



## Legato in Times of Staccato

### Playlist #22 - Wednesday, September 2nd, 2020

Curated by Music Director, Fouad Fakhouri

#### [Beethoven: Violin Concerto \(Itzhak Perlman, violin\)](#)

Written in 1806 (between his Fourth and Fifth Symphonies) Beethoven wrote the only Violin Concerto he completed for violin virtuoso, Franz Clement. The Napoleonic invasion of Austria was in full stride when he completed the work. In fact, the French officers were quartered in the same house with Beethoven when he set the last marking to the concerto.

#### [Beethoven: Triple Concerto in C major Op. 56 & Choral Fantasy in C minor Op. 80 \(Itzhak Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, & Daniel Barenboim\)](#)

Ludwig van Beethoven's Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Piano in C major, Op. 56, more commonly known as the Triple Concerto, was composed in 1803 and later published in 1804 by Breitkopf & Härtel. The choice of the three solo instruments effectively makes this a concerto for piano trio, and it is the only concerto Beethoven ever completed for more than one solo instrument.

#### [Bach: Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major \(Yo-Yo Ma, cello\)](#)

The Prelude of the 1st Suite for unaccompanied cello by J.S. Bach is possibly the most immediately recognizable solo work for the instrument. The pattern of the suite is the one largely followed in the subsequent suites: a free prelude, followed by a fast Allemande and Courante, a contemplative Sarabande, a Minuet that makes an excursion into a minor key, and a speedy closing Gigue.

#### [Haydn: Trumpet Concerto \(Wynton Marsalis, trumpet\)](#)

Joseph Haydn's Trumpet Concerto was written in 1796 for his long-time friend Anton Weidinger. Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the trumpet held many restrictions in classical music, due to its lack of valves and keys. As other instruments in the orchestra were progressing and becoming more challenging and diverse, the natural trumpet fell behind. Many people called for a new instrument that



## Legato in Times of Staccato

could play chromatically, thus the keyed trumpet was invented. Haydn and his good friend, Anton, were able to show off this new keyed trumpet with Haydn's Trumpet Concerto.

### **Barber: Violin Concerto, Op. 14 (Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, violin)**

When the Curtis Institute of Music opened its doors on October 1, 1924, Samuel Barber was second in line. He became one of the most recognized composers before he was 30 years old. In 1939, Barber returned to Curtis Institute to be a composition professor and maintained the position until 1942. During that time, Samuel Fels served on the school's board of directors, and in early 1939, offered Barber \$1,000 to commission a violin concerto for a Curtis violin student by the name of Iso Briselli. After Barber accepted, he began to compose the piece while staying in Switzerland. Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of the war, Barber was interrupted and was unable to finish his concerto by the given deadline. After the piece was fully completed, Iso Briselli was dissatisfied with the finished product and demanded the piece be rewritten. Instead, Barber showed the concerto to Albert Spalding, who was reputedly on the lookout for an American piece to add to his concerto repertoire. Spalding signed on instantly, and it was he who introduced the work, with Eugene Ormandy conducting The Philadelphia Orchestra.

### **Shostakovich: Symphony No. 1**

Dmitri Shostakovich wrote this piece as his graduation piece at the Petrograd Conservatory during the years of 1924 and 1925 and had completed it at the age of 19. Because of the traditionalist mindset of the Conservatory, Shostakovich did not discover the music of Igor Stravinsky until his late teens. The effect of hearing this music was instant and radical. Along with Stravinsky, Symphony No. 1 had other influences including Schoenberg, Alban Berg, Tchaikovsky, Mahler, and even Charlie Chaplin.

### **Shostakovich: Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 99 (Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, violin)**

Because of the delay between composition and performance, this piece was originally listed as Opus 77. Due to uncertainty of the political climate, Shostakovich shelved the concerto until after Stalin's demise. The piece came at a time when the Russian composer had been riding a roller coaster of triumph and condemnation due to the Soviet authorities. Throughout the piece, you can hear emotions of depression, separation, oppression, and at some points, anger.



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### [Albinoni: 12 Concertos, Op. 9](#)

12 Concerti a cinque is a collection of concertos by the Italian composer Tomaso Albinoni, published in 1722. The concertos were dedicated to Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria. It is possible, but not certain, that the concertos were written in the Elector's court during a 1722 visit there by Albinoni during performances of his theatrical compositions.

### [Mozart: Requiem](#)

This piece was Mozart's last composition and was unfinished at the time of his death. Four years before his Requiem, Mozart wrote to his father saying:

"As death is the true goal of our existence, I have formed during the last few years such close relationships with his best and truest friend of mankind that death's image is not only no longer terrifying to me, but is indeed very soothing and consoling."

Mozart believed that he had been poisoned with a very slow-moving poison, and therefore sensing his end. He decided to compose his own Requiem—a tribute by Mozart himself, his final confession.

### [Xenakis: Pithoprakta \(with graphical score\)](#)

The word Pithoprakta translates to "actions through probability". The piece is based on the statistical mechanics of gases, Gauss's law, or Brownian motion. Each instrument is conceived as a molecule obeying the Maxwell-Boltzmann distribution law, with Gaussian distribution of temperature fluctuation. The theory states "the temperature of a gas derives from the independent movement of its molecules." Xenakis drew an analogy between the movement of a gas molecule through space and that of a string instrument through its pitch range.

\*\*\*To access the full Spotify playlist for week #22, click [here!](#)\*\*\*