Pacific Symphony
CARL ST.CLAIR MUSIC DIRECTOR

2021-22 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom Family Foundation Classical Series

BEETHOVEN'S PIANO CONCERTOS

Preview Talk with Dr. Jacob Sustaita @ 7 p.m.
Thursday, June 9, 2022 @ 8 p.m.
Friday, June 10, 2022 @ 8 p.m.
Saturday, June 11, 2022 @ 8 p.m.

Carl St.Clair, conductor
Alexander Romanovsky, piano
Dennis Kim, violin
Frank Almond, guest concertmaster (Friday)
Pacific Symphony

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PROGRAM

THURSDAY

Beethoven

Overture to *Egmont*, Op. 84

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15
Allegro con brio
Largo
Rondo: Allegro
Alexander Romanovsky, piano

—Intermission—

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58
Allegro moderato
Andante con moto
Rondo: Vivace
Alexander Romanovsky, piano

FRIDAY

Beethoven

Romance No. 1 in G Major for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 40
Dennis Kim, violin

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Rondo: Molto allegro
Alexander Romanovsky, piano

—Intermission—

Romance No. 2 in F Major for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 50
Dennis Kim, violin

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37
Allegro con brio
Largo
Rondo: Allegro
Alexander Romanovsky, piano

SATURDAY

Beethoven

Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93
Allegro vivace con brio
Allegretto scherzando
Tempo di menuetto
Allegro vivace

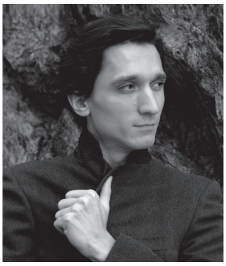
—Intermission—

Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73 ("Emperor")
Allegro
Adagio un poco mosso
Rondo: Allegro
Alexander Romanovsky, piano

This concert is being recorded for broadcast on Sunday, August 21, 2022 at 7 p.m. on Classical California KUSC.

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Described by Carlo Maria Giulini as "extraordinarily gifted," pianist Alexander Romanovsky is a riveting, distinct and subtle performer with an utterly engaging voice. Born in Ukraine in 1984, at the age of thirteen he moved to Italy where he studied at the Imola Piano Academy with Leonid Margarius, considered by Romanovsky to be the most influential figure in his musical formation, and later obtained the Artist Diploma from the Royal College of Music in London, studying with Dmitry Alexeev. At the age of seventeen, he won First Prize at the prestigious Busoni Competition in Italy.

Praised by *The New York Times* as "special, not just an extraordinary technician with a flair for color and fantasy, but also a sensitive musician and lucid interpreter," Romanovsky graces many of the world's most prestigious stages in recital. Recent highlights include performances at the Main Hall of Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire, Tokyo's Asahi and Kioi halls, Chile's Teatro Municipal; Sala Verdi at Milan's Conservatorio and the Teatro Olimpico in Rome.

Romanovsky regularly performs with major orchestras throughout Europe, Asia and Americas including the UK's Royal Philharmonic, English Chamber, Hallé and Bournemouth Symphony orchestras; Italy's Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome and Milan's Filarmonica della Scala; Russia's Mariinsky and Russian National orchestras and St. Petersburg and National philharmonics; Japan's Tokyo and NHK symphony orchestras; Chicago Symphony at the Ravinia Festival; and with the New York Philharmonic, under Alan Gilbert, at the Bravo! Vail Festival. He collaborates at a very high level with conductors such as Vladimir Spivakov, Valery Gergiev, Michael Pletnev, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Sir Antonio Pappano, Gianandrea Noseda and James Conlon. Romanovsky performs extensively throughout Italy, where he has lived since early childhood. In 2007, he was invited to give a concert at the Papal Residence in the presence of Pope Benedict XVI in celebration of the 110th Anniversary of Pope Paul VI's birth.

Since 2007, he has released four critically acclaimed albums on Decca: *Beethoven: Diabelli Variations, Brahms/Schumann, Rachmaninov: Etudes-Tableaux* and *Corelli Variations* and most recently *Russian Faust*. Romanovsky has held the post of artistic director of the Vladimir Krainev Moscow International Piano Competition since 2014.

