



CHEVALIER DE SAINT-GEORGES

Friday, June 4, 2021 at 11:15 am
Saturday, June 5, 2021 at 7:30 pm

ALLEN-BRADLEY HALL

Ken-David Masur, conductor



FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Symphony No. 85 in B-flat major, "La Reine" [The Queen]

- I. Adagio – Vivace
- II. Romanze: Allegretto
- III. Menuetto: Allegretto
- IV. Presto

JOSEPH BOULOGNE, Chevalier de Saint-Georges

Overture and Ballet music from *L'Amant Anonyme*
[The Anonymous Lover]

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Symphony No. 86 in D major

- I. Adagio – Allegro spiritoso
- II. Capriccio: Largo
- III. Menuet: Allegretto
- IV. Allegro con spirito

The Reimagined Season is sponsored by the **United Performing Arts Fund**.
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CHEVALIER DE SAINT-GEORGES

Program Notes by J. Mark Baker

Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges was a contemporary of Mozart. A composer, virtuoso violinist, conductor, and champion fencer, his worthy music is heard all-too-infrequently. We aim to rectify this by presenting the instrumental music from a comic opera. Two of Haydn's six "Paris" symphonies bookend the program.

Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges

Born 25 December 1745; near Basse Terre, Guadeloupe

Died 9/10 June 1799; Paris, France

Joseph Boulogne was born on the eastern Caribbean island Guadeloupe, the son of George Boulogne, a wealthy plantation owner, and Anne dite Nanon, his wife's 16-year-old Senegalese slave. His father, wishing him to have a proper education, moved the family to Paris, where he became as renowned a fencer as he was a violinist. As one writer put it, he was "virtuoso of the sword and the bow." He also excelled in riding, dancing, swimming, and skating.

Little is known about his musical training, either as a violinist or a composer. Earlier accounts of Boulogne's life state that he had lessons with this father's plantation manager. It has also been suggested that, in France, he studied the violin with the great violinist/composer Jean-Marie Leclair (1697-1764) and composition with François-Joseph Gossec (1734-1829), the most important instrumental composer in France during this period.

Unfortunately, Boulogne has sometimes been given the nickname "The Black Mozart" (*Le Mozart noir*). This is inappropriate, not only because it is offensive, but also because Boulogne is coming out of the French tradition, whereas Mozart is coming from the Austro-German tradition. It has also been pointed out more than once that we might very well call Mozart "The White Boulogne" (*Le Boulogne blanc*) because the Austrian master was influenced by his French counterpart. In his travels to Paris, Mozart saw the acclaim of Boulogne's music, witnessed his acceptance by the French nobility, and envied his familiarity with Marie Antoinette.

When compared with his contemporaries, Boulogne's compositional output may seem small. Nevertheless, he produced two symphonies, four symphonies concertantes, 12 sonatas for chamber ensemble, 14 violin concertos, 18 string quartets, and 118 songs with keyboard accompaniment. We need to remember that he was involved in many other activities, in addition to composing and performing. In fact, despite his earlier enchantment with the nobility, he went on to take part in the French Revolution, assuming military duties and leading a battalion of soldiers. In 1793, he was arrested and incarcerated in a house, but was spared execution and released 18 months later. Boulogne lived out his life as a commoner, forbidden to live in the vicinity of his former comrades. He briefly directed a new musical organization in Paris before his death.

Franz Joseph Haydn

Born 31 March 1732; Rohrau, Austria

Died 31 May 1809; Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 85 in B-flat major, “La Reine” [The Queen]

Composed: 1785-86

First performance: 1785-86; Paris, France

Instrumentation: flute; 2 oboes;
2 bassoons; 2 horns; strings



For nearly 30 years, beginning in 1761, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy was Haydn’s patron and employer. The Esterházy family was among the richest and most influential of the Hungarian nobility, and Nikolaus’s musical tastes and requirements shaped the traditions at the Esterházy court. Across the years, at various times and in various combinations, Haydn’s duties – both as composer and music director – included instrumental music (symphonies, concerti, divertimenti, chamber music, etc.), church music, opera, and cantatas to commemorate special occasions.

In 1784 or 1785, he received a commission for six symphonies that seemed to arrive at just the right moment: His work at court was becoming humdrum and routine, and he longed for a challenge. The request came from Claude-Francois-Marie Rigoley, Count d’Ogny. Though only in his late 20s, the Count was the Postmaster-General of France; a well-educated arts patron, he owned one of the most extensive libraries of the time. He was closely associated with a concert series, sponsored by his wealthy Masonic lodge, called Le Concert de la Loge Olympique. It was for this fine organization and its large Parisian orchestra (40 violins, ten basses!) – and its conductor, Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges – that Haydn penned the so-called “Paris” symphonies, Nos. 82-87.

We don’t know the exact order in which these six works were composed, but Symphony No. 85 in B-flat major was particularly well-liked in its own day – it is nicknamed “La Reine” because it was a favorite of the ill-fated queen, Marie Antoinette – and throughout the 19th century. It was one of the first Haydn symphonies to cross the Atlantic: Philadelphia and New York audiences heard it in the early 1790s.

