

Andris Nelsons, Ray and Maria Stata Music Director
Boston Symphony Orchestra
141st season, 2021–2022

Thursday, November 11, 8pm
Friday, November 12, 1:30pm
Saturday, November 13, 8pm

Roderick Cox conducting

Mozart Clarinet Concerto in A, K.622
 Allegro
 Adagio
 Rondo: Allegro
William R. Hudgins

{intermission}

Mendelssohn Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Opus 56, *Scottish*
 Introduction and Allegro agitato—
 Scherzo assai vivace—
 Adagio cantabile—
 Allegro guerriero and Finale maestoso

Bank of America is proud to sponsor the BSO's 2021-22 season.

The evening concerts will end about 9:45 and the afternoon concert about 3:15.

In consideration of the performers and those around you, please turn off all electronic equipment during the performance, including tablets, cellular phones, pagers, watch alarms, messaging devices of any kind, anything that emits an audible signal, and anything that glows. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please note that the use of audio or video recording devices and taking pictures of the artists—whether photographs or videos—are prohibited during concerts.

THE PROGRAM IN BRIEF...

Wolfgang Mozart had a favorite clarinetist, one Anton Stadler, whom he met soon after relocating to Vienna in 1781 and whom he had in mind in writing a number of pieces—most notably, the Clarinet Quintet, K.581, and the 1791 Clarinet Concerto, one of Mozart's last completed works. The clarinet was a relatively new and undeveloped instrument in Mozart's time, but it's clear Stadler was an excellent player and that the substantial pieces Mozart wrote for him helped elevate the clarinet's soloistic capabilities. In fact, though, the Mozart concerto may have been written for a hybrid instrument, the basset clarinet, an instrument whose range falls between that of today's standard clarinets and their lower, larger cousin, the basset horn. With a few adjustments, though, Mozart's Clarinet Concerto is a wonderful vehicle for the modern clarinet, showing off in turn the instrument's wide range of tonal beauty and its virtuosic, athletic possibilities.

The German composer Felix Mendelssohn found the inspiration for his Symphony No. 3, the *Scottish* Symphony, along with his *Hebrides* Overture, on a trip to Scotland in the summer of 1829, when he was twenty. It was more than a decade later, though, that he actually composed the piece based on thematic sketches he'd made during that trip. Finished in 1842, the *Scottish* was his last completed symphony. (The numbering of his five mature symphonies is famously misleading, with the Fifth, *Reformation*, dating from 1830 and the Fourth, *Italian*, from 1833.) The *Scottish* Symphony is in four movements, played without pause. This ensures uninterrupted concentration in moving through the work's evocative themes, colors, and moods, and further heightens its overarching musical connections.

Robert Kirzinger

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

Clarinet Concerto in A, K.622

Joannes Chrisostomus Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart—who began calling himself Wolfgang Amadeo about 1770 and Wolfgang Amadè in 1777 (he used “Amadeus” only in jest)—was born in Salzburg, Austria, on January 27, 1756, and died in Vienna on December 5, 1791. At some point between the end of September and mid-November 1791, Mozart wrote a concerto for the clarinetist Anton Stadler, who presumably gave its first performance in Vienna soon after. However, the concerto does not survive in the form in which Mozart wrote it, and it is generally heard now in an adaptation of unknown authorship dating from about 1800. Mozart made no space for cadenzas in this concerto.

In addition to the solo clarinet, the score of Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto calls for an orchestra of just 2 flutes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, and strings (violins I and II, violas, cellos, and basses).

Anton Stadler gets a generally bad press in the Mozart literature. “Dissolute” is an adjective frequently applied, and one of Mozart’s sniffer relatives, his sister-in-law Sophie Haibel, counted him among the composer’s “false friends, secret bloodsuckers and worthless persons who served only to amuse him at the table and intercourse with whom injured his reputation.” Like Mozart, he was a Freemason, though they belonged to different lodges. Mozart liked him, particularly as a companion for those pleasures of the table (including the gambling table) of which Mozart’s widow and her second husband were so disapproving. Mozart even lent Stadler 500 gulden, without security, a debt that went unpaid.

