

## PROGRAM NOTES BY KEN MELTZER

## DANIEL HOPE &amp; FRIENDS V

Monday, April 8 at 6 pm  
 Congregation Mickve Israel

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**  
 (1756–1791)

***Gran sestetto concertante in E-flat Major***  
**for String Sextet, after the *Sinfonia***  
***concertante*, K. 364 (1779)**

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

INTERMISSION

**ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841–1904)**  
**String Quintet in G Major, Opus 77 (1875)**

- I. *Allegro con fuoco*
- II. *Scherzo. Allegro vivace*
- III. *Poco andante*
- IV. *Finale. Allegro assai*

Daniel Hope, violin  
 Benny Kim, violin  
 Simos Papanas, violin  
 Paul Neubauer, viola  
 CarlaMaria Rodrigues, viola  
 Eric Kim, cello  
 Keith Robinson, cello  
 Joseph Conyers, bass

***Gran sestetto concertante in E-flat Major***  
**for String Sextet, after the *Sinfonia***  
***concertante*, K. 364 (1779)**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria, on January 27, 1756, and died in Vienna, Austria, on December 5, 1791.**

 *Approximate performance time is 30 minutes.*

 *SMF performance history: SMF premiere*

Mozart composed his *Sinfonia concertante*, K. 364 in 1779, during his final years in Salzburg. It was a difficult time for the young Mozart. He had just returned from a two-year tour of Mannheim and Paris. During his travels, Mozart attempted, unsuccessfully, to secure a new position that would allow him to fulfill his desire to leave his native city.

The composer's mother, Anna Maria, accompanied Mozart on the trip. On July 3, 1778, while in Paris, Anna Maria Mozart died, at the age of 57. In a letter to his friend, Abbé Bullinger, Mozart revealed:

Her life flickered out like a candle. Three days before her death she made her confession, partook of the Sacrament and received Extreme Unction. During the last three days, however, she was constantly delirious, and today at twenty-one minutes past five o'clock the death agony began and she lost all sensation and consciousness. I pressed her hand and spoke to her—but she did not see me, she did not hear me, and all feeling was gone. She lay thus until she expired five hours later at twenty-one minutes past ten.

A *Sinfonia concertante* juxtaposes a group of solo instruments with the accompanying orchestra. In K. 364, the solo instruments are a violin and viola. The orchestra comprises pairs of oboes and horns and strings. In addition to his prowess as a keyboard virtuoso, Mozart was an accomplished string player. No documentation exists as to the specific circumstances that prompted Mozart to write his *Sinfonia concertante*. But Mozart rarely composed music of this ambitious scope without some specific concert in mind. Whether Mozart himself ever gave concert performances of either of the solo parts in this sublime work remains a matter of tantalizing speculation.

This performance features an anonymous arrangement, first published in Vienna in 1807, for string sextet (pairs of violins, violas, and cellos) of the *Sinfonia concertante*, K. 364. In the arrangement, the music originally written for the soloists (including the first and second movement cadenzas) is divided among the violins, violas, and first cello. The second cello is an accompanist throughout.

I. *Allegro maestoso*—Typical of Mozart, the opening portion of this movement features the introduction of a wealth of thematic material. The development section is frequently tinged with melancholy. The recapitulation of the central themes leads to a fully-transcribed cadenza. The ensemble's vigorous coda concludes the opening movement.


II. *Andante*—Some commentators have suggested that the *Andante* of the *Sinfonia concertante*—one of Mozart's most beautiful and tragic slow-tempo movements—is a musical expression of the composer's grief over his mother's death. The violins sing the *Andante's* somber, principal theme. The *Andante* proceeds in the spirit of an operatic ensemble, with the instruments frequently offering whispered exchanges. After a cadenza (again, fully transcribed by Mozart), the *Andante* concludes with a hushed postlude.

III. *Presto*—The first viola immediately presents the vivacious central theme of the rondo finale. The melody returns throughout the movement, alternating with episodes that relate to the principal theme. The vibrant mood continues to the closing fanfare, capped by a trio of emphatic chords.

**String Quintet in G Major, Opus 77 (1875)**

**Antonín Dvořák was born in Nelahozeves, Bohemia (now, the Czech Republic), on September 8, 1841, and died in Prague on May 1, 1904.**

 *Approximate performance time is 35 minutes.*

 *SMF performance history: 3/26/14, 3/25/08*

In the summer of 1874, Antonín Dvořák applied for the Austrian State Stipendium, an award given by the Vienna Ministry of Education to “young, poor and talented artists.” The Prague

Town Clerk's Office provided a certificate attesting to the fact that the 32-year-old composer was, indeed, in dire financial straits. Dvořák submitted numerous compositions for review by a distinguished panel that included Johann Herbeck, Director of the Vienna Court Opera, the noted music critic Eduard Hanslick, and the great German composer, Johannes Brahms.