Cast in what was, by then, the usual four movements, the symphony opens with the customary Adagio. The Vivace that follows is set in 3/4 meter in sonata form, based on a single theme: there’s a long-held note followed by a descending movement, then upward-moving scales. The Romance is a set of variations on a folksong melody fancied by the Queen, “La gentile et jeune Lisette.” The movement was so popular that it was later published as a piano solo.

In the third movement, Haydn eschews his typical peasant-like Minuet, offering instead a more *galant* and refined Menuetto; in the trio – in which the bassoon takes a solo role – listen for an arresting moment when, above a pedal tone on the dominant, a series of woodwind voices enters in succession. The Presto finale is in rondo form, and is yet another example of Haydn’s economic monothematic writing. The first violins and solo bassoon present the melody that will recur throughout.

Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges

Born 25 December 1745; near Basse Terre, Guadeloupe

Died 9/10 June 1799; Paris, France

Overture and Ballet music from *L'Amant Anonyme* [The Anonymous Lover]

Composed: c1779-80

First performance: 8 March 1780; Paris, France

Instrumentation: 2 oboes; bassoon;
2 horns; harpsichord; strings



Of the seven stage works penned by Boulogne, only one remains completely extant: *The Anonymous Lover*, described as a “comédie mêlée d’ariettes et de ballets,” was based on a play by Stephanie Félicité de Genlis (1746-1820). As that characterization indicates, it is an *opéra ballet* with dialogues and many dances, the sort of light entertainment then in vogue.

Its plot is a lighthearted affair, consistent with the tastes of the time. There’s a love triangle, but with a twist: only two people are involved. The threesome consists of nobles: Léontine, a beautiful, wealthy young widow; Valcour, her friend of many years; the anonymous lover (in actuality, Valcour), who has been sending her gifts and love letters for several years. There’s the conventional entourage: Ophémon, an old scholar who knows both sides and gently manipulates the situation; Dorothée, Léontine’s confidante and friend; Jeanette and Colin, the requisite happy and simple peasant couple. The double wedding – yes, Valcour finds the courage to declare his love – at the end of the opera includes both the serving class and the aristocrats.

Though it seems there might be nothing in the libretto to occasion deep thought or special attention, the music is another story. It is, according to conductor James Conlon – who led a recent virtual performance in Los Angeles – “elegant, charming, lively, and most importantly, deeply expressive and even profound when it needs to be.” Boulogne’s music falls in the category of the *style gallant*, which was popular in the mid-to-late 18th century. Such music is typified by elegant melodies and simple chordal accompaniment. It is “pleasing, entertaining, and unproblematic” (R.G. Pauly), designed to appeal to the widest audience.

The Overture is cast three continuous sections. Its opening 3/4 Allegro presto is set in the bright key of D major. The expressive D-minor Andante that follows is scored for strings only; note the orderliness and symmetry of its agreeable melody. The 3/8 Presto, back in D major, takes us almost by surprise; set in ternary form, its middle section shifts to D minor, *sans* winds. Throughout this brief section, enjoy the playful dialogue between the first and second violins.

The ballet music we’ll hear on this concert comes from Act 2, Scene 7. The first selection is scored for the entire ensemble; set in ternary form, its middle section is cast in the parallel minor key. The second piece, in a lilting 6/8 meter, highlights the strings. It, too, is a three-part form: A major–A minor–A major.

Franz Joseph Haydn

Born 31 March 1732; Rohrau, Austria

Died 31 May 1809; Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 86 in D major

Composed: 1786

First performance: 1787; Paris, France

Instrumentation: flute; 2 oboes; 2 bassoons;

2 horns; 2 trumpets; timpani; strings



Haydn's Symphony No. 86 is another of the works he composed for the orchestra of Le Concert de la Loge Olympique. Joseph Boulogne led its premiere in 1787. Writer Michael Steinberg called it "a marvel of a piece," and noted that it "began to gain some currency in modern times thanks to a delightful on-its-toes 1938 recording by Bruno Walter." Like No. 85, it is "among the finest expressions of Haydn's genius" (Jans Peter Larsen), no doubt inspired by the prospect of writing for such an accomplished ensemble.

The stately Adagio begins softly, but soon there's a deluge of scales, tremolandos, and brass salvos. As we near the Allegro spiritoso, we expect to return to the tonic key of D major. But Haydn has a trick up his sleeve and instead moves to a chord that H.C. Robbins Landon called the "off-tonic." We reach D major on the fourth bar. Similarly, the extensive development section begins with an "off-dominant" that resolves four measures later. Haydn labels the second movement a Capriccio; the term infers capriciousness or whimsy, allowing for some freedom of manner. Marked Largo, its opening three notes, quiet and detached, outline a G-major triad. This chord serves as the launching pad for the theme and, as the eloquent movement progresses, helps delineate its structure.

