

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN
Symphony No. 95 in C minor

Franz Joseph Haydn was born in Rohrau, Austria in 1732 and died in Vienna in 1809. He composed this symphony in 1791 and led the first performance in London the same year. The symphony calls for flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings.

The man on Haydn's doorstep was blunt: "My name is Salomon. I have come from London to fetch you; we shall conclude our agreement tomorrow."

And they did!

"Salomon" was Johann Peter Salomon (1745-1815), a violinist and impresario who directed a concert series in London. When he learned of the death of Prince Nicholas Esterházy—Haydn's longtime employer—he hid himself to Vienna, for he had long wanted to bring Haydn to London under his auspices.

Nicholas had granted Haydn his title and salary in perpetuity, but Haydn's obligation had expired with the prince and he was free to make his way outside the court he had served for so long. His new circumstances illustrated the changing role of a composer in society: the age of the composer-as-liveried-servant was drawing to a close.

England received Haydn warmly and he became a popular figure in society as well as the concert stage. His visits to England resulted in his last twelve symphonies; they would later become known as the "London" symphonies, and his newly-found independence can be found in every score.

This work is the only one of the twelve in a minor key, and the only one without a slow introduction to the first

movement. (Haydn loved to set off a sunny allegro with a dark and mysterious introduction, but the reverse of that process doesn't really work.) This *Allegro moderato* begins with a bold and rather ominous unison statement. In the silence that follows we wait for Haydn to underline that statement, but the flowing melody we hear is a contrast, not a continuation. These two themes, together with the almost dainty second subject, will undergo a polyphonic workout in the development.

Haydn treats the *Andante cantabile* very much like a theme and variations, with special prominence given to a solo cello. The composer toys with us at every turn—in a minor variation we hear wickedly foreign harmonies and oddly-placed pauses; what sounds like a literal restatement of the opening theme suddenly becomes another variation.

The *Menuet* begins with quiet ticks, soon replaced by a full-bodied peasant dance. The trio brings a solo cello to the fore once again; having the concertmaster take over the line briefly is a most unusual and delightful touch.

For the Finale Haydn leaves the minor key behind and embarks on a masterfully contrapuntal movement that recalls the "Jupiter" symphony of his dear friend, Mozart. Note how Haydn suddenly drops the counterpoint like a hot potato upon the final restatement of the theme in the recapitulation: perfect.

Haydn loved writing for musically sophisticated audiences who knew the conventions and were alert to his defiance of them. His London audiences were just what he was looking for, and their delight is now ours.

VINEET SHENDE

Three Longfellow Poems

Vineet Shende was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1972. He composed this work in 2005 and 2007 on a commission from the Portland Symphony Orchestra and the Willamain McPhee Thaxter Fund. Support for this afternoon's premiere performance also comes from the Alfred Nash Patterson Foundation for the Choral Arts Fund and the Bowdoin College Common Good Fund. The score calls for soprano soloist, chorus, 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in A, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings.

Vineet Shende spent his formative years in such contrasting settings as the Chicago area and Pune, India. He holds degrees from Cornell University, Butler University, and Grinnell College, at which institutions he studied composition with Roberto Sierra, Steven Stucky, Michael Schelle, and Jonathan Chenette. His music has been performed throughout the United States and Europe, and also in Taiwan, and has brought him recognition in the form of awards, fellowships, and grants from such organizations as ASCAP and the Mellon Foundation. Shende's music has been commissioned and premiered by ensembles such as the National Symphony Orchestra, the Casatt String Quartet, the Aeolian Chamber Players, and Flexible Music. In spring 2007, a recording of Shende's *Sonetos de amor* (text by Pablo Neruda) by soprano Elizabeth Weigle and guitarist Daniel Lippel was released on Focus Recordings. In addition to his creative work, Shende is active as a tenor and guitarist, and he is an assistant professor of music at Bowdoin College, where he teaches

courses in composition, theory, electronic music, and Asian music.

