The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, February 8, at 7:30
Friday, February 9, at 2:00
Saturday, February 10, at 8:00

Tugan Sokhiev Conductor

Gabrieli Canzon septimi toni, No. 2, from *Sacrae symphoniae*

Britten *Simple Symphony*, Op. 4, for strings
I. Boisterous Bourée
II. Playful Pizzicato
III. Sentimental Saraband
IV. Frolicsome Finale

Intermission

Shostakovich Symphony No. 4 in C minor, Op. 43
I. Allegretto poco moderato—Presto
II. Moderato con moto
III. Largo—Allegro

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 50 minutes.

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM and are repeated on Monday evenings at 7 PM on WRTI HD 2. Visit www.wrti.org to listen live or for more details.

The Philadelphia Orchestra
Yannick Nézet-Séguin
Music and Artistic Director

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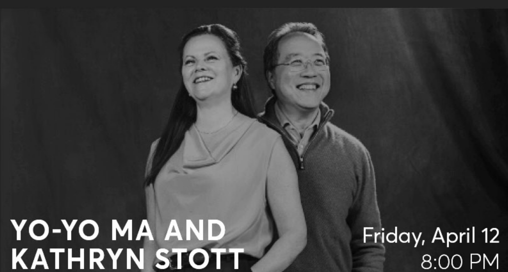

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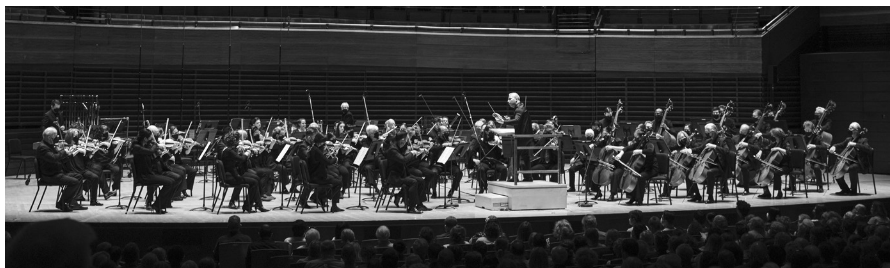

The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives, a commitment to its diverse communities, and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive and inclusive future for classical music, and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united to form The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc., reimagining the power of the arts to bring joy, create community, and effect change.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 12th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, in Verizon Hall and around the community, in classrooms and hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; School Concerts; sensory-friendly concerts; open rehearsals; the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program; All City Orchestra Fellowships; and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad. The Orchestra's free online video series, Our City, Your Orchestra (OCYO), uncovers and amplifies the voices, stories, and causes championed by unique Philadelphia organizations and businesses. Joining OCYO in connecting with the community is HearTOGETHER, a free monthly podcast featuring artists and activists who discuss music, social justice, and the lived experiences that inform the drive to create a more equitable and inclusive future for the arts.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 13 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award–winning *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

Conductor

Patrice Nin

Internationally renowned conductor **Tugan Sokhiev** divides his time between the symphonic and lyric repertoire, conducting the most prestigious orchestras around the world. He regularly leads the Vienna Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Dresden Staatskapelle, the Munich Philharmonic, the Berlin Staatskapelle, the Bavarian Radio Symphony, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, and the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. He spends several weeks each season with the NHK Symphony in Tokyo and is invited to the finest orchestras in the United States, including the New York Philharmonic and the Boston and Chicago symphonies. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2014.

As music director of the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse from 2008 to 2022, Mr. Sokhiev headed numerous successful concert seasons and led several world premieres and a significant number of tours abroad, propelling the orchestra to international prominence. Passionate about his work with singers, he was music director and chief conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow from 2014 to 2022, conducting many new productions and premieres. He has guest conducted at the Metropolitan Opera, received critical acclaim for his performance of Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges* with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and conducted a highly praised new production of Strauss's *Salome* at the Bolshoi Theatre. In addition to these current performances, highlights of the 2023–24 season include tours to Taiwan and Korea with the Vienna Philharmonic, European tours with the Munich Philharmonic and the Dresden Staatskapelle, and a return to the Berlin Philharmonic.

