

Season 2016-2017

Friday, March 10, at 8:00
Saturday, March 11, at 8:00
Sunday, March 12, at 2:00

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Michael Tilson Thomas Conductor
Leonidas Kavakos Violin

Seeger Andante for Strings
First Philadelphia Orchestra performances

Berg Violin Concerto
 I. Andante—Allegretto
 II. Allegro—Adagio

Intermission

Beethoven Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 55 (“Eroica”)
 I. Allegro con brio
 II. Marcia funebre: Adagio assai
 III. Scherzo (Allegro vivace) and Trio
 IV. Finale: Allegro molto—Andante—Presto

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 50 minutes.

The March 10 concert is sponsored by
Willis Towers Watson.

Please join us immediately following the March 12 concert for a free Chamber Postlude, featuring members of The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Smetana String Quartet No. 1 in E minor (“From My Life”)
 I. Allegro vivo appassionato
 II. Allegro moderato à la polka
 III. Largo sostenuto
 IV. Vivace—Meno presto—Moderato—Allegro—
 Meno presto

Amy Oshiro-Morales Violin
Richard Amoroso Violin
Marvin Moon Viola
Gloria dePasquale Cello

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM. Visit WRTI.org to listen live or for more details.

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Jesse Griffin



The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world, renowned for its distinctive sound, desired for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for a legacy of imagination and innovation on and off the concert stage. The Orchestra is inspiring the future and transforming its rich tradition of achievement, sustaining the highest level of artistic quality, but also challenging—and exceeding—that level, by creating powerful musical experiences for audiences at home and around the world.

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin's connection to the Orchestra's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics since his inaugural season in 2012. Under his leadership the Orchestra returned to recording, with two celebrated CDs on the prestigious Deutsche Grammophon label, continuing its history of recording success. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of listeners on the radio with weekly Sunday afternoon broadcasts on WRTI-FM.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra continues to discover new and inventive ways to nurture its relationship with its loyal patrons at its home in the Kimmel Center, and also with those who enjoy the Orchestra's area performances at the Mann Center, Penn's Landing, and other cultural, civic, and learning venues. The Orchestra maintains a strong commitment to collaborations with cultural and community organizations on a regional and national level, all of which create greater access and engagement with classical music as an art form.

The Philadelphia Orchestra serves as a catalyst for cultural activity across Philadelphia's many communities, building an offstage presence as strong as its onstage one. With Nézet-Séguin, a dedicated body of musicians, and one of the nation's richest arts ecosystems, the Orchestra has launched its **HEAR** initiative, a portfolio of integrated initiatives that promotes **Health**, champions music **Education**, eliminates barriers to **Accessing** the orchestra, and maximizes

impact through **Research**. The Orchestra's award-winning Collaborative Learning programs engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members through programs such as Play!Ns, side-by-sides, PopUP concerts, free Neighborhood Concerts, School Concerts, and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, The Philadelphia Orchestra is a global ambassador for Philadelphia and for the US. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, the ensemble today boasts a new partnership with Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Shanghai Oriental Art Centre, and in 2017 will be the first-ever Western orchestra to appear in Mongolia. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall while also enjoying summer residencies in Saratoga Springs, NY, and Vail, CO. For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit www.philorch.org.

Music Director

Chris Lee



Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** is now confirmed to lead The Philadelphia Orchestra through the 2025-26 season, an extraordinary and significant long-term commitment. Additionally, he becomes music director of the Metropolitan Opera beginning with the 2021-22 season. Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of the Orchestra. His intensely collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him “phenomenal,” adding that under his baton, “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.” Highlights of his fifth season include an exploration of American Sounds, with works by Leonard Bernstein, Christopher Rouse, Mason Bates, and Christopher Theofanidis; a Music of Paris Festival; and the continuation of a focus on opera and sacred vocal works, with Bartók’s *Bluebeard’s Castle* and Mozart’s C-minor Mass.

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling talents of his generation. He has been music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic since 2008 and artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. He was also principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles and has conducted critically acclaimed performances at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Deutsche Grammophon (DG) enjoy a long-term collaboration. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with two CDs on that label. He continues fruitful recording relationships with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records; the London Philharmonic for the LPO label; and the Orchestre Métropolitain for ATMA Classique. In Yannick’s inaugural season The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to the radio airwaves, with weekly Sunday afternoon broadcasts on WRTI-FM.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal’s Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada, *Musical America’s* 2016 Artist of the Year, Canada’s National Arts Centre Award, the Prix Denise-Pelletier, and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec in Montreal, the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, and Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, NJ.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit www.philorch.org/conductor.