Mr Shende writes the following about his *Three Longfellow Poems*:

Many people have been drawn to Longfellow for the epic scope of poems such as *The Song of Hiawatha*, others for the sentimental and flowing language of *The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls*, but in choosing texts for *Three Longfellow Poems*, I was drawn to Longfellow's meditations on the theme of hope. The three movements of *Three Longfellow Poems* all reflect a different aspect of this subject and together form an arc of hope born, hope lost, and hope regained.

I love the fact that every Maine day begins with a sun fresh from its morning ablutions over the Atlantic – everything seems renewed and filled with possibility. Longfellow's poem *Daybreak* (1858) captures this idea perfectly. The poem describes a wind that is born in the ocean and travels across Maine's ports, forests, farms, and towns, infusing all it touches with a sense of hope and optimism for the new day. Trills, harmonic *glissandi* in the strings, and (most importantly) a winding, constantly changing 16th-note line that begins in the clarinets and spreads throughout the entire orchestra all depict this wind. This line becomes a recurring motive that represents hope throughout all three movements, as does the harmonic material first heard in the horns after the soprano soloist sings: "sail on ye mariners, the night is gone." Also, native Maine birdsong, transcribed from early morning walks at Wolfe's Neck, Acadia National Park, Vinalhaven, and Harbor Island sounds in the woodwinds during the "forest" sections of the piece.

The second movement deals with the horrible tragedy that can result when hope is removed. This movement uses *The Warning* (1842), the last work in

Longfellow's collection *Poems on Slavery*, as its text. In it, Longfellow retells the Biblical story of Samson and the destruction of the temple of the Philistines. In comparing Samson's imprisonment and humiliation to that of America's slaves, Longfellow warns:

*There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,
Shorn of his strength and bound in
bonds of steel,
Who may, in some grim revel, raise his
hand,
And shake the pillars of this
Commonweal',
Till the vast temple of our liberties
A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish
lies.*

In the original Bible story, Samson destroys the temple of the Philistines by pulling down its two central pillars, thereby killing himself and some 3000 Philistines. Given the similarity between this story and terrible events of September 11th, 2001, Longfellow's poem seems eerily prescient and relevant to our own time.

The movement begins with a high-register contrabass solo. A full contrabass section playing in its middle or low register is one of the most powerful sounds in the orchestra, but a high solo bass sounds incredibly weak. I felt this timbre would be an apt representation of Samson, shorn of his powerful locks. Tambourines, maracas, and cymbal scrapes all depict his imprisonment and forced labor. Samson's story is narrated by the choir and makes extensive use of the melodic "hope" motive from the first movement, but here it is inverted, intervallically compressed, and sequenced to reflect the absence of hope. A central fugue, continuously increasing in tension, leads to an orchestral explosion

as the temple is destroyed. When the dust settles, the soprano soloist, accompanied by the choir, sings Longfellow's cautionary lines.

The last movement sets *The Occultation of Orion* (1845). A pacifist, Longfellow was deeply troubled by the aggressive and expansionist tendencies of the Polk administration, tendencies that eventually led to an unprovoked war with Mexico. In his poem, Longfellow uses the astronomical phenomenon of an occultation (one celestial body blocking another from view – in this case the moon passing over the constellation Orion) to retell the Greek myth of Orion and Diana. After being wounded by Oenopion, Orion heals his pride by vowing to kill every beast in the forest. Aggression rules the day until the goddess Diana approaches Orion. Confronted by her holiness and purity, Orion realizes the arrogance and injustice of his actions and throws down his club, ending the reign of violence. Hope is thus reborn.

Longfellow makes much use of celestial imagery in his poem, and I tried to create a corresponding "music of the spheres" by taking the ratios between the radii, orbits, axes, and masses of the first six planets and moons and mapping this information to pitches and rhythms in particular instruments. Mercury is the solo violin and glockenspiel, Venus the flute and harp, Earth the oboe and marimba, Mars the trumpet and chimes, Jupiter the bass trombone and cellos, and Saturn the contrabassoon and contrabass. Orion and his destructive nature are represented by driving, dissonant fanfare material in the brass and timpani. Diana's purity is painted with the solo soprano and harp. Finally, the eternal triumph of peace uses the opening hope motive, now extended and presented in counterpoint throughout the entire

orchestra.