The Menuet begins simply enough, but after the first dozen bars, Haydn develops his melody with pedal tones and expressive counterpoint. Wind solos lend a distinctive color to the trio, a delectable Austrian Ländler. The sparkling Finale, "fast, with spirit" and set in 4/4 meter, teems with cheeky good humor. With it, the Chevalier de Saint-George and his Olympique players must surely have brought the house down.

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Terry Burko and David Taggart
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In memory of Todd Levy's Mother

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In honor of Patt Mumm-Lovely

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In honor of Christine Radiske's Birthday

Kay and Fred Austermann

In honor of Dave Rasmussen

Caroline Coward

In memory of Hans Schwark

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John Jacobsen

In memory of Eileen M. Sukawaty

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In honor of Peter Thomas

Susi and Dick Stoll

In honor of Emily Wacker Schultz

Kathy and Russ Schultz

**In honor of Barbara Weigner in celebration
of her 84th Birthday. And our 70 years of
friendship, initially nurtured by our mutual
participation in high school orchestra**

Marjorie Sutton

In memory of Mary Lee Winnie

Ms. Rebecca R. Winnie

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**MYSO, Progressions, Photo by Ron Oshima.
Skylight Music Theatre, Andrew Varela,
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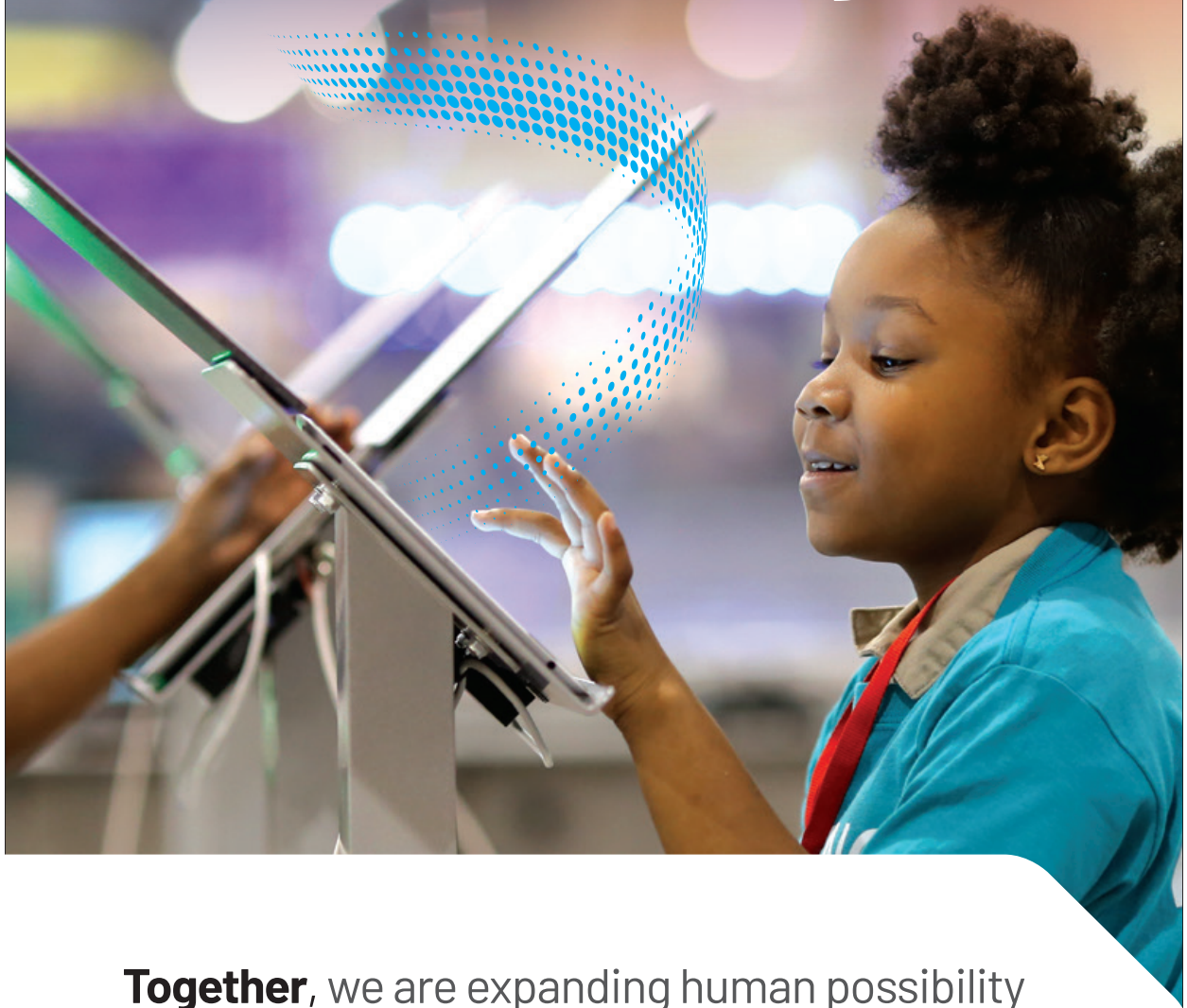
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