Conductor



Michael Tilson Thomas is music director of the San Francisco Symphony, founder and artistic director of the New World Symphony, and conductor laureate of the London Symphony. Born in Los Angeles, he is the third generation of his family to follow an artistic career. He became music director of the San Francisco Symphony in 1995 and has presented 18 festivals with the ensemble, including events devoted to the music of Mahler, Stravinsky, Beethoven, Wagner, and American Mavericks. In 1988 he inaugurated the New World Symphony, a post-graduate orchestral academy with a regular season in Miami Beach. As a guest conductor, he works with the world's leading orchestras. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 1971.

Also an accomplished composer, Mr. Tilson Thomas led the Pacific Music Festival Orchestra in the 1995 premiere of *Showa/Shoah*, his work commemorating the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. Baritone Thomas Hampson premiered his settings of poetry by Walt Whitman; soprano Renée Fleming premiered his settings of the poetry of Emily Dickinson; and the San Francisco Symphony premiered his concerto for contrabassoon, *Urban Legend*. As a Carnegie Hall Perspectives Artist from 2003 to 2005, Mr. Tilson Thomas had an evening devoted to his own compositions, including *Island Music* for four marimbas and percussion, *Notturmo* for solo flute and strings, and a new setting of poems by Rainer Maria Rilke. Other compositions include *Street Song* for brass instruments and *Agnegram*, an overture for orchestra.

Mr. Tilson Thomas has won 11 Grammy awards for his recordings. His discography includes more than 120 discs. With the San Francisco Symphony label, SFS Media, his ongoing series of recordings includes the symphonies of Mahler, Bernstein's *West Side Story*, and works by Beethoven, Ives, and John Adams. He is a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France, was *Musical America's* Musician of the Year and Conductor of the Year, and *Gramophone* magazine's Artist of the Year. In 2008 he received the Peabody Award for his radio series for SFS Media, *The MTT Files*. In 2010 President Obama awarded him the National Medal of Arts, the highest award given to artists by the United States.

Soloist



Marco Borggreve

Violinist **Leonidas Kavakos** has been a regular guest of The Philadelphia Orchestra since making his debut in 1999 with Charles Dutoit at the Mann Center. He has appeared with the ensemble under the direction of music directors Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Wolfgang Sawallisch, and Christoph Eschenbach as well as numerous guest conductors. He was also soloist for the Orchestra's 2009 tour of Europe and the Canary Islands, performing in Tenerife, Grand Canary, Lisbon, Madrid, Valencia, Luxembourg, Budapest, and Vienna.

Mr. Kavakos is the artist-in-residence at the New York Philharmonic for the 2016-17 season and is featured in solo, play-conduct, and recital performances. Other season highlights include play-conducting with the Houston Symphony, a recital tour with pianist Yuja Wang in Europe and the U.S., a European tour with the Budapest Festival Orchestra, and a tour of Switzerland with the Mariinsky Orchestra. He has built a strong profile as a conductor and this season makes conducting debuts with the Gürzenich-Orchester Köln and the Finnish Radio Symphony. Mr. Kavakos works with the world's major orchestras and conductors, including the Vienna, Berlin, Munich, La Scala, New York, and Los Angeles philharmonics; the Leipzig Gewandhaus and Royal Concertgebouw orchestras; and the London, Boston, and Chicago symphonies.

Born and raised in a musical family in Athens, Mr. Kavakos was still in his teens when he first gained international attention, winning the Sibelius Competition in 1985 and, three years later, the Paganini and Naumburg competitions. In 1991 he won a *Gramophone* Award for the first-ever recording of the original version of Sibelius's Violin Concerto, recorded on BIS. Now an exclusive recording artist with Decca Classics, his first release on the label, the complete Beethoven violin sonatas with Enrico Pace, resulted in the ECHO Klassik "Instrumentalist of the Year" award. His most recent recording, *Virtuoso*, was released in April 2016. Mr. Kavakos was named *Gramophone* Artist of the Year in 2014. He plays the "Abergavenny" Stradivarius of 1724 and owns modern violins made by F. Leonhard, S.P. Greiner, E. Haahti, and D. Bagué.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1803

Beethoven

Symphony

No. 3

Music

Spohr

Violin Concerto

No. 1

Literature

Schiller

Der Braut von

Messina

Art

West

Christ Healing

the Sick

History

Louisiana

Purchase

1931

Seeger

Andante for

Strings

Music

Still

"Afro-American"

Symphony

Literature

O'Neill

Mourning

Becomes Electra

Art

Mondriaan

Composition No.

