ARCO Chamber Orchestra

Tuesday, April 9, 2019
7:30 PM
Hodgson Concert Hall

PROGRAM

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major, KV 414
   Allegro
   Andante
   Allegretto

Evgeny Rivkin, piano

INTERMISSION

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) Fantasie in F minor for piano four hands, Op. 103, D. 940
   arranged for violin and string orchestra by Efrem Podgaits
   US premiere
   Allegro molto moderato
   Largo
   Scherzo. Allegro vivace
   Finale. Allegro molto moderato
   Levon Ambartsumian, violin

Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857) Valse – Fantasie
   arranged for chamber orchestra by Igor Kholopov
   Tempo di valse
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)
Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major, KV 414

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a child prodigy—he began composing at age four, and he was a fine pianist as well as a violinist. Born the son of the great musician and pedagogue, Leopold Mozart, young Wolfgang Mozart was able to unfold his musical ability, establishing his name from an early age.

Moving away from the father’s shadow, Mozart moved to Vienna in 1782, trying to be independent. Contrary to what his father anticipated, by 1785, Mozart became Vienna’s favorite composer and performer. And unlike most contemporary musicians, who had a hard time making a living, Mozart was able to make enough for living. Muzio Clementi, the famous pianist said about Mozart that he “had never heard anyone perform with such spirit and grace.”

During the first four years Mozart was in Vienna, from 1782 to 1786, he wrote fifteen piano concertos. He performed as a concert pianist, performing his own works and derived most of his income from his concerts. He wrote to his older sister Maria Anna Mozart that, “Every day there are concerts...it is impossible for me to describe the rush and bustle. Since my arrival your brother’s fortepiano has been taken at least a dozen times from the house to the theater or to some other house.”

Mozart wrote his Piano Concerto No.12 in 1782, while simultaneously working on two other piano concertos, No. 11 and No.13 for his debut concert in 1783. He intended a home performance with string quartet, so he scored No. 12 lightly, using strings with optional woodwind parts.

Mozart was enthusiastic about those three concertos, saying that “they are very brilliant, pleasing to the ear, and natural, without being vapid.” Mozart was especially fond of his concerto in A major: he played it often and taught it to his favorite students, as well as writing two different cadenzas.

The concerto has three movements. The first movement is Allegro. The second movement, Andante, has the theme from the overture to La clemenza di Tito by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It was a memorial to Bach, who had died on New Year’s Day of 1782. The finale is a light and gentle rondo.

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)
arr. Efrem Podgorski
Fantasie in F minor, D.940
Franz Schubert was a prolific composer who wrote over 600 Lieder, 9 symphonies, chamber music including 15 string quartets, piano quintet piano sonatas, 7 masses, operas, as well as incidental music during the 31 years of his life.

He wrote the Fantasie in F minor in 1828, his last year. It was a productive year for Schubert, even though he was suffering from poverty and poor health. In addition to Fantasie in F minor, he wrote two symphonies, a string quintet, three last piano sonatas, Mass No. 6, and two vocal works in same year.

Schubert wrote for piano four hands more than other composers. Amongst all piano four hands repertoires, Fantasie in F minor is one of finest and well-known work. The music is dedicated to his pupil, Karoline Esterhay, whom he was in love with. Schubert wrote the piano four hands so he could be close to her. Because of nature of the composition, the two players sit right beside each other, breathe together, and the performers’ hands often cross. Sadly, his love was never returned.

There are four movements in the Fantasie and each movement is connected, played without a pause. The first movement, Allegro molto moderato, starts with a lyrical and expressive melody in minor key that sounds nostalgic. The second movement Largo has a double dotted rhythm in a slow tempo which adds intensity and passion. The third movement is Scherzo, Allegro vivace. This triple meter movement contrasts strongly between minor and major keys, suggesting a light, bouncy, dance juxtaposed with serious, sincere footsteps. The last movement Finale: Allegro molto moderato, has a complicated fugue section among all four voices. The piece ends tragically, slowly and quietly sinking into the dark F minor.

MIKHAIL GLINKA (1804-1857)
arr. Igor Kholopov
Valse-Fantasie, for orchestra in B minor, G. ii213
Mikhail Glinka was among the first Russian composers to gain international recognition and also one of the most influential composers in Russian modern music. He made a great contribution to define distinct Russian style that is uniquely different from European style. When Tchaikovsky referred Glinka’s opera, “A Life for the Czar” and its symphonic movement “Kamarinskaya,” he said, “It’s all in Kamarinskaya, just as the whole oak is in the acorn. And for a long time Russian composers will draw from this rich source, for it will need much time and much strength to exhaust all its wealth.”

