

**Tomas Svoboda - Overture of the Season**

Tomas Svoboda (b. 1939), a Czech-American contemporary classical composer and pianist, has more than 200 compositions for a wide range of ensembles, starting at age 9, to his credit. He was a professor at Portland State University, OR, for 27 years and is now Professor Emeritus there.

*Overture of the Season*, Op. 89, was commissioned by the Oregon Symphony and composed in 1978. That orchestra presented the world premiere on October 7, 1978. The festive work is about nine minutes in duration.

Svoboda's composition style typically combines Slavic folk elements

with complex meters and rhythms in a contemporary classical structure, creating an intense, vibrant effect.

Nature has been a major source of Svoboda's inspiration. *Overture of the Season* can be interpreted to depict scenes in nature, possibly the course of a river, starting at its headwaters with a light woodwind theme that grows as the rest of the orchestra enters, depicting a more rapid section of the river. It continues to a stirring recap of the original theme that grows, as would increasingly turbulent rapids, ending in a high waterfall as the river empties into a pool below.

**Franz Joseph Haydn - Violin Concerto No. 1**

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) wrote his Violin Concerto No. 1 in C Major about 1765 for Luigi Tomasini, a well-known violinist at the time. It was the first of four violin concertos he composed between 1765 and 1770. He wrote the concerto in the three movements customary at the time, in a fast-slow-fast pattern. Each movement is in sonata form, also customary at the time. The concerto is scored for solo violin, strings and cembalo (keyboard).

None of Haydn's violin concerto scores available today are autographed. This concerto was not published until the middle of the twentieth century, and only

eight manuscripts are currently extant.

The work is in three movements, with a bold theme consisting of double stops and a brief cadenza in the solo part in the *Allegro moderato*. The *adagio* movement is much slower and relaxed, as is common in concerti of the time. The final *presto* is quite fast and virtuosic for Haydn's time, and serves to pull the concerto together prior to a *forte* final section.

Though, as a classical concerto, it is perhaps not as virtuosic as its romantic counterparts, this piece still requires considerable ability to play cleanly and musically.

**Gioachino Antonio Rossini - "Barber of Seville" Overture**

Gioachino Antonio Rossini (1792-1868) composed his opera *The Barber of Seville*, as an *opera buffa* in two acts. It was first performed in 1816 in Rome.

The original overture to the opera was lost prior to the opera's performance in Bologna later that year. Rossini did not compose another. Instead, he

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substituted the overture to *Aureliano in Palmira*, an earlier and more serious work.

This overture has no relationship to the *Barber of Seville*'s principal characters, because it was originally

composed for another work. The Italian audiences of the time, however, were unconcerned over such "unfitness." The overture was well received and is used to this day. It is also a free-standing concert piece in its own right.

#### **Johannes Brahms - Variations on a Theme of Haydn**

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) wrote two versions of his *Variations on a Theme of Haydn*: one for orchestra (Op. 56A) and one for two pianos (Op. 56B), both in 1873. The first performance was by the Vienna Philharmonic under Brahms' direction on November 2, 1873.

The theme of the work, "Chorale St. Antoni," is almost certainly not by Haydn. Misattributions were common in music up to the 19th century, as copyright laws were non-existent and music circulated freely in manuscript form. Whoever wrote the theme used what was probably a religious melody. The piece for wind ensemble carried an attribution to Joseph Haydn, and Brahms titled his composition accordingly. The original composer of the "Chorale St. Antoni" is unknown.

The theme starts with two five-measure phrases, in contrast to the more usual four-measure phrases. The eight variations follow the phrasal structure of the theme almost without exception, and follow the harmonic structure less strictly. The variations are:

1. *Poco più animato*.
2. *Più vivace*
3. *Con moto*
4. *Andante con moto*
5. *Vivace*
6. *Vivace*
7. *Grazioso*
8. *Presto non troppo*

The finale recapitulates the theme, and is almost a set of variations in itself, using passacaglia structure. It culminates in a *fortissimo* restatement of the theme.