

# Season 2019-2020


**Thursday, March 19,**  
at 7:30

**Saturday, March 21,**  
at 8:00

**Sunday, March 22, at 2:00**


## The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Conductor


**Beethoven** Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36   
I. Adagio molto—Allegro con brio  
II. Larghetto  
III. Scherzo (Allegro) and Trio  
IV. Allegro molto

### Intermission

**Hunt** *Climb*  
*World premiere—Philadelphia Orchestra commission*

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

This program runs approximately 2 hours.

 LiveNote® 2.0, the Orchestra's interactive concert guide for mobile devices, will be enabled for these performances.

These concerts are sponsored by

**Carole Haas Gravagno.**

The March 19 concert is also sponsored by  
**Sandra and David Marshall** and the **Hassel  
Foundation.**

The March 22 concert is also sponsored by  
**Dr. and Mrs. Joseph B. Townsend.**

These concerts are part of The Philadelphia Orchestra's  
BeethovenNOW celebration.

Please join us following the March 19 and 21 concerts for a free Organ Postlude featuring Peter Richard Conte, and following the March 22 concert for a free Chamber Postlude featuring members of The Philadelphia Orchestra.

### **March 19 and 21**

**Beethoven/arr. Rubinstein and Conte** Turkish March,  
from *The Ruins of Athens*, Op. 113

**Beethoven** from Five Pieces for Mechanical Clock, WoO 33:  
IV. Allegro non più molto

**Wesley** Choral Song and Fugue

**Beethoven/transcr. Schreiner** from Piano Sonata No. 8  
in C minor, Op. 13 ("Pathétique"):  
II. Adagio cantabile

**Beethoven** Prelude No. 2, from Two Preludes through  
All Twelve Major Keys, Op. 39

**Schubert/transcr. Best** *Marche militaire* No. 1 in D major,  
D. 733

### **March 22**

**Beethoven** Sextet in E-flat major, Op. 81b, for two violins,  
viola, cello, and two horns  
I. Allegro con brio  
II. Adagio  
III. Rondo: Allegro

**Juliette Kang** Violin

**Yayoi Numazawa** Violin

**David Nicastro** Viola

**Priscilla Lee** Cello

**Jennifer Montone** Horn

**Jeffrey Lang** Horn

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](http://www.wrti.org) to listen live or for more details.

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Music Director



## Getting Started with LiveNote® 2.0

- » Please silence your phone ringer.
- » Make sure you are connected to the internet via a Wi-Fi or cellular connection.
- » Download the Philadelphia Orchestra app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.
- » Once downloaded open the Philadelphia Orchestra app.
- » Tap “OPEN” on the Philadelphia Orchestra concert you are attending.
- » Tap the “LIVE” red circle. The app will now automatically advance slides as the live concert progresses.

### Helpful Hints

- » You can follow different tracks of content in LiveNote. While you are in a LiveNote content slide you can change tracks by selecting the tabs in the upper left corner. Each track groups content by a theme. For example, “The Story” track provides historical information about the piece and composer. “The Roadmap” track gives the listener more in-depth information about the orchestration and music theory behind the piece. \*Note: Some pieces only contain one track.
- » Tap in the middle of the screen to display player controls such as Glossary, Brightness, Text Size, and Share.
- » Tap a highlighted word in yellow or select the “Glossary” in the player controls to take you to an in-depth glossary of musical terms.
- » If during the concert the content slides are not advancing, or you have browsed to other slides, you can tap the “LIVE” button in the bottom right corner to get to the current live slide.

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Jessica Griffin



The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the world's preeminent orchestras. It 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 educational initiatives, and an ongoing commitment to the communities that it serves, the ensemble is on a path to create an expansive future for classical music, and to further the place of the arts in an open and democratic society.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his eighth season as the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. 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, from Verizon Hall to*

*community centers, the Mann Center to Penn's Landing, classrooms to hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. The Orchestra continues to discover new and inventive ways to nurture its relationship with loyal patrons.*

The Philadelphia Orchestra continues the tradition of educational and community engagement for listeners of all ages. It launched its **HEAR** initiative in 2016 to become a major force for good in every community that it serves. **HEAR** is a portfolio of integrated initiatives that promotes **H**health, champions music **E**ducation, enables broad **A**ccess to Orchestra performances, and maximizes impact through **R**esearch. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members through programs such as Play!Ns, side-by-sides, PopUP concerts, Free Neighborhood Concerts, School Concerts, sensory-friendly concerts, the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program, and All City Orchestra Fellowships.