Three Longfellow Poems is dedicated to Ari Solotoff, Toshiyuki Shimada, and Elizabeth Weigle. I would also like to thank: conductors Paul Polivnick, Peter Frewen, and Shannon Chase for their dedication to this project; Suzanne Rousso for her patience during all my tweaking; Dale Syphers and Thomas Baumgarte for answering all of my astronomy questions; Brian Booton, Ann Dean, and Bernardo Feliciano for all of their suggestions; and most of all, my wonderful wife Hillary for all of her support.

Three Longfellow Poems – Texts

Daybreak

A wind came up out of the sea,
And said, O mists, make room for me.

It hailed the ships, and cried, Sail on,
Ye mariners, the night is gone.

And hurried landward far away,
Crying, Awake! it is the day.

It said unto the forest, Shout!
Hang all your leafy banners out!

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,
And said, O bird, awake and sing.

And o'er the farms, O chanticleer,
Your clarion blow; the day is near.

It whispered to the fields of corn,
Bow down, and hail the coming morn.

It shouted through the belfry-tower,
Awake, O bell! proclaim the hour.

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,
And said, Not yet! in quiet lie.

The Warning

Beware! The Israelite of old, who tore

The lion in his path,—when, poor
and blind,

He saw the blessed light of heaven no
more,

Shorn of his noble strength and
forced to grind

In prison, and at last led forth to be
A pander to Philistine revelry,—

Upon the pillars of the temple laid
His desperate hands, and in its
overthrow

Destroyed himself, and with him those
who made

A cruel mockery of his sightless
woe;

The poor, blind Slave, the scoff and jest
of all,

Expired, and thousands perished in the
fall!

There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,
Shorn of his strength and bound in
bonds of steel,

Who may, in some grim revel, raise his
hand,

And shake the pillars of this Com-
monweal,

Till the vast Temple of our liberties.

A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish
lies.

The Occultation of Orion

I saw, as in a dream sublime,

The balance in the hand of Time.

O'er East and West its beam impended;

And day, with all its hours of light,

Was slowly sinking out of sight,

While, opposite, the scale of night

Silently with the stars ascended.

Like the astrologers of eld,

In that bright vision I beheld

Greater and deeper mysteries.

I saw, with its celestial keys,

Its chords of air, its frets of fire,
The Samian's great Aeolian lyre,
Rising through all its sevenfold bars,
From earth unto the fixed stars.
And through the dewy atmosphere,
Not only could I see, but hear,
Its wondrous and harmonious strings,
In sweet vibration, sphere by sphere,
From Dian's circle light and near,
Onward to vaster and wider rings.
Where, chanting through his beard
of snows,
Majestic, mournful, Saturn goes,
And down the sunless realms of space
Reverberates the thunder of his bass.

Beneath the sky's triumphal arch
This music sounded like a march,
And with its chorus seemed to be
Preluding some great tragedy.
Sirius was rising in the east;
And, slow ascending one by one,
The kindling constellations shone.
Begirt with many a blazing star,
Stood the great giant Algebar,
Orion, hunter of the beast!
The moon was pallid, but not faint;
And beautiful as some fair saint,
Serenely moving on her way
In hours of trial and dismay.
As if she heard the voice of God,
Unharm'd with naked feet she trod
Upon the hot and burning stars,
As on the glowing coals and bars,
That were to prove her strength, and try
Her holiness and her purity.

Thus moving on, with silent pace,
And triumph in her sweet, pale face,
She reached the station of Orion.
Aghast he stood in strange alarm!

Then, through the silence overhead,
An angel with a trumpet said,
"Forevermore, forevermore,
The reign of violence is o'er!"