Stadler’s artistry was never in dispute. Here is a rhapsody from the pen of Johann Friedrich Schink, a Prussian-born critic of theater and opera who lived in Austria from 1780: “My thanks to you, noble Virtuoso! Never have I heard the like of what you contrive with your instrument. Never should I have imagined that a clarinet might be capable of imitating the human voice as deceptively-faithfully as it was imitated by you. Verily, your instrument has so soft and so lovely a tone that none can resist it who has a heart, and I have one, dear Virtuoso. Let me thank you!” Still more telling is the testimony of what Mozart wrote for Stadler—the concerto; the quintet, K.581, of all but equal loveliness; perhaps the rich and subtle E-flat trio with viola and piano, K.498; certainly the obbligatos in two of the arias in the opera *La clemenza di Tito*, Sesto’s “Parto, parto” and Vitellia’s “Non più di fiori.” (Mozart had taken Stadler along for this opera’s premiere in Prague on September 6, 1791, and reported home with delight that the clarinetist had received ovations for his playing.) It may also be that the late addition of clarinet parts to the Symphony No. 40 in G minor was undertaken to please the Stadlers.

Mozart wrote for the clarinet as early as 1771 when it was just beginning to be established as a normal part of the orchestra, but his real discovery of its character came about in the ’80s. The soft edge of its tone, the vocal aspect that Schink noted in Stadler’s playing, its virtuosic potential in matters of range and flexibility all made it an ideal voice for Mozart’s fantasy and musical thought. At that time, the lower register of this relatively new instrument was accounted colorless as well as a bit uncertain in pitch. Stadler was particularly concerned to improve that deficiency, and more, he wanted to extend the range downwards. He therefore built, or had built for him, clarinets that added four semitones at the bottom, the so-called basset clarinet, encompassing the low A on the bass staff for the A-clarinet and the corresponding B-flat for the instrument in that key. It is for one of Stadler’s stretch models that Mozart wrote the quintet, the brilliant obbligato to “Parto, parto,” and the concerto. (Stadler had no special name for the instrument.) The trouble is that Mozart’s autograph manuscripts of the quintet and the concerto do not survive, and for the concerto our earliest sources have shrunk the solo part to accommodate the compass of an ordinary clarinet in A, for it seems that the Stadler extension did not catch on.

The history of Mozart’s concerto is both complicated and clarified by the existence of an autograph fragment, 199 measures long, of a concerto in G for basset horn with an orchestra of flutes, horns, and strings. (The basset horn is a gently mournful relative of the clarinet, with a range down to the F at the bottom of the bass staff. Mozart was fond of it, and it still shows up as late as a number of the scores of Richard Strauss.) This fragment, K.621b, closely corresponds to a little over half the first movement of the Clarinet Concerto as we know it. From it, moreover, we can infer what the clarinet solo part looked like before the arrangers got their hands on it. Just why and when Mozart abandoned his basset horn score and switched to Stadler’s “basset clarinet” is yet another pair of questions to which we have no answer. Trying to sort out the chronology of the concerto, we see that Mozart returned in mid-September to Vienna from Prague, where he had conducted *Don Giovanni* and introduced *La clemenza di Tito*, Stadler remaining behind to play more opera performances and to give a concert of his own on October 16. Mozart reported the week before that concert that he was scoring “Stadler’s Rondo,” that is to say, the finale of the concerto. It was the last major work he completed, with only the Little Masonic Cantata, K.623, and the fragments of the Requiem to follow. He conducted the cantata on November 18, went ill to bed two days later, and died on December 5. (Given the vagueness of reports and the peculiarities of 18th-century medical terminology, we cannot tell for sure what Mozart died of.)

There is a recognizable Mozart-in-A-major mood, gently lit, more apt to be serene than impassioned, with the sense of physical energy somewhat muted, the music being likely to start with a theme that descends from E: the first movements of the Clarinet Concerto, the Clarinet Quintet, and of the Piano Concerto No. 23, K.488, exemplify it. In the Clarinet Concerto, Mozart reveals before long that there is more to the first theme than innocence, that it lends itself to closely worked polyphonic elaboration. The clarinet, once it has entered, introduces new ideas that expand the expressive range in the direction of a certain gently unstressed melancholy. The slow movement is an Adagio, and that in Mozart is rare and a sign always of special seriousness. This Adagio, whose beauty is of a truly ineffable sort, begins in calm, but grows to admit Mozart's tribute to Stadler's (and his instrument's) virtuosity and vocalicity. In the rondo that brings the concerto to its close, Mozart again shows how simple beginnings may lead to unexpected riches. Describing it, the prominent musicologist H.C. Robbins Landon invokes Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, where once it is said that "the heart dances, but not for joy."

