

Minnesota Orchestra

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, conductor

Gina DiBello, violin

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| Thursday, February 4, 2010, 11 am | Orchestra Hall |
| Friday, February 5, 2010, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall |
| Saturday, February 6, 2010, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall |

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski | *Music for Winds** | ca. 20'
 Misterioso – Allegro
 Aria: Lento
 Presto tenebroso: Presto
 Molto allegro

Wolfgang Amadè Mozart | Concerto No. 3 in G major for Violin and Orchestra, K. 216 | ca. 24'
 Allegro
 Adagio
 Rondo: Allegro
Gina DiBello, violin

I N T E R M I S S I O N | ca. 20'

Johannes Brahms | Symphony No. 3 in F major, Opus 90 | ca. 33'
 Allegro con brio
 Andante
 Poco allegretto
 Allegro

* U.S. premiere; co-commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra, University of Minnesota Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken Kaiserslautern, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Bruckner Orchester Linz, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Wind Ensemble, New England Conservatory Wind Ensemble, University of Southern California Thornton Wind Ensemble, and the Orchestra of Indian Hill.

thank you

With Saturday's concert, we recognize the support of **Xcel Energy Foundation**.

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live Friday evenings on stations of **Minnesota Public Radio**. The concerts are also featured in **American Public Media's** national programs, *SymphonyCast* and *Performance Today*. Regional broadcasts are supported by the Minnesota Orchestra; **Patterson, Thuente, Skaar and Christensen, P.A.**; **UBS**; and **DTS Digital Entertainment**.

music up close

Concert Preview:
Music of Skrowaczewski
with Courtney Lewis
2/4 at 10:30 am

with Dr. Fred Harris
2/5 at 7 pm
2/6 at 7 pm
Orchestra Hall Auditorium

Post-concert Q&A
2/6, post concert
Stay after the Saturday night concert
for a Q&A with Dr. Fred Harris and
conductor Stanislaw Skrowaczewski.

one-minute notes



Stanislaw Skrowaczewski,
conductor

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the eminent composer-conductor Stanislaw Skrowaczewski's continual involvement with the Minnesota Orchestra. He was its music director from 1960 to 1979 and since has taken the podium regularly as conductor laureate. **Conducting:** Next month he concludes a three-year tenure as principal conductor of Tokyo's Yomiuri Nippon Symphony. In addition, he is principal guest conductor of the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie. He previously served as principal conductor of the Hallé Orchestra and of several orchestras in his native Poland, and he has guest conducted top orchestras around the world.

Composing: Skrowaczewski's recent works include his *Symphony* and his *Fantasies for Flute and Orchestra*, // *Piffero della Notte*, both premiered by this Orchestra.

Of interest: Skrowaczewski was a key figure in developing and securing support for Orchestra Hall, which opened during his 15th season as music director.

More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



Gina DiBello, violin

Gina DiBello joined the Minnesota Orchestra in 2008 as principal second violin after three seasons as a member of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. These concerts mark her debut as soloist with the Orchestra.

Upcoming: At next month's Inside the Classics concerts, she will be featured in portions of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, and in May she will play Hindemith's Fourth String Quartet on the Orchestra's Chamber Music at MacPhail series.

Soloist: DiBello has performed as soloist with ensembles including the Pine Bluff and Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestras, Cleveland Pops and Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings.

Contemporary music: She is a founding member of New Music Detroit, with which she has participated in the group's annual 12-hour marathon, *Strange Beautiful Music*.

Background: DiBello, a Chicago native, studied violin at the Music Institute of Chicago, Cleveland Institute of Music and Juilliard School.

More: minnesotaorchestra.org.

Skrowaczewski: *Music for Winds*

Woodwinds, brass and percussion star in Skrowaczewski's newest work. Dazzling virtuosic music abounds, including solo episodes for saxophones, in an emotional composition with tragic undertones.

Mozart: *Violin Concerto No. 3*

Mozart's concerto is at turns buoyant, touching and whimsical. The delightful opening borrows material from his opera *Il rè pastore*, while the *Adagio* casts a poetic spell with muted strings and delicate winds. A folk-infused *Rondo* caps the concerto.

Brahms: *Symphony No. 3*

A powerful brass motto opens this symphony; hymn-like, passionate, pastoral and bittersweet melodies follow. Resolving tension, the final *Allegro* treats us to a serene, sunny glow—the mood so often associated with Brahms.



