Orpheus Chamber Orchestra
with Pinchas Zukerman, violin

Friday, March 18 | 8 pm | Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center

J. C. BACH
Sinfonia in G Minor, Op. 6, No. 6
Allegro
Allegro più tosto Adagio
Allegro molto

MOZART
Concerto No. 3 in G Major for Violin and Orchestra, K. 216
Allegro
Adagio
Rondeau: Allegro; Andante; Allegretto; Tempo primo

INTERMISSION

BEETHOVEN
Romance No. 1 in G Major for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 40

MELTZER
Vision Machine
WORLD PREMIERE

RAVEL
Le tombeau de Couperin
Prélude: Vif
Forlane: Allegretto
Menuet: Allegro moderato
Rigaudon: Assez vif

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The International Chamber Music Series is underwritten, in part, by the William T. Kemper Foundation

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**Sinfonia in G Minor, Op. 6 No. 6**  
**Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782)**

Born when his father was 50, Johann Christian was the youngest of Johann Sebastian Bach's surviving sons. He was also the most cosmopolitan, and remarkably versatile in his musical endeavors. The elder Bach oversaw his son's early musical education. After Sebastian's death in 1750, Christian moved to Berlin to live with his half-brother Carl Philipp Emanuel, who was court harpsichordist to the Prussian King Frederick the Great.

The rest of the Bach family spent their careers in a relatively narrow geographical span of present-day Germany. Christian traveled to Italy at age 19. He studied with Padre Martini in Bologna and enjoyed the patronage of Count Agostino Litta, a wealthy Milanese nobleman. Intending to pursue a career as a church musician in Italy, Bach converted to Catholicism (a singular decision for one who had been reared in the staunch Lutheran environment of Leipzig). In 1760, Bach was appointed cathedral organist in Milan. During his tenure in Milan, he composed a substantial amount of sacred music, but soon the siren call of the stage attracted him. In 1761 and 1762, he had three operas produced in Torino and Naples. When an invitation arrived in spring 1762 to compose two operas for the King's Theatre in London, Bach decided to move to England. Though he occasionally returned to the continent, Britain was his home for the rest of his life.

The 1760s were richly productive for Bach. In addition to his work at the King’s Theatre, he founded a new concert series in 1765 with Carl Friedrich Abel, who had been a viola da gamba player for Sebastian Bach in Leipzig before joining the superb Dresden Orchestra for ten years. Abel moved to England in 1759. The Bach-Abel concerts were pioneers in the rise of public concert series.

Johann Christian Bach became music master to Queen Charlotte, the young German princess who married George III in 1761. His association with the royal household gave him high social status.

When the Mozart family traveled to London in 1764, eight-year-old Wolfgang and Christian Bach forged an affectionate bond that lasted until Bach’s death. By 1770 he was the leading composer in London.

Bach's first symphonies, a set of six from 1765 published as Op. 3, were first performed on the Bach-Abel concerts. Bach's celebrity meant that these works were in demand internationally. The Op. 6 set soon followed. After its publication in Amsterdam in 1770, the symphonies of Op. 6 were performed in all of Europe's important music centers.

In these works, Bach adhered to the Italian opera sinfonia (overture) model: three movements arranged fast-slow-fast. For the most part, the stern Germanic character of his early training virtually disappeared during his Italian years. The symmetrical phrases, more basic harmonies, and newer galant style of opera seria dominated his musical vocabulary in instrumental as well as vocal music. That is why the G Minor sinfonia is so astounding.

Startlingly, like his half-brother Emanuel's music, this sinfonia is a Sturm und Drang ('Storm and Stress') composition. All three movements are in minor mode, a highly unusual choice in the 1760s. Listeners familiar with Mozart's early Symphony No. 25 in G Minor, K. 183, will sense a connection. There are other parallels to Mozart: the agitation and nervous energy of the opening Allegro recall the stormy slow introduction to Don Giovanni's overture. The contour of the slow movement theme, in C minor, is a pre-echo of Mozart's principal theme in the great C Minor Piano Concerto, K. 491. Profoundly expressive, the Andante più tosto Adagio shows Bach to have been a composer of emotional depth beyond surface beauty.

