

CONCERT II

Saturday, November 21, 2009 at 8 pm

Sunday, November 22, 2009 at 3 pm

Itzhak Perlman, conductor

Anthony McGill, clarinet

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

A Midsummer Night's Dream: Overture, Op. 21 (1826)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Concerto for Clarinet in A Major, K. 622 (1791)

Allegro

Adagio

Rondo allegro

Mr. McGill

INTERMISSION

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Symphony No. 9 in C Major ("Great"), D. 944 (1826)

Andante – Allegro ma non troppo – Piu Moto

Andante con moto

Scherzo – Allegro vivace

Finale – Allegro vivace- Allegro vivace

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Anthony McGill

Anthony McGill, principal clarinetist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, has quickly earned the reputation of being one of classical music's finest solo, chamber and orchestral musicians. Before joining the MET Orchestra in 2004, he served as associate principal clarinet of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra for four years. With the MET Orchestra, Mr. McGill frequently performs in Carnegie Hall's Isaac Stern Auditorium, as well as Zankel and Weill Halls with the MET Chamber Ensemble. He can also be seen and heard on the *Live in HD* broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera.

On January 20, 2009, Mr. McGill performed "Air and Simple Gifts" by John Williams with Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman and Gabriela Montero at the Inauguration of President Barack Obama. Mr. McGill was a winner of the highly prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant in 2000 and has appeared as a soloist with orchestras including the Baltimore Symphony, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Hilton Head

Orchestra, Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, and The Curtis Orchestra. This season he will appear with the Peabody Orchestra, The New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra and the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra.

As a distinguished chamber musician, Mr. McGill has performed at the Marlboro Music Festival, Sarasota Festival, La Musica, Tanglewood, Music@Menlo, the Grand Teton Music Festival, Music from Angel Fire, Martha's Vineyard Chamber Music Festival, the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, Bridgehampton Chamber Festival and the Interlochen Music Festival. He is also a member of the newly formed Schumann Trio with violist Michael Tree and pianist Anna Polonsky.

Mr. McGill has collaborated with artists such as Itzhak Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, Midori, Lang Lang, Yefim Bronfman and Gil Shaham, as well as world-renowned string quartets including the Guarneri, Tokyo, Shanghai, Miami, Miró and Daedalus quartets. He has performed

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Program Notes

A Midsummer Night's Dream: Overture, Op. 21 . . . Felix Mendelssohn

(Born February 3, 1809, in Hamburg; died November 4, 1847, in Leipzig)

When Mendelssohn was seventeen, he and his sister Fanny used to sit in the garden of their Berlin home, reading aloud to each other German translations of Shakespeare's plays. He was especially captivated by *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and often acted out the roles. He told friends that in a state of "delirium" he conceived of the piece that would become this overture. In July 1826, he began writing a descriptive piece called *A Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*, and in August, had completed it. He originally intended that it be a descriptive fantasy, not an overture to anything, rather a short, imaginative equivalent of what Liszt dubbed, 20 years later, "the symphonic poem." Fanny and he played it for friends as a piano duet in November, and before year's end, he had orchestrated it. It premiered in February 1827.

The *Overture* magically conjures up Shakespeare's fairyland in an apparently episodic piece rich in melody and musical "events." Among them are the high-pitched opening chords, the songs and dances of the fairies, the running figure like the beating of fairy wings, the hunting horns of Theseus, the lovers' chases, the bucolic clowns' dances, and a sequence of tunes or fragments of melody among which is the hee-haw of Bottom, the Ass. After the donkey's bray, Theseus' horns sound again, and the fairy revels resume, their dreamy beauty intact. Mendelssohn develops the subjects some more before the overture closes with a charming coda. Mendelssohn dedicated the overture to the Crown Prince of Prussia.

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, in A Major, K. 622 . . . Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(Born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg; died December 5, 1791, in Vienna)

Among Mozart's greatest works, the *Clarinet Concerto* is the last major composition

that he completed. Often considered a seminal work of the clarinet repertory, it helped establish the clarinet as an equal member of the woodwind family and defined the clarinet idiom for the future.

Three months before his death, Mozart journeyed to Prague with the Viennese clarinetist Anton Stadler, both friend and Masonic brother, for *La Clemenza di Tito's* premiere. Mozart returned to Vienna immediately to resume work on *The Magic Flute*, a composition he interrupted to fulfill the Prague commission. Stadler stayed on in Prague for the later performances of *Tito*, while Mozart, in Vienna, wrote a concerto evidently promised to Stadler in friendship and gratitude. In late October, Mozart orchestrated the concerto's last movement, evidently planning to finish it before Stadler's return.

Stadler aided him on many of his pieces with clarinet and basset horn from the great *B-flat Serenade* to the little divertimenti. Contemporary critics said in beauty of tone and sensitivity of expression, Stadler's clarinet playing could be compared only with that of a very great singer. The clarinet he played had keys that gave him four additional low notes below the range of today's clarinet. Mozart wrote music to fit Stadler's instrument, but in early editions of the concerto, published after Mozart's death, the music was altered so that ordinary clarinets could play it. In 1802, an anonymous magazine article observed that the music no longer required the extra low notes and expressed gratitude to the publisher for making the concerto accessible, while regretting that the original text was not saved. In fact, the history of this concerto is complicated, (an abandoned fragment of a concerto for basset horn replicates half of the first movement of the clarinet concerto) and Mozart's manuscripts have not survived.

