

The Renaissance

2008-09: volume 33

MANSFIELD
SYMPHONY

Robert Franz
Music Director

Waltzing with the Stars February 21, 2009 at 8:00 PM

Waltzing with the Stars The Program:

Symphony No. 8
- Ludwig von Beethoven

Blue Danube Waltz
- Johan Strauss II

Die Fledermaus Overture
- Richard Strauss

Guest Artist: Neos Dance Theatre



Neos Dance Theatre: Bobby & Brooke Wesner



From Music Director Robert Franz:

“OK, so I admit it, I’m hooked. *Dancing with the Stars* is so much fun to watch and I end up rooting for my favorites each week. Ever since I saw the show I thought it would be fun to do a similar contest on the stage of the Renaissance... but who to help me put this program together. Then I met Bobby and Brooke Wesner and all became clear. Bobby and Brooke (Neos Dance Theatre) have a way of connecting with people that is nothing short of extraordinary, and so I asked them to create this program with me. Here’s the best part... there will be no judges. The audience will vote for their favorites and the winner will give a portion of that evening ticket proceeds to the charity of their choice. Now, Viennese music will be the genre of the evening, so you will hear a Strauss waltz and some polkas, along with works by other Viennese masters like Beethoven and Richard Strauss (no relation to the waltz king).”

Symphony No. 8

Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827

Beethoven typically composed symphonies in pairs: a larger one paired with a smaller, lighter one. In 1812, he completed both his Seventh and Eighth symphonies. The premiere of the Seventh symphony, in December 1813, was a great success. Not so with the Eighth, premiered two months later. It was performed between two larger works; one was the Seventh. Because of its lighter content the Eighth symphony was overshadowed. When his protégé, Karl Czerny, noted the greater popularity of the Seventh, Beethoven retorted, "That's because the Eighth is so much better." Beethoven referred to the Eighth as "my little one", written in an "unbuttoned mood." Apparently, the mood was one of ease as he composed this humorous, lighthearted work. Throughout, it is celebratory, despite the circumstances of his increasing deafness, the estrangement of his brother, and the departure of his "immortal beloved," all occurring this same year.

An Der Schönen, Blauen Donau

(Blue Danube), Op. 314

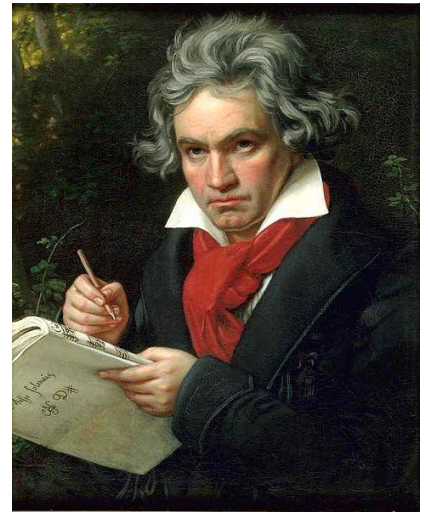
Johann Strauss II, 1825-1899

Johann Strauss II, by far the best known of nineteenth century Vienna's composers of dance music, was adored by high society who fondly named him the Waltz King. He was by nature shy, self-effacing and insecure, far removed in nature from the light-heartedness and exuberance expressed in his music. *An der schönen, blauen Donau*, known here as the "The Blue Danube," was composed in 1867, and became Vienna's consolation prize for the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the hands of Prussia the year before.

Die Fledermaus Overture

Richard Strauss, 1864-1949

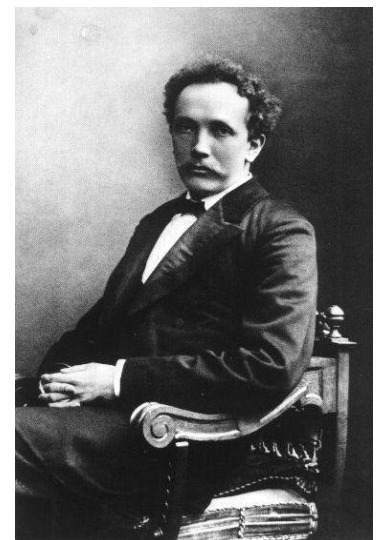
Beyond composing 479 sets of waltzes, galops, polkas, quadrilles and marches, Johann Strauss, Jr. also dabbled in Viennese operetta, with 16 titles to his credit. Among the latter, his masterpiece *Die Fledermaus* (*The Bat*) of 1874 has become a treasure of the repertoire. In three acts, the operetta is based on a French farce, *Le Réveillon*, by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, with a libretto by Carl Haffner and Richard Genée. As a frolic of champagne and romantic indiscretion, the plot offers wonderful opportunities for a gala of song and dance. The storyline goes: on New Year's Eve, Rosalinde's husband, Eisenstein, must leave for a few days in jail because he kicked the tax collector in the derriere. But on his way to the slammer, he stops off at a lavish masked ball, unaware that his wife and her chambermaid, Adele, are also there in disguise. After a night of amorous blundering by just about everyone, it seems a joke has been played by a certain Dr. Falke, who, at the same event the previous year, was embarrassed when he had to return home in daylight dressed as a bat. To open the curtain, Strauss crafted this *Overture* of inimitable wit and charm, including one of the greatest waltzes from the Viennese tradition.



Ludwig van Beethoven



Johann Strauss II



Richard Strauss