1 with Red

History

George

Washington

Bridge completed

1935

Berg

Violin Concerto

Music

Gershwin

Porgy and Bess

Literature

Steinbeck

Tortilla Flat

Art

Dali

Giraffe on Fire

History

Roosevelt signs

Social Security

Act

In 1931, while in Europe on a Guggenheim Fellowship, the 30-year-old Ruth Crawford dropped in unexpectedly to meet Alban Berg. The young American modernist admired the Viennese composer and the compositions of both often combine challenging dissonances with lyrical Romanticism. The intensely haunting Andante for Strings is drawn from her String Quartet, which she was composing at that time. The following year she married ethnomusicologist Charles Seeger (father of Pete Seeger) and began to devote most of her professional energies to collecting and cataloguing folk music.

Alban Berg's last completed composition, his magnificent Violin Concerto, brilliantly combines lush Romantic sounds with 12-tone musical techniques pioneered by his teacher Arnold Schoenberg. Baroque music also makes an appearance near the end with the chorale "Es ist genug" (It Is Enough), which J.S. Bach used in his Cantata No. 60. The Violin Concerto is a deeply felt work, written in "memory of an angel," the recent death at age 18 of Alma Mahler Gropius's daughter Manon.

Beethoven's Third Symphony, the mighty "Eroica," proved a turning point not only in the composer's career, but also in the history of orchestral music. It was the signal work ushering in his "heroic" middle period and broke with audience expectations of what a symphony should be. The piece initially baffled many listeners because of its length, complexity, and unusual form—an imposing first movement, a gigantic funeral march, a lively scherzo with playful horn trio, and a formidable concluding set of variations. Although originally inspired by the figure of Napoleon, the heroic nature of this Symphony is deeply connected to Beethoven's own personal struggles at the time as, only in his early 30s, he realized that he was losing his hearing.

The Music

Andante for Strings



Ruth Crawford Seeger
Born in East Liverpool,
Ohio, July 3, 1901
Died in Chevy Chase,
Maryland, November 18,
1953

When Ruth Crawford, the daughter of a clergy family, enrolled at the American Conservatory in Chicago in 1921, her intention was to spend a year completing her training as a music teacher. That all changed when she began to explore the musical life of a big city. She switched to composition, and came into contact with Henry Cowell and other members of the musical avant-garde. In New York, at the end of the 1920s, she gained a new mentor in Charles Seeger, not a composer himself but a guide to composers, Cowell included. Seeger graduated to the role of husband in 1932, after Crawford had returned from a year in Berlin and Paris on a Guggenheim Fellowship. As was quite usual, she kept her maiden name for her artistic work.

A Husband's Influence She herself noted, in the letters she wrote from Europe to Seeger, how his influence on her—in terms of what he called “dissonant counterpoint” (counterpoint in which dissonance is the norm) and also rhythmic structuring—was most effective during this period when they were apart. She also kept her distance from leading European musicians (apparently, she met Schoenberg only at a Berlin tennis club), and felt she gained from being left to her own devices. These turned out to be remarkable in the work she was writing: her String Quartet (1931).

The Quartet made a strong impression on Cowell, who arranged for it to be printed in 1941 in his New Music edition and for its *Andante* slow movement—which seemed then, and still seems now, totally exceptional—to be recorded for New Music's first 78 rpm record. Though pleased by the attention, she had—very soon after producing such a striking work—abandoned composition to devote herself with her husband to collecting and arranging folk songs. And it was in that area that her children were to excel, especially her stepson Pete, son Mike, and daughter Peggy.

Seeger added a note to her published score that the *Andante* could be performed by a string orchestra, with a part for double basses. However, the part supplied for performances hitherto was defective, and the correct

part has only recently been brought to light by scholar Ian Sewell. His new edition of the work makes these performances the first to realize her intentions fully.

