



KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

Classical Series

Friday, June 4, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, June 5, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 6, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts
Michael Stern, *conductor*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Serenade No. 11 in E-flat Major, K. 375

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Menuetto I
- III. Adagio
- IV. Menuetto II
- V. Allegro

PAUL DUKAS

Fanfare to Precede *La Péri*

TIMOTHY HIGGINS

Sinfonietta

- I. Introit
- II. Arias
- III. Scherzo
- IV. Finale

PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER (arr. Higgins)

Lincolnshire Posy

- I. "Lisbon"
- II. "Horkstow Grange"
- III. "Rufford Park Poachers"
- IV. "The Brisk Young Sailor"
- V. "Lord Melbourne"
- VI. "The Lost Lady Found"

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Kayla Burggraf

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WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**Serenade No. 11 in E-flat Major, K. 375 (1781)****25 minutes***2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns*

Mozart penned this serenade hoping that it would advance his career at the court of Joseph II, ruler of the Habsburg dominion. Originally a sextet for clarinets, bassoons and horns, the piece premiered in Vienna on October 15, 1781 at the home of court painter Joseph von Hickel. Mozart knew that the von Hickels frequently hosted Joseph von Strack, the emperor's valet and personal cellist, and he hoped that the serenade might impress von Strack sufficiently to mention Mozart favorably to the emperor. Further seeking to curry imperial favor — and perhaps a court appointment — Mozart later added two oboe parts to the serenade when he learned that the emperor had a wind octet in his retinue. While the serenade did not have its intended effect, it did secure immediate appreciation from those hearing the work. Mozart wrote his father concerning the serenade's premiere for the von Hickels' that the musicians performed the work twice more that evening: "As soon as they finished playing it in one place, they were taken off somewhere else and paid to play it."

The octet version holds sway today with its exceptionally rich sonorities and wide spectrum of tone colors. The serenade is built symmetrically, with lively opening and closing movements adjacent to entertaining minuets, all framing a gloriously operatic slow movement with ample opportunities for each instrument to take the spotlight. The concluding Allegro is a lively romp, well calculated by its canny composer to elicit great enthusiasm from all concerned, performers and audience alike. *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 clever orchestration, 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 substantial 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 as a violist 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 concerti 5 violin concerti 23 string quartets, 36 violin sonatas, 21 operas and 18 masses — plus the famous Requiem unfinished at his death.

ETW



PAUL DUKAS

Fanfare to Precede *La Péri* (1911-12)

2 minutes

4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba

We can only speculate as to the specific origin of Paul Dukas' one-act ballet *La Péri*. There are tantalizing references in his comments to friend and fellow music critic Pierre Lalo about losing a wager and having to write the piece as a result. But we need not hazard a guess as to the beneficiary of his imaginative score: Natacha Trouhanova, a Kiev-born dancer who arrived in Paris in 1907 and danced at the Paris Opéra, Folies Bergère, and Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Dukas dedicated the work to her and gave her exclusive performing rights for five years. The plan for *La Péri* was for a Ballets Russes premiere in June 1911. Unfortunately, a contract dispute between Trouhanova and Diaghilev prompted the latter to limit the number of performances and exclude all critics from attendance. The critics were outraged at this affront and Trouhanova was understandably angry. Dukas responded by withdrawing his score. Diaghilev sought to soothe injured feelings by offering performances in London and on an American tour, but Dukas was not placated and refused the offer.

It took another year for *La Péri* to reach the stage in a Parisian premiere, albeit without Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. The critics, welcome at this performance, were effusive in their praise, calling it a masterpiece. For this occasion, Dukas added a brass fanfare to his original score, with some scholars suggesting that it was for the practical purpose of calming a boisterous audience before the quiet beginning of the ballet. Dukas' brilliant writing is certainly evocative of the ballet's exotic scenario, drawn from Persian folklore. Indeed, the fanfare has taken on a life of its own, becoming a staple of concert repertoire. *ETW*

PAUL DUKAS
(1865-1935)

You have doubtless heard his most famous composition but his name is somewhat obscure: Paul Dukas. (According to the BBC, a friend of the Dukas family assured them that the composer himself pronounced the final “s” in his name: due-KASS.) That famous piece is *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, based on a 1797 poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and popularized by Walt Disney’s movie “Fantasia” featuring Mickey Mouse as the apprentice.



