



KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

Classical Series

Sunday, February 28, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts
Michael Stern, *conductor*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Divertimento in D Major for Strings, K. 136/125a

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Presto

MICHAEL ABELS

Delights & Dances

Sunho Kim, violin, *Miller Nichols Chair*
Tamamo Someya Gibbs, violin
Matthew Sinno, viola
Mark Gibbs, cello, *Robert A. Kipp Chair*

EDWARD ELGAR

Introduction and Allegro for String Quartet and
String Orchestra, op. 47

Sunho Kim, violin, *Miller Nichols Chair*
Tamamo Someya Gibbs, violin
Matthew Sinno, viola
Mark Gibbs, cello, *Robert A. Kipp Chair*

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FIRST VIOLINS

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Stirling Trent,

Acting Associate Concertmaster

Chiafei Lin,

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Kayla Burggraf

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Silvio Guitian

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Thomas DeWitt

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Adam Rainey

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* Non-Rotating Musician

^ New Member

‡ On Leave of Absence

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**Divertimento in D Major for Strings, K. 136/125a (1772)****15 minutes**

The divertimento (Italian for “diversion” or “amusement”) was a very popular genre in 17th- and 18th-century Europe. Its lack of formal definition and structure allowed composers great latitude, so long as the resulting work was pleasant and suitable for accompanying a social gathering. Comprised of several movements written for chamber groups of strings, winds or some combination thereof, divertimenti tend to be rather unassuming.

Wolfgang Mozart wrote more than 25 divertimenti in his lifetime along with numerous serenades and cassations that served a similar purpose. The first in a set of three divertimenti, the Divertimento in D Major, K. 136/125a is one of his earlier forays into the genre. He composed the piece probably early in 1772, after returning to Salzburg, Austria, from the second of two extraordinary tours of Italy. Having been exposed to new ideas and musical styles in Milan and other cities, the youthful Mozart began transforming them into his own vernacular. The vivacious character of this divertimento reflects the Italian influence — and perhaps the inherent exuberance of its 16-year-old composer.

Built in three movements, the Divertimento is scored for violins, violas and basses, suggesting it was intended for a chamber ensemble rather than a string quartet although it is often performed by that instrumentation. The piece sparkles in either configuration. Because of the scoring, the Divertimento and its two companions are sometimes called “the Salzburg Symphonies.”

The opening movement is cheerful and energetic, with its melodic material flowing effortlessly from one thought to the next. The andante that follows has spare lines that typify simple elegance and provide a lovely contrast to the spirited outer movements. The Divertimento concludes with some cheeky scampering, surely calculated to please audiences with its wit and vigor. *ETW*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
(1756-1791)

Born in Salzburg, Austria, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart grew up on the road, so to speak. His violinist father, Leopold, sought to advance the family’s prospects by touring with the musical wunderkind Wolfgang and his older sister Maria Anna (Nannerl), a talented pianist in her own right. A violin and piano prodigy, Wolfgang began composing at age 5 and wrote his first opera at age 11.

The Mozart family spent the years 1763-66 visiting the capitals and great courts of Europe. Subsequent trips included extended visits to Italy. At each location, Mozart learned from the composers in residence, thus constituting a very



broad musical education in addition to his father's tutelage. The ascension of a new prince-archbishop of Salzburg, Leopold's employer, in 1772 greatly reduced the family's travel.

Wolfgang enjoyed his time in Europe's cosmopolitan cities and he grew restive with the confines of his Konzertmeister position in provincial Salzburg. He set out on tour with his mother in 1777, looking for a new position. His mother fell ill and died while they were in Paris, a devastating blow for the young composer. No suitable job offers were forthcoming and upon returning to Salzburg, Mozart was appointed court organist, a position he held until 1781 when a dispute with the prince-archbishop resulted in his abrupt dismissal from court. He then decided to settle in Vienna, which presented numerous opportunities for an ambitious young man.

Once in Vienna, he taught, composed, and played concerts for his living. Although busy, he found time for romance and married Constanze Weber against Leopold's wishes. The young couple was happy and those early days in Vienna were among the most successful of Mozart's life. His operas and symphonies were popular and he had many triumphs as a pianist-composer. Indeed, his piano concerti were filled with wonderful melodies and cleverly orchestrated, incorporating solo virtuosity into the overall musical texture. He wrote prolifically, producing music in a wide range of genres. His achievements were noted by the renowned composer Joseph Haydn, who said to Wolfgang's father Leopold, "I tell you before God, and as an honest man, your son is the greatest composer known to me by person and repute; he has taste and what is more the greatest skill in composition."

