

TOWARDS RESOLUTION

Friday, June 18, 2021 at 11:15 am
Saturday, June 19, 2021 at 7:30 pm

ALLEN-BRADLEY HALL
Ken-David Masur, conductor



DANIEL KIDANE

Towards Resolution

HENRY PURCELL

Fantasia Upon One Note, in F major, Z. 745

ERKKI SALMENHAARA

Canzonetta for String Orchestra

(First three pieces performed without pause)

COLERIDGE-TAYLOR PERKINSON

Generations: Sinfonietta No. 2 for Strings

I. Misterioso: Allegro

II. Alla sarabande

III. Alla Burletta

IV. Allegro vivace

INTERMISSION

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Opus 92

I. Poco sostenuto–Vivace

II. Allegretto

III. Presto

IV. Allegro con brio

The Reimagined Season is sponsored by the **United Performing Arts Fund**.
The Classics Series is sponsored by **Rockwell Automation**.

"Towards Resolution" by Daniel Kidane appears by arrangement with Rayfield Allied.

TOWARDS RESOLUTION

Program Notes by J. Mark Baker

As we observe Juneteenth (June 19) and continue to address the racial tensions and inequities that roil our nation, the MSO carries on the musical conversation via two works by composers of color: Daniel Kidane and Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson. Music by – and inspired by – Purcell and Beethoven’s “apotheosis of the dance” round out the concert.

Daniel Kidane

Born 1986; England

Towards Resolution

Composed: 2009

First performance: 2009; Manchester, England

Instrumentation: strings



The British composer Daniel Kidane, the son of a Russian mother and an Eritrean father, was raised in London. His musical education began at the age eight, when he started playing the violin. He first received composition lessons at the Royal College of Music Junior Department and then went on to study privately in St. Petersburg, taking lessons in composition with Sergey Slonimsky. Subsequently, he attended Manchester’s Royal Northern College of Music and the Guildhall School in London. His music – variously described as “quietly impressive,” “tautly constructed,” and “vibrantly imagined” – has been widely performed, both in the U.K. and abroad.

Towards Resolution was commissioned by the Manchester Camerata, who gave its first performance. Of the work, Kidane has written:

Towards Resolution was inspired by Purcell’s first three-part Fantasia. The stimulus for my piece was his opening descending gesture, heard at the very beginning of his work. I set out to generate a stasis in my piece – creating a feeling of timelessness and gradually building towards a resolution that clarifies all that came before. As the piece slowly progresses, morphing in and out of harmony, the timbre becomes more and more agitated, signaled by the tremolos and ever-rising glissandi. Eventually, the timbral turbulence reaches a plateau from which the resolution seamlessly surfaces.

Henry Purcell

Born 1658/9; London, England

Died 21 November 1695; London, England

Fantasia Upon One Note, in F major, Z. 745

Composed: c1680

First performance: Unknown

Instrumentation: string quintet



Henry Purcell was one of the greatest composers of the Baroque era and one of the greatest English composers of all time. Versatile in any number of musical genres, he was active at the royal court, in ecclesiastical settings (a boy chorister in the Chapel Royal; organist at Westminster Abbey), and in the theatre. His *Dido and Aeneas* (1689) is among the finest of 17th-century operas.

Purcell's earliest surviving works date from c1680 and include the fantasias for viols, masterpieces of contrapuntal writing in the old style. His *Fantasia Upon One Note, Z. 745* falls into this category. Scored for five string voices, the tenor – in this performance, the viola – sustains a middle-C for the duration of the three-minute piece. (Musicologists have speculated that Purcell had a friend who did not know how to play the viol, but wanted to participate.) Around this middle-register *cantus firmus*, the other voices weave a tapestry of seamless counterpoint. The brief work is cast in two sections – slow, then fast. The slower music returns a few bars before the end, and an expressive suspension resolves to bring the piece to rest on an F-major chord.

Erkki Salmenhaara

Born 12 March 1941; Helsinki, Finland

Died 19 March 2002; Helsinki, Finland

Canzonetta for String Orchestra (on Purcell's "Dido's Lament")

Composed: 1971

First performance: 10 July 1972; Savonlinna, Finland

Instrumentation: strings



Erkki Salmenhaara, composer and musicologist, is a name unfamiliar to many of us. A native of Finland and a long-time professor at Helsinki University, he wrote his doctoral dissertation on György Ligeti (1923-2006), with whom he studied in Vienna. Salmenhaara's compositions include symphonic works, chamber music pieces, choral works, pieces for solo instrument, art songs, and an opera called *The Portuguese Woman*. A widely published author and critic, he wrote books on music theory, the Brahms symphonies, 20th-century music, and a biography of Jean Sibelius, among many others.