An Innovative Work All four movements of the original quartet are compact, and the Andante lasts only four minutes or so. Having entered successively, the instruments play continuously, moving independently from one pitch to another and bringing forward their pitch of the moment by means of a crescendo, or contrariwise retracting it. The harmony becomes an elastic sheet, constantly changing as notes come and go. Gradually the music rises through the registers, from an opening by the violas on C-sharp near the bottom of their range to a point where the first violins have reached more than three octaves higher. Simultaneously, the harmonic tension steadily rises to a crisis point where the sheet sheers. The instrumental parts briefly cascade alone, then rejoin, rather as splashed drops of liquid will come back together.

In its orchestral form, the movement is perhaps even stranger than it is in the Quartet, as a continuous, continuously changing harmonic mass. The dissonant counterpoint is understood in an unparalleled manner, with exquisite dissonances (a minor second at the opening) protracted and slowly evolving. They do so largely around a melody that runs through the piece, except where it is broken off at the climax, to be completed in the final measures. She wanted this melody printed in the score in red notes (as at last it now is, in Sewell's new edition), and hoped it could be brought out more clearly by a string orchestra with a conductor to shape the unfolding.

Nothing like this can be found in music before György Ligeti's *Atmosphères*, 30 years later, and Seeger also anticipates the total serialism of the 1950s in how she rings changes on sequences of four durations—reversing them, for example. Her music, though fully chromatic, is not strictly serial, but it clearly springs from a similar impulse. It is abstract and manifestly constructed, and yet what results is something whole and entire, something with its own powerful voice and presence.

Seeger was to return to independent composition more than two decades later, in 1952, when she wrote her Suite for Wind Quintet. Her death the following year not only cut short this creative revival but also contributed to the neglect that overcame her music. Its rediscovery is often attributed to the Composers Quartet and Nonesuch Records, and to the release of the first complete recording

The Andante for Strings is a transcription for string orchestra of the third movement of the String Quartet, which was composed in 1931.

These are the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work.

The score calls for strings only.

Performance time is approximately four minutes.

of her String Quartet in 1973. However, it is by no means irrelevant to today's concert to note there was a performance of the Andante for Strings two years before that, by the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas.

—Paul Griffiths

The Music

Violin Concerto



Alban Berg
Born in Vienna,
February 9, 1885
Died there, December 24,
1935

Berg loved gossip, secrets, and codes, and the Vienna in which he lived during the first decades of the 20th century afforded ample opportunities to satisfy these interests. This was the Vienna of Mahler and Schoenberg, and also of Freud, Wittgenstein, Klimt, Schnitzler, Kraus, and so many other artistic and intellectual luminaries. They all seem to have known one another, and often to have known one another's business. Mahler had an intensive four-hour psychoanalytic session with Freud after he discovered his young wife Alma's affair with the architect Walter Gropius. Schoenberg's wife left him and took up with the brilliant painter Richard Gerstl, who killed himself at age 25 when she decided to return home. Berg had more than his share of romantic escapades, beginning with an illegitimate child fathered at age 17 with a household servant (about which, more later). All this may seem irrelevant to the miraculous music Berg composed, but the culture in which he lived and worked profoundly affected him. Moreover, some of the gossip he knew about others, and the secrets he himself had, found their way into his works.

Requiem for Manon The Concerto, Berg's last finished composition (he did not live to complete the opera *Lulu*), memorializes the death of Manon Gropius, the 18-year-old daughter of Alma Mahler with her second husband. At least that is what the famous dedication—"To the Memory of an Angel"—declares. Berg also referred to the Concerto as a "Requiem for Manon." "Berg loved my daughter as if she were his own child, from the beginning of her life," wrote Alma Mahler Gropius later. "She became more and more beautiful as she grew into young adulthood. When [theater director] Max Reinhardt saw her, he asked if I would allow her to play the part of the First Angel in the Grosses Welttheater at Salzburg. But before anything could be arranged she was stricken with infantile paralysis ... and she died on Easter Day of 1935. She never did play the angel, though in reality she became one."

In recent years, however, scholars have argued that secrets lurk in this Concerto as well: that Berg alluded to his illegitimate child from many years earlier, as well as to his more recent love affair with Hanna Fuchs-Robettin.

