Sunday, April 22, 2018
3:00 PM

Spring Spectacular
Dr. Robert G. Hasty, Music Director
North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie

Overture to Il signor Bruschino .......................................................... Gioachino Rossini
(1792-1868)

Symphonia Concertante in E flat major K364 ......................... Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Andante maestoso
Andante
Presto

Jeff Yang, violin  Ariel Chapman, viola

INTERMISSION

Symphony # 3 in A minor Op. 56 “Scottish” ........................................ Felix Mendelssohn
Andante con moto
Vivace non troppo
Adagio
Allegro vivacissimo – Allegro maestoso assai

This concert is supported in part by
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Program Notes

Rossini – Overture to Il signor Bruschino
Gioachino Rossini made his compositional debut at the age of 18 and very quickly established himself as one of the most popular composers in Italy with a series of operas, both comic and tragic. One of his first major successes came with the one-act farce Il signor Bruschino. It was one of four brief comedies the young composer wrote from 1810-13. These types of short works were popular in Venice at the time. They were intimate pieces with a cast of only five or six singers, always including a pair of lovers, and at least two comic roles. The style called for much visual comedy (often improvised by the players) and, compared to other genres of opera, relied more on acting ability and comedic talent than vocal prowess.

The opera’s plot revolves around two lovers, Sofia and Florville, whose love is thwarted by Sofia’s arranged engagement to Signor Bruschino. Sofia has never met her fiancée, as they were betrothed by correspondence. Seizing the opportunity, Florville pretends to be Bruschino so that he can marry Sofia, but humorous complications arise when the real Bruschino finally appears. Though significantly shorter than most of his later operas, this one-act farce already displayed many of the compositional signatures for which Rossini would become known, starting with the brief and vigorous overture.
Mozart – Sinfonia Concertante

The genre known as the sinfonia concertante is a hybrid form, combining elements of the concerto or, more specifically the old-fashioned concerto grosso, and the symphony. It is similar to a concerto in that soloists (generally two or more) are on prominent display, but the fact that those soloists are discernibly a part of the total orchestral ensemble and not individualistically preeminent, lends the work a certain symphonic quality. The sinfonia concertante was cultivated primarily during the early Classical period by a handful of composers including Johann Christian Bach, Ignaz Pleyel, and Josef Haydn, but most notably, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Beginning around 1775 with a work he called a Concertone (big concerto) for two solo violins and oboe, Mozart seemed to have developed an interest in concertos for more than one instrument. Over the next several years he produced a string of such works, including the Concerto for Flute and Harp, and the Concerto for Two Pianos. His first encounter with a sinfonia concertante likely took place in 1778 during a visit to Paris, and it was there in fact, that the 22 year-old Mozart composed such a work of his own for the first time. Written expressly for a quartet of outstanding wind soloists who also happened to be visiting Paris, it has come down to us only in a spurious 19th century edition. During this period Mozart also began but did not complete at least two other works in the sinfonia concertante genre, one for violin and piano, and another for violin, viola, and cello. The present composition, the magnificent Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola, was completed in Salzburg in 1779.

Rather than following the Parisienne model of a two-movement work, Mozart cast his sinfonia concertante in three. The opening movement is filled with an abundance of thematic material. After an orchestral introduction, the two soloists emerge from the orchestral texture to introduce a new set of melodies. It quickly becomes apparent that violin and viola are equal partners in this musical undertaking, sharing themes in dialogue fashion or in harmonic cooperation. Also noticeable is the equanimity with which the orchestra participates in the unfolding soundscape, as melodies are passed seamlessly between the larger ensemble and the solo instruments.

The slow movement, in the tradition of Mozart’s poignant adagios, is one of great emotion. Almost operatic in nature, the wordless aria is marked by a yearning pathos. Obviously, this movement is meant to focus on the lyrical capabilities of each solo instrument. The finale is a set of ten variations on a folk-like melody wherein the soloists are highlighted in passages of bravura virtuosity.

This, Mozart’s last and greatest concerted work for strings, follows by four years the five violin concertos of 1775. In comparing this later work with the concertos, the eminent Mozart biographer Alfred Einstein noted, “Every trace of galanterie has disappeared” to be replaced by the “revelation of the deepest feeling” characteristic of the best compositions of Mozart’s maturity.
Mendelssohn – Symphony No. 3 (Scotch)
Felix Mendelssohn was born into one of Germany’s most prominent Jewish families. His grandfather, the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, was an important cultural figure and a wealthy textile merchant, while his father was a successful banker. As a result, Felix enjoyed a privileged upbringing. When it became apparent that he possessed immense musical ability, his father’s wealth and social standing helped to support and indulge his son’s prodigious gift. So it was, that as Felix approached his twentieth year, his father sponsored an extensive European tour for him, first to the British Isles then to Italy.

