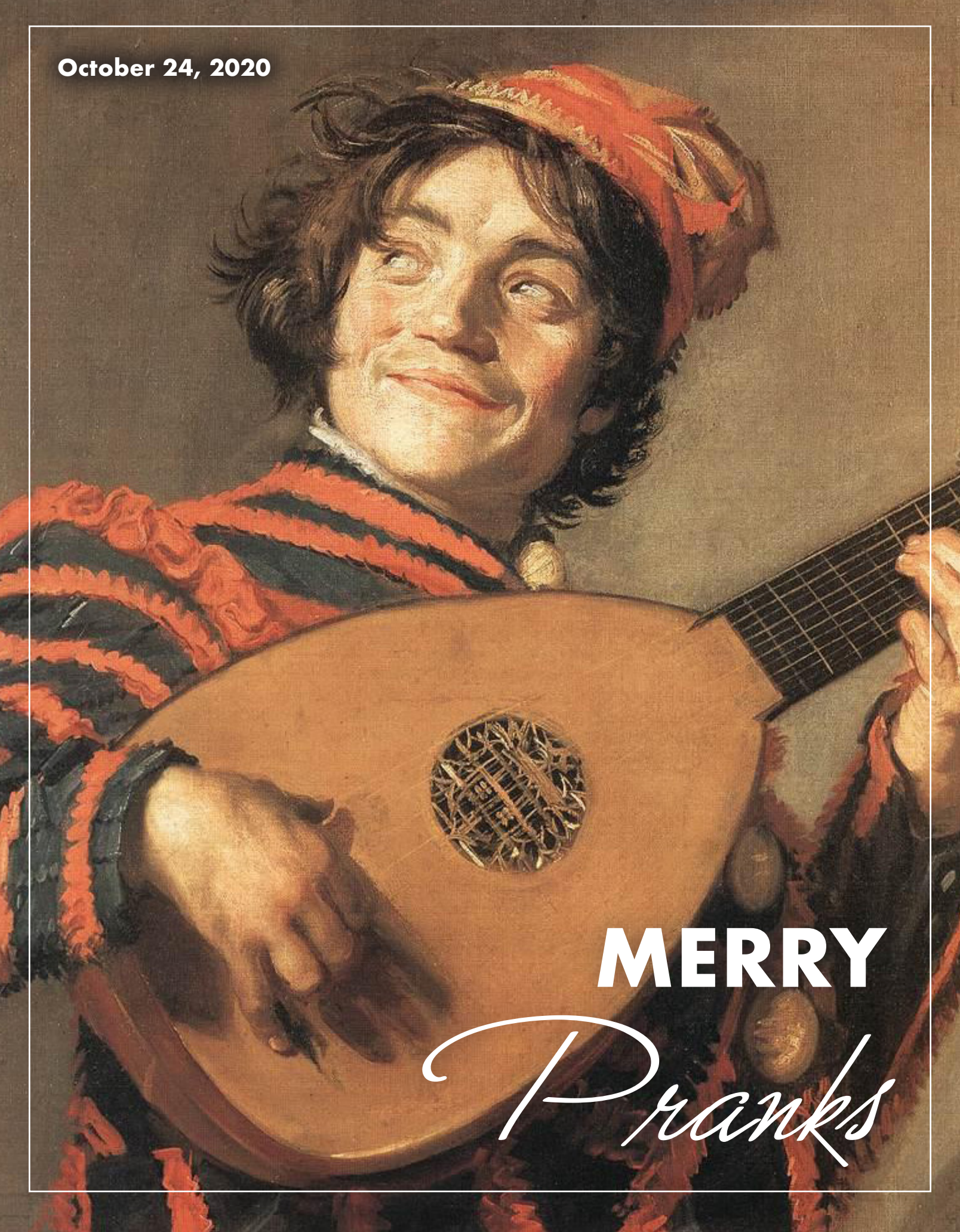


October 24, 2020



**MERRY**

*Pranks*

## Merry Pranks

Saturday, October 24, 2020 • 8:00PM

Grace Presbyterian Church

Broadcast on WTVVP Create 47.4

Peoria Symphony Orchestra  
George Stelluto • conductor  
Pei-yeh Tsai • piano  
Sarah Carrillo • trumpet

