

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Albert Combrink takes us *Inside the Concert* with notes on the programme

Introduction

The concert presents three works- each of which defined their era, and yet in their greatness, also became the swansong of that genre, as the works themselves opened the way to the musical language of the future.

J.S Bach's Organ Fugues are the pinnacle of abstract fugal writing, and his "Little Fugue" in G Minor is a textbook fugue written with such formal and technical control, that the fugal form itself simply had to evolve beyond Bach, or risk merely attempting to duplicate it.

Mozart's Wind Serenade K.375 is the pinnacle example of a style of background party-music that, but for a few Romantic Era examples, came to an end when the French Revolution hit Europe in full force. Mozart is also directly credited with unleashing the deeper expressive qualities of the woodwind instruments, and this work is the prime example.

Vivaldi simultaneously defined the decorative Italian Baroque Concerto Style, influencing all of Europe, but he wrote them so perfectly that the genre either had to copy Vivaldi or reinvent itself.

The entire orchestra (excluding percussion) will be represented in a programme of three chamber works that not only defined their eras, but also signified the end of those eras, because their individual achievement was so great that future generations had no choice but to use them as a starting point for the next level of discoveries.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Fugue in G minor, BWV 578: "Little" Fugue (for Organ, arranged for Brass Quintet by Canadian Brass)



From the Italian "Fugir" which means "to fly", the Fugue is a musical form whereby a theme or musical idea, is repeated at specific intervals, "chasing" each other. The Fugue is rhetorical musical form rather than dramatic: from Renaissance experiments in imitation, the Fugue grew to become a cornerstone of the Baroque exploration of an idea or statement, unpacked and explored for everything it had to offer. This was different to what was to follow in the Classical Era: Sonata and Rondo forms exploring two contrasting ideas pitted against each other, or used to set up, develop, and potentially resolve, a central conflict.

Fugue in G minor, BWV 578, (popularly known as the *Little Fugue*), is an Organ piece written by Bach during his years at Arnstadt in the early 1700s. It is one of Bach's best-known fugues with a wide variety of arrangements. Early editors of Bach's works attached the title of "Little Fugue" to distinguish it from the later "Great Fantasia and Fugue" in G minor, BWV 542, which is longer in duration and larger in overall conception.

The Fugue was originally written for four voices, with the feet playing the low bass notes on the organ's pedals. The Fugue builds from a simple statement of the theme to a virtuosic display where 4 versions of the same theme play at the same time, including what was, at that time, unusually virtuosic writing for the feet.

For those who explore the academic pastime of finding and tracing mathematical elements in Bach's music – and yes, there is an entire discipline around this "Bachian Numerology" – in bar 33, at the exact midpoint of the work, Bach introduces, for the first time, the Fugue theme in a new key, outside the expected key-loop of the opening section. Audiences might not realise exactly what is going on theoretically, but the result of this

is a dramatic heightening of emotional tension at exactly the same time that Bach starts shortening the intervals at which the Fugue theme entries "chase" each other. We can not say for sure how many of these instances in Bach's music is by instinct, calculation or innate understanding of musical structure hitherto unexplored, but we do know that these not only abound in Bach's work, but also had the power to turn a relatively simple organ fugue into a masterpiece of emotional escalation: the perfect marriage of form and emotional content.

Bach's work has been transcribed for various forces, but the Brass Quintet – a relatively modern invention - has been fertile ground for Bach Transcriptions. The organ is a wind instrument, where phrasing is not limited to the duration of human breath, but the fact that a Brass Quintet is essentially one wind-instrument made up of different breathing players – gives it a practical kinship. *Canadian Brass* has been one of the top Brass Ensembles in the world since its inception in 1970. Known for popularising the genre, with shows of humour and virtuosity, their legacy of transcriptions is also legendary. They leave behind over 100 CD recordings and more importantly, a library of over 600 new compositions and transcriptions made or commissioned especially for them.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Serenade No. 11 in E-flat major, K. 375

1: *Allegro maestoso* 2: *Menuetto 1* 3: *Adagio* 4: *Menuetto 2* 5: *Allegro*



Of the more than 600 works that Mozart wrote in his short lifetime, several were devoted to the woodwinds, a section he is said to have made into stars. More than 50 of these fell into the category of background-music for garden parties, and were mostly products of his teenage years.

