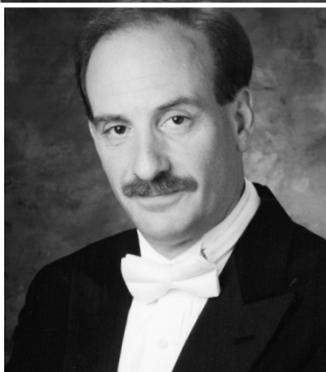




RHODE ISLAND PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Larry Rachleff, *Music Director*



2016/2017
PROGRAM NOTES

Beethoven's Emperor!

TACO Classical Saturday *September 17, 2016*; Amica Rush Hour Friday *September 16, 2016*

Overture to *The Bartered Bride*

Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884)

The word “roots” has come to mean one’s cultural-ethnic roots, implying also a search for those roots and raising one’s consciousness of them. Bedřich Smetana found his roots in the music of his native Bohemia (now in the Czech Republic). Swept up in patriotic revolutions around the mid-19th century, Smetana also crusaded as a political activist. The revolution against German political and cultural tyranny was unsuccessful, but the effort produced a fresh, liberating force in Smetana’s music. He became his country’s first nationalist composer.

Nowhere in Smetana’s music is there a stronger sense of Czech “roots” than in his second opera, *The Bartered Bride*, which he wrote between 1863 and 1866. Borrowing very little folk music, Smetana created a peasant opera that synthesized elements of Czech melody and dance into a wholly nationalist creation. To the Czechs, *The Bartered Bride* became synonymous with Czech culture. Created for its 1866 premiere with spoken dialogue and no dance, the opera underwent three revisions in 1869, resulting in continuous music. The overture and three famous dances are often performed in the concert hall.

Summarizing the music in *The Bartered Bride*’s overture, opera authority the Earl of Harewood writes:

The Overture, written before the rest of the opera, so great was Smetana’s enthusiasm for the subject he was to tackle, is immensely and justifiably popular as a concert piece. Its themes are later used in connection with Kečal and the marriage contract . . . but whatever their associations, their dashing quavers [eighth notes], Mozartian in their gaiety and appropriately marked *vivacissimo*, give the opera an irresistible start.

Concerto for Orchestra

Witold Lutoslawski (1913-1994)

From the mid-1950s, Witold Lutoslawski became an internationally celebrated composer. His list of prizes and honors nearly fills a dictionary column, and they come from such varied sources as UNESCO, Helsinki (Sibelius Prize) and academies of arts in Hamburg, Berlin, London, Sweden, Japan and the United States. He has been recognized with three honorary doctorates. In his native Poland, Lutoslawski became a familiar figure as a pianist and conductor as well as a composer.

Lutoslawski paid heavy dues for his recognition, however. Following the Nazi oppression of Poland during World War II, the country became part of Stalin’s Soviet Bloc. Polish composers thus were subject to the same repressive rules as the Russian composers, such as Prokofiev and Shostakovich. It was in that climate that Lutoslawski brought forth his *Concerto for Orchestra*. Government officials required all concert music to bear some earmark of “social conscience,” usually a folk style of composing or actual quotations of folk music. It is a tribute to Lutoslawski’s vast talent that he produced such a vibrant work under those circumstances. Composing the *Concerto for Orchestra* was the result of a 1950 commission from Witold Rowicki for the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, which Rowicki had founded that year. Lutoslawski wrote:

This was to be something not difficult, but which could, however, give the young orchestra an opportunity to show its qualities. I started to work on the new score, not realizing that I was to spend nearly four

years on it. Folk music and all that follows with it . . . was to be used in my new work. Folk music has in this work, however, been merely a raw material used to build a large musical form of several movements, which does not in the least originate either from folk songs or from folk dances. A work came into being, which I could not help including among my most important works as a result of my episodic symbiosis with folk music, and in a way that was for me somewhat unexpected.

In procedural matters, Lutoslawski often looked to the music of Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, and that is what he has done with regard to “folk music.” Each of these composers had absorbed the folk music idiom of his native country to such a depth that composing modern music in the flavor of folk music was a natural procedure.

What to listen for: As the first movement begins, notice how the sound builds from low sounds to higher ones, leading to the later sections featuring a variety of instruments. Listen also for the contrast between melodies in these sections — some short and choppy, others long and song-like. In the latter, notice how the orchestral sound often becomes more forceful. Near the end, see if you can identify recurrences of the tune introduced at the beginning of the movement.

In the second movement, notice the hushed scurrying feel of the music during the first section. Notice when this changes to the slower middle section with a trumpet call. Notice the difference in mood between the first two sections. Listen for the quick scurrying sounds to return to create a finish.

The last movement is longer than the first two combined. We might call this the “center of gravity” in the Concerto for Orchestra. It starts with a melody played by the double basses and harp. Listen to it closely and try to identify as many of its recurrences (in these and other instruments) as possible. There are 18 in all. Other ideas are pitted against it, so this is not an easy task. This is the “Passacaglia” section. When its music finally dies away, we come to the “Toccatà” section. This begins softly but quickly. Notice the sudden change and the growing agitated quality of the “Toccatà.” The generic title of the final section, “Corale” (Chorale), originally meant church hymn. You can hear that idea in the music played softly by brass instruments. Notice how the music repeats but with new ideas etched around it, sometimes taking over the spotlight. Many ideas are reminiscent of folk music. Then notice how the pulse of the music gathers momentum as it drives toward a climax, sometimes backing off for an anti-climax. Listen for the full brass section to bring back the “Corale” in preparation for the sudden percussive ending.

Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat major, op.73 (“Emperor”)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

It is a truism to say that Ludwig van Beethoven changed the course of music history. It is another matter, however, and a more exciting one, to hear a Beethoven composition that actually did change history. The “Emperor” Piano Concerto is such a work.

Before Beethoven, the role of the performer was more creative than in later times. Performers were expected to improvise not only ornaments and filler passages but, in a solo concerto, also a whole cadenza (long solo near the end of the first movement). It was the performer’s job to “finish” the composition for the audience (in the same way today, that an interior decorator finishes the work of an architect and a builder). Beethoven’s “Emperor” Concerto wrested that decorative privilege from the performer, who often took too much license with it anyway. In this concerto’s first movement just before the conclusion, where the soloist’s cadenza is expected, Beethoven wrote in the score, “Non si fa una cadenza, ma s’attacca subito il seguente” (“Do not play a cadenza, but immediately proceed to the following”). With those fateful words, Beethoven seized full control and

forever closed what one analyst has called “the saddest chapter in the story of the concerto.” The movement continues with Beethoven’s own written-out cadenza, briefly treating the two principal themes and gradually bringing in the orchestra for a triumphant ending.