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

The Orchestra also makes live recordings available on popular digital music services and as part of the Orchestra on Demand section of its website. Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording, with seven celebrated CDs on the prestigious Deutsche Grammophon label. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org).

# Music Director

Jessica Griffin



Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** will lead The Philadelphia Orchestra through at least the 2025–26 season, an extraordinary and significant long-term commitment. Additionally, he became the third music director of New York's Metropolitan Opera in August 2018. Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His intensely collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm, paired with a fresh approach to programming, have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him “phenomenal,” adding that under his baton, “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.”

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling talents of his generation. He has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000, and in summer 2017 he became an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He was music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world's most revered ensembles and has conducted critically acclaimed performances at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon (DG) in 2018. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with seven CDs on that label. His upcoming recordings will include projects with The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and the Orchestre Métropolitain, with which he will also continue to record for ATMA Classique. Additionally, he has recorded with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records, and the London Philharmonic for the LPO label.

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

To read Yannick's full bio, please visit [philorch.org/conductor](http://philorch.org/conductor).

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

**1801**

**Beethoven**

Symphony  
No. 2

**Music**

Haydn  
*The Seasons*

**Literature**

Chateaubriand  
*Atala*

**Art**

Goya  
*The Two Majas*

**History**

Fulton produces  
first submarine

The Philadelphia Orchestra's BeethovenNOW celebration of the composer's 250th anniversary continues the cycle of his complete symphonies, which are paired with world premieres by young composers who have written pieces in dialogue with them.

Beethoven's Third Symphony, the revolutionary "Eroica," so changed the history of the genre upon its public premiere in 1805 that it quickly overshadowed his first two symphonies, which he had composed shortly before. Despite its humor and good cheer, some critics initially greeted the Second Symphony as "bizarre." Beethoven wrote it around a time of acute personal crisis, as he was first confronting his loss of hearing.

**1803**

**Beethoven**

Symphony  
No. 3

**Music**

Spohr  
Violin Concerto  
No. 1

**Literature**

Schiller  
*Der Braut von  
Messina*

**Art**

West  
*Christ Healing  
the Sick*

**History**

Louisiana  
Purchase

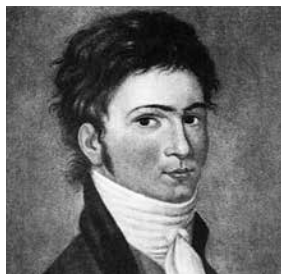
The crisis seems more evident in relation to the "Eroica," which Beethoven originally called "Bonaparte." He changed the title after becoming disillusioned when Napoleon crowned himself emperor. The heroism of this monumental work nonetheless remains and may relate to the composer's own struggles at the time.

Beethoven's confrontation with adversity inspired American composer Jessica Hunt's *Climb* as she deals with her own challenges from living with chronic illness. The metaphor of the difficulty she experiences climbing steps led her to write what she calls "a letter-through-time to Beethoven to express my gratitude for his work and to express our silent kinship." She named the piece "to represent the challenge of living with any invisible illness or obstacle: Some of us cannot simply *walk* up a flight of stairs, instead, we must *climb*."

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

## Symphony No. 2



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

In the summer of 1801, while composing his Second Symphony, Beethoven disclosed the secret of his deteriorating hearing in a long letter to a childhood friend, Franz Wegeler. After recounting assorted professional successes, the 30-year-old composer went on to relate that “that jealous demon, my wretched health, has put a nasty spoke in my wheel; and it amounts to this, that for the past three years my hearing has become weaker and weaker.” Since Wegeler was a physician who lived in the composer’s native Bonn, he provided a detailed account of symptoms and lamented the constraints placed on his personal life (“I have ceased to attend any social functions just because I find it impossible to say to people: I am deaf”) and professional situation (“... if my enemies, of whom I have a fair number, were to hear about it, what would they say?”).

A little more than a year later, just as he was completing the Second Symphony, Beethoven penned his “Heiligenstadt Testament,” the famous unsent letter to his brothers in which he expressed utter despair over his loss of hearing. In this revealing confession he stated that on account of his torments, “I would have ended my life. Only my art held me back. It seemed to me impossible to leave the world until I had produced all that I felt was within me.” What if Beethoven had killed himself in the fall of 1802, at age 31? What had he accomplished at this point in his career and how would he have been remembered? The question assumes a special poignancy when one considers that Schubert died at the same point in his life. Mozart had not lived much longer. Beethoven, fortunately, had another 25 years.