In Act 2 of *Don Giovanni*, the Don has an 8 piece wind-band entertaining him at dinner, including a self-parodying slightly drunken version of an aria from Mozart's opera - *The Marriage of Figaro*. The scene suggests that in Mozart's day, a wind band like this was a feature of many aristocratic households. Lower on the rank than String players, these windplayers lived and ate with the servants, dressed like servants, and generally did servant's tasks when not playing. Because of their superior carrying quality outdoors, wind instruments were particularly favoured for garden parties. For that purpose, an informal genre of music developed for wind bands and mixed ensembles with winds in a dominant role. Whether for indoor or outdoor use, this informal instrumental music was always written for performance as background to leisurely feasting, promenading and idle conversation.

Mozart was perhaps the first to write parts for specific instruments – up until this time, the woodwind parts had been pretty much interchangeable, but he took the distinctive characteristics of each instrument into account and dedicated a part to each. Bassoonists can be grateful that he elevated that instrument from continuo to full player.

This process of delving deeper into the emotional character of the sound of each distinct instrument, mirrors what Mozart was doing in the world of opera at the same time. He deliberately started associating certain voice-types with certain characters and delineating the emotional range of each character to a higher degree than had ever been done before.

Peripatetic and versatile, Mozart spent his life travelling between Austria, Italy and France writing operas, symphonies, five violin concertos, some 30 concertos for one, two, or three pianos and various concertos for other instruments and works. Haydn called him the greatest composer he had known, a sentiment fully subscribed to by Mahler, Strauss, Tchaikovsky and many others. His Clarinet Concerto and his Gran Partita are recognised as his greatest achievements for wind instruments.

The Serenade No. 11 in E-flat major K. 375 was composed by Mozart on 15 October 1781 for St Theresa's Day. It was originally scored for six players – two clarinets, two horns and two bassoons. Mozart later revised the score to include parts for two oboes. The work was written for the sister-in-law of Joseph Hickel, a very popular Viennese court painter who painted some 3000 portraits during his tenure. Mozart had hoped that the blessing of such a famous artist would manifest a few more commissions, but sadly this was not to be. Hickel was friends with Johann Kilian von Strack, a valet to Archduke Ferdinand, for whom he arranged chamber music concerts, with himself booked as the cellist. An introduction would have served as entry to imperial musical life. The Archduke was, sadly, only three at the time, so his response was noted for posterity, but clearly other politics was at work, as Haydn's biographer C.F. Pohl maintained that both music by both Haydn and Mozart were actively suppressed by Von Strack.

The world was changing, and the French Revolution was coming into view. Mozart's three great works for wind instruments - K. 361, 375 and 388 – both summarised the best elements of the dying divertimento traditions, while transcending its limitations.

Movement 1: Allegro maestoso – Fast, lively and majestic. The musicians announce their arrival in a customary march, designed to attract attention and stop the chitter-chatter of the guests. The sheer variety of tonal colours created by only 4 pairs of instruments, is truly remarkable orchestration virtuosity.

Movement 2: Menuetto 1 – Minuet 1. A rather formal dance in $\frac{3}{4}$ time follows, interrupted by a pensive Trio section dominated by gentle horns.

Movement 3 Adagio – Slow. The balmy and blissful central bridge of the arch the work forms, took audiences by surprise. The sheer depth and beauty conjured out of, essentially, a backing band of peasants, was unprecedented. Lyrical Clarinet solos and a haunting Oboe epilogue give expression to one of Mozart's movements of almost unearthly perfection and beauty.