The second movement projects a nocturnal atmosphere through its song-like theme and following delicate treatments of it. At the soft, sustained ending, the finale bursts forth exuberantly. This movement has an ingenious architecture in which the main theme keeps reappearing between episodes, always growing and evolving. Despite the analysis that such formal genius invites, however, the concerto’s finale is impetuous and spontaneous, written with the exhilaration and pure joy of a creative artist making a modern form out of an old one.

The “Emperor” Concerto was written in 1809, the year of the French siege and occupation of Vienna, when Beethoven’s patron and student, Archduke Rudolf, suddenly had to leave the city to protect his safety. This was the occasion of Beethoven’s *Les Adieux* piano sonata, dedicated to Rudolph, as was the concerto. By 1809, Beethoven had grown too deaf to perform at the piano, and perhaps for that reason the “Emperor” was his final piano concerto. Probably because of the war, the work had to wait until 1812 for its premiere. At that occasion, the press was ecstatic, calling the work “one of the most original, imaginative, most effective but also one of the most difficult of all existing concertos.” The exact origin of the nickname “Emperor” is unknown, but a story persists that a French army officer attending the premiere enthusiastically dubbed it “an emperor among concertos.”

Mozart’s Requiem! with Providence Singers

TACO Classical Saturday *October 15, 2016*; AMICA Rush Hour Friday *October 14, 2016*

Francesca da Rimini, op.32

Peter I. Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Tristan and Isolde, Pelléas and Mélisande, Romeo and Juliet, Paolo and Francesca — what do they have in common? They were lovers who could not completely fulfill their great love while living, and so they died tragically. The first three couples above were fictional. Paolo Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini, however, actually lived in the 14th century. The handsome Paolo courted Francesca, and she fell in love with him, believing it would be he whom she would marry. Her father, however, had made a bargain with Paolo’s ugly, hunchbacked brother, Gianciotto, so Francesca was compelled to marry him instead. Unable to restrain their love, Paolo and Francesca met, but Gianciotto found them and (legally in 14th-century Italy) killed them both.

The ghosts of Paolo and Francesca found their way into the *Inferno* of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. From there, Francesca’s story reached Peter I. Tchaikovsky on the suggestion of his brother Modest in 1876. The composer’s first thought was to use the subject for an opera, but soon he settled on writing a programmatic orchestral “fantasy.” Francesca da Rimini premiered in Moscow in March 1877 and was performed again in the same month in St. Petersburg. Audiences and most critics were enthusiastic, some saying that this was his best orchestral work yet.

The *And ante* opening represents the words that Dante reads as Virgil leads him through the gate of Hell: “Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.” In the following stormy section of the music, Dante enters the Second Circle of the *Inferno*, where famous adulterers receive their punishment: to be constantly swept by a tempest, as their lives were swept by the tempest of passion. Gradually, the storm subsides until a solo clarinet enters

very quietly. This is the voice of Francesca telling the story of her great love. The melody becomes like one, long-breathed phrase spanning dozens of measures. Additional themes and Tchaikovsky's passionate scoring merge to push toward the climactic moment. The peak is sustained until a concluding *Allegro* intrudes, completing the story's stormy frame. Tchaikovsky was most proud of the "love" section, however. As he wrote to his brother, "I have worked at it with love, and the love, I believe, has been quite successful."

Requiem, k.626

Wolfgang A. Mozart (1756-1791)

I have nothing more to fear. I know well, from what I am experiencing, that my hour is near, that I am on the point of death: I shall die without having known any of the delights my talent would have brought me. And yet life is so full of beauty, and in the beginning my career showed auspicious prospects!

From this letter, reportedly from Mozart to Da Ponte in September 1791, we glimpse his own vision of impending tragedy, the warning signs of which must have already been present. A few months earlier, Mozart had accepted a commission to compose a Requiem Mass, and it is interesting to speculate whether he then suspected that it would be his own last work. What he could not have known is that the Requiem's story would develop into one of the strangest in musical history. According to Mozart's widow, Constanze, a "grey messenger" appeared at Mozart's door one night bearing an unsigned commissioning letter and some money as down payment for a Requiem Mass. Although the specter of this visitor seems sinister and reportedly haunted Mozart during his last days, the actual reason for the commission was bizarre.

In Vienna there lived a certain Count Franz von Walsegg, a wealthy amateur musician who wished to pass himself off as a fine composer. To do this, he would find a good composer who was down on his luck and commission an anonymous piece from him. The count would then recopy the music and have the parts extracted for the premiere of yet another of his own "great" works. In February 1791, the count's wife had died, and he conceived the idea of obtaining a Requiem Mass to be performed each year on the anniversary of her death. It was Walsegg's "grey messenger" who came to Mozart with the anonymous commission. At the time, Mozart and his wife needed the money badly enough to accept the condition of reciprocal anonymity, but due to his involvement with *The Magic Flute* and other professional commitments that year, Mozart had to wait until October or November to begin work on the Mass.

Toward the end of November, Mozart suddenly grew very ill and had to be confined to bed. Even his terminal illness, however, (see below) could not deter him from his unyielding attempt to complete the Requiem, which would bring Constanze at least a little money after he was gone. Constanze's sister, Sophie Haibel, reports that on December 4, the day before Mozart's death,

There was Süßmayr [Mozart's student and friend] by Mozart's bed, the well-known Requiem lay on the coverlet, and Mozart was explaining to him how in his opinion he should complete it after his death.

Sophie also gives a poignant description of a reading that afternoon of the completed portions of the Requiem: "When they got to the first bars of the *Lacrimosa*, Mozart began to weep violently, and laid the score aside. Eleven hours later, at one in the morning, he passed on."

After Mozart's death, Constanze did not ask Süßmayr to work on the score right away. For some unexplained reason, she went to a few other composers first, but none of them took the job very seriously. So Constanze finally turned to Süßmayr, who completed the Requiem as well as he could and with great care. In 1800, Süßmayr described to Breitkopf and

Härtel, publishers of the Requiem, how much of the work Mozart had actually completed:

In the Requiem [aeternam], together with the Kyrie, dies irae, [and] Domine Jesu Christe, Mozart completely finished the 4 vocal parts and the figured bass, but gave only brief indications of the orchestration here and there. In the Dies irae [*Lacrimosa* movement], the last line he set was “qua resurget ex favilla” . . . I completed the Dies irae from the line “judicandus homo reus.”

The Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei were composed afresh by me; I only allowed myself, in order to give the work more unity, to repeat the Kyrie fugue at the words “cum sanctis.”

A year earlier Constanze had written to the publishers that Mozart “told him [Süssmayr] that if he were to die without finishing it, he should repeat the first fugue, as is anyway normal practice, for the final movement. He also told him how he should finish off where the important ideas were already worked out here and there in the parts.” Thus, there is good evidence that the full *Requiem*, as we normally hear it performed, was completed in reasonable compliance with Mozart’s wishes.

Following the sublime Introit, *Requiem aeternam*, the chorus plunges into a vigorous double fugue in which one theme is the setting of the words *Kyrie eleison* and the other a setting of *Christe eleison*. Mozart borrowed the *Kyrie* theme from a fugue in Handel’s *Messiah* (“And with his stripes we are healed”), which he had re-orchestrated some years earlier.

Mozart divides the lengthy text of the Sequence, *Dies irae*, into seven distinct movements, alternating choir with soloists until the *Lacrimosa*, which is again for choir. The use of trombone at the opening of the *Tuba mirum* movement is noteworthy. The text refers to the mystical trumpet of the Last Judgment, so instead of an actual trumpet, Mozart designates the trombone, a theater-orchestra instrument traditionally associated with supernatural phenomena.

The Offertory, *Domine Jesu Christe*, which alternates choir with soloists and again employs fugue, leads to the *Sanctus*, *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei*, which are mostly the original work of Süssmayr. It is not difficult to perceive a heavier hand at this point. The choral and solo vocal writing is much less buoyant and exciting than Mozart’s, and Süssmayr’s orchestration lacks Mozart’s transparency and attention to detail.

Finally, the *Lux aeterna* reuses part of the *Requiem aeternam* movement, possibly on Mozart’s instructions, and the *Cum sanctis* fugue is, at Mozart’s direction, an adaptation of the *Kyrie eleison*/Christe eleison fugue setting. Richard Maunder, who prepared a new edition of the *Requiem* in the early 1980s, speculates:

Perhaps, if he had lived to finish the Requiem, Mozart would have written an even more elaborate final fugue incorporating the main Requiem theme, its inversion as the “Amen” But it is not out of the question that Mozart might after all have decided simply to repeat the Kyrie fugue as the final section of the “recapitulation.”

A Note on the Cause of Mozart’s Death

Over the years, there has been wide speculation concerning the cause of Mozart’s death. Theories have ranged from rheumatic fever to syphilis to poisoning. Finally, Peter J. Davies, a British physician, comprehensively researched Mozart’s lifelong history of illnesses and published his findings in his book, *Mozart in Person: His Character and Health* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1989). Dr. Davies refutes the feeble theory that Salieri poisoned Mozart, and in his diagnosis concerning the cause of death he accounts for Mozart’s own suspicions about poisoning.

Briefly, Dr. Davies's diagnosis is this: Mozart suffered from recurring streptococcal infections. In 1791, he again became infected, but this time it was complicated by the Schönlein-Henoch Syndrome, an immune reaction involving the small blood vessels and resulting in rash, joint pain or polyarthritis, gastrointestinal involvement, swelling or edema and kidney failure. Kidney failure, besides being the ultimate cause of Mozart's death, very likely also prompted his false sense of reality concerning the alleged poisoning. Mozart scholars, such as H.C. Robbins Landon, have accepted Dr. Davies's diagnosis as the final word.

Breathtaking Barber

TACO Classical Saturday *November 12, 2016*

Dreamtime Ancestors

Christopher Theofanidis (1967-)

Christopher Theofanidis is, quite simply, one of the top American composers active today. With an education from Yale, the Eastman School of Music and the University of Houston, Theofanidis has remained close to the academic scene as well as the world of professional classical music. He is a former faculty member of the Peabody Conservatory and the Juilliard School and currently teaches at the Yale School of Music. He has been honored with several important prizes, including the International Masterprize, the Rome Prize, a Guggenheim fellowship, a Fulbright fellowship to France, a Tanglewood fellowship and two fellowships from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He also served as Composer of the Year for the Pittsburgh Symphony during their 2006-07 season.

Commissions from prestigious orchestras and other sources attest to the popularity and extremely high quality of his music. One of the most recent of these was for *Dreamtime Ancestors* from a consortium of orchestras sponsored by New Music for America, composed for the Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra, Steven Karidoyanes conducting. Originally, this commission had been awarded to Stephen Paulus. Paulus's terminal illness and death in 2014, however, caused the orchestra to look to another composer to fulfill the commission. Christopher Theofanidis stepped in and composed *Dreamtime Ancestors*, dedicating it to the memory of Paulus. Immediate success followed the October 2015 premiere. During the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons, the work will have been performed in all 50 states as well as abroad.

Ideas behind the music of *Dreamtime Ancestors* are based on the Australian aboriginal creation myths connected to "dreamtime," where each of us is connected to each other through our "dreamtime ancestors" in the past, present and future. Each of the three movements of this tone poem may, optionally, be preceded by a text provided by the composer.

About *Dreamtime Ancestors*, Theofanidis comments:

"Songlines" refers to the way the dreamtime ancestors leave earthly remnants of their existence: rivers, mountains, etc. are all direct connections to our ancestors' being. In this first movement, there is a weaving line that moves about and 'threads' the other materials and melodies of the movement.

The second movement, "Rainbow Serpent," is a reference to one of the big "Ur"-characters in the dreaming — a kind of Brahma-like figure. This movement has a string section focus, and the main melody moves about chromatically leaving a "rainbow" in its wake.

The third movement, "Each stone speaks a poem," refers to

the idea that the poetry of our collective history surrounds us every day and requires our connection to all things. This movement is more earthy and driven.

The work is dedicated to Stephen Paulus, a wonderful human being and music maker, who is a part of us all, past, present, and future.

(Optional spoken text from Australian Aboriginal tradition provided by the composer:)
What is the Dreaming?

