

We are excited to begin TSO's fifth season as we began our first, with a movie-themed concert. This time around, we will present a Classical masterwork whose second movement has been featured in a number of motion pictures and the music of one of the most famous film-score composers of the modern era.

Born in Bonn, Germany, **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) lived through a difficult childhood to become one of music history's greatest composers. Inspired by the earlier success of Leopold Mozart and his son Wolfgang, Beethoven's abusive father wanted his talented son to be the next traveling prodigy. Unfortunately the young performer could not play well under pressure. Against all odds, Beethoven persisted in wanting to become a musician. He traveled to Vienna in the late 1780's to receive lessons from Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) and finally settled in the Austrian capital in 1792. Beethoven was a darling of the Viennese nobility, charming socialites with his impassioned piano playing style.

Towards the end of the 1790's however, signs of deafness appeared. Beethoven became more introverted and avoided social contact. In 1802 he wrote the *Heiligenstad Testament*, a series of letters addressed to his brother (but never mailed) and came close to suicide. In the end, the Master decided that he would not leave this world until he had written all the beautiful music still within him. This point usually marks the beginning of Beethoven's second and most prolific period.

Renowned as one of the great symphonists of all times, each of Beethoven's nine symphonies takes the listener through a unique and exhilarating journey. From his First, inspired by the teachings of Haydn, to the Third and the Fifth which literally broke the mold of the genre, Beethoven evolved as a composer through his symphonic experiments. The Seventh Symphony represents one his most celebrated contributions to the canon, and Beethoven himself regarded it as one of his best achievements.

Three years after having completed his *Pastoral* Symphony no. 6, Beethoven felt the need to write another substantial orchestral work. He began the composition of his new Symphony while taking a cure rest in Teplitz, a small resort town near Prague. The Seventh Symphony was composed between 1811 and 1812 and premiered at the University of Vienna in December of 1813 at a benefit concert for wounded soldiers of Napoleonic wars. The first performance was an immense success, and the second movement had to be repeated. Great musicians of the day also played in the orchestra, including Louis Spohr, Domenico Dragonetti, Johann Hummel, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Ignaz Moscheles, and even Beethoven's old master, Antonio Salieri. Beethoven was conducting.

What strikes the listener with this work is its rhythmic energy. Romantic composer Richard Wagner (1813-1883) perhaps adequately described the piece as "the apotheosis of the dance". Through the use of short repeated rhythmic motives, Beethoven creates an irresistible drive that takes the listener by storm. In spirit, this work is also akin to his Sixth and Eighth Symphonies, pieces of overall happiness and hopeful spirit.

The first movement, beginning *Poco sostenuto*, features a long extended introduction of a noble character. The main rhythmic motive of the first movement proper is slowly introduced

at the end of the introduction through a repeated “E” leading into the first theme of the *Vivace* section. The rest of the movement, although in sonata-form and introducing the usual second and closing themes, never veers from the original rhythmic pattern established at the beginning of the *Vivace*. Themes evolve and emerge naturally out of each other.

The second movement, *Allegretto*, is the most famous part of the work. It is set in a tempo that is neither fast nor slow, making this symphony without a slow movement unusual in that matter. Here again, a recurrent rhythmic motive drives the movement (slow-fast-fast-slow), giving at times the impression of a funeral procession. The basic rhythmic device of this movement was taken from a pattern of Austro-German church litanies of the 18th and 19th centuries. The overall form of the movement, ABABA, ensures that brighter episodes will contrast the darker ones. Note also the contrapuntal section in the middle of the movement where the main theme and a counter-subject are presented in imitation, first gradually in the strings, and leading into an orchestral climax. This movement was featured in the Beethoven biographical release *Immortal Beloved* (1994) and the movie *Mr. Holland's Opus* (1995).

The third movement, *Presto*, is set in the traditional format of the *Minuet and Trio* (or *Scherzo and Trio*), with the only difference that the *Trio and Scherzo* are repeated after what should be the final *Scherzo* (ABABA instead of ABA). Beethoven used this technique in other works and it enabled him to compose longer movements and take the listener by surprise. The pastoral theme of the *Trio* is taken from an Austrian Pilgrim's Hymn.

The *Finale, Allegro con brio*, is perhaps Beethoven's most exuberant symphonic movement. Here again, just as in the *Vivace* of the first movement, simple repetitive rhythmic figures provide an incessant drive throughout the whole movement.

Primarily known as a film-music composer, **John Williams** (b. 1932) is now regarded as one of the greatest musicians of our generation. The son of a professional Jazz drummer, Williams first studied composition privately with Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco at UCLA. Following his service in the Air Force, he moved to New York City and trained as a pianist at the Juilliard School of Music under Rosina Lhévinne. After his studies he moved back to Los Angeles and worked as an orchestrator and studio pianist.

