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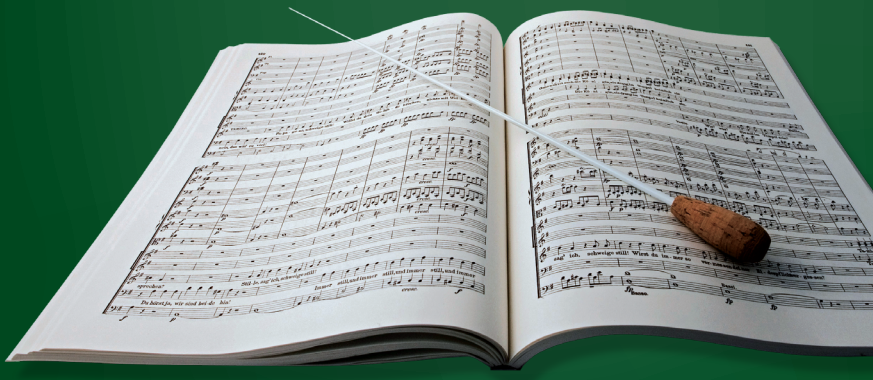
The 30 Greatest Orchestral Works

Course Guidebook

Professor Robert Greenberg
San Francisco Performances



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Professor Robert Greenberg was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1954 and has lived in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1978. Professor Greenberg received a B.A. in Music, magna cum laude, from Princeton University in 1976. His principal teachers at Princeton were Edward Cone, Daniel Werts, and Carlton Gamer in composition; Claudio Spies and Paul Lansky in analysis; and Jerry Kuderna in piano. In 1984, Professor Greenberg received a Ph.D. in Music Composition, with distinction, from the University of California, Berkeley, where his principal teachers were Andrew Imbrie and Olly Wilson in composition and Richard Felciano in analysis.

Professor Greenberg has composed more than 45 works for a wide variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles. Recent performances of his works have taken place in New York; San Francisco; Chicago; Los Angeles; England; Ireland; Greece; Italy; and the Netherlands, where his *Child's Play* for String Quartet was performed at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

Professor Greenberg has received numerous honors, including three Nicola de Lorenzo Composition Prizes and three Meet The Composer grants. He has received recent commissions from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress, the Alexander String Quartet, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Strata Ensemble, San Francisco Performances, and the XTET ensemble. Professor Greenberg is a board member and an artistic director of COMPOSERS, INC., a composers' collective and production organization based in San Francisco. His music is published by Fallen Leaf Press and CPP/Belwin and is recorded on the Innova label.

Professor Greenberg has performed, taught, and lectured extensively across North America and Europe. He is currently Music Historian-in-Residence

with San Francisco Performances, where he has lectured and performed since 1994, and is a faculty member of the Advanced Management Program at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business. He has served on the faculties of the University of California, Berkeley; California State University East Bay; and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he chaired the Department of Music History and Literature from 1989 to 2001 and served as the director of the Adult Extension Division from 1991 to 1996.

Professor Greenberg has lectured for some of the most prestigious musical and arts organizations in the United States, including the San Francisco Symphony (where for 10 years he was host and lecturer for the symphony's nationally acclaimed Discovery Series), the Chautauqua Institute (where he was the Everett Scholar-in-Residence during the 2006 season), the Ravinia Festival, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Van Cliburn Foundation, the Nasher Sculpture Center, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Villa Montalvo, Music@Menlo, and the University of British Columbia (where he was the Dal Grauer Lecturer in September 2006).

In addition, Professor Greenberg is a sought-after lecturer for businesses and business schools and has recently spoken for such diverse organizations as S. C. Johnson, Canadian Pacific, Deutsches Bank, the University of California/Haas School of Business Executive Seminar, the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, Harvard Business School Publishing, Kaiser Permanente, the Strategos Institute, Quintiles Transnational, the Young Presidents' Organization, the World Presidents' Organization, and the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco. Professor Greenberg has been profiled in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Inc.* magazine, the *Times* of London, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *San Jose Mercury News*, the University of California alumni magazine, *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, and *Diablo* magazine.

For many years, Professor Greenberg was the resident composer and music historian for NPR's *Weekend All Things Considered*; he presently plays that role on NPR's *Weekend Edition, Sunday* with Liane Hansen. In February

2003, Maine's *Bangor Daily News* referred to Professor Greenberg as the Elvis of music history and appreciation, an appraisal that has given him more pleasure than any other.

Professor Greenberg's other courses with The Great Courses include *How to Listen to and Understand Great Music, 3rd Edition*; *Concert Masterworks*; *Bach and the High Baroque*; *The Symphonies of Beethoven*; *How to Listen to and Understand Opera*; the *Great Masters* series; *The Operas of Mozart*; *The Life and Operas of Verdi*; *The Symphony*; *The Chamber Music of Mozart*; *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*; *The Concerto*; *Understanding the Fundamentals of Music*; and *The Music of Richard Wagner*. ■

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The 30 Greatest Orchestral Works

Scope:

This course identifies and celebrates 30 of the greatest orchestral works in the concert repertoire. Each lecture presents learners with a historical and biographical context for each work via a guided tour of the work itself. These musical tours include both piano demonstrations of the piece's compositional structure and selected excerpts drawn from recordings.

The course is designed to serve learners as a series of expanded program notes that explores a broad range of orchestral music composed over the last 300 years: From the baroque era, the classical era, the romantic era, and the 20th century, the works featured in the course include some of the most well-known, best-loved, and most frequently performed pieces in the standard repertoire in the forms of symphonies, concertos, tone poems, symphonic poems, and suites.

By the course's end, we will understand why each featured piece is considered "great"; how each reflected, reinvented, and/or broke from contemporary musical conventions; how each reflected the individual spirit and nature of its composer; and to what extent contemporary historical circumstances affected the composition.

The works featured in the course include Johann Sebastian Bach's Brandenburg Concerto no. 2, Haydn's Symphony no. 104, Beethoven's Symphonies nos. 3 and 9, Mozart's Piano Concerto in C minor, Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, Mahler's Symphony no. 5, Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, and other timeless works by such composers as Antonio Vivaldi, Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Antonín Dvořák, Sergey Rachmaninoff, Claude Debussy, Gustav Holst, Camille Saint-Saëns, Aaron Copland, and Dmitri Shostakovich.

In addition to the glorious music, the course brings to life the humanity behind each composition. We will learn which of these mainstays of the

repertoire was lauded at the time of its composition and which had to wait for recognition and acclaim. We also learn which fondly held conventions—musical, societal, and political—were upended by composers such as Vivaldi, Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven.

We learn that Bach's contemporaries favored Vivaldi's compositions and thought of Bach's work as an artistic dead end. We learn of Haydn's compositional thrift and revel in the originality and genius of the musical utopian Mozart, who was recognized in his own time as being outside the contemporary compositional mainstream.

The course traces the development of the different musical genres, too. For example, the course traces the evolution of the symphony from an entertainment for the privileged wealthy to one enjoyed by the wider public to the impact of Beethoven's Symphony no. 9—with its revolutionary combination of instruments and voices—on 19th-century compositions.

In addition to the historical, social, political, and cultural contexts of the music, we learn about the personal circumstances that shaped the composers' musical voices. Mental and physical illness, rejection, loss, political censure, and ostracism all play a role in the very human side of the great music we study.

The course concludes with a reflection upon the future of orchestral music, some thoughts regarding the music business, and fervent hopes for the survival of a threatened species—the modern orchestra. ■

Game Plan and Preliminaries

Lecture 1

The goals of this first lecture are to put the course title into perspective and to explore what constitutes both an orchestra and orchestral music. Another goal is to introduce the stylistic periods and the orchestral genres that will be encountered throughout the course. In addition, we will discuss the nature of musical form and define the seven major musical forms composers either follow or from which they innovate.

In reference to the course title, the word "greatest" denotes compositions of enduring expressive content and compositional quality—works that evince their ongoing popularity by their centrality in the standard repertoire. This lecture serves as an introduction, while Lectures 2–31 are the "30 greatest." The final lecture addresses a few of the many "great orchestral works" that were not included in this course. While the order in which the works appear is, for the most part, chronological, the course itself does not require sequential viewing/listening.

By the early 1700s, the relatively large, mixed instrumental ensemble called an orchestra had come into being. At that time, composers were writing idiosyncratically orchestral music thanks to the developing concept of orchestration, which refers to how a composer assigns instruments to the melodic and accompanimental parts of a composition. The art of orchestration demands that individual instruments and/or groups of instruments enter, depart, and overlap—constantly shifting the weight and color of the musical sound as it unfolds.

The baroque era is a stylistic period that spanned from 1600 to 1750—from the birth of opera in 1600 to the death of Johann Sebastian Bach in 1750. The early baroque (1600–1650) was a musically revolutionary time in which opera appeared in Italy and evolved from a modest courtly entertainment into a hugely popular and profitable media industry. During the middle baroque (1650–1700), the compositional innovations of opera transferred to other genres of music. During the high, or late, baroque era (1700–1750),

Antonio Vivaldi, George Frederick Handel, and Johann Sebastian Bach created a transcendent body of work.

A new, more melodically direct style of music emerged in southern Italy, namely Naples, that featured what their practitioners called natural music: song-like melodies simply accompanied (a **texture** referred to as **homophony**). This new Neapolitan style rejected so-called artificial harmony, which is the intertwining of multiple, simultaneous, principal melodies (a texture known as **polyphony**). Today, what we call the **classical** style evolved from this new, more accessible, presumably natural sort of music that resonated with the spirit of the empowered individual that lay at the heart of Enlightenment doctrine.

After Beethoven, composers took for granted that they should express themselves in their music.

The romantic era is a period that spanned from the death of Beethoven in 1827 to the advent of the 20th century in 1900. After Beethoven, composers took for granted that they should express themselves in their music. For some composers, the expressive imperative and their desire to be original necessitated that they go beyond the strictures of traditional **melody** and **harmony**: the so-called **tonal** system that had been the bedrock vocabulary of Western music since the 15th century.

The search for expressive originality led some composers to abandon the structures and rituals of traditional tonality around the turn of the 20th century in favor of self-created, self-referential musical languages. In general, the music of the 20th century demonstrated a sort of hyper-romanticism, in that the very musical language with which a composer spoke became contextual, or subject to the self-expressive urge. ■

The Major Musical Forms

Musical form refers to the structure of a given movement of music. Composers of a given era will generally adhere to a fairly limited number of formal procedures that are understood by a contemporary audience and, therefore, contribute mightily to rendering works comprehensible to a contemporary audience. The musical forms that are necessary for this course are as follows. With the exception of the ritornello form, all are classical-era forms.

- **ritornello**: A refrain procedure in which a theme returns in part, called a fragmentary refrain, over the course of a movement. This form is among the most common of all baroque-era instrumental procedures.

- **theme and variations**: A theme is stated at the beginning of the movement, and each subsequent section of music is perceived as a variation of that theme. Such a movement usually concludes with a coda, which informs the listener that the process of variation is over and provides a satisfying sense of conclusion.

- **minuet and trio**: A minuet—a moderate, stately three-step dance—is expressed, and then a contrasting minuet is presented in a section called the trio. Following the trio, the original minuet returns in a section called the da capo to conclude the movement.

- **scherzo**: Generally retains the structure of minuet and trio form, but eliminates the ritual repetitions of the minuet dance, which speeds up the movements.

- **rondo**: A refrain form in which a rondo theme, once stated, returns periodically after various contrasting episodes. Unlike ritornello form, the returns of a rondo theme tend to be complete.

Continued from previous page.

- **sonata**: Two or more principal contrasting themes are presented, developed, and ultimately reconciled to each other.

- **double exposition**: Sonata form adapted to the needs of a concerto.

Orchestral Genres

- **solo concerto**: A multi-movement work in which a single soloist is accompanied by, and sometimes pitted against, the orchestra.

- **concerto grosso**: A multi-movement work in which multiple soloists are accompanied by, and sometimes pitted against, the orchestra.

- **symphony**: A multi-movement work composed for an orchestra.

- **symphonic poem** or **tone poem**: A single-movement orchestral work that seeks to tell some sort of extra-musical, or programmatic, story.

- **suite**: A concert work consisting of a collection of dances extracted from a longer ballet.

Important Terms

classical: Designation given to works of art of the 17th and 18th centuries, characterized by clear lines and balanced form.

harmony: The musical art (and science) of manipulating simultaneous pitches.

homophonic texture/homophony: Texture in which one melodic line predominates; all other melodic material is heard as being secondary or accompanimental.

melody: Any succession of pitches.

polyphonic texture/polyphony: Texture consisting of two or more simultaneous melody lines of equal importance.

texture: Number of melodies present and the relationship between those melodies in a given segment of music; they include monophony, polyphony (counterpoint), heterophony, and homophony.

tonal/tonality: Sense that one pitch is central to a section of music, as opposed to atonal/atonality.

Vivaldi—*The Four Seasons*

Lecture 2

Taken as a whole, Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* is about humankind's relationship to nature. Musically, the cycle demonstrates a satisfying degree of contrasts and balances. In both "Spring" and "Autumn," nature is idealized and depicted as benign. Alternately, in "Summer" and "Winter," nature is depicted as a terrifying force. Both "Spring" and "Autumn" deal with collective communities celebrating nature's kindness: birds, nymphs, shepherds, and villagers. However, "Summer" and "Winter" focus much more on the individual, and his struggle to survive the elements.

The four, three-**movement** violin concerti known collectively as *The Four Seasons* stand today, along with Handel's *Messiah*, as the most famous works composed during the baroque era. Composed in 1720 by Antonia Vivaldi, *The Four Seasons* is scored for solo violin—a string orchestra consisting of first and second violins, violas, and 'cellos—and what is called a continuo part—typically a harpsichord, which reinforces the bass line as it plunks out the harmonies. Each violin concerto within *The Four Seasons* is based on a poem—a sonnet—extolling one of the four seasons and, consequently, is program music—music that describes and illustrates a literary story.

Vivaldi, born in Venice in 1678, was trained as both a violinist and a priest. He was known as *il prieto rosso*, or "the red priest," because of his bright red hair. While he composed 49 operas in the ornate Venetian style, Vivaldi is best remembered for his concerti—over 500 in number. Just under half of Vivaldi's concerti are for solo violin and orchestra, and most, if not all, of them were performed at a Venetian convent/orphanage/conservatory of music called the *Pio Ospedale della Pietà* (the "Devout Hospital [Orphanage] of Mercy"), or *Pietà* for short. For 37 years, Vivaldi was the violin master, conductor, composer, and dean of music at the *Pietà*.

Antonio studied violin with his father, a barber and professional musician (string player), and displayed remarkable precocity as both a violinist and

composer. However, as the eldest son of a poor household, it was expected that he would join the priesthood, and he was ordained a priest in March of 1703. He joined the faculty of the *Pietà* as *maestro di violino* (master of the violin) in September of 1703, and after about a year, the Venetian publishing house of *Sala* issued his opus 1, a set of **trio sonatas**: works for two violins, 'cello, and continuo. In 1711, Vivaldi's set of 12 concerti was published as opus 3 and is generally considered to be the most influential music publication of the first half of the 18th century. By 1718, the 40-year-old Vivaldi's career had taken off, and he became very successful.

As will be the case in all four of the concerti that comprise *The Four Seasons*, the first movement of "Spring" is cast in ritornello form.

Concerto No. 1 in E Major, "La Primavera" ("Spring")
Movements 1, 2, and 3

As will be the case in all four of the concerti that comprise *The Four Seasons*, the first movement of "Spring" is cast in ritornello form. Part of the zest of the first **theme** is its outdoor rusticity, as evidenced by the steady, droning, bagpipe-like accompaniment in the 'cellos. The solo violin depicts the extra-musical details described by the sonnet, and in doing so, features the extended violin techniques for which Vivaldi was so famous.

The second movement is scored for the solo violin, orchestral violins, and viola only—no 'cellos and no harpsichord continuo. Beyond the murmuring, lyric mood of the music there are, in truth, no explicit programmatic references in this second movement. At best, this music is impressionistic, or evocative of a mood rather than a specific picture. The fast third movement is likewise more impressionistic than programmatically explicit. The movement is labeled as being a rustic dance, with long-held accompanimental drones creating, again, a bagpipe-like effect.

Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, "L'estate" ("Summer")
Movements 1, 2, and 3

The overwhelmingly bright mood depicted in "Spring" does not exist in "Summer," which presents an altogether less idealistic and grittier seasonal depiction. In this movement's ritornello theme, quiet, drooping, isolated **motives** depict rather convincingly the oppressive, miasmic heat of the Venetian summer. The climax of the movement is the advent of a storm, which is so dramatically dominating that Vivaldi concluded the movement with it rather than returning to the exhausted ritornello theme.

In the second movement of "Spring," a growling bit of thunder interrupts things every few **measures**, and after a few such interruptions, this movement begins to sound a bit absurd. In the third movement, bad weather remains the issue. The entire movement is a nonstop riff on this stormy weather, with a series of particularly virtuosic passages for the solo violin. The last of these solo passages is followed by the conclusion of the movement.

Concerto No. 3 in F Major, "L'autunno" ("Autumn")
Movements 1, 2, and 3

"Autumn" returns to the Arcadian mood of "Spring," while the last of the seasons—"Winter"—will be dominated by the sort of meteorological extremes that made "Summer" such a dramatic downer. The ritornello theme that exists in this movement is among the most famous melodies Vivaldi ever composed. The solo violin-dominated episodes that alternate with the ritornello theme depict merry partygoers, as referenced in the sonnet. The movement ends as it began—with the ritornello theme—and clearly, a good time has been had by all.

The contented, feel-good nature of the first movement continues through the remainder of the concerto. The second movement picks up where the first left off, with the partygoers having dozed off. The dreamy inactivity of the second movement comes to an end with the hustle and bustle of a hunt, as referenced by the sonnet that represents the third movement.

The theme of the third movement is appropriately upbeat. The artful simplicity of this theme is a product of careful compositional calculation: A compact melodic idea is repeated almost verbatim three times over

a bagpipe-like drone, all of which assures that this music will have a direct, almost folk-like quality to it. It is just this melodic directness and mock thematic simplicity that has made "Autumn," like "Spring," an audience favorite.

Vivaldi's Orchestral Works

The concerti of Antonio Vivaldi are the capstone of the Italian baroque instrumental style and constitute—in number and quality—one of the greatest bodies of work ever composed. While Vivaldi's compositional style continued to evolve over the course of his career, several generalizations can be made about his concerti.

- Vivaldi institutionalized the three-movement, "fast-slow-fast" scheme of movements.
- Vivaldi's first movements are almost always cast in ritornello form.
- Vivaldi was a first-class tunesmith and his themes—busy and ornate though they are—set a new standard for dramatic expression and sheer memorability.
- Vivaldi's solo parts are more brilliant and virtuosic than any composed in his time. His solo parts reflect the dual influence of his own virtuosity as a violinist as well as the vocal virtuosity that was characteristic of contemporary Venetian opera.

Putting all of this together, Vivaldi's concerti exhibit a degree of contrast and dramatic thrust that raised the expressive orchestral bar to an entirely new level. Along with the concerti of his contemporary Johann Sebastian Bach, Vivaldi's are the earliest orchestral works performed today as part of the standard repertoire.

Concerto No. 4 in F Minor, "L'inverno" ("Winter")
Movements 1, 2, and 3

The fourth and final of the seasons, "Winter," is programmatically and compositionally the most complex of the set. The ritornello theme that drives the first movement has more of a special effects construct than a thematic melody. Twitching, rising, repeated **dissonances** build toward a trembling, shivering climax as the solo violin cuts loose with a slashing line labeled "*orrido vento*," which means "horrid wind."

The second movement, with its momentary warmth by the fire, is perhaps the most memorable slow movement in *The Four Seasons.* The solo violin sings a warm and contented song, accompanied by **pizzicato** (meaning "plucked") orchestral violins that depict the raindrops outside, sustained violas, and a solo 'cello.

The opening of the third movement is nothing less than comic theater. The careful, mincing footsteps of someone treading on ice are depicted by the solo violin. According to the score, after a series of theatrical slips and slides, the individual falls down. The movement concludes brilliantly as the Sirocco—the warm, Saharan desert wind—collides with the Boreas, "the cold north wind." The storm that follows concludes the movement, the concerto, and the set. ■

Important Terms

dissonance: A musical entity or state of instability that seeks resolution to consonance, a point of rest.

measure: Metric unit; space between two bar lines.

motive: Brief succession of pitches from which a melody grows through the processes of repetition, sequence, and transformation.

movement: Independent section within a larger work.

pizzicato: Plucking, rather than bowing, a stringed instrument.

theme: Primary musical subject matter in a given section of music.

trio sonata: Baroque-era genre of chamber music consisting of two soprano instruments, a bass instrument, and a chord-producing instrument (called the continuo). The most common trio sonata instrumentation was two violins, a ’cello, and a harpsichord.

Bach—Brandenburg Concerto No. 2

Lecture 3

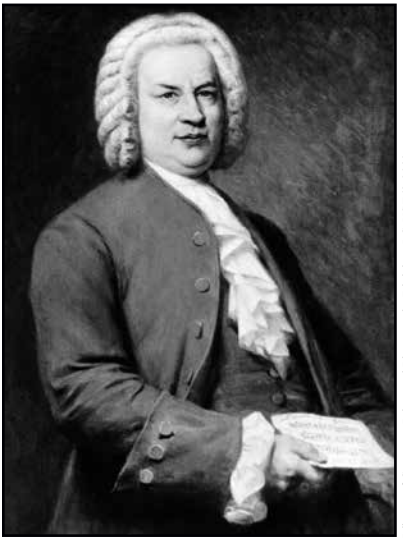
Bach's Brandenburg Concerto no. 2, like pretty much everything Bach composed, expanded the formal, melodic, harmonic, and expressive frameworks that were his baroque inheritance. It is this expansion of the musical language that prompts Bach scholar Martin Geck to write: "Bach assumes a pivotal role in history. He sums up what went before him and, at the same time, lays the foundation for important developments that will come after him. In Bach, the universalism of the baroque merges into modern idealism."

Johann Sebastian Bach spent the bulk of his professional life as a musical functionary of the Lutheran Church and at war with the authorities for whom he worked. His dream job lasted for only six years; he was the victim of budget cuts, disillusionment, and personal estrangement. Bach was born on March 31, 1685, and died on July 28, 1750. During his life, he held a total of six professional positions: a court musician in the chapel of Duke Johann Ernst, organist at St. Boniface's Church, organist at the Church of St. Blasius, court organist and concertmaster at the ducal court, Kapellmeister (music director) of Anhalt-Cöthen, and finally, cantor (liturgical music director) at the St. Thomas School. Bach held this last position for the remaining 27 years of his life.

In early 1719, Bach traveled to Berlin to commission the construction of a new, state-of-the-art harpsichord for the Cöthen court. It was during this trip that Bach met and played for Margrave Christian Ludwig of Brandenburg, the youngest son of the elector of Brandenburg, Friedrich Wilhelm. In 1721, Bach sent the margrave an artistic resume: six concerti that Bach clearly felt offered a cross-section of his skills as a court composer. The concerti Bach sent were filed and forgotten until their rediscovery in the 1870s, when they were collectively dubbed the *Brandenburg Concertos* by the Bach scholar and biographer Philipp Spitta.

Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F Major

The Brandenburg Concerto no. 2 is a concerto grosso, which means that it is a large concerto that features multiple soloists. The Brandenburg no. 2 includes four soloists: a clarino, a flute, an oboe, and a violin. A concerto grosso features two performing ensembles in one: a group of soloists—called the concertino, meaning the "little ensemble"—and the ripieno, meaning the "orchestra." A passage in which the concertino and ripieno play together is called a tutti, meaning literally "all together."



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Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) held a total of six professional positions during his lifetime.

The ripieno of Bach's Brandenburg no. 2 consists of a string orchestra—first and second violins, violas, 'cellos, violone (or bass viol, the ancestor of today's double bass), and a harpsichord. The brilliant, celebratory nature of the Brandenburg no. 2 has much to do with its treble-dominated concertino: trumpet, flute, oboe, and violin. Never before—or since—has this particular set of solo instruments been used in a concerto grosso.

Movement 1

This first movement ritornello form might have been inspired by the ritornello movements of Vivaldi, but in terms of its length, complexity, and sheer invention, it is superior to its models. The theme is a vigorous, memorable, though typically busy baroque-styled melody, and it concludes with a **closed cadence**—a musical punctuation mark equivalent to a period—that effectively separates it from what comes next.

The ritornello theme is cast in four distinct phrases, which we will call phrases *a*, *b*, a^1, and b^1. Phrases *a* and a^1 have a jolly, dance-like bounce to

them; phrases *b* and b^1 consist almost entirely of fast, running 16th **notes**. The chattering bass line heard beneath phrase *a* is strictly a background element when we first hear it. Given that our ears are focused on the ritornello theme unfolding above it, we probably don't even notice it. However, that chattering bass line will soon enough rise from the accompaniment to become a thematic element itself and will be played by each solo instrument during the course of the movement.

Bach introduces the solo instruments—one at a time—with a brief, trilling melody that offers a considerable contrast to the foot-stomping heaviness of the ritornello theme. Since this little theme will only be played by the solo instruments, we will refer to it as the solo theme. Following the movement opening statement of the ritornello theme, the solo violin enters with the solo theme, immediately after which the opening phrase *a* of the ritornello theme is again played by the tutti.

Next it's the solo oboe's turn to play the solo theme, which is again followed by phrase *a* of the ritornello theme. The solo flute next plays the solo theme, followed once again by the opening phrase of the ritornello theme. Lastly, the trumpet plays the solo theme, and the ritornello theme picks up where it left off, followed by the remainder of the theme (phrases *b*, a^1, and b^1) plays and then a closed cadence.

This first large section of the movement—part 1 of the movement—is expository, meaning that it features thematic music: the ritornello theme itself, the chattering bass line that rises from the bass to become a surface element, and the solo theme. Part 1 is a brilliant and idiosyncratic interpretation of ritornello form, an approach dictated by the brilliant and idiosyncratic set of solo instruments Bach employs in the concertino.

There are six large parts to this first movement, and each of the subsequent five parts concludes with the final two phrases of the ritornello theme— a^1 and b^1—played by the tutti and followed by a closed cadence. These (and other) appearances of the ritornello theme are fragmentary and are used to punctuate developmental episodes dominated by the instruments of the concertino—episodes during which we are witness to all sorts of phrase extensions, polyphonic overlapping of voices, and new **key** areas.

Part 2 is dominated by the trumpet. It begins with a very high version of the solo theme played by the trumpet, continues with a lengthy episode that features the trumpet, and concludes with the final two phrases of the ritornello theme set in the key of D **minor** that is dominated by the trumpet. Part 3 of the movement features the entire concertino, as the solo instruments emphatically play phrases *a* and a^1 of the ritornello theme.

The Brandenburg Concerto no. 2 is a concerto grosso, which means that it is a large concerto that features multiple soloists.

In part 4, the concertino plays the solo theme and then phrase *a* of the ritornello theme until, once again, the tutti performs the section-ending statement of the last two phrases of the ritornello theme, now in the key of G minor. In part 5, the instruments of the concertino are paired in various ways and again conclude with the final phrases of the ritornello theme, now in the key of A minor. The sixth and final part of the movement is recapitulatory: It is based entirely on the ritornello theme, and it begins and ends in the **home key**, or the **tonic** key, of F **major**.

The harmonic leap between the conclusion of part 5 (in the key of A minor) and the beginning of part 6 (in the home key of F major) features one of Bach's favorite devices: a pivot that uses common tones to transit a large harmonic distance in a virtually short amount of time. Immediately after the A minor harmony at the conclusion of part 5, without transition or preparation, Bach begins the ritornello theme back in the home key of F major. This device works because an A minor harmony and an F major harmony have two of their three **pitches** in common. Bach uses those common tones as a hinge to swing instantly from A minor to the ritornello theme in F major.

Movement 2

The second movement is scored for the solo flute, oboe, and solo violin, accompanied only by a single 'cello and the harpsichord. For reasons both practical and musical, the trumpet does not appear in this movement. Given the incredible rigors of the first and third movements of this concerto, a rest is both a physical necessity and an act of mercy. On the musical side is the

expressive message of the movement. Set in D minor, it is a sublime and lyric bit of night music—a nocturne—particularly notable for the gentle intertwining of the solo flute, oboe, and violin. The trumpet—with its piercing, brilliant sound—would dominate the other instruments and disrupt the shadowy, expressive mood of the movement.

Movement 3

Presumably well rested, the trumpet returns as the lead instrumental voice in the third movement **fugue**, which is a multi-voiced, or polyphonic, formal process in which a theme—called the fugue **subject**—is introduced and then restated in various voices and in various keys. The first large section of a fugue is called the exposition, during which each constituent "voice" enters in turn with the subject. There are four such voice entries in this movement, one for each instrument of the concertino (trumpet, oboe, violin, and flute).

The accompaniment here is provided by the **basso continuo**, which is a single 'cello and a harpsichord. The ripieno—the orchestral strings—are not active participants in the unfolding of the fugue. This third movement is about the bright, brilliant, treble-dominated timbral colors of the concertino, while the ripieno is reduced to the role of deep-background accompanist.

The fugue subject consists of two parts: the first called the head and the second the tail. The head is vigorous and dancelike, while the tail consists of a running series of 16th notes. The head and tail of the fugue subject should sound familiar because phrases *a* and *b* of the first movement ritornello theme have almost exactly the same rhythmic and harmonic profile. This sort of macro-relationship between outer movements is something we generally will not observe until the mature music of Beethoven—music composed more than 50 years after Bach died. ■

Important Terms

basso continuo: Those instruments in a baroque-era ensemble (typically a chord-producing instrument and a bass instrument) whose job it was to articulate with unerring clarity the bass line and play the harmonic progressions built atop the bass line.

closed cadence: Equivalent to a period or an exclamation mark; such a cadence ends on the tonic and gives a sense of rest and resolution.

fugue: Important baroque musical procedure in which a theme (or subject) is developed by means of various contrapuntal techniques.

home key: Main key of a movement or composition.

key: Collection of pitches that relate to a specific major or minor mode.

major: Modern term for Ionian mode; characterized by an intervallic profile of whole tone–whole tone–semitone–whole tone–whole tone–whole tone–semitone (symbolized as: T–T–S | T–T–T–S).

minor: Modern term for Aeolian mode; characterized by an intervallic profile of whole tone–semitone–whole tone–whole tone–semitone–whole tone–whole tone (symbolized as T–S–T | T–S–T–T).

note: A sound with three properties: a single, sing-able fundamental frequency; timbre; and duration.

pitch: A sound with two properties: a single, sing-able fundamental frequency and timbre.

subject: The theme of a fugue.

tonic: Home pitch and chord of a piece of tonal music. Think of the term as being derived from “tonal center” (tonic). For example, if a movement is in C, the pitch C is the tonic pitch, and the harmony built on C is the tonic chord.

Bach—Violin Concerto in E Major

Lecture 4

Bach took the alternation of solo and tutti of the Italian concerto and transformed it into something far more complex and original. It is ironic but typical that those very things we prize most in Bach's concerti—their extraordinary originality and attendant complexity of craft and invention—are the things that made them controversial in their own time. The message is clear: Compose what you desire to compose, and let time decide what is of lasting value.

In May of 1723, Johann Sebastian Bach was appointed director of religious music at the St. Thomas School in the central German city of Leipzig. Bach spent the remainder of the 1720s composing a mind-boggling repertoire of masterworks for the churches of Leipzig. In March of 1729, he took over the directorship of Leipzig's prestigious *Collegium Musicum*, a secular-music performance organization. By the mid-1730s, Bach's estrangement from the religious musical institutions he presumably directed had become clear, and in November of 1736, Bach finally managed to persuade August III, king of Poland and elector of Saxony to appoint him royal court composer.

