~ The Apollo Ensemble Presents ~

A concert featuring the music of Mozart,
Strauss, Bizet, and Schmitt

The Apollo Ensemble of Boston
Elias Miller, Conductor

Saturday, 20 July 2019 at 8:00 PM
The First Church in Belmont,
Unitarian Universalist

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Violin I
Jesse Macdonald (Concertmaster)
Yip Wai Chow
Lynn Giam
Stephanie Atwood
Allison Dobbs

Violin II
Deborah Palmer (Principal)
Leonardo Espinosa
Meghan Titzer
Toshi Motoyama
Elizabeth Cai

Viola
Jessica Chen (Principal)
Emilie Catlett
Jóia Findeis

Cello
Nolan Peard (Principal)
Sarah Nichols
Annalise Schlaug

Bass
Aidan Phipps (Principal)
Harrison Dilthey

Flute
Michael Tabak$^{\omega\psi\delta\beta}$
Sara Simpson

Oboe
Joel Bard$^{\psi\beta}$
Michael Ochoa$^{\omega\delta}$

English Horn
Joel Bard$^{\delta}$

Clarinet
Yi-Ting Hsieh$^{\beta\delta}$
Yhasmin Valenzuela$^{\psi\omega}$

Bassoon
Shu Satoh$^{\delta\psi}$
Matt Capone$^{\beta}$
Michael Meehan$^{\omega}$

Contrabassoon
Michael Meehan$^{\psi}$

Horn
Jimmy Zhou$^{\psi\delta}$
Angela Chi$^{\omega\beta}$
Kevin O'Brien
Steven Eddins

Trumpet
Patrick Sanguineti$^{\omega\psi\beta\delta}$
Don Mitchel

Timpani
Jeremy Lang$^{\omega\beta}$

ω – First in *Don Giovanni* (Overture)
ψ – First in *Suite in B-flat Major*
δ – First in *Lied et Scherzo*
β – First in *Symphony in C*

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~ Program ~

Overture to Don Giovanni — W. A. Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Suite in B-flat Major, Op. 4 — Richard Strauss (1864 - 1949)

I. Präludium
II. Romanze
III. Gavotte
IV. Introduction und Fuge

Intermission

Lied et Scherzo, Op. 54 — Forent Schmitt (1870 –1958)

Jimmy Zhou, Horn

Symphony in C — Georges Bizet (1838 – 1875)

I. Allegro vivo
II. Andante, Adagio
III. Allegro vivace
IV. Allegro vivace

~ Notes ~

Mozart:

The darkest of all of his operas, Mozart's *Il dissoluto punito, ossia il Don Giovanni* ("Don Giovanni, the Rake punished") tells the story of the serial womanizer and rapist Don Giovanni and his many womanly conquests. The opera opens as the eponymous character attempts to force himself upon Donna Anna. Screaming for help, Donna Anna attracts the attention of her father, the Commendatore, who blocks the Don's escape and challenges him to a duel. Without thinking much of it, Don Giovanni kills the Commendatore and flees the scene with his trusty servant, Leporello. Ultimately, this act proves to be the Don's undoing.

In the opera's second act, Don Giovanni and Leporello meet up in a graveyard that houses a statue of the Commendatore, replete with a plaque that reads "Dell'empio che mi trasse al passo estremo qui attendo la vendetta" ("I await revenge against the scroundel who killed me"). The statue begins to speak, warning Don Giovanni that his laughter and fun will cease before sunrise. Unfazed, Don Giovanni invites the statue to dinner, and the statue accepts. The drama comes to a head in the opera's penultimate scene when Leporello runs into his master's house exclaiming that the Commendatore's statue has appeared at the door. Two terrifying chords (a diminished seventh chord and then the dominant of D minor) are heard as the Commendatore's statue knocks at the door. Upon his entrance, the statue demands that Don Giovanni repent, and Leporello begs his master to follow the statue's orders. When Don Giovanni refuses, the statue and his demonic minions drag him down to hell.

