

Programme Notes

Henri Chaussier (1854 - 1914)
Elegy in F-minor

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756- 1791)
Horn Concerto No. 1 in D major, K. (412+514)
I. Allegro
II. Rondo

Intermission

Reinhold Gliére (1875 - 1956)
Horn concerto in B-flat, op. 91
I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Moderato - Allegro Vivace

Henri Chaussier (1854 - 1914) composed Elegy in F minor for horn and harp. He was a French composer and a virtuoso horn player during the early Romantic period, which the arrival of valve horn had a significant impact on him a lot at that time. The advent of the valve horn during that period had an impact on composers and French horn players, as the ideas and styles differed. Henri was neither hated nor loved for the innovation, but he preferred his music to be played on the traditional instrument for which it was written. Camille Saint-Saëns also experienced the arrival of the valve horn with Henri, such as in "Morceau de concert," for which he dedicated horn solo pieces to Henri.

Elegy originally written for horn and harp, is composed in the key of F minor with a slow tempo. This piece was written in the Romantic style but incorporates elements of classical instruments, such as the natural horn, which Henri had mastered. The term "elegy" or "elegos" has its roots in Greek, meaning "song of mourning," referring to a poem or song lamenting someone who has passed away.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756- 1791) composed Horn Concerto No.1 in D major during his last decade. Mozart composed this concerto for a period instrument, which was commonly used in ensembles or orchestras at that time. These horn works were dedicated to his beloved horn player friend, Leutgeb, who was a virtuoso French horn player, especially skilled in playing the natural horn, setting him apart from others. Their friendship was strong, and in the original music, Mozart wrote words that interacted with Leutgeb, particularly in the second movement, such as "Mr. Donkey, come on quick, well done poor chap".

Horn Concerto No.1 in D major was written as the last of all the horn concertos during the last year of his life and is somewhat simpler than the others. Because of this, Mozart passed away before finishing the work, and one of his students continued it.

Additionally, the reason this concerto is simpler than others might be due to Leutgeb's age. Therefore, the concerto employs a period instrument to fulfill the composer's original intent. It is written in D major and comprises only two movements: Allegro and Rondo. The first movement using a simple sonata form to establish the piece, followed by the second movement in rondo form, which highlights the hunting horn style while maintaining a melodious character.

Reinhold Glière (1875-1956) was a well-known Russian composer during the Romantic period. He earned numerous awards in classical music as a composer and taught some students who became successful composers as well, such as Nikolai Myaskovsky and Sergei Prokofiev. Throughout his life, he composed a significant repertoire for many instruments, including the French horn. Glière dedicated his first horn concerto to the Russian principal horn player Valery Polekh after they met during one of the rehearsals for Glière's ballet at the Bolshoi Theatre.

“Such a remarkable instrument, and how regrettable that composers rarely write for it.” — Glière

The Concerto for Horn and Orchestra in B-flat major is written in a strong Romantic style with elements of classical ideas, featuring three distinguished movements: Allegro, Andante, and Moderato - Allegro vivace. In the first movement, the concerto begins by introducing a solid majestic theme followed by contrasting lovely melodies in the tranquillo section, alternating throughout the movement, including a cadenza. The second movement starts calmly with a romantic melody, showcasing the instrument's tonal abilities akin to a love letter. In the Agitato section, Glière then develops the movement into an anxious feeling before returning to calmness early on. The final movement opens with a knightly call, followed by grand chorales in the Moderato section. Moving into the Allegro vivace section, the composer infuses the concerto with a cheerful and exciting theme, evoking the tapping of dancers' feet. The last movement alternates between these two sections, building tension until the cheerful coda brings it to a close.