Perhaps Glinka’s visit to Italy has set the path for the opera. Glinka heard Donizetti and Bellini conduct the premières of their respective operas Anna Bolena and La sonnambula in Milan, Italy. He drew inspiration from his travels and as a result he began to compose chamber music. For example, he wrote Divermento Brillante on a theme from Bellini’s Opera La Sonnambula in 1832. The work showcases the bel canto style, melody, and lyrical theme. Meanwhile, Glinka had his own ways to harmonize; light and ostinati style accompaniment texture that is unlike the European four-part texture and unusual and surprising harmonic progression.

Glinka was more defined in his style and developed Russian character when he composed Valse-Fantasie. The composition is in a minor key that is uncommon because waltz composition is in major key exception for few compositions like Shostakovich’s Second Waltz. In Valse-Fantasie, Glinka’s expressive and lyrical melody in B minor is accompanied by mysterious and surprising harmonies.

Glinka originally wrote Valse-Fantasie as a piano piece in 1839. Later it was first orchestrated by the conductor, Herman (his first name unknown) in 1845. As Glinka mentioned in his Memoirs, Herman “transposed it very successfully for his own orchestra, along with the Waltz Fantasy in B minor.” The same year, Glinka orchestrated it for large symphony orchestra and in 1856 he arranged it.
Nizhny Novgorod College of Music. He earned his Master of Music from the Moscow Conservatory and his Doctor of Musical Arts from the Moscow Conservatory.

Dr. Rivkin has won several awards for his playing, including top prizes in the Bavarian Radio Musik Competition in Munich, the International Tchaikovsky Competition held in Moscow, the USSR National Piano Competition of St. Petersburg, and the Russian National Piano Competition held in Moscow. In 1998 he won the First prize in the 1998 International McMahon Piano. Evgeny Rivkin came to the University of Georgia in 1995 as a professor at the School of Music. Before coming to UGA, Rivkin was a professor of piano at the Latvian Academy of Music in Riga, Latvia. In addition to presenting master classes worldwide, Rivkin continues to perform as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States, Russia, Canada, Brazil and Europe.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

LEVON AMBARTSUMIAN, Regent's and Franklin Professor of University of Georgia, USA, studied in the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory. In 1977 he became the First Prize winner of Zagreb International Violin Competition headed by Henryk Szeryng. Two years later he was a prizewinner of the Montreal International Competition, and in 1981 he won the All-Union Violin Competition in Riga. Levon Ambartsumian was distinguished as Honored Artist of Armenia in 1981 and Honored Artist of Russia in 1997. He has collaborated with conductors and composers such as Valery Gergiev, Vladimir Fedoseev, Maxim Shastakovich, Aram Khachaturian, Alfred Schnittke, and many others. He performed and gave master classes in the USA, Canada, Europe, Brazil, and South Korea. In 1989 Ambartsumian founded the Moscow Chamber Orchestra ARCO which regularly performed in Russia and abroad and now resides in Athens, Georgia, USA. Ambartsumian joined the faculty of the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory in 1978 where he taught for 15 years. For two years, he was a Visiting Professor at Indiana University School of Music. In 1995, Mr. Ambartsumian joined the University of Georgia’s School of Music as the Franklin Professor of Violin, while remaining the artistic director and conductor of ARCO. Because he was able to bring some of his students to America with him, the home base of the orchestra shifted to this hemisphere. The repertoire of the orchestra includes music of all epochs: from baroque till our day’s music.

EVGENY RIVKIN was born in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, receiving his early training and Bachelor of Music from the Nizhny Novgorod College of Music. He earned his Master of Music from the Moscow Conservatory and his Doctor of Musical Arts from the Moscow Conservatory.

Dr. Rivkin has won several awards for his playing, including top prizes in the Bavarian Radio Musik Competition in Munich, the International Tchaikovsky Competition held in Moscow, the USSR National Piano Competition of St. Petersburg, and the Russian National Piano Competition held in Moscow. In 1998 he won the First prize in the 1998 International McMahon Piano. Evgeny Rivkin came to the University of Georgia in 1995 as a professor at the School of Music. Before coming to UGA, Rivkin was a professor of piano at the Latvian Academy of Music in Riga, Latvia. In addition to presenting master classes worldwide, Rivkin continues to perform as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States, Russia, Canada, Brazil and Europe.

ARCO Chamber Orchestra

VIOLIN I
Shakhoda Azimkhodjaeva
Anastasia Petrunina
Fei Tong
Yidan Zhang
Lucas Scalambrogna
Paulo Batchauer
Courtney Doglis
Anna Ambartsumian

VIOLA
Elitsa Atanasova
Seonkyu Kim
Yeasol Kang

CELLO
Valentina Ignjic
Andrea Ceia

BASS
Davide Sobello

ARCO Chamber Orchestra

FLUTE
Jovana Damnjanovich

OBOE
Daniel Ellis

CLARINET
D. Ray McClellan

BASSON
Amy Pollard