

3 From Bach

1–3 Concerto for Violin and Oboe in c minor, BWV 1060 (ca.

1736)

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Allegro

4:52

Adagio

5:05

Allegro

3:28

KRISTIN LEE, *solo violin*; JAMES AUSTIN SMITH, *oboe*; HYEYEON PARK, *harpsichord*; ARNAUD SUSSMANN, BENJAMIN BEILMAN, *violins*; RICHARD O'NEILL, *viola*; DMITRI ATAPINE, *cello*; SCOTT PINGEL, *bass*

4–6 Piano Concerto no. 12 in A Major, K. 414 (1782)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Allegro

10:11

Andante (after J. C. Bach)

7:19

Rondeau: Allegretto

6:52

GILBERT KALISH, *piano*; ARNAUD SUSSMANN, JORJA FLEEZANIS, *violins*; RICHARD O'NEILL, *viola*; DAVID FINCKEL, *cello*; SCOTT PINGEL, *bass*

7–9 Double Concerto in d minor for Violin, Piano, and Strings

(1823)

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

Allegro

17:58

Adagio

9:28

Allegro molto

9:09

WU HAN, *piano*; BENJAMIN BEILMAN, *solo violin*; KRISTIN LEE, SUNMI CHANG, *violins*; RICHARD O'NEILL, *viola*; DMITRI ATAPINE, *cello*; SCOTT PINGEL, *bass*

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Music@Menlo *LIVE*

3 From Bach



BACH	Concerto for Violin and Oboe
MOZART	Piano Concerto no. 12
MENDELSSOHN	Double Concerto for Violin, Piano, and Strings

Music@Menlo *LIVE*

3 From Bach

Music@Menlo's eleventh season, *From Bach*, celebrated the timeless work of Johann Sebastian Bach, the composer whose profound legacy has shaped Western music over the two and a half centuries since his death. Each disc of the 2013 edition of Music@Menlo *LIVE* captures the spirit of the season.

Disc III celebrates the exuberance of Bach's music for solo instruments and the virtuosity of the soloist. Bach's Concerto for Violin and Oboe ingeniously pairs strings and wind instruments. Mozart's Twelfth Piano Concerto, written soon after the death of Bach's son, similarly treats the piano with virtuosic refinement. Mendelssohn, too, continues this hallowed tradition in his Double Concerto.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Concerto for Violin and Oboe in c minor, BWV 1060 (ca. 1736)

In 1729, Bach assumed the directorship of the Collegium Musicum, a concert series presented by local musicians at the iconic Zimmermann's Coffeehouse in Leipzig. Harpsichord concerti were a significant part of Bach's compositional output for the Collegium Musicum; he wrote eight harpsichord concerti (ca. 1738), all transcriptions of earlier concerti for wind or string instruments. One concerto from this period is a two-harpsichord concerto in c minor, based on a concerto for oboe and violin. While the original performance materials for this concerto are lost, it exists in a scholarly reconstruction that is widely performed today. The concerto is cast in three movements, following the Baroque convention of a fast first movement, a slow second



Johann Sebastian Bach's Concerto for Violin and Oboe in c minor, BWV 1060. L-R: Arnaud Sussmann, Kristin Lee, Benjamin Beilman, Hyeyeon Park, Richard O'Neill, James Austin Smith, Dmitri Atapine, and Scott Pingel.

movement, and a fast finale. The ritornello that begins the *Allegro* first movement is compact and exuberant, and, despite the characteristically moody key of c minor, it emanates an irresistible *joie de vivre*. The oboe and violin soloists present a secondary theme, which leads quickly into a spirited exchange with the full ensemble, issuing fragments of the ritornello. The subsequent solo-tutti conversation that ensues throughout the movement is lively and emotionally intense. The *Adagio* second movement highlights the soloists further, setting florid and piercingly expressive melodic writing for the oboe and violin above a simple, naïve accompaniment in the strings. The concerto finishes with a vigorous *Allegro* finale—like the first movement, set in ritornello form, featuring an animated dialog between solo and tutti passages.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Piano Concerto no. 12 in A Major, K. 414 (1782)

For Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the piano concerto served as an essential creative outlet. He produced twenty-seven piano concerti over his lifetime, completing his first four at age eleven and his final one within a year of his death. Mozart composed his Piano Concerto no. 12 in A Major, K. 414, in 1782. It is the second of a trio of piano concerti that Mozart composed shortly after his move to Vienna. The A Major Concerto demonstrates all of the hallmarks of Mozart's mature compositional language in the genre: the piano writing is in equal measures logically expressive and brilliantly virtuosic; the dynamic between soloist and orchestra is pitch-perfect—and, moreover, has an intimacy suggestive of chamber music. Indeed, the concerto exists in an arrangement for piano and string quartet which Mozart prepared in the hopes of promoting the concerto for private home performances. The first movement *Allegro* contains no fewer than six distinct melodic ideas, the first theme marked by ascending arpeggios, followed by a descending dotted-rhythm figure, like a slinky coming down a flight of stairs. Next comes a gently crooning melody, above light pizzicati in the cello. With the pianist having entered the picture, the concerto proceeds essentially from the blueprint of melodic ideas laid out by the strings, but with the pianist elaborating on those ideas, adding soloistic flourishes, as if coloring in a rough pencil sketch. At the arrival of the development section, Mozart continues inventing new melodies and focuses only on these new ideas presented by the piano, never actually touching on the themes of the exposition. The *Andante* second movement is based on an overture by Johann Christian Bach, Johann Sebastian's youngest son and an important childhood friend and mentor to Mozart. Johann Christian Bach had died on New Year's Day of 1782, the year of this concerto. His fondness for Johann Christian, and his grief over his death, can be felt in the *Andante*'s tender opening. Mozart casts the melody in the strings, to be played *sotto voce*. The finale is a lighthearted rondo, a welcome reprieve following the heartrending slow movement. The alternating episodes complement the refrain's

cheerful demeanor, and Mozart moreover picks up elements of the refrain throughout, lending the proceedings an organically flowing quality.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

Double Concerto in d minor for Violin, Piano, and Strings (1823)

Mendelssohn composed his Concerto in d minor for Violin, Piano, and Strings in 1823, as a fourteen-year-old prodigy. The Double Concerto reflects a dichotomy between the Baroque influence on Mendelssohn's music and the emerging Romantic energy that would come to define the nineteenth century. The violin, a brilliant, melodic instrument, is generally entrusted with music of soaring lyricism, while the piano, Mendelssohn exploits for its massive sonority. The work begins with the strings issuing a contrapuntal theme, reminiscent of a Bach fugue but infused with the spirit of Romantic *Sturm und Drang*. As the theme unfolds, the contrapuntal texture grows increasingly intricate. Mendelssohn introduces a long-breathed second theme—a markedly Romantic contrast to the compact first theme. The orchestral exposition ends with a return to the Bachian counterpoint of the opening measures, but the piano's furious entrance rips the music from its Baroque reverie back into the era of Beethoven. The soloists soon take over the lyrical second theme; the strings answer with a fragment of the Bachian theme, which, seemingly out of nowhere, plunges the music into showy salon fare. One of this movement's greatest delights lies in discovering how the young and, at times, cheeky Mendelssohn inventively weds together all of these elements: Baroque counterpoint with Romantic *Sturm und Drang*, profundity with showmanship, heroism with salon music. Mendelssohn follows the fireworks of the concerto's expansive first movement with a heartfelt *Adagio*. After the initial tutti statement of the theme, most of the movement is given over to an intimate dialog between the two soloists. The full ensemble comes together again only for the movement's magical conclusion. The warm texture of the strings, playing *sotto voce*, surrounds the soloists with an ethereal glow. The final movement begins with an impassioned statement uttered first by the piano, which is then joined by the solo violin. The full ensemble



Felix Mendelssohn's Double Concerto in d minor for Violin, Piano, and Strings. L-R: Benjamin Beilman and Scott Pingel.

responds with emphatic terseness. The fiery energy of this music is countered by the brighter, elegant second theme. Throughout the proceedings, whether tempestuous or calm, Mendelssohn spotlights the soloists with passages of pyrotechnic virtuosity.

—Patrick Castillo



About Music@Menlo

Music@Menlo is an internationally acclaimed three-week summer festival and institute that combines world-class chamber music performances, extensive audience engagement with artists, intensive training for preprofessional musicians, and efforts to enhance and broaden the chamber music community of the San Francisco Bay Area. An immersive and engaging experience centered around a distinctive array of programming, Music@Menlo enriches its core concert programs with numerous opportunities for in-depth learning to intensify audiences' enjoyment and understanding of the music and provide meaningful ways for aficionados and newcomers of all ages to explore classical chamber music.