In May of 1737, six months after Bach's appointment, an article appeared in a journal called *The Critical Musician*. Published in Hamburg and edited by a Leipzig-born writer and musician named Johann Adolph Scheibe, the article attacked Bach's music and musical aesthetic. In his defense of Bach published in 1738, Johann Abraham Birnbaum, a lecturer in rhetoric at Leipzig University, addressed Scheibe's claims. Both men were correct in their own way. Scheibe was speaking for his generation during the time of the Enlightenment. However, in Birnbaum's defense, Bach's music has stood the test of time and has even become a genre unto itself.

Violin Concerto in E Major

While we do not know exactly when Bach composed his Violin Concerto in E Major, we do know that it was composed while he was Kapellmeister—court musical director—for the principality of Cöthen in central Germany,

a position he held from 1717 to 1723. At some point between 1729 and 1731, Bach revised the Concerto in E Major for performance by Leipzig's *Collegium Musicum* while he was the director there. The concerto as we know it today is almost certainly this revised "Leipzig" version.

Bach's concerti—most, if not all, of which were initially composed at Cöthen between 1717 and 1720—are built along the lines of what is called the Vivaldi model: a three-movement template in which the first movement is a fast ritornello form movement, the second movement is slow, and the third movement is upbeat and might be a ritornello form, a fugue, or a dance. While the influence of Vivaldi's concerti on Bach's must rightly be acknowledged, Bach's concerti reach far beyond Vivaldi's model. Bach's concerti are longer, more melodically interesting, more harmonically and structurally complex, more brilliant, and more profound than anything that came before him.

However, unlike today's audiences—who perceive Bach as the apex of the high baroque—most of Bach's contemporaries perceived Vivaldi and his Italian colleagues as the apex and Bach's music as an academic offshoot and artistic dead end. We now recognize that Bach was a true universalist—someone who synthesized in his own work a continent's worth of national styles and 300 years of compositional techniques.

Movement 1

This first movement is a textbook example of Bach's compositional transcendence. Typical of the Vivaldi concerto model, the movement is cast in ritornello form. However, Bach's movement transcends entirely its model in terms of the length and complexity of his ritornello theme, the compositional methods by which he manipulates the theme, the musical substance of his solo part, his unrivalled harmonic imagination, and the manner in which he creates a large-scale A–B–A (statement-departure-return) structure that transcends the small-scale episodes characteristic of ritornello form.

Bach's lengthy and elaborate theme is set in four phrases. The first phrase, phrase *a*, is melodically and harmonically straightforward. It begins by spelling out the tonic **triad** of E major, and then it spends time in an E major triad. It concludes with two turn-like motives, the second heard

lower than the first; the repetitions of a motive at different pitch levels like these is called a **sequence**. The second thematic phrase, phrase *b*, features a downward sequence consisting of repeated notes and arpeggios. Phrase *c* features another downward sequence, this one based on the turn-like motive that concluded phrase *a*. The closing, or cadential, phrase *d* is the most motivically varied of the bunch, summarizing what has come before it by featuring the repeated notes of phrase *b* as well as the turn-like motive heard in phrases *a* and *c*.

While the influence of Vivaldi's concerti on Bach's must rightly be acknowledged, Bach's concerti reach far beyond Vivaldi's model.

One of the many things that set Bach apart from his contemporaries was his ability to create large-scale narrative structures out of the typically small-scale, episodic nature of baroque-era **musical forms**. For example, concerto ritornello form is a refrain-type musical form in which a ritornello theme is stated and then returns periodically in fragments. In between these fragmentary restatements of the ritornello theme are episodes dominated by the soloist that may (or may not) be based on the ritornello theme. The constant shifting of emphasis and the fragmentary returns to the ritornello theme do not create a large-scale sense of departure and return so much as a constant shift between two poles. However, in this movement, Bach does create a large-scale A–B–A narrative out of the otherwise fragmentary and episodic nature of ritornello form.

The first large section of the movement, which we will label as A, consists of three versions of the ritornello theme, each of which is in a major key. Because of the overwhelmingly thematic content of this first large section of music, we perceive it as being expository in nature. The second large section of the movement, section B, is much more fragmentary and episodic than the opening A section and is set in predominately minor keys. Because of its fragmentary, episodic character, we perceive this passage as being developmental in nature. The third large section of the movement is a literal repeat of the opening A section.

What makes the B section sound different is the more fragmentary treatment of the ritornello theme as well as its relatively unstable and predominantly minor-**mode** harmonic underpinning. Bach manages to create a sense of thematic coherency in the A sections, despite the nature of a fragmented ritornello theme, by inserting solo episodes between the phrases of the theme, a process called gapping in which gaps are created between the phrases of the theme that are then filled with solo episodes.

Movement 2

In its structural originality and expressive power, this second movement **adagio** is a full equal to the first movement. A passacaglia is a baroque variations procedure in which the theme is a brief bass line, called the ground bass, and/or the harmonies stacked above that ground bass. In a passacaglia, the ground bass is repeated over and over again beneath the continuously changing material above it.

Bach's treatment of passacaglia form in the second movement is as novel as his treatment of ritornello form in the first movement. Just as he did with the first movement ritornello theme, Bach gaps the ground bass and inserts solo material within those gaps. He creates a large-scale A–B–A form in the second movement—with the middle section, B, taking on the more fragmentary and harmonically unstable character of a development.

As we would expect in a passacaglia, the first section of the movement presents the ground bass without accompaniment, played here by the 'cellos. Soulful, lyric, and set in C-**sharp** minor, the ground bass is six measures long. Then, the solo violin enters, floating above the ground bass, which—because of its gaps—is now 8 measures long. The more developmental middle section of the movement begins with the ground bass dropping out entirely. In its place, the solo violin weaves an exquisite melody around harmonic elements extracted from the ground bass.

The third and final section of the movement is recapitulatory and consists of two parts. In the first part, the solo violin floats above the ground bass, which has now been expanded to nine measures in length. In the second part of this third section, the ground bass returns as we heard it at the beginning

of the movement. This third section is an ethereally beautiful and utterly idiosyncratic movement.

Movement 3

After the formal and expressive complexities of the first two movements, the dance-like and structurally straightforward rondo pleases our musical palates. The movement is cast in rondo form, which Bach rarely used. Like ritornello form, rondo form is a refrain form in which the rondo theme returns after various contrasting episodes. Unlike ritornello form, in which the ritornello theme typically returns in fragments, a rondo theme will typically return in its entirety each time we hear it. Where ritornello form is primarily about its solo episodes—punctuated by fragments of the ritornello theme—a rondo form movement is primarily about the rondo theme, which is punctuated by the contrasting episodes.

During the course of the third movement, the rondo theme will be heard, verbatim, a total of five times. Thus, the overall structure of the movement is transparent. However, while the formal structure of the movement might be straightforward, the nature of the solo episodes between the reiterations of the rondo theme is not. There are four solo episodes, and they become increasingly virtuosic as the movement unfolds.

The first of these solo episodes is simple enough: It consists of a steady stream of 16th notes. At 16 measures in length, this episode is exactly as long as the rondo theme itself. By the time we reach the fourth and final contrasting episode, the virtuosity level of the solo violin part has risen substantially. At 32 measures in length, this final solo episode is double the length of any other section of the movement; it features a brilliant solo violin, the most active accompaniment, and the greatest rhythmic and harmonic variety in the movement. This final solo episode brings the rondo to its climax, followed by the final statement of the rondo theme and the conclusion of the concerto. ■

Important Terms

adagio: Slow.

mode: A type of pitch collection (or scale).

musical form: The manner in which a given movement of music is structured.

sequence: Successive repetitions of a motive at different pitches; compositional technique for extending melodic ideas.

sharp: Accidental (sign/symbol) placed to the left of a note, indicating that the pitch should be raised by a semitone.

triad: A chord consisting of three different pitches built from some combination of major and/or minor thirds.

Haydn—Symphony No. 104

Lecture 5

Along with Ludwig van Beethoven, Haydn was the thriftiest composer of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Haydn's three-movement, 11-minute-long Symphony no. 1 of 1759 is an updated version of an early-18th-century Italian opera overture. Composed 36 years later, Haydn's Symphony no. 104, which is cast in four movements that together run a full 30 minutes in length, looks forward—in its spirit and mood—to the beginning of the 19th century.

Franz Joseph Haydn was born on March 31, 1732, in the eastern Austrian town of Rohrau, close to the Hungarian border. Haydn was the second of twelve children born to Mathias Haydn—who was a wheelwright—and Anna Maria Koller Haydn. As a small child, he had an excellent singing voice. With the hopes that he would someday join the clergy, Haydn's parents sent him away to study music at the age of six. Two years later—in March or April of 1740—Haydn became a choirboy at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. The music young Joseph sang as a choirboy formed the foundation of his musical ear and education.

When Haydn's voice broke, he was unceremoniously booted out of the choir at St. Stephen's Cathedral. Because he was determined not to join the priesthood but, rather, to make a career in music, Haydn moved into a small attic room above the wealthy widow Princess Maria Octavia Esterházy. The princess's two sons, Prince Paul Anton Esterházy and Prince Nikolaus, were destined to become Haydn's employers for about 29 years; Haydn served as assistant Kapellmeister (and later, first Kapellmeister) in Prince Paul's musical establishment.

In 1758, Haydn was hired as the Kapellmeister for Count Karl Joseph Franz von Morzin and composed, among other works, his first symphonies. In 1790, Johann Peter Salomon, a German-born violinist, composer, conductor, and concert producer working out of London, offered to pay Haydn to move to London for a few years to compose an opera, six symphonies, and some smaller works. In total, Haydn agreed to two separate London residencies

in which he composed twelve symphonies—which were the last symphonies he composed—that are collectively known as Haydn's *London Symphonies* and are each a masterwork.

The Teaching Company Collection.

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) pioneered the Viennese classical style with his Symphony no. 104, which was composed in 1795.

Symphony No. 104 in D Major, "London"

Haydn's First Symphony was composed in 1759 for Count Morzin's orchestra and was 11 minutes in length. It is a modest work cast in three movements built along the lines of a baroque-era Italian opera **overture**. By the time Haydn composed his Symphony no. 104 in 1795, what is now referred to as the Viennese classical style—with its balance of melodic fluidity and beauty, formal clarity, and emotional restraint—was fully developed with Haydn being its essential proponent. In the 36 years between Haydn's first and final symphonies, the genre of symphony had transformed from being an entertainment for aristocrats to a public entertainment. For Haydn, this meant composing symphonies that struck a balance between intellect and feeling—between high rhythmic energy and gentle lyricism.

Movement 1

The first movement opens with a solemn introduction that begins with a magisterial fanfare played in what is called an **orchestral unison**, meaning that all the instruments of the orchestra simultaneously play the same pitches—in this case, D–D–D–A, D–D–D–A, the bottom and top pitches of a D **chord**. However, the orchestra does not play the middle pitch of the chord, the one that would tell us whether this music is set in D major (as the symphony advertises itself) or D minor. This tonal ambiguity is resolved in

the third measure of the introduction, when we hear an F-**natural** played along with the D and A—at which point we realize that we are, at least for now, in D minor. This appearance of D minor—dark and dramatic, when we expected the light and brilliance of D major—imparts tremendous expressive depth to the music in D major that will eventually follow.

In 1758, Haydn was hired as the Kapellmeister for Count Karl Joseph Franz von Morzin and composed, among other works, his first symphonies.

Marked "**allegro**"—meaning "fast"—the sonata form begins with the first theme. It is lyric, elegant, and compact, consisting of two thematic phrases which we will refer to as phrases *a* and a^1. This theme, in D major, takes on the character of a contrasting element, following the dark-toned introduction. The shadow cast by the key of D minor in the introduction imbues the first theme with an expressive depth that it would not have otherwise had.

A lengthy, high-octane modulating bridge follows that bridges the distance between themes 1 and 2, using music that is melodically fragmented and, therefore, is not perceived as being thematic. It also **modulates**, or changes key, in preparation for theme 2. The **cadence** immediately follows, and about halfway through the cadence material, Haydn introduces a cadence theme: an optional melody that will be associated with conclusions. Haydn's cadence theme—set in the new key of A major—is followed by a loud and vigorous passage that brings the exposition to its conclusion.

In a typical sonata form exposition, themes 1 and 2 will contrast by being different melodies and by being in different keys. However, in this movement, only the key is different; it is set in the new, contrasting key of A major. In fact, it is the same as theme 1, set in the new key area presumably reserved for theme 2. In this sonata form exposition, there are a few reasons Haydn chose not to include a contrasting second theme: The introduction provides all the thematic contrast Haydn requires for the movement, the optional inclusion of a cadence theme provides all the contrast he required for the body of the exposition, and the theme's recognizability factor is maximized

because he intends to build almost the entire development section from a single, utterly inauspicious aspect of theme 1.

The first development section contains a motive-rich melody. The most memorable of its motives—and therefore the one we'd most expect to hear developed—is its opening. The next most memorable motive is the one that brings the theme to its conclusion. Among the least memorable elements of the theme are the four repeated notes sitting in the middle of motive three, which sound like filler but supply the requirements for the development section.

In a sonata form recapitulation, the principal themes (typically two) will be heard in the same key—the home key. If Haydn did that in this movement, we would hear the same theme played twice in the same key, which would be boring and obvious. So, following the initial recapitulation of theme 1 in D major, Haydn offers what amounts to a second development section, which is based on the repeated notes of motive 3 and motive 1 of the theme. The cadence follows and brings the movement to its conclusion.

Movements 2 and 3

The second movement is a moderately paced two-step dance of great elegance and style. The third movement is set in minuet and trio form. There is no more predictable ritual in the music of the classical era than the presence of a minuet and trio form movement as a middle movement in a four-movement work, with its moderate **tempo**, **triple meter**, large-scale A–B–A form, and ritual phrase repetitions. Therefore, it remains a miracle of Western art that Joseph Haydn continuously turned the clichéd genre of minuet and trio into something special. With effervescent, bubbly phrase endings, the music of the third movement has a "champagne" feel.

Movement 4

The fourth movement opens with the sort of rustic, countryside-type dance music that Haydn often used in his finales. Its rural flavor is doubly reinforced by the bagpipe-like drone that accompanies the theme's first appearance. While theme 1 dominates the movement, theme 2 is brilliant and celebratory. Even as theme 2 first appears in the first violins, theme 1 is played by the winds and second violins. Theme 3 is a cadence theme and

is sustained and quiet; it offers just about the only moment of respite in this otherwise upbeat exposition. Haydn uses an extended version of this cadence theme to conclude the development section and to transition into theme 1 at the beginning of the recapitulation, followed by the remainder of the last movement of Haydn's last symphony. ■

Important Terms

allegro: Fast.

cadence: A harmonic or melodic formula that occurs at the end of a phrase, section, or composition and conveys a momentary or permanent conclusion—in other words, a musical punctuation mark.

chord: Simultaneous sounding of three or more different pitches.

modulation: The process of changing key during the course of a piece of music.

natural: Accidental (sign/symbol) placed to the left of a note, indicating that the note should not be sharpened or flattened; a white key on a keyboard.

orchestral unison: A technique by which multiple instruments simultaneously play the same pitch but in different registers (ranges).

overture: Music preceding an opera or play, often played as an independent concert piece.

tempo: Relative speed of a passage of music.

triple meter: Metrical pattern having three beats to a measure.

Mozart—Piano Concerto No. 24 in C Minor

Lecture 6

The classical style—of which we today consider Wolfgang Mozart to be a leading exponent—was a style of music that was principally characterized by lyric, engaging, accessible thematic melody. Mozart was a musical utopian: a composer of such lyric, dramatic, and technical gifts that his music transcends the stylistic rituals and clichés of classicism. If Mozart is indeed the greatest composer of concerti, then his Piano Concerto in C Minor must be considered among a handful of the most extraordinary concerti ever composed.

Wolfgang Mozart was born in the Austro-Bavarian city of Salzburg on January 27, 1756, and was one of the most accomplished child prodigies of all time. The instrument Mozart learned to play as a child was the harpsichord, which is a mechanical harp whose strings are plucked by picks activated from a keyboard. While piano technology developed tremendously during Mozart's lifetime, the piano was still a relatively small, lightweight and light-sounding instrument compared to the modern grand pianos of the 1860s. It was in 1782 that Mozart began performing exclusively on pianos. From a quantitative and qualitative point of view, Mozart was the greatest composer of concerti who has yet to live.

Composed between 1781 and 1791,Mozart's 17 Viennese piano concerti are a very special body of work: a concentration of masterworks in a single genre composed over a relatively brief period of time with few equals in the history of Western music. Mozart's Piano Concerto in C Minor is the 14th of his 17 Viennese piano concerti and was completed on March 24, 1786, about a month after he completed his operatic masterwork *The Marriage of Figaro*. As in much of the music he composed after moving to Vienna in 1781, the Piano Concerto in C Minor delivered to the public what it expected while satisfying Mozart's self-expressive urge, which was moving beyond public taste and beginning to trump the standards of what we today consider the classical style.

Piano Concerto No. 24 in C Minor

In Mozart's Piano Concerto in C Minor of 1786, the orchestra is a full, symphonic ensemble consisting of two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and a full string complement. Because the pianos of Mozart's time were small and tinny sounding, he employed lighter orchestral textures while the piano plays so that the orchestra does not drown out the piano. However, when the piano is not playing, the C minor orchestral passages have a symphonic impact and expressive gravity for a concerto. From an expressive and orchestral point of view, Mozart's Concerto in C Minor was a work that had a profound influence on a young composer named Ludwig van Beethoven, who began composing his first piano concerto a few years later.

Movement 1

Typical of Mozart's concerti, this first movement is cast in double exposition form, which is an adaptation of sonata form to the particular dramatic requirements of the concerto. A typical sonata form movement has four main

At the time of Mozart's birth, the piano was only beginning to become advanced enough to compete with the harpsichord as a musical instrument.

sections: **exposition**, **development**, **recapitulation**, and **coda**. It is in the exposition that the principal themes (usually two in number) are introduced. Sonata form expositions are typically repeated in their entirety to express the contrasting themes and key areas. The development section is the action sequence, during which the themes are fragmented—or metamorphosed, or overlapped—in a predominately unstable harmonic environment. In the recapitulation, the themes return in their original order, though with the second theme now in the same key as the first. The coda is a closing section of music that brings the movement to its conclusion.

Mozart's double exposition form movements differ from sonata form in a number of ways, of which we will identify two. Instead of repeating the exposition, there are two separately composed expositions. In the first, called the orchestral exposition, the orchestra plays the themes. In the second, called the solo exposition, the soloist plays the themes. The second difference is that a third theme will typically be introduced and played only by the solo instrument, a theme generally referred to as the solo theme. These compositional elements represent a structural template, and the way in which Mozart manipulates or disregards these expectations will contribute to the expressive message and impact of a given movement.

In the first movement of his Piano Concerto in C Minor, Mozart disregards these expectations: The orchestral exposition introduces only one theme—a craggy, dissonant, non-classical melody. During the course of the orchestral exposition, there are moments when we think we might be hearing a second theme, but each such passage is a diversion. Lacking thematic contrast, the orchestral exposition is not so much an argument as it is an introduction, an overture, for the solo piano.

The piano enters 100 measures into the movement with a sighing and reflective solo. The piano's voice is that of a character who acknowledges—bravely but sadly—that it is about to enter a world in which it will attempt to maintain its lyric equilibrium in the face of the dark and dissonant harmonic environment around it. This is made clear the moment the piano concludes its entrance solo and the orchestra boldly and insistently reenters with the opening of theme 1. Rather than be drawn into an argument with the huge orchestra, the piano instead quiets things down by reflecting on theme 1 and

then launches into a brisk, scalar passage that enlivens the mood as it heads for the brighter harmonic world of E-**flat** major.

The piano takes over the moment with this key shift to E-flat major—a mood shift from dark angst to quiet good cheer—and is now prepared to introduce a contrasting theme, which is played first by the solo piano and then by the winds. Buoyed by the lyric beauty of theme 2, the piano blazes through a dazzling episode, deftly accompanied by a flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and very quiet strings. Overlapping with the piano's conclusion, a solo oboe begins what is the third and final theme: a gentle, exquisite melody that descends lightly. The theme's first phrase is played by the winds, and its second phrase is played and embellished by the piano. The C minor darkness that began the movement seems, for now, a distant memory.

Wolfgang Mozart was born in the Austro-Bavarian city of Salzburg on January 27, 1756, and was one of the most accomplished child prodigies of all time.

The new, contrasting key of E-flat major predominates for the remainder of this solo exposition. However, the comparatively compact development section will swing the music back toward the dark harmonic side, after which the recapitulation will emphatically express the key—and dark mood—of C minor. The coda begins with one last tutti iteration of theme 1, after which the movement concludes on a very special harmony called a cadential six-four chord.

Movement 2

This exquisite second movement played larghetto, meaning slowly, is as structurally straightforward as the first movement is idiosyncratic. A gentle, singing theme in E-flat major acts as a refrain, which occurs three times across the span of the movement. This theme alternates with two contrasting episodes, the first of which is set in C minor and the second in A-flat major, after which a coda brings the movement to its conclusion.

The rondo theme is introduced by the piano, and the two contrasting episodes both begin with wind instruments alone. Mozart had a special

affinity for the sound and combination of wind instruments, which breathe in a manner very much like the human voice. By scoring this concerto for large orchestra, Mozart had a full wind choir at his disposal. His use of the winds imbues this second movement with a vocality that is very operatic in sound and feel.

Movement 3
Mozart's theme is marked allegretto, meaning moderately fast. The orchestra introduces the theme, while the role of varying it will fall principally to the piano. Six variations of the theme follow.

- In variation 1, the solo piano gently embellishes the theme over a quiet string accompaniment.

- Variation 2 is a dialogue between the wind choir and the solo piano.

- In variation 3, the theme becomes a ferocious march to war, initiated by the solo piano.

- Variation 4 features a jaunty version of the theme set in A-flat major, played initially by the winds.

- Variation 5 opens with a sinuous and **chromatic** version of the theme in the solo piano, set back in C minor.

- Set in C major, variation 6 constitutes the last light expressive moment in the concerto and is initiated by the winds.

The lengthy coda, set back in C minor, begins with the theme played by the orchestral violins for the first time since the beginning of the movement. The coda includes a brief **cadenza**, a passage played exclusively by the solo instrument in a concerto, that concludes the movement—and the concerto. ■

Important Terms

cadenza: Passage for solo instrument in an orchestral work, usually a concerto, designed to showcase the player's skills.

chromatic: A pitch that lies outside of whatever key area presently anchors a passage.

coda: The closing few measures of a composition; usually not a part of the main theme groups of the standard form of a composition but a finishing theme added to the end to give the composition closure.

development: The second large part of a sonata form movement, during which the themes are developed in a generally unstable harmonic environment.

exposition: The first part of a sonata form, during which the principal themes are introduced.

flat: Accidental (sign/symbol) placed to the left of a note indicating that the pitch should be lowered by a semitone.

recapitulation*:* The third large part of a sonata form movement, during which the themes return in their original order.

Mozart—Symphony in C Major, "Jupiter"

Lecture 7

Mozart's Symphony in C Major is his longest and most expressively brilliant symphony. It is truly imperial in its scope and power, and so it deserves the nickname "Jupiter"—the king of the gods—that Johann Peter Salomon bestowed upon it soon after Mozart's death. Of course, had Mozart lived long enough to be inspired by Haydn's *London Symphonies* or Beethoven's "Eroica," who knows what kinds of masterpieces he might have composed.

As recently as the 1930s, there were thought to be 49 symphonies that Mozart composed. This total of 49 symphonies has, today, been reduced to 41, as works erroneously attributed to Mozart have been removed. Anyway, there are still more than enough to make him a major symphonist. But in truth, Mozart's symphonies occupy a secondary place in his compositional output. Only the last 10 symphonies were written after 1775, when he had achieved his full musical maturity. Only the final three—the E-flat major, the G minor, and the C major (also known as "Jupiter")—which were transcribed during the summer of 1788, were conceived as a cohesive and coherent symphonic unit.

Symphony in C Major, "Jupiter"

In truth, composing symphonies was never a high priority for Mozart. In his heart, he was an opera composer who wrote piano concerti for money and chamber music for his friends. With the exception of his final three, Mozart's symphonies were occasional works—works composed for particular occasions—or pieces written while he was on tour when he needed something new to perform. To this day, we know that only one of Mozart's symphonies was performed only once in his lifetime, and it was probably "Jupiter."

Movement 1

The first movement opens with a theme that immediately sets the tone for the remainder of the movement and that alternates a vigorous, martial, masculine phrase scored for the entire orchestra with a yearning, lyric,

feminine phrase. The masculine aspect of the theme is a rhythmic idea represented by upward-sweeping motives. Conversely, the feminine aspect is pure melody that consists of a gentle, yearning **tune**. The second part of theme 1 is entirely masculine, as the martial, fanfare-like opening of the theme takes over. The regular rhythmic pattern and simple harmonic structure of this passage give it a drum-corps-like effect, which is entirely in keeping with the spirit of the masculine opening phrase.

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) created entire works in his head and carried them around until deadlines forced him to write them down.

According to the formal orthodoxy of classical-era sonata form, having stated theme 1, Mozart is next supposed to introduce a transitional passage called a modulating bridge that will transit to the contrasting second theme. However, Mozart is so enamored of the masculine-feminine dichotomy his first theme represents that he begins to develop the theme immediately. Next, he superimposes a new, feminine-styled melodic idea in the flutes and oboes over the opening of theme 1.

Theme 2 is cast in three parts. Part 1 is a playful, bubbly tune of incredible grace and charm, feminine in its spirit and impact. The feminine spirit of theme 2 is made explicit in its second part, as the rising, feminine element of theme 1 is heard in dialogue with a new melodic phrase. Just as theme 1 represented a unity of masculine and feminine, so does theme 2. The third part of theme 2—set initially in C minor—is explosive and martial. It jump-starts the action and pitches the music headlong toward the cadence material—and, with it, the conclusion of the exposition.

The first part of the cadence material is familiar: It is a masculine development of the once-feminine phrase of theme 1. Because we expect this fire-breathing music to culminate with a powerful cadence, we are very surprised when it quietly descends and then just stops. Then, an entirely new theme appears, and it's more than just a cadence theme—it is a genuine third theme that is the most memorable melodic idea we have heard thus far in the movement. Using the melody of a concert aria that he had only just composed, Mozart plugged in this theme at the very last moment of the exposition, which is followed by the drum-corps-like music that brings it to its conclusion.

Movements 2 and 3
The second movement is a lyric **andante** cast in sonata form; it is a movement scored without trumpet and drums that is particularly notable for the way Mozart embellishes and varies the themes at each new iteration. The third movement is a broad and courtly minuet and trio.

Movement 4
The final movement contains four themes that are designed to be stacked and overlapped. We will refer to these four thematic elements as: thematic melody 1, thematic melody 2, the fanfare motive, and the bridge motive.

Movement 4, Theme 1
Theme 1 features two of the four thematic elements: thematic melody 1 and the fanfare motive. Thematic melody 1 is made up of a head and a tail. The head consists of a four-note motive that drives the bulk of the fourth movement. This thematic head is followed by a brilliant tail. We get a hint of the polyphonic games to come when Mozart brings theme 1 to its conclusion via a five-part **fugato**—a section of music that sounds like the opening of a fugue—based on the head motive of thematic melody 1.

Movement 4, The Fanfare Motive
The fanfare motive is the blaring, martial musical idea that follows thematic melody 1 and that begins overlapping with itself the moment it is first introduced. Mozart quietly concludes the exposition with a swirling, overlapping treatment of the fanfare motive.

Movement 4, Theme 2

Like theme 1, theme 2 consists of a thematic melody followed by the fanfare motive. Like thematic melody 1, thematic melody 2 consists of a head and tail. Like the head of thematic melody 1, the head of thematic melody two consists of sustained notes. Like the tail of thematic melody 1, the tail of thematic melody 2 consists of faster, descending notes. Like theme 1, the fanfare motive concludes theme 2.

Movement 4, The Bridge Motive

The final thematic entity of the movement is the bridge motive—a rising, trilling melodic idea introduced during the modulating bridge of the exposition. The bridge motive first appears in an overlapping dialogue between upper and lower strings.

As recently as the 1930s, there were thought to be 49 symphonies that Mozart composed.

The major "characters" of the movement, as aforementioned, are thematic melodies 1 and 2, the fanfare motive, and the bridge motive. It is their seemingly limitless combination and interaction that is the generative dramatic idea of the movement. As the movement approaches its conclusion, Mozart stages a curtain call for all his melodic characters, set as a canon in five parts. This episode is followed by the conclusion of the movement and the symphony.

There is hardly a measure of this fourth movement that is not witness to some kind of polyphonic interplay, from simple imitation to the five-part, canonic episode at the conclusion of the last movement. For all of its polyphonic arcana, the compositional techniques Mozart employs in this movement do not alone constitute the larger expressive point of the movement. Rather, the movement's polyphonic complexity serves a higher expressive message—a utopian message that reflects the contemporary spirit of the Enlightenment by joining together a multiplicity of independent and diverse elements to create a joyful, energized, and **consonant** finale. ■

Important Terms

andante: Moderately slow.

consonance: A musical entity or state that can be perceived as a point of rest.

fugato: A fugal exposition inserted into a movement that is not otherwise a fugue.

tune: Generally sing-able, memorable melody with a clear sense of beginning, middle, and end.

Beethoven—Symphony No. 3

Lecture 8

Beethoven's Symphony no. 3, otherwise known as the "Eroica," is an experimental artwork. In its fourth and final movement, Beethoven was attempting to do the impossible: to reconcile the classical tradition of playful, upbeat finales with the revolutionary, heroic expressive content of the other three movements. In the "Eroica," Beethoven made the epic leap toward conceiving his music as self-expression, a conception that changed the substance and spirit of Western music forever.

Ludwig van Beethoven, who idolized Napoleon Bonaparte as the personification of the revolution that would sweep Europe clean of absolutism, took the news that Napoleon had crowned himself emperor poorly. Although Beethoven's Symphony no. 3 was originally subtitled "Bonaparte" as a sign of respect, upon hearing the news, Beethoven renamed it "*Sinfonia Eroica*," or the "Heroic Symphony."

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, "Eroica"

In reality, the hero Beethoven memorialized in this symphony was himself, whose aspirations for happiness were cut short by a progressive hearing loss that began in 1796 and who experienced a suicidal crisis over that loss in the fall of 1802. He virtually reinvented himself in the guise of a hero struggling with and overcoming fate in late 1802 and 1803. Beethoven expressed that struggle in his Symphony no. 3 of 1803 and 1804, which became more like a last will and testament, suicide note, and rant and rave against God, humankind, and intractable fate.

Movement 1

The symphony begins with two proud and powerful E-flat major chords, chords that anchor the harmony unambiguously in E-flat major and establish a martial and masculine mood. These opening chords are followed by a lengthy theme in four phrases. Although the theme concludes in a heroic blaze of glory, this theme—and consequently the male character it represents—carries within it the seeds of ruin and despair, which are musically depicted by melodic and harmonic dissonance and rhythmic ambiguity.

Just seven measures into the movement, the theme and its harmony take a completely unexpected and dissonant turn toward the dark side of G minor. It is the 'cello—the voice of the hero—that pulls the music down toward the dark side by playing a shocking chromatic descent from an E-flat to a D to a C-sharp, which is a pitch that is not found in the key of E-flat major. This C-sharp in the 'cellos implies a sudden and shocking move toward the key of G minor. The C-sharp, and the dark key of G minor it implies, is a dissonant musical element—an element that implies harmonic chaos and disruption, a potentially fatal character flaw in the personality of the theme.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) began conceiving his music as self-expression with the "Eroica."