### Concerto in C Minor for Piano, Trumpet, and Strings, Op. 35

*Allegro moderato – Lento – Moderato – Allegro con brio*

Dmitri Shostakovich  
(1906-1975)

Pei-yeh Tsai • piano  
Sarah Carrillo • trumpet

### Till Eulenspiegels Lustige Streiche, Op. 28 (Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks)

Richard Strauss  
(1864-1949)  
arr. Brett Dean

### Three Divertimenti

#### K. 136 in D Major

*Allegro – Andante – Presto*

#### K. 137 in B-flat Major

*Andante – Allegro di Molto – Allegro assai*

#### K. 138 in F Major

*Allegro – Andante – Presto*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)

## Concert Sponsors & Underwriters

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This program is partially supported by a  
grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.



### Pei-yeh Tsai • Piano

Pei-yeh Tsai joined the Peoria Symphony Orchestra in 2019 as principal pianist and featured soloist. She is also a frequent sub for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and principal pianist for the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and New Bedford Symphony. Her performance is best described by cellist Yo-Yo Ma: “Tsai is a powerhouse of a pianist; she plays with an incredible depth of soul. Her love of her instrument is perceptible... she draws the listener in with a great range of color and expression.”

Tsai's mastery of her instrument and her ability to express its depths has been noted throughout her career. She took first prize in the Aaron Richmond International Piano Competition and International New England Chamber Music Ensemble Competition, Special Viardo Prize at the Viardo International Piano Competition, the Rising Star Award and Sergio Fiorentino Memorial Award from the Rising Stars of Taipei Philharmonic Foundation, the Rose Marie Milholland Award from the Peabody Conservatory, the Marie Miller Award from the Women's Guild, and was a prize winner of The Iowa International Piano Competition. As an advocate of new music and a past member of the BleepBlop electro-acoustic ensemble, she has premiered numerous new works, among them: Ketty Nez's piano concerto *Thresholds* with the Boston University Wind Ensemble and *Fleeting* for solo piano by Michele Caniato.

Tsai's performances are also wide-ranging geographically, having performed across continents in Moscow, Vienna, Spain, Austria, and Taiwan. She has also performed at the distinguished venues of Chicago Symphony Center, Carnegie Hall, and Alice Tully Hall. Her performances have been played on WFMT, WTVVP, WCTV, STV8, and BIRN radio stations, as well as an exclusive personal interview by BBC's Radio 4 “Soul Music” with Rosie Boulton about her performance of Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto.

Dr. Tsai received her graduate diploma from the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University under the tutelage of Boris Slutsky, with regular masterclasses with Leon Fleisher. She received her master's degree from The Juilliard School with Jerome Lowenthal, and her D.M.A. from Boston University. In addition, Dr. Tsai studied orchestra performance with Mary Sauer, who holds 57 years as the principal pianist for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. During her leisure time, Tsai finds inspiration hiking remote mountain trails and alpine lakes, capturing these images with a keen photographer's eye.

# Peoria Symphony Orchestra

October 24, 2020

## Violin 1

Marcia Henry Liebenow, concertmaster  
Courtney Silver, assistant concertmaster  
Margaret FioRito  
Katie Cousins  
Jo Marie Sison

## Violin 2

Pyunghwa Choi, guest principal  
The Frederick Family Endowment  
Leslie Koons  
Peter Wessler

## Viola

Sharon Chung, guest principal  
Sharon and John Amdall Endowment  
Lowell Koons  
Taisiya Sokolova  
Mark Wirbisky