Mr. Sokhiev has a rich and varied discography, which includes recordings with the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse on Naïve and Warner Classics and winning the Diapason d'Or in 2020. His recordings with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester (DSO) Berlin, where he was principal conductor from 2012 to 2016, have been released on Sony Classical. He has collaborated with EuroArts on a series of DVDs with the DSO Berlin, the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, and the Berlin Philharmonic. One of the last students of legendary teacher Ilya Musin at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, Mr. Sokhiev is eager to share his expertise with future generations of musicians. He founded a conducting academy in Toulouse and works with the young musicians of the Angelika Prokopp Summer Academy of the Vienna Philharmonic. He is honored to be a patron of the Philharmonic Brass Education Program, collaborating with musicians on their first recording.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1597
Gabrieli
Sacrae symphoniae

Music
Dowland
Firste Booke of Songes
Literature
Shakespeare
Henry IV, Pts. 1 & 2
Art
El Greco
St. Martin and the Beggar
History
Bali discovered

1933
Britten
Simple Symphony

Music
Weill
The Seven Deadly Sins
Literature
Lorca
The Blood Wedding
Art
Giacometti
The Palace at Four a.m.
History
First concentration camps erected by Nazis in Germany

1936
Shostakovich
Symphony No. 4

Music
Barber
Symphony No. 1
Literature
Auden
On this Island
Art
Mondrian
Composition in Red and Blue
History
Spanish Civil War begins

The Italian Baroque composer Giovanni Gabrieli wrote his Canzon septimi toni, No. 2, for the great St. Marks Basilica in Venice and exploited its amazing acoustic possibilities by alternating two groups of brass players to splendid effect.

The English composer Benjamin Britten and Russian Dimitri Shostakovich were contemporaries who greatly admired each other's music. They met many times and dedicated pieces to one another.

Britten wrote his charming *Simple Symphony* for string orchestra at age 20. He based the piece on some of his earliest compositions, written between the ages of nine and 12. The four movements bear charming alliterative titles: "Boisterous Bourrée," "Playful Pizzicato," "Sentimental Saraband," and a "Frolicsome Finale."

When Shostakovich began composing his monumental Fourth Symphony in 1935, he was at the top of the Russian musical world, but by the time of its intended premiere, he had fallen from grace with the Soviet authorities. He withdrew the work while in rehearsal in 1936 and it was not heard until 1962, when Joseph Stalin was safely dead. The Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy gave the American premiere the following year.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world with three weekly broadcasts on SiriusXM's *Symphony Hall*, Channel 76, on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 4 PM.

The Music

Canzon septimi toni, No. 2

Giovanni Gabrieli
Born in Venice, ca. 1555
Died there, August 12, 1612

The second half of the 16th century was a period of great political and cultural ferment for the city-state of Venice. Among the expressions of its growing civic pride were the magnificent religious and musical presentations at the Basilica of St. Mark's in the city's grand piazza. It was for such occasions that Giovanni Gabrieli composed most of the music by which we know him now. It was the tradition at St. Mark's that the first organist was required to write, among other things, large-scale music for its many festive occasions. Gabrieli, who assumed that post in 1585, brought the art of the Baroque polychoral motet to a peak of refinement that matched the flamboyant splendor of the painting, sculpture, and architecture of the era.

Music for Venice It is no exaggeration to say that acoustics and architecture played a leading role in the choral style that developed under the aegis of St. Mark's—for the church's space was (and still is) ideally suited for the *cori spezzati* (separated choirs) style in which composers delighted. Specifically, as the cathedral's conceits and expectations expanded, its choir grew so large that it had to be divided into two galleries, one on each side of the altar; thus developed a sort of antiphonal style with conceptual origins in Gregorian chant. It remained for Giovanni Gabrieli to perfect the polychoral style, imbuing it with lively rhythms and rich counterpoint. His vocal works, and the instrumental pieces that grew up around them, are among the landmarks of the period.

When it came to the hiring of musicians, St. Mark's budget was generous. And because each of the divided choirs needed a group of supporting instruments, Gabrieli usually had at his disposal anywhere from 15 to 20 players—this in addition to the two (and sometimes four) choirs. It was natural, then, that he would put the players to more extensive use than "mere" choral accompaniment: During the late 1580s he began writing instrumental pieces to accompany entrances, interludes, processions, and postludes.

A Closer Look In 1597 Gabrieli published the *Sacrae symphoniae*, which became his best-known collection of polychoral and instrumental pieces. (The word "symphonies" should be understood more in the original sense of "sounding in

concordance" than in that of later instrumental genres.) Included in the set were canzonas on various "tones" that corresponded to the pitch levels or patterns of the vocal chant (or polyphonic settings of the chant). Instrumental canzonas were often used to "give the choir the pitch," as we might think of it today, in preparation for a subsequent choral work using the same "tone." Thus one needed a collection of these instrumental flourishes on all the various tones, and the more the better.

