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2021-22 Season



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UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

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Spring 2022

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CU ★ PRESENTS is the home of performing arts at the University of Colorado Boulder.



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The College of Music acknowledges that the university sits upon land within the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples. Further, we acknowledge that 48 contemporary tribal nations are historically tied to Colorado lands.

CU Philharmonia Orchestra

Joel Schut, conductor

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 8, 2022

Grusin Music Hall

Program

***Barber of Seville* Overture**

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

Seven Miniatures for Piano

Florence Price (1887-1953)

I. Andante in E-Flat Major

Elizabeth Lo, piano

Nelson Walker, orchestration

II. Dream Boat

Erich Brady, piano

Dianna Link, orchestration

III. Honeysuckle (or) A Southern Sky

Luke Lozano, piano

Logan Dougherty, orchestration

IV. Honeysuckle at Dusk

Aggie Wagman, piano

Max Wolpert, orchestration

V. Little Melody in E-flat

Pearl Ennsle, piano

Ilan Blanck, orchestration

VI. Song Without Words (Pleading)

Sharon Hui, piano

Jordan Holloway, orchestration

VII. Memory Mist
Lizzie French, piano
Ben Morris, orchestration

Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Op. 21

Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827)

- I. Adagio molto - Allegro con brio
- II. Andante cantabile con moto
- III. Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace
- IV. Adagio - Allegro molto e vivace

Program notes

***Barber of Seville* Overture**

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

To say that the premiere of *Rossini's Il barbiere di Siviglia* ("The Barber of Seville") was an unmitigated failure, would in no way be an exaggeration. There seems an unending litany to the blunders that took place that fateful evening in 1816 at the Teatro Argentina in Rome. Rossini's first complication was perhaps of his own making: he based his opera on the already popular French play by Pierre Beaumarchais, which had already been set popularly in opera form by the senior composer, Giovanni Paisiello. Paisiello had his allies in the audience and their only purpose seemed to be to disrupt the production. That was just the beginning of Rossini's woes.

There were well-documented instances of a main character tripping over a prop during his entrance and falling flat on his face, having to sing his aria with a bloodied nose; another singer had the misfortune of plummeting through a trap door that had accidentally been left open; a character in the midst of his serenade broke a string on his accompanying instrument; and another poor sop didn't adequately find his mark, instead turning the wrong way and walking into some already precariously placed scenery. One might imagine this could be enough buffoonery for one evening, but sadly, no. During one of the opera's most climactic scenes, a stray cat strode across the stage, eliciting giggles from the audience, as well as Rossini's cast. (It was never proven if one of Paisiello's cohorts engineered the feline's entrance, or if it was just another in a string of remarkably unlucky events of the premiere.) Rossini could bear no more and left the theater before the opera's curtain calls.

Luckily for Rossini, Italian opera-goers of the time were both fickle, and in possession of very short memories. The second performance, completely devoid of the first night's high jinks, allowed the audience to truly recognize the genius of *The Barber of Seville*. Rossini chose not to attend the second performance, fearing the same types of disasters as the previous night's. While he was at home worrying about what was happening during the second performance of Seville, he heard an uproar in the street. When he looked out

his window, he saw a large group of people shouting and carrying torches approaching his dwelling. At first, he feared they were coming to harm him, until he heard the words, *Vivat Rossini* (“Long live Rossini”). Apparently Rossini’s memory was better than the audience’s, because when he realized they wanted him to come out and accept their accolades, he muttered something unprintable and stayed indoors, refusing to acknowledge their tribute.

As with most of Rossini’s operas, he composed them at lightning speed, *The Barber of Seville* in just three weeks. He initially had wanted to write a Spanish-inspired overture for *Seville*, but ran out of time, and using one of his tried and true tricks, resorted to recycling. He chose an overture originally written in 1813, which he used again in 1815, but this time, there was no extricating his use of the overture in 1816 and its felicitous attachment to *The Barber of Seville*. In true *opera buffa* style, Rossini’s *Il barbiere* is filled with the requisite loves, villains, disguises, pseudonyms, misunderstandings, shenanigans and in traditional *buffa* form, the good guys almost always win.

The overture follows many of Rossini’s opera overture formats, this one beginning with a slow introduction in E major with a marking of *Andante maestoso*. The introduction vacillates between forte chords involving the whole orchestra, and softer and smaller complements of instruments for its often reflective and introspective moments. In typical Rossini format the introduction is followed by a sprightly allegro in E minor, an allegro that once stated, treats the listener to the true ambience of the action to follow. With this, comes the recognition that this overture could never again be attached to another work other than *The Barber of Seville*.

This is one of the more recognizable opera overtures in popular culture, familiar to both opera lovers and the reluctant and nescient opera detractors. Lest we forget the cartoon’s contribution to *Seville*’s popularity—Woody Woodpecker’s *The Barber of Seville* (1944) and Bugs Bunny’s creative *The Rabbit of Seville* (1949). Even the seminal sitcom, *Seinfeld* (1993) used the allegro of the overture during one of its most farcical plot lines involving a barber and an infidelity scandal. —*Note by Lori Newman*

Seven Miniatures for Piano

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Florence Price was born in Little Rock Arkansas in 1887. Her musical education began at the age of three with piano lessons from her mother. At the age of 19, she graduated with the highest honours earning a double major in piano teaching and organ performance from the New England Conservatory of Music. Five years after moving to Chicago, Price entered the 1932 Rodman Wanamaker Music Contest, which was a national competition for African-American composers. Price came first in the piano composition category with her Sonata in E Minor and also won the symphonic category with her Symphony in E Minor. Price is recognised as the first African-American woman composer to achieve national and international success.

