2003-2004 SEASON

A New Home

A New Season

A New Beginning

DAYTON PHILHARMONIC

NEAL GITTLEMAN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Neal's Notes

Revolution Number Nine

(Portions of this article appeared, in a different form, in the 2003-2004 *Classical Connections* Listener's Guide.)

The *Ninth* is back! Beethoven's monumental symphony was last played by the DPO at the Fraze Pavilion in July 1999. This May it closes our classical season and makes its Schuster Center debut. The *Ninth* has also lurked behind the scenes in three of our Classical Connections concerts this season.

So what is it with this symphony? What's the big deal?

In the introduction to his fascinating book *Beethoven's Ninth, a Political History* the Argentinean social scientist Esteban Buch calls the *Ninth* "a kind of aural fetish in the Western world." He goes on, "Consider this: The romantic composers made it a symbol of their art. Bakunin dreamed of destroying the bourgeois world, of wiping out everything but the *Ode to Joy*. German nationalists admired the music's heroic power, and nineteenth-century French republicans found in it an expression of 1789's three-word motto, *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. The communists hear in it the gospel of a classless world, Catholics hear the Gospel itself, and democrats hear it as the voice of democracy. Hitler celebrated his birthdays with the *Ode to Joy* and yet the same music was used to oppose him, even in his concentration camps. The *Ode to Joy* resounds periodically at the Olympic Games and it was also heard not long ago in Sarajevo. It was the anthem of the racist Republic of Rhodesia, and it is today the anthem of the European Union."

Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* is, indeed, one of a few works — the Bible, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, Einstein's theory of relativity, the Wright Flyer — that changed everything that followed, crossing over esthetic, political and philosophical barriers. One could form a Beethoven's *Ninth* "Theory of Everything" to demonstrate its pervasive influence on world culture. But not here. I'm interested in exploring the *Ninth*'s purely musical significance.

In 1824, when Beethoven composed what turned out to be his last symphony, the musical world had a clear and limited concept of the well-formed symphony: a four- (or occasionally three) movement, purely orchestral piece lasting between 15 and 35 minutes. The words "purely orchestral" had two particular connotations: (1) no soloists, singers or choirs and (2) no theatrical or programmatic elements.

Although he had pushed the envelope before — with his 1803 *Eroica* Symphony (50 minutes long, a funeral march as the second movement and a back-story about Napoleon) and his 1815 *Pastorale* Symphony (45 minutes long, five movements and titles evoking scenes from country life) — Beethoven's symphonies were still "in the ballpark" of contemporary norms and expectations. Symphony no. 9 was to be no different.

By the time Beethoven was ready to begin work on the *Ninth*'s finale, he already had quite a piece on his hands: a stormy, powerful opening movement; a driving scherzo patterned after the third movement of his Symphony no. 7 and a glorious slow movement using the same theme-with-variations scheme he had used for the slow movements of his second, fourth, fifth and sixth symphonies. The *Ninth* was long — 40-plus minutes for the first three movements — and it was great

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music, but it wasn't meant to rock the musical boat.

Then all hell broke loose, and the boat did, indeed, rock!

Try to imagine the scene on the night of May 7, 1824.

The finale began with a raw, dissonant outburst from the orchestra, breaking the peaceful mood of the slow movement. Then the cellos and basses played something even more strange: an instrumental recitative. (Recitative was a traditional technique from world of opera — music imitating the rhythms and shapes of speech.) But recitatives were sung, not played by cellos and basses. Never mind. It's Beethoven. After the first phrase of the recitative ended things got even stranger. There was a brief flashback to the opening figure of the first movement. Then a second phrase of recitative. Then a hint of the scherzo. A third phrase of recitative. A bit of the third movement's melody. Then more recitative, followed by something completely different: a new melody that modern audiences recognize as a "pre-flashback" to the "Ode to Joy" tune. But Beethoven's listeners didn't know the tune, so they must have figured the composer wasn't merely deaf, but insane, too. The cellos and basses resumed, no longer in recitative style, but playing a long flowing melody (yeah, that one). Three instrumental variations on the melody followed, interrupted by a reprise of the dissonant music that had opened the movement.

Then came classical music's "I don't think we're in Kansas anymore!" moment: The recitative melody returned, this time with a baritone soloist singing words that Beethoven wrote specifically to empathize with his dazed and confused listeners : "O friends, not these tones! Instead, let us take up something more agreeable and joyful." Then, and only then, with the musical and dramatic groundwork having been laid, Beethoven began his setting of Schiller's *An die Freude*. Twenty minutes later, the *Ninth Symphony* came to a triumphant conclusion. Orchestral music would never be the same again.