During the third phrase of theme 1, the triple meter beat that has characterized the movement up to this point suddenly and unexpectedly begins to alternate with groupings of two beats. It is a passage of extraordinary rhythmic ambiguity. Like the C-sharp in phrase 1, the rhythmic ambiguity in phrase 3 is a character flaw, a seed of chaos and despair buried within an otherwise heroic personality. The fourth and final phrase of the theme is the least ambiguous and most outwardly heroic of the phrases.

The storyline of movement 1, then, is the flawed personality that theme 1 initially represents. Those flaws—as represented by dissonance and rhythmic ambiguity—combine at the very center of the movement to bring the hero to the very brink of destruction. It is here, at the center of the development section, that Beethoven depicts the abyss, a spiritual black hole from which no hope can emerge. It is a passage of extraordinary musical nihilism, during which the dissonance and rhythmic ambiguity present in theme 1 come together to create a terrifying climax.

During the course of the passage, isolated diminished seventh chords—the most dissonant harmony in Beethoven's tonal arsenal—are repeated in alternating patterns of two and three beats. These dissonant chords effectively destroy any sense of tonal gravity, and their alternating groups of two and three beats obliterate any sense of rhythmic regularity. Taken together, it is one of the most shocking, modern, and original passages in the orchestral repertoire.

In reality, the hero Beethoven memorialized in this symphony was himself.

Having survived the abyss, the development section slowly recovers and turns back, harmonically, toward the heroic key of E-flat major. That the struggle with harmonic dissonance and rhythmic ambiguity has been won is made clear by the version of theme 1 that begins the recapitulation. Theme 1 of the recapitulation begins as it did in the exposition but soon diverges, as the dissonant descent to C-sharp now continues downward to C-natural, a move that instantly dispels the darkness and harmonic tension that were implied in the exposition.

Theme 1 now consists of three (rather than four) phrases, because in the recapitulation, the phrase that contained the rhythmic ambiguity is no longer heard. The life and death struggle played out during the development section has been won by life itself. The hero—as represented by theme 1—has overcome the flaws that once threatened to destroy him. The movement ends as it began, with a series of detached E-flat major chords. The first movement of the "Eroica" is a stupendous achievement, a brilliant combination of narrative storytelling, abstract musical structure, and autobiographical confession—all couched in a musical language that stretches the contemporary musical elements of melody, harmony, and expressive content.

Movement 2

Beethoven conceived this second movement, also known as the funeral march, as an essential element in the large-scale dramatic progression of the symphony. Movement 1 is about heroic struggle, while movement 2

acknowledges the inevitability and finality of death. Movement 3 reanimates the symphony and sets the stage for movement 4, which is about apotheosis.

Movement 3
Beethoven's brilliant third movement scherzo reanimates the symphony through its pure, visceral, rhythmic power. It's hard to imagine a greater, more uplifting contrast than the one this movement provides after the funeral march. This third movement ends on an explosive, celebratory note, which sets up the genuinely burlesque opening of the fourth movement.

Movement 4
We know that Beethoven identified with the heroic image projected by Napoleon and that Beethoven appropriated that heroic image in his own rebirth and subsequent composition of this Third Symphony. However, even more important than Napoleon to the genesis of the "Eroica" was the image of the mythical hero Prometheus. In 1801, Beethoven, in collaboration with the choreographer Salvatore Vigano, composed a ballet score entitled *The Creatures of Prometheus*.

Beethoven makes the connection between his Prometheus music and his Third Symphony explicit by basing the fourth movement finale of the "Eroica" on a theme originally composed for the celebratory finale of the ballet. Beethoven's message is that Prometheus's rebirth is his own rebirth, and the apotheosis that marks the conclusion of the ballet is his own apotheosis at the conclusion of the Third Symphony. The dramatic and symbolic elements of the Prometheus story—struggle, death, reanimation, and apotheosis—constitute the large-scale dramatic progression of the Third Symphony, which parallel Beethoven's own despair, thoughts of suicide, and subsequent artistic rebirth.

The fourth and final movement of the "Eroica" is curious, as its comic opening behaves more like music-hall burlesque than the capstone of a great spiritual journey. The movement begins with dramatic, downward-rushing strings followed by an explosive and fanfare-like cadence. This grand, magnificent introductory music must anticipate an event of signal importance. Surprisingly, a silly little theme emerges—what we'll refer to as the bass theme—and when it emerges a second time, it is answered by out-

of-step winds and is followed by a full measure of silence. The strings then resume their dainty bass theme along with the winds, brass, and percussion. This is an odd way to begin a movement that purports to be the apotheosis of a heroic struggle.

The bass theme then presents two variations of itself in which it accessorizes with various accompanimental elements. However, the bass theme still doesn't assume thematic responsibility. Then, with the appearance of the master theme, it is made clear that the bass theme is not a theme but the bass line—the support staff—for an infinitely more memorable master theme. This is the music that Beethoven borrowed from the finale of *The Creatures of Prometheus* ballet.

The remainder of the movement consists of a series of alternating variations of the bass theme and the master theme, which create an intricate and whimsical fugue together. The fugue concludes with the same sort of fanfare that concluded the movement's opening introduction—the same dramatic, downward-rushing strings. This time, however, the fanfare precedes a thrilling series of musical events: a version of the master theme heard in the horns, followed by what is among the longest and most exciting final cadences in the symphonic repertoire. ■

Beethoven—Piano Concerto No. 4

Lecture 9

Between 1803 and 1812—that is, in the nine years after his reinvention—Beethoven composed six symphonies: nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. During that same period, he composed three solo concerti: his piano concerti nos. 4 and 5 and the Violin Concerto in D Major. In his fourth and fifth piano concerti, Beethoven pushes the dramatic importance and virtuosic envelope of the solo piano to the point that it becomes, virtually, a second orchestra.

Beethoven was born in the German city of Bonn on December 16, 1770. He grew up hard and fast, a lonely and abused child for whom music was his solace. It was also his ticket out of Bonn and into the Habsburg capital of Vienna, where he settled in late November or early December of 1792, almost exactly a year after Mozart's death. Beethoven became a source of endless fascination for the local sophisticates, who encouraged his predisposition toward experimentation and novelty. That Beethoven did not have to spend time early in his career composing in a popular style gave him a degree of artistic freedom that few composers of his time ever enjoyed.

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major

Beethoven reinvented himself musically in the autumn of 1803 in response to his progressive hearing disability. Pressed to the edge of suicide, he had recast himself as a hero battling fate. The notion of such middle-class heroism was rife in Napoleonic Europe after the French Revolution, and Beethoven took advantage of this. He was a revolutionary man living during a revolutionary time, and he believed that his music was part of that revolution. Beethoven came to treat the compositional rituals, forms, and even genres of classicism contextually, using them only to serve his expressive needs—at which point he'd compose freely. A perfect example is the opening of Beethoven's Piano Concerto no. 4 of 1806.

Movement 1

The first movement is set in a musical form called double exposition form, which is sonata form adapted to the particular needs of a concerto. In performance, the sonata form expositions are typically repeated verbatim, so that listeners can absorb the contrasting themes and their key areas. In double exposition form, however, the exposition is not repeated; rather, there are two separately composed expositions. In the first exposition, called the orchestral exposition, the orchestra plays the themes. In the second, called the solo exposition, the soloist plays the themes.

Going against all convention, the piano begins the concerto by itself. It plays a hushed, chorale-like version of theme 1 that establishes the tonic key of G major and a mood both haunting and lyric. The orchestra responds with a similar phrase, but one that begins in the distant key of B major. The dramatic impact of this harmonic leap is subtle but very powerful. In this brief and gentle opening, Beethoven has reconciled the piano and the orchestra to each other not just as soloist and ensemble, but as equals.

Established as an equal partner to the orchestra, the solo piano steps back and lets the orchestra proceed with the orchestral exposition. Back in the home key of G major, the orchestra expands upon theme 1, building to a powerful climax. Theme 2 begins, without a transition, in the dark key of A minor but ends the theme back in the tonic key of G major. A royal and triumphant cadence theme follows, fading away with a series of rustling, downward **scales**.

In a traditional double exposition form movement, this is the point at which we'd anticipate the entrance of the soloist and the advent of the solo exposition. However, in this movement, the solo piano already appeared in the beginning of the orchestral exposition, so it makes sense that it will also conclude the exposition. Winds and violins echo between them the three repeated notes that initiated theme 1. The solo piano then enters with these same repeated notes and brings this orchestral exposition to its conclusion, seamlessly transitioning to the series of flourishes, scales, and trills that begin the solo exposition.

The solo exposition is double the length of the orchestral exposition, not just because of its extended and virtuosic piano episodes, but also because Beethoven introduces a third theme in the key of D major. In the solo exposition, themes 1, 2, and 3 are shared: Each theme is played first by the orchestra and embellished by the piano. Likewise, the cadence theme is shared: It is initially played by the orchestra and embellished by the piano, and then played by the orchestra alone. Together, these themes—and the various permutations Beethoven will derive from them—combine to create one of the most melodically varied movements Beethoven ever composed.

Beethoven reinvented himself musically in the autumn of 1803 in response to his progressive hearing disability.

The remaining formal landmarks of this first movement are the beginning of the development section and the beginning of the recapitulation. The development section begins with a lengthy and increasingly dramatic episode based on material the piano played at the conclusion of the orchestral exposition. The recapitulation begins with another shared version of theme 1. This time, the chorale-like opening of theme 1 is grandly played by the piano, after which the orchestra plays the theme supported by a brilliant, filigreed accompaniment in the piano.

Movement 2

The second movement is scored for solo piano and strings only. This movement is often referred to as "the lyre of Orpheus" because of the way the piano calms and eventually tames the wild beast that is the string section. In the opening of the movement, the growling and gnashing strings, playing in orchestral unison, are first confronted by the lyre of Orpheus as portrayed by the piano. As the movement unfolds, the dialogue between two completely different chunks of music—between the ferocious strings and the lyric piano—becomes increasingly intense, until the string ensemble is finally captivated and subdued. Thus, the ancient vision of music as having the power to enlighten—as personified by Orpheus—becomes a symbol of the power of the individual (Beethoven) to enlighten and tame the collective.

Movement 3

The third movement, the finale cast in rondo form, begins without a pause. For the first time in the concerto, we hear the entire orchestra as the trumpets and drums finally enter, giving this movement a glitz and festive edge new to the concerto. Nevertheless, thanks to its fabulous melodic substance and variety, its rhythmic energy and sharp-edged brilliance, and the collaboration between equals that marks the relationship between the solo piano and the orchestra, this third movement perfectly complements the first movement.

The rondo theme is set in four phrases: *a*, a^1, *b,* a^2. Phrase *a* is played quietly by the strings. In the spirit of sharing, the solo piano plays phrase a^1: a slightly embellished version of the opening phrase, intimately accompanied by a single 'cello. A slightly contrasting phrase *b* is evenly split between the strings and the piano. The fourth and final phrase of the rondo theme, a^2, is played by all instruments—the trumpets and drums make their first appearance in the concerto.

The first contrasting episode begins energetically, but soon transits to a radiant theme we will refer to as theme B. The coda that concludes the movement features a mix of everything: the rondo theme, theme B, transitional music, and so forth. The cadenza occurs about halfway through the coda. Soon after the cadenza concludes, the tempo picks up, and the rondo theme returns and careens forward to the conclusion of the concerto. Beethoven's Piano Concerto no. 4 is brilliant at every level: in its thematic content, in its pianistic virtuosity, and in particular, in the revolutionary manner by which Beethoven treats the piano and the orchestra as musical and expressive equals.

With the composer at the piano, Beethoven's Piano Concerto no. 4 received its premiere during the single most famous concert in the history of Western music: the "marathon concert" of December 22, 1808. The concerto has been a mainstay of the repertoire since that evening, although Beethoven himself never played it again. Nobody present that night—including Beethoven himself—could have guessed that because of his deteriorating hearing, this performance would mark his last as a soloist in a concerto. ■

Important Term

scale: All the pitches inside a given octave, arranged stepwise so that there is no duplication. The names of the chords built on the scale steps are: tonic, supertonic, mediant, subdominant, dominant, sub-mediant, and leading tone.

Beethoven—Symphony No. 9

Lecture 10

Beethoven's Symphony no. 9 was the most influential and important piece of music composed during the first half of the 19th century. By 1824, Beethoven had established his unassailable place in European music. His Ninth Symphony proved to the following generations of composers that something as basic as genre is contextual: The expressive needs of the artist must take precedence over any convention—no matter how sacred, time honored, or popular that convention may be.

Beethoven's Symphony no. 3 is generally acknowledged as his heroic breakaway piece, and each symphony that followed was unique, culminating in the still spine-tingling Symphony no. 9 of 1824. Somehow, Beethoven managed to once again reinvent himself compositionally after having reinvented himself through the composition of his Third Symphony. His experiences of 1815–1820—a custody battle over his nephew and the deterioration of his hearing to the point that he was deemed clinically deaf—forced Beethoven to acknowledge many of his deepest fears and desires, allowing his creativity and imagination to soar to unimagined places and to compose a series of works that redefined their genres.

Symphony No. 9 in D Minor

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is an epic vision of struggle crowned by utopian triumph. Movements 1 and 2 deal with musical and expressive extremes, which we will interpret as the struggles of the present. These struggles are resolved in the song-like third movement. The fourth movement (which constitutes the second half of the symphony) describes a transcendent utopian vision of the future.

Movement 1

The first movement is about polar opposites and confrontations, a titanic struggle against the dark side of death and oblivion—as represented by the key of D minor. In this movement, the dark side is victorious; it ends with a funeral march in D minor. The monumental introduction of this symphony

has no parallel in Beethoven's earlier symphonies. The Ninth Symphony emerges with a quietly throbbing open fifth A–E in the horns and strings.

There's no middle pitch—either a C-sharp or C-natural—that would tell us whether we're in major or minor, or even what key we're in. Falling As and Es in short-long rhythms appear increasingly quickly as more instruments enter. Finally, a sudden move to another open fifth (D–A) signals an impending change.

This principal theme of the movement is a ferocious thing of terrifying power, a compressed version of the falling notes and the short-long rhythms of the introduction. Most importantly, the theme outlines a complete triad, which finally signals that we are in the key of D minor. The first phrase of the theme represents a fearsome, expressive place. The next phrase is one of violent extremes; it alternates barking brass fanfares with pathetic, forlorn winds until—after a series of dissonant, off-beat chords—the theme collapses in on itself with a vicious downward swirl.

This opening version of theme 1—set in D minor—represents one expressive extreme: the dark side as represented by D minor. The primeval open fifth of the introduction resumes, now outlining a D–A. This reintroduction continues as did the original, but when theme 1 appears this time, it is not heard in minor but in major—in the key of B-flat major, in which the formerly tragic theme becomes heroic and magnificent. This is the other expressive polarity of the movement. The first movement is, therefore, about the struggle between the tragic and the heroic that is projected not so much via contrasting themes as by presenting the same themes in contrasting keys. This first movement ends in darkness, but the symphony's chief combatants—D major and D minor, metaphors for heroic triumph versus death and oblivion—will compete in the second movement.

Movement 2

The second movement begins in almost exactly the same manner in which the first movement ends. Movement 1 ends with one last loud playing of theme 1 that spells out a descending D minor harmony in short-long rhythms. Movement 2 begins in the same way but in long-short rhythms. This second movement is a scherzo, which was Beethoven's answer to traditional

minuet and trio form. Like a classical-era minuet and trio form movement, a Beethoven scherzo is typically cast in three-part, A–B–A form. However, Beethoven's scherzi tend to be fast in tempo and do not adhere to the ritual phrase structure and repetitions.

It is in the second movement scherzo that the dramatic weight of the symphony shifts from the dark side toward the light, from D minor to D major. Beethoven achieves this shift two ways: by setting the middle B section and the coda of this second movement in D major, and by infusing the entire movement with a physical energy that blows away the deathly pall that concluded the first movement.

The scherzo section begins with a bouncing, fugue-like passage that, despite beginning in D minor, is filled with the life-affirming spirit of dance. This is music in expressive transition, animated by the physicality of dance. The B section that follows marks another step on the expressive journey. It is music unlike anything we have heard in the symphony: light, airy, rustic, charming, and set entirely in the key of D major. This second movement ends abruptly but joyfully and becomes the expressive fulcrum of the symphony: a movement that began on the dark side in D minor and concludes in the light of D major.

Movement 3

The third movement is gloriously beautiful. It shifts the expressive focus of the symphony from the visceral to the ethereal—from the personal to the universal—and paves the way for the statement of universal personhood that is the message of the fourth and final movement.

Movement 4

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is truly universal music—music that inspires spiritual exaltation regardless of the nationality or religious affiliation of its listeners. In the fourth movement, that spiritual universality is explicitly evoked with its Enlightenment-inspired paean to collective personhood and democratic ideals. It is a paean that was premiered at a time (1824) when those ideals had largely been snuffed out by post-Napoleonic European governments. It is a paean that was premiered in a place where espousing such ideals could have been considered criminally subversive.

The final movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is a vocal setting of Friedrich Schiller's poem "*Lied an die Freude*" ("Ode to Joy"). Beethoven spent a tremendous amount of creative energy trying to figure out how to incorporate human voices into the symphony, and his solution is brilliant. He begins the movement with what amounts to an overture for orchestra alone, during which the orchestra performs the same vocally conceived music the singers will sing when they make their entrance later in the movement. As a result, when the voices enter, it will sound as if they've been singing all along. A series of increasingly energized and joyful variations follow, as more instruments join in playing a new theme, a metaphor for an ever-growing number of people triumphantly embracing the enlightened message of the new theme.

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is an epic vision of struggle crowned by utopian triumph.

Movement 4, Act I

In what we will refer to as act I of this fourth movement, the violent, dissonant, chaotic music of the movement's opening suddenly and brutally returns and, along with it, the key of D minor. The hero enters and rejects this orchestral chaos, just as he has rejected the efforts of the orchestra in all three previous movements. This time, however, the hero is a baritone singer who belts out in **recitative**.

A four-measure wind introduction punctuated with shouts of "Joy" from the chorus leads to verse 1 of Schiller's "Ode," with the hero in the lead. All at once, the implicit becomes explicit; "all men shall be brothers" is the meaning of the new theme—the "Ode to Joy" theme. By using voices to make his meaning explicit, Beethoven forever shattered the concept of the symphony as a purely instrumental genre. All at once, instrumental music and vocal music were fused in a manner entirely new, demonstrating unequivocally that a composer's expressive needs trump everything—including genre.

Movement 4, Act II

Act I of this fourth movement is about the promise of the Enlightenment. We discover that act II is about the victory of the Enlightenment and the

triumph of the "Ode to Joy" because Beethoven turns the "Ode to Joy" theme into a triumphal march. From the distance we hear the "army of freedom" approach in a bass drum (the only appearance of a bass drum in any of Beethoven's symphonies) and bassoons. Having arrived before us, the army of freedom performs the "Ode to Joy" theme as a marching band tune (without strings)—a declaration of victory.

Movement 4, Acts III and IV

Act III is about thanksgiving and heavenly devotion. Finally, act IV is an extended celebration of light, life, and love that concludes the movement and the symphony. ■

Important Term

recitative: Operatic convention in which the lines are half sung, half spoken.

Schubert—Symphony No. 9

Lecture 11

Franz Schubert put the finishing touches on his Symphony no. 9 in C Major in March 1828—almost one year after Beethoven died and just seven months before his own death at the young age of 31. In his Ninth Symphony, Schubert managed to reconcile classical lyricism with an expressive energy inspired by, but in no way an imitation of, Beethoven. When this work was discovered and performed in 1838, it provided an alternative to Beethoven's stylistic reign of the realm of symphonies.

At the time he composed the Symphony no. 9 in C Major, between 1825 and 1828, Franz Peter Schubert was grappling with an artistic problem that would plague the next two generations of composers: Maestro Ludwig van Beethoven, who completed and premiered his Ninth Symphony just one year before Schubert began his own Symphony no. 9. The legacy of Beethoven—his compositional innovations, his expansion of the expressive language of Western music—had to be dealt with to the degree that his legacy informed but did not overpower the music of those who followed him. Of the composers who can be considered Beethoven's contemporaries, only a very few—Carl Maria von Weber, Felix Mendelssohn, and Schubert—incorporated elements of Beethoven's mature style into their own music in Beethoven's lifetime.

Franz Schubert was born in Vienna on January 31, 1797. Of all the great masters of Viennese classicism—including Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven—Schubert was the only native-born Viennese. For Schubert, these composers were not names in a textbook but real people, and their music was part of the contemporary scene in which he grew up. Although we do not know unequivocally that Schubert and Beethoven met at some point in their lives, we do know that Beethoven's music had a decisive influence on Schubert's late music, of which the crowning glory is his Symphony in C Major. And even beyond the technical influences of Beethoven on Schubert's late music, there seemed to be a spiritual influence that was even more profound.

Unfortunately, Schubert contracted syphilis sometime during the summer of 1822 at the age of 25. Periods of remission were followed by periods of relapse, which were accompanied by depression and despair. Schubert's illness certainly affected the nature and expressive substance of his music. With his diagnosis, an expressive depth entered his compositional vocabulary that was simply not there before. At the same time, Schubert's identification with Beethoven became personal, as his own disease gave him an insight into Beethoven—the man and composer that he might never have gained had he remained healthy. Schubert died on November 19, 1828, at the age of 31. Schubert was buried in Währing Cemetery—just three graves away from Beethoven.

Schubert called the symphony "The Great," here meaning a grand or large symphony.

Symphony No. 9 in C Major, "The Great"

Schubert began his last symphony, in C major, during the summer of 1825. It was substantially completed by early 1826, though Schubert didn't date the piece as being finished until March of 1828. Schubert called the symphony "The Great," here meaning a grand or large symphony. Inspired by Beethoven's Ninth, Schubert's Ninth Symphony typically runs a full hour in performance and is scored for a full orchestra. As the symphony makes clear, Schubert had, by the age of 29, been won over entirely by Beethoven's music.

Movement 1

The first movement is in sonata form and begins with an introduction that features a theme of great majesty and lyric beauty that is played first in unison by two unaccompanied horns and then by a choir of winds. This introductory tune is so sylvan and beautiful that we might not notice its incredibly complex and original phrase structure. The tune is eight measures long. Typically, a tune eight measures in length will break down into two (rather predictable) four-measure phrases, the first called an antecedent and the second called the consequent. However, this does not occur.

The first phrase of the tune is two measures long. Schubert follows this first phrase with a one-measure echo. The first three measures, then, consist of two phrases: a two-measure phrase followed by the one-measure echo. The next three measures are the same: we hear another two-measure phrase followed by another one-measure echo. The opening melody appears to be complete at the end of measure six, but it's not. Next, Schubert takes the echo that was measure six and repeats it, stretching out its note values so that it takes up two measures instead of one, creating what amounts to an echo of the echo.

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Franz Schubert (1797–1828) finished his Symphony no. 9 in March of 1828, which was just seven months before his untimely death.

Schubert then attaches this elongated version of the echo to the end of the tune, creating an eight-measure melody with a phrase structure of two measures plus one measure, two measures plus one measure again, plus two additional measures. Even as the horns conclude the melody, though, the strings enter at the very last moment as a tagline that smoothes the way for the next iteration of the melody, which is in the winds. This fabulous opening melody has a fluidity, flexibility, and sense of growth that is a product of its unpredictable phrase structure.

A sense of triumphant arrival greets the beginning of the fast-paced sonata form that follows the introduction. In this massive exposition, there are four component parts: theme 1, the modulating bridge, theme 2, and the cadence material. Theme 1 alternates a vigorous, dotted-note (meaning a long-short rhythm) melody in the strings and brass with chirping winds. The modulating bridge that follows grows directly out of this melody.

Theme 2 begins as a vaguely Slavic-sounding tune set initially in E minor and played initially by the winds. The second part of theme 2 is set in G major with alternating wind instruments and loud strings. The strings play a rustic, foot-stomping melody derived from the opening of the theme. Finally, rising trombone lines, based on rhythms drawn from the introduction, lead to a series of huge orchestral swells and the conclusion of this massive second theme. This huge exposition ends as the foot-stomping melodic idea of theme 2 leads to a brief but energized version of the opening of theme 1.

Movement 2

The second movement has been variously described as a march depicting a theme—described by critics as either a march of tragedy or a dance of seduction—that has a Slavic melodic feel characteristic of Viennese music, of which Schubert was very fond.

Movement 3

The third movement is a huge scherzo—a three-part, A–B–A form structure. The opening of the first A section is a rollicking peasant dance that initially alternates between heavy, masculine-sounding strings and light, delicate, feminine-sounding winds. The middle section of the movement, the B section, begins a full six minutes into the movement. At roughly 13½ minutes long in performance, Schubert's third movement scherzo even outlasts the scherzo in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Movement 4

The fourth movement is a sprawling movement that runs over 1,150 measures in length; there are entire Haydn symphonies that are shorter. As is true throughout the symphony, Schubert's orchestration—the way he distributes thematic and accompanimental materials among the instruments of the orchestra—is wonderful. In this fourth movement, the independence with which Schubert treats the woodwind and brass instruments is particularly striking.

After the Leipzig premiere of the symphony, Felix Mendelssohn brought it with him to London and wasn't even able to get through the first rehearsal of the symphony before the performance was called off. It seems that the violinists could not handle the multitudinous consecutive measures of eighth-

note triplets that accompany the fourth movement's second theme—the scale of Schubert's Symphony in C Major was completely new to them. ■

Mendelssohn—"Italian" Symphony

Lecture 12

Mendelssohn's critics have claimed that the "Italian" Symphony is nothing but an unconnected series of *tableaux vivants*—that is, program music that would describe pictures of daily life—and a rather unsophisticated soundtrack to the travelogue of Mendelssohn's Italian tour that inspired the work. Of course, Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony is, like so much of his mature music, unclassifiable. It features the beauty of line and clarity of expression associated with classicism along with the personalized, programmatic content that is very much the territory of early-19th-century romanticism.

Felix Jacob Ludwig Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg on February 3, 1809. In 1812, when Felix was three years old, his family moved to Berlin. Mendelssohn was an absurd prodigy. There was nothing he couldn't master: the piano, composing, painting, languages. Between the ages of 12 and 14, he composed, among many other works, 13 symphonies for string orchestra.

Mendelssohn's teacher was Carl Friedrich Zelter, the director of the Berlin Singakademie. Zelter put Mendelssohn through a rigorous, J. S. Bach-dominated program of study, with some C. P. E. Bach and Mozart mixed in for the sake of modernity. Mendelssohn's Symphony no. 1 in C Minor—completed on March 31, 1824, just a month after he turned 15 years old—capped his education at Zelter's hands. From that point on, he moved on a compositional path of his own making. At 16, he composed his Octet in E-flat Major for strings, his first great masterwork. Mendelssohn went on to compose four more symphonies, the most famous of which is his Symphony no. 4 in A Major—the "Italian."

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, "Italian"

Felix Mendelssohn began work on his Symphony no. 4 in A Major during an extended trip through Italy in 1830 and 1831. At its core, the symphony is an impressionistic work based on the sights, smells, and emotions inspired by his Italian adventure. The music is among the most brilliant

Mendelssohn ever wrote, but he did not allow it to be published in his lifetime. He completely revised the second, third, and fourth movements, but never got around to rewriting the first movement—an unfortunate fact given his premature death at the age of 38. The symphony was published posthumously in 1851, four years after Mendelssohn's death. It was instantly embraced by symphonic audiences and has been a mainstay of the orchestral repertoire since.

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Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) composed one of the most enduring orchestral works in the repertoire at the age of 17.

Movement 1

Mendelssohn spent a large portion of his stay in Italy in Rome. He was particularly enthralled by the pre-Lent season of Carnival, which runs for roughly a month. Many have compared Mendelssohn's leaping, throbbing, vivacious theme 1 to the Carnival season. A fanfare-like modulating bridge follows. Theme 2, graceful and lilting, is initially heard in the clarinets and bassoons. Theme 1 then briefly returns and brings the exposition to its conclusion.

A third theme makes an appearance about halfway through the development section, but supposedly this third theme had originally appeared in the exposition. According to the rules and regulations of classical-era sonata form, introducing a new theme in a development section is absolutely wrong, but Mendelssohn was living and working in the post-Beethoven expressive environment of 19th-century romanticism. The third theme returns in the recapitulation, and along with theme 1, it drives the movement to its glittering conclusion in A major.

Despite its programmatic content and idiosyncratic approach to sonata form, the overwhelming impressions the first movement of Mendelssohn's "Italian" leaves us with are its melodic brilliance and structural clarity; its expressive directness; its dancing, rhythmic character, and its complete lack of post-Beethoven angst. These descriptors apply to most of Mendelssohn's mature music. They apply, as well, to the music of the classical era—to the music of Haydn and Mozart. Thus, Mendelssohn is often classified in a manner that inadvertently denigrates his work even as it misleads, implying that the mature Mendelssohn was a conservative composer. This perception is intensified when we consider that Mendelssohn's first, youthful masterworks were anything but conservative.

Movement 2

At the heart of Mendelssohn's mature compositional style is lyricism: songlike melodic expression that explicitly invokes the human voice. The second movement is a quiet and melancholy processional, inspired perhaps by the religious processionals Mendelssohn witnessed during his stay in Italy. The opening of the movement is occupied by a single, direct, song-like melody accompanied by steady, marching, plucked low strings.

Typical of his mature music, Mendelssohn presents the principal theme of this second movement over a simple, straightforward accompaniment, without the more active, counter-melody-dominated accompaniments characteristic of his earlier music. This sort of direct thematic presentation is not an indication of encroaching conservatism; rather, it's a reflection of Mendelssohn's developing desire to cultivate voice-like lyricism and thematic clarity in his music.

Movement 3

The opening of the third movement strikes many listeners as being conservative and conventional when compared to such early Mendelssohn masterworks as the Octet in E-flat Major and the "Overture to a Midsummer Night's Dream." This perception of encroaching conservatism in Mendelssohn's later music has led many intelligent auditors to incorrectly categorize his work and development as a composer.

What most of us hear when we listen to this movement is a gentle, gliding, exquisitely lyric dance movement featuring a song-like phrase structure and muted contrasts—something that the mature Beethoven would probably not have composed. Thus, such a movement is considered by some to be conservative, as representing a pre-Beethoven aesthetic environment. The fact is that Mendelssohn developed on an artistic path of his own making, and as he got older, his compositional muse led him to an ever greater intensification of musical means—a less-is-more aesthetic attitude that is not unusual for a maturing artist.

Movement 4

This fourth movement finale is the most explicitly Italian music in the symphony. Mendelssohn labels the movement as being *saltarello*, a high-energy folk dance popular in southern Italy characterized by a hop on the last beat of every measure. This *saltarello* finale behaves like most classical-era symphonic finales, which were intended not as summations but, rather, to engage the listener by inspiring dance. However, at the same time, this last movement is a rarity: a minor-mode finale (set in A minor) for what is otherwise a major-mode symphony.

Once again, Herr Mendelssohn makes himself impossible to classify: something traditional, something different, all in the service of an entirely personal, an entirely "Mendelssohnian" movement. This finale also has that personalized, Mendelssohnian sound that is created by the light-as-a-feather opening thematic statement in the flutes, the steady-state triplets that characterize the theme and its accompaniment, and the dance-like beat that underlies it all.

