

2024–2025 | 125th Season
Marian Anderson Hall

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Friday, May 23, at 2:00

Saturday, May 24, at 7:00

Thursday, May 29, at 7:30

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Lara Downes Piano

Leah Hawkins Soprano

Rihab Chaieb Mezzo-Soprano

Issachah Savage Tenor

Ryan McKinny Bass-Baritone

Philadelphia Symphonic Choir

Amanda Quist Director

Price Piano Concerto in One Movement

Intermission

Beethoven Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 (“Choral”)

I. Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso

II. Molto vivace—Presto

III. Adagio molto e cantabile—Andante moderato—Tempo I

IV. Presto—Allegro assai—Presto (Recitativo)—Allegro assai—Allegro assai
vivace: alla marcia—Andante maestoso—Allegro energico—Allegro ma
non tanto—Poco adagio—Poco allegro, strigendo il tempo—Prestissimo

This program runs approximately two hours.

These concerts are sponsored in memory of **Gail and Dr. George E. Ehrlich**.

The May 23 concert is also anonymously sponsored.

The May 24 concert is also sponsored by **Dr. and Mrs. Joseph B. Townsend**.

The May 29 concert is also sponsored by **Nancy S. Halpern**.

Florence Price’s Piano Concerto in One Movement is a highlight of the Marian Anderson Artistic Initiative, supported in part by the **Wyncote Foundation**. The Marian Anderson Artistic Initiative showcases composers and artists who embody Ms. Anderson’s passion for increasing inclusivity, diversity, equity, and access in the performing arts, contributing to the advancement of a more representative art form.

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM and are repeated on Monday evenings at 7 PM on WRTI HD 2. Visit www.wrti.org to listen live or for more details.



The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives, a commitment to its diverse communities, and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive and inclusive future for classical music and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united. Today, The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts brings the greatest performances and most impactful education and community programs to audiences in Philadelphia and beyond.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community. In addition to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today's composers, Yannick and the Orchestra are committed to performing and recording the works of previously overlooked composers.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, around the community, over the airwaves, and online. The Kimmel Center has been the ensemble's home since 2001, and in 2024 Verizon

Hall at the Kimmel Center was officially rededicated as Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; the free annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute Concert; School Concerts; sensory-friendly concerts; open rehearsals; the School Ensemble Program; All-City Orchestra Fellowships; and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a now-five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 14 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award-winning *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

Music and Artistic Director



London Neudeman

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is currently in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. An inspired leader, Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is both an evolutionary and a revolutionary, developing the mighty “Philadelphia Sound” in new ways. His collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him “phenomenal,” adding that “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.”

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling and sought-after talents of his generation. He became the third music director of New York’s Metropolitan Opera in 2018. In addition, he has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. In 2017 he became the third-ever honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He served as music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles and at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick has shown a deep commitment to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today’s composers and by performing the music of under-appreciated composers of the past. In 2018 he signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 14 releases on that label, including *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*, which won a GRAMMY® Award for Best Orchestral Performance in 2022.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal’s Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductors, most notably Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada; Companion to the Order of Arts and Letters of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Montreal; an Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres; *Musical America*’s 2016 Artist of the Year; ECHO KLASSIK’s 2014 Conductor of the Year; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; Canada’s National Arts Centre Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; the Oskar Morawetz Award; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, the University of Montreal, the University of Pennsylvania, Laval University, and Drexel University.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit philorch.org/conductor.

Soloists

Ebru Yildiz



Pianist **Lara Downes** made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2022 in Saratoga. A sought-after soloist, Billboard Chart-topping recording artist, and arts activist, she was honored as 2022 Classical Woman of the Year by *Performance Today*. In addition to these current performances, recent and upcoming engagements include appearances with the Boston Pops, the Detroit and Indianapolis symphonies, and the Louisville Orchestra, as well as recitals and residencies at Ravinia, the Gilmore Festival, Washington Performing Arts, Caramoor, and

the Cabrillo Festival, among many others. Her collaborations with diverse artists including Rhiannon Giddens, Thomas Hampson, Judy Collins, Daniel Hope, Yo-Yo Ma, and the Miró Quartet explore shared creative perspectives across genres and traditions. Her most recent recording, *Love at Last* on Pentatone, debuted at the top of the Billboard and Amazon charts and was featured on an NPR Tiny Desk concert. She is creator and host of the NPR Music video series *AMPLIFY with Lara Downes* and the creator and curator of Rising Sun Music, a label dedicated to making first recordings of music by Black composers from the 18th century to the present day. Learn more at LaraDownes.com.