Their 10-year relationship began in 1925 and ended with Berg's death. News of this relationship came as a surprise to many because it is utterly at odds with the picture of domestic bliss painted by Berg's widow, Helene. (Helene, by the way, was rumored to be the illegitimate daughter of Emperor Franz Joseph, with whom her mother had a long liaison. Such was life during what Woody Allen, in a *New Yorker* piece, called "Fun de siècle Vienna.")

Helene Berg outlived her husband by more than 40 years, jealously guarding his memory and reputation. Only after her death in 1976 did more facts emerge, which offered new insights into the inbred Viennese world of the time. Hanna was the sister of the novelist Franz Werfel, Alma Mahler's third husband. In 1925 Berg traveled to Prague for performances of orchestral music from his opera *Wozzeck*, conducted by Alexander Zemlinsky, teacher and brother-in-law of Schoenberg, teacher and frustrated lover of Alma before she married Mahler. While in Prague, Alma took Berg to the home of the Fuchs-Robettin family, where he met Hanna and quickly fell in love with her. In his subsequent works, most importantly the *Lyric Suite* for string quartet, the opera *Lulu*, and the Violin Concerto, Berg made reference to this new passion.

A Modernist Classic The appeal of the Concerto, which mixes 12-tone techniques with tonal principles, lies partly in the composer's "theatrical" approach to the treatment of solo texture versus instrumental body. Berg's experience in the composition of two acts of *Lulu* had taught him that 12-tone techniques were most effective when other aspects of melody, gesture, and overall form were addressed as well. Even today, many listeners who struggle to comprehend the works of Schoenberg and Webern find the music of Berg more accessible—with a color, coherence, and lyricism that brings the music within the grasp of most concertgoers.

Berg wrote the Violin Concerto in a surge of inspiration during the spring and summer of 1935. Earlier that year, while consumed with *Lulu*, he was approached by the American violinist Louis Krasner about writing a concerto. Krasner felt that Berg's lyrical style, placed in the context of a standard violin concerto, would "further the cause" of 12-tone music among the concert-going public. On July 16, Krasner, a Russian émigré who was living in the United States, received a letter from Berg. "Yesterday I finished composing our Violin Concerto," he wrote. "To be sure, I was keen on it as I have never been before in my life, and I must add that the work gave me more and more joy. I hope—no,

I even have the confident belief—that I have succeeded.” Berg composed the work with unusual speed, which has furthered speculation, given his poor health at the time, that thoughts of his own death colored the composition.

The orchestration of the piece took Berg less than a month, and by mid-August the Concerto was ready. But soon afterward he fell gravely ill, in late 1935, from an infection that appears to have stemmed from an insect bite. He died a few weeks later, on Christmas Eve. Webern, scheduled to conduct the Concerto's premiere at a music festival in Barcelona in April, found himself unable to lead such a moving piece so soon after the death of his close friend and colleague. He led two of the rehearsals and then abandoned the podium, leaving the final rehearsal, and the performance on April 19, to Hermann Scherchen.

A Closer Look Each of the Concerto's two movements is divided into two parts. The bipartite first movement is often said to represent, programmatically, two aspects of young Manon's character: the lovely, lyrical first section (**Andante**) representing her elegant beauty and sensitivity, the scherzando second section (**Allegretto**) standing for a certain sort of bubbly Viennese gaiety. It is difficult to imagine a more appealing use of the 12-tone technique than in this dancing, gently virtuosic Allegretto, which is variously marked *rustico* and *wienerisch*. Near the end of the first part, Berg alludes to a Carinthian folksong, “Ein Vogel auf'm Zwetschgenbaum” (A Bird on the Plum Tree Has Awakened Me). The melody is introduced by the French horns and taken up by the trumpets before migrating to the soloist. There is reason to believe that thoughts of Manon evoked associations with Berg's own illegitimate daughter, Albine, the progeny of his teenage liaison with a servant girl who worked for the composer's family during the summer holidays.

The second movement begins with a dramatically charged **Allegro**, the dense, rhapsodic section that builds through an intricate, cadenza-like passage to an explosive fortississimo climax—the culmination of the entire Concerto, which Berg has marked *Höhepunkt* (climax) to make it clear exactly where we are. This ushers in the last section (**Adagio**), a denouement in which the solo violin intones the last four pitches of the 12-tone row, which, as it happens, are the first notes of Johann Rudolf Ahle's chorale “Es ist genug” (It Is Enough), a melody used by J.S. Bach in his Cantata No. 60, “O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort” (O Eternity, thou thund'rous word). Four clarinets alternate with the soloist in presenting the phrases of the four-part

Berg composed his Violin Concerto in 1935.