Born in Paris to a musical family, Dukas was not a child prodigy. He took piano lessons but was otherwise unremarkable. He began to compose at age 14 while recovering from an illness and entered the Paris Conservatoire two years later, playing timpani in the orchestra. Claude Debussy was a classmate and the two became lifelong friends. An apt student, Dukas eventually took second place in the Prix de Rome in 1888 but he was disappointed at the result and left the Conservatoire.

Dukas’ early career was divided between composing and working as a music critic, writing regular reviews in several publications. Despite the era’s musical partisanship, he did not adhere to a particular compositional school of thought and was respected by musicians across the spectrum.

By comparison with most composers, Dukas’ output was quite small — only twelve published compositions — contributing to his relative obscurity today. One reason for this sparsity is that he was intensely critical of his work and therefore destroyed many pieces because they failed to meet his standard of perfection.

Dukas married later in life, in 1916. He and his wife, Suzanne Pereyra, had one child, a daughter born in 1919. He was appointed professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire in 1927 and also taught at the École Normale de Musique. He noted that his teaching approach was “to help young musicians to express themselves in accordance with their own natures. Music necessarily has to express something; it is also obliged to express somebody, namely, its composer.” His students included Jehan Alain, Carlos Chávez, Maurice Duruflé, Jean Langlais, Olivier Messiaen, Manuel Ponce, Joaquín Rodrigo, and Claude Arrieu. Judging from their stylistic breadth, Dukas was true to his belief. *ETW*



TIMOTHY HIGGINS

Sinfonietta (2016)

15 minutes

4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani and percussion

Timothy Higgins, principal trombone of the San Francisco Symphony, is a prolific composer and arranger. He has arranged music for musicians of the orchestra as well as a wide variety of trombone and brass groups, and has been commissioned by Michael Tilson Thomas, Music City Brass Ensemble and the Steamboat Strings Music Festival. Higgins says of his composing, “I feel like my job as a composer is to create something that will hopefully have its own life afterwards ... I compare it to parenting: I’m ‘raising’ this piece, then at a certain point you cut the cord and let it go, and hope that it has everything it needs to survive.”

Of his inspiration for *Sinfonietta*, Higgins says, “I came up with the idea to write this piece as a challenge to myself. Since the majority of my musical career is performing in an orchestra playing symphonies, I thought it would be a good exercise to try to write something in a symphonic form. I chose to write for brass and percussion because that is what I am most familiar with, being a trombonist myself! I drew inspiration from composers like Shostakovich and Bruce Broughton to come up with the harmonic and formal material of the *Sinfonietta*.”

The *Sinfonietta* was premiered by the Bienen Brass Ensemble of Northwestern University, and received subsequent performances by the San Francisco Conservatory of Music brass ensemble, the Chicago Symphony brass section and Symphony Parnassus. The “miniature symphony” includes thrilling moments as well as beautiful arias for the brass players. **AJH**

TIMOTHY HIGGINS

(b. 1982)

Timothy Higgins was appointed to the position of Principal Trombone of the San Francisco Symphony by Michael Tilson Thomas in 2008. He was previously the acting Second Trombonist with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. Higgins, a Houston native, has a bachelor’s degree in music performance from Northwestern University and has performed with the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony, Virginia Symphony, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Music of the Baroque, Aspen Music Festival, Grand Teton Music Festival, Sun Valley Summer Symphony, Washington National Opera and Baltimore Symphony. His principal teachers have been Michael Mulcahy (Chicago Symphony), Michael Warny (Houston Grand Opera) and Royce Landon (Des Moines, Iowa). He has participated in music festivals with the Roundtop Music Festival, the National Repertory Orchestra and the Tanglewood Music Center.



Along with a busy orchestra career, Higgins is a sought-after arranger of music. He was the sole arranger of the National Brass Ensemble's Gabrieli recording. Additionally, he has arranged music for CT3 Trombone Quartet, National Brass Quintet, Bay Brass and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Brass Ensemble. Higgins has also composed works for brass instruments in solo and chamber settings. His arrangements and compositions have been performed by the Washington Symphonic Brass, the Bay Brass, the San Francisco Symphony brass section, the Chicago Symphony brass section, the Los Angeles Philharmonic brass section and numerous university brass ensembles. His arrangements and original compositions are available through his publishing company, 415Music.