Upon arriving in London in 1829, the young musician conducted several concerts but performed extensively as a pianist. He then journeyed north to Scotland for a period of relaxation and sightseeing. On July 30, he and his friend Karl Klingemann visited the ruins of Holyrood Chapel at Holyrood Palace near Edinburgh. Mendelssohn wrote to his family: “In the deep twilight we went today to the palace where Queen Mary lived and loved. The chapel below is now roofless. Grass and ivy thrive there and at the broken altar where Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland. Everything is ruined, decayed, and the clear heavens pour in. I think I have found here the beginning of my Scottish Symphony. Alongside this description, Mendelssohn jotted down the opening notes of what would become the symphony’s main theme.

Though conceived in Scotland and given attention almost immediately upon Mendelssohn’s return to Germany, work on the new symphony progressed slowly. In 1831 the composer wrote to his sister Fanny: “The Scottish symphony is not yet quite to my liking. If any brilliant idea occurs to me, I will seize it at once, quickly write it down, and finish it at last.” Brilliant ideas were not, evidently, forthcoming; the work’s completion was put off until 1842, a long enough delay that the “Scottish-ness” of the symphony would have been difficult to identify had the composer himself not initially identified it. In fact, by the time of its premiere Mendelssohn deleted the label, realizing that the symphony’s Scottish-ness was not its most essential character. The composition was sufficiently devoid of reference to Scotland that it elicited one of the most embarrassing moments in the history of music criticism when Robert Schumann (relying upon fake news?) wrote of the symphony’s “beautiful Italian portraiture” and how “its splendor made him regret that he had never visited Italy.”

The four movements of the symphony are played without pause. It opens with a slow, dark-hued introduction based upon those notes Mendelssohn first wrote down in the deep twilight at Holyrood. Armed with this knowledge, it is almost impossible not to envision the mists of the Scottish highlands. The main, faster section is a stormy movement built out of a restless theme first heard in the strings. The scherzo is a model of joyful lightness, melodically and rhythmically in the style of Scottish folk music, although no direct quotations have ever been identified. The slow movement that follows is one of Mendelssohn’s many songs without words, in which haunting melodies and rich instrumental colors combine to create a soundscape of tender beauty. The symphony concludes with a grand, almost martial, finale marked “Allegro guerriero” (fast and warlike). Although two themes do battle, the contest remains civilized and ultimately fades to a peaceful truce. The conclusion comes unannounced, as a majestic, affirmative new theme appears to bring this exceptionally dramatic piece to a fitting close.

Program notes by Dr. Michael Vaughn

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Jeff Yang is the violin and recorder soloist with Mannheim Steamroller and former first violinist with Corky Siegel’s Chamber Blues. He has also served as concertmaster and conductor for Il Divo on their 2009 tour. Currently, Jeff is a member of the Palomar Ensemble in Chicago and performs regularly with the Grant Park Symphony and the Chicago Philharmonic. He served as Concertmaster for the New Millennium Orchestra, Spoleto Festival Orchestra in Italy, National Repertory Orchestra, Emerald City Philharmonic, and as a principal player of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, International Festival Orchestra in Israel, and Octava Chamber Orchestra. We know him here in Skokie as our concertmaster!

Outside of the classical scene, Jeff has played with jazz violinist Randy Sabien, harmonica virtuoso Howard Levy, singer/songwriter Marcy Levy, and be seen in many PBS productions of Soundstage with artists such as Faith Hill, Jewel, Dennis DeYoung, Burt Bacharach, Peter Cetera as well as on numerous Oprah shows with Andrea Bocelli and Il Divo.

In the fall of 2009, Jeff opened Chicago Strings, a full service violin shop in Evanston, Illinois.
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ARIEL CHAPMAN, VIOLIST

Boston-based, Ariel completed a Bachelor in Music at the New England Conservatory under Martha Katz and is completing her Graduate Diploma under Dmitri Murrath. Before studying at NEC, Charlotte native Ariel studied with Lewis Rosove and Sally Chisolm and was an active part of Midwest Young Artists.