Michael Steinberg

Michael Steinberg was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1976 to 1979, and after that of the San Francisco Symphony and New York Philharmonic. Oxford University Press has published three compilations of his program notes, devoted to symphonies, concertos, and the great works for chorus and orchestra.

The first known American performance of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto was of the first movement only, played by Thomas Ryan in Boston with the Mendelssohn Quintette Club on March 5, 1862, the orchestral part being taken by a string quartet with an additional cello, a flute, and two horns.

The first Boston Symphony performances of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto were on March 29 and 30, 1918, with Albert Sand, the orchestra's principal clarinet, under the direction of Ernst Schmidt. Principal Clarinet William R. Hudgins has been the soloist in the BSO's most recent performances, in October 1995 under Seiji Ozawa and in April 2011 under Johannes Debus.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Opus 56, *Scottish*

Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg on February 3, 1809, and died in Leipzig, Saxony, on November 4, 1847. He completed this symphony—which, not counting the string symphonies he wrote as a boy, is actually his fifth and last—on January 20, 1842, though his first idea for it goes back to the summer of 1829. Though Mendelssohn always referred to this in correspondence and conversation as his "Scotch Symphony," he does not use that title anywhere on the score. He conducted the first performance on March 3, 1842, at the Leipzig Gewandhaus. He then made a few revisions, and the work was played in its final form for the first time just two weeks later under the direction of Karl Bach, conductor at the Leipzig Opera. The dedication is to "H.M. Queen Victoria of Great Britain and Ireland."

Mendelssohn's *Scottish* Symphony is scored for 2 each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings (violins I and II, violas, cellos, and double basses).

Mendelssohn is the most astonishing of all the composing prodigies. Mozart was to go much farther, but as a teenager not even he surpasses or often equals Mendelssohn in assurance and certainly not in individuality. To think of the young Mendelssohn is to think first of all of the Octet for Strings, written 1825, the year he turned 16, and of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* Overture, the work of a boy of 17. He had found a voice unmistakably his own and he used it with the confidence of a seasoned professional. In a way he was just that. By the time of the Octet, he had seen, heard, read a lot. He had composed a lot, too.

In 1829 the 20-year-old Mendelssohn made his first visit to England, the country where he became more appreciated, more adored, than in any other. He conducted his Symphony No. 1 with the London Philharmonic, played Weber's *Konzertstück* and Beethoven's *Emperor* Concerto with that orchestra (creating a sensation because he did it from memory), gave a piano recital, and capped his stay with a benefit concert for Silesian flood victims, for which he assembled an all-star cast including the sopranos Maria Malibran and Henriette Sontag, the pianist Ignaz Moscheles, and the flutist Louis Drouet. Not to give a false impression of Mendelssohn's London stay, this time he did not just work but had fun as well.

In mid-July he was ready for a vacation, and so, with Karl Klingemann, a friend from Berlin now posted in London as Secretary to the Hanoverian Legation, he set out for Scotland. He was both a diligent and a gifted letterwriter, as was Klingemann, which means we have a remarkably complete picture of their journey to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Perth, Inverness, Loch Lomond, and the Hebrides islands of Iona, Mull, and Staffa. They made a detour

to Abbotsford to visit the then-worshipped novelist Sir Walter Scott and were disappointed to find him grouchy, distracted, and unwilling to rise beyond small talk. They were good-humored about bad food (sometimes no food), uncomfortable inns, and taciturn Scots (“To all questions you get a dry ‘no’”), but Mendelssohn hated, absolutely hated, bagpipes and anything to do with folk music.

On August 7, after his visit to Staffa and Fingal’s Cave, he jotted down the opening of his *Hebrides* Overture. A week before, on July 30, he had written home:

In darkening twilight today, we went to the Palace [of Holyrood] where Queen Mary lived and loved. There is a little room to be seen there with a spiral staircase at its door. That is where they went up and found Rizzio in the room, dragged him out, and three chambers away there is a dark corner where they murdered him. The chapel beside it has lost its roof and is overgrown with grass and ivy, and at that broken altar Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland. Everything there is ruined, decayed and open to the clear sky. I believe that I have found there today the beginning of my Scotch Symphony.

And for himself he wrote down sixteen bars of music, the opening, still in preliminary form, of this score.

