

Counterpoint



COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA

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Symphony No. 3 "Eroica" by Ludwig v. Beethoven

also performing

Overture to Bastien and Bastienne K. 50 by W.A. Mozart

Concerto for 2 Oboes in F Major by Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni (Hubert Brard & Scott Duffus, oboes)

Concerto for Clarinet in E-flat by Franz Krommer (Bob Thorpe, clarinet)

CCO RECEIVES COMPASS GRANT FROM ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

The Fundraising Committee of the CCO Board is pleased to announce that we have received a Compass Grant from the Ontario Arts Council to hire an arts consultant. The consultant will lead us in crafting a three year strategic plan. Our consultant will be Linda Barnett. Linda has worked with several community orchestras in the past and will be with us over the next three months. The project will focus on articulating a vision of where we want to go as an organization and developing a conscious decision-making process for long-term sustainability and including identification of skills needed by the Board Directors to ensure we get there. Orchestras members will be invited to participate in the process. Watch for more news on this exciting initiative in the coming weeks.



Colin MacAdam,
Chair, Fundraising

NEXT CONCERT

Saturday, March 3, 2007

St. Luke's Church (Sherbourne & Carlton) at 8:00pm

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FRANZ KROMMER: CLARINET CONCERTO



Often compared to other great composers of his time, Franz Krommer was born in the same year as Haydn's death, was a contemporary of Mozart, and outlived Beethoven. His musical style denotes the influences across the divide between the Classical and Romantic eras.

Showing talent in his early years, Krommer was trained as a violinist and organist by his uncle. In 1790, he took a position as a church musical director in the eastern part of the Czech Republic.

Later, after paying his musical dues, Krommer moved to Vienna in his mid-thirties, where he accepted an appointment as concertmaster for a duke. This employment proved fruitful for the composer and he published many of his early symphonies, concertos and about 50 string quartets over a dozen-year period.

For a few years, Krommer traveled around Europe with Emperor Franz I as his chamber door guardian. Then, when he was nearly 60 years old in 1818, Krommer accepted a promotion to become court composer and director of chamber music for the emperor at the Imperial Court of Austria. Though his creative output declined during this time, the composer served in this post until his death in 1831.

By the time the clarinet concerto was written, Krommer was widely famous in Europe. Appearing in print in 1803, the piece takes the form of a standard concerto from the Classical period. The first movement is long, serious and heroic, featuring a double exposition for the orchestra and soloist. However, despite the traditional format, the melodies display hints of the approaching Romantic style, with a yearning second movement and frequent, dramatic shifts to minor keys. Not generally considered a virtuoso work, Krommer's concerto does showcase the clarinet's strengths as a lyrical instrument. In the age of Beethoven's dominance, this piece stands out as one with especially pretty qualities, written by a composer with tuneful sensibilities.

Katya Diakow,
Violin Section

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The Counterpoint Community Orchestra's own Robert Thorpe will perform Franz Krommer's Concerto for Clarinet.

BEETHOVEN'S 'EROICA' SYMPHONY



The main work in our March concert is the Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 in E, known as the Eroica. The exact title, as it appears in Beethoven's manuscript is *Sinfonia eroica, composta per festeggiare il sovvenire d'un grand'uomo* (Heroic symphony, composed to celebrate the memory of a great man). According to his pupil Ferdinand Ries, Beethoven originally named the symphony *Buonaparte* and dedicated to Napoleon Bonaparte, then First Consul of the French Republic - whom he reputedly greatly admired and in whom he saw the personification of the ideals of the French Revolution; when Beethoven learned the news that Napoleon had proclaimed himself emperor, he was so disgusted and disappointed that he tore the title page of the manuscript in half and later changed the title to *Sinfonia eroica*.