Ariel has won the Walgreens Concerto Competition, as well as the Discover Chamber Music Competition and the St. Paul Chamber Music Competition. She has performed with many groups, including concertos with the Knox-Galesburg Symphony, and with Festivals in France, Colorado, Maine and Wisconsin.

Ariel’s sound has a rich melancholy to it, which comes both from her unique instrument, commissioned by her late father Eric Chapman, from French luthier Frank Ravatin and her passion for both eclectic musical interests and non-musical interests. Ariel believes that music is better when made by an individual whose ideas have been influenced by other interests. She has used NEC’s diverse offerings to study music different from what she performs, from historical jazz to Afghani music. Additionally, history and geography (especially in the form of travel) are powerful non-musical interests that contribute to her musical interpretations.

In Skokie we know her as Skokie Symphony’s Principal Trombonist Adina Salmanssohn’s daughter. Welcome to our stage Ariel!

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Dr. Robert G. Hasty is the Music Director of the Kenosha Symphony Orchestra, Principal Conductor of the Highland Park Strings, and the conductor of the Chamber Orchestra and the Philharmonia at the Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University where he also serves as the Associate Director of Orchestras. He is also Artistic Director of the International Schools Choral Music Society.

Dr. Hasty began his career teaching music in the public schools in Southern California. This included tenure in administration as the District Music Coordinator of the Capistrano Unified School District where he supervised the K-12 music education program and its staff of 39 teachers. He also served an elected term as Vice President in charge of String Education for the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association.

A noted researcher in music cognition, Dr. Hasty has been an author for two publications delivered at the 7th International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition in Sydney, Australia. A book on his research on conducting has recently been published: “Critical Listening While Conducting”. The European Society for Cognitive Sciences of Music invited him to speak at their conference in Portugal on these studies.

As a conductor, Dr. Hasty has appeared with the All-American College Orchestra at Walt Disney World, Beijing Youth Orchestra, Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra, Grant Park Symphony Orchestra, Irvine Youth Symphony, La Primavera Orchestra, Merit Symphony Orchestra, Metropolis Youth Symphony, National High School Music Institute Orchestra, Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra, NU Opera Theater, NU Contemporary Music Ensemble, and the Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra. His performances have been broadcast on WFMT radio in Chicago and on the Big Ten Network. Dr. Hasty’s international engagements include performances at the National Concert Hall of Taipei, Taiwan, the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, China, the Shanghai Oriental Arts Center Concert Hall in Shanghai, China, and the Busan Cultural Center Main Theater in Busan, South Korea. He is sought after as an honor orchestra conductor by groups across the United States. He is a member of the conducting and music education faculties at the Bienen School of Music.

Dr. Hasty continues to perform as a freelance violinist and violist. The Aliso Viejo Symphony Orchestra, with whom he has served as concertmaster, the Capistrano Valley Symphony, and the Mozart Classical Orchestra are a few of the ensembles that have requested his violin services. Dr. Hasty was the violist on the world premiere of Kathy Henkel’s Moorland Sketches, which was broadcast on KUSC-FM Los Angeles. Currently, he is living out a long-held musical fantasy as a fiddler, performing and recording with singer-songwriter Christina Trulio’s band (ASCAP).
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- Jeff Yang, *Concertmaster*
- Ron Meyer, *Assistant Concertmaster*
- Margarita Solemensky
- Fran Sherman
- Kjersti Nostbakken
- Bob Spitz
- Wally Pok Hon Yu

### Violin 2
- Michael Kleinerman, *Principal*
- Madeline Capistran
- Alyssa Isaacson
- David Ratnor
- Charles Evans
- George Sobolevsky

### Cello
- Alyson Berger, *Principal*
- David Cowen
- Nazgul Bekturova
- Howard Miller
- Mike Taber
- Marcia Chessick
- Susan Hammerman
- Bonnie Malmed

### Bass
- Karl Erik Seigfried, *Principal*
- Jacque Harper

### Flute
- Karen Frost, *Principal*
- Barb Holland

### Oboe
- Tricia Wlazlo, *Principal*
- Kelsey O’Brien Flath

### Clarinet
- Walter Grabner, *Principal*
- Irwin Heller

### Bassoon
- Lynette Pralle, *Principal*
- Jennifer Speer

### Trumpet
- Chris Haas, *Principal*
- Dan Price

### Horn
- Matthew Oliphant, *Principal*
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- Laura Stone

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- Jay Renstrom

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