

## Triangle Youth Orchestra Fall Concert 2019 Program Notes

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### The Disastrous Premiere and Later Success of *The Barber of Seville* By Sharayu Gugnani

Rossini is an Italian composer that gained fame through his forty-nine operas. By the time he retired, at the age of thirty, his operas were viewed as having set a sort of standard for the quality of operas. *The Barber of Seville* was commissioned by the impresario or manager of the Teatro Argentina (an opera house and theatre in Rome) at the end of 1815 when Rossini was about 24 years of age.

As a courtesy to Giovanni Paisiello, a popular Italian composer who had also created an opera based off Beaumarchais's play *The Barber of Seville*, Rossini called his own work *Almaviva*. The title was changed to *The Barber of Seville* for the Bologna revival, after Paisiello's death. Nonetheless, the opera was viewed by Paisiello's supporters as an insult, and a group of them attended Rossini's premiere, booing and hissing throughout the performance. The work was barely ready, and the performers were underprepared. Overall, the opening night was plagued by misfortunes. Unsurprisingly, for the opera's second performance Rossini decided to stay home. But this time, the audience—presumably lacking Paisiello's disruptive fans—was wildly enthusiastic and afterward gathered outside the composer's house to cheer. Before long, productions of the opera were taking place across Europe and beyond; in 1825 the opera became the first opera to be sung in Italian in New York City.

The Overture to *The Barber of Seville* itself actually contains music drawn from two of his previous operas: *Aureliano in Palmira* and *Elisabetta, Queen of England*, and none of the musical themes from the actual opera to which it belongs.

The overture is not the only thing unconventional about this opera. During the 19th and 20th centuries, performances of the opera reflected the stylistic preferences of the time, some of which can be heard in recordings today. For example, the most frequently made change to the opera was the transposition of Rosina's part from the original mezzo-soprano into a higher soprano range to accommodate the usual leading singers; when that was done, Berta's range was lowered to mezzo-soprano so that contrast between the women's voices could be preserved. In addition to these large-scale changes, smaller scale changes in orchestration and structure also became performance tradition. Perhaps as a result from constant evolutions of the opera, the opera became laden with errors. For example, in published scores, Rossini's piccolo part was changed to a flute part, and extra bass and percussion parts were added; these and other copyists' errors were kept in performances.

One fun fact about the Overture to *The Barber of Seville* is that about two minutes into the piece, you can hear the theme that was popularized by the popular cartoon, Bugs Bunny. Listen for this theme during the Triangle Youth Orchestra's performance, and enjoy the other artfully composed themes that make up the overture.

Sources: to come

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## Tchaikovsky Captures the Energy of Italy By Rae Heinzerling

“Capriccio Italien” by Pytor Tchaikovsky was inspired by the composer’s trip to Rome during the Italian carnival season. He had been composing variations on Italian folk tunes for some time, but found new inspiration in the carnival street music that was heard everywhere in Rome during that season. The piece itself is considered both a fantasy and a pops piece. It is often called a fantasy because of its improvised and free feel, and is frequently considered a pops piece because it is, in essence, a collection of popular Italian folk tunes.

At the opening of the piece, there is a bugle call which then leads into a staccato section. This section suddenly transforms into a mimicry of Italian street music. This sudden change is accomplished by a development in the woodwinds, cueing the rest of the orchestra. The winds and high strings continue to pass a melody back and forth throughout the piece. The melody is broken up by a soft legato section. The calm, legato provides contrast and adds depth to the piece. Bold percussion and a new theme introduce the march and tarantella section. The tarantella is modeled after a traditional Italian dance, so this section has the same rhythmic feel as many of Tchaikovsky’s ballets.

Tchaikovsky’s assembly of so many variations of Italian folk song creates a unique picture of Italy, and allows the audience to experience the magic of Italy through the composer’s eyes.

### Works Cited:

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<https://www.allmusic.com/composition/capriccio-italien-for-orchestra-or-piano-4-hands-op-45-mc0002369293>

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## What to Imagine When Listening to Offenbach’s “Orpheus in the Underworld”

By Arun Murali

Jacques Offenbach was a German-French composer, known for his almost hundred operettas, and famous for his satires of important topics and other composers’ tunes. Offenbach wrote “Orpheus in the Underworld” to put a twist to the previous tellings of the Greek myth of Orpheus. In the original myth, Orpheus is a musician and poet whose wife, Eurydice, is bitten by a snake and dies. Orpheus is saddened and travels to the underworld to bring her back, but ultimately fails. In the version of the myth that Offenbach chose to represent, however, Eurydice and Orpheus are not close and Eurydice willingly goes to the underworld, so when Orpheus grudgingly tries to bring Eurydice back to the world of the living and fails, both characters are content. At first audiences were shocked because of how the piece, in a way, mocked previous versions of the story, however, audiences eventually grew to love the piece and it became a success.

The main plot element from the myth that is incorporated into Offenbach’s piece is that of Orpheus traveling to the underworld. The individual parts of “Orpheus in the Underworld”

represent the different parts of Orpheus' journey to the underworld. In the beginning, the mood is somewhat dissonant and intense. Right before the piece transitions to a waltz, the flute and clarinet are featured. The waltz section, a very elegant and graceful moment of the piece, represents Orpheus traveling to the underworld across the river Styx, the river of hell. After the waltz section and within the final section of the piece, there is a sudden contrast created by an upbeat and energetic tone. This part of the composition describes Orpheus playing the lyre in order to soothe the beasts of the underworld. An important part of this final section is the inclusion of the famous can-can, a very recognizable tune that is fast-paced and fun, and one of the highlights of the piece.

“Orpheus in the Underworld” is a piece with a great variety of melodic content, and a very memorable tune that will keep you engaged throughout the piece.

Sources:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Orpheus-in-the-Underworld>

[http://www.guidetomusicaltheatre.com/shows\\_o/orpheus\\_in\\_the\\_underworld.htm](http://www.guidetomusicaltheatre.com/shows_o/orpheus_in_the_underworld.htm)

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Soon Hee Newbold's Glorious Portrayal of Mythological War Heroes

By Christina Yi

Contemporary composer Soon Hee Newbold is known for her bold, energetic musical pieces. She mostly writes string orchestra compositions which she targets toward beginner musicians. She does, however, have several full orchestra pieces under her belt such as her composition titled “Warrior Legacy.”

In addition to the noteworthiness of being a respected contemporary female composer, she is involved in many film and television related projects, such as her breakout film, *The Waterboy*, starring Adam Sandler. She incorporates her extensive film knowledge into her music by always managing to give her pieces a cinematic touch that makes one feel as though he or she is listening to a movie score.

“Warrior Legacy” is meant to bring to life stories of mythological warriors and legends. A strong, steady beat clashes with mysterious yet gloriously passionate melodies to create a piece full to the brim with energy, energy like that of a mythological hero who has triumphed victorious over a difficult battle. Various solos occur throughout to add another layer of drama to the piece; listen in particular for the various violin and viola solos scattered throughout the piece, often smoothly blended together.

During the Triangle Youth Orchestra's performance, sit back and take in the glory of Soon Hee Newbold's portrayal of the old mythological war heroes.

Sources:

<https://www.fjhmusic.com/composer/snewbold.htm>

<https://www.jwpepper.com/Warrior-Legacy/10366890.item#.Xdch8CVOmEc>

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[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soon\\_Hee\\_Newbold](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soon_Hee_Newbold)