It is a similar set of chords in D minor (this time tonic and then dominant but with the same orchestration, rhythm, and dynamic) that begins the opera's overture, foreshadowing Don Giovanni's eventual fate. The overture's slow introduction features more of the ominous music from Don Giovanni's final encounter with the Commendatore before launching into an upbeat and playful sonata form in D major.

While the overture puts music to Don Giovanni's hedonism, it is not without darker flourishes that hint at the drama to come.

Premiered in 1787 in Prague with a libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte (who also wrote the libretti for Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Così fan Tutte)*, *Don Giovanni* is considered one of Mozart's greatest masterpieces.

Strauss:

Having grown up in a musical family, Richard Strauss had become an advanced composer, violinist, and pianist by the time he was a teenager. By the time he completed his now famous *Serenade for Winds, Op. 7* in 1881, the young composer had already developed an extensive portfolio of published music including a festival march, two piano trios, a string quartet, a piano sonata, and a violin concerto as well as unpublished drafts of more than one hundred additional works including a full symphony. Strauss' compositions from this time owe much to the musical tastes of his father, Franz Strauss. A celebrated French horn player who served as principal horn of the Munich Court Opera, Franz loved the music of the classical era above all else, idolizing Mozart and enjoying Haydn and early Beethoven as well. Though he led Munich's horn section in the premieres of *Tristan und Isolde*, *Das Reingold*, and *Die Walküre*, and earned Wagner's heartfelt praise for his performances ("Strauss is a detestable fellow but when he blows his horn one cannot sulk with him"), Franz detested Wagner's music and forbade his son from studying it. It is thus no surprise that Strauss's first wind serenade bore such a striking resemblance to the music of Mozart.

The publication of his *Wind Serenade* helped bring about an important turning point in Richard Strauss' life. The year of its premiere, Strauss had enrolled at the University of Munich where he studied art and philosophy instead of music. Perhaps he would not have become a professional musician at all if famed conductor Hans von Bülow had not stumbled across the serenade, programmed and performed it, and subsequently invited him to serve as his assistant

conductor in Meiningen. (The young Strauss would ultimately become the principal conductor this orchestra in 1885 when Bülow left to become music director of the Berlin Philharmonic.) Shortly after the successful premiere of his *Wind Serenade* in 1882, Bülow requested another work for the same 13-instrument ensemble. Strauss was undoubtedly all too eager to recreate the success of the serenade, and he began on a new, multi-movement work: his *Suite in B-flat Major, Op. 4*.

Like his serenade, Strauss's *Suite in B-flat Major* is perhaps closer to the music of Mozart and the other classical masters than it is to the intensely chromatic and Wagnerian works Strauss would begin work on several years later. The first two movements of the suite in particular look back to his serenade. The first movement, *Präludium*, is a relatively straightforward sonata form albeit without a real development section, while the second, *Romanze*, perhaps resembles a more modern take on the baroque concerto grosso, featuring prominent solos for the clarinet. The latter does include a surprisingly chromatic and dramatic final section, perhaps foreshadowing Strauss' music yet to come.

However, Strauss's compositional style was significantly more developed by 1884 than it had been 3 years before, and in the suite's final two movements, Strauss pushes its music far beyond what he had accomplished in his earlier works with respect to harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, and form. These movements sound shockingly symphonic and complex for an ensemble of only thirteen instruments. Strauss shows off an almost Beethovenian ability to derive a large-scale form from a simple melodic figure (three notes of a descending chromatic scale in this case) in the suite's third movement, *Gavotte*, (a movement which shares more in common with a scherzo than with a gavotte). After recalling the work's second movement during the andante cantabile introduction to its final movement, *Introduction und Fuge*, Strauss wastes no time demonstrating his contrapuntal prowess and dives into a massive fugue that features nearly every possible contrapuntal technique and

permutation (invertible counterpoint, subject inversion, subject augmentation, and numerous stretto sections). While still an early composition for a composer who lived to age 85, Strauss's *Suite in B-flat Major* demonstrates that he had already developed formidable compositional skills, a well-developed ear for orchestral writing, and a willingness to employ a diverse harmonic and formal language by the time he was 20.