**A “Smiling” Symphony in Difficult Times** The Beethoven who contemplated killing himself at 31 ultimately became the legendary figure who redefined music and whose life in so many ways epitomizes that of the Romantic artist. During his 20s he was better known as a performer—a brilliant pianist and improviser—than as a composer. He had written a good many works in various genres, but nowhere near what Mozart, Schubert, and other masters accomplished by the age of 30. He was about to embark on a “new path,” as he told his student Carl Czerny.

The genre of the symphony, of which his idol Mozart had written some 50, and his teacher Haydn more than twice that, offered new challenges. Beethoven had ventured to write one during his teenage years in Bonn, but did not get very far. A later attempt in Vienna, during the mid-1790s, likewise proved unsuccessful, although some of the musical ideas in it eventually made their way into his First Symphony. He began sketching the Second Symphony as early as 1800, but most of the work took place during the summer and early fall of 1802—exactly at the time he confronted the crisis explained in the “Heiligenstadt Testament.”

The boundless humor and vitality of the Second Symphony—French composer Hector Berlioz later remarked that “this Symphony is smiling throughout”—challenge the simplistic connections so often made between the immediate events at a given time in Beethoven’s life and the music he then created. Indeed, as with his witty Eighth Symphony (1812), also written during a period of considerable personal distress (in the aftermath of his affair with the “Immortal Beloved”), Beethoven may have sought refuge in musical “comedy” at times of personal “tragedy.”

**First Reactions** Despite its good cheer, the Second Symphony initially challenged listeners. One critic remarked in 1804:

It is a noteworthy, colossal work, of a depth, power, and artistic knowledge like *very few*. It has a level of difficulty, both from the point of view of the composer and in regard to its performance by a large orchestra (which it certainly demands), quite certainly unlike *any* symphony that has ever been made known. It demands to be played again and yet again by even the most accomplished orchestra, until the astonishing number of original and sometimes very strangely arranged ideas becomes closely enough connected, rounded out, and emerges like a great unity, just as the composer had in mind.

Today we might assume such an observation would be about the monumental Third Symphony that we hear paired with it on this program. Yet this early reaction is echoed by other contemporaries, who also initially found the Second Symphony difficult, imposing, and puzzling.

Early-19th-century listeners, of course, were hearing it in the context of the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, and of Beethoven’s own initial one. In fact, Beethoven



*Beethoven's Symphony No. 2 was composed from 1801 to 1802.*

*The Second Symphony was first performed by The Philadelphia Orchestra in March 1903, with Fritz Scheel on the podium, as part of the Orchestra's first Beethoven symphony cycle. It was most recently performed on subscription concerts in December 2016 with Cristian Măcelaru conducting.*

*The Philadelphians have recorded Beethoven's Second Symphony twice: in 1962 for CBS with Eugene Ormandy and in 1987 for EMI with Riccardo Muti. A live recording from 2005 with Christoph Eschenbach is also available as a digital download.*

*Beethoven scored the work for an orchestra of two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.*

*The Second Symphony runs approximately 35 minutes in performance.*

premiered the Second Symphony at a concert in Vienna on April 5, 1803, that also featured the First Symphony, as well as the premieres of the Third Piano Concerto and the oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives*. Comparisons were therefore inevitable—and his First Symphony won, in part because “it was performed with unforced ease, while in the Second a striving for novel and striking effects is more visible.” The “striking effects” begin with the slow introduction to the first movement. Other sections that follow, especially in the third-movement scherzo and in the humorous finale, elicited the word perhaps used most often to describe Beethoven's music at the time: “bizarre.”

**A Closer Look** Beethoven's teacher Haydn typically began his symphonies with a slow introduction. Mozart generally did not, and Beethoven was nearly evenly split in his nine symphonies. The lengthy **Adagio molto** he wrote for the Second Symphony is far more imposing than that for his First and leads to an **Allegro con brio** theme in the lower strings and somewhat military march-like second theme for clarinets, bassoons, and horns.

