

## **Concerto Grosso in D Major, Op. 6, No. 1**

Arcangelo Corelli

Towards the end of the 17th century and at the beginning of the 18th, roughly speaking from 1680-1730, Rome experienced one of the most splendid periods in its musical history. The twelve concertos of Opus 6 have come down to us in a luxurious edition, printed by Estienne Roger of Amsterdam in 1714. These twelve published concertos were the fruit of a strict process of selection and underwent reorganization. Each of the twelve concertos is made up of movements written at different times and on different occasions. We can notice that Corelli has groups of movements which are juxtaposed but basically independent of one another. Within each group contrasting movements are bound together by cadences and tonality. The structure of the first concerto is as follows: Largo—Allegro—Largo—Allegro—Largo—Allegro—Allegro.

## **Serenade for Strings, Op. 20**

Sir Edward Elgar

The Serenade was written 1892, shortly after Elgar's marriage. Its origin lies in an earlier work, "Three Pieces for Strings", written in 1888 and premiered at the Worcesterhsire Musical Union. The Serenade, presumably a revised version of the "Three Pieces," was played by amateurs in Worcester. The first professional performance, took place in New Brighton in 1899 under the composer's direction. This work opens in the key of E minor, with a pulsating rhythm by the violas. The expressive second movement leads us to the final allegretto. Once again Elgar returns the pulsating rhythm as he explores the rich sounds of the divided string sections and the soaring beauty of the solo violin.

## **Zigeunerweisen, Op. 20**

Pablo de Sarasate

Pablo de Sarasate was an international violin phenomenon who regularly performed concerts throughout Europe, as well as in the music capitals of both North and South America. Like many violin virtuosos before and after him, he started young and never looked back, with his first concert at age eight and a premiere prix (first prize) at the Paris Conservatoire at age 17. He wrote more than 50 works, all showpieces to display his exceptional skill as a violinist. Zigeunerweisen is among his best-known works and is certainly the most extraordinary in terms of its explosive and scintillating writing. Marilyn Maingart has kept this character of virtuosity in her arrangement, displaying her wonderful technique and splendid showmanship.

## **The Witches Dance**

Nicolo Paganini

Paganini attended a ballet by Sussmayr and it made a lasting impression, who soon composed a set of Variations on Sussmayr's music for the entrance of the witches. Paganini entitled his variations "Le Streghe" (The Witches), Opus 8, although one English-language publication called them Paganini's Dream. A grand, majestic introduction for violin and orchestra acquaints the listener with tempo changes in Sussmayr's theme and the virtuosity of the ensuing variations. Three main variations and an intermediate section marked "Minore" display Paganini's virtuoso tricks: multiple stops in Variation I, rapid crossings over multiple strings, pizzicatos and harmonics in Variation II, chromatic runs in octaves in the Minore, and runs up and down the G string alternating with multiple harmonics in Variation III. The Finale presents an incredible display of violin pyrotechnics, including runs, arpeggios, and harmonics played high on the G string. These technical difficulties inherent in "Le Streghe" combined with the enchanted subject matter, helped foster the growing association between Paganini and the Devil.

## **Tempo di Concerto in C Minor**

Lorenzo Turchi-Floris

Dedicated to Ettore Boschi

The concerto for piano and string orchestra is in one movement, just like our lives. The piece represents the idea of our hearts beating, a persistent sense of pulse and rhythm bound by strange melodies and feelings. It is romantic, funny and dramatic music with an over-riding sense of rebellion; the ideas in this work show our desire for peace and love in a consistent battle against the injustices of life and our eternal fight with ourselves.

## **Concerto in G Minor, F. XI, n 21, RV 157**

Antonio Vivaldi

Antonio Vivaldi, known as the "Red Priest" for his flaming red hair, was most influential in his concertos, over 400 of which were written for and performed by his young students at the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice. Europeans traveled from afar to hear the orphaned girls perform at weekly Sunday concerts. His concertos soon became famous throughout Europe, their virtuosity heavily influencing violin technique as well as the concerto form. Until this point concertos had relied on counterpoint and polyphony. Vivaldi brought a dramatic simplicity to the form and created a structure which led to the classical concerto.

Vivaldi's concertos usually follow a three movement pattern, beginning with Allegro, followed by a slow movement in the dominant key, ending with another Allegro. He was the first composer to give the slow movement, with its cantabile melody, equal importance to the faster movements. The opening Allegro of this concerto presents a sense of dark drama with suspensions alternating in the violins over a descending chromatic line in the low strings. In contrast, the middle Largo

movement is composed of scale patterns gently leading up to a suspension. The final Allegro features the cello in an exciting rapid descent accompanied by raucous arpeggios and repeated 16th notes in the upper strings.

**Suite in A Minor**  
**for Flute, Strings and Cembalo**  
Georg Philipp Telemann

“Lully is admired, Corelli let himself be praised: only Telemann is above all praise.” This is an indication, by a contemporary critic of how highly prized Telemann was in his own time. Yet, until recently, his phenomenal productivity of works for every conceivable occasion was dismissed as “worthless scribbling.” Suite in A minor, along with his other suites (Darmstadt), illustrate Telemann’s skill in combining the lively and audacious elements of Italian taste with the contrapuntal legacy of his native Germany. Here, Telemann draws upon diverse styles, introducing a French type overture, an Italian Air and a Polonaise.

It was above all in his Overtures, that Telemann was able to prove himself a master of mixed taste. “Overture” to Telemann meant an opening in general terms “because this instrumental piece opens the door, as it were to the following pieces.”

We find striking crisp dotted rhythms, dazzling contrapuntal texture, delightful harmonic and melodic treats, all expressively written. Encountered are displays of technical virtuosity written for the flute. It is wild, with some faintly sinister tones, beautiful melodies and flowing scale passages occurring throughout this composition, all which create a challenge to the world’s greatest flute players.

**Introduction and Tarantella Op. 43**  
Pablo de Sarasate

The Introduction and Tarantella is dedicated to Fermin Toldeo, a friend of Sarasate, and was composed in 1899. The sunny introduction (moderato) is relatively short, giving way to the frenetic, non-stop excitement of the more extended tarantella (allegro vivace) in C Major.

**“Hoe Down” from Rodeo**  
Aaron Copland

“Hoedown” from Rodeo is a dance within a dance. Copland quite literally quotes dance tunes from the 19th century Anglo-American square dance tradition. After a rhythmic introduction that evokes the open-fifth tuning of fiddles, “Bonaparte’s Retreat,” McLeod’s Reel,” then other tunes follow in close succession—always in a strict tempo and regular meter. Towards the end, Copland reintroduces “Bonaparte’s Retreat” in canon, before returning to the Rodeo theme which slows into the climactic joining of the Cowgirl and the Wrangler. “Bonaparte’s Retreat” is then resumed by the full string orchestra, which ends the piece with a grand fanfare. The “Hoedown” exists in many versions, one made famous by a television commercial for beef.