Dennis Kim holds the Eleanor and Michael Gordon Chair and has been concertmaster of Pacific Symphony since September 2018. A citizen of the world, Kim was born in Korea, raised in Canada and educated in the United States. He has spent more than a decade leading orchestras in the United States, Europe and Asia. Most recently, he was concertmaster of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in New York. He was first appointed concertmaster of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra at the age of 22. He then served as the youngest concertmaster in the history of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, before going on to lead the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra and the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra in Finland. As guest concertmaster, Kim has performed on four continents, leading the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lille, KBS Symphony Orchestra, Montpelier Symphony Orchestra, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Western Australia Symphony Orchestra and Symphony Orchestra of Navarra. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and Yale School of Music, Kim's teachers include Jaime Laredo, Aaron Rosand, Peter Oundjian, Paul Kantor, Victor Danchenko and Yumi Ninomiya Scott. He plays the 1701 ex- Dushkin Stradivarius, on permanent loan from a generous donor.

PROGRAM NOTES:
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Overture to *Egmont*, Op. 84

In 1809, when Beethoven received the commission to compose a complete suite of incidental music for the historical play *Egmont*, he was drawn into correspondence with the play's author, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who had written it in 1787. The subject was a natural for Beethoven: Set in 16th-century Brussels, it depicts the heroic deaths of the Dutch Count Egmont and his wife while the Netherlands lay under repressive Belgian rule. Egmont's wife, a suicide, inspired him to die as a symbol in the Dutch struggle for freedom. Beethoven, of course, was passionate in his concerns for human freedom and the effects of political hegemony, which is how he went from exalting Napoleon as a savior to vilifying him: When Napoleon crowned himself emperor in 1804, Beethoven angrily "undedicated" him from the "Eroica" Symphony, seeing him as just another despot.

The correspondence went well: Goethe was by far the dominant German-language literary figure of his day, and the mutual admiration he shared with Beethoven was congenial from afar. But what happens when towering geniuses actually meet? It's not always pretty. Goethe's descriptions of his encounters with Beethoven describe an artist resembling a cross between two Charles Schulz characters, Schroeder and Pig Pen, and the humor is mixed with real annoyance. "Beethoven's talent amazed me," he wrote. "…[U]nfortunately, he is an utterly untamed personality; he is not altogether wrong in holding the world detestable, but surely does not make it more enjoyable for himself or others by his attitude." Beethoven, for his part, seemed to hold Goethe's very worldliness and social skills against him: "Goethe delights far too much in the court atmosphere," he wrote—"far more than is becoming in a poet." It should be noted that Beethoven himself was not above the occasional attempt to ingratiate himself in the "court atmosphere," and even considered rededicating the "Eroica" to Napoleon when he received inquiries regarding its possible performance in Paris.

Composed for a style of dramatic presentation that is no longer familiar to us, the original *Egmont* suite is comprised of nine dramatic soprano arias, spoken verses for male narrator, and the orchestral overture that has remained popular, known as the *Egmont* Overture—the most admired movement of the full suite, on a par with the *Coriolan* Overture. The full suite is suited to performance alongside the original play or alone, with or without the male narrator. But in the modern repertory, we usually hear the overture performed on its own.

The *Egmont* Overture is often cited as the final work of Beethoven's "middle" period, and it has much in common with the *Coriolan* Overture: the heroic themes, the dramatic contrasts, the ratcheting tension. But in contrast with *Coriolan*, it opens with a slow, dark sound, funereal rather than martial. This overture is to some degree a compressed version of the entire drama, and in it Beethoven faced the challenge of conflating the sadness of Count Egmont's death with its glory as an inspiration to his people. Opening in F minor, the overture moves to F major as it closes, introducing a dramatic new theme to convey the victory embodied in Egmont's defiant march to the scaffold. Suddenly the music is invested with new energy. Rather than death, we hear the promise of renewal and of the people prevailing over tyranny, in accordance with Goethe's express wishes that Egmont's final moments be heard as triumphant rather than elegiac.

This powerful, expressive overture and the suite of incidental music it introduces found favor seemingly with everyone who heard its premiere in June 1810. The poet-author-composer E.T.A. Hoffmann—yes, the man who provided the stories for the ballets *Coppelia* and *The Nutcracker*, and who inspired Offenbach's opera *Tales of Hoffmann*—lauded the music's poeticism. And Goethe himself was effusive in his praise, Beethoven's manners and grooming notwithstanding.

