

## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

*Composer, Pianist*  
(Salzburg, 1756 — Vienna, 1791)

### ***EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK (SERENADE NO. 13 IN G MAJOR), K. 525***

*Composed: 1787*  
*Premiered: unknown*  
*Duration: ca. 16 minutes*  
*Scoring: strings*

*Eine kleine Nachtmusik* is at once one of the most familiar yet one of the most mysterious of Mozart's works. He dated the completed manuscript on August 10, 1787, the day on which he entered it into his catalog of compositions. There is no other contemporary record of the work's provenance, composition or performance. It was the first piece of the serenade type he had written since the magnificent C minor Wind Octet (K. 388) of 1782, and it seems unlikely that, at a time when he was increasingly mired in debt, he would have returned to the genre without some promise of payment. Indeed, he had to set aside his furious preparations for the October premiere of *Don Giovanni* in Prague to compose the piece. The simple, transparent style of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, reminiscent of the music of Mozart's Salzburg years and so different from the rich expression of his later music except for the dances he wrote for the Habsburg court balls, suggests that it was designed for amateur performance, perhaps at the request of some aristocratic Viennese player of limited musical ability. Though sunny and cheerful throughout, when seen in the light of its immediate musical companions of 1787 — *Don Giovanni*, A major Violin Sonata (K. 526), C major and G minor String Quintets — *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* takes on an added depth of expression as much for what it eschews as for what it contains.

## JOSEPH HAYDN

*composer*  
(Rohrau, Austria, 1732 — Vienna, 1809)

### **CONCERTO NO. 1 FOR CELLO IN C MAJOR, HOB. VIIB:1**

*Composed: early 1760s*  
*Premiere: soon after it was composed, perhaps in Vienna, with Joseph Weigl as soloist*  
*Duration: ca. 24 minutes*  
*Scoring: two oboes, two horns and strings*

#### *Overview*

Haydn was among the most industrious composers in the history of music. He summarized his philosophy of no-nonsense professionalism when he wrote, "I know that God has bestowed a talent upon me, and I thank Him for it. I think I have done my duty and been of use in my generation by my works. Let others do the same." His talent for simple hard work and seemingly boundless fecundity was apparent as soon as he joined the musical staff of the Esterházy family in 1761, his employer for the next half century. Not only did he compose, but he was also general administrator of the music establishment, chief keyboard player for chamber and

orchestral concerts, and conductor of the orchestra. Regarding the press of Haydn's duties, the noted scholar H.C. Robbins Landon related an amusing anecdote from those years: "He was extremely busy at this time, and when he wrote out the score of the First Horn Concerto he mixed up the staves of the oboe and the first violin and wrote on the score, as he corrected his mistake, 'Written while asleep.'"

Haydn was never so rushed, however, that he lost concern for the musicians in his charge. He composed concertos for a number of them so they could show their skills in the best light to their employer. He lived in the same so-called "music building" with them, and became their close friend and trusted advisor. He was a witness at many of their weddings, and he even stood as godfather to a number of their children. One who extended to him this last honor was the cellist Joseph Franz Weigl, a close friend for many years. It was for Weigl that Haydn wrote the lovely C major Cello Concerto as one of the products of those fertile early years with the Esterházy. The Concerto was certainly played at one of the palace concerts, after which Haydn entered its opening measures into a catalog of his compositions that he compiled in 1765. The piece then disappeared for 200 years.

Though Haydn may have written as many as a half dozen concertos for cello, it was long thought that only one had survived — that in D major. Some works once attributed to him proved to be spurious; others were lost. It was this latter fate that had apparently befallen the C major Concerto, whose only trace seemed to be the listing in Haydn's 1765 catalog and another entry by his assistant, Joseph Elssler, in an 1805 index. Ironically, it was the upheaval of the Second World War that rescued the work from obscurity. After the war, the Czech National Library's confiscation of all the great private collections in the country resulted in a mountain of manuscripts that took scholars years to catalog. Near the bottom of the pile, in the former holdings of the Counts of Kolovrat-Krakovsky, Oldrich Pulkert and Robbins Landon discovered a complete set of parts for the C major Concerto in 1961. "Here," wrote Landon, "is the major discovery of our age, and surely one of the finest works of the period." The Concerto has come round full circle, from one of Haydn's most important early works, to total obscurity, to an established place in today's cello repertory. A similar happy circle pertained to the composer's relationship with the Weigl family. The child to whom Haydn was godfather was, like his father, named Joseph, and the son became one of the most popular and successful composers of comic opera in Vienna. He never forgot Haydn. When Haydn's health broke and he was living his last days in a comfortable Vienna apartment, one of his most frequent visitors was the younger Weigl. He came to share with the older composer the respect and love that had maintained the family friendship for fifty years, a friendship whose beginning was marked by this Concerto.

#### *What To Listen For*

The C major Cello Concerto was written during the years of transition from the Baroque to the Classical era, and shows traits of both the old and new styles. Its harmonic and melodic components are largely of the modern type, while certain formal characteristics and modes of expression look back to the models of preceding generations. The first movement gives the impression of an old-fashioned stately procession, much in the grand style of Handel's orchestral works. Also backward-looking is the movement's abundance of thematic material. At least six

melodic ideas are presented by the orchestra in the first twenty measures alone, far more than the one or two upon which most of Haydn's later movements are founded. This technique is closer to that of the opening orchestral section of the Baroque concerto, with its little treasury of motivic material that is mined throughout the movement, than to the two or so contrasting themes found in the exposition of the typical Classical concerto form.

