

MOZART AND SCHUBERT PROGRAM

Jonny Greenwood (b. 1971): Suite from *There Will Be Blood*

Like many popular musicians, Greenwood studied the classics first. He learned viola at an early age, played in a youth orchestra, and entered Oxford Brookes University, intending a career in performance and composition. Along the way, however, he taught himself piano and guitar, and became fascinated with modern music, especially electronic instrumentations. When Greenwood's rock band, Radiohead, was offered a six-album recording contract, he dropped out of school and began to focus on recording and composing.

The movie *There Will Be Blood* was inspired by Upton Sinclair's 1927 novel, *Oil!*, a story of greed and corruption in the petroleum industry in early 20th-century California. In his own words, Greenwood describes how he composed music for this film: "I tried to write to the scenery, and the story rather than specific 'themes' for characters...It was all about the underlying menace in the film."

Although the original musical score calls for strings, woodwinds, trumpets, and a wide variety of percussion instruments, the version tonight is only for strings and oboe. The Suite is marked by repetition, syncopation, and sudden, dramatic stops. Segments often begin with sustained, drone-like tones or a repeated motif in the low strings, while different thematic ideas are added in the upper parts. There are also passages with open intervals and gentle dissonances in slow tempos, somewhat in the style of Aaron Copland. The Suite closes with parallel chords in the piano's upper register, which sound a little like the music of Olivier Messiaen, one of Greenwood's favorite classical composers.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791): Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219 ("Turkish")

Most people think of Mozart as an extraordinary keyboard virtuoso, and he was, but he was also quite an accomplished violinist. As a young boy, he taught himself to play the custom-built, miniature violin that his father gave him, and Mozart was only 14 when he became concertmaster of the court orchestra in Salzburg. Within the next five years he composed all five of his violin concertos, probably intending to be the soloist.

Concerto No. 5 follows the traditional fast-slow-fast scheme in three movements, but it ventures beyond the mold and is full of inventiveness. The first movement bears the designation, *Allegro aperto* (literally, "open Allegro"), which implies a tempo that is broader and more majestic than simply Allegro. While this marking frequently appears in Mozart's operas, it rarely occurs in his instrumental works.

Opera is a key to understanding some of Mozart's most imaginative and unexpected gestures. For example, when a concerto soloist initially enters, it usually presents material that the orchestra has just performed. However, in Concerto No. 5, the music stops completely at the end of the opening orchestral statement. Somewhat like an operatic diva who imperiously commands complete attention from the audience, the soloist then proceeds with a different, much slower melody over soft orchestral accompaniment. Following this adagio interlude, the original tempo resumes but with a new melody in the solo violin.

The slow movement is in the rare key (at least for Mozart) of E Major, and except for the beginning statement, the orchestra accompanies the soloist. The biggest surprise occurs in the finale. It opens with

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a typical minuet-like rondo in triple meter, but one of the episodes abruptly changes and assumes a “Turkish” flair, hence the nickname for this piece. The melodies are not actually Turkish; in fact, most are Hungarian folk-like tunes, and one has even been traced back to an early ballet by Mozart. But listeners associated some of the characteristics in this episode—duple meter and heavy accents—with Turkish military bands that had been introduced to Europeans back in the 17th century. The audiences must have been astonished but thrilled with such an exciting departure from the ordinary minuet!

Considered one of Mozart’s early masterpieces, Concerto No. 5 is now a standard composition in the violinist’s repertoire. Despite its departures from the Classic norm, the work is full of elegance, balance, and grace.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828): Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major, D. 485

Schubert was born in Vienna, and except for a few trips to neighboring areas, lived his entire life in that city. As a young man he studied the works of Haydn and Mozart, and later on, Beethoven, and he was strongly influenced by the older masters. Like Mozart, Schubert composed with slight effort and spontaneity, creating an astonishing number of masterpieces—almost a thousand before his untimely death. His first three symphonies, which may have evolved from the Schubert family quartet repertoire, are Haydnesque in thematic outlines, occasional use of a single theme, and general buoyance. The fourth symphony, with its dark mood and key of C minor, recalls the spirit of Beethoven. Even Schubert nicknamed this work the “Tragic” Symphony.

Although composed soon after the fourth symphony was finished, Symphony No. 5 does not continue in the newer style.

Schubert returns, instead, to the early Classic period. Not only is the orchestra reduced in size—clarinet, trumpets, and timpani are omitted and one flute is called for instead of two—but the slow introduction is also eliminated. In fact, the dimensions of the work are smaller than any of Schubert’s previous symphonies, and its scope and content are similar to those of early Mozart.

Despite using the earlier masters as models, Schubert provides exquisite melodies and colorful harmonies that serve as a harbinger of Romanticism. The result, Symphony No. 5, is a perfect blend of the old with the new. The opening movement, which is in B-flat Major, is marked by tight transitions and a terse development that deals mostly with the opening theme. The second movement has a chamber-music style; however, the graceful E-flat Major theme, with excursions into C-flat Major and G minor, is all Schubertian. While both the minuet and vivacious finale are Haydnesque, the trio in the third movement is particularly notable for its serene melody in the parallel mode.

Schubert worked in almost total obscurity unknown to the world during his lifetime except for a small circle of friends. He never held a music teaching or conducting post, never taught any students, wasn’t much of a performer, and published practically none of his music. (Symphony No. 5 was not published until 1885.) As music critic Donald Tovey has remarked, “The tragedy of Beethoven’s deafness needs no comment, but the history of the arts is full of tragedies not less pathetic and far less inspiring to the imagination... Schubert, who was not deaf, never heard his own mature orchestral music at all.”

Today Schubert’s Fifth Symphony is considered the best and most popular of his early symphonies.

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