The public, as ever, was fickle and Mozart's popularity eventually waned. This, coupled with an extravagant lifestyle, led to chronic financial problems. Although he secured a post as Kammermusicus to supply dance music for court balls, the salary did not relieve financial pressures and Mozart resorted to asking friends for loans.

While the Viennese may have shifted their attention from Mozart, he enjoyed some measure of success up the road in Prague but he encountered an underwhelming reception and sparse financial gain on his travels to Dresden, Leipzig, Berlin and Frankfurt. Against this backdrop of difficulty, his health became precarious. He continued working frantically despite illness, succumbing to a fever on December 5, 1791.

There are numerous topics in Mozart's life worthy of exploration: his extensive operatic output, the place of Freemasonry in his outlook and music, mastery of symphonic form, his sacred compositions, brilliant chamber music, and most certainly the complicated relationship with his father. Going beyond the "child prodigy" story yields a fascinating view of this highly accomplished composer and his place in the musical firmament. Among the many anecdotes that give dimension to his genius:

- Mozart was a prolific correspondent — 371 letters survive and a surprising number include coarse comments and immature jokes.
- It is uncertain whether Mozart and Beethoven ever met. Beethoven went to Vienna in early 1787. There is some indication that the 16-year-old Beethoven was hoping to study with Mozart but the only anecdotal account of their meeting is of rather dubious provenance and lacks any corroboration at all.

- In addition to playing keyboard and violin, Mozart was quite adept on viola and is said to have preferred the instrument to the violin, often playing viola in chamber ensembles just as Johann Sebastian Bach did. His own viola was probably made in northern Italy in the early 18th century by an anonymous luthier. It is owned today by the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation.
- Wolfgang and Constanze had six children, only two of whom survived to adulthood: Karl Thomas Mozart served as an official to the Viceroy of Naples in Milan, and Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart was a composer and teacher. Both men were unmarried and had no children.
- Mozart composed more than 600 works, including 41 symphonies, 27 piano concertos, 5 violin concertos, 23 string quartets, 36 violin sonatas, 21 operas, and 18 masses — plus the famous Requiem unfinished at his death.

ETW**MICHAEL ABELS*****Delights & Dances* (2007)****14 minutes**

Michael Abels was commissioned by the Sphinx Organization to write a work in celebration of its tenth anniversary. He composed *Delights & Dances* for the Harlem Quartet, an ensemble of first-place laureates of the Sphinx Competition for outstanding young Black and Latinx string players. The quartet premiered the piece in 2007 and later recorded it with the Chicago Sinfonietta conducted by Mei-Ann Chen.

The pensive cello soliloquy that opens *Delights & Dances* is a gentle invitation to linger and share the moment. A soulful viola response to the musing cello gradually becomes a graceful duet and soon the entire ensemble is swaying together in harmony. The orchestra sets up a bluesy pizzicato groove and the solo quartet begins to riff. Each soloist has ample opportunity to display their virtuosity. The ensemble finally comes together in a vigorous driving passage as the orchestra intones an overarching melody. The pace slows and the section ends with a solo violin benediction. A bluegrass-inflected jazz fiddle lick kicks off a deliciously syncopated and marvelously energetic set that melds together various motifs used earlier in the work. Spirited solo lines weave about vigorous orchestral exclamations and the piece concludes with an impressive flourish. *ETW*

MICHAEL ABELS
(b. 1962)

Michael Abels is an overnight sensation, decades in the making. Perhaps best-known for his scores for Jordan Peele's films "Get Out" and "Us," Abels has been writing orchestral compositions and commissions of all kinds for more than 30 years. His incredible variety of work reflects a mastery of adapting popular idioms to a unique reinvention of classical styles. His imaginative approach has been recognized with numerous awards, including the World Soundtrack Award, the Jerry Goldsmith Award, a Critics Choice nomination, an Image Award nomination and multiple other awards.

Abels was born in Phoenix, Arizona, and raised by his grandparents in rural South Dakota.

Drawn to music, he attended the University of Southern California, studying with James

Hopkins and Robert Linn. Indicative of his curiosity and expansive interests, he explored West African music with Alfred Ladzekpo at the California Institute for the Arts. For many years he served as Director of Music for New Roads School in Santa Monica, overseeing a program that provides hands-on instruction in the latest technologies integrally important to contemporary popular music.

