



UGA
presents.

24|25 SEASON

MAHLER CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
MITSUKO UCHIDA, piano and director

TUES, MAR 25, 7:30 pm

Hodgson Concert Hall

Supported by

CHARLES B. AND LYNNE V. KNAPP

LIBBY AND VAN MORRIS

DR. JANICE SIMON

CAROLINE D. STROBEL

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PROGRAM

WOLFGANG AMADÈ MOZART (1756-1791)

Concerto No. 18 in B-flat major for piano and orchestra,
K.456 [30:00]

- I. Allegro vivace
- II. Andante un poco sostenuto
- III. Allegro vivace

LEOŠ JANÁČEK (1854-1928)

Mládí [18:00]

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante sostenuto
- III. Vivace
- IV. Allegro animato

INTERMISSION

MOZART

Piano Concerto No.21 in C, K.467 [30:00]

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro vivace assai

Program is subject to change.

PROGRAM NOTES

by Laurie Shulman ©2025

Concerto No. 18 in B-flat major for piano and orchestra, K.456 Wolfgang Amadè Mozart (1756-1791)

This B-flat major concerto, K.456 was part of Mozart's *annus mirabilis* of 1784, during which he composed six splendid works for piano and orchestra, among other masterpieces. In this particular case, Mozart was writing for Maria Theresia von Paradis (1759-1824), an Austrian pianist and composer who had been blind since age 3. She was the daughter of a government official in the Austrian Department of Commerce; the Empress was her godmother. An immensely gifted pianist, she studied with Leopold Koželuch, and was reputed to have memorized dozens of Koželuch's concerti. Paradis toured Europe between 1783 and 1786. Mozart met her in Salzburg in 1783; it is possible that their paths had crossed earlier in Vienna.

The B-flat major concerto is something of a dark horse among Mozart's concerti, and performances are comparatively rare. It is a splendid and charming work that shows Mozart at the height of his powers. The opening Allegro vivace features a martial rhythm—a favorite ploy of Mozart's—whose distinctive shape dominates the development section. The second theme group hints at the rich woodwind writing that will blossom fully in the incandescent second movement Andante. Mozart's exposition allows the piano to embellish the theme with scales, arpeggios, triplets, and other varieties of passagework. Mozart generally left cadenzas when he was *not* writing for himself. Ms. Uchida plays Mozart's cadenza.

The slow movement, Andante un poco sostenuto, is a set of variations in G minor, most of which are double variations, which essentially means the composer uses two themes. Mozart's writing for the winds is sensitive and expressive. The bassoon parts are unusually substantive, far more than just reinforcing the bass line. The piano soloist is more focused and foreground in the repeat of each variation. Operatic in some places, intimate in others, this slow movement is like chamber music. Chromaticism tinges Mozart's detailed textures, with considerable back and forth between major and minor modes. The nostalgic G major variation is particularly lovely.

The finale is a sonata-rondo with hunting horn motifs, with repeated notes forming the backbone of the melodic motifs. In one of the episodes, Mozart makes an astounding modulation to B minor—a very distant key—and switches the orchestra to 2/4 time while the piano continues in 6/8 meter. His seamless transition back to the home key of B-flat major (and the same meter for the full ensemble) is both miraculous and sly.

We know that Mozart played this concerto in Vienna in February 1785. Both Mozart's father and the Austrian Emperor were in attendance. In a letter to his daughter Nannerl, Leopold Mozart reported: "When your brother left the stage, the Emperor, with hat in hand, paid his compliments and, leaning over, called out 'Bravo, Mozart.'" Bravo, indeed.

Mozart's score calls for flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, solo piano and strings.

***Mládí* [Youth] for wind sextet**

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

If Bedřich Smetana is regarded as the great-grandfather of Czech music and Antonín Dvořák as the grandfather, then Leoš Janáček must be dubbed the logical heir to their tradition and, in his turn, the father of modern Czech music. Born in Hukvaldy, Moravia in 1854, Janáček was a late bloomer. Although his musical talent manifested itself quite early on, most of his youthful works were cloaked in the forms and style of the late 19th-century romantics, garb that ill-suited Janáček. Eventually he abandoned those models, seeking more personal expression. Like his younger contemporaries Bartók and Kodály in Hungary, he became absorbed with the folk music of his native land, developing a highly individual musical language. His mature style derives in large part from the speech cadences of Slovak tongues, and the rhythms and melodies of Moravian folk music.

Janáček considered his operas to be his most important compositions. Yet instrumental works figured prominently during the last decade or so of his life, and contributed considerably to his reputation. The astonishing creative efflorescence of his old age can be attributed to two principal factors. The first was the independence of Czechoslovakia at the close of the Great War. Three provinces that formerly belonged to the Habsburg empire—Bohemia to the west, central Moravia, and eastern Slovakia—were merged to form a modern nation. Janáček's intense nationalistic pride found magnificent expression in his late works.