And, like an instrument that flings
Its music on another's strings,
The trumpet of the angel cast
Upon the heavenly lyre its blast,
And on from sphere to sphere the words
Re-echoed down the burning chords,—
"Forevermore, forevermore,
The reign of violence is o'er!"

RICHARD STRAUSS
Suite from *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*,
Op. 60

*Richard Strauss was born in Munich in 1864 and died in Garmisch, Germany in 1949. He composed incidental music for Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* in 1911-12 as part of a much larger project, and it was first performed at the Stuttgart Opera under the direction of Max Reinhardt the same year. In 1920 he fashioned the present suite from nine movements of the incidental music. The Suite calls for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 2 horns, trumpet, bass trombone, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, and strings.*

In 1911 Richard Strauss and his favorite librettist, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, had a grand idea—rather too grand, as it turned out. The idea was to put on their own version of Molière's play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (*The Bourgeois Gentleman*), complete with incidental music by Strauss, followed by a short, one-act opera newly composed for the occasion.

Well, it didn't work. At the first performance, a reception was given by King Karl of Württemberg in the intermission between the play and the opera.

This stretched on interminably and, given that the audience had already sat through a ninety minute play and was about to hear a ninety minute opera (grown from its intended thirty minutes), they simply had no patience for it. Furthermore, the opera-lovers in the audience hated the play, while the theater-lovers hated the opera. Subsequent performances (minus the reception) fared no better, and Strauss and Hofmannsthal gave up.

Strauss then accomplished one of the most impressive salvage-jobs in music history. He added a forty minute prologue to the opera—which wouldn't have made sense without it—and arrived at one of his finest confections, the opera-within-an-opera *Ariadne auf Naxos*. He then extracted an orchestral suite from his incidental music and called it *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Where the two together had been a dismal failure, each separately was a complete success.

If (as it is said) there are only seven different plots in all of literature, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme's* must be one of them. Monsieur Jourdain is a hopelessly middle-class boor who has become newly rich. It is his greatest wish to acquire the look, manner, and dance moves of a true nobleman. The play, and therefore Strauss' suite, are about Jourdain's spectacular failures at accomplishing his task.

The *Overture to Act I* is a busy portrait of M. Jourdain. It begins with piano and strings, with Strauss mildly evoking a Baroque-ish atmosphere throughout. More instruments enter—rather ominously in the case of the brass—and the movement devolves into a kind of *siciliana*.

This is followed by Jourdain's dancing lesson, to the tune of a *Menuett* in the flutes and strings. Then comes *The Fencing Master*, rather pompous and with

some scintillating piano passages. The *Entrance and Dance of the Tailors* depicts the inept M. Jourdain being instructed on how to wear his new embroidered finery to the polonaise of a solo violin. *Lully's Minuet* is Strauss' adaptation of a minuet from Jean-Baptiste Lully's own incidental music for the same play. Strauss composed the Courante that follows for the play's ball scene. The *Entrance of Cléonte* also comes via Lully; in the play, Cléonte is the lover of Jourdain's daughter. The *Prelude to Act II* depicts Count Dorantes and Marquise Dorimène arriving for dinner; they are a noble couple who happen to be broke and looking to take advantage of M. Jourdain.

The Dinner is the culmination of it all. It begins with a little march as the food is brought in, and each course has its own music. Strauss couldn't resist a few in-jokes: when the Rhine salmon is served, the music quotes Wagner's *Das Rheingold*; as the mutton appears we hear the bleating sheep from Strauss' own *Don Quixote*; and as the thrushes are served we hear a conflation of Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* and Verdi's *Rigoletto* ("La Donna è Mobile"), a hint of birds from the former and (as Count Dorantes speaks with Jourdain) a bit of disingenuousness from the latter. At last, the dinner erupts as a servant emerges from a giant omelet in the *Dance of the Kitchen Boys*.

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme finds Strauss applying unusual restraint and in exceptional good humor. This music is about as far from *Ein Heldenleben* as you can get, and it shows a level of versatility we don't necessarily expect from Strauss. Wrenched from its original conception as it was, it also shows that sometimes the parts are greater than the whole.

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