



Legato in Times of Staccato

Playlist 13 - Wednesday, July 1st, 2020

Curated by Music Director, Fouad Fakhouri

[Julia Perry: Study for Orchestra](#)

Julia Perry was an accomplished 20th-century African American composer and conductor who studied at Julliard and in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. Her early compositions were heavily influenced by African American spirituals, and in her lifetime, she completed 12 symphonies, two concertos, and three operas, in addition to numerous smaller works. Perry composed the *Study for Orchestra* in 1952 and this recording comes from a live performance of the piece by the New York Philharmonic in 1965. The piece is representative of Perry's neoclassical compositional style and includes an array of syncopated rhythms and melodic dissonances that contribute to its frantic nature.

[William Grant Still: Symphony No. 1 in A flat major "Afro-American"](#)

William Grant Still was one of the most influential African American composers of the early 20th century. His *Afro-American Symphony* was the first symphony composed by an African American that was performed by a prominent orchestra in the United States. Composed in 1930, the work premiered with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra in New York in 1931. The piece incorporates elements of jazz and blues and expresses Still's integration of black culture into classical form. In Still's own words: "I knew I wanted to write a symphony; I knew that it had to be an American work; and I wanted to demonstrate how the blues, so often considered a lowly expression, could be elevated to the highest musical level."

[Haydn: Cello Concerto No. 2](#)

Haydn composed his *Cello Concerto No. 2* in 1783 while serving as Kapellmeister for the Esterházy family. Like the *Cello Concerto No. 1*, this piece was written for the principal cellist in Haydn's orchestra at the time, Anton Kraft. Haydn enjoyed providing opportunities for talented soloists to show off their skills and instruments, and as Kapellmeister, he was afforded much creative freedom.



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Zoltán Kodály: Dances from Galánta

Kodály composed his *Dances of Galánta* in 1933 for the 80th anniversary of the Budapest Philharmonic Society. Galánta is the name of a town in Hungary where Kodály spent much of his early childhood and where he was first exposed to Hungarian folk music. Much of the musical material in the work is based on 18th-century Hungarian dance songs called “verbunkos.” These songs were used by the Austro-Hungarian army to recruit villagers during the imperial wars. The music of verbunkos begins slowly and gains in speed and excitement, as represented in *Dances of Galánta* with beautiful introductory solos and spirited finales.

Gorecki: Symphony No. 3, Op. 36

This symphony was written as a “symbol of Polish political history” and is centered on three texts -- including a prayer inscribed by a teenager on a cell wall of a Gestapo headquarters -- which the composer turned into haunting laments, backed by simple, slowly churning surges of beautiful music. As the symphony was completed in 1976, it is a slow and somber piece that exerts themes of death and suffering. Some critics have suggested that in the early 1990’s, during the era of the Holocaust remembrances, 50th anniversaries of World War II events, and the movie *Schindler’s List*, Gorecki’s symphony served as another symbol of Poland’s suffering under Nazism and communism. In 1993, the piece reached #6 on the British pop album charts, outselling newly-released albums by Madonna and Michael Jackson. While any classical recording is considered a “hit” if it sells 5,000 copies globally, Gorecki’s Third Symphony was at one point selling 15,000 copies a day in London alone.

Aretha Franklin: Think

Ozzy Osbourne: Mama, I'm Coming Home

Chuck Berry with Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band: Johnny B. Goode

Bruce Springsteen: Dancing In The Dark



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[The Beatles: Here Comes The Sun](#)

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