This is the legend of the Eroica; but like all legends, it has to be treated with a grain of salt. What is certain, is that Beethoven did, indeed, originally name the symphony *Buonaparte* and did dedicate it to Napoleon. However, modern research suggests a far more prosaic and pragmatic reason for the symphony's initial association with Napoleon, and its subsequent dissociation with him. In 1803, the year he started to work on the symphony, Beethoven was contemplating either a tour or even a move to Paris, so it seemed a good idea to write a symphony honouring Bonaparte. When these plans didn't materialize, Beethoven rededicated the work to Prince Lobkowitz, one of his most loyal admirers (who also payed very good money for it). But by that time Austria was at war with France, so obviously, the title *Buonaparte* had to go.

And if the French Revolution is not the inspiration for this work, what did move Beethoven to write it? And who is the hero mentioned in the new title? The true inspiration for the Eroica is deeply personal: the symphony is the result of two crises, one artistic and one personal, that Beethoven underwent in 1802. While enjoying an ever increasing success as a pianist and as a composer. Beethoven came to the gradual realization that he had reached the limits of what he could achieve by adhering strictly to the path of Haydn and Mozart, and he was searching for new solutions. Unfortunately, paralleling his artistic success, Beethoven's hearing was continuously deteriorating. In the spring of 1802, on the advice of one of his physicians, he decided to give his hearing a rest by retiring to the quiet village of Heiligenstadt on the outskirts of Vienna. However, his hearing did not improve and by October he was in a deep emotional crisis and felt compelled to draft a testament, the famous Heiligenstadt Testament, discovered among his papers after his death. In the preamble, Beethoven describes in an anguished language his illness and his despondency.. He then goes on to

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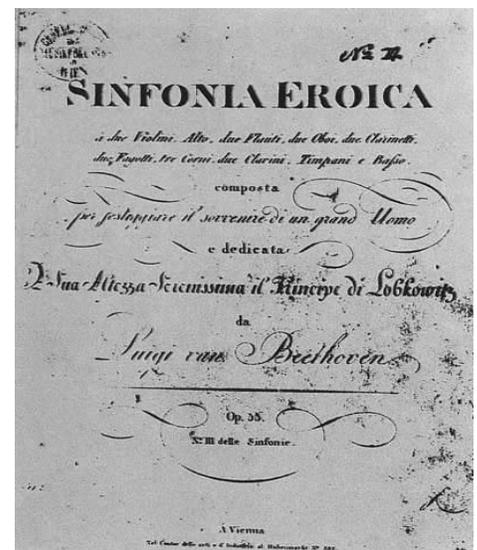
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Beethoven, age 31



First printed page from "Eroica" manuscript.

BEETHOVEN'S 'EROICA' SYMPHONY (continued)

say that he contemplated suicide, but that his art prevented him from taking this course. Both crises, however, resulted in a sort of catharsis, and immediately following Heiligenstadt Beethoven started to work again with renewed vigour and in a novel, daring style. The frontispiece of this new phase in his artistic development is the Eroica. The symphony becomes an allegory of Beethoven's own heroic struggle against blind fate, and his ultimate victory - the hero is Beethoven himself.

But what makes Eroica such a revolutionary work is the music itself. To begin with, the symphony is much longer and more complex than anything written until then. The first movement is still in the traditional sonata form, but unlike Haydn's and Mozart's symphonies (and his own first two symphonies) the first movement of the Eroica has a much expanded development section, in which new thematic material is introduced, as well as a very long coda (concluding section). The second movement, entitled Marcia funebre (Funeral march) has an obvious programmatic character, the traditional Minuet is replaced by an exuberant Scherzo. The last movement is a set of variations based on a theme used by Beethoven in a series of earlier works, most notably the ballet music The Creatures of Prometheus Op. 43. In the Greek mythology Prometheus is the hero that stole the fire from the Gods and brought it to mankind. Therefore the symphony may be an allegory of Prometheus, and by extension, and allegory of the struggle of the human spirit against the preordained, unjust order and blind fate. Such an interpretation would also fit with Beethoven's admiration of the ideas of the French Revolution. Most importantly, Beethoven uses the symbol of Prometheus to transcend his own personal struggle and to elevate it to a more general level.