The other reason for his enormous productivity was Kamila Stosslová, a young woman 38 years his junior with whom Janáček fell headlong in love.

Married to a Moravian antique merchant who had helped Janáček with daily provisions during the war, Kamila met the composer in 1917. He was strongly attracted to her. She became his obsession, inspiring an almost unceasing stream of letters, a “Kamila diary” in the last year of his life, and, most important, an autumnal rainbow of major compositions. These include the operas *Kát'a Kabanova* (1919-21), *The Cunning Little Vixen* (1921-23), and *The Makropoulos Affair* (1923-25) (all with heroines for whom Kamila served as the model); a wealth of instrumental music such as the Piano Concertino (1925), the Sinfonietta (1926), the two string quartets (1923 and 1928, respectively), and the wood-wind sextet we hear, *Mládí* (1924).

Though there is no evidence to suggest that the affair was ever consummated, or indeed that it was more than one-sided, Kamila and her husband (to whom she appears to have been happily married) enjoyed a friendship with Janáček until his death. There is no question that she provided spiritual support and artistic inspiration for him, and a companionable haven from his own unhappy marriage to Zdenka Schulzová, which soured shortly after the union in 1881.

Janáček is essentially a programmatic composer. *Mládí* is no exception. In 1924, the year he turned 70, he began reflecting back on his childhood. At age 11, he had been accepted as a choirboy in the Augustinian monastery of St. Thomas in Brno. Most of the choristers were musically gifted boys from humble backgrounds, who were thereby able to obtain a broad-based education with a focus on music. Nicknamed Bluebirds because of their uniforms, the boys sang for the monastery's Masses and also gave concerts in Brno.

Ideas for a composition commemorating these boyhood years had germinated in summer 1923, when Janáček attended the International Society of Contemporary Music in Salzburg. The festival included a performance of Albert Roussel's *Divertimento* for piano and wind quintet, which made a big impression on Janáček. In spring 1923, he composed a brief movement, “March of the Bluebirds,” for piccolo, bells, and tambourine. A larger work for wind instruments was already taking shape in his imagination. It came to fruition in July. Three weeks after his 70th birthday on 3 July, he wrote to Kamila, “I have composed here a sort of memoir of youth.”

Mládí comprises four movements, which collectively function more or less the way a four-movement symphony would. The opening Allegro has the singsong quality of children's nursery songs. Capricious tempo changes seem to reflect the young people's short attention span. The Andante sostenuto functions as a slow movement. Beginning as a somber march, it soon exhibits interruptions; one has the feeling that the children have been told to be quiet and still, but cannot resist squirming and whispering to each other.

Janáček's Vivace is scherzo-like, and returns to the teasing mood and scampering pace of the first movement. He also re-uses the theme from his “March of the Bluebirds.” The finale, Allegro animato, has elements of circus music, fanfares, and a parade, with brief quotations from the earlier movements. The six contrasting timbres allow the individual instruments to shine. Throughout *Mládí*, the harmonic language and quirky rhythms are characteristic of Janáček's late style.

The score calls for flute (doubling piccolo), oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon and horn.

Piano Concerto No. 21 in C, K. 467

Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

Mozart completed the great D minor concerto, K.466, and this one in C, K.467, within four weeks of one another in 1785. In so doing, he adhered to a pattern that recurred several times in his career, pairing two works of like origin and genre, but vastly different in their atmosphere and overall message. Other such examples are the two piano quartets, K.478 in G minor and K.493 in E-flat major, and the late string quintets, K.515 in C major and 516 in G minor. Where the D minor piano concerto is passionate and stormy, the C major that followed is resolute and positive, unflinching in the majesty and supreme control of its outer movements. Though the two works are almost exactly contemporary, they are spiritual opposites.

With these two concerti, Mozart leap-frogged ahead of himself in form and in orchestration. His concept of the piano concerto expanded, not only in the length of the works themselves, but also in his treatment of piano plus orchestra, which is more symphonic in these works. This approach was to dominate all the late concertos.

The famous *Andante*, which achieved pop-hit status as a result of its use in the soundtrack to the 1967 film *Elvira Madigan*, is unique among Mozart's concerto slow movements. Gentle triplets provide pulsing accompaniment beneath seamless, shimmering melody. This music is long-winded in the best sense. The strings play with mutes, further sweetening the sound.

Philip Radcliffe has written:

In this movement, if anywhere, Mozart can be seen as the forerunner of the 19th century. The dissonances in the second subject have the vivid foretaste of Schumann and the way in which they gently melt into the major key is equally prophetic of Schubert. The variety of phrase-lengths gives a fascinatingly rhapsodic feeling to the music and there is much unobtrusive skill in the way in which the background of throbbing triplets is shifted periodically from one tone-color to another.