As a teacher, Higgins been a faculty member of the Pokorny Seminar since 2012, and is currently on faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Northwestern University. He has also led masterclasses in Japan, China, Canada and the United States, including classes at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto, the New World Symphony, Vanderbilt University, the Manhattan School of Music and the Juilliard School of Music.

In 2005, Higgins won the Robert Marsteller Solo Trombone Competition, as well as the International Trombone Association Trombone Quartet competition with CT3. While attending the Tanglewood Music Center, Higgins was awarded the Grace B. Upton Award for Outstanding Fellow. In 2013, Timothy released a solo CD, "Stage Left." Recent albums include two self-produced recordings from 2020 in the Underground series.

When not playing, arranging or composing music, Higgins' interests include running, cooking and mixology.



PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER / arr. TIMOTHY HIGGINS

***Lincolnshire Posy* (1937)**

15 minutes

4 horns, 4 trumpets, piccolo trumpet, flugelhorn, 3 trombones, euphonium, tuba, timpani, xylophone, tubular bells, suspended cymbals, side drum, hand bell, glockenspiel, bass drum, and cymbals

Starting in 1905, around the very same time that Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály were beginning to collect Magyar folk songs in the Hungarian countryside, the Australian-born composer Percy Grainger traveled through the British county of Lincolnshire recording folk songs on a phonograph. He had been inspired by a lecture given by Lucy Broadwood, a pioneer in the field of folk-song history. Over the next five years he collected more than 200 recordings of native folk singers. Thirty years later, he arranged six of these songs for concert band (an "orchestra" with expanded wind, brass and percussion but no strings) and titled it *Lincolnshire Posy*. "Posy"

is a term for a small bouquet of flowers; Grainger wrote that he dedicated his “bunch of ‘musical wildflowers’” to “the old folksingers who sang so sweetly to me.”

Grainger’s desire in arranging the songs for band was to preserve the character and performance of the singer from whom he had collected them. He wrote, “Each number is intended to be a kind of musical portrait of the singer who sang its underlying melody — a musical portrait of the singer’s personality no less than of his habits of song — his regular or irregular interpretation of the rhythm, his preference for gaunt or ornately arabesqued delivery, his contrasts of legato and staccato, his tendency towards breadth or delicacy of tone.”

Lincolnshire Posy consists of six songs.

- “Lisbon,” originally titled “Dublin Bay,” is a lilting melody in 6/8 presented first by trumpets, bassoon and horn in parallel triads.
- “Horkstow Grange” (subtitled “The Miser and His Man — A Local Tragedy”) is a slow, flowing song that alternates between 4/4 and 5/4 time.
- “Rufford Park Poachers,” a ballad, features difficult counterpoint and constantly shifting time signatures. (This movement was not performed at the premiere because it was too difficult for the band that was performing!)
- “The Brisk Young Sailor” (“Who Returned to Wed His True Love”) is a sprightly tune that contains a euphonium solo accompanied by virtuosic arpeggios in the winds.
- “Lord Melbourne” (“War Song”) is marked “Heavy, fierce, free time” — in the opening, and at various points throughout the movement, the conductor cues every chord rather than conducting in a time signature.
- “The Lost Lady Found” is the only song in the work collected by Lucy Broadwood rather than the composer himself. The ballad tells the story of a lady who is kidnapped; her uncle is unjustly accused, jailed and eventually about to be executed, when the lady returns just in the nick of time. The villagers free the uncle and celebrate the lady’s return with church bells (played by tubular bells and other percussion instruments) and dancing.

San Francisco Symphony Principal Trombone (and composer and arranger) Timothy Higgins arranged Grainger’s work in 2015 as a showpiece for brass and percussion that features every section of the ensemble. *AJH*

PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER (1882-1961)

Percy Aldridge Grainger was born in a suburb of Melbourne, Australia, in 1882. His father was a heavy drinker and a womanizer, and Grainger’s mother Rose, after separating from her husband, raised the boy and educated him at home. Rose developed a close bond with Percy and was to live and travel with him until her death in 1922.