But more than the formal innovations, the revolutionary character of the symphony - and the one that also makes it the first romantic symphony - is the fact that it deliberately, consciously sets out to describe the composer's feelings and his inner conflicts. The passionate, often dark and anguished music of the Eroica makes Beethoven the first Romantic composer. The struggle however ends in a victory and this is what marks him as a product of the Age of Enlightenment and true Classical composer.

Joseph Nachman,
Violin Section

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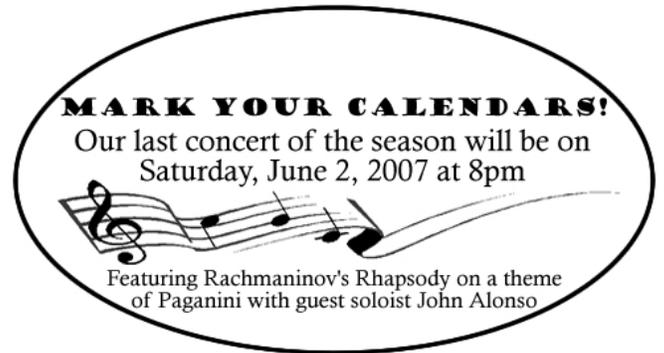
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The CCO performs with Sinead Sugrue at last November's concert. Photo by Yul Doo.



Hubert Brard & Scott Duffus, more home-grown CCO talent, will perform Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni's Concerto for Two Oboes.



TOMASO GIOVANNI ALBINONI: CONCERTO FOR 2 OBOES



Widely known today for his operas, sonatas and concertos, Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni thought of himself as merely an amateur musician.

Despite being well trained in his art as a violinist and vocalist, Albinoni did not seek professional employment in music. Unlike most composers of his time, he never attempted to find work at a church or court of nobility, though he was well-connected. Being the son of a wealthy businessman enabled him to live the life of an aristocrat and, as a man of independent financial means, Albinoni had the option to write music on his own.

His early efforts in composing church music were not very successful. However, in the 1700s, he achieved fame as an opera composer throughout Italy and was also composing many instrumental works at the time. These sonatas, concertos and cantatas can be favourably compared to those of Corelli and Vivaldi. Though he wrote in a limited range of forms, Albinoni composed a vast amount of music, the core of which was published between 1694 and 1736.

What made Albinoni notable was his introduction of a three-movement, "fast-slow-fast" structure which formed the model for countless Italian concertos to follow. While his concertos were less adventurous and soloistic than Vivaldi's, Albinoni chose a different manner from the ritornello form preferred by Vivaldi. Instead, the fast movements consisted of free variations on a motto or theme stat-

ed in the opening; and the slow movements have a simpler form, but feature an ornate style.

The composer's instrumental music even attracted the admiration of Bach, who wrote several keyboard fugues based on Albinoni's themes and used his bass lines for harmony exercises for his pupils.

Albinoni was particularly fond of the oboe, only recently introduced to Italy at the time. He is credited as being the first Italian to compose concertos for oboe, since the format was generally reserved for stringed instruments. He wrote a series of concertos which treated the oboe as a lyrical, melodic instrument, similar to the way in which the voice would have been regarded.

The Concerto for Two Oboes demonstrates the tremendous individuality of the composer's pieces and his great gifts as a melodist. With a facile style and harmonic simplicity, Albinoni's work reveals a well-balanced approach. The elegance and vitality of his creations make him stand out as a composer of strong melodic character.

Relatively little is known about Albinoni's life, especially considering his modern stature as a composer and the relatively well-documented period in which he lived. Parts of the composer's works were lost in World War II, so not much of his life or music are documented after the mid-1720s. Albinoni died in Venice in 1751.

Katya Diakow,
Violin section

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