## Cello

Adriana Ransom, principal  
Parker Endowment in memory of H. H. Block  
Kathleen Long, assistant principal  
Francisco Malespin  
Emily Munn-Wood

## Bass

Austin Vawter, principal  
Peoria Symphony Guild and Friends  
Endowment in memory of Norbert Cieslewicz  
Patrick Aubyrn, assistant principal

## Flute

Yukie Ota, guest principal  
Augusta Foundation Endowment in the  
name of E.C. Heidrich

## Clarinet

Roger Garrett, principal

## Bassoon

Ben Roidl-Ward, guest principal

## Horn

Amy Krueger, principal  
Mrs. Trenchard French Endowment

## Sarah Carrillo • Trumpet

Sarah Carrillo, a native of Massachusetts, spent much of her early life studying with members of the Boston Symphony, both in Boston and at Tanglewood. Upon completion of her bachelor's degree from Boston University where she studied with the legendary Roger Voisin, she came to Chicago to attend Northwestern University, from which she received her master's degree. Sarah has performed with many groups in the Chicago area, including the Chicago Symphony, Peoria Symphony Orchestra, Northbrook Symphony, The Chicago Arts Orchestra, Elmhurst Symphony, Brass Works Brass Quintet, Northside Brass, International Chamber Artists, Chicago Symphonietta, South Bend Symphony, Highland Park Strings, and Northwest Indiana Symphony. She has also performed with the Gulbenkian Funducao Orchestra of Lisbon, Portugal, the Boston Symphony, and the New World Symphony. She and her husband Oto Carrillo, a member of the Chicago Symphony's fabulous french horn section, have two children who also play trumpet and french horn.



## Maestro's Message

October comes with tricks and treats. Even the weather plays merry pranks with cold snaps and warm respites. The beauty of Autumn itself is a welcome diversion from our day-to-day, as we fuss about, squirrel-like, filling our larders for the coming Winter. Perhaps all of this was on my mind when considering this program. The Shostakovich combines elements of a cabaret and a Fall carnival in the first movement—with a bit of the local tavern thrown in for good measure. The second movement, to me, has the dreaminess, ardor, and tenderness of a late October romance between old acquaintances. Yes, some flowers do bloom in the Fall! In the two final movements, seriousness surrenders to animated optimism. The humorous interplay between the solo piano and trumpet is sarcastic, flirtatious, and witty as Shostakovich drops musical references from other

composers and folk songs into our musical goody bag. Then comes little Till Eulenspiegel pulling our legs and playing his tricks. This chamber orchestra arrangement of Richard Strauss's charming masterpiece evokes an intimate fun, as humor's guise becomes more secret, enigmatic, and tantalizing. Strauss' genius is such that we are pranked before we know it—but delightedly so. It seems that our little Till is finally hoisted by his own prankster's petard. But, in the end, his spirit prevails. And what better composer than Mozart to turn to for an autumnal divertissement? These divertimenti conjure images of convivial Fall gatherings with family and friends where slow Autumn fires, fresh cider, harvest meals, and the perfect music mingle into an unhurried enjoyment of the season's blessings. In retrospect, there are no tricks. It's all treats! —G. Stelluto

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Written by J. Michael Allsen, edited by Mae Gilliland Wright © 2020

This program opens with the rousing and sometimes humorous first piano concerto by Shostakovich. This work features two of the Peoria Symphony Orchestra's own: pianist Pei-yeh Tsai and Sarah Carrillo on trumpet. Till Eulenspiegel's *Merry Pranks* is one of the great symphonic poems by Strauss. Strauss's mischievous anti-hero—represented by a famous horn theme—pulls a series of outrageous pranks, remaining playful to the very end. The program ends with a set of delightful divertimenti for strings written by a teenage Mozart.

### Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

*Concerto in C Minor for Piano, Trumpet, and Strings, Op. 35*

*This concerto was written in 1933. It was first performed on October 15, 1933, by the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, with Shostakovich at the piano, and Alexander Schmidt on trumpet.*

**Duration 21:00**



#### Background

By 1933, Shostakovich was clearly one of the “young lions” of music in the Soviet Union. Tight Soviet ideological controls over music were already in place, but Shostakovich was able to balance more avant-garde (or at least more adventurous) experiments and sometimes even frivolous pieces with ideologically “safe” music: mostly ballets and theatrical music, and film scores.

When he began work on the concerto heard here, he seems to have viewed it as a lighthearted break after two years of demanding work on his opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. The opera was then in preparation for a January 1934 premiere. The concerto would be one of the last lighthearted works he would compose for a long time. It was a success at its premiere, and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was initially one of the great successes of his career. The opera opened with productions in both Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) and Moscow, a critical success with the two productions running for a combined 177 performances. However, this was also the beginning of a period of repression in Soviet history

**EACH OF THESE WORKS  
EXPLORES IN VIVID  
PROGRAMMATIC DETAIL THE  
LIFE OF A SINGLE CHARACTER,  
WHETHER A HERO OR AN  
ANTI-HERO.**

that came to be known as the “Great Terror,” a purge of Stalin’s political enemies, wealthy peasants, and ethnic minorities. By 1938, as many as 1.2 million Soviet citizens were killed, and millions more were arrested. This atmosphere of repression extended to music as well. In January 1936, Stalin attended a production of *Lady Macbeth* in Moscow and denounced it the next day in a review in the Party newspaper *Pravda*. Shostakovich suddenly found himself censured by the Party’s artistic authorities. He was able to redeem himself with the bombastic *Symphony No. 5* (1937) and a series of intensely patriotic works during the second World War but was censured again in 1946. It was not until after Stalin’s death in 1953 that artistic controls began to relax.

Shostakovich was an excellent pianist, and as a young man thought about a parallel career as a concert soloist. This plan seems to have ended in 1927, when he was one of the finalists of the first International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw—but failed to take the prize. He continued to perform into the 1950s, however, primarily as a soloist in his own works.

#### What You’ll Hear

His first piano concerto is at times a “double” concerto, with a prominent part for solo trumpet. This part was apparently inspired by the playing of Alexander Schmidt, principal trumpet of the Leningrad Philharmonic. The trumpet part often seems to be commenting wryly on the piano’s material. Part of the humor in this concerto is Shostakovich’s witty and often sarcastic use of musical quotations—from Beethoven, Haydn, and his own music to folk songs and popular salon orchestra music.

Piano introduces the wandering main theme of the first movement (*Allegro moderato*), which opens with a fleeting reference to Beethoven’s “Appassionata” Sonata. The piano develops this, eventually shifting to brighter music, almost a polka, which the trumpet decorates

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with biting fanfares. Most of the development is taken over by the piano, and the movement ends with a quiet rendition of the opening theme, now accompanied solemnly by the trumpet. The *Lento* begins as a sentimental waltz in the strings, eventually developed passionately by the piano. The waltz returns again, now played by muted trumpet, before the movement is rounded off by solo piano. The brief *Moderato*, with atmospheric music for the piano and a solemn passage for the strings, serves as a bridge directly into the final movement (*Allegro con brio*). This begins as a kind of circus polka juggled back and forth between the strings and piano, decorated with terse trumpet fanfares. Suddenly the tempo ramps up, and the trumpet introduces a new theme, borrowed from a Haydn piano sonata. Everything halts suddenly and the trumpet plays a new melody, familiar to English-speakers as the children's tune "Poor Jenny (or Mary) Sits a' Weeping." Near the end, there is a frantic piano cadenza, with a rather demented version of Beethoven's piano piece *The Rage Over a Lost Penny*, before it all concludes with a wild and slightly jazzy coda.

## Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

*Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28 (Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks)*

*Strauss composed this work in 1894-1895. Its premiere was on November 5, 1895, in Cologne. Duration 16:00*



### Background

After Franz Liszt established the symphonic poem as a form in the 1850s, many Romantic composers took on this genre. The finest of all late Romantic symphonic poems, however, are seven works that Richard Strauss completed when he was a young man, from *Macbeth* (1888) though *Ein Heldenleben* (1898). Each of these works explores in vivid programmatic detail the life of a single character, whether a

hero or—as in *Till Eulenspiegel* (1895)—an anti-hero. Strauss often denied that his symphonic poems were dependent on programs and should stand on their own as purely musical works, but this statement was seemingly obligatory among late Romantic composers. Strauss was clearly proud of his ability to depict images or stories in his scores, at one point saying: "I want to be able to depict in music a glass of beer so accurately that every listener can tell whether it is a Pilsner or a Kulmbacher!"

In the case of *Till Eulenspiegel*, the central character is a German folk-hero who may have been based on a 14<sup>th</sup>-century German peasant famed for his wisecracks and outrageous practical jokes. Till made his first appearance in a 1511 *Schwankbuch* (a collection of humorous stories), and Till Eulenspiegel stories were a staple of German folklore. The word *Eulenspiegel* means "owl-mirror," probably a reference to an old German proverb which translates roughly as: "Man recognizes his own faults as dimly as an owl recognizes his own reflection in a mirror." Strauss's choice of Till as character may have had something to do the brutal criticism of his 1894 opera *Guntram*. A character who thumbed his nose at the forces of orthodoxy and tradition—even after he was executed—must have been attractive to a young composer who felt wronged by the establishment.

### What You'll Hear

The complete title of the work is *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks, Based Upon the Old Rogue's Tale, set for Large Orchestra in Rondo Form*. Though

this is far from a classical rondo, the famous theme at the opening does return at several points. This theme, beloved (or feared) by every orchestral hornist, may well have been borrowed from the composer's father, Franz Strauss, one of the finest hornists of the 19th century and an accomplished composer. One well-known story is that the tune was actually a standard part of the elder Strauss's daily warm-up, adopted here as a symbol of the mischievous Till. Strauss was at first reluctant to provide a written program, but some years later, he relented and provided the following outline of the action:

"Merry Till cavorts through life, his jaunty progress charted at first by a carefree tune for solo horn. The anti-hero enjoys poking fun at mankind's pretensions, religious hypocrisy and the world of academia; he disrupts a village market, unsuccessfully attempts to find true love, impersonates a priest, and continues whistling on his way. An ear-splitting roll on the side-drum signals that Till must answer for his 'crimes.' He is brought before judge and jury yet is unwilling to observe the trial in silence until the death sentence is announced. Trumpets and drums herald Till's journey to the scaffold, where his merry pranks are ended."

With this description in hand, *Till Eulenspiegel* works wonderfully as a picturesque program piece. The ending is particularly effective, with the part of Till given to the E-flat clarinet, making fun of the stern pronouncements of the trombones and low strings. When the moment of execution arrives, the trombones and tuba deliver the fatal blow, and Till's spirit rises to heaven. There is a solemn epilogue on the opening music, but even this is not to be taken too seriously, as Till gets in the last word.

## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

*Divertimento in D Major, K. 136*

*Divertimento in B-flat Major, K. 137*

*Divertimento in F Major, K. 138*

*These works were composed in Salzburg in 1772. Duration 41:00*

### Background

Mozart wrote a host of smaller instrumental pieces, variously titled *Serenade*, *Cassation*, *Notturmo*, *Nachtmusik*, or *Divertimento* (literally "diversion"). Most of these were written for informal performances in Salzburg or Vienna, performed by small ensembles hired to play for a lover, friend, or special event: engagements, weddings, or "name-days." (Your name-day in Catholic Austria is the feast day of your saintly namesake.) Mozart wrote dozens of these pieces, ranging from simple marches and smaller chamber works like the fine *Divertimenti* heard here, to more substantial pieces like the famous *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* ("A Little Night Music"). In early 1772, 15-year-old Mozart was back home in Salzburg, after a whirlwind two-year tour of Italy. Among the works he wrote in this period was a set of three string quartets. Whether they were written while he was in Milan or after he returned to Salzburg is unclear. It is not known whether he had a specific occasion in mind, and in fact the title "Divertimento" was added to the manuscript at some later date by a writer other than Mozart. Though they were originally intended as quartets, these pieces are usually heard as they are here, as works for a small string orchestra.