Louis Krasner, the dedicatee and original soloist for the Barcelona premiere of the Concerto, was also on hand for the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work, in November 1937; Leopold Stokowski was the conductor. Most recently Gil Shaham was the soloist in February 2015, under Robin Ticciati's baton.

A 1969 performance of the Concerto with Leonid Kogan and Eugene Ormandy can be found in The Philadelphia Orchestra: The Centennial Collection (Historic Broadcasts and Recordings from 1917-1998).

The score calls for solo violin, two flutes (both doubling piccolo), two oboes (II doubling English horn), three clarinets (III doubling alto saxophone), bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, trombone, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, gong, snare drum, tam-tam, triangle), harp, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 25 minutes.

chorale, in Bach's harmonization. Berg inscribes the score with the hymn text, at the point where each phrase appears: "It is enough! Lord, if it pleases you, release my soul! Now I bid you good night, O world! My Jesus comes: I journey toward my heavenly home. With assurance I travel there, in peace. My great sorrow remains down there, on earth. It is enough." It is a magical effect: Traditional tonality comes to sound strange within Berg's expressive serial surroundings.

Berg has devised for the piece an ingenious tone row (G—B-flat—D—F-sharp—A—C—E—G-sharp—B—C-sharp—E-flat—F) that not only contains deliberate "tonal references" (a series of triads: G minor, D major, A minor, E major), but also has an outer skeleton of open fifths that neatly fits the violin's open strings (G—D—A—E). He has succeeded, perhaps more than any 12-tone composer, in successfully fusing elements of form and content, of purely theoretical constructs with pure musical expression. In many respects, he is just as much Mahler's true Viennese heir, as he is more obviously Schoenberg's.

—Christopher H. Gibbs/Paul J. Horsley

The Music

Symphony No. 3 (“Eroica”)



Ludwig van Beethoven
Born in Bonn, probably
December 16, 1770
Died in Vienna, March 26,
1827

“In his own opinion it is the greatest work that he has yet written. Beethoven played it for me recently, and I believe that heaven and earth will tremble when it is performed.” Beethoven’s pupil Ferdinand Ries wrote this prescient statement in a letter to the publisher Nikolaus Simrock dated October 22, 1803. Ries also mentioned that his teacher was planning to name the new symphony “Bonaparte” in homage to Napoleon. As Beethoven scholar Lewis Lockwood has noted, “The story of Beethoven’s original plan to dedicate the symphony to Napoleon, or name it for him, and his angry decision to tear up this tribute on hearing of Napoleon’s coronation as Emperor, is not a myth.” When Ries brought the news of Bonaparte’s coronation to Beethoven, his teacher cried out in fury, “Is he then, too, nothing more than an ordinary man! Now he will trample on all the rights of man and indulge only his ambition. He will exalt himself above all others and become a tyrant!” Disillusioned, Beethoven changed the title of his work from “Bonaparte” to *Sinfonia Eroica composta per festeggiare il sovvenire di un grand Uomo* (Heroic Symphony composed to celebrate the memory of a great man).

Quite apart from Beethoven’s changing opinion of Napoleon, the story of the Symphony’s creation provides insight into the composer’s tenacious and economical creative process. During the winter of 1801, he composed a contradanse for use in Viennese ballrooms. Obviously pleased by this little piece, he reused it in his ballet, *The Creatures of Prometheus*, which premiered in March 1801. In late 1802 Beethoven came back to the contradanse melody, making it the basis of his Fifteen Variations and Fugue for piano, Op. 35, now known as the “Eroica” Variations. Finally, he used the theme and part of the piano variations in the variations that comprise the finale of the “Eroica” Symphony, Op. 55. This unpretentious dance tune thus provided the point of departure for one of the grandest symphonies ever written.

By the winter of 1803 Beethoven was working obsessively on the new symphony, which grew ever longer and denser. When he conducted the first public performance of the “Eroica” on April 7, 1804, the Viennese audience was stunned by the score’s power, length, and difficulty. By the time of its publication in 1806, however, it was celebrated as one of Beethoven’s finest achievements.

Beethoven composed his *Symphony No. 3* in 1803.

