



## Legato in Times of Staccato

### Playlist #24 - Wednesday, September 16th, 2020

Curated by Music Director, Fouad Fakhouri

#### [Tchaikovsky: Symphony #1](#)

Tchaikovsky graduated from a conservatory in St. Petersburg with the intention of pursuing law; however, he changed his mind, followed his passion for music and began teaching at an all girls' conservatory in Moscow, at the age of 26. In March of 1866, he embarked on his first major classical project: his First Symphony. He had composed about a half-dozen shorter orchestral works, with only a few performed, but felt ready to attempt something more ambitious. He gave the symphony the descriptive title "Winter Daydreams".

#### [MacDowell: Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 23 \(Movement I\)](#)

[I: Larghetto calmato \(cont.\)](#)

[II: Presto giocoso](#)

[III: Largo - Molto allegro](#)

Although MacDowell trained at the Paris Conservatory and the Frankfurt Academy, he was considered to be the most important American composer of his time. At the age of 17, his mother took him from New York to Paris for his musical education, and he remained in Europe for many years. He wrote his Second Piano Concerto in Wiesbaden, Germany between the years of 1884 and 1885, and dedicated it to the Venezuelan pianist, Teresa Carreno. On March 5, 1889, MacDowell performed his new concerto in Chickering Hall with the New York Philharmonic. The program of the concert also included the first American premier of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5.

#### [Julia Perry: Stabat Mater](#)

Julia Perry was an African American composer, born in Lexington, Kentucky in 1924. She studied voice, piano, and composition at the Westminster Choir College and later, studied in Florence, Italy. Her music is a combination of European classical and neo-classical with heavy influence of African American



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music, such as “Free at Last” and “I’m a Poor Li’l Orphan”. Perry’s Stabat Mater is one of her most notable works, completed in 1951. She wrote this piece for her mother, after the 13<sup>th</sup>-Century hymn to Mary, which portrays her suffering as Jesus Christ’s mother during his crucifixion. The title comes from the line “Stabat Mater dolorosa”, which means “the sorrowful mother was standing”. This piece shows expressions of grief, sorrow, and pain.

### Nielsen: "Symphony No. 3"

Carl Nielsen was a Danish composer, conductor, and violinist. Nielsen wrote his “Sinfonia Espansiva” between 1910 and 1911 after his tenure as bandmaster at the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen. In his own words, Nielsen spoke about his Symphony No. 3:

“The first movement was meant as a gust of energy and life-affirmation blown out into the wide world... The second movement is the absolute opposite: the purest idyll, and when the human voices are heard at last, it is only to underscore the peaceful mood that one could imagine in Paradise before the Fall of our First Parents, Adam and Eve. The third movement is a thing that cannot really be described, because both evil and good are manifested...the Finale is perfectly straightforward: a hymn to work and the healthy activity of everyday life...expansive happiness about being able to participate in the work of life and the day and to see activity and ability manifested on all sides around us.”

### Copland: Appalachian Spring

Appalachian Spring tells the story of a young frontier couple on their wedding day. Created as the war in Europe was drawing to an end, the ballet captured the imagination of Americans who were beginning to believe in a more prosperous future, a future in which men and women would be united again.

### Delius: Piano Concerto in C minor

Frederick Delius’s Piano Concerto in C minor is a work with a long and complex history of revisions and disputes. It was originally conceived as a one-movement Fantasy for Orchestra and Pianoforte (1897), but never performed in this version. The first performance was of a revised version in three movements, and took place in Elberfeld, Germany. The piece underwent repeated revisions that resulted in the existence of three major versions which significantly differ from one another.



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### Beethoven: Symphony No. 6 "Pastoral"

Beethoven loved nature, and before his deafness became too severe, he often took long walks in the woods, noting the sites and sounds of the countryside. The Pastoral Symphony was meant to capture both the beauty of nature and Beethoven's delight in being outdoors.

### Stravinsky: Concerto in D "Basle" for String Orchestra

In 1946, Stravinsky was commissioned to compose a work to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Basel Chamber Orchestra in Switzerland. The Basle Concerto is representative of Stravinsky's late neoclassical style and includes various stylistic and formal aspects of Classical form. The work models the concerto grosso of the Baroque era as the music is passed between a small group of soloist and the full orchestra. The structure of the piece follows the style of an 18th-century opera sinfonia with three contrasting movements, fast-slow-fast.

### Stravinsky: Octet for Wind Instruments

Composed in 1923, the Octet for Wind Instruments marked the beginning of Stravinsky's newly adopted neoclassical style. Coming after his Rite of Spring, an intensely rhythmic and primitivist piece that caused much controversy, audiences were at first confused by this unexpected change in style. The first movement of the Octet is in sonata form and includes a slow introduction. The second movement is a theme and variations, and the third movement is in classic rondo form. Stravinsky's innovations come from his use of the octatonic scale and unusual choice in instrumentation. The piece is scored for 1 flute, 1 clarinet, 2 bassoons, 2 trumpets, and 2 trombones.

### Ponchielli: Gioconda "Dance of the Hours"

Amilcare Ponichelli was an influential composer of Italian grand opera in the mid- to late-1800s. His most famous opera, La Gioconda contains the popular ballet scene, "Dance of the Hours," which is often performed as a stand-alone orchestral work. The piece is structured in five parts, each representing a portion of the day. After a brief introduction, dawn arrives with shimmering harp arpeggios. Playful woodwinds lead the way to the famous daytime melody. A modulation and a new staccato theme in the



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woodwinds signal the setting of the sun and transition to evening. A legato theme in the cellos usher in the night, and a major-key sunrise in the strings signals the return of morning.

### [Saint-Saëns: Samson et Dalila, Op. 47 R. 288 / Act 3 "Bacchanale"](#)

Saint-Saëns' operatic masterpiece Samson et Dalila was first staged in 1877. Adhering to the original biblical story, the Hebraic leader Samson succumbs to Philistine Dalila's false charms and she takes away his strength by cutting off his hair. In Act III, as Samson is imprisoned in the temple of Dagon, a crowd of Philistines gather to relish in his humiliation and watch as priests perform the exotic and sensuous Danse Bacchanale. A solo oboe begins the sequence with a mysterious and enchanting melody, evocative of a snake charmer. The music soon becomes frenzied with loud brass, whirling winds, and strong percussive elements. In the middle, the Bacchanale becomes very tender and passionate, but the frenzy ultimately returns to bring the dance to a thrilling conclusion.

### [Respighi: Roman Festivals](#)

Respighi's Roman Festivals was composed for a massive orchestra that included expanded winds, piano four-hands, celesta, organ, mandolin, and an abundance of unusual percussion instruments. The work consists of four movements, each one depicting a specific scene from a celebrated time in Rome's history. In the preface to the score, Respighi offered a vivid description of the scene depicted in each of the four movements. The Games at the Circus Maximus depicts the frenzy of chariot-racing at the Coliseum; The Jubilee depicts a pilgrimage to Rome and the excitement of seeing the city on the horizon; The October Festival depicts a traditional grape harvest in the Roman countryside; and The Epiphany depicts a decorated street the evening before the traditional Epiphany celebration.

**\*\*\*To access the full Spotify playlist for week #24, click [here!](#)\*\*\***