



KALAMAZOO  
SYMPHONY  
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JULIAN KUERTI  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

## BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 3, “Eroica”

Saturday, November 23, 2019 | 8 p.m. | Chenery Auditorium

Julian Kuerti, Conductor

Jun-Ching Lin, Violin

Igor Cetkovic, Cello

— *Wiser Financial Prelude* | 7 p.m. —

**KNUSSEN**  
1952 – 2018

*Music for a Puppet Court*

Puzzle I (“Iste tenor ascendit”)

Toyshop Music (after “Tris”)

Antiphon (after “Iste tenor ascendit”)

Intrada and Puzzle II (“Tris”)

**BRAHMS**  
1833 – 1897

Concerto for Violin and Cello in A minor, Op. 102

“Double Concerto”

*Allegro*

*Andante*

*Vivace non troppo*

*Jun-Ching Lin, violin*

*Igor Cetkovic, cello*

— *Intermission* —

**BEETHOVEN**  
1770 – 1827

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55 “Eroica”

*Allegro con brio*

*Marcia funebre: Adagio assai*

*Scherzo: Allegro vivace*

*Finale: Allegro molto*

— *AfterWORDS discussion with conductor and guests* —



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## OLIVER KNUSSEN

### *Music for a Puppet Court*

**Born:** June 12, 1952, in Glasgow, Scotland

**Died:** July 8, 2018, in Snape, Suffolk, England

**Composed:** 1972; completed in 1983 with a recomposition and expansion of the original work

**World Premiere:** Commissioned by the Greater London Council for the 1983 South Bank Summer Music Festival. Simon Rattle led the London Sinfonietta in the premiere, which took place at Queen Elizabeth Hall in August 1983.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes (1st doubling piccolo and alto flute, 2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, vibraphone, chimes, handbells, triangle, anvil, suspended cymbal, maracas, tamtam, whip, ratchet, guiro, alarm clock, celeste, harp, guitar, and strings

*Duration: About 10 minutes*

Handbells provided by Malmark, Bellcraftsmen

Janet Van Valey and Kalamazoo Ringers

### **An Ancient Background**

*Music for a Puppet Court* originated in music written for a real royal court. In a manuscript compiled for Henry VIII of England and preserved at the British Museum, one may find two enigmatic pieces by a composer identified there as “fflude,” or “ffluyd,” but whose real name was John Lloyd, or Floyd (1475-1523). These pieces (and a few others in the manuscript that are by different composers) are puzzle canons, which means that you can’t just read them off the page without first figuring out the extremely cryptic verbal instructions that accompany them. Lloyd’s puzzles were so hard that they went unresolved until 1951, when a musicologist and literary scholar named John E. Stevens finally cracked the code. The first puzzle has a long, but by no means clear, caption that begins with the words “Iste tenor ascendit...,” Latin for “That tenor ascends.” The second, much more laconic, says simply, “Tris,” which means “thrice” in Greek. Following these clues with more than a little imagination, Stevens finally was able to decipher the canons.

### **The Modern Composition**

Oliver Knussen, the pre-eminent composer and conductor who passed away last year, first got his hands on these puzzle canons as a young man in 1972. He initially arranged them for a small ensemble and, the following year, composed two original works based on the same motifs. A decade

later, he returned to the canons once again and, commissioned by the Greater London Council for the 1983 South Bank Summer Music Festival, wrote *Music for a Puppet Court*.

In this work, Knussen divided his ensemble into two separate groups. Prominent in Orchestra 1 (on the left) are a celeste, a guitar, and two flutes; Orchestra 2 (on the right) features a harp and two clarinets.

The orchestrations of the original puzzle canons are placed at the beginning and at the end of the four-movement work, and in between are the two original variations. But the order of the movements is not what one might expect: the first puzzle is followed by a playful variation on the as-yet-unheard second puzzle (“Toyshop Music”), then a variation on the first puzzle and finally the second puzzle in its original form. With the movements placed in this order, the emphasis is not on comparing the originals and the spinoffs directly; rather, Knussen created an arch-like form, proceeding from Renaissance sounds to modern ones and back again.



## JOHANNES BRAHMS

### *Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra in A minor, Op. 102*

Born: May 7, 1833,  
in Hamburg, Germany

Died: April 3, 1897,  
in Vienna, Austria

Composed: Summer of 1887

**World Premiere:** October 18, 1887, in the Gürzenich in Köln, Germany, with Joseph Joachim on violin solo and Robert Hausmann on cello

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings

**Duration:** About 32 minutes

#### What Led to the Composition

Brahms's decision to write a concerto for violin, cello and orchestra was motivated by several factors. The external circumstances are well known: the composer intended the concerto as a gesture of reconciliation with his old friend, the great violinist Joseph Joachim, from whom he had been estranged for a number of years. Joachim had filed a divorce suit against his wife, the singer Amalie Weiss, alleging that she was having an affair with the music publisher Fritz Simrock. Brahms, who knew that Amalie was innocent, wrote a letter to that effect which helped to decide the case in her favor. After this incident, Brahms and Joachim did not speak to each other for years. The violinist, however, continued to perform Brahms's music throughout this period.