What a surprise to discover that such ineffably lovely music is in sonata form!

Both outer movements are consistent with Mozart's military march style.

Majestic and celebratory, they frame the ethereal slow movement with firm gestures. C major was the Viennese key of sunlight. To be sure, Mozart's sunshine is not without its clouds, and his signature chromaticism reminds us that the storminess of the mighty D minor concerto, composed only a few weeks earlier, still lingered in his soul. Nevertheless, the overriding impression that this concerto leaves is one of optimism.

Mozart left no original cadenzas for this concerto, which has places for the soloist to improvise in both outer movements. Ms. Uchida plays her own cadenzas.

The score calls for flute, two oboes, two bassoons, pairs of horns and trumpets in C, timpani, solo piano, and strings.

LENTEN SUBSCRIPTION SERIES

In our society, a subscription concert series means an advance commitment to designated afternoons or evenings during a concert season. Usually such series are linked by common performers and the same venue. Subscriptions are an accepted cultural phenomenon that we take for granted.

Mozart appears to have been a pioneer in organizing such series during his first years in Vienna. The concerts were closer to what we would call salon performances. They took place between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, when normal operatic and theatrical activity was proscribed by the powerful Catholic church. Such Lenten-season concerts included various pieces Mozart had composed, including vocal and instrumental music, both chamber and orchestral. The first concerted keyboard work to be presented on an early spring "subscription" was the Rondo-Variations in D major, K.382, for piano and orchestra. Mozart himself would have been the soloist. Of the 27 numbered piano concertos, those from No. 11 in F major, K.413 through No 25 in C major, K.503 were composed for Lenten subscription series from 1783 to 1787.

Some of these concerts were in private homes belonging to Mozart's wealthy students or his aristocratic patrons. Others were in more public arenas such as Vienna's Kärntnertheater and Burgtheater. In March 1785, the Viennese press announced a Burgtheater event:

On Thursday, 10th March 1785
Herr Kapellmeister *Mozart*
will have the honour of giving at the
I.&R. National Court Theatre
a Grand Musical Concert

for his benefit, at which not only a *new*, but just *finished Forte piano Concerto* will be played by him, but also an especially large *Forte piano pedale* will be used by him in *improvising*. The remaining pieces will be announced by the large poster on the day itself.

The concerto Mozart played for this event was the C major work that Ms. Uchida plays this evening; the rest of the program is unknown. As for the pedal instrument, Leopold Mozart mentions it in his letters and it was listed in the inventory of Mozart's possessions when he died, but the apparatus has not survived.

Three nights later, Mozart participated in another Lenten concert with a more sacred bent; it included the first performance of his cantata *Davidde penitente*, K.469. The program also included a symphony by Joseph Haydn.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

MITSUKO UCHIDA

One of the most revered artists of our time, Mitsuko Uchida is known as a peerless interpreter of the works of Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, and Beethoven, as well for being a devotee of the piano music of Alban Berg, Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, and György Kurtág. She was Musical America's 2022 Artist of the Year in 2022, Music Director of the 2024 Ojai Music Festival, and is a Carnegie Hall Perspectives artist across the 2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25 seasons. Her latest solo recording, of Beethoven's Diabelli Variations, was released to critical acclaim in 2022, was nominated for a Grammy Award, and won the 2022 Gramophone Piano Award.

Mitsuko Uchida has enjoyed close relationships over many years with the world's most renowned orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, and—in the U.S.—the Chicago Symphony and the Cleveland Orchestra, with whom she recently celebrated her 100th performance at Severance Hall. Conductors with whom she has worked closely have included Bernard Haitink, Sir Simon Rattle, Riccardo Muti, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Vladimir Jurowski, Andris Nelsons, Gustavo Dudamel, and Mariss Jansons.

Since 2016, Mitsuko Uchida has been an artistic partner of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, with whom she is currently engaged on a multi-season touring project in Europe, Japan and North America. She also appears regularly in recital in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, London, New York, and Tokyo, and is a frequent guest at the Salzburg Mozartwoche and Salzburg Festival.



Richard Avedon

Mitsuko Uchida records exclusively for Decca, and her multi-award-winning discography includes the complete Mozart and Schubert piano sonatas. She is the recipient of two Grammy Awards—for Mozart Concertos with The Cleveland Orchestra, and for an album of lieder with Dorothea Röschmann—and her recording of the Schoenberg Piano Concerto with Pierre Boulez and the Cleveland Orchestra won the Gramophone Award for Best Concerto.