Concerto No. 1 in C Major for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 15

Beethoven's first two piano concertos were important not only as compositional milestones, but also as demonstrations of his virtuosity at the keyboard, as Mozart's had been before him. "Cramer, Cramer, I'll never be able to write a concerto like that!" That assertion, passed down through the generations, is what Beethoven is supposed to have said to his friend Johann Cramer at a concert with Mozart as soloist in one of his own late concertos (the monumental 24th). According to tradition, his comment came after a series of complex yet seemingly effortless modulations; Mozart's apparent ease confounded Beethoven, who agonized over every note. Though Beethoven's reputation as one of music's boldest innovators is fully deserved, he did not publish a piano concerto until years after Mozart's death despite his own considerable abilities on the instrument. (Mozart and Cramer were the only pianists he seems to have praised unreservedly.)

Beethoven's No. 1 is tightly constructed in the conventional three-movement pattern of fast-slow-fast. The first movement opens with a triumphant, joyful theme in the orchestra. The melody's signature is a swooping upward phrase that the entire orchestra joins in playing. Clipped and staccato in its march rhythm, the melody gives the opening an almost martial air. But when the piano enters, it plays a much gentler, more lyrical melody, with downward rather than upward phrases. This manner of opening a concerto, with the piano introducing a second theme rather than playing the first, had been pioneered by Mozart.

In the second movement, a poetic largo is shared much more intimately between piano and orchestra. The mood and the key of the movements are only distantly related, with the key signature moving to E-flat (from the first movement's C-major) and the sound melting and songful. A pattern of stanza-and-verse responsive playing emerges between soloist and ensemble. But in the third movement, the key is once again C-major and the mood is again overwhelmingly joyful, with an allegro tempo in a double rhythm often described as "dancing." When the movement modulates in a minor key, the mood remains joyful, spiced up with a peppery staccato theme rather than saddened or slowed. The finale comes swiftly, with emphatic, celebratory C-major chords shared by the full orchestra and soloist.

Concerto No. 4 for Piano and Orchestra

When Beethoven transferred to Vienna in 1792, few in his circle suspected that he might spend the rest of his days there—or that he would transform the notion of the concerto. His great patron and protector Count Ferdinand von Waldstein had arranged the move so that Beethoven could take instruction from Haydn, who welcomed and valued him as his most talented pupil. But friends and associates in Bonn, who gave him a cordial sendoff, voiced their fond expectations of his return.

Beethoven's writing indicates that he did not reciprocate Haydn's friendly feelings, but he approached his work with music's grand old man with utmost seriousness, cultivating mastery in the Classical style that he would eventually challenge and disrupt. He spent just one year studying with Haydn, but worked his way through the major forms of Classical composition as if following a curriculum of his own meticulous devising that was less attuned to the statesmanlike Haydn than to the bolder Mozart—who, like Beethoven, was a pianist who viewed writing piano concertos as strategically important in building his professional standing.

Though Beethoven's reputation as one of music's boldest innovators is fully deserved, he did not publish a piano concerto until years after Mozart's death despite his own considerable abilities on the instrument. (Mozart and Cramer were the only pianists he seems to have praised unreservedly.) In Beethoven's first three concertos, Mozart's influence is unmistakable. But with his fourth, everything changes. In the Piano Concerto No. 4 we hear the work of a more confident composer—one who has fully found his voice. This concerto's themes have a nobility that is distinctly Beethoven's own, and he develops them in ways that previous composers had never dared. Mozart's 30 piano concertos had brought the form to a new level of beauty, expressiveness and formal refinement, representing the culmination of the classical era; starting with his fourth, Beethoven built on this legacy, expanding the old forms beyond the breaking point and then creating new ones, opening the way for the great concertos of the Romantic era.