The conclusion of the movement—and thus the symphony—is fabulous. A sinuous melody in the strings (which is theme 2, thus far unsampled) builds up to a last, climactic statement of theme 1, and then the music simply seems to fade away into the distance. Only at the very last second does the volume pick back up again in order to give some punch to the closing moments of the symphony. ■

Schumann—Symphony No. 3

Lecture 13

From a purely compositional point of view, Schumann's "Rhenish" is the best of the post-Beethoven program symphonies, combining his impressions of the Rhineland—its scenery, atmosphere, legends, and history—with a Beethovenian concision and rhythmic drive. Specifically, the exhilarating music of the first movement is a reflection of the exhilaration Schumann felt during his first months in Düsseldorf. Schumann composed his Third Symphony, in a typical creative intensity, between November 2 and December 9 of 1850.

The early 19th century saw the first great flowering of an artistic mentality that saw composers, writers, and visual artists bent on expressing their own feelings and worldviews in their work. By the 1830s, the romantic era had arrived, in which personal self-expression and originality had become artistic ends unto themselves. It was a time when cutting-edge, post-Beethoven composers celebrated themes of the glorification of emotion, nostalgia for a deep and mysterious past, and an extraordinary enthusiasm for nature—wild, pure, and untamed.

Many of these composers believed that the future of music was tied to merging music with literature and, thus, creating a composite art form. In the case of instrumental music, this meant composing works that could evoke specific emotions, paint pictures, and even tell stories. No one believed more completely in the artistic necessity of synthesizing music, literature, and self-expression than did the pianist, composer, and wannabe poet Robert Schumann.

Just as romanticism initially grew from literature, so did Robert Schumann. His father, August Schumann, was an author, translator, and bookseller who passed on his passion for literature to his son. Schumann began writing poems around the age of ten and continued to fancy himself a poet through his teens. His musical talents developed alongside his literary ones. He began piano lessons at the age of seven, and by the age of eight he had composed

his first music—a set of dances for the piano. Between 1830 and 1840, he composed a large number of extraordinary avant-garde works for solo piano.

Typical of his manic creative jags, Schumann sketched his First Symphony in four days: from January 23–26, 1841. He completed orchestrating it a few weeks later. Nicknamed "Spring," it received its premier under the baton of Felix Mendelssohn at the Gewandhaus on March 31, 1841. The premiere was a triumph, and Schumann churned out a series of symphonic masterworks over the next nine years, capped by his Symphony no. 3, the "Rhine" or "Rhenish" of 1850.

Library of Congress, Music Division, Frontispiece_LettersofRobertSchumann.

The musical talents of Robert Schumann (1810–1856) developed alongside his literary talents.

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, "Rhenish"

On March 31, 1850, the almost 40-year-old Schumann accepted an offer to become the municipal music director for the city of Düsseldorf, situated on the Rhine River in Germany. Schumann, who had never spent any appreciable amount of time in the Rhineland before moving to Düsseldorf in 1850, was enthralled with its landscape and history. Schumann's Symphony no. 3 in E-flat Major—his "Rhenish" Symphony—is about his fascination with the Rhenish landscape and its history, as well as the surge of optimism he felt during those first, exhilarating months in Düsseldorf.

Schumann's "Rhenish" Symphony is what we now call a program symphony, which is a multi-movement orchestral work that tells a story and/or paints musical pictures across its span. The most famous precedent is Beethoven's five-movement Symphony no. 6 of 1808, the "Pastoral" Symphony, which

is about impressions and emotions inspired by a day in the country. Like Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, Schumann's Third is cast in five movements.

Movement 1

This first movement begins with one of Schumann's greatest themes. It rolls forward inexorably, riding on a rhythmic wave created by its rocking triple meter and long-short rhythms. This theme is meant to evoke the breadth and grandeur of the Rhine River itself. However, for all its grandeur, this theme does not employ the sorts of stereotypical, explicitly programmatic, opera house–derived musical gestures that would evoke water. This first theme is in sonata form and creates an impression rather than a programmatic theme that uses familiar devices to paint an explicit picture.

Schumann's Symphony no. 3 in E-flat Major—his "Rhenish" Symphony—is about his fascination with the Rhenish landscape and its history.

The theme's rolling sensibility is created by its triple meter, and its grandeur is created by its royal, fanfare-like long-short rhythms. The theme's grandeur is also a product of its orchestration: Along with the strings and winds, four horns, two trumpets, and a busy timpani part create a royal and festive atmosphere. This music makes an impression that is as broad and magnificent as the Rhine itself as it passes through Germany.

More than anything else, the movement is a beautifully wrought sonata form, replete with a second, contrasting theme, a lengthy development section, and a bold and brilliant conclusion. Theme 2 does not evoke the magnificence of the Rhine—or water, for that matter: It is a lyric, delicate, contrasting theme initially introduced by the winds that travels from G minor to E-flat major. While Schumann will dutifully return to theme 2 during the development section and the recapitulation, the star of this movement is theme 1 and the river it implicitly evokes. The conclusion of the development section features the horns, which play an elongated version of theme 1, and then theme 1 begins the recapitulation.

Movement 2
Schumann originally entitled this second movement "Morning on the Rhine." He removed the title, and in its place substituted the generic designation "scherzo." Structurally, a scherzo it is: a three-part, A–B–A form movement. A movement labeled a scherzo is usually a brisk, up-tempo affair, but this one is a moderately paced dance—a rustic German three step called a *Ländler*. Once again, the gently rising-and-falling melody line that characterizes the outer A sections evokes an impression of the Rhine.

Movement 3
Schumann indicates that this third movement be played *nicht schnell*—meaning "not fast." However, everything about this charming, elegantly scored movement is "in the middle." The overwhelmingly easygoing nature of this third movement gives it the character of an **intermezzo**, which means "interlude," an ingratiating transition from the first half of the symphony to this five-movement second half.

Movement 4
This fourth movement—the only true slow movement in the symphony—is the most program-specific movement in the "Rhenish" as well as the expressive cornerstone of the entire work. It is quite evident that Schumann composed this fourth movement in praise of the Cathedral of Cologne and the mystery and majesty of Catholic ritual. In addition, it is only in the fourth movement that the three trombones—which have been mute since the beginning of the symphony—begin to play. The gravity and majesty they evoke is physically palpable.

The opening of the movement exhibits the distinctive sound of the trombones, the processional sense created by the slow but steady rhythms, and the use of a dated polyphony that gives this passage a vaguely archaic quality. As the movement approaches its conclusion, the forward motion of the processional stops. The brass, wind, and string choirs alternate long, sustained notes, just as choirs of voices would at the climax of a sacred ceremony. This closing passage is sublime, as is the manner by which Schumann manages to create a sense of lofty, echoing space on what is otherwise a concert-hall stage.

Movement 5
In this fifth movement, we transit from the explicit programmatic references of the fourth movement back to the more implicit, impressionistic character of movements 1 and 2. An exuberant, energized rondo theme begins the movement that evokes a certain popular dance-type element. It is a brilliant movement, made more so by a brass choir that now includes not just four horns and two trumpets but the three trombones that made their first appearance during the fourth movement.

Typical of Schumann, he takes the opportunity in this final movement of the work to subtly bring together musical elements from previous movements—most notably from the fourth and the first movement. For example, as this fifth movement approaches its conclusion, the brass and string instruments make a direct reference to the fourth movement processional. The reference is subtle, but clear enough to evoke the memory of the first movement and, thus, create the sense of a journey complete. ■

Important Term

intermezzo: An instrumental interlude between the acts of a performance.

Brahms—Symphony No. 4

Lecture 14

By the time Brahms composed his Symphony no. 4 in 1885—at the age of 52—he had begun to believe that he was written out. At the symphony's premier, the audience enthusiastically applauded every movement followed by an outstanding ovation at its conclusion. In retrospect, we can see that Brahms's fears regarding the symphony were just another manifestation of his monumental self-criticism, a lingering byproduct of the curse, and his existential inferiority complex vis-à-vis the music of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert.

Johannes Brahms's four symphonies lie at the core of the symphonic repertoire. Incredibly, they are works that might never have been composed because of a so-called curse that descended upon him by way of an article that was published in October of 1853, when Brahms was just 20 years old. The article, written by Robert Schumann, announced Brahms as the new messiah of German music, the long-awaited successor to Beethoven. Schumann's article had brought him too much attention much too soon.

In May of 1857, Brahms finished his first major composition, his Piano Concerto no. 1 in D Minor. It had taken him four obsessive years of the most tortuous writing and rewriting to finish the piece—mostly because he was terrified that if his first major orchestral composition was not equal to the expectations created by Schumann's article, he would be laughed off the European musical stage. The concerto received its premiere—with Brahms at the piano—in 1859. The Leipzig audience, still mourning the death of their beloved Mendelssohn, sat silently after Brahms's final movement was played. As a result, Brahms decided not to compose music that would bring him into direct comparison with Beethoven—meaning, specifically, symphonies and **string quartets**.

However, in 1873, Brahms released not one, but two string quartets. Having done so, he was finally prepared to complete and release a symphony. Brahms's Symphony no. 1 in C Minor—21 years in the making—received its premiere in the fall of 1876, and it was respectfully received. It took

Brahms 21 years to complete his First Symphony, but it only took him four months to complete his Second Symphony. Years of pent-up orchestral ideas followed, as one major orchestral work after another emerged from his pen.

Symphony No. 4 in E Minor

Brahms was afraid that his Fourth Symphony was dry and pedantic, a fear reinforced by the tepid response of his friends when he played the symphony for them on the piano. In fact, it is a masterwork and was greeted as such from the moment of its premiere, which took place on October 25, 1885, in the German city of Meiningen under the baton of Hans von Bülow. The conductor immediately took the symphony on tour across Europe, and it became an instant favorite among audiences and musicians, which it remains to this day.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) composed his Symphony no. 4 at the age of 52—an age that some composers never reached.

Movement 1

This first movement—somber and noble in expressive tone—is a superb example of Brahms as compositional synthesizer. It is structured on the disciplined, 18th-century, classical-era lines of sonata form. However, in its continuous development of a single intervallic (pertaining to an **interval**) idea as well as its harmonic and expressive substance, the movement is most definitely a product of a late-19th-century German composer.

Theme 1 is based on a series of falling-then-rising thirds and is set in two phrases. The theme begins with a step ladder–like presentation of all the pitches in E minor and then all the pitches in C major. At this point, the

essential melodic and harmonic grist of the movement is laid out: Thematic melodies will be based on the interval of a third with a particular harmonic relationship between two keys a third apart, E minor and C major.

Following the modulating bridge, a brief, fanfare-like passage scored for winds and then strings paves the way for theme 2. The passage is built almost entirely from strings of successive thirds. Theme 2, which now immediately follows, is a dark, powerful, march-like theme initially scored for the 'cellos and horns. Theme 2 is a further derivation of the opening of theme 1. The accompaniment beneath theme 2 is a series of descending thirds.

In just this way, this movement unfolds on parallel tracks. One track describes an ongoing metamorphic process, as Brahms spins his thematic materials into continuously new sounds. On the other track, he employs strings of thirds more or less verbatim, which gives this otherwise constantly developing music a sense of coherence and consistency.

Movement 2
The second movement is a solemn and impassioned andante of great gravity and power. It also employs musical elements first introduced at the beginning of the first movement—most notably, a shift between the tonalities of E and C. The opening theme is expressed quietly and with the measured step of a processional.

Movement 3
The suggestion of C major heard during the course of the second movement becomes explicit in the riveting third movement, which is set entirely in C major. In its large-scale A–B–A structure and brilliant spirit, the movement is a scherzo in all but name (Brahms entitles it *allegro giocoso*, meaning "fast and playful"). The hard, bright edge of this music owes much to the presence of a triangle and the piercing sound of the stratospheric piccolo part.

Movement 4
The fourth movement of Brahms's Fourth Symphony is generally considered his single greatest movement of orchestral music; it is a movement that emphasizes Brahms's compositional quintessence as a synthesizer. He employs a baroque-era procedure, passacaglia, to create a movement of

stunning romantic-era expressive impact. That Brahms would employ such an antiquated and potentially limiting musical procedure in a symphony composed in 1885 is the sort of thing that made the Wagnerian modernists think he was crazy. But Brahms knew—better than the romantic modernists—that without discipline, there can be no art.

It is generally believed that this fourth movement was the first to be conceived and might very well have inspired Brahms to want to compose his Fourth Symphony. The inspiration for this fourth movement came from two works by Johann Sebastian Bach. Brahms added one extra pitch to the passacaglia theme found in Bach's Cantata no. 150—an A-sharp—and thus was born the ground bass theme for the fourth movement of his Fourth Symphony. The opening of the fourth movement exhibits the first iteration of the ground bass theme, played with magisterial power by brass (including three trombones, which are playing for the first time in the symphony), winds, and timpani.

Brahms's four symphonies lie at the core of the symphonic repertoire.

There are 30 variations—that is, 30 repetitions of the ground bass theme with ever-changing materials around it—that can be organized into 3 distinct groups. Variations 1–11 are all set in E minor and are generally monumental in expressive impact and tone. In variations 4–7, the dramatic momentum really starts to build.

The second large grouping of variations consists of variations 12–15. These 4 variations are quieter, more lightly scored, and double the length of the first 11 variations. Variation 12 features an achingly melancholy solo flute. The mode switches to E major for the remainder of this second group of variations. Variation 14 is particularly spectacular—the 3 trombones intone a **hymn** of otherworldly beauty and majesty.

The lyric oasis represented by variations 12–15 ends with the beginning of variation 16, the first of the variations that comprises the third section of the movement. The mode returns to minor, the variations are once again shorter,

and the monumental character of the first group of variations resumes. Variation 16 sounds like a recapitulation—like a return from some contrasting place. However, the ground bass theme has been constant throughout, cycling back around every 8 measures. The lesson, which Brahms learned from Bach, is that the musical sameness and rigor of a passacaglia does not preclude a great composer from creating a sense of departure and return by providing groups of variations with certain shared characteristics.

The movement—and the symphony—conclude with a magisterial coda following variation 30. Most minor-mode symphonies—Beethoven's ninth, for example—mark a trajectory of darkness to light, of struggle capped by victory, and conclude, cathartically and triumphantly—in major. However, Brahms's fourth-movement coda brings this symphony to its conclusion in the tonal darkness of E minor. Brahms, who saw himself as the last exponent of the German symphonic tradition, does not surrender to convention at the end of his Fourth Symphony—his final symphony. ■

Important Terms

hymn: A religious song.

interval: Distance between two pitches, e.g., C–G (upward) equals a fifth.

string quartet: A performing ensemble consisting of two violins, a viola, and a 'cello. (2) A musical composition written for that ensemble.

Brahms—Violin Concerto

Lecture 15

Johannes Brahms's great friend, the Hungarian-born violinist and conductor Joseph Joachim, is the one for whom Brahms composed his only Violin Concerto. Joachim went so far as to rewrite entire passages of the solo part in the concerto so that it became as idiomatic as possible. The concerto received its premiere in Leipzig on New Year's Day in 1879 with the concerto's dedicatee—Joseph Joachim—playing the solo part and Brahms conducting the Gewandhaus Orchestra.

Johannes Brahms was born on May 7, 1833, in Hamburg, the largest port city in Germany. Brahms's father Johann Jakob Brahms was a professional violinist who eked out a living playing in the waterfront dives and brothels of Hamburg's red-light district. Regardless, Brahms's remarkable talent as a pianist and composer manifested itself early, and to his great fortune, he was brought to the attention of a high-end local teacher named Eduard Marxsen, who took him on as a student and grounded him in the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert.

When Europe was plagued by revolutions in 1848, and Hamburg—as a major port city—saw a huge influx of refugees in 1848 and 1849. Among these refugees were urban Hungarians, who brought with them their gypsy fiddle music: soulful, exotic, rhythmically striking music that inspired Brahms's Violin Concerto in D Major. In late May of 1853, while on a concert tour in Germany, Brahms met a Hungarian-born violinist named Joseph Joachim in Hanover. It was the 12-year-old Joachim who—under the baton of Felix Mendelssohn—had revived Beethoven's Violin Concerto, which had gone unperformed for 35 years. Within two days, Brahms and Joachim had forged a friendship that would last for the rest of their lives.

Violin Concerto in D Major

When Brahms decided to compose a violin concerto—in 1877, 24 years after he and Joachim met—it was clear that the concerto was going to be dedicated to Joseph Joachim. Besides, Brahms—as a piano player—

needed help with the solo violin part, and Joachim provided advice on how to properly compose for solo violin. Ultimately, Brahms acknowledged Joachim's irreplaceable role in helping to create the concerto by asking Joachim to compose the extended solo—the cadenza—that concludes the first movement.

Movement 1

During the classical era, sonata form was adapted to the particular needs of the concerto, which is today known as double exposition form (containing an orchestral exposition and a solo exposition). Because the orchestra gets to play the themes first in double exposition form, composers have come up with various strategies over the years in order to compensate the soloist for not being allowed to play the themes first. The strategy used by Brahms in the first movement of his Violin Concerto is brilliant. Our examination of the first movement in double exposition form will focus on this issue of thematic parity between the orchestra and the violin soloist.

Movement 1, Orchestral Exposition, Theme 1

The first movement begins with a lengthy first theme in four phrases, which can be schematized as *a*, *b*, *c*, and a^1. The theme begins quite simply and concludes quite majestically. However, for all its concluding majesty, there's still a sense of musical space unfilled. The reason is that the theme—as presented by the orchestra—is not so much a fully realized thematic melody as a harmonic framework that will not be melodically developed until the solo violin plays it in the solo exposition. The theme simply outlines a D major harmony.

Movement 1, Solo Exposition, Theme 1

In the solo exposition, the solo violin plays a ravishing, shimmering, extended, and highly embellished version of the theme. In doing so, the solo violin transforms the theme into something much more lyric and expressively complex than what it was in the orchestral exposition. In the solo exposition, theme 1 is set in three phrases: a^2, b^1, and c^1. This violin music is passionate, intensely lyric, and masculine—music that no doubt reflects Brahms's feelings about Joseph Joachim and Joachim's manner of playing the violin. This music is also an example of thematic parity: While the orchestra did

indeed play theme 1 first, it is the solo violin that breathes life, light, and lyricism into what was otherwise a skeleton waiting for muscle and flesh.

Movement 1, Orchestral Exposition, Theme 2

Immediately following theme 1 of the orchestral exposition, a transitional passage dissipates the energy generated by the theme and paves the way for theme 2. The transition begins with a quiet bit of melody drawn from theme 1. Hushed strings eventually dawdle a bit on the last five notes of the transition melody. Like a gentle exhalation, descending winds anticipate the arrival of an important event, which is followed by a rising melodic idea—heard first in the winds and then in the strings—that seems to inhale in preparation for and anticipation of theme 2. However, theme 2 never materializes. Instead, the transitional music begins all over again, and we can't help but feel like we missed something—something that will materialize in the solo exposition.

The strategy used by Brahms in the first movement of his Violin Concerto is brilliant.

Movement 1, Solo Exposition, Theme 2

After the conclusion of theme 1 of the solo exposition, the transition music begins again, now with the solo violin in the lead. The orchestral strings and a solo flute quietly dawdle while the solo violin provides an arpeggioed accompaniment. Once again, like a gentle exhalation, descending winds anticipate the arrival of an important event, which is again followed by a rising melodic idea that seems to inhale in preparation for and anticipation of theme 2.

Brahms has saved his greatest treasure for the solo violin: theme 2. It is one of the most beautiful melodies ever composed, and it now emerges in the solo violin, filling the void we heard—and felt—back in the orchestral exposition. When it comes to the battle of the themes in this first movement, the solo violin wins triumphantly. Not only does the solo violin get to breathe life and substance into theme 1, but theme 2 was conceived entirely for the lyric capabilities of Joachim's violin and is played exclusively by the solo violin.

We conclude our examination of the first movement with the solo violin's entrance, which—as we would expect in a double exposition form movement—occurs immediately after the conclusion of the orchestral exposition. The entrance of the soloist is, perhaps, the most highly anticipated moment in any double exposition form movement. And for the first couple of minutes of the piece, the soloist has been just waiting to make an entrance.

The nature of the soloist's entrance tells us a lot about the personality of the solo part: The entrance is our first impression of the solo part, and it is nothing short of electrifying. The solo violin enters with an absolutely heroic version of the opening of theme 1. This is certainly not a typical, lyric, relatively quiet, violin-as-soprano entrance; this entry—in the dark key of D minor—practically exudes machismo and testosterone.

The orchestra is not pleased with this show of attitude from the solo violin. Defiant orchestral interjections challenge the solo violin, which ultimately manages to fight off the orchestra's challenge for musical supremacy. Eventually, the orchestra accepts the presence and attitude of the solo violin, after which the solo violin makes itself comfortable with a long series of arpeggios and scales accompanied by fragments of theme 1 in the winds and orchestral strings. It's a musical portrait that captures the full range of Joachim's personality as both a man and musician: From the most powerful to the gentlest, this is Brahms's tribute to his great friend—and an altogether awesome passage of music.

Movement 2

The second movement of Brahms's Violin Concerto is not the miserable adagio Brahms claimed it was but, rather, an intimate and delicate movement cast in three-part, A–B–A form. The opening and closing A sections feature the wind instruments and have the quality of a serenade. In the opening of the movement, the solo violin takes a well-deserved rest. The middle, or B, section of the movement has the character of an operatic aria, with the solo violin playing the role of an impassioned operatic diva.

Movement 3

In the third movement, Brahms exhibits a wonderful, dancing, Hungarian rondo theme. Brahms's penchant for continuous variation is well displayed in this movement, as the rondo theme is never heard the same way twice. After various contrasting episodes—including a marvelous Viennese-style **waltz** in the middle of the movement—Brahms concludes the movement with one last version of the rondo theme, sounding now like a jingling march. This march concludes the concerto. ■

Important Term

waltz: A dance of Austrian/Viennese origin in triple meter.

Tchaikovsky—Symphony No. 4

Lecture 16

After having composed three relatively small-scale symphonies, Tchaikovsky's Symphony no. 4 was a breakthrough work—a big, heroic symphony that synthesized many of the stylistic and expressive elements that were closest to his heart: his love for the music of Beethoven, for dance music and folk music, the atmosphere of the Russian countryside and people, and the extremes of joy and angst so basic to his expressive voice. Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony is dedicated to Nadezhda von Meck, his dear friend and benefactor.

Even by the frankly modest mental health standards of major composers, Pyotr (Peter) Tchaikovsky was a genuine neurotic. As a child, he was oversensitive to the point of mania. He was permanently scarred when he was shipped off to boarding school at the age of ten. As a musical late bloomer—he didn't commit himself to a career in music until his early 20s—he carried a sense of inadequacy his entire career.

As a cross-dressing homosexual living in one of the most homophobic societies of all time, Tsarist Russia, Tchaikovsky lived in constant terror that he would be exposed and punished. A sham marriage to a love-sick former student, Antonina Milyukova, lasted only 11 weeks and drove him to attempt suicide. With his life and fortunes at their lowest ebb, a fabulously rich widow miraculously, Nadezhda von Meck, stepped into Tchaikovsky's life and gave him the means to quit his teaching job and compose full time.

Far from being merely titillating, this information is entirely germane to the music of Tchaikovsky because he believed in the 19th-century, romantic-era view of music composition as an act of intimate self-confession. This means that many of his works—including his Symphony no. 4—are autobiographical in nature. Consequently, we must first know the life experiences that inspired the music to understand it.

Symphony No. 4 in F Minor

Tchaikovsky composed his Fourth Symphony (of an eventual six) between December of 1876 and the late fall of 1877. He began working on it at the same time he began corresponding with Nadezhda von Meck. He continued to work on it while he met and married Antonina Milyukova, and finished it a roughly two months after his emotional breakdown and escape from Antonina. Tchaikovsky dedicated the symphony to "My Great Friend," a veiled reference to Nadezhda, who had asked to remain anonymous.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) composed his Fourth Symphony during a very emotional year in his life, 1877.

The symphony received its premiere in Moscow on February 22, 1878, under the baton of Nikolay Rubinstein, the director of the Moscow Conservatory. Incredibly, Tchaikovsky was not there: With Nadezhda von Meck's money in his pocket, he was spending the winter with a few choice friends in Florence, Italy. However, Nadezhda was at the premiere, and she reported to Tchaikovsky that the audience responded enthusiastically to the piece.

Movement 1

According to Tchaikovsky, his Fourth Symphony was a faithful echo of the trials and tribulations of the year 1877—about the implacability of fate, an idea that became something of a personal obsession during 1877. If Tchaikovsky's program sounds familiar, that's because it is familiar; Tchaikovsky's inspiration for his Fourth Symphony was Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which is generally acknowledged to be about the human spirit overcoming the relentless hand of fate. The relationship between Beethoven's Fifth and Tchaikovsky's Fourth is not conjectural—Tchaikovsky openly admits that his is a reflection of Beethoven's.

Movement 2

Using a technique common to 19th-century symphonic and operatic literature, Tchaikovsky creates a lonely, melancholy sense by scoring the opening of the movement for a solo oboe with the sparest of accompaniments. The effect is pure opera: a lonely shepherd piping his lonely song on a lonely, wind-swept hill. Timeworn though the effect may be, it works to perfection, primarily because Tchaikovsky's wandering, vaguely pastoral melody in B-flat minor so perfectly evokes the complex combination of weariness and nostalgia that he intends.

Tchaikovsky dedicated the symphony to "My Great Friend," a veiled reference to Nadezhda.

The opening theme is played first by a solo oboe and then by the 'cellos. The violins then enter, and the music takes on a vaguely Slavic, vaguely processional character; there's a sense of ritual intermingled with regret. It's very difficult to put into words, but the effect is clear upon hearing it.

Movement 3

This third movement—a dance movement in the traditional symphonic template—reactivates the body after the lyric ruminations of the slow second movement. Like the second movement, this third movement is straightforward in musical form: a three-part, A–B–A form movement. Tchaikovsky has subtitled this third movement "pizzicato ostinato," meaning "continuously plucked." The opening A section is an absolutely fabulous chunk of music that is performed only by pizzicato strings.

A staggering little tune, played by various wind instruments, begins the middle B section of the movement. A distant military parade now appears—played, as we would expect, by brass and drums. Soon enough, plucked strings begin to alternate with the staggering tune and band music, and then the plucked strings effortlessly swing into the closing A section of the movement. All three elements—plucked strings, staggering dance, and marching band—come together to bring this wonderful movement to its conclusion.

Movement 4

With a lighthearted mood having been established at the conclusion of the third movement, the fourth movement finale is a sustained celebration of life and energy—and one of the glories of the orchestral repertoire. The movement begins with an explosive introduction and a chirping, skittering theme that rapidly builds up to a terrific climax. The quiet, minor-tinged music that follows might sound—to non-Russian ears—like a dark-toned contrasting theme, but in fact, it is a Russian folk song called *In the Fields There Stood a Birch Tree*. For the Russians, the birch is a symbol of strength, fertility, and renewal. Consequently, when heard with informed ears, Tchaikovsky's use of the folk song does not dramatically contrast with the joyful, dancing music that preceded it but, rather, reinforces the message of strength and renewal that this finale is all about.

Tchaikovsky presents the folk song in a series of increasingly louder, more powerful variations. The brilliant, dancing opening theme soon returns, followed by yet another set of variations of *In the Fields There Stood a Birch Tree.* This leads to the climax of the movement: a reappearance of the fanfare of fate that began the first movement. The ominous mood represented by the fateful fanfare doesn't last long, and the movement—and with it, the symphony—concludes in a blaze of glory.

Tchaikovsky's return to the fate fanfare during the course of this fourth movement has been roundly criticized by many commentators. In fact, Tchaikovsky referenced the first movement fate fanfare during the fourth movement because he wanted to put into high relief the emotional distance traversed over the course of the symphony: a symphony that, like Beethoven's Fifth, begins in darkness but ends in triumph. The presence in this fourth movement of the folk song *In the Fields There Stood a Birch Tree*—with its connotations of spring and rebirth—further reinforces the cathartic dramatic progression marked by the symphony. ■

Tchaikovsky—Violin Concerto

Lecture 17

Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D Major is a perfect work. In no other single musical work did Tchaikovsky's amazing melodic gifts work more in his favor than in his Violin Concerto, nor did he ever manipulate musical form better to fit the needs and spirit of his thematic melodies. The sonata form first movement of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto is quirky, which proves that his idiosyncratic approach to musical form is not a liability but, rather, one of the work's greatest assets.

Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky was born in the town of Votkinsk, an industrial town in Russia, on May 7, 1840. Tchaikovsky was not a musical prodigy, and while he adored music and began piano lessons at the age of seven, his parents decided in 1850 to send him off to the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in St. Petersburg, a school that prepared him for a career in civil service. However, Tchaikovsky had continued to practice the piano while there, nursing an ever-growing ambition to be a composer. In 1862, at the age of 22, he enrolled at the St. Petersburg State Conservatory, founded by Anton Rubinstein, an internationally famous pianist, composer, and conductor.

At the St. Petersburg State Conservatory, Tchaikovsky became a foot soldier in the turf war that dominated 19th-century Russian musical culture. On one side were the nationalists, who claimed that Russian art music must be based on the cadence of the Russian language and the character of Russian folk music. On the other side were the academes and internationalists led by Rubinstein, who believed that Russian music should be based on the time-proven compositional methods and genres of Western European music.

Tchaikovsky was the singular Russian composer of his generation. He was a composer whose music stood between East and West—between the Russian nationalists and the Germanic academes of the Conservatory—and who employed Western European compositional techniques in the service of a distinctly Slavic expressive temperament.

Violin Concerto in D Major

The paradoxical dichotomies of Tchaikovsky's music—his Slavic musical soul tempered by his Western training and his romantic-era expressive vision tempered by his use of classical-era musical forms—are best demonstrated by his approach to sonata form. Unlike most of his Russian contemporaries, Tchaikovsky's training allowed him to consider sonata form—an 18th-century German invention—as being artistically relevant to a 19th-century Russian, and he consciously emulated German music.

Sonata form is about thematic transformation: The themes in a sonata form movement only become fully realized, or mature, once they have passed through the experiences of contrast and development over the course of the movement. However, Tchaikovsky's thematic melodies tend to be complete musical entities at their first appearance and do not need development. In general, Tchaikovsky's themes are not fragmented, combined, or superimposed; rather, they are repeated. This is typical of 19th-century Russian concert music, which is primarily an expository art, as opposed to 19th-century German music, which is primarily a developmental art.

Movement 1

The first movement, in sonata form, begins with an introduction that opens with a stately and elegant tune presented by the orchestral violins. Once it is stated here, at the very beginning of the concerto, this introductory melody is never played again. As such, it has no organic connection to anything that follows. However, the remainder of the introduction is related to what is to come: The opening motive to what will be theme 1 is stated and restated with increasing intensity by the orchestral strings. One of the most glorious operatic solo violin parts in the repertoire follows; the solo violin takes center stage with a delicate, achingly beautiful cadenza that brings the introduction to its conclusion. The solo violin then sings theme 1, which is a glowing, soaring tune of unearthly beauty—Tchaikovsky's melodic art at its apogee.

The modulating bridge, dominated by the solo violin, follows. The bridge builds to a stirring (and for the solo violin, a most virtuosic) climax before quieting down in preparation for theme 2. Tchaikovsky indicates that theme 2 be played *con molto espressivo*, meaning "with great expression." Theme 2 is yet another lyric triumph, cast in three increasingly longer

phrases and featuring just enough minor-mode angst to give it a touch of Slavic melancholy. When listening to theme two, we must be aware of two things in particular. First, like theme 1 and the modulating bridge, theme 2 is a showcase for the voice-like quality of the solo violin. Second, we must take note of Tchaikovsky's spare and extremely effective orchestral accompaniment.