A founding member of the Borletti-Buitoni Trust, and Director of Marlboro Music Festival, Mitsuko Uchida is a recipient of the Golden Mozart Medal from the Salzburg Mozarteum, and the Praemium Imperiale from the Japan Art Association. She has also been awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society and the Wigmore Hall Medal, and holds Honorary Degrees from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. In 2009 she was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

MAHLER CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Since its foundation in 1997, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra (MCO) has established itself as one of the world's leading chamber orchestras. Working as a global collective, the MCO is led by its members in collaboration with its Berlin-based management office. The musicians, who come from around 25 different countries, unite for each tour or project. The chamber music dialogue and unanimous act of listening shape the Orchestra's sound; it's a philosophy inspired by the Orchestra's founding mentor Claudio Abbado that the MCO calls The Sound of Listening.

In the past 2023/2024 season, the MCO performed with conductors Sir Simon Rattle, Maxim Emelyanychev, Tugan Sokhiev, Anja Bihlmaier, and with its Artistic Advisor Daniele Gatti, among others. The MCO is also known for its performances without a conductor; our Artistic Partners Yuja Wang and Mitsuko Uchida, with whom the orchestra goes on tour several times a year, often lead the MCO from the piano. In 2024/2025, the MCO joins the stage with Antonello Manacorda, Gianandrea Noseda, Elim Chan, Raphaël Pichon and again with Maxim Emelyanychev, as well as with soloists Augustin Hadelich, Stéphane Degout and Leif Ove Andsnes.

The Orchestra maintains residencies in Berlin, Salzburg, and Lucerne; from 2026, it will succeed the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra at the Baden-Baden Easter Festival. In 2024, the MCO assumed the role of Artistic Director of Musikwoche Hitzacker.

The MCO continually explores new musical and social initiatives. Its programme Feel the Music introduces music to deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, while the MCO Academy allows orchestra members to share their expertise with the next generation of musicians. Additionally, the MCO's school concerts foster introspection through the power of music. The MCO has also co-developed a series of extended reality concert formats. Since July 2024, some of the chamber music pieces produced in extended reality have been available in the Mahler Chamber Orchestra app for Apple Vision Pro.

Mahler Chamber Orchestra
Mitsuko Uchida, piano and director
José Maria Blumenschein, concertmaster and leader

Flute

Chiara Tonelli (Italy)

Oboe

Mizuho Yoshii (Japan)
Jesús Pinillos Rivera (Spain)

Bassoon

Mathis Stier (Germany)
Chiara Santi (Italy)

Horn

Jose Vicente Castelló (Spain)
Jonathan Wegloop (Netherlands)

Trumpet

Christopher Dicken (Great Britain)
Florian Kirner (Germany)

Timpani & Percussion

Martin Piechotta (Germany)

Violin 1

José Maria Blumenschein* (Germany)
May Kunstovny (Austria)
Hildegard Niebuhr-Candan (Germany)
Alexandra Preucil (USA)
John Timothy Summers (USA)
Annette zu Castell-Ruedenhausen (Germany)
Nicola Bruzzo (Italy)
Hwa-Won Rimmer Pyun (Germany)

Violin 2

Anna Maria Malm** (Austria)
Mette Tjaerby Korneliusen (Denmark)
Michiel Commandeur (Netherlands)
Christian Heubes (Germany)
Stephanie Baubin (Austria)
Katarzyna Wozniakowska (Poland)
Paulien Holthuis (Netherlands)

Viola

Joel Hunter** (Great Britain)
Yannick Dondelinger (Great Britain)
Mladen Somborac (Germany)
Anna Maria Wünsch (Germany)
Frida Siegrist Oliver (Norway/Switzerland)

Cello

Philipp von Steinaecker** (Germany)
Stefan Faludi (Germany)
Jakob Stepp (Germany)
Moritz Weigert (Germany)

Double Bass

Christoph Anacker** (Germany)
Johane Gonzalez Seijas (Spain)
Jon Mikel Martínez Valgañón (Spain)

*Concertmaster
**Section Leader

Renée Fleming

“Fleming’s voice floats and blooms with its customary beauty.”

—*The New Yorker*

Panel Discussion
Music & Mind

Fri, Apr 25, 5:00 pm
Ramsey Concert Hall

Five-time Grammy Award winner Renée Fleming is also a World Health Organization (WHO) Goodwill Ambassador for Arts and Health. She will present *Music & Mind*, a panel discussion with University of Georgia researchers and health practitioners.

Recital
Voice of Nature: The Anthropocene

Sat, Apr 26, 7:30 pm
Hodgson Concert Hall

Renée Fleming is one of the most highly acclaimed singers of our day. In her highly anticipated return to Athens, she offers a program of art songs and contemporary music exploring nature as both inspiration for and casualty of humanity.

Scan for info and tickets



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