"Dido's Lament" comes near the end of Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* (1689). Having been abandoned by her Trojan lover, the heartbroken Carthaginian queen prepares to die, singing: "When I am laid in earth, may my wrongs create no trouble in thy breast. Remember me, but ah! forget my fate." It is one of the greatest moments in all opera, and four of the most affecting minutes in the whole of Western music. In his *Canzonetta* (literally, "little song"), Salmenhaara creates a moving elegy – drawing upon fragments of the aria's melody, while employing harmonic language closely related to that of the Romantic era.

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson

Born 14 June 1932; New York, New York

Died 19 March 2004; Chicago, Illinois

Generations: Sinfonietta No. 2 for Strings

Composed: 1996

First performance: 1996; Manchester, Vermont

Instrumentation: strings



Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson was named after the celebrated Afro-British composer, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Exposed to the arts at an early age – his mother gave piano lessons in the Bronx, played organ for a church there, and directed a theater company – in his teen years, Perkinson was a student at New York’s prestigious High School of Music and Art, where he began conducting and composing. He attended New York University and the Manhattan School of Music, earning a master’s degree in composition from the latter. He subsequently studied conducting in the Netherlands and at the Mozarteum in Salzburg.

In 1965, he co-founded New York’s Symphony of the New World, the first racially integrated orchestra in the United States, later becoming its music director. Perkinson’s music blends Baroque counterpoint, American Romanticism, and rhythmic ingenuity with elements of the blues, spirituals, and Black folk music. His compositions range from works for unaccompanied solo instruments to those for chorus and orchestra. He has also worked as a composer and arranger of recordings by many pop figures, including Marvin Gaye. His several film scores include the Martin Luther King Jr. documentary *Montgomery to Memphis* (1970).

Generations: Sinfonietta No. 2 for Strings was commissioned by Michael Rudiakov and the Manchester (Vermont) Music Festival. The score bears the following words by the composer:

The inspiration for this composition, though non-programmatic, is somewhat autobiographical in that it represents my attempts at what were and are my relationships to members of my family – past and present. While each of the movements is without a strict “formal” mode, an informal analysis of their structures is as follows:

- I. *Misterioso and Allegro (to my daughter) is based on two motifs: the B-A-C-H idea (in German these letters represent the pitches B-flat, A-natural, C-natural, and B-natural), and the American folk tune “Mockingbird,” also known as “Hush Li’l Baby, Don’t Say a Word.”*
- II. *Alla sarabande (sarabande, a 17th- and 18th-century dance in slow triple meter) is dedicated to the matriarchs of my immediate family (of which there were for me, three), each of whom contributed a unique form of guidance for life’s journey.*
- III. *Alla Burletta (to my grandson). A burletta is an Italian term for a diminutive burlesca or burlesque-type work – a composition in a playful and jesting mood. Thematically, this movement is based on the pop tune “Li’l Brown Jug.”*
- IV. *Allergo vivace. This movement is a loosely constructed third rondo which thematically begins with a fughetta (original melody), has a second theme (African in origin), and a third theme (“Mockingbird” paraphrased). Once again, the B-A-C-H idea from the first movement is the musical thread that ties these elements together. This movement is dedicated to the patriarchs of my family, known and unknown, past, present, and future, for generations.*

Ludwig van Beethoven

Baptized 17 December 1770; Bonn, Germany

Died 26 March 1827; Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Opus 92

Composed: 1811-12

First performance: 8 December 1813; Vienna, Austria

Instrumentation: 2 flutes; 2 oboes; 2 clarinets;

2 bassoons; 2 horns; 2 trumpets; timpani; strings



On his doctor's orders, the 40-year-old Beethoven visited the Bohemian spa town of Tepliče in the summer of 1811. While there, he composed incidental music for two plays: *King Stephen* and *The Ruin of Athens*. He returned to Vienna apparently revived and set to work on his A major symphony, completing it in the spring of 1812. With his Opus 92, Beethoven sought to perpetuate the "symphonic ideal" he had celebrated in his third, fifth, and sixth symphonies – the notion that he was concerned not only with the musical and technical aspects of composition, but also with conveying his own spiritual journey and growth process.

Taken as a whole, the Symphony No. 7 exudes a sense of élan, with the composer exercising effortless control over the musical processes at every level. The first movement opens with an extensive introduction marked *Poco sostenuto*. This transitions to the main *Vivace* through a series of insistent repetitions of the note E. In sonata form, the movement is permeated with lively dance-like rhythms, sudden dynamic changes, and abrupt modulations. The much-loved *Allegretto* was immediately encored at the premiere and has remained popular ever since. In the 19th century, it was dubbed "the crown of instrumental music." Set in A minor, alternating with A major, it is in double variation form; its characteristic rhythm permeates the entire movement.