Perhaps most surprising is the quasi-gigue finale. It gallops and surges with wild abandon, only to vanish to a pianissimo close. It is as if the genie evaporated back into the bottle.

The score calls for two oboes, two horns, continuo, and strings.
Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, K. 216
Wolfgang Amade Mozart (1756-1791)

The year Mozart was born, 1756, his father Leopold published a violin method called Vorsuch einer gründliche Violinschule. The book was well-received and established Leopold's authority and reputation as a string pedagogue. As difficult as it is for us to place this information in context, to some extent Wolfgang grew up identified through his father's fame. He became an expert performer on violin and viola as well as piano, and by age 14 had been named Konzertmeister in the Salzburg Court Orchestra. For a while, he contemplated a career as a concert violinist.

With that background, we can better assess the remarkable fact that, between April and December, 1775, 19-year-old Wolfgang composed four (!) concerti for violin and orchestra. Even though he likely wrote them for Antonio Brunetti, who succeeded Mozart as concertmaster of the Salzburg orchestra, these concerti surely reflect Mozart's own string technique in his late teens.

The G Major Concerto, K. 216, was the third to be completed that year; the autograph is dated September 12. More self-assured than its two predecessors, the Third Concerto shows a more convincing command of form and interaction between soloist and orchestra. The main theme of the Allegro derives from an aria in the opera Il rè pastore, K. 208, which Mozart had just completed in April 1775. Among other details, Mozart gives the oboes and horns a more significant role than in earlier concerted works. As Stanley Sadie has observed, this was the first concerto movement in which Mozart gave the soloist thematic material that had not been previously stated in the orchestral introduction. This introduction of fresh themes would characterize all the later piano concerti.

Other foretastes of the mature piano concerti are present. Mozart specialist Philip Radcliffe compares the sustained, vocal melody of the slow movement to the famous "Elvira Madigan" theme in the Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467. Pizzicato basses, muted strings, and a duet of flutes replacing oboes, provide gentle support to the elegant solo cantilena. The Rondeau finale, a bubbling movement in 3/8, is interrupted by two episodes in duple time. Mozart further surprises us by avoiding fireworks in favor of a quiet, unassuming conclusion to this graceful movement. His emphasis is on melody, tone quality, and surpassing musicianship.

All three movements in K. 216 provide opportunities for a cadenza, and the third movement has several additional places that invite Eingänge (brief improvised embellishments, like mini-cadenza). For the first movement, Pinchas Zukerman plays a cadenza by Sam Franko (1857-1937), an American violinist and conductor who studied in Germany with Joseph Joachim and in Paris with Henry Vieuxtemps. Mr. Zukerman collaborated with Daniel Barenboim for the cadenzas and Eingänge in the second and third movements.

The score calls for two flutes, two oboes, two horns, solo violin, and strings. The oboes play in the outer movements, and are silent in the slow movement. The flutes are only used in the second movement. In the 18th century, most wind players played more than one instrument. Mozart almost certainly expected that his oboists would switch to flute for the slow movement. In this performance, of course, Orpheus' regular flutists and oboists play their respective parts.

Romance No. 1 in G Major for Violin & Orchestra, Op. 40
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Beethoven's concerto output appears to be slim: five piano concerti, the violin concerto, and the so-called 'Triple' Concerto for piano, violin, violoncello and orchestra. That short list is not, however, an accurate reflection of the composer's keen interest in concerto form. A number of Beethoven's additional concerto works were lost or exist only in fragments, such as a 1784 piano concerto and an oboe concerto from the early 1790s. Other works were incomplete at the time of his death. There is, for example, a set of sketches for a projected sixth piano concerto.

That stated, the two Romances for violin and orchestra, Op. 40 in G Major and Op. 50 in F Major, hold a special place in the literature, because they are the only other free-standing concerto movements by Beethoven that have survived. We know tantalizingly little about them; as a matter of fact, for years scholars could not even agree as to when they were written. Recent watermark studies of manuscript paper have provided compelling evidence that the G Major Romance dates from 1800. (The F Major work, although published later, may be from as early as 1798.) The G
Major Romance was published in 1803 by the Leipzig firm of Hoffmeister & Kühnel.