Stanislaw Skrowaczewski

Born: October 3, 1923, Lvov, Poland;
now living in Wayzata, Minnesota

Music for Winds

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski began his career as a musical prodigy: at the age of four he began to play piano and violin, at seven he composed his first symphonic work, at 11 he presented his first piano recital, and two years later he directed and performed as soloist in Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto. After a World War II injury to his hand ended his career as a pianist, Skrowaczewski concentrated on composing and conducting. He studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris and became a member of the avant-garde group Zodiac. He had been music director of several orchestras in his native Poland before, as a relative unknown in the U.S., he succeeded Antal Dorati as music director of the then-Minneapolis Symphony in 1960, holding that post until 1979. He continued to compose throughout and following his tenure here, in addition to accepting significant positions with other orchestras, earning recognition especially for his works for large orchestra.

The composer has provided his own introduction to this work:

“For *Music for Winds* I was commissioned by a consortium of nine orchestras in four countries (the U.S., Germany, Austria and Japan). The initiator of this project is Dr. Frederick Harris, director of the wind orchestra at MIT in Boston. He knew that I had long since wanted to write a kind of symphony or concerto for winds, or more precisely for symphonic winds, the wind instruments that appear in the symphonies of the 19th to 21st centuries, from Beethoven to Shostakovich and beyond. The repertoire for these instruments is rather scarce, compared to the great repertoire for strings. I added three saxophones, of which two are less common and less often played, soprano and baritone saxophone. They enrich the wind section by extending the possibilities of sound quality. And to that I brought in percussion, very gently, along with piano, celesta and harp.

“The work has four movements, which continue from one to the next without pause. There is a primary theme played at the beginning by clarinet and celesta and this weaves itself through all four movements, either in its original form or slightly modified.

“The listener may find the character or tone of the piece to be sad, mysterious or even tragic. This could be my own reaction to the state of our world, in which great art is slowly disappearing and being replaced by superficial ‘semi-culture.’”

— Stanislaw Skrowaczewski

Instrumentation:

3 flutes (2nd doubling alto flute, 3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, 3 clarinets (3rd doubling bass clarinet), 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contrabassoon), soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, baritone saxophone, 3 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 5 bongos, 5 tom-toms, 5 temple blocks, cymbals, snare drum, marimba, vibraphone, chimes, glockenspiel, xylophone, harp and piano (doubling celesta)

at the same time...

Mozart composes his Third Violin Concerto in 1775, the year:

- Silversmith Paul Revere makes his “Midnight Ride,” warning colonists that the British Army is advancing toward Lexington, Massachusetts
- French engineer Pierre-Simon Girard invents the water turbine
- In Kalisz, Poland, nine women are burned as witches after allegedly causing bad harvests

In 1883, when Brahms' Symphony No. 3 premieres:

- New York's Metropolitan Opera House opens with a performance of Gounod's *Faust*
- New Jersey becomes the first U.S. state to legalize labor unions
- A tornado strikes in and around Rochester, Minnesota, killing 37 people





Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

Born: January 27, 1756, Salzburg
Died: December 5, 1791, Vienna

Concerto No. 3 in G major for Violin and Orchestra, K. 216

Mozart the performer means most of all Mozart the pianist, and he was probably the greatest of his time. But he was also no mean violinist. On October 4, 1777, for example, he took part in a private concert in Munich, playing a couple of piano concertos and a demanding violin solo part, and performing, as he wrote to his father, “as though I were the greatest violinist in all of Europe. They all opened their eyes.”

Bragging? Yes, of course. Exaggerating? Almost surely not. Mozart had a sober sense of his gifts and accomplishments. He was, moreover, writing to the most knowledgeable and exigent connoisseur of string-playing alive: Leopold Mozart, himself a first-rate violinist, a prolific and able composer, and an outstanding musician all around. Leopold’s *Essay on the Fundamental Principles of Violin-Playing* goes far beyond the immediate promise of its title to touch on many points of aesthetics and technique. Its publication affirmed Leopold Mozart’s standing as one of Europe’s premier musical minds, and it is one of our most important keys to 18th-century music making.

Leopold Mozart was also not extravagant when it came to praising his son. When, therefore, he writes, “You yourself do not know how well you play the violin...when you play with energy and with your whole heart and soul, yes indeed, just as though you were the first violinist in all of Europe,” these are not just the words of a proud, let alone indulgent, papa.

Wolfgang began to play the violin right at the beginning of his career, when he was six, and he was just seven when he made his public debut playing a concerto—we do not know whose—at a birthday celebration for Archbishop Sigismund von Schrattenbach of Salzburg.

We cannot be absolutely sure that Mozart wrote any or all

of his five concertos for himself, but it is probable. The G-major Violin Concerto is dated September 12, 1775. According to Neal Zaslaw, “It has long been thought that Mozart wrote all five of his violin concertos within a space of eight months from April 14 to December 20, 1775, in accordance with the dates written by the composer on the original manuscripts. Recently, however, the German musicologist Wolfgang Plath has shown that on all five manuscripts the last two digits of the date have been tampered with....Judging from the evidence of handwriting and water marks, Plath argues that 1775 is probably correct for the last four concertos, but that the first concerto probably originally bore a date of 1773.”