—Note by Samantha Ege

This evening's performance of Florence Price's Seven Miniatures for piano is a collaboration between the CU Philharmonia Orchestra, the CU Composition Department and the CU Piano Department. Works will be performed first in Price's original piano setting and immediately followed by an orchestration performance. This project seeks to amplify underrepresented voices on the orchestral stage as well as add to orchestral literature in creative and collaborative ways.

Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Op. 21

Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Beethoven grew up knowing and hearing the symphonies of Mozart and Haydn. When he was born, Mozart was busy writing his Salzburg symphonies. When he was a teenager, Mozart was writing his extraordinary late symphonies. Haydn had many years before he honed his symphonic skills. In 1770, Haydn already had 49 symphonies under his belt and was on his way to write 106 (if one includes the Hoboken categorization). In 1795, when Beethoven began to sketch a symphony, Haydn produced the Drumroll and London symphonies: numbers 103 and 104.

It is not surprising that Beethoven's First Symphony did not appear until 1800. The success of the two classical masters was very likely intimidating. It is also

not surprising that his First Symphony bore many of the hallmarks of classical style he had studied with both Haydn (unsuccessfully, as they did not get along) and Mozart (although the latter is not fully documented). Furthermore, it is surprising that with his debut into the symphonic genre, he was hailed as their successor and a voice of the future. That newness emerged in the very first measures of Opus 21. It was not a full-fledged echo of poise and obedience to classical values.

Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 premiered on April 2, 1800 at the Burgtheater in Vienna (there were no concert halls at that time), which the composer had rented for a concert to promote his own music. The *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* reported "this was the most interesting concert in a very long time." Ironically, just as he was entering a successful phase in his compositions, he was given the bad news that his hearing problem was incurable. By 1802, in the Heiligenstadt Testament he was even considering suicide. His commitment to the art of music and his place therein saved him from himself.

The first movement, marked *Adagio molto-Allegro con brio*, begins with a twelve-measure introduction; in place of the classical style introduction, Beethoven opens with a series of chords coming from winds and horns with pizzicato accompaniment from strings. The first iteration is dominant-tonic movement in F major. The second touches on C, but the last moves strongly into G major. What this means is that the composer is breaking new ground, and shying away, misleading us, from the home key of C major. One critic mentioned "such a beginning is not suitable for the opening of a grand concert in a spacious opera house" (Christopher Gibbs: Program notes, Philadelphia Orchestra, 2006). Additionally unusual are the dynamic markings of *fp* (a sudden loud to soft) in each measure. At the *Allegro con brio* marking, Beethoven finally assures the C major tonality with a soft introduction of the first theme presented by violins. Herein is the beginning of the corpus of the work. The second more lyrical theme is introduced by oboe in conversation with the flute. From this point forward, the music behaves in classical direction and format, but with more dynamic contrasts and harmonic colorations than usual. The development is concise, focusing on the first theme, and the recap expands the initial ideas.

The second movement, *Andante cantabile con moto*, provides a simple theme, which is the subject of the entire movement. Hushed trumpets and drums add delicate coloration.

Beethoven titles his third movement *Menuetto* (an older form of minuet). It is a far cry from the anticipated courtly stately dance. This music rushes headlong into a sprightly scherzo-type affair: animated, energetic, and relentless.

“Although the DNA of Beethoven’s First Symphony was classical there were definite mutations. Especially in the scherzo. Although marked as a menuetto the music was not majestic, poised or dance like. It was fast, marked *molto* and *vivace* to encourage a brisk pace. Beethoven’s metronome markings for *allegro* usually spanned 80 to 96. And with the modifiers the composer was wanting more zest. Overall this movement was a fitting goodbye to the eighteenth century” (Maynard Solomon). The graceful trio offers relaxation and serenity before the energy re-ignites until the finish.

Like the first movement, Beethoven teases us with a slow beginning before lifting the curtain on an exciting *Allegro molto e vivace*. Opus 21 concludes in high spirits featuring violin flurries in rapidly moving notes starting softly and scaling the heights into louder dynamics, the so-called Mannheim rocket. The Mannheim school (mid-18th century) created several orchestral innovations, which were dramatic, exciting, thrillers and novel for their time. The “rocket” is indeed like fireworks, and Beethoven launches a lot of them in this movement. Listen for the changes in tempi, as if gathering breath before dashing onward. Another Mannheim novelty is also present: the General Pause, sudden cessation of all sound and then almost immediate re-entry into high-octane movement. —Note by Marianne Williams Tobias

Personnel

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Joel Schut, conductor

Philharmonia Orchestra

Violin

Olivia Breen
Alyssa Byrne
Noah-Michael Carlson
Corbin Glover
Richi Hsieh
Alisia Johnson
Abigail Leaver
Jacob Lei
Logan Indge
Soria Nguyen*
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Elijah Pouliot
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Joey Aigner*
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Flute

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