Each of the two Romances must be considered important predecessors to the Violin Concerto, Op. 61, certainly equal in importance to Beethoven’s violin sonatas. (Nine of the ten violin/piano sonatas also preceded the violin concerto.) The first Romance is more difficult than it sounds. With its exposed chorale-like opening and lack of overt display, it presents interpretive challenges to the soloist that make it difficult to bring off as a stand-alone concert piece. Beethoven’s beauty of melodic material and elegant woodwind writing make this intimate movement a small treasure in the literature. If only we had its unwritten outer movements as well!

Beethoven scored the G Major Romance for flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, solo violin and strings.

Vision Machine
Harold Meltzer (b.1966)
WORLD PREMIERE

Germany’s greatest author, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, once observed, “Music is liquid architecture; I call architecture frozen music.” His celebrated metaphor resonates particularly strongly for American composer Harold Meltzer, who has frequently found inspiration in great buildings.

Vision Machine takes its title from the French architect Jean Nouvel’s description of his residential skyscraper at 100 Eleventh Avenue in New York. Every panel of the 23-story glass and steel tower tilts at a different angle. The structure has become a landmark in Manhattan’s Chelsea district, communicating with the Hudson River and with Frank Gehry’s IAC building across the street.

Meltzer, who lives in lower Manhattan, knows the Nouvel and Gehry buildings well, having walked and driven past them countless times. “These structures are a part of my life, and they are fascinating buildings,” he says. “The hundreds of panels of glass in the façade of Nouvel’s tower seem to move independently and appear to have different colors, depending on the light. Gehry’s IAC building looks like a sailing ship or an iceberg; it is the subject of another commission I have.”

The experience of architecture has long fascinated Meltzer: “Not only the shapes you see, but also how architects move people through space,” he explains. Vision Machine is one of several recent pieces he has composed whose form and content relate directly to specific buildings.

In the case of Nouvel’s condominium tower at 100 Eleventh Avenue, Meltzer was eager to experience the building from within. Through social media, he became acquainted with a photographer and magazine editor who resides there. “He invited me to his apartment one day at noon,” the composer recalls. “He had a good view of Gehry’s building. I went back for another visit at sunset. At that point, the form of Vision Machine started to take shape.”

At press time, Meltzer had not completed his composition for tonight’s program; however, he already knew its instrumentation. The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra requested a work for an ensemble matching that of Ravel’s Le Tombeau de Couperin, which concludes this evening’s program. Meltzer adds, “It’s the second time in three years that I am writing a work to complement a Ravel piece. My Variations on a Summer Day, commissioned by the Fromm Foundation in 2012, is a setting of Wallace Stevens poetry for mezzo and nine instruments that matches Ravel’s Trois poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé (1913).”

The score to Vision Machine calls for woodwinds and horns in pairs, trumpet, harp, and strings.

Le Tombeau de Couperin
Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

France has rich cultural traditions: in cuisine, language, viticulture, and of course in the visual and performing arts. In the field of music, France has always revered the great composers of its golden Baroque era: from Jean-Baptiste Lully in the late 17th century to François Couperin "Le Grand" and Jean-Philippe Rameau in the first half of the 18th century.

Like all of his contemporaries, Maurice Ravel was educated with great respect and love for this rich musical heritage. His suite Le Tombeau de Couperin is a collection of dances and other musical forms that reached their apogee in the compositions of his Baroque predecessors. Ravel’s work originally appeared in 1918, as a six-movement suite for solo piano. The following year, he orchestrated four of its movements in the version Orpheus performs this evening.
The word *tombeau*, as its spelling suggests, means tomb or grave; however, the French term also connotes ‘homage’ or ‘tribute.’ Ravel was paying his respects not only to Couperin, but also to French Baroque heritage. His neoclassical choice of older dance forms as an instrumental suite are obvious bows to the earlier era. A *Prelude* was one of the standard opening movements to a keyboard suite. The *forlane* is an Italian dance with possible Slavic roots as well; it is related to the *gigue* and *passamezzo* and shares their 6/8 meter. The *rigaudon* is an ancient Provençal dance that was beloved by Ravel, and of course the *menuet* needs no introduction to music-lovers, who encounter it regularly as the third movement of symphonies, string quartets, and other multi-movement works. All three dances were popular in the 18th century.