This Concerto is one of the very few works in which all of the three movements are in the same form, as though Haydn were experimenting to discover what sort of musical material best fit into this particular construction. Each movement comprises alternations between the orchestra and the soloist, the basic formal principle of the Baroque concerto. There are four orchestral sections interspersed with three for the cellist. Unlike the Baroque model, however, the three cello sections take on the properties of exposition, development and recapitulation with the intervening orchestral episodes serving as introduction, interludes and coda. The soloist is provided with an opportunity for a cadenza in the closing orchestral coda. There are only two exceptions to this pattern in the Concerto: the second movement has no orchestral interlude before the soloist's recapitulation and there is no cadenza in the last movement.

Much of the charm of this Concerto lies in the manner in which the vigorous young composer poured the new wine of sentiment and melody into the old bottles of form and nobility of spirit. It is of such music, and of the man who wrote it, that Mozart said, "He alone has the secret of making me smile and touching me to the bottom of my soul."

### **MAX BRUCH**

*Composer, Conductor, Teacher*  
(Cologne, 1838 — Berlin, 1920)

### ***KOL NIDREI FOR CELLO AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 47***

*Composed: 1878-1880*

*Premiered: October 20, 1881 in Leipzig, with Adolph Fischer as soloist*

*Duration: ca. 10 minutes*

*Scoring: two each of woodwind instruments, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, harp and strings*

### *Overview*

The ancient Jewish melody *Kol Nidrei* is sung at the opening of the Yom Kippur service, on the eve of the sacred Day of Atonement. Having been passed down by oral tradition rather than by written record for most of its history, the *Kol Nidrei* came to exist in many forms. Two of the best-known versions of the chant were set down by Ahron Beer (1738-1821), compiler of one of the earliest notated collections of Jewish service music and traditional songs. The root from which these variants grew may extend as far back as the eighth century, when the singing of the *Kol Nidrei* was introduced into the Yom Kippur service. The melody originated in the Ashkenazic tradition, which encompassed those Jews who settled from the Rhine eastward to Siberia. There was inevitably contact between these Jews and their Christian neighbors, and the

ancient music of both groups shows mutual influence. From this musical melting pot sprang a group of songs for synagogue use, including the *Kol Nidrei*, called the *Missinai* melodies. They were reserved for the most solemn feast days of the year — New Year and the Day of Atonement — and their name, derived from that of Mount Sinai, indicates the special reverence in which they were held. They include motifs that were apparently borrowed from Burgundian polyphony, French troubadour song, German folk and secular music and Gregorian chant. These melodies originated at a time when the life of the Ashkenazic Jews was dominated by martyrdom, despair and expectation of the Messiah, and they often possess a keening, heroic beauty.

#### *What To Listen For*

Bruch's haunting setting of the *Kol Nidrei* is not so much a set of variations on the chant as a fantasia that springs from its general musical characteristics and dark, solemn mood. Following a prayerful opening phrase from the orchestra, the solo cello, taking the role of the cantor, presents the chant simply, then wraps elaborate embroidery around the basic melodic shape before giving another unadorned statement of the song. The middle section, glistening with the ethereal sounds of the harp, exudes a spirit of gentle animation over which the cello sings a new theme of Bruch's invention. The quiet intensity of the beginning comes again over the work as it nears its closing measures, with a final gesture of peace and serenity rising through the full compass of the cello.

### **FRANZ SCHUBERT**

*Composer*

(Vienna, 1797 — Vienna, 1828)

### **SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN B-FLAT MAJOR, D. 485**

*Composed: 1816*

*Premiered: October 3, 1816 in Vienna*

*Duration: ca. 27 minutes*

*Scoring: flute, pairs of oboes, bassoons and horns, and strings*

#### *Overview*

Schubert composed incessantly and his devoted band of friends were delighted to sing and play what he wrote. Franz von Hartmann recorded of one of these Schubertiads, "There was a huge gathering [including] Gahy, who played four-hand piano music gloriously with Schubert, and Vogl, who sang almost thirty splendid songs.... When the music was over there was grand feeding and dancing. At 12:30 [we went] home. To bed at 1 o'clock." Supplementing the songs and piano works for these Schubertiads was a growing collection of orchestral pieces composed for other amateur musical soirées. A family string quartet, comprising his brothers Ferdinand and Ignaz on violins, his father on cello and Franz on viola, attracted other players and soon evolved into a small orchestra. They rehearsed at first in the Schubert household, but as the membership grew new quarters had to be found for their activities, and they moved in 1816 to the apartments of Leopold von Sonnleithner. It was for one of those informal evenings that Schubert composed the sparkling B-flat Symphony.

### *What To Listen For*

The Symphony opens with a delicate curtain of woodwind harmonies. The violins present the main theme, a gracious melody built on the notes of the common chords. A shadow passes quickly over the music (technically, a brief excursion into the minor key — an expressive device Schubert learned from Mozart) before the main theme is repeated and extended (more shadows) as transition to the second theme. The compact development begins with a decorated version of the opening woodwind harmonies. A discussion of the decorating figure ensues as does a full recapitulation of the exposition's materials. The lovely *Andante* is built on two extended themes: the first is given immediately by the strings; the second is also played by the strings, with obbligato phrases from the oboe and bassoon. Though the third movement is marked "*Menuetto*," in tempo and temperament it is truly a scherzo; the bucolic central trio features the bassoon. The closing movement recalls the vibrant finales of Haydn in its clear melodic structure, rhythmic vivacity and witty use of dynamics.

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