When the *Ninth*'s premiere ended the audience went wild and Beethoven was acclaimed as a hero. But he had broken many of the cardinal rules of symphonic composition. He had smashed the barrier between choral/vocal music and symphonic music. He had used a symphony to make a dramatic — even a political — statement. He had broken the sixty-minute barrier. He had used percussion instruments (the cymbals, triangle and bass drum associated at that time with "Turkish music".) This was so off-the-wall that he might as well have added a stand-up comic, a dog act, a few card tricks and an Elvis impersonator! Yet the sum of all these incongruities turned out to be the greatest stylistic leap in the history of Western Music. The *Ninth* instantly became the most influential symphony in history.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the big deal!

Thursday
May 6
2004
8 PM
Schuster Center

Special Event

Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra

Neal Gittleman, Music Director

Presented by NCR

Itzhak Perlman, violin

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) — *Fidelio* Overture, Opus 72

Ludwig van Beethoven — Symphony No. 2 in D major, Opus 36
- Adagio molto — Allegro con brio
- Larghetto
- Scherzo: Allegro
- Allegro molto

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven — Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 61
- Allegro ma non troppo
- Larghetto
- Rondo: Allegro

Itzhak Perlman, violin

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Sunday, September 19, 2004, at 7:00 pm

Itzhak Perlman

A Biography

Undeniably the reigning virtuoso of the violin, Itzhak Perlman enjoys superstar status rarely afforded a classical musician. Beloved for his charm and humanity as well as his talent, he has come to be recognized by audiences all over the world who respond not only to his flawless technique, but to the irrepressible joy of making music which he communicates.

Born in Israel in 1945, Perlman completed his initial training at the Academy of Music in Tel Aviv. After graduation he came to New York and was soon propelled into the international arena with an appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1958. Following his studies at the Juilliard School under Ivan Galamian and Dorothy DeLay, Perlman won the prestigious Leventritt Competition in 1964, which led to a burgeoning worldwide career.

Since then, Itzhak Perlman has appeared with every major orchestra and in recitals and festivals throughout the world. In November of 1987 he joined the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra for history-making concerts in Warsaw and Budapest, representing the first performances by this orchestra and soloist in Eastern bloc countries. He again made history as he joined the Israel Philharmonic for its first visit to the Soviet Union in April/May of 1990 and was cheered by audiences in Moscow and Leningrad who thronged to hear his recital and orchestral performances. In December of 1994 he joined the Israel Philharmonic for their first visits to China and India.

In December 1990, Perlman visited Russia for the second time to participate in a gala performance in Leningrad celebrating the 150th anniversary of Tchaikovsky's birth. This concert, which also featured Yo-Yo Ma, Jessye Norman and Yuri Temirkanov conducting the Leningrad Philharmonic, was televised live in Europe and later broadcast throughout the world. In December 1993, Perlman visited the city of Prague in the Czech Republic to perform in a Dvořák gala concert with Yo-Yo Ma, Frederica von Stade, Rudolf Firkusny and the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Seiji Ozawa. Th[illegible] concert was also televised live with a late[illegible] worldwide broadcast and was released on CD and home video in 1994.

Itzhak Perlman has been honored with four Emmy Awards, most recently for the PBS documentary *Fiddling for the Future*, a film about the Perlman Summer Music Program and his work as a teacher and conductor in that program. His previous Emmy Award recognized his dedication to Klezmer music, as featured in the PBS television special *In the Fiddler's House*.

Perlman's recordings regularly appear on the best-seller charts and have won fifteen Grammy Awards. As a Sony Classical artist, he has recorded a wide repertoire, collaborating with such artists as Isaac Stern, guitarist John Williams, Daniel Barenboim, Zubin Mehta, Seiji Ozawa and the Juilliard String Quartet.

During the past two years Perlman has also appeared on the conductor's podium and through this medium he is further delighting his audiences. He has appeare[illegible] as conductor/soloist with the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the

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Ludwig van Beethoven

Program Notes by Dr. Richard Benedum

Overture to *Fidelio*

Beethoven was baptized on December 17, 1770, in Bonn; he was probably born the day before. He died on March 26, 1827 in Vienna. The final two-act version of *Fidelio*, written between 1803 and 1805 and dedicated to Archduke Rudolph, was first performed in Vienna at the Kärtnertor Theater on May 23, 1814; the *Fidelio* Overture was first used at the second performance on May 26. The Overture was most recently performed by the Dayton Philharmonic ~rchestra on Monday and Tuesday, ~ptember 11 & 12, 1990 under the direction of Isaiah Jackson.