Did our modern conception of the Romantic concerto start here? Certainly, a case can be made for this idea. The concerto form was especially well suited to Beethoven's approach to composition. His preoccupation with the great ideas of his time, especially the questions

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 16, 1770 in Bonn, Germany
Died: March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2022

Overture to *Egmont*, Op. 84
Composed: October 1809-June 1810
World Premiere: June 15, 1810 in Vienna
Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: October 20, 2013 at Soka Perfomring Arts Center conducted by Carl St.Clair
Instrumentation: two flutes including piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four French horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings
Estimated duration: 9 minutes

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15
Composed: 1795
World Premiere: 1798 in Prague, with the 27-year-old Beethoven at the keyboard. Historians speculate that he may have performed an earlier version of the concerto in Vienna in 1795 at a benefit concert for the widows of members of the Vienna Musicians' Guild
Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: November 20, 2016 at Soka Perfomring Arts Center with Fei-Fei Dong as soloist and Carl St.Clair conducting
Instrumentation: one flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two French horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings and solo piano
Estimated duration: 36 minutes

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58
Composed: 1805-1806
World Premiere: December 22, 1808 at Vienna's Theater an der Wien with the composer as soloist
Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: November 20, 2016 at Soka Perfomring Arts Center with Fei-Fei Dong as soloist and Carl St.Clair conducting
Instrumentation: one flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two French horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings and solo piano
Estimated duration: 34 minutes

FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 2022

Romance No. 1 in G Major for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 40
Composed: 1801 and published in 1803
Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: April 27, 2014 at Soka Perfomring Arts Center Simone Porter as soloist and Carl St.Clair conducting
Instrumentation: one flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two French horns, strings and solo violin
Estimated duration: 8 minutes

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19
Composed: primarily between 1787 and 1789, although it did not attain its published form until 1795
World Premiere: March 29, 1795 at Vienna's Burgtheater in a concert marking Beethoven's public debut as piano soloist. Prior to that, he had performed only in the private salons of the Viennese nobility
Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: February 5, 2017 at Soka Perfomring Arts Center with Sean Chen as soloist and Carl St.Clair conducting
Instrumentation: one flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two French horns, strings and solo piano
Estimated duration: 28 minutes

Romance No. 2 in F Major for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 50
Composed: 1798 and published in 1805
Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: April 27, 2014 at Soka Perfomring Arts Center Simone Porter as soloist and Carl St.Clair conducting
Instrumentation: one flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two French horns, strings and solo violin
Estimated duration: 9 minutes

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37
Composed: 1800
World Premiere: April 5, 180 in Vienna's Theater an der Wien with the composer as soloist
Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: March 25, 2017 with Zhang Zuo as soloist and Carl St.Clair conducting
Instrumentation: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two French horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings and solo piano
Estimated duration: 34 minutes

of human freedom and the individual's relation to the state, were never far from his music. As with his symphonies, Beethoven's piano concertos pushed the scope and heft of the form as he worked his way through musical ideas. Beethoven greatly admired Mozart's piano concertos, with their constant sense of spontaneity and delight, but did not pursue these qualities in his own concertos. Instead, they get progressively weightier starting with this one and reaching an extreme in the fifth, which can be heard as an inquiry into freedom and tyranny.

In the fourth, the concerto's freshness is apparent from its opening. The piano introduces a simple theme in G major with a few simple chords while the orchestra is at rest. Then the orchestra enters with the same theme, but in a key that bears little relation to the piano's statement, introducing a competitive tension between solo instrument and ensemble that would become a mainstay of Romantic concertos, and sustaining it with bold harmonic modulations. The second movement is rhapsodic and almost agonizingly slow, setting up a contemplative mood; Franz Liszt, the most admired pianist of his generation, described this movement as a depiction of Orpheus taming the furies.

In the sublime third movement, the piano keeps returning to the dramatic main theme despite the allure of one sub-theme after another. The structure is a traditional rondo form—A-B-A-C-A-D-A—but it builds with a sense of joyful drama. Hearing it, we can put a different twist on Liszt's description: Apollo, in his chariot of light, triumphantly bringing music to the world.

Romance No. 1 in G Major for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 40

Romance No. 2 in F for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 50

If you think of Beethoven as the ever-serious composer who often made things difficult for himself, challenging his players and his listeners, you're in good company. But his two lustrous romances for violin and orchestra will defy your expectations. While Beethoven sometimes wrote "against" the instrument, pushing the conventions of technique, his two violin romances are sometimes called "violinistic"—written to fit the traditions that violin soloists love.

