

Musical Notes from Maestro Futterman

Welcome to Jane Austen's World

Mozart: Overture to Don Giovanni

The woodwind octet was the Jazz quartet of the 18th Century. Every court and castle, from the lowliest duke to the king's palace had one to perform at dinners and functions. Just as the Jazz combo in every 20th Century hotel lobby immediately learned the hit tunes from the latest musical or movie, the woodwind ensembles of Europe learned and performed the tunes from Mozart operas just days after they were premiered in the great opera houses. Mozart himself immortalized this system in his opera Don Giovanni, in which a woodwind octet performs the hit tunes from La Cosa Rara of Padre Martini and even his own Marriage of Figaro. At the beginning of the 19th Century, the most common woodwind ensemble was reduced to the woodwind quintet, still the most common today. In the spirit of Mozart, and following his own practices, I have created an arrangement of his Don Giovanni Overture.

Beethoven: The Soldier/The Minstrel Boy

Many classical music aficionados are unaware that Beethoven composed and published a number of delightful Irish folk song arrangements. These songs were immensely popular during his lifetime.

Mozart: Piano Trio No. 5

It has often been said that symphonies are written to please the audience, while chamber music is written to please the performers. The Mozart Trios were first performed by musicians who gathered for an enjoyable evening with friends in a private household. This is still true today. Welcome to our intimate soirée.

Wainwright: Crazy Jane

Harriet Wainwright (c. 1766–1843), also known as Mrs. John Stewart, or Harriet Wainwright Stewart, was one of the few, famous, female, British composers of the Regency period. Her life is fascinating and includes living in India for 15 years, starting in the late 1790's. Her surviving work includes songs and operas. No less a personage than Joseph Haydn praised her opera Comala, when he attended a performance in 1792.

Vanhal: Clarinet Sonata

Johann Baptist Vanhal (1739–1813) brings us a story of rags to almost riches. He was born a serf in a Czech peasant family but ended his life in a very nice home in Vienna, as a well-known composer who had published at least 73 symphonies, 95 sacred works, and a large number of instrumental and vocal works. He is considered the very first Viennese composer to have supported himself into old age without being beholden to any patron. He excelled at the violin and organ as a child and his talent was recognized early by Mozart and Haydn. It is well documented that he played in a string quartet together with Haydn, Mozart and Dittersdorf in 1784.

Bach: *Partita for Solo Flute*

Most of our audience will understand that a Sarabande and a Bourée Anglaise are Baroque dances, but in the early Regency period there were still many people who remembered how to do these dances, and this gave them far greater meaning. To put this in perspective for our generation, imagine the pleasure of recognition if your evening's entertainer were to launch into a Charleston or perhaps a Mambo.

Scarlatti: *Le violette*

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725) was born in Palermo, Sicily but worked most of his life in the absolute center of Italian vocal music, Naples. This song of unrequited love has been a hit and standard repertoire for vocalists since it first appeared more than three centuries ago.

Text translation: Morning dew, sweetly scented on the graceful violets, you stand shyly, half obscured between the leaves, and you scoff at my desires that are too ambitious.

Stradella: *Pietà, Signore!*

Many scholars do not believe that this divine entreaty was written by Alessandro Stradella (1636-1682) but rather, that it was composed by Fétis or even Rossini, and then sold to a publisher for some quick cash. Nonetheless, it is one of the greatest church arias ever written.

Text and translation:

Pietà, Signore, di me dolente! Signor, pietà, se a te giunge il mio pregar; non mi punisca il tuo rigor, meno severi, clementi ognora, volgi i tuoi sguardi sopra di me. Non fia mai che nell'inferno, sia dannato nel fuoco eterno dal tuo rigor. Gran Dio, giammai sia dannato nel fuoco eterno dal tuo rigor!

Have mercy, Lord, on me in my misery! Lord, have mercy if my prayer rises to you, do not punish me severely. (Please be) less harsh and always merciful, (when) looking down upon me. Never let me be condemned to hell and the eternal fire of your severity. Almighty God, never let me be damned to hell and the eternal fire of your grim sternness.

Program notes and text translations by *Alan Futterman*