No more than a handful of exceptions over the last two or three centuries prove - - rather than disprove - - the belief that good composers make bad music critics, especially of their own music. There seems to be an inverse relationship between writing music and writing *about* it. To a certain extent, this also explains why composers are not generally given to showing favoritism among their own works. (There is another practical side, too. What composer could hope for performances of a piece to which he had assigned a low value!)

Not even Beethoven, who routinely flaunted convention, was about to sell any of his own music short. What prompted him, then, if not a tacit admission of dissatisfaction, to write four separate overtures for his single opera, *Fidelio*? The presumably original overture, *Leonore* No. ~ was written for the original three-act version of *Fidelio*, which was withdrawn after only three performances (the first was on November 20, 1805). The work's failure was due in part to a poor libretto and the occupation of Vienna by Napoleon's army. His next effort, *Leonore* No. 3, was written for an unsuccessful two-act revision of the opera, now called *Leonore*; of this version, there were only two performances, the first on March 29, 1806. This Overture, published in 1810, has always been a concert-hall favorite. There is controversy concerning *Leonore* No. 1 – was it written before or after Beethoven's other two efforts, and for what occasion? A likely though by no means certain explanation is that it was written later than the other two, for a projected production in Prague, because Beethoven thought *Leonore* No. 3 would be too hard for the orchestra there.

The usual reason given for the fourth overture, *Fidelio*, is that the opera's 1814 revision began in a different key, A major, and thus the new overture is in E major, the key of the dominant. Beethoven must have suspected, as well, that the vastness of *Leonore* No. 3 detracted from the opening scene, (rather amusingly trivial) in which Leonore disguised (as Fidelio) is the object of the jailer's daughter's flirtations. In any case, compared to *Leonore* No. 3, Beethoven's *Fidelio* Overture is undercomposed. (It is customary to play *Leonore* No. 3 before Act II, Scene II, in performances today, a custom which stems from Gustav Mahler's legendary performances at Vienna's State Opera.)

Instrumentation:

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets
2 Bassoons
4 French Horns
2 Trumpets
2 Trombones
Timpani
Strings

Ludwig Van Beethoven

Symphony No. 2 in D major

Program Notes by Dr. Richard Benedum

Instrumentation:

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets
2 Bassoons
2 French Horns
2 Trumpets
Timpani
Strings

Beethoven's Second Symphony, Opus 36, was begun in 1801 but composed chiefly during the summer and early fall of 1802 and premiered on April 5, 1803, in Vienna's Theater an der Wien – also the site of the premiere of *Fidelio*. It is dedicated to one of Beethoven's loyal supporters, Prince Karl von Lichnowsky, and was published in 1804. The most recent performances of the Symphony No. 2 by the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra were on Wednesday and Thursday September 17 & 18, 1997 under the direction of Neal Gittleman.

That the outward circumstances of a composer's life are reflected in his/her music is a somewhat Romantic notion, as often false as true. Beethoven's Second Symphony is a case in point.

The music is bold, uplifting, optimistic, and without a hint of darkness. And yet when Beethoven wrote the Symphony, during 1801-1802, his deafness was worsening. Around 1800 he had begun to be troubled by a "roaring in the ears," which threatened to end his career as Vienna's foremost piano virtuoso and a promising composer. He tried all sorts of "cures"; none helped. Then came the crushing news that Countess Guilietta Guicciardi, whom he loved and to whom he had proposed, had married another. And so during the summer of 1802, as was his custom, he left central Vienna for the small outlying town of Heiligenstadt, and gave expression to the depths of his grief in a letter addressed to his brothers Karl and Johann, intended for them only after his death and now known as the "Heiligenstadt Testament":

> Oh you men who think or say that I am malevolent, stubborn or misanthropic, how greatly do you wrong me. You do not know the secret cause which makes me seem that way to you. From childhood on my heart and soul have been full of the tender feeling of goodwill, and I was ever inclined to accomplish great things. But, think that for 6 years now I have been hopelessly afflicted, made worse by senseless physicians, from year to year deceived with hopes of improvement, finally compelled to face the prospect of *a lasting malady* . . . Though born with a fiery, active temperament . . . I was soon compelled to withdraw myself, to live life alone . . . Ah, how could I possibly admit an infirmity in the *one sense* which ought to be more perfect in me than in others . . . My misfortune is doubly painful to me because I am bound to be misunderstood . . . But what a humiliation for me when someone standing next to me heard a flute in the distance and *I heard nothing*, or someone heard a *shepherd singing* and again I heard nothing. Such incidents drove me almost to despair, a little more of that and I would have ended my life — it was only *my art* that held me back . . .