With grant support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Meet the Composer and the Sphinx Organization, among others, Abels' orchestral works have been performed by the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra, among many others. As guest conductor of "Get Out" in Concert, Abels has led numerous orchestras, including the National Symphony and the San Francisco Symphony. Several of his orchestral works have been recorded by the Chicago Sinfonietta on the Cedille label. Upcoming projects include a diverse mix of concert work, film music and an opera.

Abels is co-founder of the Composers Diversity Collective, an advocacy group seeking to increase visibility and opportunities for composers of color in film, games and streaming media.



Photo by Eric Schwabel



EDWARD ELGAR

Introduction and Allegro for String Quartet and String Orchestra, op. 47 (1905)

13 minutes

Edward Elgar was enjoying long-awaited popularity when he composed Introduction and Allegro in 1905. His “Enigma Variations” had earned the composer recognition that resulted in a string of accolades and honors, including a knighthood in 1904. That year, he was prompted by August Jaeger, his dear friend and publisher at Novello, with the request to write “a brilliant quick String Scherzo ... a real bring down the house torrent of a thing such as Bach could write” as a showcase for the recently founded London Symphony Orchestra. Having profiled Jaeger in the “Nimrod” movement of his “Enigma Variations,” Elgar was well-disposed toward the request. Composed in just four months, the piece met with Elgar’s offhanded favor as he noted its completion in a letter to Jaeger: “I have finished the string thing and it’s all right.”

Musical inspiration often occurs unpredictably and Elgar, like many composers, kept a sketchbook handy to capture melodies for later use. He was vacationing in Wales in August 1901 when the distant singing of Welsh folk tunes caught his ear. He jotted down the melody intending to use it in a planned Welsh piece that never came to fruition. Not one to waste a good tune, Elgar used the phrase in this piece instead.

Jaeger’s invocation of Bach’s name may have inspired Elgar to adopt aspects of the Baroque concerto grosso format for the piece. A concerto grosso typically has a group of soloists (the concertino) alternating passages with the full orchestra (the ripieno). Even within the solo quartet, Elgar wrote solo passages for single instruments, notably giving the solo viola a plaintive statement of thematic material at the outset.

The work’s overt Romanticism richly bookends what Elgar described as a “devil of a fugue,” aptly displaying his compositional prowess at weaving together disparate textures without losing the essential melodic emphasis. *ETW*

EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934)

The son of an organist and music dealer, Edward Elgar received his musical education at home, studying piano and violin. His formal schooling ended at age 15 and he went to work as a clerk in a lawyer’s office. Elgar did not enjoy the job and soon left, teaching piano and violin to earn a living and occasionally working at his father’s music shop. A fine violinist and able bassoonist, Elgar played in various orchestras and served as a bandmaster, learning instrumental colors and capabilities firsthand. He had no formal training in composition. Thus saved from the confines of academic music, Elgar developed a unique style that led the renaissance of English music.



Elgar's path to acclaim was slow, unlike that of a youthful prodigy such as Mozart. His breakthrough piece, at age 42, was the "Enigma Variations." The 14 variations are musical portraits of Elgar's friends, including a self-portrait. Elgar wrote:

I have sketched a set of Variations on an original theme. The Variations have amused me because I've labelled them with the nicknames of my particular friends ... that is to say I've written the variations each one to represent the mood of the "party" (the person) ... and have written what I think they would have written — if they were asses enough to compose.

"Enigma" was followed in 1900 by *The Dream of Gerontius*, an oratorio that many people consider his masterpiece and earned Elgar praise from the composer Richard Strauss. Of course, the most famous work in his substantial portfolio is the Military March No. 1 (*Pomp and Circumstance*), composed in 1901 and known to ardent fans as "Land of Hope and Glory" or more colloquially as the tune played so often at graduation ceremonies and Britain's annual Last Night of the Proms concert. As he described it to a friend, "I've got a tune that will knock 'em — knock 'em flat!" The piece was first performed at a graduation when Elgar was awarded an honorary doctorate by Yale University in 1905 and the piece was played as a recessional in his honor.

After receiving a knighthood and an honorary doctorate from Cambridge University, Elgar turned his attention to composing symphonic works. His Symphony No. 1 premiered in 1908 and was followed in 1910 by the superb Violin Concerto, commissioned and premiered by Fritz Kreisler, to whom the piece is dedicated.