The Canzon septimi toni, No. 2, intersperses, in sectional fashion, chordal passages with lively antiphonal "statement-and-response." The flexibility of Baroque performing practice meant that a piece such as this could be played with a large ensemble of 16 or even 32, or one-on-a-part.

—Paul J. Horsley

The Sacrae symphoniae *were published in 1597.*

Luis Biava was on the podium for the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Canzon septimi toni, No. 2, in December 1996. Alain Altinoglu led the only other Orchestra performances of the piece, in March 2014.

The scoring is for two "choirs" each with two trumpets and two trombones.

Performance time is approximately three minutes.

The Music

Simple Symphony

Benjamin Britten
Born in Lowestoft, England, November 22, 1913
Died in Aldeburgh, December 4, 1976

England has long loved child prodigies, both homegrown and ones visiting from a far. Henry Purcell, by most reckonings the greatest English composer until the 20th century, wrote his first masterpieces as a teenager, composed his opera *Dido and Aeneas* at age 30, and died in his mid-30s in 1695. The Royal Society of London was fascinated when the eight-year-old Mozart visited in 1764 and promptly ran a series of tests of his prodigious talents to make sure he was not a fraud. Fifty years later, Mendelssohn cast a similar spell on the country. After what was admittedly a dry period lasting some centuries, England produced some of the leading composers of the 20th century, although Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams were rather late starters.

But not Benjamin Britten. In a program note he wrote for a recording of his *Simple Symphony* that we hear today, he charmingly recalls composing his earliest pieces, including some he reused in the work:

> Once upon a time there was a prep-school boy. He was called Britten. … He was quite an ordinary little boy … he loved cricket, only quite liked football … he adored mathematics, got on all right with history, was scared by Latin Unseen; he behaved fairly well. … There was one curious thing about this boy: he wrote music. His friends bore with it, his enemies kicked a bit but not for long (he was quite tough), the staff couldn't object if his work and games didn't suffer. He wrote lots of it, reams and reams of it.

Early Gifts Britten was born to comfortable circumstances, his father a music-loving dentist and mother a singer and pianist raising four children. She had great expectations for her talented youngest one, whom she hoped might become "the fourth B" after Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. Britten studied piano (he became a very fine one), viola, and started to compose, producing some hundred opus numbers before age 14. He found an excellent mentor in his composition teacher, Frank Bridge, a distinguished composer ironically now best remembered for a string orchestra piece his student wrote in 1937: Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge, Op. 10. While continuing to study with Bridge, Britten entered the prestigious Royal College of Music and began to receive wide attention.

In late 1933, age 20, Britten got the opportunity to write an orchestral work for performance. He explained in a letter to a friend: "I cannot write a single note of anything respectable at the moment, and so—on the off chance of making some money—I am dishing up some very old stuff (written, some of it, over ten years ago) as a dear little school suite for strings." The idea was thus to produce a piece that school orchestras could play. When Britten conducted the premiere—an early appearance in what would be a notable conducting career—it was with the Norwich String Orchestra, a largely amateur ensemble.

Britten based the *Simple Symphony* on bits and pieces of compositions he had written between the ages of nine and 12. In his program note, he says that those early works

> aren't very good … inspiration didn't always run very high, and the workmanship wasn't always academically sound. … No, I'm afraid they aren't very great; but when Benjamin Britten, a proud young composer of twenty (who'd already had a work broadcast) came along and looked in this cupboard, he found some of them not too uninteresting; and so rescoring them for strings, changing bits here and there, and making them more fit for general consumption, he turned them into a "Simple Symphony," and here it is.

A Closer Look It may seem a rather strange title: *Simple Symphony*. Britten at one point gave an explanation to his publisher at Oxford University Press, who had voiced concern: "I have thought a lot about the title—hence the delay—and I see your adviser's point. But I have searched the dictionary in vain, and I can find nothing else suitable. After all, no one can pretend that the material is not simple, and technically it certainly is not difficult." Yet there may well be a more playful reason. He gave the four movements charming alliterative titles: "Boisterous Bourrée," "Playful Pizzicato," "Sentimental Saraband," and a "Frolicsome Finale," When he conducted the premiere in March 1934 the program listed the work as "simple Symphony for Strings," further alliteration. He was still having fun.