Schmitt:

While he never achieved widespread fame and remains somewhat obscure today, Florent Schmitt was certainly one of the several most important and influential French composers around the turn of the 20th century. Born in 1870 in Meurthe-et-Moselle, Schmitt was a part of *Les Apaches*, a group whose members included composers Maurice Ravel, Igor Stravinsky, and Manuel De Falla, as well as a number of important poets, painters, instrumentalists, and critics. Schmitt studied with such storied composers as Gabriele Fauré and Jules Massenet at the Paris Conservatoire. In 1900, Schmitt won the extremely prestigious Prix de Rome, and Stravinsky admitted that Schmitt's 1907 ballet, *La Tragédie de Salomé*, was one of his favorite pieces during the time he wrote *The Rite of Spring*. One can hear the influence of Schmitt's music in Stravinsky's great ballets, particularly with respect to Stravinsky's use of polyrhythms, polytonality, and percussive chordal ostinatos. Schmitt's reputation was somewhat damaged toward the end of his life in the 1930s when he served as a music critic for *Le Temps* (one of France's most important daily newspapers at the time). Schmitt's various controversial views including his Nazi sympathies and his desire to proclaim them loudly to the public led others to ostracize him and declare him unhinged. Ultimately, even Stravinsky denounced his music.

Written in 1910, Schmitt's *Lied et Scherzo* for double wind quintet with solo French horn is a thrilling and remarkably fresh piece of music that certainly anticipates Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and *The Rite*. (While a listener might imagine the work to be somewhat derivative

of Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, he or she might be surprised to learn the piece was actually written earlier.) Schmitt dedicated the work to Paul Dukas, another important French composer whose famous *Villanelle* also uses the French horn as a solo instrument in a concertante-like form. Schmitt prepared several arrangements of the work for different instrumentations, and the work was actually premiered in 1911 in an arrangement for cello and piano. We will present the work today in its original form.

Bizet:

Bizet began work on his first symphony just four days after his seventeenth birthday in October of 1855. Bizet finished the piece a month later and then promptly shelved it, never attempting to have it published or performed. The piece had been merely a student composition for his teacher at the Paris Conservatoire, Charles Gounod, and it owed a great deal to Gounod's own first symphony, a work the famed opera composer had completed earlier that same year.

While Bizet made seemingly no references to the existence of the work in any of his letters, he reused some of the music in other pieces, and held onto the manuscript. At some point after Bizet's death in 1875, his widow, Geneviève Halévy, passed the manuscript on to Venezuelan-French composer and conductor Reynaldo Hahn who deposited it in the conservatory's library archives. Musicologist Jean Chantavoine discovered it there in 1933. Word of the discovery reached Douglas Charles Parker, one of Bizet's biographers, and he borrowed the manuscripts and showed them to the famous Austrian conductor Felix Weingartner. In 1935, 80 years after the work's creation, Weingartner conducted its premiere in Basel, Switzerland. The piece became an immediate sensation, and audience members and critics alike declared that the work was as impressive as other masterpieces by composers in their teenage years such as those by Mozart and Mendelssohn.

Bizet set the symphony's first movement in standard sonata form.

