-key fervor.

The D-minor concerto, No. 11 is beholden to the old concerto grosso form established by Arcangelo Corelli, employing a small group of

adept soloists—the *concertino*—accompanied by a string ensemble and continuo (harpsichord and bass) known collectively as the *ripieno*. Unlike Vivaldi's usual "modern" fast-slow-fast format, five movements comprise No. 11 from *L'Estro Harmonico*. As Vivaldi developed his idiomatic style, one that favored bold themes and simple accompaniments, he would leave behind the rich counterpoint that informs this fine work.

Program Notes by Steven Lowe