If we close our eyes and leave our modern mind, if we remember our early childhood, with no awareness of passing time, when each day was full, really full, the eternity of a week or a month, the enormous and unquestioned sense of connection with our family, everything still un-traumatized, then, can we begin to enter the Dreaming. This is “all-at-once” time—our past, present, and future, our connection to all things—in a seed.

Baiame! Ancestor Maker of Many Things.

Baiame! Baiame!

Bring forth other ancestors from the ground and send them over the seas.

Rainbow Serpent Ancestor, carve rivers, leave stars!

Flow blood, hurl lightning—bring life to empty space!

Eagle ancestor, burst Emu Ancestor’s egg in the air—burst it into flame: the sun!

Crocodile Man Ancestor, whose ridges carve the earth,

leave a memory of your earthly pain!

Valleys and peaks everywhere!

Every event an ancestor, a connection, a record in the land. These are the Songlines of the earth. Nothing is apart. All we know, all we are, accumulated.

Before and after life, a spirit-child exists.

When this spirit-child is about to be born,

It is the Songline that calls the child forth to be a custodian of that place—to understand its connection, to stay.

Songlines call the whispers of animals yet to be, the stirrings of faint breaths, souls of creatures deeply slumbering under the earth’s crust, into the great human consciousness.

Each stone speaks a poem.

This is the Dreaming.

Violin Concerto, op.14

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

In the years following his graduation from the Curtis Institute, Samuel Barber spent time traveling and composing in Europe under various stipends and grants. Between 1935 and 1937 he won the Prix de Rome and two Pulitzer Travel Scholarships. Barber worked on the development of his orchestral style during his European residencies. His First Symphony, completed in Rome, was premiered by the Cleveland Orchestra in 1937. Arturo Toscanini, whom Barber had met in 1935, premiered both his *First Essay* for orchestra and the *Adagio for Strings* on a program three years later.

The Violin Concerto also originated in Europe. In the summer of 1939, Barber began work on it in a small Swiss village. Before the end of summer, he moved to Paris where he hoped to finish the work. Americans were soon warned to leave the French capital, however, because of the threat of war, so Barber returned to the United States with only the first two movements.

A wealthy patron had commissioned this concerto for a young virtuoso. When the violinist reviewed the two complete movements, reportedly he declared them too simple. Barber promised to give him a more challenging, virtuosic finale. Before that movement was completed, however, a controversy arose between the violinist and Barber

concerning the music, possibly placing the commission in jeopardy. The upshot was the violinist's dismissal from the project. The premiere was given in 1941 by Albert Spalding and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Barber's Violin Concerto has been termed a pivotal work in his style development. The first two movements could be called the culmination of his "neo-Romantic" period of the 1930s. His gift for flowing lyricism can be heard right from the first theme announced by the violin. The rhythmic second theme, introduced by the clarinet, is picked up and embellished by the violin and orchestra. In place of a big virtuosic violin solo, Barber gives the violin a vocal-style "recitative." The second movement continues and rhapsodically amplifies the work's Romantic lyricism and rhythmic vitality. Two themes are heard, then a contrasting middle section, then the two themes return.

The final movement represents a major turning point in Barber's style. Here the composer's musical vocabulary becomes much more incisive, in the manner of his post-war "*Capricorn*" Concerto and *Medea* Suite. At the opening, a perpetual motion figure is announced by the timpani and is then taken over by the violin. The concerto ends in a dizzying blaze of excitement.

Symphony No. 6 in D major, op.60

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

The Sixth Symphony of Antonín Dvořák, which became his first to be published, arose from the happiest of circumstances. In November 1879, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, under the baton of Hans Richter, presented the premiere of *Dvořák's Third Slavonic Rhapsody*. It was a great success, and Richter invited the composer to write a symphony for the following season. Dvořák complied, and by October 1880, four copyists were busily preparing the score for what the composer hoped would be a December 26 premiere. Unfortunately, Richter had to postpone until March because of the orchestra's heavy workload. As March approached, however, Richter again made excuses for not scheduling Dvořák's symphony. Now the circumstances were not so happy. The reason this time was anti-Czech bigotry among the orchestra, some members of which refused to play Czech music two seasons in a row. Dvořák sensed what was happening and took the score to Adolf Cech, who premiered it in March 1881 with the Prague Orchestra.

Certain music by Dvořák is similar to Brahms, the idol of his youth. The D Major Symphony is one of these works, and the first movement has a particularly Brahmsian flavor — that of the Second Symphony, also in D major. There is a childlike innocence and pastoral feeling to the Dvořák Sixth, and these qualities appear most clearly in the first movement.

The *Adagio* of Dvořák's Sixth has been compared to the *Adagio* molto movement of Beethoven's Ninth. The key is the same, and they begin in a pattern of sounds. There the similarity ends, however. Dvořák's movement centers on a long, lyrical melody which nearly dominates the movement.

The big attraction in the symphony is the Scherzo movement, the third, which was encored at its premiere. It is a classic Czech *furiant*, a "swaggerers' dance," which is particularly furious here. The contrasting, central pastoral Trio section makes effective use of the piccolo.

The symphony ends with a large-scale movement marked *Allegro con spirito*. Here, the fresh, innocent spirit of the first movement returns and with it some suggestions of that movement's main theme. This finale also has exuberant themes of its own, however. Analyst Donald Tovey summed up his impression of the music with the words, "Altogether, the finale . . . is a magnificent crown to this noble work, and is admirably endowed with that quality that is rarest of all in post-classical finales, the power of movement."

Schubert's Unfinished

TACO Classical Saturday January 21, 2017; Open Rehearsal Friday January 20, 2017

“Dance of the Seven Veils” from *Salome*

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Oscar Wilde's poetical play *Salome* was scandalous in its time. Here was the portrayal of a Bible story in which the temptress, Salome, tries to seduce the holy man, John the Baptist. When he rejects her, she has his head brought to her on a silver shield. Pretty grisly stuff, and at the turn of the century, in questionable taste within Catholic countries. Strauss became aware of Wilde's play through its German translation and had even made a few preliminary sketches, when he had an opportunity to see the play in Berlin in early 1903. At once, he determined to dig into an operatic project on Wilde's *Salome*. It took Strauss two years to complete the one-act score.