Berlioz called the following **Larghetto** “a delineation of innocent happiness hardly clouded by a few melancholy accents.” The **Scherzo: Allegro** eschews the polite dance forms typical of Haydn and Mozart or the composer's earlier symphony for a faster and more manic romp with a slower trio section in the middle. Berlioz called the finale (**Allegro molto**) “a second scherzo in duple meter, and its playfulness has perhaps something still more delicate, more piquant.” Beethoven's sense of humor may be gruffer than the wit of Haydn but nevertheless is ingeniously comic.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# The Music

## *Climb*



**Jessica Hunt**  
**Born in Deep Springs**  
**Valley, California,**  
**December 16, 1987**  
**Now living in Baltimore**

Born on a small cattle ranch in the desert mountains of eastern California during a blizzard, Jessica Hunt earned a Bachelor of Music in composition and piano performance from Columbia College Chicago, a Master of Music in composition from DePaul University, and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Michigan. She has composed for large orchestras and chamber ensembles, the operatic stage, theater and film, electronic media, chorus, and instrumental and vocal solos and duos. A Fellow in Gabriela Lena Frank's Creative Academy of Music and instructor in music theory at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, Hunt's current projects include *Thurso's Landing*, a new opera incorporating a libretto adapted from the poetry of early-20th-century American poet Robinson Jeffers. *Climb* was commissioned by The Philadelphia Orchestra, honoring Beethoven's 250th birthday by performing his symphonies in dialogue with music by composers of today; these performances represent the work's world premiere.

**A Shared Struggle with Beethoven** For her “dialogue” with Beethoven, Hunt looked not just to the composer's Second and Third symphonies, with which her work is paired, but to the space between the works—one of great suffering for Beethoven. In the fall of 1802, Beethoven wrote his “Heiligenstadt Testament”—his account of despondency over ever-increasing hearing loss and frustration at overcoming physical and emotional infirmities. As Hunt writes: “The first time I read that document, Beethoven's isolation, fear, and diminishing hope leapt off the page and pierced my heart. I recognized those fears—that anguish—they resonate deeply within my own chronically ill body.”

Currently living with the chronic autonomic nervous disorder dysautonomia, Hunt found a deep and personal connection with the despair and anxiety with which Beethoven lived. Just as deafness permeated every aspect of his life, Hunt notes that “every single one of my body's autonomic functions” are affected by her condition. Climbing stairs has become a particular challenge; she describes the experience as “terrifyingly dangerous. My heart races, my vision darkens, my ears ring, it feels like gravity is pulling me backwards. It is in

*Climb* was composed in 2019.

*These are the world premiere performances of the work.*

*The score calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons; three horns; two trumpets; timpani; and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately five minutes.*

these moments that I must make an active choice to keep fighting, to claw my way up, until I can triumphantly rest at the top." Connecting with Beethoven's mourning his loss of hearing and accepting a "new normal," Hunt claims that in reaching the top of the stairs, her "new reality is confirmed, but is also changed by the previous triumph and joy. The title is chosen to represent the challenge of living with any invisible illness or obstacle: Some of us cannot simply *walk* up a flight of stairs, instead, we must *climb*."

**A Closer Look** Scored for the same instrumentation as the symphonies with which it is paired, *Climb* is partly autobiographical, exploring aural representations of the physical sensations that are part of Hunt's daily life with dysautonomia. As she describes: "The piece opens with a frantic burst of adrenaline that soon surrenders to the sensation of stomach-dropping nausea and tinnitus." The opening orchestral gesture establishes the musical metaphors of adrenaline rush, dizziness, panic, tinnitus, and nausea with a heartbeat motif leading to a "tachycardia/racing heart" section. The piece reaches for the key of E flat (the same as the "Eroica" Symphony), but the gravity of the key of D pulls the music back. Optimism surfaces but is then overwhelmed by the glissandos of dizziness and transitions into violent palpitations leading to exhaustion. Punctuated by brassy flashes of pain, the orchestra-body steels itself with determination, even optimism, before a violent attack of palpitations shatters its progress, melting into mourning for a wholeness that will never come again. After the last pitch, the string section inhales together and performs an up-bow gesture without touching the string, seemingly an upbeat to a final resolution that never comes, hinting at one last measure that Hunt asks the audience to imagine—a balance of hope, hopelessness, and uncertainty.

*Climb* is Hunt's "letter-through-time" to Beethoven, expressing gratitude for his work and acknowledging their silent kinship. She writes: "Every single person has a struggle that feels monumental to them. Many of our struggles are invisible, but we can find community when we share our experiences. I hope that inviting the audience to embody, for five minutes, what it feels like to live with this chronic illness will help to raise awareness and empathy for others. If it were possible for Beethoven to hear this message, I hope he would know that he has inspired so many of us to persevere, but more importantly, that he wasn't alone. None of us are."