That sense of comfortably fitting the instrument was not easily achieved, then or now. Like Mozart, Beethoven was himself a virtuoso instrumentalist (on the piano) who gravitated to Vienna for its culture of musical appreciation. In the late 1790s he was probably the city's most eminent musical celebrity (Mozart had died in 1791). This time in Beethoven's life is often called his "middle period," and its compositions engage large-scale ideas in the symphonies and concertos. The romances reveal him in a more relaxed vein. Romance No. 2 was composed in 1798, four years earlier than Romance No. 1, but was published four years later, in 1805, and bears a later opus number (50) than the G major's number 40. His violin concerto would come later—in 1806. The romances date from the same period as *The Creatures of Prometheus*, an equally informal ballet score composed on commission.

Though Beethoven was coming to grips with his deafness and social isolation in these years, we cannot hear this in the luminous, sylvan qualities of the music he composed at the time, especially in the romances, *Prometheus*, and the second symphony. "I must confess that I am living a miserable life," he wrote to a friend. "For almost two years I have ceased to attend any social functions, just because I find it impossible to say to people: I am deaf." Yet the music seems to glow with a sense of optimism.

Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 19

Beethoven's second piano concerto, which predates the romances, shows his strict attention to the models of the two great classical masters of the form, Haydn and Mozart—especially Mozart. Though the Concerto No. 1 was the first one he published, he actually composed it almost ten years after his Concerto No. 2, in 1796 and 1797. Beethoven himself was soloist at its first performance of No. 2 in Prague in 1798 and played it again at its Viennese debut, in 1800. He was also working on his first symphony during this period, clearly a time when he was turning more confidently to the biggest and most challenging classical forms.

Though the second concerto closely resembles the first in style, it's interesting to remember as we listen that it actually preceded the first, even though the opus numbers do not clarify this fact. (The same numerical quirk is true of the violin romances.) Music historians tell us that Beethoven was sketching musical ideas for his concertos while he was still in his teens, and that the first version of his Piano Concerto No. 2 dates from 1795, when he was 25, though he did not finalize it until 1798. It was published three years later. Many listeners take these dates as guideposts to navigate Beethoven's stylistic periods, which are generally divided into early, middle and late; they identify his Piano Concerto No. 2 as the earliest of the early concertos, the most reminiscent of Mozart and Haydn. But the delay also reflects the seriousness of his intent regarding the concerto form. Beautiful? Yes, and it met with immediate success after its premiere in 1795. Yet Beethoven expressed dissatisfaction with it, noting that it did not represent his best work and submitting it for publication with reluctance. Part of its success was surely as a showcase for Beethoven's impressive technique (he was soloist at the premiere).

From the first movement's triumphant opening statement, the concerto requires dazzling finger work in both hands. For the first movement cadenza—an unaccompanied passage that was often improvised in the classical era—most pianists choose the very challenging, almost fugal version that Beethoven wrote much later, in 1809.This is followed by a slow (adagio) movement of great tenderness. Listeners who think they don't know this concerto may experience a jolt of recognition as soon as the joyful third movement begins, a romp that is melodic and playful. Even during its occasional modulations into minor, it never loses its sunny disposition.

Concerto No. 3 for Piano and Orchestra in C Minor, Op. 37

In Beethoven's third piano concerto, do we hear him, in racing parlance, "breaking away from the pack" of mainstream Classical-era conventions and working his way toward the more grandly scaled fourth and fifth? There's certainly evidence to suggest that possibility. Confidently dedicated to the King of Prussia, it was composed later than numbers one and two, and premiered at a major benefit concert in 1803 with Beethoven at the keyboard and with other major works of his—the Symphony No. 2 and oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives*—on the program. This first public performance must have been something of a shambles: there had been only one rehearsal, and with the score still incomplete by the concert date—a problem not without precedent in those days—many orchestra players found blank pages on their stands. Musicians and listeners fared far better at the more decorous performance "second premiere" a year later in Vienna, with the esteemed pianist Wilhelm Ries at the keyboard.