The breathless scherzo movement is in F major, with two trios in D major, creating an ABABA form. The finale is marked *Allegro con brio*. Back in the home key of A major, it impresses with its relentless energy and sense of fun. It is cast in sonata form, with a repeated exposition and a protracted coda that is the largest section of the movement. Rising to *fff* (*fortississimo*), a rare dynamic marking in Beethoven's music, its powerful sonorities bring this towering symphony to its conclusion.

Beethoven was on the podium for the Symphony No. 7's first performance, at a charity concert for soldiers wounded in the battle of Hanau. His so-called "battle symphony," *Wellington's Victory*, a less-than-subtle patriotic work, was also premiered. At that performance, Beethoven remarked that the A major symphony was one of his best efforts. A generation later, it was greatly admired by Richard Wagner. Referring to the lively rhythms throughout the piece, he stated, "It is the apotheosis of the dance itself; it is dance in its highest aspect, the loftiest deed of bodily motion, incorporated into an ideal mold of tone."

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In honor of Barbara Weigner in celebration of her 84th Birthday. And our 70 years of friendship, initially nurtured by our mutual participation in high school orchestra

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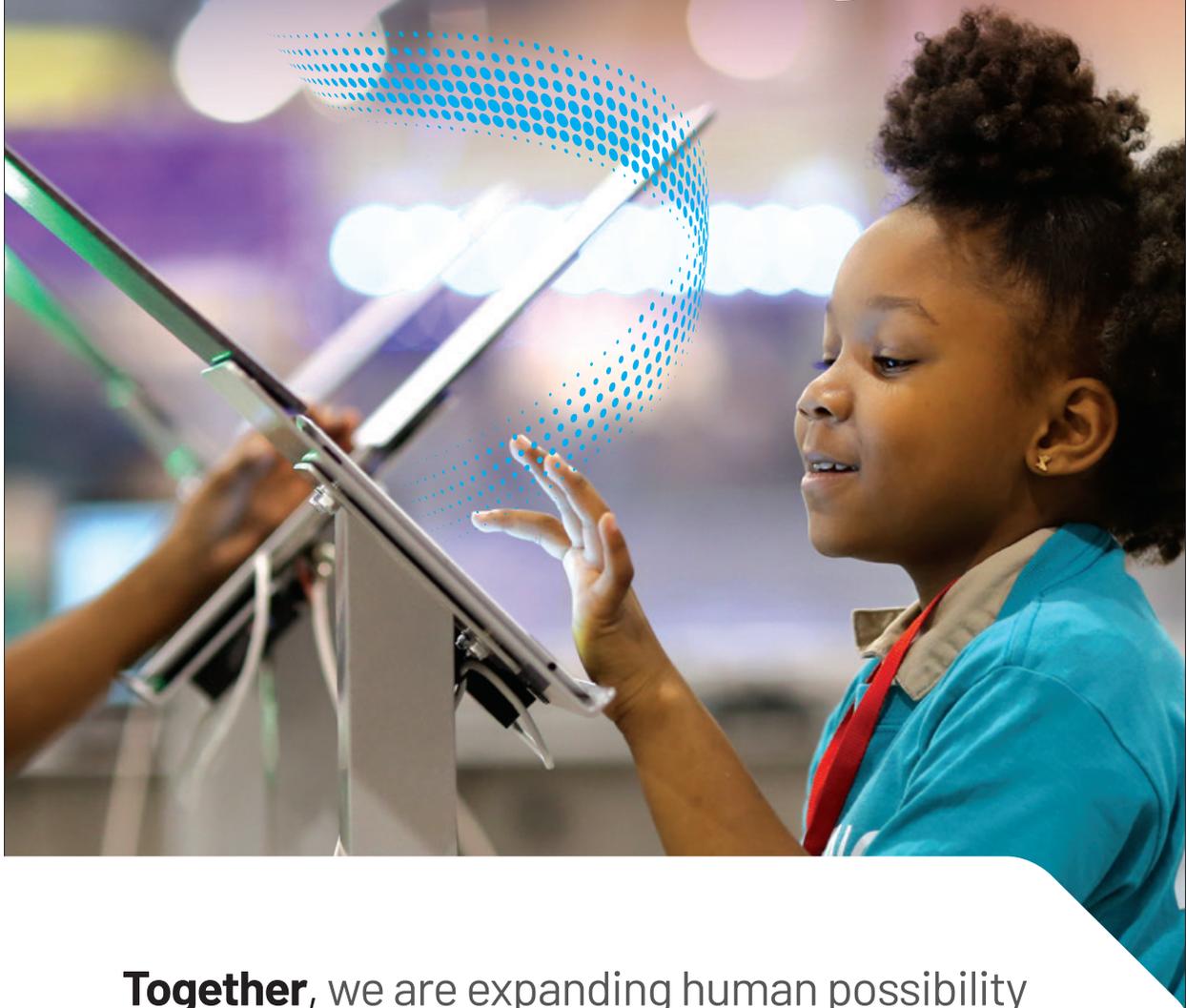
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