Movement 4: Menuetto 2 – Minuet 2. A rather prim street-song follows. The Trio is slightly more robust, but the A and B sections of this ternary structure stay tightly knitted together.

Movement 5: Allegro – Lively – As if the composer has been keeping the end of proceedings as a surprise, the final movement is the most overtly festive and brilliant, with sparkling writing giving all instruments to show off their skill at fast runs and intricate interlocking coordination.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) **Le Quattro Stagioni (The Four Seasons)**

Along with Bach and Handel, Vivaldi ranks amongst the greatest composers of the Baroque composers. His influence during his lifetime, was widespread across Europe and gave birth to many imitators and admirers. He pioneered new developments in orchestration, violin technique, and, surprisingly, gives us one of the first examples of *Programme Music*. Programmatic music is a type of instrumental art music that attempts to render an extramusical narrative through musical means. The narrative itself might be offered to the audience through the piece's title, or in the form of program notes, or accompanying poems, inviting imaginative correlations with the music.



Many of his compositions were written for the all-female music ensemble of the Ospedale della Pietà, a home for abandoned children. Vivaldi began studying for the priesthood at the age of 15 and was ordained at 25. Vivaldi also had some success with expensive stagings of his operas in Venice, Mantua and Vienna. After meeting Emperor Charles VI, Vivaldi moved to Vienna, hoping for royal financial

support. However, the Emperor died soon after Vivaldi's arrival, and Vivaldi himself died in poverty less than a year later.

After almost two centuries of decline, Vivaldi's musical reputation underwent a revival in the early 20th century, with much scholarly research devoted to his work. Many of Vivaldi's compositions, once thought lost, have been rediscovered – some as recently as 2015. Vivaldi wrote 50 operas, a large body of sacred music, and a large number of instrumental concertos. Of these, the four concertos collected as *The Four Seasons*, are undoubtedly the most famous.

The Seasons were first published in Amsterdam in 1725 as the first four of a set of twelve concertos by Vivaldi with the overall title *Il cimento dell' armonia e dell' inventione* (The contest between harmony and invention), Opus 8. They are dedicated to Count Morzin of Bohemia, and from that dedication we learn that these were not new works but that they had found favour with the count some years earlier. No autograph manuscript has survived. Martin Pearlman from *Boston Baroque* provides the following annotation for the sonnets which were very possibly written by Vivaldi himself.

Capital letters are placed next to lines in the sonnets, as well as in the score, to show us exactly where the effects mentioned in the poems are taking place in the music. In addition, captions over parts of the music -- sometimes over individual instrumental lines -- indicate pictorial effects even beyond those in the sonnets. No other concertos by Vivaldi contain such detailed programs. The sonnets printed below indicate with Roman numerals where the program for each of the three movements of a concerto begins.

Concerto No. 1 in E major, Op. 8, RV 269, "Spring" (*La primavera*)