There is another layer of meaning in *Le tombeau de Couperin* beyond a salute to the past. Each movement bears a dedication to a friend of Ravel’s who died in combat during the First World War. Ravel began the suite in 1914, after he had been discharged from the French military. Many of his friends were less fortunate, and by the time he finished composing the original piano suite in 1917, French casualties were astronomical. Ravel’s biographer H.H. Stuckenschmidt calls *Le Tombeau de Couperin* “a collection of idealized obituaries,” and points out that a dark current of mourning underlies the superficially light strains of this lovely music. That melancholy streak is particularly evident in the two inner movements, *Forlane* and *Menuet*. Ravel’s musical language is contemporary, although he adheres to the formal demands of the older dances. His remarkable gift for orchestration brings *Le Tombeau de Couperin* vividly to life with deft touches of instrumental color, particularly in the woodwinds and brass.

The score calls for two flutes (second doubling piccolo), two oboes (second doubling English horn), two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, harp, and strings.
ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

A standard-bearer of innovation and artistic excellence, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra is one of the world’s foremost chamber orchestras. Orpheus was founded in 1972 by Julian Fifer and a group of like-minded young musicians determined to combine the intimacy and warmth of a chamber ensemble to the richness of an orchestra. The orchestra presents an annual series at Carnegie Hall and tours extensively to major national and international venues. With 71 albums, including the Grammy Award-winning Shadow Dances: Stravinsky Miniatures, and 42 commissioned and premiered original works, Orpheus rotates musical leadership roles for each work, and strives to perform diverse repertoire through collaboration and open dialogue.

Orpheus has trademarked its signature mode of operation, the Orpheus Process™, an original method that places democracy at the center of artistic execution. It has been the focus of studies at Harvard and Stanford, and of leadership seminars at Morgan Stanley and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital, among others. Two unique education and engagement programs, Access Orpheus and Orpheus Institute, aim to bring this approach to students of all ages.

Access Orpheus is an educational initiative that shares the orchestra’s collaborative music-making process with public school students from all five boroughs in New York City. Because of declining resources for arts education, many public schools do not have access to fulltime arts teachers to provide music instruction and exposure to art and culture. Access Orpheus helps to bridge this gap with in-class visits, attendance at working rehearsal, and free tickets for performances at Carnegie Hall.

Orpheus Institute brings the Orpheus Process and the orchestra’s musicians to select colleges, universities, and conservatories to work directly with musicians and leaders of tomorrow. Students in all fields of study learn from Orpheus’ creative process and in areas of collaboration, communication, creative problem solving, and shared leadership. In the coming seasons Orpheus will continue to share its leadership methods and performance practices as the ensemble provides its audiences with the highest level of musicianship and programming.

For more information visit www.orpheusnyc.com/

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra appears courtesy of Baker Artists, LLC.

PINCHAS ZUKERMAN, VIOLIN

Pinchas Zukerman has remained a phenomenon in the world of music for over four decades. His musical genius, prodigious technique and unwavering artistic standards are a marvel to audiences and critics. Devoted to the next generation of musicians, he has inspired younger artists with his magnetism and passion. His enthusiasm for teaching has resulted in innovative programs in London, New York, China, Israel and Ottawa. The name Pinchas Zukerman is equally respected as violinist, violist, conductor, pedagogue and chamber musician.

Born in Tel Aviv in 1948, Mr. Zukerman came to America in 1962 where he studied at The Juilliard School with Ivan Galamian. He has been awarded the Medal of Arts, the Isaac Stern Award for Artistic Excellence and was appointed as the Rolex Mentor and Protegé Arts Initiative’s first instrumentalist mentor in the music discipline. Pinchas Zukerman’s extensive discography contains over 100 titles, and has earned him 2 Grammy awards and 21 nominations.

Pinchas Zukerman appears courtesy of Kirshbaum Associates, Inc.