

**BARD COLLEGE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC
PRESENTS**

BARD COLLEGE CONSERVATORY ORCHESTRA

Belated Beethoven Birthday Celebration

Leon Botstein, Music Director

UPSTREAMING

Sosnoff Theater

Fisher Center at Bard

Saturday, May 8, 2021

8 pm

**FISHER
CENTER**

Bard

PROGRAM

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Drei Equali (Three Equals) for four trombones

William Freeman

Anthony Ruocco

Ameya Natarajan

Henry Shankweiler

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Op. 60

Adagio – Allegro vivace

Adagio

Allegro vivace

Allegro ma non troppo

Wellington's Victory, Op. 91

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

Allegro con brio

Marcia funebre: Adagio assai

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Allegro molto

Bard College Conservatory Orchestra

Leon Botstein, Music Director

Andrés Rivas, Assistant Conductor

Erica Kiesewetter, Director of Orchestral Studies

Violin I

Ana Aparicio, *concertmaster*

Laura Pérez Rangel

Zongheng Zhang

Tristan Flores

Sarina Schwartz

Gigi Hsueh

Violin II

Shaunessy Renker, *principal*^{1, 2}

Narain Darakananda, *principal*³

Anna Hallet Gutierrez

Nándor Burai

Lap Yin Lee

Blanche Darr

Viola

Jonathan Eng, *principal*^{1, 2}

Weilan Li, *principal*³

Mercer Greenwald

Mikhal Terentiev

Rowan Swain

Mengshen Li

Cello

Nick Scheel, *principal*¹

William Pilgrim, *principal*²

Nathan Matsubara, *principal*³

Sophia Jackson

Grace Molinaro

Sarah Martin

Christina Jones

Alexander Levinson

Bass

Michael Knox, *principal*^{1, 2}

Rowan Puig Davis, *principal*³

Elizabeth Liotta

Joshua Depoint*

Flute

Jillian Reed, *principal*¹

Andrea Abel, *principal*²

Isabela Cruz-Vespa, *principal*³

Monika Dziubelski

Gabriela Rosado Torres

Piccolo

Monika Dziubelski

Oboe

Kamil Karpiak, *principal*¹

Nate Sanchez, *principal*²

Michal Cieslik, *principal*³

Clarinet

Miles Wazni, *principal*¹

Eszter Pokai, *principal*²

Collin Lewis, *principal*³

Anya Swinchoski

Bassoon

Chloe Brill, *principal*¹

Anna Pem, *principal*²

Gabrielle Hartman, *principal*³

Henry Mielarczyk

Horn

Zachary McIntyre, *principal*¹

Sabrina Schettler, *principal*²

Liri Ronen, *principal*³

Natalia Dziubelski

Felix Johnson

Trumpet

Joel Guahnich, *principal*¹

Adam Shohet, *principal*²

Aleksandar Vitanov, *principal*³

Viveca Lawrie

Guillermo Garcia Cuesta*

Samuel Exline*

Trombone

Henry Shankweiler, *principal*²

William Freeman

Anthony Ruocco

Tuba

Evan Petratos

Goni Ronen

Timpani

Petra Elek³

Juan Mora Rubio¹

Keith Hammer^{2*}

Percussion

Petra Elek

Matthew Overbay

Jaelyn Quilizapa

Juan Mora Rubio

Charley Gillette*

Luis Herrera Albertazzi*

Orchestra Manager and Video Director

Hsiao-Fang Lin

Stage Manager

Stephen Dean

Nora Rubenstone

Video Engineer

Daniel Carr

Cameras

John Gasper

Audio Producer/Recording Engineering

Marlan Barry

¹ for Beethoven 4

² for Beethoven Wellington's Victory

³ for Beethoven 3, "Eroica"

*TÖN musician

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

by Peter Laki, Visiting Associate Professor of Music

BEETHOVEN AT 250

If there is one composer who fundamentally transformed the way the Western world has thought and felt about music, it is Ludwig van Beethoven. Robert Haven Schauffler's biography called him "the man who freed music," and in fact, he rendered music capable of expressing entirely new kinds of emotions. Struggle, suffering, and triumph are all present in Beethoven's works to an unprecedented degree, and whether we are aware of it or not, we have come to expect the same communicative power in music ever since.

Beethoven inscribed the following words on the opening page of his *Missa solennis*: "From the heart—may it reach the heart." This statement, which no previous composer would have dreamt of making, applies to all his important works which have "reached" our hearts—and will remain there for as long as there are hearts on this earth.

