



Sarasota Concert Association

Great Performers Series

2015 Season

70 YEARS

DRESDEN PHILHARMONIC
Michael Sanderling, conductor
Johannes Moser, cello

Sunday, March 1, 2015
4:00 p.m.



Hailed by Gramophone Magazine as “one of the finest among the astonishing gallery of young virtuoso cellists,” German-Canadian cellist Johannes Moser has performed with the world’s leading orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony and many more. Born into a musical family in 1979 as a dual citizen of Germany and Canada, Mr. Moser began studying the cello at the age of eight. He was the top prize winner at the 2002 Tchaikovsky Competition and the recipient of the prestigious Brhams prize in 2014.

In 1909 the Dresden Philharmonic, which had been founded in 1870, became one of the first German orchestras to tour the United States. Its 2015 U.S. tour, led by its principal conductor Michael Sanderling, includes Gainesville and Palm Beach as well as Sarasota.

Program

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
Variations on a Rococo Theme, Op. 33

John Williams (b. 1932)
*Suite from *Memoirs of a Geisha**

Intermission

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Symphony No. 7
Poco sostenuto – Vivace
Allegretto
Presto – Assai meno presto (trio)
Allegro con brio

The Dresden Philharmonic appears by arrangement with IMGArtists LLC,
152 W. 57th St., 5th Floor, New York, NY 10019 212-994-3500

PROGRAM NOTES

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Variations on a Rococo Theme

After graduation from the St. Petersburg Conservatory, Tchaikovsky was recruited by Nikolay Rubinstein for a post at the new music conservatory in Moscow. But the young composer was a poor teacher, continually dogged by feelings of insecurity and resentment about the time teaching took away from composing.

That being said, Tchaikovsky made some lasting friendships at the Conservatory. One of them, the German cellist Wilhelm Fitzenhagen, inspired Tchaikovsky to compose the Variations on a Rococo Theme for Cello and Orchestra. Because he had no hands-on experience as a cellist, the composer asked Fitzenhagen for help. Fitzenhagen ended up having a substantial hand in the final form in which the work was published in 1889. He contributed to making the cello part more virtuosic and idiomatic; he even changed the order of the variations and eliminated one of them. Only in 1940 was Tchaikovsky's original version published and is now the one usually performed.

The term "Rococo" in the title refers not so much to the ornate style, popular in eighteenth-century architecture and decorative art, but to its nineteenth-century meaning: "old-fashioned." The simple theme is Tchaikovsky's own and is not particularly characteristic of the Rococo period, nor do the seven variations that follow adhere closely to the theme as was customary in the eighteenth century.

The work is a cellist's showpiece, technically demanding, light-hearted and cheerful, with none of the emotional storm and stress that usually permeates Tchaikovsky's works. He uses the variations to

create a series of moods and dance rhythms. True to tradition, however, the variations become increasingly complex, beginning with old-fashioned ornate embellishments in Variation I.

John T. Williams

Suite from *Memories of a Geisha*

In the 1930s and 40s the major Hollywood studios hired established classical composers – many of them refugees from Nazi Germany – who went on to develop a language of cinematic music that was as important a factor in controlling viewers' emotional responses as the acting and cinematography itself. Some of the best-known names are Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Kurt Weill, Miklós Rózsa and Marvin Hamlisch.

John Williams is heir to this tradition; since the 1960s he has expanded and deepened that language to become the most important film composer of all time. The industry's premier directors, especially George Lucas and Stephen Spielberg, have sought him as a partner, and their combined efforts have garnered armloads of awards, with Williams himself receiving as of this date five Academy Awards, four Golden Globe Awards and 21 Grammys. He holds the record for the Oscar nominations.

Williams wrote the music for the 2005 film *Memories of a Geisha*, garnering a Golden Globe award. He recruited Yo-Yo Ma to perform the cello solos, and in 2008 arranged for Yo-Yo Ma a six-movement suite for cello and orchestra of themes from the film. The movements are:

- I. Sayuri's Theme
- II. Going to School
- III. The Chairman's Waltz
- IV. Brush on Silk
- V. Chiyo's Prayer
- VI. Becoming a Geisha

Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No. 7 in A Major

Each movement of the Seventh Symphony is dominated by a persistent rhythmic motive that – especially in the second movement – is equal in importance to the melodic content of the themes. Richard Wagner described the Seventh Symphony as "the apotheosis of dance in its loftiest aspects."

The lengthy slow introduction, featuring some of the repertory's loveliest oboe solos, contrasts in mood with the Allegro, which follows in lively 6/8 meter. The opening movement actually consists of a single complex theme held together by an underlying dotted rhythm in the accompaniment. The pulse extends throughout the entire movement and is only occasionally interrupted.

The theme of the second movement is minimal, a 4/4 ostinato consisting primarily of repeated pitches over which Beethoven adds counter-melodies and a buildup of the orchestration to create emotional tension. Beethoven's innovative use of the rhythmic pulse in this movement influenced the Romantic composers who followed and served as a model for Schubert in his Symphony No. 9 in C major, "the Great."

The Scherzo, in 3/4, is defined by driving quarter notes, dynamic contrasts and shifting rhythms. The trio, with its legato melody for the winds, provides the expected contrast, breaking away from the rhythmic pulse of the Scherzo.

The nineteenth-century musicologist Sir Donald Tovey described the finale as "A triumph of Bacchic fury." The rondo theme, with its emphatic timpani part, resembles a stomping peasant dance – admittedly refined for the occasion.

Program notes by:
Joseph & Elizabeth Kahn
Wordpros@mindspring.com
www.wordprosmusic.com