Elgar was deeply depressed by World War I and the tremendous losses incurred, writing the profound and contemplative Cello Concerto (1919) in response. He was devastated by the death of his wife Alice in 1920 and greatly curtailed his composition. With the advent of new recording technology in the 1920s, Elgar began conducting recordings of his own works. Encouraged by renewed interest in his music, he began several new compositions, leaving more than a few pieces unfinished at his death in 1934. *ETW*



A few words about numbers (and some letters) in classical music titles...

Titles of classical music can have a confusing array of numbers and letters. In addition, there is no uniform system or standard nomenclature adopted by composers around the world. In many cases, composers don't catalog their work at all; it may be done after the fact by a publisher or a musicologist.

The most commonly used system is "opus" numbers (abbreviated op.), from the Latin word for "work." Sometimes several pieces are grouped under a single opus number and individual

numbers assigned within that set (e.g. op. 3, No. 5). On other occasions, a different opus number is assigned to every single piece.

When a composer writes more than one work in a particular genre, they usually assign a sequential number (e.g. Symphony No. 1, Symphony No. 2, Symphony No. 3). In some cases, the subsequent publication of earlier works results in new numbers (Dvořák's famed "New World" Symphony started out as No. 5 but now is No. 9).

When a composer's music is cataloged by a musicologist, the numbering system often includes an acknowledgement of the years devoted to the task by using the musicologist's initial. In Mozart's case, the "K" numbers honor Ludwig von Köchel, an Austrian musicologist who published a catalog of Mozart's music in 1862, 71 years after the composer's death. Because the catalog has been revised several times over the ensuing 158 years to reflect new scholarship, sometimes a different number has been assigned along with a letter to indicate the revision (e.g. Mozart's Divertimento in D Major was originally K. 136 and is now designated K. 125a). You also might see the listing as "KV" for Köchel-Verzeichnis (Köchel Catalog).

Occasionally, different systems have been applied to the same works over time. The music of Franz Schubert may have an opus number (some added posthumously) and a "D" number reflecting the 1951 catalog prepared by Otto Erich Deutsch. Franz Joseph Haydn's music similarly includes opus numbers as well as "Hob." numbers in respect of the catalog compiled by Anthony van Hoboken.

The music of Domenico Scarlatti is beautiful but numbered confusingly. First tagged with "CZ" numbers by pianist Carl Czerny and "L" numbers by Alessandro Longo, a thorough reevaluation by musicologist Ralph Kirkpatrick resulted in "K" numbers (not to be confused with Köchel's "K" numbers for Mozart's music) which were in turn revised by musicologist Giorgio Pestelli using "P" numbers. In this case, inertia applies and the vast majority of musicians still use "K" numbers for Scarlatti.

In a few instances, musicologists have foregone recognition and used the composer's initial as the designation. A catalog of Johann Sebastian Bach's music was published by Wolfgang Schmieder in 1950, using the abbreviation "BWV" for Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis (Bach Works Catalog). Similarly, music by Georg Philipp Telemann is designated "TWV" for Telemann-Werke-Verzeichnis rather than recognizing the tireless efforts of Martin Ruhnke. This type of work is ongoing, with the Mendelssohn-Werke-Verzeichnis ("MWV") having been published by Ralf Wehner as recently as 2009.

Catalogs of composers' works can be arranged either chronologically (typically by date of composition) or by musical genre (all string quartets in one category, all piano sonatas in another, etc.). In many cases, opus numbers may indicate a publication date rather than time of composition.

All of this may seem bewildering but don't worry about it. Just a tiny bit of digging will get you right to the particular music you want to hear! *ETW*

Program notes written by AJ Harbison (AJH) and Eric T. Williams (ETW).

SUNHO KIM
ACTING CONCERTMASTER
Miller Nichols Chair

Violinist Sunho Kim joined the Kansas City Symphony in 2008, and holds the position of assistant concertmaster. She previously was a fellow of the New World Symphony from 2005 to 2008, and served regularly as concertmaster under Michael Tilson Thomas. Winner of the Heino Eller International Violin Competition in Estonia and Bales Violin Competition in Boston, Kim made her solo debut at age 14 with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra as a winner of their Young Artist Competition. She also has been a featured soloist with the Kansas City Symphony, Estonian National Symphony, Danish Free Mason Orchestra, Seoul Symphony and Seoul Youth Chamber Orchestra, among others.