Entire libraries have been filled with attempts to explain the greatness of Beethoven's music. Admirers in the 19th, 20th, and now the 21st centuries have marveled at the composer's unique ability to say so much with just a few musical "words," and at his bold innovations that are rooted in the tradition he inherited. Yet in this age of global turmoil, Beethoven's art had another amazing characteristic that has proven timelier than ever. He was one of the greatest optimists in the history of music, and preserved this positivity in the midst of great suffering, including the complete loss of his hearing. Beethoven was able to write an "Ode to Joy" in his Ninth Symphony in which, appropriating the words of Friedrich Schiller, he "embraced the millions" of humankind. These words and ideas occupied him practically his whole life. Beethoven believed that difficulties can be overcome, darkness can be dispelled by light, and all conflicts can be resolved in harmony, and he expressed these beliefs with extraordinary conviction in the pieces you're going to hear tonight.

Drei Equali (Three Equals) WoO 30 (1812)

The word “equal” here refers to a composition written for groups of identical instruments—in this case, four trombones. Trombone players can be eternally grateful to Franz Xaver Glöggl for commissioning Beethoven to create three short works for their instruments. Glöggl served as music director for the city of Linz and was responsible for the city’s town pipers. Town-piper guilds had a centuries-old tradition in many German-speaking cities, serving at various public events. “Equals” for trombones were typically performed at burials, and Glöggl asked Beethoven, who was visiting Linz in the fall of 1812, for a composition to add to his ensemble’s funeral repertoire, to be played on All Saints’ Day. He suggested that Beethoven score his work for six trombones, including a rare soprano trombone that he had in his collection, but the composer ended up using only four.

Because the pieces were intended to be played at a funeral, Beethoven was under significant constraints. The pieces had to be brief, slow in tempo, and simple in texture. Yet Beethoven added dozens of small details that made all the difference: a bit of imitation here, an accented dissonance there, and what would otherwise have been a routine assignment, suddenly became a lot more.

In 1827, the first and the third of the Equals were played at Beethoven’s own funeral, both in the original version and in a choral arrangement.

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Op. 60 (1806)

Beethoven’s career as a composer spans some 40 years, from his youthful essays to the last string quartets. His output, however, is unevenly distributed over those decades. There were years when he composed little or nothing at all; at other times he wrote vast amounts of great music over a remarkably short period of time. During such periods, it is hard to reconcile Beethoven’s extreme speed with the usual image of the composer toiling endlessly over his sketches.

The year 1806 was one of the most prolific of Beethoven’s life. He completed his three Razumovsky quartets, the Fourth Piano Concerto, the Fourth Symphony, and the Violin Concerto. He also started work on what would later become the Fifth Symphony (actually, Beethoven began the C-minor work first, and then laid it aside in favor of the symphony in B-flat).

The 36-year-old Beethoven was in the middle of his so-called “heroic” period, shortly after the “Eroica” and before the no-less-heroic Fifth. The Fourth has traditionally been seen as a kind of respite between these two mighty works, in accordance with the old theory that opposed the dramatic “odd-numbered” symphonies to the more lyrical “even-numbered” ones.

As an experiment, if we forget this theory for a moment, we find that the Fourth is animated by the same incessant flow of energy and irresistible pull to move ahead as are its more tempestuous companions. It is as perfect a representative of the heroic period as any other work. The emotions expressed may be lighter and less tragic, but they are communicated with the same force throughout.

The first movement's slow introduction is one of the most suspenseful Beethoven ever wrote. The idea of starting a B-flat-major symphony with a slow-moving unison theme in B-flat minor may have come from Haydn's Symphony No. 98—but the polarity is greater in Beethoven, whose introduction is full of a sense of mystery that was new in music. It is hard to believe that Haydn wrote his London symphonies only a decade earlier and was still alive in 1806!

Slow introductions are usually linked to the subsequent Allegros via a transition that builds a bridge between the two tempos. In Beethoven's Fourth, there is a clear separation instead of a bridge. A drastic shift of keys and a sudden general rest bring the music to a standstill before the energetic Allegro vivace launches and there is hardly a pause until the movement's end. The concise exposition begins with a brisk and vibrant theme, and even the more lyrical moments are full of motion and excitement.

The development section employs one of Beethoven's favorite musical techniques—thematic fragmentation. The first theme is “decomposed” almost to its atoms; for a while, it receives a new lyrical counter-melody that is soon brushed aside by a tutti outburst. The recapitulation is prepared by a long tremolo on the kettledrum, over which the strings gradually put the thematic “atoms” back together for the triumphant return of the theme.