Tchaikovsky was the singular Russian composer of his generation.

A lengthy passage of cadence material follows. Like almost everything that precedes it, the cadence material is dominated by the solo violin. Then, the development section offers a perfect example of the paradoxical dichotomy of Tchaikovsky's music, during which his Germanic compositional training goes head-to-head with his Slavic expressive temperament and the nature of his thematic melodies. This development section in the first movement is based entirely on theme 1. This in itself is not unusual; many development sections are based only on one theme. However, theme 1 is not developed in the traditional, German sense; it is not dissected, fragmented, and reassembled. Instead, theme 1 was already fully realized when we first heard it at the beginning of the movement. Consequently, this development section consists, in reality, of a series of thematic restatements and variations.

The development section begins with a majestic and martial version of theme 1 played by the orchestra. The solo violin, after playing almost continuously for over six minutes, gets a welcome break and the orchestra finally takes over. Taken together, it is a fresh and glorious passage. Following a transitional passage, a presumably well-rested solo violin reenters and plays a light-as-a-feather, though exceedingly virtuosic, version of theme 1. During the remainder of the development section, theme 1 is restated and varied, separated by transitional episodes.

Rather than wait until the end of the movement, Tchaikovsky concludes the development section with the cadenza, which is full of swooping schmaltz and stratospherically high notes. The cadenza concludes with a trill in the solo violin that continues directly into the recapitulation, effectively bridging the development section with the recapitulation. A solo flute plays the

opening phrase of theme 1 of the recapitulation, and the effect is ravishing. Just as Tchaikovsky began this movement with an introductory melody that never returned, so he concludes the movement with brand new material. The ending is perfect, however, as an incredibly virtuosic solo violin leads the movement to its triumphant conclusion.

Movement 2

Tchaikovsky marks this movement as *canzonetta andante*, meaning a "slow song in the Italian style." A gentle, pastoral passage scored for wind, choir, and horns introduces the movement's principal theme, a Slavic-toned melody in G minor played by the solo violin. This second movement ends with a transition to the third movement: A three-note motive mysteriously undulates back and forth, and then that motive is instantly transformed into an entirely different piece of music.

Movement 3

In the introduction of the third movement, the solo violin takes over the three-note introductory motive and embarks on a cadenza that slowly revs the tension and momentum up to critical mass. Finally, the solo violin embarks on a sizzling, blistering dance—the rondo theme—based almost entirely on the three-note introductory motive. This Russian theme will return periodically, like a refrain, after various contrasting sections of music. The first such contrasting section consists of a throbbing, rough-hewn, peasant dance. Typical of Russian folk music, this dance consists of a short phrase repeated (in this case, six times), getting faster, louder, and wilder as it progresses. The second contrasting section features a more lyric but still folk-like melody heard initially as a dialogue between an oboe, clarinet, and bassoon. This third movement ends with some of the most brilliant music ever written for the violin—an energetic coda that concludes the movement and the concerto. ■

Bedřich Smetana—*Má Vlast*

Lecture 18

Bedřich Smetana almost single-handedly created an identifiably Czech national compositional style and is universally recognized as the father of Czech music. His masterwork is a six-movement orchestral work called *Má vlast*, which means "My Country." Each of its six movements describes some aspect of the Bohemian landscape, Bohemian history, or Bohemian legend. Today, *Má vlast* remains one of the most important orchestral works of the 19th century and the single most significant Czech nationalist composition in the repertoire.

Bedřich Smetana was born in the Bohemian town of Litomyšl on March 2, 1824. He was a formidable prodigy who began playing the violin parts in Haydn's string quartets by the age of five, playing piano in public at six, and composing by eight. Smetana's musical career was just getting off the ground when the revolutionary movement of 1848 intervened. He became a rabid Czech nationalist at a time when the Czech nation was part of the Vienna-based Austrian Empire. As a result, his life and music are thoroughly intertwined with the national politics of the 19th century.

In 1856, Smetana relocated to Göteborg, Sweden's second largest city, and his appearances as a pianist and conductor were greeted with acclaim. He opened a music school, and immediately had more applicants than he could enroll. In 1857, Smetana made a pilgrimage to Weimar in Germany in order to meet his idol, Franz Liszt. Over the next few years, Smetana composed a series of Liszt-inspired, nationalistic **symphonic poems**: orchestral works in which the form is determined by the story being told. In doing so, Smetana embraced the modern belief that the music of the future must be a composite art, a melding of literature and music.

Smetana moved to Prague in 1862 and eventually established himself as the most important Czech nationalist composer of his generation. In 1866, he was appointed conductor of the provisional theater, and for the next decade, he became a tireless exponent of Czech music and opera. He composed

eight Czech-language operas, the second of which—*The Bartered Bride* (of 1866)—remains part of the international repertoire to this day.

Má Vlast

Smetana's great masterwork is not an opera—it is a series of six symphonic poems composed across seven years, from 1872–1879. Collectively entitled *Má vlast*, which means "My Country," the work is a glorification of Bohemia's history, landscape, and people; Smetana dedicated it to the city of Prague. Our survey of the piece will focus on the national character and programmatic content of the first four of the six symphonic poems that make up *Má vlast*.

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Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884) dedicated his great masterwork, *Má vlast*, to the city of Prague.

Movement 1—"Vyšehrad"

Vyšehrad is a rock above the Vlatava River in Prague. The title of this first symphonic poem is "Vyšehrad," meaning literally "the rock." The name became synonymous with the castle of the first Czech kings that was built there in the 11th century. The opening symphonic poem is cast in sonata form. Much more important, though, is its programmatic content: The movement is about the mythical glory days when Czechs ruled Czechs—an era of time wreathed in the mists of bardic memory. The introduction features two harps, which represent lumír, the mythological Slavonic bard who sings of the events that have taken place on Vyšehrad. This first theme of the sonata form, called the Vyšehrad theme, is a tranquil and stately theme that emerges even as the harp of the bard continues to strum, and it represents the glory and mystery of Czech times past.

The second theme of the sonata form is the so-called glory theme; with its appearance, a vision of ancient magnificence takes shape. The exposition concludes with a majestic version of the Vyšehrad theme followed by the glory theme. The lengthy development section that follows is meant to depict the chivalrous deeds and combats that occurred within the castle

during its glory days. Those days are gone, and thus, after one last splendid version of the Vyšehrad theme, the movement heads toward its hazy, nostalgic conclusion.

Movement 2—"Vlatava"
The most famous movement of *Má vlast* is the second, entitled "Vlatava" (or "The Moldau," as in the river). The movement is a virtual soundtrack for an imagined journey from the river's source, winding southward through central Bohemia and Prague until it empties into the Elbe. The movement consists of eight episodes.

- Episode 1: The two sources of the river—one portrayed by a flute and the other by a clarinet—merge into the famous river theme.
- Episode 2: The river flows through a forest and past a hunt in progress.
- Episode 3: A rustic village wedding takes place on the bank of the river.
- Episode 4: The water sprites engage in a moonlit dance.
- Episode 5: The Vlatava theme returns.
- Episode 6: The Vlatava swirls through the rapids of the St. John River.
- Episode 7: The Vlatava theme again resumes.
- Episode 8: The Vlatava salutes Vyšehrad as it flows by, represented by the Vyšehrad theme from the first movement.

The fame of this movement rests on the tune that represents the Vlatava. This thematic melody—with its long-short rhythms, its smooth, step-wise motion, and its constant shift between major and minor—has attained iconic status as a Slavic folk melody, a tune that seems to epitomize Czech music. In fact, it is not a Czech folk melody; it is actually a beloved Swedish folk

tune that Smetana had heard once in Göteborg. Regardless, the music is Czech because Smetana says it's Czech and because, for him, the river theme reflects Czech national character.

Movement 3—"Šárka"

The legend of Šárka grew out of events that occurred during a war in 7th-century Bohemia, during which the Amazon Šárka led an army of women in rebellion against the rule of men. Šárka's rage and fury are well portrayed by the movement's opening, in which Šárka's theme is played. It is passionate and lyric and gives us a glimpse of the woman beneath the anger. The music that follows depicts the horses and jangling swords of the men as they approach from afar. As the horsemen approach, Šárka's pathetic bleating is portrayed by a clarinet. Ctirad, one of the knights on horseback, is portrayed by the 'cellos. The two sing a love duet (via their instrumental alter egos), and Ctirad passionately declares his love for Šárka.

In 1857, Smetana made a pilgrimage to Weimar in Germany in order to meet his idol, Franz Liszt.

The mead makes its rounds, and a leaping polka depicts the increasingly drunken party. This music eventually quiets as a low bassoon depicts the snoring of the men. A solo horn alerts the Amazons that the men are asleep. Šárka (in the guise of the clarinet) sings a song of passionate regret before giving the command to slaughter the men. The command is given, the massacre ensues, and a bellowing trombone depicts a cry of victory that concludes the movement.

Movement 4—"From Bohemia's Meadows and Forests"

The most sublime of all the orchestral poems that make up *Má vlast* is the fourth, which is entitled "From Bohemia's Meadows and Forests." Like the varied landscape he seeks to depict, this movement is filled with rustic, song-like themes that are just related enough as to sound as if they belong together but not so much alike that the movement sounds melodically one-dimensional. It is a brilliant movement that is organized in four large sections.

The first large section is introductory and impressionistic in nature; it is our first impression of Bohemia, which is one of awe and majesty that is created by fast, repeated melodic patterns in the winds and strings that frame massive, sustained harmonies. The second large section of the movement is about nature. The thematic centerpiece of the section is the nature theme—a broad, pastoral theme heard initially in the horns.

The third large section of the symphonic poem is about rural man and the presumably unspoiled character of those who live in the bosom of nature. Smetana creates this impression by initially alternating a polka theme with the nature theme we just heard. The fourth and final section of the movement is about nature and man, as all the principal themes of the movement alternate in a medley-like manner. It is the perfect conclusion to the set of four symphonic poems composed between September of 1874 and October of 1875. Three years later, Smetana returned to *Má vlast* and composed two more movements, "Tábor" in 1878 and "Blanik" in 1879. ■

Important Term

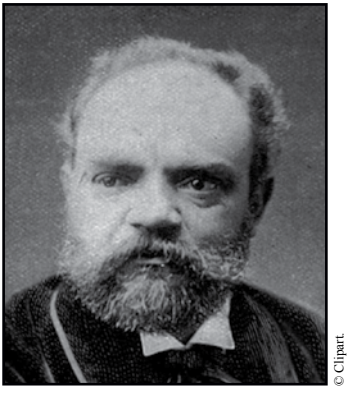
symphonic poem: Orchestral work in which the form is determined by the story being told.

Dvořák—Symphony No. 8

Lecture 19

Antonín Dvořák posed a conundrum for the musical community of his time. He was, by every appearance, a rather unsophisticated, middle-class family man. However, he was a multidimensional creature and so is his music. Dvořák's gracious musical surfaces do not exhibit a lack of compositional sophistication; in fact, he was as technically skilled a composer as any, and he composed more successful works in more diverse genres—from opera to symphony to concerto to chamber music—than any of his contemporaries since Mozart.

Antonín Dvořák was born on September 8, 1841, in the Bohemian village of Nelahozeves, located on the left bank of the Vlatava River. He was born into a working-class family and would have followed in his father's (and grandfather's) footsteps as a butcher had his musical talent not intervened. From 1857 to 1859—from the ages of 16 to 18—Dvořák studied music at the Prague Organ School, which was a music conservatory with a curriculum dedicated to church music. It was here that Dvořák developed into a professional-grade violinist and violist.



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The music of Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) was discovered by Brahms, to whom Dvořák owes his fame and fortune.

In 1862, Dvořák got a job playing in the Bohemian Provisional Theater Orchestra, in which he eventually became principal violist. In 1866, the Czech composer Bedřich Smetana was appointed conductor, at which time Smetana's rabid Czech nationalism and Czech-language operas had a decisive influence on Dvořák. In 1871—at the age of 30—Dvořák quit the orchestra and dedicated himself to composing.

Dvořák's music was discovered by Johannes Brahms in 1877. Brahms's publisher, Fritz Simrock, commissioned Dvořák to compose his first set of *Slavonic Dances*—which became wildly popular. In the space of 18 months, Antonín Dvořák went from being a poor, unknown composer to an internationally known composer. Altogether, Dvořák composed nine symphonies. Like his friend and mentor Johannes Brahms, Dvořák was a compositional hybrid: His work combined the genres and musical forms of 18th-century classicism with the harmonic language, expressive content, and nationalist flavor of 19th-century romanticism.

Symphony No. 8 in G Major

Dvořák's compositional style—his musical voice—is marked by a number of elements that are recognizably Czech. These elements include his use of Czech dance rhythms; his tendency to immediately repeat the first motivic idea of a melody before going on to continue and complete the phrase (which is characteristic of much Czech folk music); and his direct, memorable, song-like themes. These folkloric elements are embedded in classical-era genres and musical forms and are deployed with impeccable compositional craft. Our examination of Dvořák's Symphony no. 8 will include identifying those musical elements that give it its Czech sound and observing the meticulous, classical era–derived forms and craft with which it is assembled.

Movement 1

Dvořák's Symphony no. 8 is billed as being set in the key of G major, but in reality, the home key of this symphony should be given as G major and G minor. The symphony is characterized by constant and often dramatic shifts between major and minor, between light and dark, between dancing joy and funereal grief. Dvořák makes his paradoxical tonal intentions known by beginning the first movement sonata form with a quiet, chorale-like introduction set not in G major but in the dark and somber key of G minor. The G minor introduction casts a melancholy, autumnal mood over the opening of the symphony.

Suddenly, the mode shifts to major, and a delicate and sprightly theme emerges in a solo flute. The sense of the arrival of daylight and springtime is a function of the shift to G major and the birdsong-like character of the first theme as played by a bird-like flute. The first theme concludes with the brief

modulating bridge that transits toward theme 2, which is set in two parts. In part one, a sweet, rocking tune is heard in the strings that is accompanied by bird-like tweets and twitters from a flute and clarinet. The second part of theme 2 is entirely different: The mode shifts back to minor, and the thematic melody itself becomes almost march-like.

The sort of tonal swing between major and minor we hear within theme 2 is characteristic of much Czech folk music. It is also a musical dichotomy that's been present since the very beginning of the movement, with its introduction in G minor and first theme in G major. Thus, a generalized aspect of Czech folk music becomes a tonal device to be exploited by Dvořák, providing an example of how Dvořák, master composer and Czech nationalist, are indivisible from one another.

The exposition concludes with a brisk cadential theme followed by a lengthy decrescendo and thinning out of orchestral forces, which effectively dissipates the energy of the exposition and paves the way for the development section. The development section features some glorious writing for the wind instruments, particularly the flute. After all, it is the sound of the flute (and the other high winds) that evoked birds during the course of the exposition, and that avian presence is as much a theme of this first movement as the melodies themselves.

The second half of the development section presents a very different kind of music: Increasingly dramatic and dominated by the dark tonal color of minor, it builds up to an explosive climax with the return of the introductory chorale and, with it, the key of G minor at the beginning of the recapitulation. The once-somber introductory chorale returns and is played by the brass as trembling string scales surround it. Suddenly, the music quiets, the energy dissipates, and the birdsong-like theme 1 restores the key of G major and a degree of expressive balance to the movement. The relief provided by that return to G major is short lived because theme 2 soon follows, set back in the key of G minor. It isn't until the conclusion of the movement that the alternating expressive states—darkness and light, as represented by G minor and G major—are finally resolved in favor of G major.

Movement 2
The second movement is even more expressively paradoxical than the first. This second movement is probably the most ironic movement of orchestral music Dvořák ever composed, as it juxtaposes—without transition or any programmatic explanation—musical episodes of the most extreme expressive contrast.

The movement begins with a muted and melancholy funeral march in C minor. The funeral march is next turned into birdsong in a folk-like passage in which each phrase alternates between C major and C minor. This birdsong-inspired but melancholy version of the funeral march reaches a climax in C minor, after which begins the most unexpected of episodes: a light and bubbly version of the funeral march theme in C major heard over falling scales and plucked notes in the strings. This light and bubbly music continues until the triumphant passage that follows it climaxes at exactly the halfway mark of the movement. The movement continues until the end as a paradoxical, ironic juxtaposition of the funereal with the joyful—the pastoral with the tragic.

Movement 3
This movement is a perfect example of Dvořák as a classical romantic. This third movement is structured as a three-part, A–B–A form dance movement—a structure going back to the three-part minuet and trio dance movements of the classical era. Contrastingly, the outer A sections are a dark-toned, Viennese-style waltz set in the key of G minor, and the middle B section features an energized Czech dance in G major. If the opening waltz offers us a taste of Vienna, then the central section of the movement is pure Bohemia. It features a delightful, folk-flavored tune accompanied by various cross-rhythms.

Movement 4
This fourth movement, in theme and variations form, begins with a fanfare based on the opening rhythm of a 15th-century Czech Hussite hymn entitled "Ye Who Are God's Warriors." The fanfare is followed by a processional-type tune of Dvořák's own invention: the theme of the ensuing variations. The second and fourth variations begin with the solo flute, which played such a major role in the birdsong-inspired themes of the first and second

movements. The movement continues to freely vary the theme—alternating more exciting variations with more intimate ones and major-mode music with minor-mode music—until an extended version of the theme returns, which is followed by an extraordinary conclusion. ■

Dvořák—Concerto for 'Cello

Lecture 20

Antonín Dvořák composed his Concerto for 'Cello between November 8, 1894, and February 9, 1895. It was the last work he completed during his American residence, although Dvořák rewrote the very end of the concerto in June of 1895, after returning to Bohemia and learning of his sister-in-law's death. It is a sublime work—possibly Dvořák's greatest single orchestral work and without a doubt the greatest 'cello concerto in the repertoire.

In 1892, Antonín Dvořák arrived in Hoboken, New Jersey, from Prague. At 51 years old, he was that rarest of living composers—successful, appreciated by a worldwide audience, and relatively wealthy. Dvořák was regarded by many as the second-greatest living composer after his friend Johannes Brahms. The ingratiating Czech accent with which Dvořák's music spoke made it, in reality, considerably more popular than Brahms's. Dvořák had come to the United States to take over the directorship of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City. He was in search of inspiration, which he did indeed find in the New World. So inspired, Dvořák composed some of his greatest music while living in the United States, including the Concerto for 'Cello in B Minor.

Concerto for 'Cello in B Minor

On May 27, 1895—a month after Dvořák returned to Prague—his sister-in-law Josefina died. Dvořák was heartbroken. He pulled out his presumably finished Concerto for 'Cello, removed the last four measures of the third movement, and then tacked on 67 new measures of music. This new ending features four elements: a gentle evocation of the rondo theme in B major; a quiet and wistful quote of theme 1 from the first movement; an achingly beautiful passage built from Josefina's favorite song, *Leave Me Alone*; and an exultant, fanfare-like conclusion. Dvořák's new ending is music of profound peace and resignation, of deep love and affection, of nostalgia for the past, of grief, regret, defiance, and exaltation—all rolled into one miraculous passage.

Movement 1

In terms of his compositional philosophy, Dvořák is often described by the strained but nevertheless accurate phrase "classical romantic": He was a 19th-century composer who used all the expressive, melodic, and harmonic resources of romanticism but who structured his works using the musical forms of 18th-century classicism. Double exposition form is just such a classical-era construct—a form perfected by Mozart for use in a concerto.

The first movement of Dvořák's late-19th-century Concerto for 'Cello in B Minor employs an 18th-century formal construct. Dvořák's classical leanings thus noted, there is also a very personal, expressive impulse behind his use of double exposition form in the first movement. That expressive impulse has to do with a contrast between dirge-like solemnity and lyric passion, a contrast manifested by how the orchestra and the solo 'cello actually play and perceive theme 1.

Dvořák was regarded by many as the second-greatest living composer after his friend Johannes Brahms.

When theme 1 first appears in the orchestral exposition, it is dark and dirge-like and set in the key of B minor. However, when the 'cello makes its appearance in the solo exposition and presents its version of theme 1, it shows that it is unwilling to wallow in the dark night of B minor. The 'cello represents the voice of the individual, striving against fate, and it will aspire to—and ultimately attain—a state of grace as represented by the key of B major.

Theme 1 of the orchestral exposition is set in three phrases. The first phrase—played by clarinets, bassoons, and low strings—has a solemn, funeral march–like quality. Phrase 2 begins quietly as well, but it quickly builds toward the climax that is the third and final phrase of the theme. Phrase 3 is marked "grandioso," meaning "grand," and it is magnificent, powerful, and very tragic. The theme concludes with a shimmering descent.

When the 'cello enters at the beginning of the solo exposition, it begins by passionately proclaiming the opening of theme 1 in B major before repeatedly shifting between B major and B minor. The 'cello's heroic,

major-minor version of theme 1 is distinctly Slavic in tone and powerfully masculine in spirit. Set in the upper-mid range of the 'cello, the 'cello's voice can be described as Dvořák's own, heroically battling the darkness of B minor and the fateful mood it represents. This is the large-scale story line of the first movement: the struggle between the funereal darkness of B minor and the passionate triumph of B major.

It is during the development section that the solo 'cello comes to grips with the tragic element of theme 1 and, in doing so, comes face-to-face with mortality itself. It is one of the most moving passages of music Dvořák ever composed. Marked "*molto sostenuto*," meaning "very sustained," the 'cello plays a quiet, somber, profoundly contemplative version of theme 1, accompanied by hushed string tremolos. A delicate, birdsong-inspired countermelody in the solo flute flutters high above the 'cello, representing the voice of the nightingale, which—according to legend—is the last earthly sound heard before the moment of judgment.

Having contemplated and contextualized the struggle of darkness versus light inherent in theme 1 during the course of this passage, the 'cello frees the movement from the fateful, deathly bonds represented by B minor. When theme 1 next appears—in the recapitulation—it is triumphant and radiant and set in B major. This final appearance of theme 1 leads directly to the coda and, with it, one last blaring, joyful, march-like version of theme 1. The movement ends in celebration—in B major—the polar expressive opposite of where it began.

The ongoing transformation of theme 1 is the lead story of this first movement. The sublime theme 2 represents an oasis of idyllic beauty within this otherwise rather turgid, theme 1–dominated movement. It is the back story, or the love interest—a theme designed with the lyric capabilities of the solo 'cello in mind. This exquisite theme is played by the 'cello in the solo exposition.

As we have observed, the lead story line of this movement is the transformation of theme 1 from a dirge in B minor to a triumphant march in B major. To effect this transformation, Dvořák decided to end the movement with two entirely different versions of theme 1—one dark and one light. The

most expeditious way to do this was simply to reverse the order of themes 1 and 2 in the recapitulation, which is exactly what he did.

Movement 2

Dvořák marks this second movement "*adagio ma non troppo*," meaning "slowly, but not too slowly." It is structured in four large parts, which can be schematized as A–B–B^1–A^1. The A sections are generally quiet and pastoral in mood and feature a gentle theme that we will conveniently refer to as theme A. The B sections are explosive and dramatic in mood and feature a passionate theme that we will refer to as theme B.

The first half of the opening section features the gentle and pastoral theme A, scored with the intimacy and delicacy of chamber music. This intimate, lyric, utterly magical mood is shattered with the beginning of the second part—part B—of the movement. Suddenly and unexpectedly, an impassioned passage in G minor alters the course of this previously lyric movement. The inspiration for that timber-shivering, heart-rending, emotional explosion was, almost certainly, Dvořák's sister-in-law Josefina.

The music of the fourth and final section of the second movement is music of passion, aching nostalgia, and extraordinary sweetness. At the conclusion of this magical movement, Dvořák once again creates a powerful climax through quiet, lyric intensity with the voice of the 'cello in the lead. It is a technique Dvořák will use again—to supreme effect—at the conclusion of the third and final movement.

Movement 3

Like the first movement, this third movement begins with a stark, march-like theme in B minor that will be transformed and will end triumphantly in B major. The movement begins with an introduction followed by a rondo theme in the character of a brisk, Slavic march. The two contrasting episodes of this rondo theme feature melodies of great lyric beauty.

The first contrasting episode features a theme in D major played by the 'cello and accompanied by a countermelody in the clarinet. The second contrasting episode features a rich, Slavic-tinted theme of great dramatic breadth. Like the first contrasting theme, this one is also initially set in the key of D major.

The cumulative dramatic impact of these lyric, major-mode contrasting themes is decisive: When the rondo theme returns for the third and final time, it is transformed, and what was once dark and dramatic in B minor, is now dazzling and triumphant in B major. The coda immediately follows, proclaiming the heartbreaking story of Josefina. ■

Rimsky-Korsakov—*Scheherazade*

Lecture 21

The history of 20th-century Russian, Russian expatriate, and Soviet composers begins with Nikolay Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov, who was best known for his 15 operas in his lifetime. However, he is best known today for three incredibly popular orchestral works that were composed within a span of 18 months in the 1880s—including *Scheherazade*, which is filled with high-profile themes and thematic developments that are all stunningly orchestrated. A symphony in all but name, *Scheherazade* is a tour de force of program music and compositional unity.

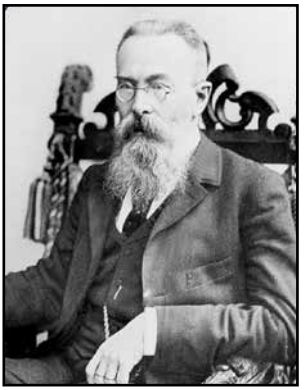
The story of Nikolay Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* comes from a collection of Middle Eastern and South Asian folk tales initially compiled during the 9th century entitled *The Thousand and One Nights*. What all the various versions and editions of *The Thousand and One Nights* have in common is a literary device built around a Persian princess named Scheherazade that frames each of the stories as it is told in turn. Among the best known of these folk tales are the stories of Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sinbad the Sailor.

The story of Scheherazade begins with the Persian Sultan Shahryar, who, after having been betrayed by his first wife, marries a new virgin each night and each day has the previous night's wife beheaded. A virgin named Scheherazade decides to put an end to the slaughter and volunteers to spend the night with the sultan. She enthralls the sultan with a story that, because of the coming dawn, she cannot finish. He spares her life so that she might finish it the next night, which she does, only to begin another story that remains unfinished at dawn. After 1,001 nights, the sultan realizes he loves Scheherazade, spares her life, and makes her his queen.

Scheherazade

Just as *The Thousand and One Nights* is framed by the story of Scheherazade, each of the four movements of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* features a melody that represents the voice of Scheherazade. That melody is a sinuous,

beguiling and stereotypically exotic Middle Eastern tune played by a solo violin. The bold, stentorian music that begins the fourth (as well as the first) movement represents the voice of the sultan, which is the polar opposite of Scheherazade's: imperious, abrupt, lacking in subtlety and nuance, and terrifying. In the beginning of the first movement, during which we meet both the sultan and Scheherazade, a deathly chorale follows the sultan's opening statement, which is in turn followed by the glowing, pacifying, healing voice of Scheherazade.



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Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) was 27 years old when he took a teaching position at the St. Petersburg State Conservatory.

Movement 1

Entitled "The Sea and Sinbad's Ship," the first movement—following the introductory passage that features the "voices" of Sultan Shahryar and Scheherazade—is an extended chunk of sailing and water music. Near the conclusion of the so-called ocean theme, which is derived from the voice of the sultan, we hear the rolling, triplet-dominated accompaniment and the huge ocean swells depicted by the timpani. Twice during the course of this first movement the oceanic music recedes and is replaced by the voice of Scheherazade, which ends the movement with a climactic passage that tells its oceanic story.

Interpreting this thematic relationship metaphorically, we could say that the sultan, with his anger and omnipotent power, is personified during the first movement by the stormy, all-embracing sea on whose waves rides the frail and seemingly defenseless ship that is Scheherazade. However, in his autobiography, Rimsky-Korsakov cautions us not to take our search for programmatic interpretations too far.

Movement 2

From a programmatic point of view, the title of this movement, "The Story of the Kalendar Prince," is much less helpful than it might seem because there are at least three different stories in *The Thousand and One Nights*

about three different Kalendar princes, and Rimsky-Korsakov does not tell us which particular Kalendar prince his movement refers to. A Kalendar is a Sufi Muslim who has chosen the path of poverty and eternal wandering in order to attain enlightenment. The Kalendar prince stories in *The Thousand and One Nights* all contain a prince who masquerades as a Kalendar for some purpose or another.

In his autobiography, Rimsky-Korsakov cautions us not to take our search for programmatic interpretations too far.

The movement, which is cast in large-scale A–B–A form, is a symphonic scherzo in everything but name. It begins with the voice of Scheherazade and continues with a theme that is undoubtedly meant to evoke the slumming prince of the title—a lyric, slightly jaunty tune set for bassoon. The outer A sections of this second movement consist of a series of ongoing variations of the Kalendar prince theme. These variations put Rimsky-Korsakov's skills as an orchestrator in the highest relief, as each version of the theme is scored for incrementally more instruments.

The climactic moment of the movement occurs near the end of the movement, during which the once-quiet bassoon theme now blasts out of the full orchestra. The contrasting middle section of this movement—the B section—is a spiky, fanfare-dominated passage of music based on the voice of the sultan from the beginning of the first movement.

Movement 3

Just as the second movement never addresses precisely which Kalendar prince Rimsky-Korsakov is referring to, neither does this third movement—titled "The Young Prince and the Young Princess"—address precisely which young prince and princess he is referring to. Ultimately, however, the specifics are unnecessary because this slow movement is about romance—pure and simple. Like the second movement, this third movement is structured in three-part, A–B–A form. Like the first and second movements, the process of variation dominates its musical substance as thematic melodies, once stated, are repeated in ever-changing permutations and orchestration.

The outer A sections feature the love music: a lush Slavic thematic melody played initially by the strings. Gentle, sinuous, arching roulades—played first by a solo clarinet and later by a solo flute—represent the lovers themselves. The middle B section of the movement describes a stately and exotic procession. The music in this B section, crisp and upbeat, marks a further variation of the love theme in the opening A section. In the opening of the B section, the theme is played by solo wind instruments accompanied by plucked strings, a snare drum, a triangle, and a tambourine.

At the end of the movement, it is Rimsky-Korsakov's iridescent orchestration that elevates this music from the merely beautiful to the sublime, creating a sense of color and nuance. He achieves these amazing orchestrational effects by treating the orchestra not as a series of discrete sections—winds, brass, strings, and percussion—but, rather, as a chamber group of individual instruments that can be mixed and matched in a seemingly infinite number of different ways.

Movement 4

This fourth movement is the most program-specific in *Scheherazade* and contains three episodes: "The Festival in Baghdad," "The Sea," and "The Ship Goes to Pieces on a Rock." It is also a summation of what has gone before it, as almost every major theme—from the voices of Scheherazade, the sultan, and the ocean theme of the first movement to the Kalendar prince music from the second movement to the processional music of the third movement—reappears in some form.

"The Festival in Baghdad" episode builds up to a maniacal climax of crackling brass and explosive orchestral splashes of color. Suddenly and most cinematically, it cuts to Sinbad's storm-tossed ship as represented by the ocean theme from the first movement. Huge gales of wind, depicted by rising and falling woodwinds and strings, and waves, depicted by bellowing trombones and crashing cymbals, drive Sinbad's ship against the rocks. The sea calms as Rimsky-Korsakov's jewel-like orchestration invokes the clearing sky and brilliant colors of the post-cataclysmic sunset.