Grainger began piano studies at the age of 10 and gave his first public performance at 12. Though he suffered from performance anxiety that persisted throughout his life, his early concerts were warmly received, with one critic calling him “the flaxen-haired phenomenon who

plays like a master.” He moved with his mother to Frankfurt, Germany, in 1895 to study piano and composition at the Hoch Conservatory. Disliking his composition professor, he began private studies outside the conservatory with Karl Klimesch, an amateur composer and folk-music enthusiast. Klimesch was his only significant composition teacher and an important influence in Grainger’s development of a personal style outside the German Classical tradition of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. With several British students at the school, Grainger formed the Frankfurt Group, whose goal was to “rescue” British and Scandinavian music from the grip of these traditions. Partly due to his association with these British colleagues, Grainger moved, again with his mother, to London in 1901.

In London, Grainger determined not to promote himself as a composer until he had gained enough recognition as a pianist. To this end, he gave numerous public and private concerts, as well as embarking on tours throughout Britain as well as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. He began collecting British folk songs in 1905, which would form the basis of many of his best-known compositions. He also met Edvard Grieg, the Norwegian composer, who was greatly impressed by the young pianist. Grieg wrote, “I have written Norwegian Peasant Dances that no one in my country can play, and here comes this Australian who plays them as they ought to be played! He is a genius that we Scandinavians cannot do other than love.” Grieg died in 1907, but Grainger’s brief acquaintance with him had a great impact on the younger composer’s musical development. Grainger championed Grieg’s music throughout his life.



Grainger felt he had achieved sufficient success as a pianist by 1911, and began publishing his compositions under a professional name that included his mother’s maiden name, Aldridge. His works were received enthusiastically by British audiences. But the outbreak of World War I in 1914 caused him to flee, once again with his mother, to the United States, and this seemingly unpatriotic decision damaged his reputation. He wrote that the move was “to give mother a change” — she had suffered from ill health for years — but his biographer later wrote that “he wanted to emerge as Australia’s first composer of worth, and to have laid himself open to the possibility of being killed would have rendered his goal unattainable.”

In the United States Grainger toured throughout the northeast, as well as making pianola rolls for Duo-Art and signing a recording contract with Columbia Records. When the country entered World War I in 1917, he enlisted as a bandsman, giving frequent benefit concerts for the Red Cross and Liberty bonds. He often performed his piano arrangement of the British folk song “Country Gardens” as an encore, and it quickly became a best-selling piece of sheet music.

Following the war Grainger continued performing, at one point giving 120 concerts a year, as well as re-scoring earlier compositions and writing new ones. He also developed a technique known as “elastic scoring,” which allowed for flexible orchestration and the performance of a

work by a wide variety of ensembles. (Timothy Higgins' re-scoring of *Lincolnshire Posy* for brass and percussion on this program surely would have met with Grainger's approval.)

Throughout the 1920s Grainger made numerous trips to Europe, Australia and New Zealand, collecting more folk songs, performing as a pianist and composing primarily arrangements of other composers' work, notably Bach, Brahms, Fauré and Delius. He married Ella Ström, an artist, in a ceremony at the Hollywood Bowl in 1928.

Grainger, an eccentric who often exaggerated his eccentricities to gain publicity, created a Grainger Museum in Melbourne and financed its construction with a series of concerts and broadcasts. He gathered letters and artifacts from friends to begin its collection, and it opened to scholars (though not the general public) in 1938. In 1955 he spent nine months organizing and arranging exhibits. He even wrote a will bequeathing his skeleton "for preservation and possible display in the Grainger Museum," though this wish was not carried out.

During World War II Grainger again gave numerous concerts in Army and Air Force camps, by some accounts nearly 300 within a few years. After the war he was beset by a sense that his compositional career had been a failure. He was offered the Chair of Music at Adelaide University in South Australia in 1947, but refused it, writing, "If I were 40 years younger, and not so crushed by defeat in every branch of music I have essayed, I am sure I would have welcomed such a chance." He described his music on one occasion as "commonplace" and complained that all his compositional life he had been "a leader without followers."

After 1950 Grainger hardly composed any music. His primary creative activity was collaborating with a young physics teacher on music-playing machines. Grainger's goal was to create "free music" — unconstrained by fixed pitch, regular meter or human performance. The collaborators began by adapting a pianola and eventually worked on a fully electronic machine, which was left incomplete at Grainger's death and later rendered obsolete by further technological advances.

His health deteriorated rapidly in the late 1950s, affecting his ability to travel, perform and compose. The last letters he wrote, in December 1960 and January 1961, record his increasing difficulties: "I have been trying to write score for several days. But I have not succeeded yet." He died in February 1961, and his remains were buried in South Australia, alongside the ashes of his mother Rose. *AJH*



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