Nothing is known about the first performance of the Concerto No. 3, though it is safe to assume that it took place soon after the work was completed and probably with Mozart as soloist. Mozart left no cadenzas.

the music

In this Concerto, Mozart gives us a first movement of a delightfully buoyant energy. At the beginning, he is recycling music he had written a few months before: an aria from *Il rè pastore*, a serenata that was performed at Salzburg on April 23, 1775.

The miraculous second movement is a real *Adagio*, something relatively rare in Mozart, and this is one of those touching pages to which Cuthbert Girdlestone has given the designation “dream andantes.” The sound of muted strings, the slightly troubled triplets in the inner voices, the plucked basses, the delicate comments and punctuations of the wind instruments instantly cast a poetic spell.

Mozart gets quirky in the finale. What starts out here as a simple and rustic rondo is interrupted by a double episode in contrasting duple meter, the first part a grave gavotte in G minor, the second a jolly country dance whose tune has been identified as a folk melody known as “The Strassburger.” After this double episode, the original material returns, but whimsy and surprise reign to the very last gesture.

Instrumentation:

solo violin with orchestra comprising 2 flutes,
2 oboes, 2 horns and strings

Excerpted from Michael Steinberg’s The Concerto: A Listener’s Guide (Oxford University Press, 1998). Michael Steinberg contributed many program notes to Showcase until his death last July, and we are honored to have permission to continue publishing them.



Johannes Brahms

Born: May 7, 1833, Hamburg
Died: April 3, 1897, Vienna

Symphony No. 3 in F major, Opus 90

The shortest of Brahms' symphonies may also be his most complex. The dense interweaving of major and minor tonalities, florid and jarring themes, is unlike anything that had gone before it. It was created in 1883, when Brahms had just turned 50—a milestone few men relish—and he was enamored of a young contralto, Hermine Spies.

Portly and prone to beer and cigars, the bachelor composer with the enormous beard had grown melancholy about his prospects with women. Instead of his usual posh vacation-spas, he spent the summer in a country house overlooking the Rhine in Wiesbaden, where Hermine lived, and it's reasonable to presume that he poured much of his emotion into his main project for the summer, the Third Symphony.

The First Symphony, 15 years in the works, had taught Brahms much about forging an individual style, and about weaning himself from Beethoven. The Second came out in a flow that at least one writer has suggested was a little *too* fast. The Third, composed and scored in a few months, was intriguing to its first auditors partly because of the way it seemed to meld the struggle of the First with the mellifluous style of the Second.

Faust and beyond

There is some evidence that Brahms did not start from scratch when working on the Third. For the middle two movements of the Symphony, he might have drawn upon music he had sketched in 1881 as incidental music for Goethe's *Faust*. In any case, the composer integrated these movements into a symphonic conception of almost unprecedented unity. Some have gone so far as to characterize the Third in terms of a cyclic plan like that of Liszt's piano concertos, in which a multi-movement work is conceived as a single continuous structure.

Indeed, the tonal plan of the Third Symphony is unusual in many respects—such as the use of C major and C minor, respectively, for the two inner movements; and the return of early thematic material at the end of the work is only one of many means by which the four movements are unified. “What a harmonious mood pervades the whole!” said Clara Schumann of the Third, immediately perceiving this sense of wholeness. “All the movements seem to be of one piece, one beat of the heart, each one a jewel.”

major and minor, locked in combat

Allegro con brio. Much has been written of the stupendous rising motto in the brass that opens the first movement, which forms an essential building block for the entire piece. The motif of F–A-flat–F is heard not only in the massive wind chords that begin the piece, but also in the bass line that accompanies the subsequent string theme.

The A-natural of the main theme's outline of F–A–F casts itself in immediate relief with the A-flat of the bass, creating a major-minor tension whose spring-like coil unwinds itself throughout the Symphony. Several writers have pointed out the resemblance of the first descending string theme to a subject in Schumann's *Rhenish* Symphony, a connection that makes sense in light of Brahms' summer stay on the Rhine.

Andante. The second movement is uncomplicated but darkly shaded, encompassing a hymn-like first theme and a pointedly contrasted second subject, heard in the clarinets and bassoons, that—in a bit of structural sleight-of-hand—is skipped in the recapitulation but instead becomes part of the final movement's resolution.

Poco allegretto. The third movement, neither scherzo nor minuet, reminds us somewhat of the composer's intermezzos for piano, and features one of his most passionate melodies.

Allegro. The finale, beginning squarely in F minor, serves as a genuine culmination, and its tranquil coda in F major heightens the sense of relief, indeed of the “triumph” of major over minor, and of resolution over tension.

Instrumentation:

2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon,
4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings

Program note by **Paul Horsley**.