Anxious to restore the old friendship, Brahms wrote to Joachim about the new concerto, asking him only to write the two words "I decline" on a postcard if he did not want to accept the peace offering. Fortunately, Joachim knew better than to turn down a Johannes Brahms. He and his colleague, cellist Robert Hausmann, with whom he had founded the celebrated Joachim Quartet, arranged to meet with the composer in Baden-Baden and read through the work both with piano and with the spa orchestra. This was followed by several concert performances, resulting in a certain rapprochement between Brahms and Joachim, although their former closeness never returned.

#### About the Instrumentation

The story of the Brahms-Joachim friendship, however, is only one of the factors in the genesis of the "Double Concerto." It doesn't answer the question as to why Brahms used

the particular combination of violin and cello with orchestra. No doubt, it would have been hard even for Brahms to write another violin concerto after his D-major masterpiece from 1877. Hausmann had been urging him to write a cello concerto, but Brahms for some reason did not take to the idea. But both cello and violin had been very much on his mind around 1886: the works immediately preceding the "Double Concerto" (Op. 102) are sonatas for each instrument (Op. 99 for cello, Op. 100 for violin), and a trio (Op. 101), in which both instruments are joined by the piano.

Also, he might have been interested in writing a work for an unusual grouping of performers. The "Double Concerto" as an idea had its ancestors in the *Symphonies concertantes* of the Classical era, the most famous example being Mozart's work for violin and viola (K. 364). But concertos for multiple instruments went out of fashion after the first decade of the 19th century. Beethoven's Triple Concerto of 1803-04, whose piano part Brahms had performed, stood at the end of a line; 80 years later, the genre had to be practically reinvented. And that was precisely what Brahms challenged himself to do, choosing the violin-cello duo which never had been combined with the orchestra before. (At least, Brahms was unaware of any precedents, as have been all his biographers.)

#### The Composition

Brahms's letters from the time of the "Double Concerto" are full of the self-deprecating comments the composer usually made concerning his new works. He described the concerto variously as "a strange notion," "my latest folly," and even an "idiocy." He teased his friend and publisher, Simrock: "I warn you not to ruin yourself! Offer me a small sum!"

These remarks seem to have been some kind of an emotional insurance policy against a possible unfavorable reception of the work—and, in the case of the "Double Concerto," Brahms's fears were not entirely unfounded. Despite the efforts of Joachim and Hausmann, the first performance was a *succès d'estime* at best. Listeners looking for the relentless energy and the strong unity that characterized the symphonies and the earlier concertos may have been somewhat disappointed. At first hearing, the "Double Concerto" seems less focused, with more lyrical digressions and formal irregularities than what is found in earlier works. These, however, can be explained by the unusual medium, and at second hearing, they turn out to be particular attractions rather than weaknesses. Brahms needed to give both solo instruments enough elbowroom. Each had to receive its virtuoso passages and its great melodic moments; in addition, they had to be featured both individually and as a duo pitted against the orchestra. The intrinsic beauty of the work lies precisely in this structural looseness, which allows for plenty of lyrical expression and introspection.

After four measures of orchestral introduction, the cello begins what Brahms called a "recitative in strict tempo." This seems to be a contradiction in terms, whose explanation is probably that Brahms notated the intended rhythmic freedom in precise note values. The constant alternations between groups of two notes and groups of three, if played as written, do give the impression of a free performance.

CONTINUED >>

At least one commentator has heard the cello's dialog with the violin that soon enters as a conversation between Brahms (cello) and Joachim (violin). The personal, lyrical tone of the two solo instruments contrasts with the stronger, more angular music of the orchestra. The contrast can be felt even (or especially) when variants of the same melodic idea are being played. The orchestra strikes a softer note when, in the recapitulation, the tonality changes from A minor to A major; the end of the movement, however, reverts to the dramatic A minor of the beginning.

The second-movement, *Andante* (D major) begins with a four-note introductory motif that becomes the opening of the principal melody, introduced by the two soloists in parallel octaves. This theme is answered by a second idea in a new key (F major), played by the woodwind and embellished by the soloists. An abridged recapitulation of both ideas rounds off this poetic movement.

The third-movement, *Vivace non troppo*, is in rondo form; that is, it consists of a main theme alternating with episodes. The main melody is a sprightly dance tune in Brahms's best Gypsy vein. It is played in turn by the cello, the violin, and the full orchestra. The first episode is a legato melody in C major; the second, a very Brahmsian rhythmic idea that keeps changing keys; in both, the soloists use double-stops (two notes played simultaneously). As in most late Classical and Romantic rondos, the first episode later returns a second time, making the form, properly speaking, a sonata-rondo. The key of this return, A major, is retained to the end, brightening the mood during a lyrical, slower-moving final episode and a brief, brilliant coda.