For the last time, the voice of Scheherazade appears, bringing the movement to its conclusion. Scheherazade's voice at the end of the movement

tells us unequivocally that it lives: The sultan's reign of terror has been smashed, just like Sinbad's ship, on the rocks. It is a stunning conclusion to a stunning work. ■

Richard Strauss—*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Lecture 22

Richard Strauss's music straddles the artistic fence between the last stage of German romanticism and the experimental modernism of the early 20th century. His symphony *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is a multi-movement orchestral work based on Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical poetic masterwork of the same title. Strauss musically interprets Nietzsche's prologue and eight chapter headings, and the different movements evolve from one to the next to create an integrated compositional whole.

Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Zarathustra was an ancient Persian prophet who was born, according to modern scholarly speculation, in 628 B.C.E. in what today is suburban Teheran. In his philosophical poem, Friedrich Nietzsche used the historical Zarathustra to spout his own ideas about the purpose of human life and the fate of humankind. Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* consists of 80 fairly brief discourses that are framed by a literary device in which Zarathustra retreats from humanity to the solitude of his cave, emerging periodically to share with others what he has learned during his isolation.

Richard Strauss's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

From the 80 chapter headings in Nietzsche's original, Richard Strauss selected eight that inspired him artistically. Beginning with a prologue, Strauss arranged the order of those eight titles to serve his artistic end: to convey the evolution of the human race. It is this ongoing evolution—in musical terms, thematic development—that holds the eight movements of Strauss's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* together. Richard Strauss utilizes two principal melodic themes in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: one that represents nature and another that represents the aspirations of mankind.

Introduction—"Prologue"

Nietzsche began his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* with an introductory chapter he called a prologue. Strauss reprinted Nietzsche's preamble verbatim at the beginning of his score. The introductory monologue depicts Zarathustra

as a rising sun; this prologue inspired the first and most famous part of Strauss's composition.

The introduction begins with four measures of low Cs played by the basses, the contrabass bassoon, and a pipe organ. The effect of these opening measures is simple yet spectacular. This quiet low C evokes the primal power of creation—the primeval moment before emptiness gave way to substance. Out of this miasmic rumbling, matter coalesces into form as Strauss's nature theme emerges: C–G–C. This nature theme is a rising melodic idea featuring the elemental intervals of a perfect fifth followed by a perfect fourth, played in unison by four trumpets.

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Richard Strauss (1864–1949) lived for 85 years and composed a lot of extraordinary music from the beginning of his life to the end.

The four trumpets intone the nature theme four times during the prologue. Consisting only of the intervals of a perfect octave, fifth, and fourth, the nature theme does not contain enough pitch information to indicate whether the music is in C major or C minor. And so, after each of the first two statements of the nature theme, the full orchestra enters and alternates between major and minor.

It is only after the third iteration of the nature theme that the music settles, gloriously and resplendently, in major. The passage reaches its climax on its final C major harmony, which is scored for full orchestra and pipe organ. Strauss reinforces the vaguely religious atmosphere created by the presence of the pipe organ by allowing it to sustain the C major harmony for a full two beats after the orchestra cuts out. The body of the work follows.

Part 1—"Of the Backworldsmen"

By "backworldsmen," Nietzsche is referring to primitive, pre-enlightened humanity, which feeds on the easy comforts of religion. The opening of this part depicts these groveling backworldsmen crawling through the muck of

ignorance and fear. A few moments later, a bit of Catholic plainchant appears in the horns, which is followed by a sweet hymn tune in the strings—an evocation of the Christian faith in which these backworldsmen have naively placed their faith. This hymn music builds up to a terrific and very beautiful climax. But for Nietzsche and Strauss, it is a false beauty that represents a spiritual opiate for the masses.

Part 2—"Of the Great Longing"
The focus in this part shifts to Zarathustra and his great yearning to enlighten and elevate humanity. That yearning is projected by long, predominately upward melodic gestures.

Part 3—"Of Joys and Passions"
The swirling, agitated expressive mood that concluded part 2 continues without interruption into part 3. The dark C minor sweep of most of this part would seem to depict more passion than joy. It is Zarathustra's passion, borne of wisdom and empathy for mankind that must be shared, that Strauss describes in this part. As this part reaches its climax, the trombones blast out a brief melodic idea that will become a key thematic element for the rest of the piece. Usually referred to as Zarathustra's satiety theme, we will refer to it as Zarathustra's full-to-bursting theme.

The nature theme and the full-to-bursting theme are the two expressive poles between which Strauss's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* spins. The nature theme is as pure and primal as the natural world it purports to represent. The full-to-bursting theme, filled with dissonant intervals and chromaticism, is complex and harmonically ambiguous—a metaphor for the thoughts, actions, and wisdom of Zarathustra.

Part 4—"The Grave Song"
"The Grave Song" is a dirge in B minor, slow and dark music that counterbalances the manic passion of the previous part. The movement is filled with sinuous, almost weeping melodic ideas, many of which—like the oboe melody that begins the part—grow out of part 2, which describes Zarathustra's great longing. This music would seem to represent Zarathustra's painful realization that beyond his great wisdom and longing to share it lies eternal sleep.

Part 5—"Of Science"

Nietzsche's poem describes an old magician whose learning is based on superstition and whose words ensnare the innocent. For Nietzsche, the magician—who manipulates and imprisons those around him—is a combination of the false prophets of all organized religions. Strauss's interpretation of Nietzsche's passage is programmatically and musically ingenious, setting the bulk of this part as a fugue.

In his philosophical poem, Friedrich Nietzsche used the historical Zarathustra to spout his own ideas about the purpose of human life and the fate of humankind.

The fugue subject begins with the nature theme, but from that point on, the fugue subject is anything but natural, as it weaves its way through all 12 chromatic pitches in the span of its four measures. The fugue eventually takes flight in a long, lyric, incredibly high passage before it crashes and burns as the nature theme, played by a trumpet, alternates with a violent and compressed version of the full-to-bursting theme in the winds and strings. This explosive conclusion leads directly to the expressive center of the piece.

Part 6—"The Convalescent"

Doubt assails Nietzsche's Zarathustra. He leaps from his bed in his cave, screeching like a crazy person. He passes out and, on awakening, self-cleanses with a seven-day fast. Having recovered from his funk, he finds himself prepared to return to the world of men to preach his message.

The section begins with Strauss's depiction of Zarathustra's agonized self-doubt, as the fugue and the spiritual exploitation it represents now reaches its climax. Only slowly out of that terrifying silence and the deep, gloomy music that follows does the person of Zarathustra regain his consciousness. When he does, it is to the sound of birdsong. Finally, Zarathustra finds his voice, as portrayed by a solo 'cello singing a rising melodic idea drawn from part 2.

Part 7—"The Dance Song"
This dance movement remains the most controversial part of Strauss's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, as the convalescent Zarathustra, having regained his voice and sense of mission celebrates with a Viennese waltz. While most enjoy a Viennese waltz, the image of the bearded, robed, preaching Zarathustra waltzing around his cave to the accompaniment of happily singing birds is a bit too vivacious for us to handle. Rather than a monumental lapse of artistic judgment, the waltz might be an act of irony on Strauss's part. Either way, the waltz builds up to a rip-roaring climax that showcases Zarathustra's full-to-bursting theme.

Part 8—"Song of the Night Wanderer"
It is midnight. A bell chimes 12 times as Zarathustra's full-to-bursting theme swirls about. Slowly, the maniacal energy flags and dissipates. After the opening minute of this eighth and final part, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* ends quietly and mysteriously.

Melodic ideas associated with Zarathustra's longing settle in the key of B major. At the same time, the nature theme appears in low, plucked strings set in C major. The final moments of the piece alternate between the music of Zarathustra—of man—as represented by B major and the music of nature, as represented by the nature theme set in C major. Back and forth the music swings, as ethereal chords in B major alternate with the nature theme in C major. The piece concludes on the same low C on which it began with an aching sense of irresolution. ■

Mahler—Symphony No. 5

Lecture 23

Gustav Mahler was one of the greatest compositional technicians who ever lived, and a principal reason his music hangs together so beautifully and moves us so deeply is his consummate craftsmanship. In his Symphony no. 5, Mahler uses the traditional tonal musical language to convey a very modern message. As a result, the symphony is a most disturbing musical tract that seeks to describe the grieving process: the conscious and unconscious reactions of the living to the death of someone very close.

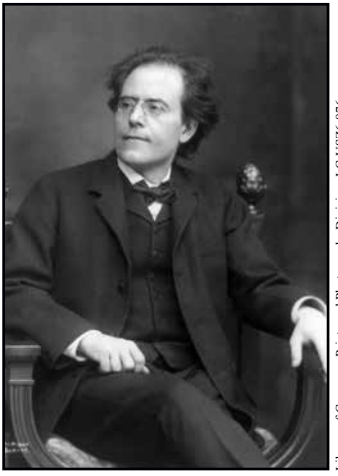
Gustav Mahler, who was born in 1860 and died in 1911, was not just a superb composer but one of the great conductors of his day and among the greatest opera conductors of all time. He was an extraordinarily gifted composer who invested his symphonies with all the narrative, drama, and musical variety of opera. Mahler spent his life searching for answers to unanswerable questions regarding the purpose of life and death, the nature of the universe, of love, of God, of redemption, of grief, and of resignation. He was no less a philosopher than Nietzsche; he was a philosopher who used the medium of the symphony to explore a realm of ideas that others wrote about in prose.

Symphony No. 5

In terms of its expressive content, Mahler's Fifth Symphony goes far beyond the programmatic storytelling of his first four symphonies and seeks, rather, to depict the progressive emotional states of the grieving process. It is an example of **expressionism**—the contemporary art movement that celebrated inner emotional states as the highest truth. Using a new method of composition, Mahler composed his Fifth Symphony in full score rather than in a short score that was later orchestrated, which means that the Fifth was conceived as a complete orchestral entity from the beginning.

Mahler's Fifth Symphony is cast in five movements. These five movements are, in turn, grouped into three large parts. Part 1 consists of movements 1 and 2. These two movements are about death, the rituals that surround death,

and the immediate emotional responses of the living to death and those rituals. Part 2 consists of movement 3. It is a lengthy, dancing scherzo that confirms that where there is rhythm—meaning, in this case, a heartbeat—life will go on. Part 3 of the symphony consists of movements 4 and 5. Movement 4 is the famous "*Adagietto*," Mahler's sublimely beautiful tribute to the life-sustaining power of love. The fifth and final movement is a giddy reaffirmation of life, which looks back on the earlier movements—and the emotional distance that has been traversed—before concluding triumphantly.



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Gustav Mahler (1860–1911) famously said, "The symphony must be like the world; it must embrace everything."

Movement 1

This first movement begins with a stark fanfare for solo trumpet set in the key of C-sharp minor. This fanfare announces—without equivocation or sentiment—that we are in the presence of death. Across the span of this first movement, this fanfare of death will reappear in assorted guises, each time representing the implacable presence of death. Various other themes will emerge in response to this fanfare of death—themes that trace the progressive emotional reactions of the living to death.

Immediately following the opening fanfare, a numb, quiet funeral march plods forth. This music represents the rituals that surround death—from removal of the corpse to the funeral and burial. The mourners are dazed, and it is ritual that helps them get through the first days following a loss.

As the numbness begins to wear off, it is replaced by crushing grief. This second large section of the movement is the grieving theme. With the trumpet again in the lead, this music—violent, angular, and unrestrained—marks the terrible revelation that the death is real.

The next contrasting episode emerges halfway through the movement as a quiet, gentle passage representing consolation momentarily lightens the mood. For this temporary moment of consolation, Mahler quotes the melody of a song he had just composed that was based on a collection of poems by the German romantic poet Friedrich Rückert. The poems capture a parent's attempt to bear the most devastating grief—the death of a child—which Mahler tries to console in this first movement.

The poems capture a parent's attempt to bear the most devastating grief—the death of a child—which Mahler tries to console in this first movement.

The movement concludes as dismally as it began. The music arrives at the grave site; a brass-dominated choir sings a final hymn before the funeral fanfare is heard for the last time. A drumroll, trumpet, and flute mark the end of the ceremony, which is followed by a forlorn pause. Finally, a loud, low string pizzicato concludes the movement.

Movement 2

With the passage of a little time, the funereal numbness and grief of the first movement have morphed into blinding rage as a result of the loss of a loved one and of the feeling that death is inevitable. The furious introduction that initiates the movement is followed by the roiling storm theme, which eventually collapses, utterly spent after having sustained such a soul-searing level of emotion.

Like the funeral fanfare of the first movement, this storm theme returns periodically across the span of this second movement, a constant reminder of our rage. Interspersed among these restatements of the storm theme—and sometimes heard simultaneously with the storm theme—are various new themes that represent further emotional steps in the grieving process as well as references back to the first movement.

Following the storm theme that begins the movement, a rising, singing, longing melody referred to as the **elegy** theme makes its first appearance. This theme is sad, though not aggrieved, and melancholy, though not out of

control. It is an **elegy**: a song expressing sorrow for one who has died. It is grief in the process of being contextualized.

Following the more subdued emotions represented by the elegy theme, the violent storm theme returns four more times, a reminder that grieving is a process. Nevertheless, a fleeting moment of joy bursts forth near the end of the movement, a momentary glimpse of what life might again be—once enough time has passed. This joyful moment, an inspired chorale in D major that is very brief, is an affirmation of life and hope. This second movement, which began so viciously, concludes with a marvelously strange, ethereal coda that simply evaporates, bringing this first large part of the symphony to its close in a state of emotional limbo.

Movement 3

This massive double scherzo comprises the second of the three large parts of the symphony. A symphonic scherzo is an up-tempo middle movement structured as a large-scale A–B–A. A **double scherzo** is a five-part form in which there are two middle B sections separated by three A sections: A–B–A–B–A. Mahler's double scherzo—with its many dance-like themes, developments, and recapitulations—goes so far beyond even that form as to render any schematic useless.

This movement reactivates the body and soul of the symphony through dance. The dances featured run the gamut from a rustic three step called a *Ländler* to a melancholy Viennese waltz. The opening *Ländler* begins with a swaggering horn call scored for four horns, which—after the twilight conclusion of the second movement—represents a very new kind of musical world. This is music in which the dance becomes a metaphor for life itself. The frenzied conclusion of the movement features music that looks only forward—music devoid of nostalgia or melancholy.

Movement 4

This fourth movement, "*Adagietto*" (which means "fairly slow"), is today the single most famous movement Mahler ever composed, thanks in large part to the Italian director Luchino Visconti, who featured it in his 1971 film *Death in Venice*. The movement is an extended song without words scored only for strings and harp that serves a brilliant expressive function within

the dramatic scheme of the symphony. Its magical, otherworldly lyricism acknowledges the loss of a loved one—gently and wistfully—without becoming hysterical. This movement seems to tell us that the mourners have mastered their grief.

Movement 5
This massive finale bustles with life, energy, tunes, and fugues. The grieving process is over, and the symphony, which started so darkly in C-sharp minor, concludes radiantly here in D major. The orchestral introduction is followed by the warm, rustic rondo theme. Together, this is music that exudes bonhomie and contentment. This movement—and the symphony—conclude with an extended version of the joyful chorale that first appeared near the end of the second movement. Back in the second movement, the chorale was a single beam of sunlight in an otherwise barren emotional landscape; it was a promise of future joy once grief had run its course. That joy—unequivocal and extravagant—occurs here at the end of the movement. Its impact represents not just a catharsis but a veritable rebirth. ■

Important Terms

double scherzo: A five-part form in which there are two middle B sections separated by three A sections: A–B–A–B–A.

elegy: A song expressing sorrow for one who has died.

expressionism: The contemporary art movement that celebrated inner emotional states as the highest truth.

Rachmaninoff—Symphony No. 2

Lecture 24

Steeped in Russian romanticism, Sergey Rachmaninoff's music is characterized by passionately long melodies, lush harmonies, and extraordinarily expressive breadth. His ability to develop thematic material over multiple movements creates a subtle but powerful sense of long-range thematic integration and unity. Rachmaninoff's solo piano music and songs are cornerstones of their repertoires, and his second and third piano concerti—along with his Symphony no. 2—continue to be audience favorites, despite predictions of their imminent departure from the repertoire.

Sergey Vasilievich Rachmaninoff was born on April 1, 1873, in Oneg—about 100 miles south of St. Petersburg. Rachmaninoff was an incredible piano prodigy with a phenomenal memory and the ability to read and instantly memorize any music. In 1885—at the age of 12—he was enrolled at the Moscow Conservatory, where he became a star among his classmates. Because Rachmaninoff's compositional voice was firmly in place by his early 20s, the modernism of the 20th century did not influence him at all. It is this fact that, coupled with Rachmaninoff's great popularity and talent as a pianist and conductor, has led his music to be disparaged and dismissed by certain composers, critics, and scholars.

Symphony No. 2 in E Minor

By 1906, Rachmaninoff's popularity in Moscow as a pianist, composer, and conductor had exploded—he was a celebrity whose presence was in constant demand. Rachmaninoff might have been just 33 years old, but he was getting tired, and his schedule left him little time to compose. He and his wife plotted an escape to Dresden, Germany, to live and work for roughly a year. Rachmaninoff began his Second Symphony immediately upon arriving in October of 1906 and finished it six months later, in April of 1907. It received its premiere in St. Petersburg on January 26, 1908, with Rachmaninoff conducting.

Movement 1

The movement begins with a lengthy, slow introduction that consists of a single achingly beautiful phrase—one that starts in the low strings, arches upward, and eventually falls back to the depths from which it began. The introduction—and indeed, much of the symphony that follows—is based on the dark and somber opening melodic idea played by the 'cellos and basses. Typical of Rachmaninoff's thematic melodies, it is a **conjunct** melodic idea; its notes follow a stepwise contour.

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Sergey Rachmaninoff (1873–1943) was born in Russia but died an expatriate in California.

The opening melodic idea that begins in the low strings immediately moves into the violins where it is stretched and elongated. It is this process of constant elongation and overlapping of the sinuous thematic melody that give the introduction its continuity—the sense that it constitutes a single giant phrase. This giant phrase reaches its climax about three minutes in, after which it slowly recedes. The climax is followed by the conclusion of the introduction, which ebbs and sinks back toward the lower reaches of the orchestra. A solo English horn plays yet another elongated version of the introductory melody, bringing the introduction to its conclusion.

From this point, the first movement is cast as a fairly traditional sonata form, which had been a standard symphonic construct since the 1750s. Consequently, at a time when composers were pushing the traditional Western musical language to its breaking point, such traditionalism on Rachmaninoff's part rankled the avant-garde, who perceived it as a rejection of everything they stood for.

The structural freedom used by Rachmaninoff in this first movement sets it apart from standard sonata form. In theme 1, four measures of repeated

harmonies set the stage. Theme 1 is a long, sinuous, stepwise melody, but it is another elongated version of the introductory melody. Then, a solo clarinet introduces theme 2. The theme itself—which initially alternates between an undulating wind choir and gently murmuring strings—is yet another manifestation of the stepwise introductory melody.

In standard sonata form, theme 1 returns in the recapitulation (more or less as originally heard) in the home key (in the case of Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony, E minor). Traditionally, then, the onset of the recapitulation has the character of an arrival. However, in this first movement, Rachmaninoff concludes the development section with a roiling, blistering version of theme 1. Only after that climactic appearance of theme 1 does the music settle down and the harmony head back to the key of E, where it arrives just in time for an elegant and extended version of theme 2.

Movement 2

The second movement is a scherzo, but it is an unpredictable one. Its relatively long length, expressive sweep, and wealth of thematic detail mark it as a most idiosyncratic movement. The opening and closing A sections are dominated by a bold figure heard initially in the horns that is accompanied by a galloping rhythmic figure in the strings. Within each of the A sections there is a contrasting, lyric passage sandwiched between appearances of the bold and galloping theme. This contrasting passage features a rich and lyric melody that is yet another manifestation of the introductory melody from the first movement.

The opening A section evaporates and ends with a hush. The central B section of the movement starts with a fortissimo bang that makes the listener jump. Having gotten our attention, the second violins initiate a brilliant fugue, which is soon played by the entire orchestra. A quick transition leads back to the A section and the eventual conclusion of the movement.

Movement 3

The third movement puts Rachmaninoff's lyric melodic gift in high relief. The movement begins as if it were already in progress, as upward winding violas introduce an outstanding melody. What follows is one of the great clarinet solos in the repertoire. It is a long, constantly developing theme,

heard upper-middle to high in the clarinet's range. This glowing, seemingly endless third movement thematic melody is a still further extension of the introductory melody first heard at the beginning of the first movement.

This ultimate manifestation of the introductory melody is now a theme that is started by the solo clarinet and completed by the violins. As the theme draws to its conclusion, the passage that began the movement reappears, though now in context as the closing phrase of the theme. Its reappearance is nothing short of sublime.

The body of the third movement is a sprawling, melodically continuous essay based on the first movement's introductory melody. About two-thirds of the way through the movement, we hear the theme played by the violins and accompanied by the closing phrase played by a solo French horn. This reprise of the theme is exquisite.

Movement 4

The fourth movement, cast in sonata form, is typical of Rachmaninoff's final movement sonata forms—its second theme carries the great expressive weight of the movement. The movement begins with an energized, joyful first theme that might sound like the movement's principal theme, but it is only a setup for the second theme.

The huge, sprawling, prototypically romantic second theme is accompanied by throbbing triplets and is based on the opening of the third movement. The theme spirals and evolves for over two minutes and finally concludes with a direct quote of the third movement introduction. It is this gigantic second theme that brings the movement to its gut-wrenching climax as it draws to its conclusion. ■

Important Term

conjunct: Melodic contour that generally features steps between pitches; such a melody will usually sound smooth and controlled.

Pull Quote Rachmaninoff was an incredible piano prodigy with a phenomenal memory and the ability to read and instantly memorize any music.

Debussy—*La Mer*

Lecture 25

For all of its sensual aesthetics—and he did indeed compose some of the most gorgeous music ever written—Claude Debussy's music is among the most revolutionary and influential ever composed. At a time when young composers were casting about for new musical models, it was Debussy's music that became their inspiration. For Debussy, visual imagery and the power of memory were the generative inspirations behind *La Mer*, a work that allows us to reconsider the genre of symphony from an entirely French point of view.

Achille-Claude Debussy, who lived from 1862 to 1918, was not just one of the greatest composers who ever lived, one whose impact is still being felt in the compositional world; he was also the quintessential French composer—a composer whose music embodies French artistic sensibility. Debussy was born in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Germain-en-Laye on August 22, 1862. In 1872—at the age of 10—Debussy entered the Paris Conservatory as a student of piano and composition. From the beginning, he was drawn to strange harmonies and harmonic progressions for the sheer sensuality of their sound.

Although the pendants at the conservatory often criticized his work, Debussy was in the process of creating a musical language that was replacing traditional forms and harmonic practice with a French language–inspired approach to sound, nuance, and color. For Debussy, the quality of sound itself became as important as the melodies, harmonies, and rhythms articulated by the sounds of the French language. He cultivated a music of blurred edges and amazing fluidity, in which ideas ebb and flow without the sharpness of articulation and form characteristic of German music.

La Mer

Debussy's *La Mer* is a work of program music; it seeks to depict, using purely instrumental forces, a pictorial narrative describing *la mer*, meaning "the sea." Like so much impressionist art, *La Mer* is about water, and thus it is about the constant movement and ever-changing play of light, color, and

reflection produced by moving water. Debussy's *La Mer* was also inspired by visual art—by the seascapes of English and Japanese artists.

Debussy gave each of the three movements of *La Mer* a descriptive title. These titles are lovely and evocative, and they act as cues when examining the piece from a programmatic point of view. Such an approach is the best way to understand the progressive dramatic line of the piece.

Movement 1—"From Dawn to Noon on the Sea"
Structurally, this movement is what today we would call an **open form**: a movement in which thematic ideas are introduced and immediately developed in a continuous sequence. This particular movement can be schematized as having an A–B–C–D–E structure—a movement with no resemblance to sonata form or anything approaching symphonic tradition.

The relative inactivity of the opening A section, which represents dawn and awakening, gives it the character of an introduction. This section opens with a pentatonic collection—a five-pitch collection (rather than the seven-pitch collections of traditional major and minor)—that imbues this passage with an exotic, vaguely East Asian sensibility.

The pre-dawn stillness is evoked by sustained double basses and a quiet timpani roll, over which slowly rising lines in the 'cellos and violas depict the first light on the horizon. This opening passage brings forth a rising-and-falling melodic idea in the oboe that will also be heard in the third movement. This introductory section of the movement concludes with a series of surging, rising, ever-louder gestures as the sun breaks the horizon.

In the second B section of the movement, the sun, fully risen, shines forth on gently rolling waves projected by undulating groups of six notes called sextuplets. Then, two contrasting melodic ideas emerge that will characterize this section of the movement: The first is a sprightly melodic idea based on the undulating wave motive, and the second is a long-limbed tune heard initially in the French horns. While the two thematic elements are contrasting, they do not conflict with one another; rather, they are presented back-to-back, and over the remainder of this section, they intertwine in such a way as to complement rather than confront each other. Finally, this second

part builds up to a striking climax, which then ebbs with a liquidity that rivals the ocean's own.

The third of the five large sections of the movement—section C—again offers something completely different. The tempo slows, the key changes, and a lush, radiant theme emerges from the 'cellos. The remainder of this section consists of two free variations of this theme, after which it, too, ebbs and evaporates. The fourth section of the movement follows: It is a quiet, mysterious **whole-tone collection** that dominates the passage, which darkens and becalms the movement in anticipation of the climactic fifth section.

For Claude Debussy (1862–1918), music was primarily a sensuous experience rather than an intellectual or ethical one.

The fifth, final, and climactic section of the movement follows. The whole-tone collection that created such a sense of stasis in the fourth section now gives way to more traditional (and familiar) major and minor pitch collections—and the effect is electric. This final section is magnificent beyond words, as the sun cuts through the fog to reveal the awesome immensity of the sea at midday.

This first movement of *La Mer* has all the thematic variety, narrative line, and expressive power of a first movement symphonic sonata form—except that it isn't in sonata form. What holds it together is Debussy's extraordinary use of thematic variety and **timbre** to evoke the passing of oceanic time from dawn to noon and from inactivity to activity. It is a spectacular movement—one that could only have been written by a native French speaker.

Movement 2—"Play of the Waves"

In terms of its form and expressive content, this second movement is often described as a scherzo. However, this movement is so idiosyncratic that it's

best to simply call it the second movement of *La Mer* to avoid associating it with a term as generic as scherzo.

The first large section of the movement contains a harmonic environment in which the key changes so rapidly and unexpectedly that there is no sense of tonal stability or gravity; instead, everything's just sliding around, which evokes an image of water. We become submerged in a motive-rich environment in which melodic ideas and textures come and go and overlap so quickly that no single idea has a chance to develop. The effect is one of a fragmented, ever-shifting melodic and timbral surface in which there is no reference to the past or anticipation of the future.

For Debussy, the quality of sound itself became as important as the melodies, harmonies, and rhythms articulated by the sounds of the French language.

Clearly, these rapidly shifting timbral, melodic, and harmonic elements are a metaphor for the rapidly shifting play of light on the ever-shifting surface of the ocean's waves. However, it is the exquisite subtlety of Debussy's evocation of this "play of the waves" that sets this music apart from any other water music in the repertoire. Like the Japanese art that inspired it, this is music that lives entirely in the moment, divorced from the narrative tradition of having a beginning, middle, and end that had characterized Western music for 500 years.

Movement 3—"Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea"

Structurally, this final movement is cast as a refrain form in which three distinct thematic entities each return across the span of the movement. The movement begins with the first thematic entity: a menacing entity that features upward-thrusting low strings (representing the sea) and downward-moving woodwinds and horns (representing the wind). If this is a dialogue between water and air, it is a stormy one.

The second thematic entity is the principal thematic melody of the movement—called the wind theme because it is played by the woodwinds over a roiling, watery accompaniment in the lower strings. This wind theme

grows directly out of the rising/falling motive that began movement 1. The third thematic entity in the third movement is a gentle hymn, and it offers a bit of calm from the otherwise stormy interaction of the other themes.

In the conclusion of the movement, the final appearance of the wind theme is played by the woodwinds and is superimposed over the gentle hymn played by the horns. This is followed by a magnificent, ringing conclusion that combines the once-ominous first thematic entity with the wind theme. It is a terrific conclusion, during which thematic ideas previously heard consecutively are now heard simultaneously. ■

Important Terms

open form: A movement in which thematic ideas are introduced and immediately developed in a continuous sequence.

timbre: Tone color.

whole-tone collection: Divides the octave into six equal segments; a whole-tone scale ascends and descends by major seconds, or whole tones.

Stravinsky—*The Rite of Spring*

Lecture 26

What Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was to the 19th century, Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* was to the 20th: the single most influential piece of music composed in its time. *The Rite of Spring*—composed in 1912 and premiered in Paris in 1913—was new and different. Although it was conceived as a ballet, Stravinsky believed—and time has proven him correct—that the music of *The Rite of Spring* was strong enough to stand by itself, without reference to the scenario that inspired it.

Igor Stravinsky was born on June 17, 1882, in Oranienbaum (today known as Lomonosov), but he grew up in St. Petersburg, which was a remarkable mix of west and east, of rich and poor, of city people and country peasants. The impressions this baroque cityscape made on him were indelible, and chief among them was the confrontation and coexistence of east and west that defined St. Petersburg's culture. The cultural duality of St. Petersburg was Stravinsky's formative creative inspiration, and it was to become the key to his artistic personality and compositional development.

The Rite of Spring

Originally conceived as a ballet, *The Rite of Spring* was inscribed by Stravinsky as having been completed on November 17, 1912. Stravinsky was behind the campaign to disassociate *The Rite of Spring* from its roots as a ballet in favor of an abstractly conceived concert work. In composing *The Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky followed a scenario: a storyline that describes, in this case, various tribal rituals presumably practiced by bronze-age Russians, culminating in human sacrifice.

The basic themes of *The Rite of Spring* are birth and death—the fundamental experiences of existence—in prehistoric Russia. Stravinsky's compositional challenge was to create music that somehow evoked the primitive, brutal environment of bronze-age Russia—music devoid of any preexisting cultural context that was earthy and ancient and, yet, in every way new. *The Rite of Spring* is set in two large parts: "Adoration of the Earth" and "The Sacrifice."

Part 1—"Adoration of the Earth"

This first large part of *The Rite of Spring* is divided into seven episodes. We will sample each of these episodes—in order—paying attention to its generative innovative musical element.

Part 1, Episode 1—"Introduction"

It is during the introduction—played before the curtain goes up—that the earth awakens from its winter's snooze. The introduction begins with what has become one of the most famous melodies in the orchestral repertoire: a sinuous, long-breathed tune played by a solo bassoon. Slowly, over the course of this introduction, other instruments—primarily solo woodwind instruments—enter with various chirping, buzzing, and slithering melodic ideas, depicting birds, plants, and bugs as they come to life and multiply. The effect is one of accumulation: The music doesn't develop or transform; rather, there are more and more sounds swirling about as the introduction progresses. This introduction is a wonderful metaphor for the accumulative growth in nature.

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Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) was inspired to compose *The Rite of Spring* based on a ballet sharing the same name.

Part 1, Episode 2—"Dance of the Adolescents"

Stravinsky decided that bronze-age musical rituals—real and imagined—would have been dominated by drums and drummed rhythms. To that end, *The Rite of Spring* calls for the largest percussion battery ever assembled for an orchestra at its time. And indeed, the musical heart of *The Rite of Spring* consists of drum-like rhythms presented with asymmetrical accentuation.