Salome, stepdaughter to King Herod, is affected by the hedonism of the court and of the king, who desires her. She herself has an uncontrollable desire for John the Baptist, but he resists and advises her to seek redemption. At a feast, Herod feels two emotions: fear that the Messiah might be in their midst, and lust for Salome. Opera authority the Earl of Harewood describes how this moment leads to the “Dance of the Seven Veils”:

It is as much because of his dread of the future as for longing for her that Herod asks as a diversion for Salome to dance in order that life may flow warm again in his chilled veins. Salome demurs until he swears that he will grant any request she may make of him. She executes the “Dance of the Seven Veils,” casting one veil after another from her.

Cello Concerto No. 2 in D major (H. VIIB.2)

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Was it by Haydn, or was it not? For over a century that was the raging issue about the D major Cello Concerto. The controversy fanned the flames of publicity and helped to make this concerto one of Haydn's most popular works during the early years of the 20th century. The question was probably raised originally by the son of Antonio Kraft, the cellist and composition student for whom Franz Joseph Haydn had written this concerto. We can guess that after Haydn's death, the aging Kraft spoke to his son about “collaborating” with the great composer on this work, and that the son merely exaggerated the story, making his father the supposed sole composer. The D major Concerto's virtuosic solo part also made the Haydn attribution suspect, as Haydn's C major Concerto was not as difficult, and the D major's virtuosic show went far beyond the norms of 18th-century classic concertos. Finally, in 1953 the autographed manuscript came to light in Vienna, establishing the date of composition as 1783 and confirming that the famous work was indeed by Haydn.

What to listen for: After the orchestra has introduced the cello, the soloist plays most of the time. Particularly charming is the duet between cello solo and violins in the second theme. Virtuosity soon gets rolling full force, and later we hear the cello play all the themes with elaborate embellishments. Listen also for some high notes that imitate the sound of a flute. Before the movement's ending we hear a substantial unaccompanied solo by the cello.

The *Adagio* has a lovely theme, and the cello decorates each return of this theme with new filigree. Again, there is a solo just before the movement closes.

Haydn scholar H.C. Robbins Landon has likened Haydn's finale theme to the English folk tune, “Here We Go Gathering Nuts in May,” though Haydn had not yet visited England and probably did not know that tune. Quickly, the cello comes to the fore

with virtuoso acrobatics to top the brilliance of the first movement. Later on, listen for a contrasting section, which explores (in a restrained way) the cello's expressive range, climaxing finally in a big solo. The farewell appearance of the main theme caps the concerto with a dazzling flourish by the soloist and a bright final bit of music in the orchestra.

Symphony No. 8 in B minor (*Unfinished*)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Exactly why did Franz Schubert leave his trim torso of a symphony unfinished? The once-popular misconception that Schubert died before he had the opportunity to complete it simply does not square with the facts, as the two movements were completed in November 1822, six years before his death. There is little doubt that at some point he intended a full, four-movement work, as he nearly finished the sketch for a third-movement. Alfred Einstein theorizes that Schubert recognized that this movement did not have the power of the first two, and he simply could not finish the work. John Reed's recent Schubert study further suggests that Schubert always feared his symphonic music would be compared to Beethoven's, and perhaps he declined to attempt a finale that would have to triumphantly resolve the sorrow introduced in the first two movements. Hypothetically, then, Schubert had painted himself into a corner before he could complete the symphony.

We also know that in that period of Schubert's operatic activity, he left several instrumental works unfinished, and some of these have the same "cosmic despair" found in the "Unfinished" Symphony. Moreover, 1822 was the year in which Schubert's serious, and ultimately fatal, illness was diagnosed as syphilis. Confusion and emotional distress surely influenced his creative affairs at the time. Knowing all this, are we any closer to comprehending why the "Unfinished" Symphony was left unfinished? We may have some thoughts on the issue, but there may never be a firm answer.

The two completed movements are among the most tight-knit and emotionally taut in all symphonic literature. A dark opening idea in the low strings leads quickly to the song-like wistful first theme in the woodwinds. Following the briefest of transitions, the second theme — one of Schubert's most memorable — is introduced in a bright key. This theme has the ease and grace of an Austrian Ländler, forerunner to the waltz. Later, Schubert works with the dark opening idea, raising its emotional intensity to excruciating heights. Following the restatement of principal themes, the dark motive returns to dominate the ending and to close the movement.

The serenity of the second movement's opening theme provides a release from the tension and melancholy of the first movement. Soon, however, the wistful lament of the clarinet's theme tinges the movement with sadness. Sadness soon grows into turbulence as ideas associated with the theme are subjected to manipulation. Calm is restored as the first theme reappears, but with the recurrence of the second theme, a sad uneasiness creeps in and hovers over the movement to its end.

***Der Rosenkavalier*: Suite**

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

When Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal finished the comic opera, *Der Rosenkavalier*, in 1909, it was a complete departure from the intense subject matter on which they had previously collaborated. The new farcical but deeply psychological opera was, in the words of the Earl of Harewood, "a masterpiece of pastiche, an evocation of an unrealistic, fairy-story Vienna of long ago, a brilliant tour-de-force." For Strauss, the stylistic approach was different from anything he had tried in his orchestral or operatic works up to that time: a sort of amalgamation of Mozart and Wagner — as if that were possible.

The novel style of the score can be heard right from the *Introduction* played be-

fore the curtain goes up. The music implies a scene of lovemaking between The Marschallin, a noble woman on the brink of middle age, and Octavian, a youth (sung in the opera by a soprano in the manner of *The Marriage of Figaro's Cherubino*).

In Act II, however, it is Octavian's destiny to fall in love at first sight with Sophie, whom he meets when making *The Presentation of the Rose*. He performs this courting ritual for Baron Ochs, a countrified, oafish nobleman who hopes to replenish his dwindling fortune with Sophie's dowry. *The Arrival of Ochs* quickly draws his profile, but his character is best heard in the charming but decadent-sounding *Waltzes* of Acts II and III.

Octavian plays an elaborate joke on Ochs in Act III, and after Ochs's departure, Octavian, Sophie and The Marschallin are left alone on stage. Together they sing the famous *Trio*, in which Sophie experiences a moment of awe, Octavian admits his love for Sophie, and The Marschallin bids a bittersweet farewell to her former lover. Following the Marschallin's departure, Sophie and Octavian sing a final love Duet to a naive, folk like melody that savors of Mozart's *Magic Flute*. After the couple exits, a final bit of burlesque rounds out the opera and the Suite, as a servant boy returns and quickly retrieves Sophie's dropped handkerchief.