The second movement is the only large-scale lyrical Adagio in a Beethoven symphony before the Ninth. (The other symphonies' slow movements are all faster, with the exception of the Funeral March of the Third.) In the Fourth Symphony, Beethoven unfolds a beautiful cantabile (“singing”) theme over a characteristic rhythmic accompaniment that eventually rises to a theme in its own right. The cantabile theme

returns several times, in a more ornamented form, its appearances separated by some powerful statements. The movement ends with a timpani solo followed by two concluding orchestral chords.

The third movement is a scherzo, although Beethoven didn't use that word as a title. The music abounds in playful elements such as subtle interplays of duple and triple meter, sudden modulations (or, rather, jumps) into distant tonalities, and a mood of exuberant joy. The Trio moves in a slower tempo and has a simpler melody; it is based on the juxtaposition of the orchestra's wind and string sections. Here, Beethoven added an interesting twist to the usual scherzo form: he expanded the standard arrangement (Scherzo - Trio - Scherzo) by means of a second appearance of the Trio and a third Scherzo statement (he was to do the same in the Seventh Symphony).

The fourth-movement finale, marked "Allegro ma non troppo," begins with a theme in perpetual sixteenth-note motion; the flow of which is only briefly interrupted by melodic episodes. This movement is light in tone and cheerful in spirit. Like the slow introduction to the first movement, the finale also shows how much Beethoven had learned from Haydn (less during his brief apprenticeship with the older composer than from studying Haydn's symphonies). But, once again, most of the music sounds like no one but Beethoven. The repeated and unresolved dissonances at the end of the exposition (brought back in the recapitulation) sound like a similar passage in the first movement of the "Eroica." Also, Haydn probably wouldn't have entrusted the return of the perpetual-motion theme to the solo bassoon, in what is one of the most difficult passages for the instrument in the classical repertoire. In general, Haydn's cheerfulness has been stepped up to a state of near-euphoria. One feels that this music could go on ad infinitum, but it is suddenly cut short by a hesitant, slower rendition of the main theme in the violins, continued by the bassoons, and abruptly ended by a few energetic chords played by the whole orchestra.

Wellington's Victory, Op. 91 (1813)

Wellington's Victory (Wellington's Sieg) is the Beethoven work that music critics have loved to hate for the last 200 years. It contains little of the refinement and emotional depth that had always characterized Beethoven's music, especially in his heroic middle period, to which this singular work belongs. Structurally loose and episodic, relying on popular melodies rather than introducing original ones, it has bewildered, if not downright embarrassed, those who wanted to put Beethoven on a pedestal as a

musical god. The only defense of the work came from those who insisted on its being a *Gelegenheitsstück* or “occasional work,” connected to the circumstances under which it was written: the victory of the British forces led by Viscount (later Duke) Wellington against the French at Vitoria, Spain. (Wellington’s final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo came two years later, in 1815.) Yet this line of defense only seeks to justify the work’s perceived shortcomings, without raising the possibility that they might not be shortcomings at all. Musicologist Nicholas Mathew took a different approach in a 2006 article where he claimed: “Wellington’s Sieg leads the heroic style into the real world.” Simply put, Beethoven’s objective here was different from his goals elsewhere, and he was as successful in achieving his goals as he always was.

Not quite a decade after the “Eroica,” initially intended to celebrate Napoleon, Beethoven was ready to celebrate the man who defeated Napoleon. And the work, first performed in Vienna on December 8, 1813, became one of the most popular he ever wrote, with numerous repeat performances following the premiere. The Seventh Symphony was premiered at the same concert, but it was *Wellington’s Victory* that stole the show that night.

It had originally been conceived for a mechanical instrument called the Panharmonicon, invented by Beethoven’s friend Johann Nepomuk Mälzel (who also created the first metronome). The Panharmonicon could imitate the sound of all instruments and also produce sounds evoking gunshots and cannon fire. In the event, however, the first performance was given by a large symphony orchestra, complete with the largest percussion section Beethoven ever used.

In this “occasional work,” Beethoven tells the story of the famous battle, including military drumrolls and trumpet calls (the English trumpets are in E-flat and the French ones in C). Each army is represented by a characteristic song: “Rule, Britannia!” for the English and “Marlbrough s’en va-t-en guerre” for the French. (Incidentally, in the English-speaking world, the latter melody is known as “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow.”) This presentation is followed by the two main sections, “Battle” and “The Symphony of Victory.” The former portrays the war by stormy descending scales against an equally stormy accompaniment of offbeat accents and tremolos. The cannon shots are precisely notated in the score. The two armies rush to the battlefield in an excited fast section dominated by the two trumpets, each playing its own pitch. In the subsequent “Storm March,” a single theme is repeated multiple times, each time a half-step higher (an unorthodox way of changing keys, but one that was picked up in many pop songs of recent times). At the end of the battle

scene, the French defeat is symbolized by the transformation of the “Marlbrough” tune, in a sad minor mode in a slower tempo before completely disintegrating.