His popular breakthrough as a composer came in the 1970's with scores to movies such as *Jaws*, *Star Wars*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *Superman*. Today, at 78, Williams is still active as a composer and also conducts concert performances of his music with the Boston Pops Orchestra (among other orchestras), an ensemble with which he has been associated for a number of years. Williams is also a versatile composer whose music is not limited to the film-score style. He has produced a variety of classical pieces including a number of solo concertos and traditional vocal and orchestral compositions.

Williams' style is largely inspired by the Romantic composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Hence, his music is deemed Neo-Romantic as it continues the great tradition of the last centuries into this new era. From an orchestration perspective, the way Williams handles the resources of the orchestra is close in practice to German composer Richard Strauss' (1864-1949) approach. Williams' knowledge of the orchestration techniques of Russian

composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) and French composer Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) are also obvious. Williams follows in a long line of twentieth-century film music composers who were inspired by a musical style which seemed to fit the grandiose character of some early motion pictures.

On a structural level, Williams is interested in associating characters, situation, places, or concepts with specific musical material. This technique developed by opera composer Richard Wagner enabled composers to impart dramatic information through the music. Those short themes or motives are called *leitmotiv*. The best example of such a short musical phrase might be the two low notes of the Shark theme from the movie *Jaws*. Through this simple musical device, the audience can imagine the shark even though there might be no visual cue on the screen.

The music to the movie *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (also known as *The Philosopher's Stone*) – the first in the famous series of *Harry Potter* movies - was composed in the summer of 2001 while Williams was working in Tanglewood. On July 31, he gave a preview of the music at a concert with the Boston Pops, and the music was an instant success. He recorded the music for the movie just a few weeks later in London, and the movie was released later that year.

Based on the books by J. K. Rowling published in 1997, the *Harry Potter* series tells the story of young wizard Harry Potter and his life at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Williams actually took the time to read the books by Rowling, contrary to his usual habit, and found his musical inspiration through this process. Williams' film-scoring style was particularly suitable for series of films, such as the *Harry Potter* series, where his use of leitmotiv would be essential to creating musical coherence throughout the series.

The excerpts presented tonight, and arranged as a concert suite by John Williams, will feature some of the main themes of the movies. The most famous, *Hedwig's Theme*, is featured from the very beginning of the suite. Williams uses the sound of the celesta, a keyboard-like instrument creating bell-like sounds, to set the mood. Hedwig is an owl who delivers mail to Harry at Hogwart's School, and Williams felt that the brisk and light sound that this instrument provided was appropriate. The *Nimbus 2000 theme*, a fast-paced motive depicting Harry's broom (a Nimbus 2000 model!) and first introduced by woodwinds instruments, is also featured prominently, as well as the music of *Harry's Wondrous World*.

John Williams is also noted for his collaboration with famous directors, Steven Spielberg being the one with whom he has probably collaborated most. The music for *Schindler's List* (1993), directed by Spielberg, reveals another side of Williams' musical inspiration and sensibility.

Based on the true account of the life of German industrialist Oskar Schindler, Steven Spielberg tells the story of this man who tried to save human lives in the midst of the Holocaust by hiring Jews to work in his ammunition plant. Shot in black and white, the movie's stark and visceral impact is equally matched by Williams' themes of simple beauty and emotional impact. Often inspired by Jewish melodies or the sounds of ancient scales, Williams is able to recapture the essence of the movie and deliver the perfect counterpoint to images of an unspeakable horror.

The excerpt presented tonight is the *Main Theme* of the motion picture, written for solo violin and orchestra. The violin had always been an instrument close to the heart of the Jewish people, and Williams chose this musical combination appropriately. Jewish violinist Itzhak Perlman recorded the original soundtrack of the movie.

Finally, the epic music of Williams' most famous themes will resound gloriously in our theatre! The music to the *Star Wars* Series (begun in 1977) has become a model of great film scoring, and when it burst onto the scene, announced a return to the grandiose style of film scoring by such earlier composers as Max Steiner and Erich Korngold. The *Star Wars* series is also the jewel in the collaboration between Williams and another great director of our times, George Lucas.

Here the leitmotiv technique is a fundamental structural compositional device. *Star Wars* being the series that is, the need for musical themes that can transcend individual episodes was necessary. Just like Wagner united his *Tetralogy* with such themes, Williams contributed to the overall unity of the film through this technique.

Once again, in this suite arranged for concert presentation by Williams, the main themes of the famous movies are presented. We will begin with the *Main Title* featuring the main theme of the series, often associated with heroism and the character of Luke. It is heralded *fortissimo* by the brass section. We will follow with the love theme of the epic, also known as *Princess Leia's theme*, introduced by the solo French horn. Finally, we will be playing the theme to the *Throne Room and the End Titles*, providing the musical background of the finale of *Episode 4 – A New Hope*.

And if you thought that this music was too Romantic to be associated with such a science-fiction classic, remember that this story happened "**a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away....**"