The "Dance of the Adolescents" is characterized by a single bitonal sonority that is literally drummed into our heads. This sonority consists of an E-flat **dominant** seventh chord heard over an E major triad—a sonority that resembles nothing in traditional Western harmony. For Stravinsky, this sonority is neither a consonance nor or dissonance; rather, it exists as a continuous, thumping presence that is repeated 180 times over the course of the first half of the episode.

Originally conceived as a ballet, *The Rite of Spring* was inscribed by Stravinsky as having been completed on November 17, 1912.

What makes all the repetitions of the bitonal sonority so exciting is the uneven, asymmetrical manner in which they are **accented**. This rhythmic asymmetry was inspired by the Russian language and Russian-language folk music but was distilled and elevated by Stravinsky into something far beyond its inspiration. In traditional western European music, dramatic interest is usually a product of thematic variation, contrast, or development. In the "Dance of the Adolescents," dramatic interest is created almost exclusively by rhythmic asymmetry, which is sensationally original.

The influence of the French composer Claude Debussy runs strong through *The Rite of Spring*, most notably in Stravinsky's use of sustained pitches or harmonies, called **pedals**, or repeated melodic patterns, called **ostinatos**, to underpin long stretches of music in lieu of traditional harmonic progressions. By using pedals and ostinatos in *The Rite of Spring,* Stravinsky manages to create a consistent (if static) musical underpinning without ever having to resort to traditional harmonies and harmonic progressions.

Part 1, Episode 3—"Game of Abduction"

This swirling, high-energy mating ritual reaches its thrilling conclusion with asymmetrically arrayed accents. The conclusion produces a rocking rhythmic wave of music in which rhythmic asymmetry is the reason it exists.

Part 1, Episode 4—"Round Dances of Spring"
The "Round Dances of Spring" is yet another rhythmically powerful and eventually violent episode. However, it begins and ends with a quiet prelude and postlude. The prelude is a primitive-sounding melody played by clarinets and accompanied by a continuous trill (therefore a pedal) in the flutes. The primitive quality of this melody is due in largest part to the pitch collection it employs: an ancient, pre-tonal collection called the Aeolian or natural minor mode. By employing such an antique pitch collection, Stravinsky once again avoids cultural reference; as such, this music is both ancient and new at the same time.

Part 1, Episode 5—"Game of the Rival Tribes"
The "Game of the Rival Tribes" depicts a contest between the testosterone-filled young men of competing tribes. Using juxtaposition, Stravinsky depicts the ebb and flow of their contest by crosscutting back and forth between chunks of contrasting and rhythmically asymmetrical music, including a drum flourish and two rhythmically asymmetrical melodic ideas.

Part 1, Episode 6—"Procession of the Sage"
Even as the rival tribes continue their game, a slower, more ponderous music emerges from the depths of the orchestra and eventually takes over. This music represents the sage: the ancient, white-bearded elder who has emerged to bring these opening "rites of spring" to their climax. This episode features four simultaneous and different ostinatos that are layered, or superimposed on each other. Each ostinato is played by its own set of instruments and features its own accent patterns; when they are layered, a complex, hypnotic, mega-pattern of instrumental color and accent is created.

Halfway through the episode the music doubles in volume, creating a terrific sense of climax—until everything stops, and the sage falls to his knees before the sun. Once again, we are struck by how archaic and yet how utterly modern this music sounds. The "Procession of the Sage" is an example of what today is called process music; in this case, the "process" is the layering and repetition of the ostinatos. Once begun, Stravinsky simply keeps repeating the ostinatos until everything just stops. At the time, process music was a completely new and completely different technique.

Part 1, Episode 7—"Dance of the Earth"
The explosive, primeval "Dance of the Earth" follows, bringing the first half of *The Rite of Spring* to its conclusion. It features virtually every one of the generative compositional techniques Stravinsky used up to this point: accumulation, rhythmic asymmetry, pedals and ostinatos, layering of ostinatos, juxtaposition, and nontraditional pitch collections. The episode begins quietly and mysteriously, as the kneeling sage stretches his hands imploringly toward the sun, after which havoc ensues. The "Dance of the Earth" is primitive music with every modern convenience.

Part 2—"The Sacrifice"
The second part of *The Rite of Spring*—"The Sacrifice"—takes place at night. Though this second part is divided into six episodes, its effect is that of a single, continuous section of music—one that builds inexorably from the quiet, ominous night music with which it begins to the vicious, explosive sacrificial dance of the chosen virgin that concludes the part.

The lengthy sacrificial dance that concludes *The Rite of Spring* is organized like a rondo; that is, a principal thematic passage returns after variously contrasting episodes. That principal thematic passage consists of a jagged, snarling, leaping, rhythmically asymmetrical dance. It is the frenzied dance of the virgin herself, as she dances herself to death in order to assure the coming of the spring and the return of the sun. The virgin's sacrificial dance begins the episode, and the last, pounding version of the dance brings *The Rite of Spring* to its conclusion. In this version, the chosen virgin collapses, dies, and is raised on the outstretched arms of the tribal elders—proving that this is not music for the weak of heart. ■

Important Terms

accent: The emphasis of certain notes over others.

dominant: Pitch and chord five pitches above a given tonic pitch/chord. The dominant harmony is the chord most closely related to the tonic chord in a given key; the dominant chord will almost always immediately precede an appearance of the tonic chord.

ostinato: A brief melodic idea that is repeated over and over again.

pedal: A single pitch or harmony sustained or repeated for a period of time.

Saint-Saëns—Symphony No. 3
Lecture 27

Saint-Saëns composed music in virtually every genre, including 13 operas (as many as Richard Wagner), three numbered symphonies, four symphonic poems (modeled on those of Liszt), five piano concerti, three violin concerti, two cello concerti, and about 20 smaller works for soloist and orchestra and hundreds of solo piano works, chamber works, and vocal works both sacred and secular. Saint-Saëns was adored by his students, respected for his flawless keyboard and compositional techniques, and loved by his contemporary audiences—particularly in England and the United States—for his music.

Camille Saint-Saëns was born in Paris on October 9, 1835. He began playing the piano at the age of two. He completed his first composition—a little piece for piano—on March 22, 1839, when he was not quite three-and-a-half years old. He made his public debut as a pianist at Paris's vaunted Salle Pleyel in 1846, when he was 10 years old. His program included piano concerti by both Mozart and Beethoven. Saint-Saëns was not just good at music; he was also prodigiously talented in foreign languages, mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy.

Danse Macabre

Defined as simply as possible, a symphonic poem is an orchestral work that tells a literary story. Saint-Saëns composed three symphonic poems, the most famous of which is the *Danse Macabre* of 1872. "Danse macabre" means "dance of death," and it is a late-medieval artistic allegory that depicts the inevitability and universality of death: From popes and emperors to the lowest peasants, all mortals share the same end. In a danse macabre, death, usually personified as a skeletal grim reaper, summons humanity—old and young, rich and poor—to dance to their graves.

Saint-Saëns's *Danse Macabre* began its life in 1872 as an art song for voice and piano based on a text by the poet Henri Cazalis, which in turn is based on an old French legend. In 1874, Saint-Saëns expanded the piece and

turned it into a symphonic poem and, in doing so, replaced the voice part with a solo violin.

According to the legend, death appears every Halloween at midnight. Saint-Saëns's *Danse Macabre* begins with 12 repeated D's played by the harp, accompanied by quiet, mysterious strings. Also according to the legend, death—in the guise of a skeletal violinist—calls the dead to rise from their graves and dance for him while he plays his diabolical fiddle.

In *Danse Macabre*, death is portrayed by a solo violin in a scordatura tuning, meaning, in this case, that the upper E string has been tuned down from an E to an E-flat. This allows the violin to enter playing an interval called a tritone between its upper two strings—an E-flat and an A. The interval of a tritone is exceedingly dissonant, meaning harmonically unstable, and it desperately wants to resolve. During the Middle Ages, the tritone was avoided like the plague, and it came to be known as *diabolus in musica*, or "the devil in music," an association Saint-Saëns banks on in the opening of his piece.

The principal dance theme—a waltz, as it turns out—is heard initially in a solo flute, as the dead begin their dance. The clattering of dancing and copulating skeletons is depicted in *Danse Macabre* by a xylophone. Saint-Saëns even manages to cop a lick from both Hector Berlioz and Franz Liszt by shoe horning into his *Danse Macabre* version of the *Dies Irae*, the famed plainchant from the requiem mass that describes in grisly detail the Day of Judgment.

The piece builds up to a terrific climax when, suddenly, a rooster's cock-a-diddly-doo (portrayed by an oboe) signals the coming of dawn. As the legend tells us, the dead must now return to their graves until next Halloween, and the piece ends quietly.

Symphony No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 79

Saint-Saëns's Symphony no. 3 was commissioned by the Philharmonic Society of London in 1884. Saint-Saëns had been contemplating a return to the genre, as 25 years had passed since the publication of his Symphony no. 2 in A Minor in 1859. For the usually succinct and facile Camille Saint-

Saëns, the Third Symphony turned into a gargantuan 37-minute work. The symphony received its premiere on May 19, 1886.

The layout of the symphony's movements has caused some confusion. On the face of it, the symphony would appear to be arrayed in a traditional four-movement design: movement 1 is cast in sonata form with a slow introduction; movement 2 is a lyric adagio; movement 3 is a scherzo; and movement 4 is a stirring and climactic **presto**. However, Saint-Saëns indicates that the symphony is, in reality, cast in only two movements.

Movement 1

The first movement begins with a slow, mournful introduction that overlaps descending chromatic lines in the strings with yearning, upward gestures in the winds. The somber mood thus set, the faster, sonata-form body of the movement soon begins. The first theme—chattering, urgent, and set in C minor—begins like an urgent whisper in the strings, above which are layered the yearning, upward wind gestures featured in the introduction.

Saint-Saëns's theme 1 sounds a lot like Schubert's famed Unfinished Symphony, which begins with a slow introduction followed by a chattering, urgent melody in whispering strings. This is not really a problem because Saint-Saëns's theme is the principal theme of the movement whereas Schubert's is an accompanimental melody that serves at the whim of the principal theme, which is layered atop. In addition, Saint-Saëns's theme is transformed across the four-movement span of his symphony whereas Schubert's melody is but a bit player in an unfinished two-movement work. Most importantly, Saint-Saëns's theme—far from being inspired by Schubert—is in reality based on the Day of Judgment, the plainchant *Dies Irae* from the requiem mass, the icon of death, doom, and gloom that Saint-Saëns also quotes in his *Danse Macabre.*

When the first theme of the first movement returns in the recapitulation, it no linger "whispers," but is transformed into something ferocious and terrifying and quiets down only as it concludes. The second theme of this sonata-form movement features a rich, lyric, waltz-like melody that eventually builds up to a terrific climax. When theme 2 returns in the recapitulation, it just sort of fizzles out and is followed by a long pause; thus ends (or doesn't end) the

first movement and heralds the beginning of the poco adagio—that is, for Saint-Saëns, the second half of the first movement and, for the rest of us, the second movement.

Movement 2

With the entrance of the organ, everything about this symphony changes. As the organ is, in fact, a one-person orchestra, he de facto doubles the size of the orchestra onstage by adding an organ to the mix, and the symphony takes on a vaguely religious sensibility as a result of our associations with the sound of the organ. The symphony takes on an expressive gravity—a profundity—that is a product of the organ's kidney-rattling low notes.

The magnificent theme that unwinds across the span of this second movement grows directly out of the yearning, upward gestures first heard in the introduction of the first movement. We are reminded that death lurks everywhere when, about halfway through the movement, the otherwise ethereal mood is broken by an ominous, *Dies Irae*–inspired bit plucking in the low strings.

Movement 3

Cast in a large-scale A-B-A-B form, this movement transits from C minor to C major—from brutal rhythmic power to otherworldly lightness. The movement begins darkly and dramatically in C minor, as the strings and timpani play a riveting theme based on the repeated notes of the *Dies Irae*–inspired first theme of the first movement.

The brilliant, chirping B section begins in C major, and it lightens the mood. The opening A section duly returns—set again in C minor—followed by another iteration of the glittering B section. Hardly has this final version of the B section begun when a powerful, stirring, hymnlike melody rises out of the deep bass.

This powerful, hymnlike melody—which is a harbinger of the magnificent fourth movement to come—is but a new version of the lyric theme that powered the second movement and which itself grew out of the yearning, upward gestures first heard in the introduction of the first movement.

A genuinely heavenly chorus of strings picks up the hymnlike melody and, with it, gently transits toward the fourth and final movement. A profound quiet descends over the symphony as the third movement draws to its close. It is a quiet that is squished, squashed, and stomped by the gigantic C major chord in the organ that initiates the fourth and final movement. The organ, which had remained in the background during the second movement, will take center stage in the fourth and final movement.

Movement 4

Two themes emerge in this movement, each of them a further transformation of thematic material we've been hearing since the first movement. The movement begins with a grand and triumphant melody played by the orchestra, which is punctuated by the organ. This melody is a diminution—meaning a faster version—of the powerful, hymnlike melody that grew out from the depths of the orchestra at the conclusion of the third movement.

The second theme to emerge in the fourth movement is a glowing and glorious version of the *Dies Irae*–inspired theme, played first by strings with a rippling piano accompaniment and then by the organ, punctuated by brass fanfares. A fugue follows, based on yet another transformation of the *Dies Irae*–inspired theme. Various episodes follow, each featuring one or another version of the *Dies Irae*–inspired theme and the grand and triumphant melody.

As the movement—and the symphony—approaches its climactic conclusion, various versions of the themes, old and new, fly by in incredible profusion. Like Beethoven's Symphony no. 5, Saint-Saëns's Third Symphony affects a grand catharsis from the darkness of C minor at its beginning to over-the-top triumph in C major at its end.

Important Term

presto: Very fast.

Holst—*The Planets*

Lecture 28

There are many who would dismiss Gustav Holst as an insignificant composer of choral music whose only claim to fame is *The Planets*. In general, *The Planets* is a piece that audiences tend to love and critics tend to hate. *The Planets* is immediate and direct: its expressive punch and dramatic power exist on its surface and can be understood viscerally after a single hearing, and it makes its expressive points with a minimum of guile and artifice.

The Planets

Gustav Holst's *The Planets* consists of seven movements: "Mars," "Venus," "Mercury," "Jupiter," "Saturn," "Uranus," and "Neptune." Although each movement bears a planetary title and subtitle, *The Planets* is not program music. Instead, each movement represents the expressive embodiment of the astrological character suggested in its subtitle and then proceeds as an abstract musical composition. The ordering of *The Planets* does not correspond with the physical order of the planets in the solar system; Holst chose to traverse a particular expressive distance—from Mars to Neptune, from the violent to the ineffable.

Movement 1—"Mars, the Bringer of War"

The throbbing, spectral opening of "Mars" has the repetitive rhythmic pattern and momentum of an infernal bolero (a Spanish dance), but instead of being set in groups of three beats, this one scuttles along in groups of five beats. Three distinct themes are presented back-to-back during the first half of the movement, and all grow out of the interval of a falling semitone. A **semitone** is the smallest interval—the smallest distance between pitches—in the equal-tempered tuning system.

The first of Holst's semitone-generated themes features a series of falling semitones, each one higher than the last. Holst begins the movement by instructing the strings to play the infernal, five-beat rhythmic pattern **col legno**—that is, with the wood side of the bow. The clicking, clattering sound that results creates a spectral and skeletal sonic image. The second of Holst's

semitone-generated themes follows immediately in the brass. The third of Holst's semitone-generated themes—a bugle call-like melody heard initially in a tenor tuba—immediately follows.

The presentation of the themes takes up the first half of the movement, which is set off from what follows by the low, spine-tingling dissonance that concluded the third theme. The remainder of the movement consists of a series of free variations of the themes, which lead to a terrifying climax built from sustained harmonies. Finally, the movement concludes with a vicious, bone-rattling coda. As its title "Mars, the Bringer of War" indicates, this movement is about the destructive nature of Mars himself, and the vicious, militant music becomes a metaphor for humanity's own darkest side.

Movement 2—"Venus, the Bringer of Peace"
The melodic material in "Venus, the Bringer of Peace" is much less highly marked than in "Mars." In fact, only one of the two themes of this movement is a melody, per se; the other is the sound world the movement projects. The opening of "Venus" is more notable for the sheer sensuality of its sound than for any particular melodic content. A hazy glow is created by rich, sustained, and repeated harmonies—and by gentle smears of timbral color created by a delicate use of winds, horns, harps, and strings.

Soon thereafter, a solo violin—which represents Venus herself—introduces a shimmering, atmospheric melody that is the melodic theme of the movement, which is a long, sinuous, ever-evolving melody that begins in the solo violin. Sound and thematic melody share equal parts in this second movement, which evokes a mystical serenity that stands in polar opposition to "Mars." These opening two movements—"Mars" and "Venus," the masculine and the feminine—define the outer expressive limits of *The Planets*, and these expressive limits will be filled in across the span of the remaining five movements.

Movement 3—"Mercury, the Winged Messenger"
Everything about Mercury—the winged messenger of the gods—is associated with quickness and speed: his darting, hummingbird-like movements, his swiftness of mind, and his adaptability to situations. If *The Planets* had been a four-movement symphony and not a seven-movement

suite, it is at this time that we would expect a fast, playful movement—usually called a scherzo. Its seven-movement length notwithstanding, this is indeed a scherzo, and its scurrying, playful music is perfectly suited to the character of Mercury.

Holst's *The Planets* consists of seven movements: "Mars," "Venus," "Mercury," "Jupiter," "Saturn," "Uranus," and "Neptune."

Typical of a scherzo, Holst's "Mercury" describes a large-scale A–B–A form, to which he adds a brief coda that recalls the B section. The A sections are characterized by rising/falling, perpetual-motion melody lines. Of particular interest is Holst's orchestration: the manner in which he distributes his fleeting melody lines between different instruments, dovetailing one into the next, to a brilliant effect. The B section is dominated by a folk-like melody, which seems frankly less mercurial and somewhat more melodically continuous. Fleeting, buzzing, playful, and vibrantly coloristic, this movement is a superb personification of Mercury himself, presented in the guise of a symphonic scherzo.

Movement 4—"Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity"

The delicate, coloristic orchestrations of both "Venus" and "Mercury" are forgotten in "Jupiter," which returns to the full-throated sound of "Mars." Like "Mars," "Jupiter" is organized around three themes that are presented in the first half of the piece and then are freely varied in the second half. However, where the three themes in "Mars" were all semitone dominated, the three themes in "Jupiter" are genuinely different in expressive substance, to the degree that for the first and only time in *The Planets*, "Jupiter" features real contrast within a movement.

Each theme reflects Jupiter as "the Bringer of Jollity." Theme 1 is an energized, fanfare-like theme that sweeps away the blues. Theme 2, which begins immediately and without transition, is a bold and strutting country dance heard in a series of orchestral permutations. A brief transition leads to theme 3: a gorgeous, hymn-like song of thanksgiving. Together, these themes and their variations create a Jovian jollity that is aided and abetted by Holst's Technicolor orchestration.

In terms of sheer mass—number of measures, number of notes, degree of thematic contrast, and range of moods—"Jupiter" is the biggest movement in *The Planets*; it is also the most massive planet in the solar system. This most viscerally human of the movements marks the midpoint of the journey from "Mars" to "Neptune." From this movement forward—in what is a metaphor for the increasing distance of the planets from the sun—the movements become increasingly ethereal and otherworldly.

Movement 5—"Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age"
As we might suspect, Holst was an astrology junkie, and he outwardly stated that "Saturn" was his favorite movement in *The Planets*. This movement is about the slow but inexorable march of time and culminates with the end of time—of human time, at least—with a beautiful conclusion, during which time itself seems to stand still. The movement begins with the repeated alternation of two dissonant chords in the winds and harps, undoubtedly meant to represent the ticking of time. The principal melodic theme of the movement rises from the depths of the orchestra, a semitone-dominated theme that clearly relates back to "Mars."

The opening leads to a relentless and very Mahler-like march of time that is the final march—a march toward death. This struggle that is life finally ends, and we find ourselves in a musical place of sublime wonder. Suddenly, time stands still as harmonic movement stops almost entirely. The principal theme rumbles in the bass as winds, horns, harps, and chimes float above. It is with this music of corporeal transcendence that Holst concludes the movement.

Movement 6—"Uranus, the Magician"
While this movement's subtitle, "the Magician," might be taken to imply the world of the occult, Holst's frankly comic movement steers more toward the bumbling student wizardry of Paul Dukas's *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, a piece that Holst's daughter credited with having inspired Holst. The great bulk of this movement consists of a rather bizarre march, and the movement gets even wilder as it continues.

Movement 7—"Neptune, the Mystic"
"Neptune" is the most impressionistic movement in *The Planets*. Its principal theme consists of the undulation between minor triads a major third apart.

These undulating harmonies are given color and variety by Holst's exquisite orchestration, which features two harps and a celesta—which literally means "heavenly." In this movement, the ringing, bell-like sound of the celesta is undoubtedly meant to evoke the twinkling of distant stars and galaxies.

The movement begins so quietly that it appears to coalesce out of the void. Lacking any traditional harmonic progressions or thematic melodies, this is music that sounds as remote as the planet Neptune itself, which was Holst's intention, as physical distance becomes musical distance from tradition. Devoid of traditional harmonic motion, "Neptune" floats and twinkles until Holst offers his final compositional card: a wordless chorus of female voices. The end of the movement doesn't so much end as simply fade away into limitless distance. ■

Important Terms

col legno: Striking the strings with the wood side of the bow.

semitone: Smallest interval in Western music; on the keyboard, the distance between a black key and a white key, as well as B–C and E–F.

Copland—*Appalachian Spring*

Lecture 29

Just as the music of Joseph Haydn came, over time, to epitomize the Viennese classical style, so the populist music of Aaron Copland has come to epitomize the mid-20th-century American style. It is a style characterized by wide melodic leaps that have become a metaphor for the wide open spaces of North America, thematic material evocative of jazz or American folk music, and marked by the rhythmic bristle and energy of the American nation.

In a culture defined by its multiplicity, any concert music that purports to be American must, somehow, reflect that multiplicity and eclecticism. Such American concert music did not emerge until the first decades of the 20th century, when American-born composers began to synthesize jazz, ragtime, Anglo-American and Hispanic folk music, popular song, and elements of American musical theater into their concert works.

It wasn't until the 1920s that recognizably "American" concert music began to emerge from the pens of native-born American composers. This was Aaron Copland's generation of composers—a generation that put American concert music on the map by synthesizing various aspects of American musical culture with the genres and compositional techniques of traditional Euro-music.

Aaron Copland was born in Brooklyn, New York, on November 14, 1900, and was the fifth of five children. His parents had immigrated to the United States from Lithuania, and in the process, his father had Anglicized the family name of "Kaplan" to "Copland." Copland's father built a prosperous family business, and Copland grew up—a first-generation America—comfortably ensconced in the middle class. An ethos of hard work and pride shaped Copland's family—pride at what they had accomplished and pride in the country that had given them the opportunity to do so.

Copland was a musical late bloomer; he only began playing piano at the age of 13. Copland's passion for music led him to take total control of his

own musical education: He found and hired his own piano teachers, took correspondence courses in harmony and theory, and eventually worked himself up the local education ladder. After studying in Europe and then returning to the United States, he asserted that there exists a West African–inspired rhythmic punch endemic to American music. As a composer, he was an exoticist—one who employed a variety of national idioms in his music.

Appalachian Spring

The Great Depression began with the stock market crash on October 29, 1929, and ended when the United States declared war on Japan 12 years later—on December 8, 1941—a day after the attack on Pearl Harbor. There was a belief during the Depression that the fine arts should address not just an elite few but, rather, the common man. This spirit of populism was magnified during the war, when national pride was as important to the war effort as metal drives and victory gardens. Copland was deeply affected by the populist spirit of the time. Among his best-known populist works are *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, *A Lincoln Portrait*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, and *Appalachian Spring*.

Appalachian Spring was composed as a ballet, commissioned, choreographed, and danced by Martha Graham. She conceived of the ballet as a springtime celebration around a newly built farmhouse in Pennsylvania during the early part of the 19th century. The ballet received its premiere on October 30, 1944, and in 1945, Copland's score was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music. Copland's concert version of *Appalachian Spring* is set in eight parts. Copland's own description of the action that the music represents is presented at the beginning of each description for use in our examination.

Part 1

Copland writes: "Very slowly. Introduction of the characters, one by one, in a suffused light." With exquisite simplicity—what Copland himself would call thrifty—the prologue unwinds with repeated notes and slowly rising triads. Martha Graham told Copland that she wanted the opening to have the effect of a distant fanfare, which may be the reason for this vaguely bugle-like opening material. With its spare, spacious melody and lack of harmonic dissonance, this is music that resonates entirely with what the art historian Robert Hughes identifies as the "vastness"

and "clarity" that is characteristic of American painting. The slow, quiet, and static quality of the introduction gives way without transition to the remainder of part1.

Part 2

Copland writes: "Fast. [A] sudden burst of unison strings starts the action. A sentiment both elated and religious gives the keynote to this scene." Like the prologue, the music of part 2 is characterized by thrifty, spacious melodic ideas as well as by rising three-note motives that outline simple triads. With the bristling, rhythm momentum of part 2, the action of the piece and the ballet are fully joined.

Copland was a musical late bloomer; he only began playing piano at the age of 13.

Part 3

Copland writes: "Moderate. Duo for Bride and her intended—scene of tenderness and passion." Copland's duet for the bride and groom initially has the feel of a country dance—a courting dance, as it were. The voice of the groom is projected by a clarinet and that of the bride by an oboe.

Part 4

Copland writes: "Quite fast. The Revivalist and his flock. Folksy feeling—suggestions of square dances and country fiddlers." Copland's part 4 features the same spacious melodic motives and rising triads that have characterized *Appalachian Spring* from the beginning. This means that *Appalachian Spring* is more than just a ballet suite; it is an integrated musical composition in which each part marks a progressive evolutionary step from the previous part.

Part 5

The rhythmic excitement and forward momentum of part 4 continues directly into part 5, about which Copland writes: "Still faster. Solo dance of the Bride—pre-sentiment of motherhood. Extremes of joy and fear and wonder." This manic bridal energy is followed by a slow passage that recalls the prologue, which is part 6.

Part 6
Of this passage, Copland writes simply: "Very slowly. Transition scene." This transition scene serves two complementary purposes: to dissipate the accumulated energy of the bridal dance and to introduce what is the crown jewel of *Appalachian Spring*—the five variations on the Shaker hymn "Simple Gifts."

Part 7
Copland writes: "Calm and flowing. Scenes of daily activity for the Bride and her Farmer husband." Despite all the folk-like melodies in *Appalachian Spring*, "Simple Gifts"—composed in 1848 by American songwriter and Shaker Joseph Brackett—is the only preexisting melody in the score. Copland's use of "Simple Gifts" was meant to evoke the upright and self-sufficient American pastoral image that is part of America's collective national myth. And though the words of "Simple Gifts" are never heard in *Appalachian Spring*, the poetic message of its words nevertheless resonated powerfully with a wartime audience.

Part 8
Copland writes: "Moderate. The Bride takes her place among her neighbors. At the end, the couple [is] left quiet and strong in their new house." Part 8 recalls the prologue, and *Appalachian Spring* concludes with the same exquisite simplicity with which it began. ■

Shostakovich—Symphony No. 5

Lecture 30

With so many millions of Soviet citizens killed and imprisoned during Stalin's horrific reign, Dmitri Shostakovich's immediate survival was almost certainly due to the incredible reception of his Fifth Symphony. Apparently, Shostakovich fit Stalin's preconception of an artist: someone who was not smart but, rather, someone who by instinct could turn anything into art—a high-end village idiot. It was a role Shostakovich learned to play in his guerilla artistic war against the Soviet authorities, which was a war of veiled intentions.

Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich was born on September 25, 1906, in St. Petersburg, then the capital city of the Russian Empire ruled by Tsar Nicolas II. He died on August 9, 1975, in Moscow, then the capital city of the Soviet Union ruled by Leonid Brezhnev. A prodigy as both a pianist and composer, Shostakovich entered the St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg is Russia's second largest city after Moscow, and it was the capital city of the Russian Empire from 1712 to 1917.

State Conservatory at the age of 13 in 1919, during the Russian Revolution. He graduated from the conservatory in 1926, just as Joseph Stalin was consolidating his grip over the Soviet Union.

In 1926, Shostakovich's Symphony no. 1 was premiered to great acclaim in Leningrad, the city formerly known as St. Petersburg. Shostakovich's rise to fame was meteoric, and within just a few years he had come to be considered among the best of the new Soviet composers. Unfortunately, Shostakovich's rise to fame in the late 1920s and early 1930s also corresponded with a Soviet cultural revolution, one that saw the creation of various unions of writers, cinematographers, and musicians that stressed conformity with party policies regarding art and expression.

In the newly developed Soviet critical doctrine, the most dangerous charge that could be leveled against a composer was that of formalism, which was a catchphrase for anything modernistic, dissonant, or overtly self-expressive—anything that did not somehow reflect the "heroic ideals" of the Soviet working class. For a while, Dmitri Shostakovich managed to sidestep the increasingly repressive artistic dictates of the Soviet government by toeing the party line verbally while composing the sort of music he wanted to compose—like the opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*.

Shostakovich completed his opera *Lady Macbeth* in 1932, and it received its premiere in Leningrad on January 22, 1934. It was a runaway hit and was proclaimed by Soviet critics to be the greatest Russian opera since Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* of 1890. *Lady Macbeth* made Shostakovich an international celebrity. Because of political turmoil, Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony had to wait 25 years for its premiere, which finally took place on December 30, 1961. In his Fourth Symphony, Shostakovich had not yet learned to lie—to claim that his music meant something it did not. It was a lesson he would learn just in time, with the premiere of his Symphony no. 5 in 1937.

Symphony No. 5 in D Minor

Shostakovich scratched out a living in 1936 and 1937 by writing scores for industrial films. By 1937, no new work of his had been presented to the public in over two years. It was under these circumstances that he was

expected to compose his Fifth Symphony, the composition that would either rehabilitate him or seal his doom. The premiere took place at Leningrad's Philharmonic Hall on November 21, 1937.

Immediately before its public premiere, Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony was performed for a small number of select party members, who were to determine its ideological suitability—and, therefore, his fate. He lied, explaining that the sorrow apparent in the music was really indicative of a joyous, optimistic mood. In a society built on lies, Dmitri Shostakovich had learned to lie, and consequently, he remained among the living composers.

Shostakovich's Fifth is a four-movement work built on the traditional symphonic template.

Shostakovich's Fifth is a four-movement work built on the traditional symphonic template. It is less melodically and harmonically complex than either *Lady Macbeth* or his Fourth Symphony. That the Fifth acknowledges the stylistic directness of Soviet socialist realism was, for Shostakovich, the bare minimum he had to do in order to comply with the dictates of the state. However, he was able to present his Fifth Symphony in a way that mocked the state and the demands of the Soviet leaders.

Movement 1

The first movement, cast in sonata form is serious in mood and moderately paced. The movement—and theme 1—begins with a leaping, vaguely Slavic-sounding passage presented in dialogue between the low and high strings. Quiet, throbbing low strings next introduce and then accompany a thematic melody of great expressive power. Theme 2 makes its first appearance about five minutes into the movement, as quiet low strings accompany a soaring melody in the violins. Both of these themes are notable for their simplicity of utterance and expressive directness.

In his Fifth Symphony, Shostakovich expresses himself with a directness that actually becomes an aesthetic quality of the piece; his manner of utterance becomes as meaningful as what he is saying. The climax of the movement occurs when the musical discourse shifts from abstract development to

cinematic specificity—when theme 1 is turned into a bristling, dissonantly harmonized march. This music is vulgar, satirical, and palpably menacing. That music can only represent Stalin, and the frenzy it triggers in what had been, up to this point, a tragically contemplative movement continues for the next two minutes, after which the remainder of the movement projects a sense of dazed dread.