Beethoven's Eroica!

TACO Classical Saturday February 18, 2017; Amica Rush Hour Friday February 17, 2017

Les offrandes oubliées (*Forgotten Offerings*)

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Olivier Messiaen defies classification. One of France's most important and influential composers of the 20th century, Messiaen developed a style employing such diverse elements as medieval modes, serial procedure, Indian ragas and bird songs.

Messiaen's early period of composition occurred during the first half of the 1930s. Most of his early music has some basis in Roman Catholic ritual or mysticism. He has stated that he wished to achieve "the emotion and sincerity of musical work which shall be at the service of the dogmas of Catholic theology."

Les offrandes oubliées is described in the score as a "symphonic meditation." It was Messiaen's first major work performed publicly (in Paris) and published. It revealed his great creative potential and expressed his deep penchant for expressing religious emotion in music. In the published score, the composer offered this paragraph as a guide to the music's meaning:

With arms extended, sad unto death, on the tree of the Cross, sheddest Thou thy blood. Thou lovest us, Gentle Jesus, but we had forgotten. Urged onward by madness and the sting of the serpent, in a frenzied, panting race that gives no release, fell we into sin as into a tomb. Behold the table pure, the spring of charity, the banquet of the poor; behold adorable compassion, offering the bread of life and love. Thou lovest us, Gentle Jesus, but we had forgotten.

Concerto for Two Pianos in D minor

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) completed the Concerto for Two Pianos in 1932, immediately following *Le Bal masqué*. At the time, the composer considered both of these to represent a stylistic quantum leap. As he wrote,

You will notice that it is an enormous advance on my earlier works. . . It is perhaps possible that concern for technical perfection, especially in orchestration, carried me beyond my musical nature . . . but the concern was necessary, and you can verify yourself with how “precise” a pen I orchestrated the *Le Bal masqué and Concerto*, which, I assure you, are pure Poulenc.

At the time, he could not know that the Concerto for Two Pianos would be his last composition before a three-year period of self-analysis that would usher in an altogether new style period. The Concerto is, therefore, a point of arrival rather than departure.

Following an introduction featuring the pianos, the three-part form of the first movement unfolds. The first section shows the influences of Stravinsky, although Poulenc’s “music hall” style also colors some themes. A slower middle section carries a slightly Russian flavor. Following a sharply varied reprise of the opening section, a colorful, exotic ending echoes the Balinese Gamelan music that Poulenc had heard in 1931.

Poulenc himself later offered a commentary on the second movement: In the *Larghetto* of this concerto, I allowed myself, for the first theme, to return to Mozart, for I cherish the melodic line and I prefer Mozart to all other musicians. If the movement begins *alla Mozart*, it quickly veers, at the entrance of the second piano, toward a style that was standard for me at that time.

Like the beginning of the previous movements, the finale opens with the pianos alone. The whole work typifies Poulenc’s eclecticism, but this movement is the most eclectic. With its myriad themes ranging in style from jazz to Rachmaninoff, the mosaic-like form jumps from one to another with remarkable finesse. The concerto finishes with the soloists playing a reminiscence of the first movement’s Balinese ending.

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, op.55 (*Eroica*)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

The year was 1804, and Ludwig van Beethoven had just finished a new symphony that was musically revolutionary and was longer than any the world had yet known. It was to be the “Bonaparte” Symphony, dedicated to Napoleon and, implicitly, to the spirit of the French Revolution. The score lay on a table in Beethoven’s quarters when his student, Ferdinand Ries, burst in with the news that Napoleon had proclaimed himself the French Emperor. Ries describes that Beethoven

. . .flew into a rage and cried out: “Is he then, too, nothing more than an ordinary human being? 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!” Beethoven went to the table, took hold of the title page by the top, tore it in two, and threw it on the floor.

Beethoven had previously viewed Napoleon as the ideal hero, and the symphony was more a portrait of heroism than of Napoleon personally. Thus, the work’s new title page would read *Sinfonia eroica*, with the additional comment, “composed to celebrate the memory of a great man.”

Following two sharp chords, Beethoven launches into one of his most famous first movements. Just sit back and relax; this is going to be rather long. You will be swept up in a rhythmic momentum, however, that carries the music forward constantly. The music is alternately heroic, turbulent and tragically tender. Beethoven makes the most of these plus a new theme introduced in the middle of everything. At the end, we have the feeling that a monumental declaration has been made, that Beethoven has encapsulated his philosophy in a single musical statement.

During Beethoven's lifetime — the French Revolution and early Napoleonic era — ceremonial funeral marches commemorating fallen heroes became extremely popular in France. Beethoven's contribution to that tradition in the *Marcia funebre* movement explores heroic grieving and spiritual contemplation through variations and fugue in one of his profoundest musical essays.

The very jovial Scherzo lifts the listeners from these depths with its buoyant rhythms and raucous outbursts. For many listeners, however, the high point of this movement is the central passage, where Beethoven employs three horns in passages both memorable and heroic.

The *Eroica's* finale is an extensive set of variations on a skeletal theme that Beethoven had already used more than once, notably in the ballet, *The Creatures of Prometheus*. In the third variation, a new, lyrical melody — also from *Prometheus* — is layered over the skeletal theme. Our attention moves away from it, however, in the music that follows. Now, Beethoven turns to more complex expressions and new rhythmic ideas. An extensive *Andante* section explores the tragic and noble possibilities of the lyrical theme. Again comes an interruption; this time it is the final, triumphal finish to the symphony.

All-Brahms

TACO Classical Saturday March 18, 2017; Open Rehearsal Friday March 17, 2017

Symphony No. 2 in D major, op.73

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Creating two works in the same genre simultaneously was not uncommon for composers of the Classic-Romantic era, and often the nature of the two contrasted sharply. One case was Beethoven's labor over his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, which premiered on the same concert. The Fifth, tragic-heroic in character, is the complementary opposite of the "Pastoral" Sixth, idyllic and reflective.

Another example is Brahms' First and Second symphonies. He devoted more than 15 years to the completion of his first symphonic effort. Of course, during that time he worked on other projects, one of them being the sketching of his Second Symphony. This bore a relationship to his First that is remarkably similar to that between Beethoven's "Pastoral" and Fifth Symphonies. In fact, later writers have characterized Brahms's First as "tragic" and have given the idyllic Second Symphony the "Pastoral" nickname.

