

We ♥ Mozart

Saturday, February 16, 2019 • 7:30 p.m. • Mark C. Smith Concert Hall, Von Braun Center

CHRISTIE WEBER, soprano • **ABIGAIL NIMS**, mezzo-soprano

DANIEL WEEKS, tenor • **CHRISTOPHER FARLEY**, bass

HUNTSVILLE COMMUNITY CHORUS • **BILLY ORTON**, Artistic Director

GREGORY VAJDA, Music Director and Conductor • **HUNTSVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**



CELEBRATING ALABAMA'S BICENTENNIAL

W. A. Mozart
(1756–1791)

Symphony No. 41 in C major, "Jupiter," K. 551

- I. Allegro vivace
- II. Andante cantabile
- III. Menuetto
- IV. Molto allegro

INTERMISSION

Mozart

Mass in C minor, "Great," K. 427

- I. Kyrie
- II. Gloria
 - Gloria in excelsis Deo
 - Laudamus te
 - Gratias agimus tibi
 - Domine Deus
 - Qui tollis
 - Quoniam tu solus
 - Jesu Christe
- III. Credo
 - Credo in unum Deum
 - Et incarnatus est
- IV. Sanctus
- V. Benedictus

Christie Weber, soprano

Abigail Nims, mezzo-soprano

Daniel Weeks, tenor

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Huntsville Community Chorus

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Program Notes

Mozart Symphony No. 41 in C major, “Jupiter,” K. 551

It is not known whether Mozart heard performed during his lifetime this last and largest of his many symphonies. There is no sure record of its appearance in any of Mozart’s concerts, though it seems that a performance was tentatively planned. The “Jupiter,” as No. 41 came to be called, was written concurrently with Nos. 39 and 40 in the furiously busy summer of 1788, following the tragic death of Mozart’s infant daughter, Therese. A few final concertos, the great last operas, and the infamous Requiem would fill Mozart’s remaining years.

Whether he intended this work to be his farewell to the genre is an open question. Its grand scale and many intricacies suggest to musicologist Sir George Grove a purposeful summation of the composer’s symphonic powers. Indeed, Mozart’s magnum opus represents a significant elevation and enrichment of the established form as it was understood at the time. It is widely considered to be one of the greatest masterpieces ever penned, a visionary work exceedingly well executed.

The first movement begins with the dramatic flourish of an opera overture, and proceeds as an expansive exploration of contrast between vigorous and coy themes. One feels this music must have been well known to Rossini a generation later. The style of the subsequent *Andante* has been compared to that of a stately Baroque sarabande; it is one of the most imaginatively scored of Mozart’s movements of this type, with stark shifts of color and mode which presage Schubert. Delicate counterpoint hides beneath the surface of the third movement, a danceable, gliding minuet.

The finale of the “Jupiter” is, like the first movement, cast in sonata-allegro form. Its themes—an ancient chant fragment among them—are presented in a disarmingly simple and cellular fashion, like the laying of cards upon a table. Their ensuing development, however, is most extraordinary. The composer’s harmonic shuffling is at its most virtuosic, and the closing moments constitute one of Mozart’s most stupendous achievements, a real royal flush: five previously heard themes are combined simultaneously into a brilliant new fugue. [ca. 40’]

Mass in C minor, “Great,” K. 427 edited by H. C. Robbins Landon

The conductor John Eliot Gardiner notes that both the Requiem and the “Great” C minor Mass, Mozart’s two most ambitious sacred works, were left unfinished. Death killed the Requiem, but Mozart had earlier abandoned the Mass for unknown reasons. It was to be the last of his 17 settings of the ordinary Catholic rite.

Mozart had only recently moved from his native Salzburg to the city of Vienna when the first performance of the “Great” Mass was given back in his hometown. It seems to have been intended in part to introduce his new wife, the soprano Constanze Weber, to family, friends, and colleagues. There is also the possibility, as one letter from Wolfgang to his father intimates, that the Mass was a peace offering to both the elder Mozart and to their employer, the Archbishop Colloredo of Salzburg. Both men had sternly disapproved of Mozart’s relocation to the capital, and Papa Mozart was less than enthused about his son’s marriage.

Continued work on the Mass seems to have stopped directly following its partial premiere in October 1783. Mozart’s busy and competitive life in Vienna would have demanded adaptation to fresh opportunities, and he may have felt that the Salzburg performance had served its purpose well enough.

Mozart frequently wrote for singers he knew, tailoring the parts to their specific strengths. Movements such as *Laudamus te* and *Et incarnatus est* show that he thought highly indeed of the sopranos engaged to perform them, his own spouse included. The choral writing abounds with the richly detailed and expertly structured counterpoint which would also figure prominently in the “Jupiter” Symphony. At the encouragement of his friend the Baron von Swieten, Mozart had recently made a close study of the music of Bach, Handel, and other giants of the Renaissance and the Baroque whose techniques fascinated him.

Various musicologists and composers have attempted completions of the “Great” Mass, which is missing portions of the *Credo* movement as well as the entire concluding *Agnus Dei*. The Landon edition heard tonight adds no new music, but reconstructs missing choral parts and orchestrations. [ca. 55’]

GUEST ARTISTS

Christie Weber

- Performances with Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, Huntsville Youth Orchestra, Nashville Community Chorus, Orchestra Sul Ponticello
- Opera roles include Don Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Hanna (*The Merry Widow*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Mimi and Musetta (*La bohème*), Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*)
- Winner, NATS Competition Professional Division, 2008; recordings with Ben Folds, Michael W. Smith



Abigail Nims

- Performances with San Francisco Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra
- Opera roles include Despina (*Così fan tutte*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*), Veruca Salt (*The Golden Ticket*)
- Recitals at Trinity Church Wall Street, Wexford Festival, Ohio Wesleyan University



Daniel Weeks

- Performances with Dallas Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, Orchestra of Saint Luke's, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Mexico
- Opera roles include Don Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Triquet (*Eugene Onegin*), Pong (*Turandot*), Curley (*Of Mice and Men*)
- National Finalist, Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions; Young Artist, National Federation of Music Clubs



Christopher Farley

- Performances with Opera Birmingham, Harrower Opera
- Opera roles include Horace Tabor (*The Ballad of Baby Doe*), Doc (*West Side Story*), Sciaronne (*Tosca*)
- Winner, Birmingham Music Club Guild Scholarship Competition; First Prize, NATS Competition, Fourth-Year Men's Division



Huntsville Community Chorus Association

Billy Orton, Artistic Director

Ian Loepke, Associate Artistic Director

Eric Wilson, Principal Accompanist

- Established in 1946, the HCCA is Huntsville's longest continuously running performing arts group
- The Symphonic Chorus, Chamber Chorale, Children's Chorale, Youth Chorale, and other ensembles perform throughout the year
- Summer musical theater productions provide a creative outlet for area youth
- Proudly an all-volunteer, non-profit community choral organization. For more information, visit thechorus.org.