Movement 2

Irony and satire are apparent throughout the second movement scherzo. Typical of a scherzo, the movement is cast in three-part, A–B–A form. Like the first movement, the second begins in the low strings. However, that's where the resemblance between the two movements ends, as this second movement quickly turns into a rollicking, off-balance dance. The B section opens with a mincing, tipsy melody set first for a solo violin and then a flute.

Movement 3

The slow third movement of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony is magnificent—the heart and soul of the symphony. Scored without brass and percussion, it is a movement dominated by its melody: a single, huge, arcing, 17-minute-long melody of confessional intensity that whispers and weeps and hopes and howls with rage. The opening of this movement is music that cuts to the soul—music without artifice or irony. It was during this movement that the audience at the symphony's premiere began to cry.

Movement 4

With the Stalin-inspired march from the first movement ringing in our ears, it is impossible not to hear the opening of the fourth movement as a similar march. However, unlike the first movement march, this fourth movement march is not a satire but a brutal two-step, intent on crushing everything in its path. According to Shostakovich's brief, opening-night program note, his Fifth Symphony constituted: "A lengthy spiritual battle, crowned by victory." That crowning moment exists in the final minute of the symphony.

Clearly, the audience at the premiere understood that Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony was about the terror of Stalin. No matter how Shostakovich skewed his statements for the benefit of the authorities, the audience's perspective and empathy allowed them to understand the work in a way that

we, today, simply cannot. Western writers and critics belittled Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony as a concession to political pressure and as empty Soviet bombast; the realities of life in the Soviet Union were simply beyond their comprehension. Their insensitivity was as appalling as their ignorance.

Following the premiere of his Fifth Symphony, Shostakovich was officially rehabilitated. He issued a statement expressing his "gratitude" and "joy" at being readmitted to the Soviet cultural family—the words of the public Shostakovich. Of course, like the Fifth Symphony itself, these seemingly simple words ooze with sarcasm and rage. And indeed, Shostakovich's fear and loathing of the Soviet bureaucracy never left him; it was a fear and loathing that became a generative artistic theme for the rest of his life. ■

Shostakovich—Symphony No. 10

Lecture 31

Dmitri Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony was premiered in Moscow on December 29, 1953, approximately eight months after Joseph Stalin's death. The carping criticisms of some party affiliates aside, Shostakovich's Tenth became an instant classic and was performed across the Soviet Union and abroad. After five years of disgrace following the release of his Ninth Symphony in 1948, Shostakovich was vaulted, once again, to the forefront of the Soviet cultural family, and the excellence of his Tenth Symphony became a testament to his incredible creative power, integrity, and imagination.

Dmitri Shostakovich survived the Civil War and the famine of the early 1920s, the terror of Stalin, and World War I, though many of his friends and associates did not. Incredibly, he survived the second coming of Stalin and yet another purge in 1948, which was provoked by his Ninth Symphony. The war in Europe officially ended on May 8, 1945. Shostakovich began work on what was to be his Ninth Symphony in late July, and he completed it a month later. From the beginning, Shostakovich knew that his Ninth Symphony was going to cause him problems.

When the war against Hitler was won, Stalin went off the deep end. In response, Shostakovich wrote a compact, five-movement work of such biting irony that even the authorities knew that they were being satirized. Perhaps Shostakovich's critical judgment had been softened by the relative expressive freedoms of the war years—during which the enemy was a foreign power and not his own government—or perhaps he lost himself in the giddy spirit of victory in the months after Germany's defeat. Either way, he should not have released this Ninth Symphony.

Within a matter of months after Stalin's death, Shostakovich composed his Tenth Symphony. Eight long years had passed since the premiere of Shostakovich's Ninth Symphony, the work that had contributed so mightily to his downfall in 1948. Shostakovich's Symphony no. 10 is about nothing

less than the confrontation between artist and despot—in personal terms, between Dmitri Shostakovich and Joseph Stalin.

Symphony No. 10 in E Minor
Movement 1

This sprawling, 25-minute-long movement features three themes, laid out one after the other during the first half of the movement. While each of these themes is characterized by its own tempo, rhythmic character, and orchestration, the themes have more in common than not. Chief of what they have in common is their directness of expression; lacking any fluff or ornament, they each exhibit a certain primal, prototypical character.

Within a matter of months after Stalin's death, Shostakovich composed his Tenth Symphony.

The beginning of theme 1 exhibits one of Shostokovich's favorite opening strategies: a slow, meditative, stepwise melody that slowly rises out of the low strings. This sort of beginning is one of the most familiar of all Russian musical openings, as it invokes the bass voices and chant of the Russian orthodox priesthood. This low, heavy theme—with its unmarked rhythm, stepwise motion, and thoughtful pauses—has the prototypical character of prayer, and as such, it evokes the notion of the spirit. Theme 1, then, marks the beginning of a spiritual journey, one that will end—at the conclusion of the symphony—with ecstatic affirmation.

Theme 2 appears when a solo clarinet sings out a somber, folk-like melody over the prayer-like strings. This theme has the prototypical character of song, and it represents the yearning voice of the individual. Theme 2 builds up to a passionate climax, after which theme 3 makes its appearance. Theme 3 is initially presented by a solo flute and is characterized by a bouncing, rhythmic profile characterized by two-note units and is accompanied by plucked strings. Theme 3 has the prototypical character of dance—specifically, a waltz—and thus represents the body. These three themes—representing the spirit, the voice, and the body—collectively represent the composer himself.

The first ten minutes of this movement—what constitutes the exposition of its sonata form structure—is generally quiet, ruminative, and introspective in nature and is understood to represent the artist's cautious existence in the Soviet Union. The caution and quiet are obliterated during the central portion of the movement, what constitutes the development section. The movement reaches its climax when a snare drum and timpani together pound out a militant tattoo that is a symbol for Stalin. Shreds of the formerly quiet themes scream forth from the orchestra, as the artist attempts—clearly without success—to grasp sanity in what is an insanely dissonant environment. The drum-induced climax eventually quiets down, and the movement ends with a sense of hollow exhaustion—with the spirit, voice, and body of the artist sapped of its strength.

Movement 2

This second movement scherzo is a musical portrait of Stalin, and it's not a pretty one. Militant, brutal, vicious, and inexorable, this movement is a gut-wrenching whirlwind that never relaxes or lets down its aggressive guard—a movement that features 50 crescendos and only a couple of decrescendos. While this second movement depicts Stalin, it also marks his end; everything that happens during the remaining two movements of the symphony is a reaction to his death.

Movement 3

The third movement of Shostakovich's Symphony no. 10 has long been considered a great mystery. This quiet, quirky allegretto is about the slow emergence of the Soviet people in general and Shostakovich in particular from the dark shadow of Stalinism. The movement asks questions: Is it safe? Will real change take place, or will things stay the same?

The movement is cast as a rondo. The twist in this movement is that each time the rondo theme returns, it is progressively developed, with the result being that the rondo theme takes on the character of a changing personality. The movement begins with a timid first version of the rondo theme. The rondo theme features a short melodic idea—a motive—that is repeated obsessively: D–E-flat–C–B. These four pitches are of huge significance to Shostakovich, and this ordering of the pitches will come to dominate the fourth movement of the symphony.

These four pitches—D–E-flat–C–B—constitute Shostakovich's musical signature. In German, the pitch names practically spell out his name. At the beginning of the third movement, however, Shostakovich's signature motive is purposely misspelled; instead of D–E-flat–C–B, this version is C–D–E-flat–B. This purposeful misspelling is a perfect musical metaphor for Shostakovich's reticence to fully reveal himself at the beginning of the third movement.

The first contrasting episode depicts an emboldened Shostakovich; a melody features the proper spelling of Shostakovich's signature motive. The second contrasting episode—which is the central section of the movement—is slow and expansive. It is dominated by a horn melody of great majesty and melancholy that serves as a memorial to those who did not survive to see the end of Stalin and the new day.

Shostakovich's horn melody is an almost direct quote from the third movement scherzo of Gustav Mahler's Symphony no. 5—a movement that marks the end of a grieving process that was subject of movements 1 and 2. Mahler's horn melody momentarily brings a halt to the manic action of his third movement and serves as a ritualized memorial to the death marked in the earlier movements.

Like the first movement of Shostakovich's Tenth, the generally quiet, introspective mood of this third movement is shattered by a passage in which drums invoke the terror of the Soviet system. The big difference is that in Shostakovich's third movement, his signature motive responds to the pounding drums. Shostakovich seems, here, to be prepared to stand up to the new authorities. Then, the movement ends quietly and mysteriously but confidently, with Shostakovich motives ringing out in the flute and piccolo.

Movement 4

This last movement is idiosyncratic because it doesn't follow any particular preexisting musical form—which is because it is entirely autobiographical. In 1953, Shostakovich found himself alive while Joseph Stalin was dead. Still, Shostakovich was not willing at that time to discuss the true meaning of the movement, so he continued to accept—publically—whatever criticisms were doled out by the bureaucrats.

The movement begins with a slow introduction, which begins—as did the first movement—with a ruminative melody heard initially in the low strings. After over six minutes, this deeply felt, almost funereal introduction suddenly gives way to music of incredible joy and energy. The sheer joy this music depicts continues to build until a terrible memory darkens the musical sky and turns joy to panic, as the Stalin music—lifted directly from the second movement—bursts forth. But Stalin is dead, and Shostakovich—as represented by the D–E-flat–C–B motive—knows it. The Shostakovich motive obliterates the darkness induced by the Stalin music, and the movement ends in almost hysterical celebration, as the reiterated D–E-flat–C–B motive is heard among blaring brass. ■

The Ones That Got Away

Lecture 32

Our primary goal in this last lecture will be to discuss a few of the many deserving works that might rightly have been included in *The 30 Greatest Orchestral Works*. To do so, we will focus on works by composers not mentioned up to this point in the course. In addition, we will discuss the overzealous protection of copyright that has precluded us from examining some important pieces of the repertoire. We will also address the programming strategies of the potentially extinct modern orchestra.

Bizet—Symphony in C Major

Georges Alexandre César Léopold Bizet was born in Paris on October 25, 1838. He was an extraordinary child prodigy as both a pianist and composer. He is best known for his masterwork, *Carmen*, an opera that literally broke his heart; he dropped dead of a heart attack after having put everything he had into *Carmen*, which had played across Europe and North America within three years after his death.

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Although Georges Bizet (1838–1875) lived a short life, he composed some truly extraordinary music.

Bizet's Symphony in C Major predates *Carmen* by nearly 20 years. It was composed in November of 1855, when Bizet was 17 years old, as a student composition assignment. The piece was entirely unknown until 1933, when it was found in the archives of the Paris Conservatory. It received its long-delayed premiere in 1935 and was declared a gleaming and joyful work. It was filled with the same sort of melodic grace, expressive refinement, and sheer good taste that characterize *Carmen*.

Hindemith—Symphony *Mathis der Maler*

Paul Hindemith was born in Hanau—near Frankfurt—in Germany in 1895 and died in 1963. Aside from being an incredibly prolific composer, he was a professional-grade violinist, violist, and conductor, a noted music theorist, and a teacher who spent 13 years on the faculty at Yale.

Between 1933 and 1935, Hindemith composed an opera entitled *Mathis der Maler*, which translates as "Matthias the Painter." The opera is about Matthias Grünewald, a German painter of religious subjects who lived from about 1470 to 1528, years that correspond with the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

Hindemith's Symphony *Mathis der Maler* is based on themes from the opera, though the symphony was actually composed before the opera was completed. It is cast in three movements, and each one corresponds to one of the painted panels that together comprise Grünewald's famous Isenheim Altarpiece, paintings inspired by the same religious and political issues that led to the reformation itself. The three movements are entitled, in order, "Angelic Concert," "Entombment," and "The Temptation of Saint Anthony."

Prokofiev—Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major

Sergey Sergeyevich Prokofiev was born in Ukraine on April 27, 1891. He entered the St. Petersburg State Conservatory at the age of 13, in 1904. He was a brilliant and most original pianist, who treated the piano not like a string instrument but, rather, like a percussion orchestra.

When the revolution came to Russia in 1917, the 26-year-old Prokofiev decided that he would take his particular brand of experimental music to the United States. Disgusted with what he considered the provincialism of the American musical scene, Prokofiev moved to Paris in 1923, which remained his

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Sergey Prokofiev (1891–1953) wrote in a wide range of musical genres.

home for the next 13 years. In 1936, he moved to Moscow and became a citizen of the Soviet Union.

Prokofiev composed a lot of music for orchestra, including 7 mature symphonies, 18 orchestral suites, 6 piano concerti, and 2 violin concerti. From this incredibly rich group of pieces, Prokofiev's Symphony no. 5 of 1944 is the best work he wrote after his return to the Soviet Union. Just as Shostakovich's Symphony no. 7 of 1941 had come to symbolize Soviet determination in the face of Nazi aggression, so Prokofiev's Fifth came to represent the impending Soviet victory over Germany.

Walton—Symphony No. 1 in B-flat Minor

William Walton was born in Oldham, Lancashire, England, on March 29, 1902. He referred to himself as a reluctant composer; he wrestled with many of his works. It took Walton four torturous years to compose his Symphony no. 1, but it was well worth the time.

Stylistically, Walton was a cosmopolitan, meaning that his music does not sound particularly "English." It was the fourth and final movement of his First Symphony that caused Walton his biggest problems and has garnered both the most praise and the most abuse. Some commentators have criticized the finale for sounding a bit too much like the movie music that Walton composed, but even if it does begin with the glitz of a film score, it builds up to a majestic, gut-busting conclusion.

Vaughn Williams—Symphony No. 5 in D Major

Ralph Vaughn Williams was a big, bluff, outspoken man whose life as a professional composer spanned an incredible 66 years of nonstop productivity. He was born in Gloucestershire on October 12, 1872, and he was first published in 1891, at the age of 19. He died in London on August 25, 1958, having just completed his Ninth Symphony at the age of 85.

Vaughn Williams was an unabashed English nationalist who resented the historical domination of English concert music by German and Austrian composers. Therefore, he consciously set out to create a recognizably English music, to which end he immersed himself in English folk song. He found in English folk music his musical ideal—music in which clarity

of spirit and directness of expression are of preeminent importance. It is a clarity and directness that he captures magnificently in his Symphony no. 5, which is one of the most beautiful pieces of music ever written.

Bartók and Copyright

The music of Béla Bartók—who is my personal favorite 20th-century composer—is missing entirely from the course. His *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste* of 1936 and *Concerto for Orchestra* of 1943 deserve, without qualification, to be numbered among the "30 greatest." The fault, however, lies with Bartók's publisher and the people who manage his estate, who wouldn't grant permission to use his music in this course. Their concerns are that they don't want commercial enterprises profiting from or trivializing Bartók's wonderful music.

It is an unfortunate fact that the listening public is not flocking to hear Bartók's music, but without efforts to put his music before a wider public, it will continue to languish in an obscurity that Bartók himself would have never wanted. Unfortunately, there are many 20th-century (and 21st-century) composers whose music—still under copyright—will never be heard in a course because its myopic guardians are not willing to discriminate between friend and foe.

For the most part, modern audiences attend concerts to be entertained by music that is familiar—a fact that militates entirely against the creation of new repertoire.

What Will Happen to the Orchestra?

America's orchestras do not perform nearly enough contemporary music and are therefore failing to create the very repertoire that will guarantee their relevance in the future. Sadly, however, this is the audience's fault because orchestras are market-driven institutions that are struggling to stay alive, and the margin between breaking even and bankruptcy can be the ticket sales for just a few concerts. For the most part, modern audiences attend concerts to be entertained by music that is familiar—a fact that militates entirely against the creation of new repertoire.

By an unofficial count, there are 223 professional orchestras in the United States and Puerto Rico—most of them regional orchestras—and the great bulk of these orchestras will simply become irrelevant in a generation unless they do something to make themselves relevant. Taking music to the schools certainly helps, as does giving performances in unusual venues. However, it is music that feeds the orchestral beast, and without the roughage provided by fresh music, the beast will die.

Along with playing the preexisting repertoire, orchestras should focus on cultivating and performing new music, and there are many ways orchestras can focus on creating new music.

- Orchestras must lead and not be led by polls that ask their audiences what music they should perform.

- There should be a short piece of new music on every concert program, with a longer, featured new work appearing a few times per season.

- Local composers should be cultivated, commissioned, and then paraded on stage before the performance so that the audience can see who they are and so that the composers can briefly describe what their pieces are about.

- Conductors must become—as they once were—advocates for fresh repertoire.

- The performances of these new works should be posted on an orchestra's website so that anyone, anywhere, can hear what is fresh, new, and exciting.

- Composers have to be willing to meet the audience halfway, by composing music that gives something back immediately in terms of rhythm, melody, harmony, and expressive content.

- The local media—radio and press—must commit themselves to new programming as well, with the knowledge that by doing so they, too, would be making themselves culturally relevant. ■

Timeline

1717 (circa) ..... Johann Sebastian Bach, Violin Concerto in E Major.

1720 (circa) ..... Antonio Vivaldi, *The Four Seasons.*

1721 (circa) ..... Johann Sebastian Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No. 2.

1786..... Wolfgang Mozart, Piano Concerto No. 24 in C Minor.

1788..... Wolfgang Mozart, "*Un bacio di mano.*"

1788..... Wolfgang Mozart, Symphony No. 41.

1795..... Joseph Haydn, Symphony No. 104.

1801..... Ludwig van Beethoven, *The Creatures of Prometheus.*

1804..... Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 3.

1806..... Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 4.

1824..... Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 9.

1826..... Franz Schubert, Symphony No. 9.

1833..... Felix Mendelssohn, Symphony No. 4, “Italian.”

1850..... Robert Schumann, Symphony No. 3, “Rhenish.”

1855..... Georges Bizet, Symphony in C Major.

1878..... Johannes Brahms, Violin Concerto.

1878..... Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 4.

1878..... Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Violin Concerto.

1879..... Bedřich Smetana, *Má Vlast.*

1885..... Johannes Brahms, Symphony No. 4.

1886..... Camille Saint-Saëns, Symphony No. 3. in C Minor.

1888..... Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, *Scheherazade.*

1889..... Antonín Dvořák, Symphony No. 8.

1895..... Antonín Dvořák, ’Cello Concerto.

1896..... Richard Strauss, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.*

1902..... Gustav Mahler, Symphony No. 5.

1905..... Claude Debussy, *La Mer.*

1907..... Sergey Rachmaninoff, Symphony No. 2.

1912..... Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*.

1916..... Gustav Holst, *The Planets*.

1934..... Paul Hindemith, Symphony *Mathis der Maler*.

1935..... William Walton, Symphony No. 1.

1937..... Dmitri Shostakovich, Symphony No. 5.

1943..... Ralph Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 5.

1944..... Aaron Copland, *Appalachian Spring*.

1944..... Sergey Prokofiev, Symphony No. 5.

1945..... Dmitri Shostakovich, Symphony No. 9.

1953..... Dmitri Shostakovich, Symphony No. 10.

Glossary

accent: The emphasis of certain notes over others.

accidental: A notational sign/symbol that modifies a pitch. *See also* **sharp**, **flat**, and **natural**.

adagio: Slow.

allegro: Fast.

andante: Moderately slow.

asymmetrical meter: Exhibits no particular repeated metric pattern.

atonal/atonality: Music lacking the sense of a central pitch, as opposed to tonal/tonality.

augmentation: The process of systematically extending the note values of a given melodic line.

bar: *See* **measure**.

bar lines: Notational device: two vertical lines that enclose a measure and are equivalent to one metric unit.

basso continuo: Those instruments in a baroque-era ensemble (typically a chord-producing instrument and a bass instrument) whose job it was to articulate with unerring clarity the bass line and play the harmonic progressions built atop the bass line.

beat: Smallest pulse to which we can comfortably move our bodies. *See also* **meter**.

cadence: A harmonic or melodic formula that occurs at the end of a phrase, section, or composition and conveys a momentary or permanent conclusion—in other words, a musical punctuation mark.

cadenza: Passage for solo instrument in an orchestral work, usually a concerto, designed to showcase the player's skills.

chord: Simultaneous sounding of three or more different pitches.

chromatic: A pitch that lies outside of whatever key area presently anchors a passage.

classical: Designation given to works of art of the 17th and 18th centuries, characterized by clear lines and balanced form.

closed cadence: Equivalent to a period or an exclamation mark; such a cadence ends on the tonic and gives a sense of rest and resolution.

coda: The closing few measures of a composition; usually not a part of the main theme groups of the standard form of a composition but a finishing theme added to the end to give the composition closure.

col legno: Striking the strings with the wood side of the bow.

compound meter: Any meter that features a triple subdivision within each beat.

concerto grosso: A multi-movement work in which multiple soloists are accompanied by, and sometimes pitted against, the orchestra.

conjunct: Melodic contour that generally features steps between pitches; such a melody will usually sound smooth and controlled.

consonance: A musical entity or state that can be perceived as a point of rest.

deceptive/false cadence: Equivalent to a colon or semicolon; such a cadence brings resolution but not to the expected tonic harmony.

development: The second large part of a sonata form movement, during which the themes are developed in a generally unstable harmonic environment.

diminution: The process of systematically shortening the note values of a given melodic line.

disjunct: Melodic contour that generally features leaps between pitches; such a melody will usually sound jagged and jumpy.

dissonance: A musical entity or state of instability that seeks resolution to consonance.

dominant: Pitch and chord five pitches above a given tonic pitch/chord. The dominant harmony is the chord most closely related to the tonic chord in a given key; the dominant chord will almost always immediately precede an appearance of the tonic chord.

double exposition form: Sonata form adapted to the needs of a concerto.

double scherzo: A five-part form in which there are two middle B sections separated by three A sections: A–B–A–B–A.

dynamics: Degrees of loudness—e.g., piano (quiet), forte (loud)—indicated in a musical score.

elegy: A song expressing sorrow for one who has died.

enharmonic: Pitches that are identical in sound but with different spellings, depending on the key context, e.g., C-sharp and D-flat.

exposition: The first part of a sonata form, during which the principal themes are introduced.

expressionism: The contemporary art movement that celebrated inner emotional states as the highest truth.

fermata: Pause.

flat: Accidental (sign/symbol) placed to the left of a note indicating that the pitch should be lowered by a semitone.

frequency: Rate of vibration of a string, column of air, or other sound-producing body.

fugato: A fugal exposition inserted into a movement that is not otherwise a fugue.

fugue: Important baroque musical procedure in which a theme (or subject) is developed by means of various contrapuntal techniques.

functional harmony: Harmonic usage that was standardized and codified into a fully coherent system during the baroque period. This method is still used by modern arrangers and orchestrators. The basic concept used in functional harmony is the fact that all harmonic sounds used in music may be classified into three large groups. These groups derive their names from the three important roots of the traditional harmonic system: the tonic, the dominant, and the subdominant.

fundamental frequency: Rate of vibration of the full length of a sound-producing body and the sound created by that full-length vibration.

graded dynamics: Markings used to indicate a progressive increase in loudness or softness, respectively, crescendo (getting louder) or decrescendo/diminuendo (getting softer/quieter).

half step: *See* **semitone**.

harmony: The musical art (and science) of manipulating simultaneous pitches.

home key: Main key of a movement or composition. *See also* **key**.

homophonic texture/homophony: Texture in which one melodic line predominates; all other melodic material is heard as being secondary or accompanimental.

hymn: A religious song.

inclusive art: An art in which distinctions between popular, sacred, and concert music are immaterial when compared to its universal power to move and enlighten.

intermezzo: An instrumental interlude between the acts of a performance.

interval: Distance between two pitches, e.g., C–G (upward) equals a fifth.

inversion: Loosely applied to indicate a reversal in melodic direction. Harmonic inversion is a situation in which a chord tone other than the root is in the bass.

key: Collection of pitches that relate to a specific major or minor mode.

largo/lento: Very slow.

major: Modern term for Ionian mode; characterized by an intervallic profile of whole tone–whole tone–semitone–whole tone–whole tone–whole tone–semitone (symbolized as: T–T–S | T–T–T–S).

measure: Metric unit; space between two bar lines.

melody: Any succession of pitches.

meter: Group of beats organized in a regular rhythmic pattern and notated in music as a time signature.

minor: Modern term for Aeolian mode; characterized by an intervallic profile of whole tone–semitone–whole tone–whole tone–semitone–whole tone–whole tone (symbolized as T–S–T | T–S–T–T).

minuet: A dance of the 17th and 18th centuries, graceful and dignified, in moderately slow three-quarter time.

minuet and trio form: A three-part musical form consisting of a minuet ("A"), followed by a contrasting minuet ("B," called the trio), followed by a return to the original minuet ("A," called the da capo). Minuet and trio was the only baroque-era form to find its way into the instrumental music of the classical era.

modal ambiguity: Harmonic ambiguity, in which the main key is not clearly identified.

mode: A type of pitch collection (or scale).

modulation: The process of changing key during the course of a piece of music.

motive: Brief succession of pitches from which a melody grows through the processes of repetition, sequence, and transformation.

movement: Independent section within a larger work.

musical form: The manner in which a given movement of music is structured.

natural: Accidental (sign/symbol) placed to the left of a note, indicating that the note should not be sharpened or flattened; a white key on a keyboard.

note: A sound with three properties: a single, sing-able fundamental frequency; timbre; and duration.

open cadence: Equivalent to a comma; such a cadence pauses on the dominant harmony without resolving the tonic harmony, creating tension and the need to continue.

open form: A movement in which thematic ideas are introduced and immediately developed in a continuous sequence.

opus number: A number supplied by a publisher to indicate the order in which a composition (or set of compositions) is published.

orchestral unison: A technique by which multiple instruments simultaneously play the same pitch but in different registers (ranges).

ostinato: A brief melodic idea that is repeated over and over again.

overture: Music preceding an opera or play, often played as an independent concert piece.

pedal: A single pitch or harmony sustained or repeated for a period of time.

pitch: A sound with two properties: a single, sing-able fundamental frequency and timbre.

pizzicato: Plucking, rather than bowing, a stringed instrument.

polyphonic texture/polyphony: Texture consisting of two or more simultaneous melody lines of equal importance.

presto: Very fast.

recapitulation*:* The third large part of a sonata form movement, during which the themes return in their original order.

recitative: Operatic convention in which the lines are half sung, half spoken.

ritornello form: A refrain procedure in which a theme returns in part, called a fragmentary refrain, over the course of a movement. This form is among the most common of all baroque-era instrumental procedures.

rondo form: A classical-era form that sees a principal theme (the rondo theme) return like a refrain after various contrasting episodes.

scale: All the pitches inside a given octave, arranged stepwise so that there is no duplication. The names of the chords built on the scale steps are: tonic, supertonic, mediant, subdominant, dominant, sub-mediant, and leading tone.

scherzo form: Meaning literally "I'm joking," scherzo is the designation Beethoven gave to his modified use of minuet and trio form.

semitone: Smallest interval in Western music; on the keyboard, the distance between a black key and a white key, as well as B–C and E–F.

sequence: Successive repetitions of a motive at different pitches; compositional technique for extending melodic ideas.

sharp: Accidental (sign/symbol) placed to the left of a note, indicating that the pitch should be raised by a semitone.

solo concerto: A multi-movement work in which a single soloist is accompanied by, and sometimes pitted against, the orchestra.

sonata: Piece of music, typically in three or four movements, composed for a piano (piano sonata) or a piano plus one instrument (violin sonata, for instance).

sonata form: A classical-era formal process posited on the introduction, development, recapitulation, and reconciliation of multiple contrasting themes.

string quartet: A performing ensemble consisting of two violins, a viola, and a 'cello. (2) A musical composition written for that ensemble.

subject: The theme of a fugue.

suite: A concert work consisting of a collection of dances extracted from a longer ballet.

symphonic poem: Orchestral work in which the form is determined by the story being told.

symphony: A multi-movement work composed for an orchestra.

syncopation: Displacement of the expected accent from a strong beat to a weak beat and vice versa.

tempo: Relative speed of a passage of music.

texture: Number of melodies present and the relationship between those melodies in a given segment of music; they include monophony, polyphony (counterpoint), heterophony, and homophony.

theme: Primary musical subject matter in a given section of music.

theme and variations form: A classical-era formal process that exhibits a systematically varied theme in a series of variations.

timbre: Tone color.

tonal/tonality: Sense that one pitch is central to a section of music, as opposed to atonal/atonality.

tone poem: Also called a symphonic poem. A one-movement orchestral genre that develops a poetic idea, suggests a scene, or creates a mood. The tone poem is generally associated with the romantic era.

tonic: Home pitch and chord of a piece of tonal music. Think of the term as being derived from "tonal center" (tonic). For example, if a movement is in C, the pitch C is the tonic pitch, and the harmony built on C is the tonic chord.

tonicization: The process of creating a temporary tonic by articulating a dominant-to-tonic progression of a key other than the one currently in use.

triad: A chord consisting of three different pitches built from some combination of major and/or minor thirds.

trio sonata: Baroque-era genre of chamber music consisting of two soprano instruments, a bass instrument, and a chord-producing instrument (called the continuo). The most common trio sonata instrumentation was two violins, a 'cello, and a harpsichord.

triple meter: Metrical pattern having three beats to a measure.

tune: Generally sing-able, memorable melody with a clear sense of beginning, middle, and end.

waltz: A dance of Austrian/Viennese origin in triple meter.

whole-tone collection: Divides the octave into six equal segments; a whole-tone scale ascends and descends by major seconds, or whole tones.

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Holst, Gustav
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Mendelssohn, Felix
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Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus
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Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolai
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Strauss, Richard
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Tchaikovsky, Pyotr Ilyich
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Violin Concerto (1878). NAXOS 8.557690. Ilya Kaler (violin) and Dmitry Yablonsky conducting the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra.

Vivaldi, Antonio
The Four Seasons (ca. 1720). NAXOS 8.553219. Takako Nishizaki (violin) and Stephen Gunzenhauser conducting the Capella Istropolitana.

"The Ones That Got Away" and Extras

Beethoven, Ludwig van
The Creatures of Prometheus, Op. 43 (1801). NAXOS 8.553404. Michael Halász conducting the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Bizet, Georges
Symphony in C Major (1855). NAXOS 8.553027. Donald Johanos conducting the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Hindemith, Paul
Symphony *Mathis der Maler* (1934). NAXOS 8.553078. Franz-Paul Decker conducting the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus
"Un bacio di mano," K. 513 (1788). Brilliant Classics 92632/5. Ezio Maria Tisi (bass) and Wilhelm Keitel conducting the European Chamber Orchestra.

Prokofiev, Sergey
Symphony No. 5 (1944). NAXOS 8.554058. Theodore Kuchar conducting the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine.

Shostakovich, Dmitri
Symphony No. 9 (1945). NAXOS 8.550427. Alexander Rahbari conducting the BRT Philharmonic Orchestra, Brussels.

Vaughan Williams, Ralph
Symphony No. 5 (1943). NAXOS 8.550738. Kees Bakels conducting the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

Walton, William
Symphony No. 1 (1935). NAXOS 8.553180. Paul Daniel conducting the English Northern Philharmonia.

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Debussy, Claude. *La Mer* (1905). Performed by Alexander Rahbari conducting the BRT Philharmonic Orchestra, Brussels. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Dvořák, Antonín. Symphony No. 8 (1889). Performed by Stephen Gunzenhauser conducting the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

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Additional Works

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Hindemith, Paul. Symphony *Mathis de Maler* (1934). Published by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG. Performed by Franz-Paul Decker conducting the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

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