Charles Rosen, in his book *The Classical Style*, notes the "inexhaustible and continuous melodic line" the clarinet plays throughout this subtle, inventive work. In the first movement,

a classical *Allegro*, Mozart begins with a theme that seems innocent but lends itself to contrapuntal elaboration. The orchestral accompaniment has especially subtle and graceful flute passages and a harmonic foundation built on string support. The first theme is lively, while the second contrasts in a melancholy minor mode. Rosen accurately observes this movement “seems like an endless song – not a spinning-out of one idea, but a series of melodies that flow one into the other without a break.” The second movement, *Adagio*, a great lyrical aria, begins calmly with a profoundly affecting lyrical clarinet theme articulated without orchestral accompaniment. Later in the movement, Mozart emphasizes the clarinet’s intricate possibilities of tone color with explorations into its virtuosic possibilities without disturbing the theme’s serenity or the movement’s intimate character. The last movement, *Rondo allegro*, begins with a soft, rhythmic declaration of the theme. The episodes between appearances of the rondo theme become increasingly lively and exuberant as Mozart exploits the agility and extremes of the clarinet’s range. Gaiety dominates this final movement, but inevitable moments of sadness occur, as if beauty and perfection cannot appear without a complementary sense of possible downturn.

The instruments of the orchestra are two flutes, two bassoons, two horns and strings.

***Symphony No. 9 in C Major, (“Great,”
D. 944 . . . Franz Schubert
(Born January 31, 1797, in Lichtenthal; died
November 19, 1828, in Vienna)***

Schubert’s *Ninth Symphony* presents a challenge to the artistic, technical and physical powers of conductors and orchestral players, perhaps most significantly because of its length. Schumann called it the “symphony of heavenly length,” a nickname that persisted and became the symphony’s unofficial subtitle. Infused with Romantic spirit, yet an affirmation of the Classical tenets of symphonic design, it is impelled forward by rhythmic energy. Music historian

George Henry Lang placed it at a significant juncture in music history, calling it “the mighty classical symphony which like a bastion guards the exit of the hallowed precincts of the greatest era of classical orchestral music.”

Schubert began the symphony in 1825, and in 1826, the Viennese orchestra of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* (“Society of Friends of

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Music”) read through it. The complete symphony lay forgotten until Robert Schumann, going through Schubert manuscripts which the composer’s brother Ferdinand owned, rediscovered it. Schumann sent the score to Mendelssohn, who conducted it in a drastically cut version at a concert of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra on March 21, 1839. The Vienna Philharmonic also performed it that year, but played only the first two movements. In London in 1844, when Mendelssohn wanted to program it, the musicians rebelled because of its extreme difficulty and length. Schumann, nevertheless, was determined to see it performed and appreciated because he believed, “Deep down in this work there lies more than mere song, more than mere joy and sorrow, as already expressed in music in a hundred other instances. It trans-

ports us into a world where I cannot recall ever having been before.”

The symphony, distinctively characterized by Schubert’s Romantic orchestral tone coloring, opens with an extended introduction, *Andante*, the melodic theme introduced by the horns. Gradually the tempo and tension increase until the expansive first movement bursts into a buoyant, strongly rhythmic *Allegro ma non troppo – Piu moto*. In the *codetta*, soft trombones (a new instrument at that time, just joining the orchestra) create an unusual effect. At the movement’s end, without a slackening of pace, the introductory theme reappears triumphantly. The complex second movement appears simple and songlike, a subdued, march-like *Andante con moto*, featuring a plaintive oboe melody, followed by a lyrical theme in the violins. The vigorous scherzo, *Allegro vivace*, incorporates melodies of popular Viennese tunes and has a relaxed, contrasting middle section, many melodic themes and an elegant trio. The intensely energetic *Allegro vivace* “Finale” derives its character from the trombones’ rhythm and the power and the repeated note horn motif that brings the symphony to its exuberant end. Throughout, Schubert uses inventive harmonies, original modulations and marvelous melodic invention.

References to this work often use the word “Great.” When the first complete edition of Schubert’s symphonies appeared in 1885, musicians noticed that although the symphony of “heavenly length” had been published in 1850, another previously unavailable symphony, also in C, now known as No. 6, existed. As that symphony is about two-thirds the length of this one, the musicians immediately called it *klein* (“small”) and this one *gross*, (“large”) referring only to the length, with no implication about quality.

The *Great C Major Symphony* is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings.

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throughout the United States, Europe and Asia as a chamber and orchestral musician with artists including the Brentano String Quartet, Musicians from Marlboro, The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Mitsuko Uchida, Marina Piccinini and Barbara Sukova. Mr. McGill

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has appeared on *Performance Today*, MPR’s *St. Paul Sunday*, Ravinia’s *Rising Star Series*, on the *Mr. Rodger’s Neighborhood* television show and at Lincoln Center as a member of Chamber Music Society Two.

Mr. McGill attended the Interlochen Arts Academy and the Curtis Institute of Music. His former teachers include Donald Montanaro, Richard Hawkins, Larry Combs, Julie DeRoche, David Tuttle and Sidney Forrest. In high demand as a teacher, Mr. McGill currently serves on the faculties of the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, Mannes College of Music and the Manhattan School of Music Precollege. In addition he has given masterclasses at the Curtis Institute of Music, University of Michigan, Stony Brook University, Temple University, UCLA, University of New Mexico and the Manhattan School of Music.

Mr. McGill is a Leblanc and Rico Artist.