As modern listeners we can hear both the Classical emphasis on melodic grace and the distinctively "Beethovenian" thoroughness of thematic development. It's also interesting to note that musicologists now cite similarities between this work and Mozart's innovative Piano Concerto No. 24, the concerto that inspired and challenged Beethoven. Recognizing its originality, he may well have seen it as a portent of future developments in concerto form, and in this concerto he makes use of the latest innovations in piano technology for the first time. He also opens the concerto in challenging rather than ingratiating style—with a boldly assertive statement in C minor. The thundering C-minor outbursts of his fifth symphony were soon to follow. The movement's exploration of this theme culminates not with the typical orchestral summation, but with continued musical conversation between orchestra and soloist, as in Mozart's No. 24.

For confirmed Beethoven fans, the second movement's gentle largo in E major hints at the magic of the slow, poetic passages in the "Emperor" Concerto (perhaps inspired by the daringly exposed slow piano solos in Mozart's concertos). But if an almost somnolent serenity prevails, Beethoven wakes us up in characteristic fashion with an explosive fortissimo chord. This leads onto a final movement of harmonic astonishments in which Beethoven immerses us in E major for almost ten minutes, then takes us surprisingly back to C minor. Once we have "settled in" to the concerto's home key, the conclusion is rousingly energetic, with a rollicking 6/8 meter that seems to make the keyboard dance.

Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op. 93

Beethoven's first two symphonies, with their Classical grace, display the influence of Mozart and Haydn. After that, the monumentality begins. The passion and majesty of No. 3, the "Eroica," enlarged the scope of the form. After that, all Beethoven's symphonies, but especially the odd-numbered ones, push the limits of music's potential to express human concerns as well as sheer beauty. As a mnemonic device, some enthusiasts say the third, fifth, seventh and ninth *thunder*; the fourth, sixth and eighth *sing*. The fourth has been described as possessing the serenity of ancient Greek statuary nestled between two towering, rocky crags. But the sixth and the eighth, while they also give an impression of perfectly harmonious form, are not without their innovations; the sixth, with its five movements, follows a narrative line, while the eighth, like the sixth in F major, shows some boldness in development.

Beethoven was fond of this symphony—reportedly preferring it to the more popular seventh—and critics including the redoubtable George Bernard Shaw agreed. And he was clearly relaxed in its execution, feeling free to postpone the first movement's climactic moment to the recapitulation section, which mounts to a freewheeling fortississimo (notated *fff*). The stateliness of the second movement may well camouflage musical satire, though who's being satirized depends on whose anecdote you believe: either Beethoven's friend Johann Maelzel, who invented an improved metronome, or Papa Haydn, whose "Clock" Symphony has a similarly rigid slow movement. Here Beethoven, again in relaxed mode, simply appends a coda after the movement's exposition, rather than executing one of his usual thoroughgoing development sections.

In the third movement, belying his usual iconoclasm, Beethoven invokes a traditional minuet—already a style of the past by the time this symphony premiered, in 1814. But in the fourth movement, we hear the more usual symphonic Beethoven: serious, and with a sense of gravitas. This movement's weight is emphasized by the dramatic use of the timpani and by the contrast with all that has gone before.

Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-Flat, "Emperor"

Is there another piano concerto so frequently performed or widely accepted as a symbol of the form's possibilities? Listeners who would never think of poring over varying interpretations of other works remember their "first Emperor" and argue over comparative interpretations.

The sheer inventiveness and beauty of Mozart's last and greatest piano concertos, composed from 1784 through 1786, had left Beethoven wondering how he could possibly advance the form. (Both men were pianists.) The "Emperor" Concerto, completed 25 years later, provides an emphatic answer. Its beauty lies not so much in the originality of its relatively few melodies, but in the poetic grandeur and depth of their development. Mozart's uncanny mastery had pushed piano concertos from the salon to the concert hall; Beethoven gave them a breadth of scale and an engagement with ideas that have remained benchmarks through the Romantic and Modern eras.

So who is the concerto's "emperor"? As author Andrew Schartmann notes in his *Myth and Misinterpretation in Beethoven's Emperor Concerto*, it is clear that listeners had Napoleon in mind when the Fifth became associated with that highly charged word. But whether this nickname is appropriate is another matter. "There is no question that the popular title originated from extra-musical associations not sanctioned by the composer," says Schartmann, who calls the term misleading. "It can only be hoped that performer[s] do not base their interpretations on these unfounded anecdotes."