Britten uses two earlier works in each of the four movements. The **Boisterous Bourrée** starts with lively version of a 17th-cenutry Baroque French dance that contrasts with a lyrical second theme based on a song. **Playful Pizzicato** is not so simple (to be plucked as fast as possible), beginning with a scherzo drawn from a piano sonata that is juxtaposed with another song as a middle trio section. The emotional heart of the suite is the extended third movement, **Sentimental Saraband**, which features a lullabylike waltz. The **Frolicsome Finale** is marked "prestissimo con fuoco" and uses the finale of a piano sonata and another song.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Britten composed the Simple Symphony *from 1933 to 1934.*

Klaus Tennstedt led the first, and only other, complete Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work on subscription concerts in February 1990. William Smith had led the second movement only on a Children's Concert in January 1987. Most recently, André Raphel led the second movement on a Family Concert in October 1994.

The score calls for strings alone.

Performance time is approximately 16 minutes.

The Music

Symphony No. 4

Dmitri Shostakovich
Born in St. Petersburg, September 25, 1906
Died in Moscow, August 9, 1975

"This game could end badly." No artist likes getting a bad review, but in January 1936, when Dmitri Shostakovich read those words at the end of an article attacking his widely acclaimed opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, he realized he was dealing with more than mere aesthetic criticism. This amounted to an official warning that he had to take deadly seriously. The article was titled "This Is Chaos, Not Music" and appeared in *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party. Although unsigned, the composer knew that Stalin had walked out of a performance of *Lady Macbeth* a few days earlier and he understood that this attack was written at Stalin's behest.

Criticism in Dangerous Times For the brilliant 29-year-old composer, whose fame had risen steadily over the previous decade, the *Pravda* article, which was soon followed by another one criticizing his ballet *The Limpid Stream*, was a bitter personal and professional blow. The horrors of the Stalinist era were becoming ever more evident and such matters were literally ones of life and death. Associates and friends of Shostakovich disappeared or died under mysterious circumstances. As the fate of such prominent writers as Maxim Gorky, Osip Mandelstam, Isaak Babel, and of the celebrated theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold makes clear, no one, no matter how famous, was safe.

Despite financial hardships in his youth, Shostakovich's career to this point had seemed charmed. Prodigiously talented as a pianist and composer, he had come to international attention in his late teens with his graduation project from the Leningrad Conservatory: the First Symphony. Premiered when he was 19, it made Shostakovich famous overnight and extended his renown far beyond the Soviet Union as Bruno Walter, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Arturo Toscanini, and other leading conductors championed the youthful work. (Leopold Stokowski gave the American premiere with The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1928.) His next two symphonies followed soon thereafter.

Throughout his career Shostakovich was intimately involved with music for the screen and stage. He wrote his Modernist first opera, *The Nose,* in 1927–28 and completed *Lady Macbeth* four years later. The great popular success of the latter

in the Soviet Union, as well as abroad, led to a new production in December 1935, which sparked the *Pravda* rebuke. At that time Shostakovich was halfway through composing a symphony, his first in nearly six years, a work that had been long in the planning. After various false starts, he had finished the first two movements by the beginning of January, some three weeks before Stalin attended the fateful *Lady Macbeth* performance.

The sustained criticism in the press and elsewhere that followed had the practical consequence of curbing presentations of Shostakovich's works and of chances to perform himself, therefore cutting off much of his income at a time that he was expecting his first child. Immersion in composition proved his salvation—as he informed his friend Isaak Glikman: "Even if they chop my hands off, I will still continue to compose music, albeit I have to hold the pen in my teeth."

An Aborted Premiere Shostakovich finished the Fourth Symphony—his longest to date and orchestrally the largest he ever composed—in April and by the end of the year conductor Fritz Stiedry was rehearsing the Leningrad Philharmonic in preparation for the scheduled premiere on December 11. The concert never took place. A press announcement appeared that day stating the composer had withdrawn the work "from performance on the grounds that it in no way corresponds to his current creative convictions and represents for him an outdated phase."

The real reasons for the cancellation are still unclear. Some have questioned the competence of the conductor, stating that poor rehearsals discouraged Shostakovich. By other accounts the composer was approached by officials who requested that he withdraw the score. Given all the attacks against him, his precarious situation, and the recent birth of his daughter, Shostakovich certainly had every reason to be cautious. In any case, the Fourth was not heard in public, although it enjoyed some underground reputation through keyboard arrangements that allowed intimates to get to know it. The existence of the work was too widely acknowledged for Shostakovich to bury it completely and so when he wrote his next symphony—the famous Fifth—it bore the appropriate number. That symphony, which remains his most often performed, rehabilitated him.

The Fourth Symphony was finally premiered 25 years later, on December 30, 1961, with Kirill Kondrashin leading the Moscow Philharmonic to resounding applause. By this time Shostakovich had written 12 of his 15 symphonies and allegedly told Glikman, "It seems to me that in many respects the Fourth is better than my most recent symphonies." The work was soon taken up abroad, with Eugene Ormandy leading the Philadelphians in the American premiere in 1963.