But it was years before either of his musical mementos from Scotland reached final form. The *Hebrides* Overture went through three stages, being first written in 1829 with the name of *Die einsame Insel* (“The Desert Island”), then revised in December 1830 and again in June 1832. Mendelssohn did not even return to his plan for a *Scotch* Symphony until 1841. He wrote from Rome in March 1831 that he could not “find his way back into the Scottish fog mood,” and the matter receded farther and farther from the forefront of his mind. Over the next ten years he wrote the *Reformation* and *Italian* symphonies, as well as the *Hymn of Praise* (on the invention of printing), two piano concertos, four books of *Songs Without Words*, the oratorio *Saint Paul*, four string quartets, the Piano Trio No. 1, and much besides.

He had traveled, become music director first at Düsseldorf and then at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, married Cécile Jeanrenaud, had given the first performance of Schubert’s *Great C* major symphony, and had just been appointed director of the music division of the Academy of Arts in Berlin. In 1842, on his seventh visit to England, he made two new friends, enthusiastic and competent performers of his songs and chamber music, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and Her Majesty graciously consented to accept the dedication of the *Scotch* Symphony.

The score is prefaced by a note asking that the movements not be separated by the customary pauses, and the composer goes on to suggest that their sequence be indicated in the program as follows:

Introduction and Allegro agitato—Scherzo assai vivace—

Adagio cantabile—Allegro guerriero and Finale maestoso.

The markings in Mendelssohn’s preface and in the music itself, however, do not exactly correspond to this.

The introduction begins solemnly. Mendelssohn has refined his 1829 sketch, coming up with a more interesting rhythm in the first measure and a less flaccid turn of melody a little later. This hymnlike opening gives way to an impassioned recitation for the violins, and it is from this passage that the rest of the Andante takes its cue. The music subsides into silence, and after a moment the Allegro begins, its *agitato* quality set into higher relief by the *pianissimo* that Mendelssohn maintains through twenty-one measures. The *Scotch* is very much a *pianissimo* symphony. The scoring tends to be dense and dark in a manner that we, certain of the symphony’s title, are much inclined to interpret as Northern and peaty. At the first *fortissimo*, the tempo is pushed up to *Assai animato*, which is in fact the base speed for the remainder of the movement.

As always, Mendelssohn handles the entrance into the recapitulation captivatingly: as the moment of return approaches, cellos start to sing a new melody in notes much slower than the skipping staccato eighths in the strings and woodwinds, set in delicate *piano* against the surrounding *pianissimo*, and when the first theme returns, it is as a counterpoint against the continuing cello song. The coda brings one of those diminished-seventh-chord tempests that Romantic composers were so fond of. Once again the music subsides—very beautifully—and a breath of the introduction brings the first movement to a close.

The scherzo emerges from this with buzzing sixteenth-notes and distant horn calls (on all sorts of instruments). In spite of Mendelssohn’s irritations in the summer of 1829, the flavor of the tunes is distinctly Scots. The Adagio alternates a sentiment-drenched melody with stern episodes of march character. The fiercely energetic fourth movement again seems very Scots indeed, and every bit as macho and athletic as Mendelssohn’s *guerriero* promises. He invents yet another of his magical *pianissimos*, this time to emerge into a noble song, scored in surprisingly dark and muted hues for such a peroration: he remarks somewhere that it should suggest a men’s chorus. The composer Robert Schumann caught the cousinage of this hymn to the one that begins the symphony and remarked: “We consider it most poetic; it is like an evening corresponding to a lovely morning.”

Michael Steinberg was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1976 to 1979, and after that of the San Francisco Symphony and New York Philharmonic. Oxford University Press has published three compilations of his program notes, devoted to symphonies, concertos, and the great works for chorus and orchestra.

The first American performance of Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 3 was given by the Philharmonic Society led by George Loder in New York's Apollo Rooms on November 22, 1845. A Boston performance with George J. Webb leading the Academy of Music took place at the Odeon on January 14, 1846.

The first Boston Symphony performance of Mendelssohn's *Scottish* Symphony was given by Georg Henschel in January 1883. The most recent BSO subscription performances were led by Andris Nelsons during the orchestra's "Leipzig Week" concerts in February 2018. Ascher Fisch led the most recent Tanglewood performances by the BSO, and Andris Nelsons led the most recent Symphony Hall performances of the piece with the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig on October 29, 2019, during the BSO and GHO's joint "Leipzig Week" concerts that fall.