An avid chamber musician, Kim is heard frequently in the Kansas City Symphony's free Happy Hour chamber music concerts and has performed at the Colorado Music Festival, Yellow Barn Chamber Music Festival, Shanghai International Music Festival, Summerfest in Kansas City and Savonlinna Chamber Music Festival in Finland. She was a founding member of the Tappan String Quartet and has performed with them at the Smithsonian American History Museum. She also has performed solo recitals in Germany, Denmark, the Czech Republic, South Korea and the United States. Originally from South Korea, Kim moved to Germany at age 16 to study with Mi-Kyung Lee at the University of Arts, Berlin, and continued her study with Milan Vitek, first at the Royal Danish Academy of Music and then at the Oberlin Conservatory, where she received an artist diploma. She received her master's degree from the New England Conservatory as a student of Masuko Ushioda.

TAMAMO GIBBS

PRINCIPAL SECOND VIOLIN

Tamamo Someya Gibbs began taking violin lessons at the age of 3. At age 6 she entered the Tokyo College of Music Prep School, where she received training in violin performance, aural skills and music theory. Her secondary and post-secondary education took place at Toho High School and Toho College of Music under the tutelage of Kenji Kobayashi. Upon graduation, she played for the Shinsei Japan Symphony Orchestra for several months before the New World Symphony in Miami Beach invited her to join as a co-principal violinist. In 1995, Gibbs joined the Sacramento Symphony as a core first violinist, and in 1996 joined the first violin section of the Kansas City Symphony. In 1999, she was appointed principal second violinist of the Kansas City Symphony as well as named co-concertmaster of the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra.



Gibbs has performed in Japan, the United States, France, Monaco, Israel, Brazil and Argentina, and participated in numerous music festivals including the Evian Music Festival in France, the National Repertory Orchestra in Colorado, the Kent/Blossom Music Festival in Ohio, and the Grand Teton Music Festival in Wyoming. Past solo engagements include appearances with the National Repertory Orchestra, the Penn's Woods Music Festival Orchestra, the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, the Overland Park Orchestra and the Kansas City Symphony. She currently resides in Overland Park, Kansas, with her husband, Mark Gibbs (principal cellist of the Kansas City Symphony), and their two children.

MATTHEW SINNO

ACTING PRINCIPAL VIOLA

Massachusetts native Matthew Sinno recently was appointed associate principal viola of the Kansas City Symphony. He also has performed with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. As winner of the 2014 Juilliard Concerto Competition, Sinno performed Hindemith's *Der Schwanendreher* in Alice Tully Hall with the Juilliard Orchestra. He has attended several summer festivals including Perlman Music Program, Music Academy of the West and Colorado College Music Festival. An avid chamber musician, Sinno performs regularly at Chestnut Hill Concerts and Sebago Long Lake Music Festival. He holds degrees from the Juilliard School and Curtis Institute of Music. His primary teachers include Cynthia Phelps, Heidi Castleman, Roberto Díaz, Toby Appel, Ed Gazouleas and David Rubinstein.



MARK GIBBS
PRINCIPAL CELLO
Robert A. Kipp Chair

Praised by the Kansas City Star for his “sweet, sensuous tone and a sophisticated feel for long-breathed lines,” Principal Cellist Mark Tsuyoshi Gibbs holds the Robert A. Kipp chair in the Kansas City Symphony. Prior to this appointment in 1999, Gibbs earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Northwestern University, where he was a student of Hans Jorgen Jensen. At Northwestern, Gibbs was named principal cellist of the Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. He also worked closely with Jensen as a teaching assistant.

Gibbs’ numerous awards include the Northwestern University Civic Scholar String Fellowship, the Union League of Chicago Civic and Arts Foundation Prize, first place in the Northwestern University School of Music Concerto Competition, first prize in the Music Teachers National Association Collegiate Artist National Competition, and grand prize in the American String Teachers Association National Solo Competition. He has appeared many times as a soloist with the Kansas City Symphony, including twice on Classical Series opening weekend concerts as well as on the Symphony’s 2015 Saint-Saëns disc from Reference Recordings, which earned a GRAMMY® Award nomination. He is proud to be known as a “Fine Kansan Cellist” (Audiophilia Online Magazine) and resides in Overland Park with his wife, Kansas City Symphony Principal Second Violinist Tamamo Someya Gibbs, and their two daughters.