This movement contains two direct quotes from Gounod's *Symphony No. 1 in D Major*. The second movement progresses in an ABA form with a short and clever fugue acting as a developmental B section. The initial A section and its return are concertante-like and feature extended, operatic oboe solos with soft, pizzicato accompaniment in the strings. The form of this movement mimics that of Gounod's *Symphony in D*, and Bizet even copied the order of fugal entrances in his B section from his teacher. The symphony's third movement is a standard orchestral scherzo, and while the opening section is quite original, Bizet references Gounod's *Symphony in D* in the movement's trio. Bizet's final movement is also a standard sonata form with a brief codetta that draws on the material already used in the movement. While Bizet certainly drew much inspiration from Gounod's first symphony, Bizet's symphony is generally considered the far superior piece. Despite its borrowing, it contains many marks of Bizet's originality and showcases his excellent early grasp of harmony and form and his exceptional talent for creating melodies.

- Notes by Elias Miller

~ Biographical Notes ~

Conductor:

Music Director **Elias Miller** has established a reputation as one of Boston's leading young conductors and orchestra builders. As music director of the Harvard Early Music Society from 2016 until 2019, Miller conducted a series of critically acclaimed operatic productions in the Boston area including performances of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, the Boston premiere of J.A. Hasse's *Alcide al Bivio* in collaboration with the Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra, the North American premiere of Telemann's 1745 *Johannespassion*, a production that featured famed countertenor Charles Humphries and earned Miller an enthusiastic preview in the *Boston Globe*, and, most recently, the North American premiere of J.A. Hasse's *Sanctus Petrus et Sancta Maria Magdalena.* Miller's other recent conducting highlights include appearances with the University of Michigan's University Philharmonia and Campus Philharmonia orchestras, the Ann Arbor Camerata, and the Weston Wind Quintet & Friends as well as an independent opera production at the University of Michigan during which Miller conducted two fully staged performances of William Grant Still's *Minette Fontaine*.

Miller cofounded the Apollo Ensemble with flutist Michael Tabak in May of 2018, and this is Miller's fourth concert to date with the new orchestra. Other ensembles he has conducted in the past include the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra Chamber Players, the Chromos Collaborative Orchestra, the Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players, and Harvard College Opera. He has also served as the assistant conductor of the Boston Chamber Symphony.

Originally a cellist, Miller graduated from Harvard University summa cum laude in 2016 after transferring there from the New England Conservatory/Tufts University Dual Degree Program. He is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in orchestral conducting at the University of Michigan where he studies with Kenneth Kiesler. Miller's past conducting teachers include his father, David Alan

Miller, conductor of the Albany Symphony Orchestra, and Federico Cortese, conductor of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra. Outside of conducting, Miller performs actively as a collaborative pianist, accompanying singers and instrumentalists on a variety of lessons, masterclasses, and recitals.

Cofounder:

Michael Tabak studied flute, theory, and ensemble at the Juilliard School of Music Preparatory Division where he was rated "Exceptional" by the woodwind faculty jury and was principal flute and soloist multiple times with the orchestra. He has been principal flute of orchestras including the National High School Symphony at Interlochen, the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, the Fine Arts Symphony, the Boston Chamber Symphony, and others. An avid chamber musician, he is a founding member of the Weston Wind Quintet, the Atrium Winds, and the Aujourd'hui Ensemble. He has displayed a talent for assembling orchestras and chamber groups from scratch. While in high school, he organized and was flutist of the Long Island Wind Quintet, whose oboist became principal oboe of the Munich Philharmonic and whose clarinetist became principal clarinet of the Atlanta Symphony. He recruited the members of the Boston Chamber Symphony from its inception in 2012 through 2016, and often expands his chamber music groups to play pieces for larger ensembles. Live recordings of many of those concerts are available, free of charge, at soundcloud.com/wwq/sets.

~ A Note of Thanks~

Janice Zazinski and The First Church in Belmont, Unitarian Universalist for the use of their parish hall as a concert venue
Rev. Betty Walker, and Unity Somerville for the use of their small hall as a rehearsal space
Nancy Nicoloau, Rev. William Kelly, and Saint Paul Parish for the use of their lower church as a rehearsal space
Dorisiya Yosifova for her help creating the poster

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of Boston