1: *Allegro* 2: *Largo e pianissimo sempre* 3: *Allegro pastorale*

<p><i>La primavera</i></p> <p>Giunt' è la primavera, e festosetti (1) la salutari gl' augei con lieto canto, e i fonti allo spirar de' Zeffiretti con dolce mormorio scorrono intanto. Vengon coprendo l'aer di nero ammanto e lampi e tuoni ad annunziarla eletti; indi tacendo questi gl' augelletti tornan di nuovo al lor canoro incanto:</p> <p>e quindi sul fiorito ameno prato (2) al caro mormorio di fronde e piante dorme 'l caprar col fido can a lato.</p> <p>Di pastoral zampogna al suon festante (3) danzan ninfe e pastor nel tetto amato di primavera all' apparir brillante.</p>	<p><i>Spring</i></p> <p>1: Spring has arrived, and joyfully the birds greet her with glad song, while at Zephyr's breath the streams flow forth with a sweet murmur. Her chosen heralds, thunder and lightning, come to envelope the air in a black cloak; once they have fallen silent, the little birds return anew to their melodious songs;</p> <p>2: then on the pleasant, flower-bedecked meadow, to the happy murmur of fronds and plants, the goatherd sleeps next to his trusty dog.</p> <p>3: To the festive sound of rustic bagpipes nymphs and shepherds dance beneath the beloved sky at the glorious appearance of spring.</p>
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The famous bird calls among the violins in the first movement and the legato music of "the flowing streams" are interrupted by angry tremolos designated as "thunder" in the score. As the sky clears, we once again hear the bird calls. In the second movement, the solo violin line has the heading "the sleeping goatherd," while the gentle dotted rhythms in the accompanying violins are marked "the murmuring of the fronds and plants." The viola, however, depicts an effect that is not mentioned in the poem: its marking is "the barking dog" and the viola is told to play forcefully. (How the goatherd sleeps through the barking is not explained.) The closing movement, a "Pastoral dance," unfolds over the sound of bagpipes, imitated by sustained open fifths in the lower instruments.

Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 8, RV 315, "Summer" (*L'estate*)

1: *Allegro non molto* 2: *Adagio e piano – Presto e forte* 3: *Presto*

<p><i>L'estate</i></p> <p>Sotto dura stagion dal sole accesa (I) languie l'uom, languie 'l gregge ed arde il pino; scioglie il cucco la voce, e tosto intesa canta la tortorella e 'l gardellino.</p> <p>Zeffiro dolce spira, ma contesa muove Borea improvviso al suo vicino; e piange i pastorel perché sospesa tema fiera borasca e 'l suo destino.</p> <p>Toglie alle membra lasse il suo riposo (II) il timore de' lampi e tuoni fieri e de' mosche e mossoni il stuol furioso.</p> <p>Ah che pur troppo i suoi timor son veri: (III) tuona e fulmina il ciel, e grandinoso tronca il capo alle spiche e a' grani alteri.</p>	<p><i>Summer</i></p> <p>1: In a harsh season burned by the sun, man and flock languish, and the pine tree is scorched; the cuckoo unleashes its voice, and soon we hear the songs of the turtle-dove and the goldfinch. Sweet Zephyr blows, but Boreas suddenly opens a dispute with his neighbour; and the shepherd laments his fate, for he fears a fierce squall is coming.</p> <p>2: His weary limbs are robbed of rest by his fear of fierce thunder and lightning and by the furious swarm of flies and blowflies.</p> <p>3: Alas, his fears are only too real: the sky fills with thunder and lightning, and hailstones hew off the heads of proud cornstalks</p>
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The first movement of Summer closely follows the program laid out in the sonnet. The quiet stillness of the opening, headed "languishing in the heat," is broken by the voice of the cuckoo and then of the turtle dove and goldfinch in the solo violin, but the movement ends with the shepherd imagining a violent storm. The second movement contrasts the calm repose of the solo line against the mildly annoying dotted figures of the orchestral violins, which are designated

"flies and blowflies." This peaceful scene is repeatedly interrupted by the distant approach of thunder. The summer storm breaks in all its fury in the closing movement.

Concerto No. 3 in F major, Op. 8, RV 293, "Autumn" (L'autunno)

