

TYP Fall Concert 2019 Program Notes

Beethoven's Symphony No. 8: A Surprisingly Happy Symphony By Esther Zhu

Beethoven is one of the most famous composers of all time, with good reason. He is known as a crucial composer in the transition from the Classical era to the Romantic era. Beethoven's music is generally divided into three periods: early, middle, and late. His Symphony No. 8 in F Major is from the late period. During the late period, Beethoven usually wrote works like his 7th symphony, grand in both power and length. However, unlike the 7th symphony that preceded it by only a few months, the 8th symphony was comparably humble. Beethoven's Symphony No. 8, with its playful energy and cheerfulness, is unlike other pieces from his late period. The piece also stands in direct contrast to the depression and difficulties Beethoven was experiencing at the time he composed the piece.

The first movement sweeps listeners off their feet from its very beginning, and keeps them elevated until the end with its brisk tempo, leaving little time for performers or audiences to breathe. Unlike the typical symphonic form which dictates a slow and long second movement, the second movement is actually quite short and played at a medium tempo. The short, light themes that get passed around the different sections make this movement very cute. The third movement makes up for the calmness and leisurely pace that was left out of the second movement. In the style of a minuet, the third movement sets a broad, comfortable pace from the beginning. The calm theme with its rolling accompaniment gives respite from the high energy of the previous movements. The last movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 takes listeners back to the fast paced music of the second movement. In this final movement, Beethoven throws curveballs at listeners left and right. Starting with a light and cheerful theme in F major punctuated by an unexpected and sudden fortissimo C#, Beethoven plays with the expectations of the audience. Near the end of the movement, when the abrupt C# returns, Beethoven surprises listeners again by going into F# minor instead of the expected F major. Though he does bring listeners solidly back to the original key by the conclusion of the piece, the surprise detours give audiences a glimpse of Beethoven's humor.

Get ready to be swept away by the masterfully upbeat and cheerful melodies within this unique Beethoven symphony. Feel free to dance along a little from your seat!

Sources:

[https://cso.org/uploadedFiles/1 Tickets and Events/Program Notes/060210 ProgramNotes Beethoven Symphony8.pdf](https://cso.org/uploadedFiles/1_Tickets_and_Events/Program_Notes/060210_ProgramNotes_Beethoven_Symphony8.pdf)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._8_%28Beethoven%29

Jennifer Higdon Reflects on Life in "blue cathedral" By Chloe Holleschak

Composed by Jennifer Higdon and premiered in 2000, "blue cathedral" was commissioned by the Curtis Institute of Music to commemorate its 75th anniversary. Higdon won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, and two Grammy Awards for Best Contemporary Classical Composition.

“blue cathedral” was written in memory of the composer’s late brother, Andrew Blue. The piece was written to symbolize a journey to heaven. Higdon wanted to progress from a quiet, peaceful mood, to a celebratory, heavenly mood. According to Higdon on the Longwood Symphony Orchestra website, this piece was written to tell a story that “commemorates living and passing through places of knowledge and of sharing and of that song called life”.

Listen for the percussion in the beginning of the piece, as well as the bells played by the entire symphony at the end. The flute, representing Higdon herself, and the clarinet, representing her brother, both have featured solos. Enjoy this beautiful, ethereal piece, and take this time to reflect on life and its beauty.

Sources:

<http://longwoodsymphony.org/news/2018/8/14/a-special-welcome-from-ronald-feldman-music-director-c4zjp>

<http://jenniferhigdon.com/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_cathedral

Respighi Takes Listeners on a Journey Across Rome

By Joydeep Mukherjee

"Pines of Rome" was composed by Ottorino Respighi in 1924. It is a symphonic poem—orchestral music that tells a specific story—illustrating the pine trees across the Roman landscape in the capital city of Italy. It is the second piece in a trilogy by Respighi, preceded by "Fountains of Rome" and succeeded by "Roman Festivals".

The first movement, "The Pines of Villa Borghese", depicts the great enthusiasm of playing children with its fast-paced rhythms and soaring melodies. Immediately, the mood shifts in the second movement, "The Pines Near a Catacomb", which depicts the chanting of priests in the catacomb with a steady hymn-like rhythm. The third movement, "The Pines of the Janiculum", depicts the pines during a peaceful night on Janiculum Hill. Respighi requested a phonograph recording of a singing nightingale to be played at the end of the movement. This was deemed innovative as it was the first time a recording would be used during a live symphonic performance. Finally, the fourth movement, "The Pines of the Appian Way", illustrates the legacy of the Roman Empire. The triumphant fanfares depict the soldiers of the Roman Army marching along this ancient road.

Widely considered one of Respighi's greatest works, this piece takes the listener on a vivid journey across the Roman landscape.

Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pines_of_Rome

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Pines-of-Rome>