#### About the Author

Peter Laki, who wrote the composer notes, was born in Budapest, Hungary, where he studied musicology at the Franz Liszt Conservatory (currently University) of Music. After further studies in Paris, he moved to the United States, where he received his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. Among other positions, he has worked as Program Annotator and Lecturer for the Cleveland Orchestra, and has taught at Case Western Reserve University and Oberlin College. Since 2007, he has served as Visiting Associate Professor at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Laki is the editor of "Bartók and His World" (Princeton University Press, 1995). He has published numerous articles, mostly—though not exclusively—on Bartók and other Hungarian composers and presented papers at international conferences in the United States, Canada, Hungary, Germany, France, and Italy.

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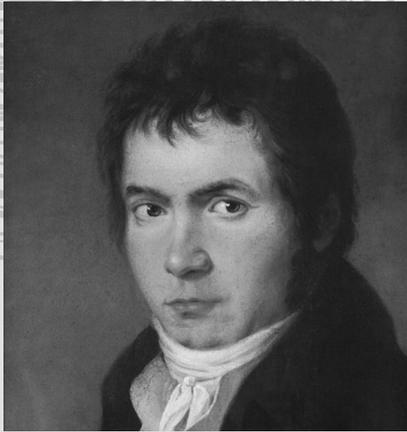
# After

# WORDS

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KSO Concertmaster Jun-Ching Lin,  
KSO Principal Cello Igor Cetkovic, and KSO musicians**

Meet us after the concert in the Reception Room,  
located in the main hallway



## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

### *Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55 “Eroica”*

**Born:** December 1770,  
in Bonn, Germany

**Died:** March 26, 1827,  
in Vienna, Austria

**Composed:** 1802-04

**World Premiere:** April 7, 1805, at the  
Theater an der Wien, in Vienna

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, 2 oboes,  
2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 3 horns, 2  
trumpets, timpani, and strings

**Duration:** About 47 minutes

#### **A Revolutionary Work**

Beethoven’s “Third Symphony” represents a quantum leap within the composer’s oeuvre as it does in the history of music in general. The sheer size of the work—almost twice the length of the average 18th-century symphony—was a novelty, to say nothing of what amounted to a true revolution in musical technique and, even more importantly, in musical expression.

Music had never before expressed the idea of struggle in such a striking way. Beethoven’s encroaching deafness is surely part of the reason why that idea took center stage in the composer’s thinking at the time, and it is fair to assume that his physical affliction was behind the spectacular change that Beethoven’s style underwent in what has come to be called his heroic period. Yet in the case of the “Third Symphony,” the personal crisis was compounded by the dramatic political events of the day, and in particular by Beethoven’s ambivalent relationship with the leading political figure of the era—Napoleon Bonaparte.

Beethoven always had sympathized with the French Revolution, which broke out when he was at the impressionable age of 19. Like many intellectuals of his time, he was fascinated by the reforms Napoleon introduced as First Consul of the Republic. At the same time, he despised tyranny in all its forms, and when Napoleon crowned himself Emperor, Beethoven saw that event as a betrayal of the revolution. He

had planned to dedicate his new symphony to Bonaparte. But, upon hearing the news, he flew into a wild rage, according to an eyewitness, and tore up the dedication, replacing it with an inscription that was more impersonal but also more universal: *Sinfonia Eroica, composta per festeggiare il Sovvenire di un grand Uomo*, or “Heroic Symphony, composed to celebrate the memory of a great man.”

#### **The Composition**

The “Third Symphony” proceeds from intense drama to the final victory. The opening *Allegro con brio* is Beethoven’s longest symphony movement, aside from the finale of the Ninth. In it, some of the basic procedures of Classical sonata form (presentation and transformation of themes; traversal of various keys before a return to the initial tonality) are carried to a point where they take on an entirely new meaning: they become elements of a drama of unprecedented intensity. The themes are shorter than in most earlier symphonies and more open-ended, lending themselves particularly well to modifications of various sorts. It is by transforming, dismembering and reintegrating his motifs that Beethoven expresses the idea of struggle that is so unmistakably present throughout this movement.

The second movement bears the title *Marcia funebre* (“Funeral March”). The music begins softly and rises to a powerful, dramatic climax. After some extensive

contrapuntal development in the middle of the movement, the main theme’s final return is interrupted by rests after every three or four notes, as if the violins were so overcome by grief that they could barely play the melody.

In the third and fourth movements, Beethoven managed to ease the feeling of tragedy without letting the tension subside. The third-movement, *Scherzo*, begins with two notes repeated in an undertone that evolve into a theme only gradually. In the somewhat more relaxed trio, the three horns take center stage.

The main theme of the last movement appears in no fewer than four of Beethoven’s compositions. We first hear it in a simple contra-dance for orchestra, then in the last movement of the ballet, *The Creatures of Prometheus* (both in 1800-01), followed by the “Variations for Piano, Op. 35” (1802), and lastly, in the “Third Symphony.” The elaborate set of variations in the “Eroica” finale are integrated into a single, continuous musical form. There is a minor-key variation with a distinct Hungarian flavor, and another one that turns the contra-dance theme into a slow aria. An enormous crescendo leads to the short *Presto* section that ends the symphony.

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