—Nancy Plum

# The Music

## Symphony No. 3 (“Eroica”)



**Ludwig van Beethoven**

The monumental “Eroica” Symphony represents a turning point not only in Beethoven’s career, but also in the history of music, a stature shared by few other compositions. The work raises fascinating biographical issues: the personal circumstances of its genesis at a crucial juncture in Beethoven’s life; its relationship to the political events of the day, specifically to Napoleon Bonaparte; and the ways in which audiences at the time first received what many found to be a “horribly long” and “most difficult” piece of music.

It is striking that early critics, those writing during the initial 10 years or so of the work’s existence, did not talk about the issues most often discussed today: the Symphony’s relation to Beethoven’s life or to Napoleon. They viewed the “Eroica” as a bizarre but original composition, more sublime than beautiful. Its unprecedented length, technical challenges, and uncompromising aesthetic stance seemed to aim beyond entertainment, forcing Beethoven’s contemporaries to rethink what a symphony should be and do.

**A Personal Turning Point** During the summer of 1802 Beethoven’s doctor suggested that he move to the suburb of Heiligenstadt so as to escape the heat and hassles of Vienna. It was there, in the early fall, that Beethoven poured out his heart in an unsent letter to his brothers:

O you men who think or say that I am hostile, peevish, or misanthropic, how greatly you wrong me. You do not know the secret cause that makes me seem so to you. From childhood on, my heart and soul were full of tender feeling of goodwill, and I was always inclined to accomplish great deeds. But just think, for six years now I have had an incurable condition, made worse by incompetent doctors, from year to year deceived with hopes of getting better, finally forced to face the prospect of a lasting infirmity (whose cure will perhaps take years or even be impossible).

This “Heiligenstadt Testament” has exerted a tremendous influence on posterity’s view of Beethoven. The anguished words also had a powerful effect on the understanding of his music, especially a work like the “Eroica,” which seems to express in music the struggles that the composer, never a fluent writer, had tried to put in prose.

**A New Path** The “Eroica” helped launch the middle period of Beethoven’s career, which lasted for roughly a dozen years. These were years of astounding—one could say heroic—productivity: “I live only in my notes, and with one work barely finished, the other is already started; the way I write now I often find myself working on three, four things at the same time.” His problems were initially hidden, denied, and fought, but by 1806 Beethoven wrote in a sketch: “Let your deafness no longer be a secret—even in art.”

Beethoven began the Symphony around the time he wrote the “Heiligenstadt Testament,” and did the most concentrated work starting in May 1803, some seven months later. It was the first of his symphonies for which he gave public indications of an extra-musical program. Originally he planned to dedicate it to Napoleon and call it *Bonaparte*. Disillusioned when the French military leader crowned himself emperor in 1804, Beethoven so vigorously scratched out the title that his pen tore the manuscript paper. In the end the work was published as “*Sinfonia Eroica* . . . composed to celebrate the memory of a great man.” It was initially heard in private and semi-private performances, the first of which took place in June 1804 at the Viennese palace of his patron, Prince Lobkowitz, to whom the work is dedicated. The public premiere was on April 7, 1805, at the Theater an der Wien.

**First Hearings** The early reviews show that most critics wanted to praise the composer and work, but were often confused by what he was trying to do. A critic commented that general opinion was sharply divided:

One group, Beethoven’s very special friends, maintains that precisely this symphony is a masterpiece, that it is in exactly the true style for more elevated music, and that if it does not please at present, it is because the public is not sufficiently educated in art to be able to grasp all of these elevated beauties. After a few thousand years, however, they will not fail to have their effect. The other group utterly denies this work any artistic value and feels that it manifests a completely unbounded striving for distinction and oddity, which, however, has produced neither beauty nor true sublimity and power.

The critic goes on to discuss a “middle” group of commentators, who admire its many excellent qualities, but are dismayed at the disjointed surroundings and at the “endless duration of this longest and perhaps most difficult of all symphonies, which exhausts even connoisseurs and becomes unbearable for the mere amateur.”