1: *Allegro* 2: *Adagio molto* 3: *Allegro*

<p><i>L'autunno</i> Celebra il villanel con balli e canti (I) del felice raccolto il bel piacere, e del liquor di Bacco accesi, tanti finiscono col sonno il lor godere.</p> <p>Fa ch' ogn' uno tralasci e balli e canti (II) l'aria, che temperata dà piacere, e la stagion, ch' invita tanti e tanti d'un dolcissimo sonno al bel godere.</p> <p>I cacciator alla nov' alba a caccia (III) con corni, schioppi e cani escono fuore; fugge la belva e seguono la traccia; già sbigottita e lassa al gran rumore de' schioppi e cani, ferita minaccia languida di fuggir, ma oppressa muore.</p>	<p><i>Autumn</i> 1: The countryman celebrates with dance and song the sweet pleasure of a good harvest, and many, fired by the liquor of Bacchus, end their enjoyment by falling asleep.</p> <p>2: Everyone is made to abandon singing and dancing by the temperate air, which gives pleasure, and by the season, which invites so many to enjoy the sweetness of sleep.</p> <p>3: The huntsmen come out at the crack of dawn with their horns, guns and hounds; the quarry flees and they track it; already terrified and tired out by the great noise of the guns and hounds, the wounded beast makes a feeble effort to flee but, overwhelmed, dies.</p>
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The opening of Autumn is marked "dance and song of the peasants." Soon, however, their liquor goes to their heads, and the indication "the drunks" at bar 33 suggests that the strong dance rhythm of the opening could become less steady, speeding up and slowing down whimsically. Just before the final ritornello, a brief slow section is headed "the drunks asleep." This anticipates the second movement, which is a more extended drunken sleep. Here the music is very still, with muted strings and only gentle motion in the harpsichord, which is instructed to arpeggiate. We are jolted from sleep by the last movement, "the hunt," in which the strings imitate horn calls and even individual gun shots.

Concerto No. 4 in F minor, Op. 8, RV 297, "Winter" (L'inverno)

1: *Allegro non molto* 2: *Largo* 3: *Allegro*

<p><i>L'inverno</i> Aggiacciato tremar tra nevi argenti (I) al severo spirar d'orrido vento; correr battendo i piedi ogni momento; e pel soverchio gel batter i denti;</p> <p>passar al foco i di quieti e contenti (II) mentre la pioggia fuor bagna ben cento;</p> <p>camminar sopra 'l ghiaccio e a passo lento (III) per timor di cader girsene intenti; gir forte, sdruciolar, cader a terra; di nuovo ir sopra 'l ghiaccio e correr forte sin ch'il ghiaccio si rompe e si disserra; sentir uscir dalle ferrate porte Sirocco, Borea e tutti i venti in guerra: quest'è 'l verno, ma tal che gioia apporta</p>	<p><i>Winter</i> 1: To shiver, frozen, amid icy snow in the bitter blast of a horrible wind; to run, constantly stamping one's feet; and to feel one's teeth chatter from the extreme cold;</p> <p>2: to spend restful, happy days at the fireside while the rain drenches a hundred people outside; to walk on the ice, and with slow steps</p> <p>3: to move about cautiously for fear of falling; to go fast, to slip and fall down; to go on the ice again and run fast until the ice cracks and opens up; to hear coming out of the iron gates Sirocco, Boreas and all the winds at war; this is winter; such are its delights.</p>
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Winter opens with shivering on the ice, interrupted by blasts of "horrible wind" in the solo violin. The stamping of feet and later the chattering of teeth described in the sonnet are marked in the score and clearly depicted in the music. The beautiful slow movement that follows is composed in layers: in the foreground, the melody line of the solo violin,

although it bears no heading, paints the joy of resting peacefully by the fireside; the accompanying violins, marked pizzicato and forte, are designated as "the rain," a patter of drops against the window that contrasts with the legato solo melody; in the background, the violas sustain quiet, long notes; and a solo cello gently energizes the underlying pulse of the bass line with light, fast octaves. The concerto and the final season of the year close with sliding on the ice, falling as it cracks, and a fierce fight of the winter winds, all of it following the program of the sonnet.

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1914, the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra in Cape Town is arguably the most versatile and active orchestra on the continent of Africa, contributing handsomely to Cape Town's global status and appeal. Through various incarnations from the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra to the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra and finally again the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, the CPO is financially and culturally sustainable, attracting some of the leading international artists of our time. A multi-functional orchestra, the CPO delivers a world-class orchestra service to all communities in the region, participating in festivals and concerts across all genres of music.

For more information visit www.cpo.org.za