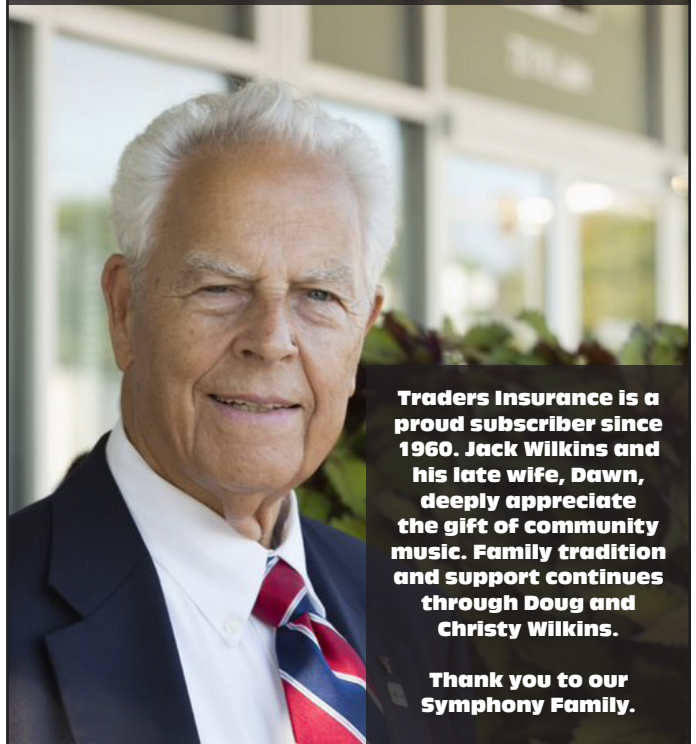


*Divertimento in D Major*, the most frequently-heard of the set, is in three short movements, all in sonata form. The musical style shows that young Mozart had his ears open during his trip through Italy in the preceding years. They have a genial and uncomplicated style that clearly reflects Italian musical tastes in the 1770s. The opening *Allegro* combines two bright themes in a short movement that is a showcase for the violins. Mozart's slow movements contain some of his most eloquent music, and even at age 15, he could write the lovely, expressive *Andante* movement heard in this divertimento. Longer than the other two movements combined, this *Andante* is an unhurried development of two lyrical, distinctly operatic themes. The final *Presto* has a pair of rollicking themes and tiny fugal development. The movement was possibly a tribute to Giovanni Battista Martini, a Catholic priest who was one of the great counterpoint teachers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Mozart had studied with Martini while in Bologna in 1770, and one of the themes refers to one of Martini's fugue subjects.

*Divertimento in B-flat Major* has an unconventional form, with an extensive slow movement followed by two shorter fast movements. The graceful opening *Andante* has an underlying harmonic sophistication that shows the subtlety of the teenaged Mozart. The bright *Allegro di molto* is based upon a lively Italian-style theme. There is a brief moment of lyrical contrast, before the movement rounds off with the return of the main idea. The closing *Allegro assai* is a lively minuet that features a briefly serious fugal trio.

The last of the set, *Divertimento in F Major*, begins with an *Allegro* set in a concise sonata form that features a miniature minor-key development. The *Andante* is yet another of Mozart's lovely slow movements. Its music unwinds from two equally lyrical themes, one of which is developed with piquant dissonances. The *Presto* is a lively rondo. Its main theme, a robust dancelike tune, alternates with other, equally good-humored ideas throughout. ♦

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