Within a couple of years, however, the tone began to change. It often takes time before musicians and the public feel comfortable with the demands of difficult new music. In the case of the “Eroica,” as a Leipzig critic remarked, “One must not always wish only to be entertained,” a sentiment echoed by another: “But the connoisseur will only enjoy it as a complete work (and a repeated hearing doubles his spiritual enjoyment) the deeper he penetrates into the technical and aesthetic content of the original work.” Musicians in particular seem to have gone out of their way to embrace “this most difficult of all symphonies.” Regarding a Leipzig performance in 1807, we are informed that “the orchestra had voluntarily gathered for extra rehearsals without recompense, except for the honor and special enjoyment of the work itself.” A few years later a critic commented that the Symphony “was performed by the orchestra with unmistakable enjoyment and love.”

**A Closer Look** The innovations of the “Eroica” begin with the two striking tonic chords of the first movement (**Allegro con brio**), ushering in a sweet cello melody that is soon derailed by an unexpected note—C sharp—which does not belong to the “home key.” The motivic, metric, and harmonic surprises continue throughout this lengthy movement. A “new theme” (in fact related to the opening) appears during the development that has elicited comment for two centuries now. There are other unexpected details: The French horn seems to enter prematurely in the recapitulation, an effect that Beethoven’s contemporaries initially thought to be a mistake.

The second movement (**Adagio assai**) is a funeral march and one of the most influential pieces of music Beethoven ever composed. Schubert alluded to it in two late works (his song “Auf dem Strom” and in the second movement of his Piano Trio in E flat) to honor Beethoven’s death, just 20 months before his own. Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Mahler, and others would also write marches, often funereal in character, within their symphonies that can in many ways be traced back to Beethoven. The C-minor opening presents the somber theme in the violins, over a drum-like bass, that is taken up by the oboe. The tone brightens at moments in the movement, notably in sections in major keys, but also becomes more austere with a fugal passage of extraordinary intensity. The opening theme returns at the end, deconstructed so that only fragments remain.

An energetic scherzo (**Allegro vivace**) changes the tone (confusing some commentators—why the mirth after a funeral?), but not the intensity. Beethoven plays with metric

Beethoven composed his  
"Eroica" Symphony in 1803.

Fritz Scheel conducted the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work, in January 1903. Its most recent appearance on a subscription series was in April 2019, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting. The "Eroica" has become one of the most frequently performed works by the Orchestra, appearing almost every season, and the work was chosen to be performed in memory of both Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy. Among the distinguished conductors who have led the Symphony with the Philadelphians are Leopold Stokowski, Willem Mengelberg, Clemens Krauss, Eugene Ormandy, Otto Klemperer, Fritz Reiner, Bruno Walter, Georg Solti, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Daniel Barenboim, Claudio Abbado, Klaus Tennstedt, Riccardo Muti, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Christoph Eschenbach, and Simon Rattle.

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

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

Performance time is approximately 50 minutes.

ambiguities—is the movement in duple or triple time?—and also gives the French horns a chance to shine in the middle trio section.

Beethoven employs another formal innovation for the finale (**Allegro molto**), which he casts as an unusual set of variations. The theme takes some time to emerge, with initially only its harmonic skeleton given in the bass. For the theme proper Beethoven returned to a melody he had already used in three previous pieces: in one of his contredanses, in his ballet music for *The Creatures of Prometheus*, and as the theme for the Piano Variations in E flat, Op. 35. Beethoven referred to these as the "Prometheus" Variations and the work is closely related to the last movement of the Symphony. Indeed, as Lewis Lockwood has observed, the finale was conceived of first and became the "springboard" for the entire work. It seems natural that Beethoven was attracted to—dare we say identified with?—Prometheus, the rebellious Greek Titan who incurred the wrath of the gods of Mount Olympus by stealing their sacred fire. Prometheus resisted, took risks, and suffered in order to help humanity. That mythic hero's music provides a fitting conclusion for this heroic symphony.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# Musical Terms

## GENERAL TERMS

**Chord:** The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

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

**Contredanse:** A type of folk dance in which couples are arranged in sets or face one another in a line

**D.:** Abbreviation for Deutsch, the chronological list of all the works of Schubert made by Otto Erich Deutsch

**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

**Glissando:** A glide from one note to the next

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

**Harmony:** The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

**Meter:** The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

**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.

**Recapitulation:** See sonata form

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

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

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

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

the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

**Tonic:** The keynote of a scale

**Trio:** See scherzo

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

**Adagio:** Leisurely, slow

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Cantabile:** In a singing style, lyrical, melodious, flowing

**Con brio:** Vigorously, with fire

**Larghetto:** A slow tempo

**Vivace:** Lively

## TEMPO MODIFIERS

**Assai:** Much

**Molto:** Very

**Più:** More



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