GUEST ARTISTS

Roderick Cox

Winner of the 2018 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award, the Berlin-based American conductor Roderick Cox makes his Boston Symphony Orchestra debut this week. Highlights of his 2021-22 season include debuts with the BBC Philharmonic, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Seattle and New World symphonies, and the symphony orchestras of Malmö, Kristiansand, and Lahti, as well as a return to the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. In recent seasons he has made debuts with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Dresdner Philharmonie, Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Cleveland Orchestra (at its Blossom Music Festival), and Dallas Symphony Orchestra, as well as returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, and Aspen Music Festival Chamber Orchestra. This season, Mr. Cox returns to the Opéra National de Montpellier for Verdi's *Rigoletto*, having made an acclaimed symphonic debut there last season. His opera engagements in recent seasons have included important debuts at Houston Grand Opera (Bizet's *Pêcheurs de Perles*) and San Francisco Opera (Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*), as well as recording Jeanine Tesori's *Blue* with Washington National Opera. With a passion for education and diversity and inclusion in the arts, Mr. Cox started the Roderick Cox Music Initiative (RCMI) in 2018—a project that provides scholarships for young musicians of color from underrepresented communities, allowing them to pay for instruments, music lessons, and summer camps. Mr. Cox and the RCMI will be featured in the upcoming documentary *Conducting Life*, by filmmaker Diane Moore, which follows the young conductor's musical and personal journey over the course of seven years. Born in Macon, Georgia, Roderick Cox attended the Schwob School of Music at Columbus State University and then Northwestern University, graduating with a master's degree in 2011. He was awarded the Robert J. Harth Conducting Prize from the Aspen Music Festival in 2013 and has held fellowships with the Chicago Sinfonietta as part of their Project Inclusion program and at the Chautauqua Music Festival, where he was a David Effron Conducting Fellow. In 2016 Mr. Cox was appointed associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra under Osmo Vänskä for three seasons, having previously served as assistant conductor for a year.

William R. Hudgins

William R. Hudgins joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra's clarinet section in 1992 and in 1994 was appointed principal clarinet by Seiji Ozawa. He holds the Ann S.M. Banks chair, endowed in perpetuity. He has been heard as a soloist with the BSO on numerous occasions. He made his debut as concerto soloist with the BSO in October 1995 with Mozart's Clarinet Concerto under Seiji Ozawa; his most recent appearances as soloist were in January 2017 performing Franz Krommer's Concerto in E-flat for two clarinets alongside former BSO clarinetist Michael Wayne and, during the BSO's online 2020-21 season, Carl Maria von Weber's Concertino, Op. 26, this past spring. Other solo appearances with the orchestra include Copland's Clarinet Concerto, Bruch's Double Concerto for Clarinet and Viola, Frank Martin's Concerto for Seven Winds, Timpani, Percussion, and String Orchestra, and, for the opening of the BSO's 2014-15 season, Mozart's *Sinfonia concertante* in E-flat, K.297b. As a member of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, he can be heard on their BSO Classics CDs of Brahms and Dvořák serenades (the ensemble's most recent release); the Grammy-nominated *Profanes et Sacrées: 20th-Century French Chamber Music; Plain Song, Fantastic Dances* (in music of Gandolfi, Foss, and Golijov), and the Grammy-nominated *Mozart Chamber*

Music for Strings and Winds (in Mozart's Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, K.581), as well as a Grammy-nominated Arabesque recording of Hindemith's Quartet for Clarinet, Violin, Cello, and Piano. Appearances outside of the BSO include orchestral performances and recordings with the Saito Kinen Orchestra in Matsumoto, Japan, and the Mito Chamber Orchestra in Mito, Japan, both under the direction of Seiji Ozawa; chamber music at the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, and recitals and master classes at various universities and around the United States. Before joining the BSO, Mr. Hudgins served as principal clarinetist and soloist with the Orquesta Sinfónica Municipal in Caracas, Venezuela, and the Charleston Symphony Orchestra in South Carolina. He was heard for six seasons as a member of both the Spoleto Festival Orchestra in Charleston, South Carolina, and Il Festival dei Due Mondi in Spoleto, Italy. He was also a Fellow of the Tanglewood Music Center, where he won the C.D. Jackson Award for outstanding performance. Mr. Hudgins received his bachelor's degree from the Boston University School for the Arts, studying with former BSO principal clarinetist Harold Wright.