Perhaps. But the anecdotes are inescapable, and there are good reasons why they seem tied to the notion of the common man versus an imperial ideal. Beethoven was deeply concerned with the philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment, and most particularly with the dilemma of the individual's right to be free versus society's need to be governed. Beethoven was among the many thinkers who first believed that as liberator of Europe from monarchies, Napoleon was a champion of human freedom who betrayed this noble cause by arrogating the power and privileges of monarchy to himself. The composer famously intended to dedicate his "Eroica" symphony—which, like the "Emperor" Concerto, bears a key of E flat—to Napoleon, but furiously "undedicated" it in manuscript.

There are also good reasons why the concerto form is especially well suited to Beethoven's philosophical concerns. Its most basic formal constraint—the one (soloist) versus the many (orchestra)—provides an ideal framework for exploring the individual's relationship with society. As with his symphonies, Beethoven's piano concertos pushed the scope and heft of the form as he worked his way through musical ideas. Beethoven greatly admired Mozart's piano concertos, with their constant sense of spontaneity and delight, but did not pursue these qualities in his own concertos. Instead, they get progressively weightier, until in the fifth we hear some of the noblest music ever written. For all its beauty, "delight" is not the prevailing effect; as we listen, we have the impression that all of human dignity is at stake.

For all the philosophical meanings that many listeners hear in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5, its appeal is mainly a matter of sheer, abstract beauty, expressed through melodies that combine simplicity and grandeur. Their development seems profound yet personal, partly because Beethoven's development sections often delineate only the accompanying line in the orchestra or the piano, leaving us to imagine the melody on our own. This draws us into the composition as few concertos do—one reason why the Emperor as achieved such rare popularity with its adoring public.

The Emperor Concerto bears the hallmarks that have grown familiar through the canon of Beethoven piano concertos: the fast-slow-fast arrangement of movements, the adherence to sonata form, the final rondo with its repeated melodic statements by the soloist. But its consistently noble character is unique. If Beethoven's rededication of the "Eroica" symphony shows what he thought of emperors, the "Emperor" Concerto still seems aptly named for its elevated expression, which never flags.

Rather than climbing to altitude, the concerto's opening seems already to have arrived at a great height, announcing itself through repeated, solemn chords with the gilded quality of a royal fanfare. After an introduction, the splendid opening theme has a sense of firmness, strongly rooted in the concerto's tonic key of E flat. It is balanced by a second theme that is no less noble but far softer, almost whispering its presence until the two themes reconcile. After this high-flying but worldly opening, the second-movement adagio seems to ascend still further, perhaps heavenward, stopping time with a sweet but melancholy meditation. After the end of a series of trills, listen for the second phrase of the poetic main theme: in his book *The Rest Is Noise*, the music critic Alex Ross identifies this as a source for Leonard Bernstein's song "Somewhere" from the musical *West Side Story*.

In the final movement, the main theme is really just an arpeggio reassembled. But with each dazzling iteration, Beethoven disassembles it still further, requiring the listener to take part in the performance through active listening — just as variations on a theme may require listeners to bushwhack their way back to the original theme. As in the concerto's opening, the main theme of the final movement has the structure and imposing character of a fanfare.

Beethoven performed his other concertos publicly, but by 1811 his increasing deafness prevented him from continuing to do so. In listening, we can hear why: this concerto requires extreme virtuosity from the soloist. Entrances are precise and unforgiving, and some passages that have a free, cadenza-like quality are actually prescribed in detail. The premiere of the Emperor Concerto was played by pianist Friedrich Schneider in Leipzig.

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SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 2022

Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93
Composed: 1812
World Premiere: February 27, 1814 at a concert in the Redoutensaal, Vienna
Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: July 23, 1994 at Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre with Carl St.Clair conducting
Instrumentation: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two French horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings
Estimated duration: 26 minutes

Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73 ("Emperor")
Composed: 1809
World Premiere: November 28, 1811 in Leipzig, with Friedrich Schneider as the soloist and Johann Philipp Christian Schulz conducting the Gewandhaus Orchestra. Beethoven, usually the soloist, could not perform due to declining hearing
Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: May 5, 2018 with André Watts as soloist and Carl St.Clair conducting
Instrumentation: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two French horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings and solo piano
Estimated duration: 38 minutes