“The Symphony of Victory” begins with a series of resounding fanfares in a bright D-major, followed by a jubilant march. As a slow Trio section in the middle of the march, Beethoven inserted a sensitively orchestrated version of “God Save the King,” before “The Symphony of Victory” returns. A second, varied verse of “God Save the King” is followed by a fugato based on the same anthem, before “The Symphony of Victory” and a positively ecstatic conclusion.

(It is worth noting that years before *Wellington's Victory*, in 1802–03, Beethoven had written variations for piano on both “God Save the King” and “Rule, Britannia!”)

Beethoven himself had little patience with those who dismissed the work as unworthy of his genius. Gottfried Weber, a music theorist from Darmstadt, published a scathing review in the journal *Cäcilia*, on the margins of which Beethoven famously scrawled the words “Oh you pitiful scoundrel, my shit is better than anything you have ever thought.” He certainly had a point.

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55 “Eroica” (1802–04)

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 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 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 era—Napoleon Bonaparte.

Beethoven was at the impressionable age of 19 when the French Revolution broke out, and his letters from the 1790s attest to his support of the republican cause.

Like many intellectuals of his time, he was fascinated by the reforms Napoleon introduced as First Consul. At the same time, he despised tyranny in all its forms, and when Napoleon crowned himself emperor, he felt that the revolution had been betrayed. He had planned to dedicate his new symphony to Bonaparte, but, according to the well-known story, he flew into a wild rage when he heard the news of the coronation. He tore up the title page, replacing the dedication with a new 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 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) take on 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 to modifications. By transforming, dismembering, and reintegrating his motifs, Beethoven expresses the idea of struggle that is present throughout this movement.

In the second movement *Marcia funebre* (Funeral March), the music begins softly and rises to a powerful, dramatic climax. After some extensive contrapuntal development midmovement, 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 gradually evolve into a theme. In the more relaxed Trio, the three horns take center stage.

The main theme of the last movement appears in four Beethoven 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 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.

BIOGRAPHY

In addition to serving as music director of the Bard Conservatory Orchestra, **Leon Botstein** is music director and principal conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra (ASO), founder and music director of The Orchestra Now (TÖN), artistic codirector of Bard SummerScape and the Bard Music Festival, and conductor laureate of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, where he served as music director from 2003 to 2011. He has been guest conductor with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Mariinsky Theatre, Russian National Orchestra in Moscow, Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden, Taipei Symphony, Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, and Sinfónica Juvenil de Caracas in Venezuela, among others.

Recordings include a Grammy-nominated recording of Popov's First Symphony with the London Symphony Orchestra, an acclaimed recording of Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner* with ASO, and recordings with the London Philharmonic, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, and TÖN, among others. He is editor of *The Musical Quarterly* and the author of numerous articles and books, including *The Compleat Brahms* (Norton), *Jefferson's Children* (Doubleday), *Judentum und Modernität* (Böhlau), and *Von Beethoven zu Berg* (Zsolnay). Honors include Harvard University's Centennial Award, the American Academy of Arts and Letters award, and Cross of Honor, First Class, from the government of Austria, for his contributions to music. Other distinctions include the Bruckner Society's Julio Kilenyi Medal of Honor for his interpretations of that composer's music, Leonard Bernstein Award for the Elevation of Music in Society, and Carnegie Foundation's Academic Leadership Award. In 2011, he was inducted into the American Philosophical Society.

BARD COLLEGE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Tan Dun, *Dean*

Frank Corliss, *Director*

Marka Gustavsson, *Associate Director*

Bard College Conservatory of Music expands Bard's spirit of innovation in arts and education. The Conservatory, which opened in 2005, offers a five-year, double-degree program at the undergraduate level and, at the graduate level, programs in vocal arts and conducting. At the graduate level, the Conservatory also offers an Advanced Performance Studies Program and a two-year Postgraduate Collaborative Piano Fellowship. The US-China Music Institute of the Bard College Conservatory of Music, established in 2017, offers a unique degree program in Chinese instruments.

For more information and the concert calendar, see bard.edu/conservatory.

Rehearsals and performances adhere to the strict guidelines set by the CDC, with daily health checks, the wearing of masks throughout, and musicians placed at a safe social distance. Musicians sharing a stand also share a home.

Programs and performers are subject to change.