Fritz Scheel conducted the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the “Eroica,” in January 1903. Its most recent appearance on a subscription series was in February 2014, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting. The work has become one of the most frequently performed pieces by the Orchestra, appearing almost every season, and it was chosen to be performed in memory of both Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy. Among the distinguished conductors who have led the *Symphony* with the Philadelphians are Leopold Stokowski, Willem Mengelberg, Clemens Krauss, Eugene Ormandy, Otto Klemperer, Fritz Reiner, Bruno Walter, Georg Solti, Zubin Mehta, Daniel Barenboim, Claudio Abbado, Klaus Tennstedt, Riccardo Muti, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Christoph Eschenbach, Simon Rattle, and Christoph von Dohnányi.

The Orchestra has recorded the “Eroica” three times: in 1961 with Ormandy for CBS; in 1980 with Ormandy for RCA; and in 1987 with Muti for EMI. A live performance from 2005 with Eschenbach is also currently available as a digital download.

The work is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, three horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 50 minutes.

A Closer Look The “Eroica” *Symphony* begins (**Allegro con brio**) with two explosive and defiant chords. These two root-position triads in the main key of E-flat major contain within their structure the basis for the entire *Symphony*’s thematic material. The forward trajectory set in motion by these powerful opening salvos is sustained throughout the rest of this movement. All of the subsidiary themes are either obviously or subtly related to the first theme. This first movement represents a vast expansion of sonata form; its development section is remarkably protracted, complex, and highly dramatic. Even the movement’s coda—far from being a perfunctory closing “tail”—is so extended as to function as a second developmental section.

The *Symphony*’s second movement, the *Marcia funebre* (**Adagio assai**), caused the French composer Hector Berlioz to observe, “I know of no other example in music of a style wherein grief is so able to sustain itself consistently in forms of such purity and nobility of expression.” Beethoven cast this funeral march in a broad three-part formal design in which the opening theme returns as a refrain, similar to a rondo. The final passage of the second movement is harrowing in its pathos, as Berlioz stated, “When these shreds of lugubrious melody are bare, alone, broken, and have passed one by one to the tonic, the wind instruments cry out as if it was the last farewell of the warriors to their companions in arms.”

While the third movement Scherzo (**Allegro vivace**) begins quietly, the music builds volume inexorably as it hurtles forward. The accompanying Trio, by contrast, with its prominently featured three horns, is stately and heroic. The last movement (**Allegro molto**) features the theme and variations mentioned above. The finale begins with a precipitous onrush of energy. Immediately afterward, pizzicato strings quietly play the bass line of the main theme—itsself obviously related to first movement’s opening theme. From this point onward, a series of ingenious variations appear in succession until an exuberant coda brings the “Eroica” to an exultant close.

In 1817, with all but the Ninth composed, Beethoven was asked by a friend to name the favorite among his eight symphonies. With “great good humor,” he replied, “Eh! Eh! The ‘Eroica.’”

—Byron Adams

Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Cadenza: A passage or section in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a movement or composition

Cantata: A multi-movement vocal piece consisting of arias, recitatives, ensembles, and choruses and based on a continuous narrative text

Chorale: A hymn tune of the German Protestant Church, or one similar in style. Chorale settings are vocal, instrumental, or both.

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Chromatic: Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

Coda: A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

Counterpoint: A term that describes the combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

Fugue: A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout the entire piece in all the voices at different places

Harmonic: Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

Harmony: The

combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output

Pizzicato: Plucked

Rondo: A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

Scherzo: Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo in triple time, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts.

Serialism: Music constructed according to the principle pioneered by Schoenberg in the early 1920s, whereby the 12 notes of the scale are arranged in a particular order, forming a series of pitches that serves as the basis of the composition and a source from which the musical material is

derived

Sonata form: The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda.

Triad: A three-tone chord composed of a given tone (the "root") with its third and fifth in ascending order in the scale

Trio: See scherzo

12-tone: See serialism

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegretto: A tempo between walking speed and fast

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Con brio: Vigorously, with fire

Presto: Very fast

Rustico: Rustic, plain, simple

Scherzando: Playfully

Vivace: Lively

Wienerisch: Viennese

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Assai: Much

Molto: Very

DYNAMIC MARKS

Crescendo: Increasing volume

Fortissimo (ff): Very loud

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