And when he returned to Vienna in the autumn, after suffering "moments when I shall be the most miserable of God's creatures," he carried with him the manuscript of the Second Symphony.

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Ludwig van Beethoven

Program Notes by Dr. Richard Benedum

Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 61

Beethoven's violin concerto was completed in 1806 (various accounts claim it was finished anywhere from two days before, to even after, the final rehearsal!), and premiered on December 23 of that year by Franz Clement. The most recent performances by the Dayton Philharmonic were on Wednesday and Thursday September 18 & 19, 1996 under the direction of Neal Gittleman, Cho-Liang Lin violinist.

The history of Beethoven's Violin Concerto is inextricably bound up with Franz Clement (b. 1780), a virtuoso violinist. Clement was a child prodigy blessed with, among other gifts, an amazing musical memory. His relationship with Beethoven dates from the time when, as *primo violino* (concertmaster) Clement played in the first unsuccessful performances of *Fidelio* in 1805, and at a session held at the palace of Beethoven's patron Prince Lichnowsky, Clement played the leading voices of the entire opera from memory.

Clement was the conductor of an amateur orchestra and he had programmed Beethoven's first two symphonies, and had given the "Eroica" a reading as well. He then programmed the Third Symphony for public performance and invited Beethoven to conduct. Clement decided to give a benefit concert in December 1806, and asked Beethoven to contribute a violin concerto. The composer readily agreed, for Clement was one of the few musicians in Vienna he respected — and from whom he would accept criticism. The numerous changes in the manuscript bear witness to their frequent editorial sessions.

Clement was, to be sure, an eminent virtuoso, but was also more than a bit of a musical clown, frequently given to demonstrate his virtuosity (or shenanigans, depending upon one's point of view) by, for example, playing the violin while holding it upside down. Beethoven's first dedication of the piece shows that he was aware of Clement's ways; the autograph copy reads: "*Concerto par Clemenza pour Clement primo violino e direttore al theatro de Wien. Dal L. v. Bthvn. 1806.*" Beethoven was making a pun, asking a little clemency from Clement for his new composition.

It was not uncommon in Beethoven's time for only individual movements of pieces to be played, or for multi-movement works to have other music interspersed between movements. Thus after Clement premiered the first movement of Beethoven's new Concerto, he played a fantasia of his own, written entirely for one string of the violin, holding the instrument backwards! Then came intermission. Beethoven's second and third movements followed, and must have seemed dull by comparison; the music was not embellished by any theatrics.

The audience reaction was lukewarm. One critic, while praising Clement's performance, wrote of the concerto, "The musical argument is often quite loose, and the unending repetition of certain rather ordinary passages might easily become wearisome. And another exhorted Beethoven to return to the style of his first two symphonies and other earlier works: "it is to be feared, however, that if

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Instrumentation:

1 Flute
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets
2 Bassoons
2 French Horns
2 Trumpets
Timpani
Strings

Beethoven's Violin Concerto continued from page 37.

Beethoven continues upon this path he and the public will fare badly."

Beethoven was understandably discouraged, and undertook to convert the piece into a piano concerto, a transformation which did not meet with success. Finally in 1809 the work was published, with a new dedication to Stephan von Bruening, a boyhood friend (the piano version had been published in 1808 and was dedicated to Bruening's wife, Julie). The work received a few performances in the following years, but it remained rather neglected until a revival by Henri Vieuxtemps (1834). Finally, the then thirteen-year-old Joseph Joachim (1844) brought the work into the standard repertoire.

Beethoven begins with four solo taps of the kettledrum which, according to John N. Burk, become "the basic pattern of the entire movement. Its very commonness, squarely measuring off the bar, lends to its serviceability, makes its omnipresence natural, and gives the whole context a downright on-the-beat character."

The second movement, a theme and variations, shows another Beethoven characteristic–tenderness without sentimentality. The finale opens with a straight-forward rondo tune for the solo instrument. Beethoven instructs the soloist to play this melody solely on the G string, the lowest string on the violin, despite the tune's frequent rise into the registers of the A and D strings. Besides increasing the movement difficulties, this rubric produces a special timbre which lends this folk-like tune its special character.