

MUSIC

Tafelmusik musicians say goodbye to old boss with a horn's blast

By [John Terauds](#) Special to the Star
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Photo by Sian Richards

Jeanne Lamon is returning to lead Tafelmusik Orchestra's next concert program with the blast of a horn.

The period-instrument ensemble presents a package Classical-era offering featuring the French horn played by guest soloist Scott Wevers. On the program are Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Symphony No. 25*, his fourth *Horn Concerto*, Joseph Haydn's *Symphony No. 73* (known as "The Hunt" for its horn part) and a symphony by 18th-century Swedish composer Joseph Martin Kraus.

The program is an informal farewell party for Lamon and her partner, Christina Mahler, who is retiring as Tafelmusik's principal cello at the end of this season.

Lamon has, of course, been replaced as Tafelmusik's musical leader by Italian violinist [Elisa Citterio](#), but this will be Lamon's last guest appearance as the orchestra's head before she and Mahler move to Victoria in late June.

It's been 38 years since Lamon and Mahler arrived in Toronto to join the then three-year-old band of period-performance enthusiasts. And it's been 33 years since the couple moved into their house just steps from Withrow Park in Riverdale.

"It's bittersweet," says Lamon of pulling up stakes after so many years. It's not just leaving friends and a great neighbourhood. "I don't think I'll ever play with an orchestra that's this good anywhere else," she says, frankly.

"But we do intend to continue making music," Mahler adds. "We'll decide how much or how little after we settle down in Victoria."

In the meantime, they are both keen to revisit the 18th century, known in art music as the Classical era, the time of Mozart and Haydn.

The program runs at Trinity-St. Paul's Centre from April 25 to 28. There will be a repeat at George Weston Recital Hall in North York on April 30.

Citterio asked Lamon to be part of Tafelmusik's 40th-anniversary season; Lamon chose the program.

"The one thing I knew I didn't want to do is another mixed Baroque program," the violinist says. "I've done so many of those. I was very busy with Classical-era music in my mind and in my practising."

She came up with a program that would suit a smaller, Baroque-size orchestra, she explains. "Haydn's orchestra (with Prince) Esterhazy was teeny-weeny," she says. "He had three first violins, one second, one viola, one cello, one bass." There was also a small woodwind section.

Like most musicians, Lamon and Mahler have a soft spot for Haydn, even though Mozart gets most of the listening public's attention. I ask why this is.

"People don't appreciate Haydn because they compare him with Mozart, but it's really very different," Lamon explains. "His language is different and his way of looking at the world is different. He was a much more provincial guy."

"He wrote 140 symphonies and every single one of them is good. Mozart wrote 41 and probably the last 12 are good. The early ones show talent, but they're not great pieces. There's a reason why nobody performs the 12th symphony of Mozart. Whereas with Haydn, all of them get played."

Mahler adds: "With a composer like Bach, it doesn't matter what style you play it in, it's always good. With Mozart, the good ones are more grown up. With Haydn, if you play it in a Romantic style (with modern instruments), a lot of it falls away: a lot of the humour, a lot of the musicality. It just doesn't come to life in the same kind of way."

Tafelmusik recorded 40 Haydn symphonies in the 1990s. The original plan was to record them all, but the music business crashed in the late '90s and the orchestra had to give up the project. But the musicians have missed playing Haydn, so Lamon thought it

would be great to revisit an old friend, “but we’re performing a Haydn symphony we’ve never done before.”

And instead of announcing someone’s arrival, the horn call will be one of goodbye — or, more appropriately, see you again soon.

Visit tafelmusik.org for full concert details.