A Closer Look The Fourth Symphony is certainly different from Shostakovich's earlier ones and no doubt would have sparked considerable controversy if it had been performed in 1936. Surely the length and massive size of the Fourth, as biographer Laurel Fay has noted, "would have been construed as the epitome of

formalism, an act of arrogant defiance of the Party's benevolent guidance." After the brash and brilliant First Symphony, and the more problematic Second and Third, this was the symphony in which Shostakovich both pointed to his maturity but also hinted at directions he did not take or only did so more privately. A potent influence on the piece is Gustav Mahler, whose works were becoming ever more important to the composer at this time. His closest friend, the brilliant musicologist Ivan Sollertinsky, had recently written a book on Mahler and the two pursued deep study of his music.

The Symphony is in three movements, two long outer ones lasting nearly a half hour each frame a much shorter central one. The first movement (**Allegretto poco moderato**) immediately announces the boldness and intensity that characterize much of the work. Some aspects of its musical language, such as the use of fugal and ostinato techniques, recall instrumental sections of *Lady Macbeth*. The brief **Moderato con moto** serves as a sort of intermezzo, in this case one calling upon a Mahlerian dance.

The finale is in two sections, beginning with a funereal **Largo,** also reminiscent of Mahler, which leads to an **Allegro** filled with more dances and marches, often of a grotesque character. The conclusion of the Symphony is one of the most remarkable of any in the repertory. In the final minutes the evocative orchestration, using celesta, and the gradual building of dissonance is quiet, tragic, and haunting. It surely would have proved dangerous at the time.

Shostakovich's next symphony, the popular Fifth with its perhaps exaggerated affirmations at the end, was more what the authorities wanted. He later made a remark to the conductor Boris Khaikin: "I finished the [Fifth] Symphony fortissimo and in the major. Everyone is saying that it is an optimistic and life-affirming symphony. I wonder, what would they be saying if I had finished it pianissimo and in minor?" That is what he had in fact done in the Fourth, although few knew it at the time.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

The Fourth Symphony was composed from 1935 to 1936.

Eugene Ormandy and The Philadelphia Orchestra gave the United States premiere of Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony in February 1963, one of many American premieres the Orchestra has given of the composer's works. The most recent subscription performances were in December 2016, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting.

The Orchestra recorded the Symphony in 1963 with Ormandy for CBS and in 1994 with Myung Whun Chung for Deutsche Grammophon.

The work is scored for two piccolos, four flutes, four oboes (IV doubling English horn), four clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, eight horns, four trumpets, three trombones, two tubas, two timpanists, percussion (bass drum, castanets, cymbals, glockenspiel, snare drum, suspended cymbal, tam-tam, triangle, wood block, xylophone), two harps, celesta, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 60 minutes.

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Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Antiphonal: Works in which an ensemble is divided into distinct groups, performing in alternation and together

Bourrée: A 17th-century French dance in double time with a long-short-short rhythm

Canzona: A genre of Italian instrumental music from the 16th and 17th centuries with sections in contrasting tempos, meters, and rhythms

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Contrapuntal: See counterpoint

Counterpoint: The combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

Dissonance: A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

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

Intermezzo: A short connecting instrumental movement in an opera or other musical work

Modernism: A consequence of the fundamental conviction among successive generations of composers since 1900 that the means of musical expression in the 20th century must be adequate to the unique and radical character of the age

Motet: A sacred vocal composition in contrapuntal style, and without accompaniment

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

Ostinato: A steady bass accompaniment, repeated over and over

Pizzicato: Plucked

Polyphony: A term used to designate music in more than one part and the style in which all or several of the musical parts move to some extent independently

Sarabande: A slow, stately Spanish dance in triple meter

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, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts. Also an instrumental piece of a light, piquant, humorous character.

Sonata: An instrumental composition in three or four extended movements contrasted in theme, tempo, and mood, usually for a solo instrument

Trio: A division set between the first section of a minuet or scherzo and its repetition, and contrasting with it by a more tranquil movement and style

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Allegretto: A tempo between walking speed and fast

Allegro: Bright, fast

Con fuoco: With fire, passionately, excited

Con moto: With motion

Largo: Broad

Moderato: A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

Presto: Very fast

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Poco: Little, a bit

MODIFYING SUFFIXES

-issimo: Very

DYNAMIC MARKS

Fortissimo (ff): Very loud

Pianissimo (pp): Very soft

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Photo: Jeff Fusco

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