Although Brahms had frequent and severe misgivings about his First Symphony, he apparently knew from the start that the Second was destined for success. His confidence took the form of "putting on" his friends and publishers about the character of the work, especially the sunlit, optimistic first movement. He had Clara Schumann convinced that the first movement was "quite elegiac in character," and he instructed his publisher, Simrock, "You must put a black border around the score to give an outward show of grief." Brahms completed the symphony during the summer of 1877 in the bucolic setting of Pörtschach by the Wörthersee. It premiered in Vienna on December 30 of that year.

The Viennese at once took the work to their hearts. Some have attributed this immediate success to the first movement being supposedly waltz-like. The moderate tempo and gentle grace of the movement suggest, however, more the ballet stage than the ballroom. Brahms also shows great sophistication in the way he uses the opening three-note idea (called a "motto") as a springboard to generate later themes in this and the final movement. In the orchestra, a delicate balance between the general feeling of lightness and the uncommon heaviness of the brass section results from the use of three trombones and tuba, something very unusual for Brahms.

The long line of the *Adagio*'s opening theme reveals the character of the movement as songlike. Quicker rhythmic motion in the middle section gives contrast before the return of the opening material, heard now in a varied form.

Next Brahms presents a graceful movement in place of the more classic type. Yet its outer sections are as noble and classical as any minuet. The quick Trio section is very different rhythmically, yet Brahms has derived its theme from the main theme of the movement.

The opening three notes of the climactic finale recall the "motto" at the opening of the symphony, but the spirit of this movement is entirely different: rhythm, not tone, is the dominant element. Through rhythmic impulse, Brahms pushes the listener constantly forward, even through the more relaxed middle section. An abbreviated reprise of themes leads to the ending, which biographer Karl Geiringer has described as finishing "in a burst of Dionysiac jubilation."

Violin Concerto in D major, op.77

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

"You will think twice before you ask me for another concerto!" wrote Johannes Brahms to violinist Joseph Joachim, his lifelong friend and advisor on violinistic matters. The year was 1879, and on that New Year's Day, Joachim had just premiered Brahms's Violin Concerto in Leipzig. The reception had not been very gratifying, partially because the violin part sounded unduly difficult and labored. That was the view of conductor Hans von Bülow, who stated that the concerto was written "against the violin." (Violin prodigy Bronislav Hubermann later countered with the remark that it is a concerto "for violin against orchestra — and the violin wins.")

As usual, Brahms had modeled the proportions — and something of the approach to solo violin treatment — on a parallel work by his transcendental idol, Beethoven. In its day, Beethoven's Violin Concerto had also been accused of unwarranted difficulties, and early audiences often missed its profound content. Brahms placed his concerto in the key of D major, the key of Beethoven's great work.

D major also happens also to be the key of Brahms's Second Symphony finished less than a year ahead of the concerto. The Violin Concerto is a companion piece to the symphony in other ways, too, notably the use of a broken chord as the basis of the opening theme. This theme in the concerto is the focus of the orchestra's brief opening. At the entry of the violin, this theme returns but eventually gives way to others, including a gloriously sweet, song-like second theme. Following Classical tradition, Brahms leaves the long solo passage near the end of the movement (the "cadenza") up to the performer (as Beethoven, another non-violin-soloist, had done). This concerto is virtually the last one to do so, granting an opportunity for virtuosos from Joachim to Perlman to make their own mark on Brahms's first movement.

Brahms had originally intended two middle movements. He discarded them, however, placing there instead what he modestly called "a feeble *Adagio*." Far from feeble, this is some of Brahms's richest writing for orchestra, exploring remote keys and supporting a lovely, decorative violin line.

The finale is a Hungarian-style piece. It has a rhythmically athletic main theme and contrasting episodes (also with soloistic acrobatics) to charm the listener. Near the end, the short cadenza by the composer leads to a concluding section that first builds excitement and then, as in a Mozart opera, subsides into restrained propriety for its grand ending.

Brahms's Violin Concerto stands as a great musical pillar near the end of the 19th century, counter-balancing the pillar of Beethoven's great Violin Concerto from the beginning of that century. As analyst John Horton has put it:

That Brahms should have ventured upon a Violin Concerto in D with the sound of Beethoven's . . . in his ears was in itself an act of faith and courage; that he should have produced one . . . worthy to stand beside it, is one of the triumphs of Brahms's genius.

Rachmaninoff with Joyce Yang

TACO Classical Saturday April 8, 2017; Amica Rush Hour Friday April 7, 2017

Piano Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp minor, op.1

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

The saga of Rachmaninoff's First Piano Concerto traces the first two-thirds of the composer's life. It begins as he was graduating from the Moscow Conservatory with the Gold Medal in composition — the most brilliant composer the institution had seen since Tchaikovsky. At the Conservatory, Rachmaninoff performed the first movement of his own Piano Concerto No. 1, but the reception was not especially warm. He decided to put the work aside. Recovering from the devastating reviews of his First Symphony and his resulting depression, Rachmaninoff went on to triumph with his Second Piano Concerto, written shortly after the turn of the 20th century. But he wanted to go back and revise the First, as he expressed in a letter of 1908:

“There are so many requests for this concerto, and it is so terrible in its present form. Of course, it will have to be written all over again, for its orchestration is worse than its music.” He must have had misgivings, too, for during the next year, instead of working on the revisions, he composed his Third Piano Concerto. It was not until the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 that Rachmaninoff took the score of his First Piano Concerto seriously in hand. He later recalled: I had started to rewrite my First Piano Concerto. . . . I was so engrossed with my work that I did not notice what went on around me. . . . I sat at the writing table or the piano all day without troubling about the rattle of machine guns and rifle shots. . .

As an aristocrat and land owner, Rachmaninoff and his family would soon be in mortal danger, so he quickly accepted a concert tour of Scandinavia, which led to the United States, where he remained for the rest of his life. In New York in 1919, the First Piano Concerto (in revised form) finally received its world premiere with the composer as soloist. Later, he reminisced that the concerto

. . . is really good now. All the youthful freshness is there, and yet it plays itself so much more easily. And nobody pays any attention. When I tell them in America that I shall play the First Concerto, they do not protest, but I can see by their faces that they would prefer the Second or Third. . .