Dvořák succeeded in impressing the panel and, as a result, was awarded a considerable stipend. Karl Stremayer, the Minister of Education, reported:

Anton DWORAK of Prague, 33 years old, music teacher, completely without means. He has submitted 15 compositions, among them symphonies and overtures for full orchestra which display an undoubted talent, but in a way which as yet remains formless and unbridled...The fact that Dvořák's choral and orchestral compositions have been performed frequently at big public concerts made a favorable impression. The applicant, who has never yet been able to acquire a piano of his own, deserves a grant to ease his straitened circumstances and free him from anxiety in his creative work.

In addition to that initial grant, awarded in the early part of 1875, Dvořák was the recipient of an Austrian State Stipendium each of the following two years. These awards provided Dvořák with the much-needed resources to pursue his career as a composer.

The 1875 grant seemed to inspire an extraordinary period of creativity. In March of that year, Dvořák completed his String Quintet in G Major, Opus 77. Between May and July, Dvořák composed the Piano Trio in B-flat Major, Opus 21, the Piano Quartet in D Major, Opus 23, four "Moravian Duets" for soprano, tenor, and piano, Opus 20, the Serenade in E Major for Strings, Opus 22, and the Symphony No. 5 in F Major, Opus 76.

Perhaps of even greater long-term benefit was the fact that Dvořák's application for the Austrian State Stipendium brought the Czech composer to Brahms's attention. The two would become dear friends. And, Brahms expended considerable

effort to assist his younger colleague. On December 12, 1877, Brahms wrote to his publisher, Simrock:

Dear S.

In connection with the State Grant I have for several years past had great pleasure in the works of Antonín Dvořák (pronounced Dworschak) in Prague... Dvořák has written all sorts of things, operas (Czech), symphonies, quartets and piano music. There is no doubt he is very talented. And then he is also poor. I beg you to think the matter over. The "Duets" won't give you much thought and will possibly sell well.

Here, Brahms refers to Dvořák's *Moravian Duets*, published by Simrock in 1878. Their highly successful distribution was the beginning of a long and rewarding association. The influential German publisher's distribution of Dvořák's music helped to catapult the Czech composer to international prominence.

The String Quintet in G premiered in Prague on March 18, 1875, featuring an ensemble that included František Ondříček, who also was the soloist in the 1883 world premiere of Dvořák's Violin Concerto, Opus 53. Simrock published the 1875 Quintet (two violins, viola, cello, and double-bass) in 1888, and as a result the work bears the relatively late Opus No. of 77.

I. *Allegro con fuoco*—The Quintet opens with a mysterious introductory passage. The viola intones a motif that finally emerges as the lively first principal theme. The second violin, viola, and cello introduce the playful second, triplet-based melody, marked both *pianissimo* and *leggiero*. Following an extended development section, the viola leads the start of the varied recapitulation of the principal themes. The opening theme prevails in the spirited closing measures.

II. *Scherzo. Allegro vivace*—The rustic *Scherzo* (in E minor and 6/8 time) is very much in the spirit of Dvořák's beloved *Slavonic Dances*. The elegant central *Trio* (*L'istesso tempo, quasi allegretto*) in C Major and duple meter spotlights the first violin's flowing, radiant music. The movement concludes with a reprise of the *Scherzo*.

III. *Poco andante*—The first violin leads the introduction of the slow-tempo movement's lovely principal melody, capped by a nostalgic, sighing figure. The key shifts from C to E Major for another beautiful episode (*L'istesso tempo*) that also contains moments of storm and stress. The movement concludes with a reprise of the opening section, capped by the first violin's seraphic ascent to the *pianissimo* final bars.

IV. *Finale. Allegro assai*—The spirit of Bohemian folk dance returns in the *Finale*. The first violin immediately presents the lively, wide-ranging principal theme. The first violin also leads the presentation of the descending subsidiary principal melody, marked *pianissimo* and *dolce*. While the themes return throughout the rondo *Finale*, Dvořák avoids any sense of routine by constantly varying their instrumental settings and colors. The first theme serves as the basis for the Quintet's dashing resolution.