All three movements of Piano Concerto No. 1 begin with a brass statement or fanfare. In the first, it leads to a brooding, somewhat Tchaikovskian essay that owes much to that composer's Piano Concerto No. 1. The main theme, however, is of a lyrical flavor that only Rachmaninoff could write. The *Andante*, a freely flowing three-part form, is quietly rhapsodic and reflective. The last movement, which Rachmaninoff revised most extensively, has the dynamic and rhythmic energy necessary to conclude this fervent work. The movement coheres thematically, chiefly through a descending tutti flourish. At the end, following all the piano's fireworks, the composer maintains momentum through an incisive ending based on that flourish.

Symphony No. 8 in C minor, op.65

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

The Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Symphonies by Dmitri Shostakovich have often been called his “wartime trilogy.” This phrase is accurate chronologically. In terms of the spirit of each of these great works, however, the phrase is too simplified. The Seventh, written during the siege of Leningrad, has been hailed for its portrayal of war and its vision of ultimate triumph. The composer also secretly meant to convey Stalin’s inhumanity toward his own people — of the struggle that raged within the Soviet Union at the time it was drawn into WW II. By contrast, the Ninth Symphony was Shostakovich’s dance of joy following the end of the war. His orchestra became like a “troupe of clowns” in this complete humanistic portrait.

Only the Eighth Symphony, written in 1943 as Soviet troops were beginning to repel the Nazis, has completely to do with war and its vast, tragic implications. But Soviet officials, who loved the victorious Seventh Symphony, had quite a different reaction to the Eighth. Years later, the composer reflected in his memoirs that

They said, why did Shostakovich write an optimistic symphony at the beginning of the war and a tragic one now? [Then] we were retreating and now we’re attacking, destroying the Fascists. And Shostakovich is acting tragic, that means he’s on the side of the Fascists.

How did Shostakovich survive such a reaction, when other Soviet citizens were being shot for merely receiving a letter from an Allied country? Partly, he was shielded by his great international reputation. His symphonies, particularly the Seventh, were so successful abroad that conductors vied for the privilege of conducting the next one. Fortunately for Shostakovich — and for the world — that was enough to save him.

The Eighth Symphony’s vast, 25-minute first movement, is a lament. Although it is a Mahler-size beginning, the musical style and message belong purely to Shostakovich. This is for the most part a lean-sounding movement. Right from its first “warning” sound, it depends in large part upon the strings, making all the more effective later passages that focus on muted trumpets, flutes or English horn. Little by little tension builds to what analyst Roy Blokker terms a “strident and dissonant climax.” Eventually, this subsides and the movement ends as it began, with the “warning” idea.

The second and third movements take the place of Scherzos. The *Allegretto* is a quick march, nearly joyful at moments — but this is far from a “pretty picture” — with incisive themes and biting orchestration. The third movement has been dubbed the “Toccata of Death.” Nowhere in the symphony is a physical description of war made more realistic than here. As Blokker so vividly describes it, “Against a crushingly insistent . . . beat . . . the sickening crump of explosions and the pitiless whine of shells are depicted unmistakably in an orgy of exaggerated writing.”

Relief from the grips of the third movement comes in the fourth, a Largo that unfolds as a set of variations on a bass line idea. The early ones feature the strings, but solos by the horn, the piccolo, four flutter-tonguing flutes and the clarinets enliven later variations with a charm that almost makes us forget the horrors of war. The fourth movement melts imperceptibly into the Finale. This movement, in free-variation form, begins with rays of hope, but in the course of its musical events, emotions tear this way and that. An intense fugue works its way up from the low strings, and an accelerating tempo brings a retrospective of previous material — gripping at first, but becoming gradually more tranquil. An intimate ending, characterized by a three-note pizzicato idea, bestows the final moments of unsettled peace upon this embattled symphony.

which he arranged, orchestrated and published in five volumes spanning the years 1923-1955. An eloquent appreciation of the orchestral version of these songs comes from the pen of Christopher Palmer:

The songs themselves are simple and basic, but Canteloube's orchestral settings, of fastidious and delicate workmanship, are anything but simple, posing problems for any conductor and singer who wish to realize that freedom of articulation which is an inbuilt feature of the folk songs and is scrupulously preserved in Canteloube's orchestral translations.

An Alpine Symphony

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

The love of nature has been an inspiration to many composers, particularly those of the romantic persuasion. Beethoven, as in so many other areas, set a model for nature music. Although later composers did not always emulate him in detail, his *Pastoral Symphony* stands as the near-perfect romantic paean to nature.

For Richard Strauss, working one hundred years after Beethoven, the attraction of a nature subject was no less obsessive. As a boy, Strauss had gone mountain climbing. The party had lost its way on the ascent, and there had been a heavy storm on the way down. At home, Strauss rushed to the piano to set down his impressions; thus, the idea of the *Alpine Symphony* was born. In 1900 he made a stab at writing the work but could not muster enough enthusiasm to finish. His famous remark was that it amused him less than chasing cockroaches. Spreading the composition process over four years (1911-1915), Strauss finally had his *Alpine Symphony* in hand.

Far from a symphony in Beethoven's sense, Strauss's work was actually his last symphonic poem, a giant edifice in 22 continuous sections. In addition, it portrays not only the mountains but also humankind's relationship to them. For Strauss, the zealous student of Nietzsche, a mountain was meant for someone to climb — an act of superlative achievement. On the other hand, like Beethoven's music, Strauss's describes the "feel" of the landscape during a day's experience there.

What to listen for. There are several features of the symphony to listen for. One is the sustained descending scale in the strings at the opening, "Night." This results in a massive, opaque sound with every note of the minor scale present. In contrast with the smooth descent of the scale, most of Strauss's themes are upward thrusting and rhythmically jagged. During "The Ascent," we hear hunting horns in the distance, played by 12 off-stage horns. The "Apparition" is of the Alpine Sprite, a popular superstition. The peaceful "On the Alpine Pasture" is accompanied quietly by the realistic sound of cowbells. "On the Summit" is the work's climactic moment, but Strauss's orchestration is remarkably restrained, perhaps reflecting awe at the panorama. On the descent from the peak, the composer captures many subtleties of mountain weather changes, climaxing in "Thunder and Tempest, Descent." Again, Strauss inserts realism — this time in the form of a wind machine. Finally, "Sunset" winds down the symphony, returning to "Night" and a reprise of the cascading, sustained scale. The last melodic shape we hear (in the upper strings) curiously resembles a craggy mountain peak.

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