Curtis Brown



Soprano **Leah Hawkins** is the recipient of the Metropolitan Opera's 2024 Beverly Sills Artist Award and a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. Additional honors include the Dallas Symphony's Women in Classical Music Career Advancement Award, a Richard Tucker Foundation Career Grant, and the Marian Anderson Award. In addition to these current performances, highlights of her 2024–25 season include her San Francisco Symphony debut in Verdi's *Requiem* conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen and

returns to the Metropolitan Opera for Verdi's *Il trovatore* and Arizona Opera for her titular role debut in Verdi's *Aida*. On the concert stage she debuts with the Apollo Orchestra in a concert of Verdi arias and returns to the Park Avenue Armory for a self-curated recital entitled "C'est ainsi que tu es or That is how you are," which is "a glimpse into my ongoing journey of finding, accepting, and living as my truest self." Future engagements include debuts with La Monnaie in Brussels and Dallas Opera. She has also sung Musetta in Puccini's *La bohème* at the Metropolitan Opera and with The Philadelphia Orchestra in 2024. She made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2017.

Soloists

Goetz Photography



Tunisian-Canadian mezzo-soprano **Rihab Chaieb** made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2022 at Carnegie Hall. Highlights of her 2024–25 season include a return to LA Opera as Dorabella in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, her house debut with Opera Australia as the title role in Bizet’s *Carmen*, and a return to the Bavarian State Opera as Lola in a new production of Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana*. She also sings Maddalena in Verdi’s *Rigoletto* at the Metropolitan Opera and Fenena in Verdi’s *Nabucco* at the Canadian Opera Company.

On the concert stage she debuts at the Bregenz Festival in Ravel’s *Shéhérazade* with the Vienna Symphony and Elim Chan. She also sings Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain and Yannick Nézet-Séguin and with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel. As a recording artist she has appeared on tenor Jonathan Tetelman’s *The Great Puccini* album for Deutsche Grammophon and has also recorded Bach’s Mass in B minor and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with Yannick and the Orchestre Métropolitain, the latter released on Deutsche Grammophon’s DG Stage.

Jiyang Chen



Since sweeping the board of top prizes at Seattle’s International Wagner Competition in 2014, tenor **Issachah Savage** has established himself as one of today’s most impressive young heldentenors, making acclaimed debuts as Siegmund in *Die Walküre* with the Opéra National de Bordeaux conducted by Paul Daniel; Froh in *Das Rheingold* with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and Yannick Nézet-Séguin; the title role in *Tamnhäuser* at Los Angeles Opera, conducted by James Conlon; Bacchus in Strauss’s *Ariadne auf Naxos* at both

the Théâtre du Capitole Toulouse under Evan Rogister and Seattle Opera under Lawrence Renes; and, most recently, as the Kaiser in Strauss’s *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in a return to the Théâtre du Capitole Toulouse under Frank Beermann. Mr. Savage opened the 2024–25 season with a title role debut in Britten’s *Peter Grimes* at Dutch National Opera and sang Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the New Jersey Symphony under Xian Zhang. Among his many awards, he was honored in the early stages of his career as the first-ever “Scholar Artist” of the Marian Anderson Society of Philadelphia. Mr. Savage made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2023.

Soloist

Stacey Bode



American bass-baritone **Ryan McKinny** made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2022. Other recent performance highlights include the role of Joseph De Rocher opposite mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* at the Metropolitan Opera, including on the big screen for the Met's Summer HD Festival in Lincoln Center Plaza; his role debut as Jan Nyman in Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves* at Houston Grand Opera; and his company debut at Des Moines Metro Opera as the title character in Wagner's *The*

Flying Dutchman. Additional performances include Verdi's Requiem with the Colorado Symphony and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Houston Symphony and the Toledo Symphony. Mr. McKinny draws on his wide-ranging artistic experiences in his increasing work as a film and stage director. Through Helio Arts, he commissioned artists to write, direct, and film original stories, helping to elevate fresh voices and visions in the classical performing arts world. In collaboration with co-director Tonya McKinny, he created a new stage production of Kevin Puts's *Silent Night*, which premiered at Wolf Trap Opera in August 2024.

Choir

Jessica Griffin



The **Philadelphia Symphonic Choir** made its debut in December 2016, performing in three programs with The Philadelphia Orchestra that season. Consisting of talented vocalists from around the country, the ensemble was created to marry gifted voices of Philadelphia and beyond with the legendary Philadelphia Sound. Performance highlights with the Orchestra include the world premiere of the concert version of Kevin Puts's opera *The Hours* and Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* in Philadelphia and at Carnegie Hall. The Choir

is directed by Amanda Quist, director of choral activities for Western Michigan University. She has collaborated in choral preparations with The Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the New World Symphony, the Dresden Staatskapelle, Seraphic Fire, and the Spoleto Festival. The American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO, the union of professional singers, dancers, and production personnel in opera, ballet, and concert, represents the choral artists in these performances.

Philadelphia Symphonic Choir

Sopranos

Laura Berman
Lily Carmichael
Ting-Ting Chang
Abigail Chapman
Lauren Cohen
Maria Palombo Costa
Marisa Curcio
Natalie Esler
Alexandra Gilliam
Julie-Ann Green
Jina Jang
Colleen Kinderman
Rachael Lipson
Mary McCormick
Maddie Meier
Luciana Piovani
Olivia Prendergast
Rexxi
Veronica Richer
Sophia Santiago
Rebecca Shimer
Nathania Sigmund
Pei Ying Wang

Altos

Tanisha Anderson
Katie Bove
Lori Cummines-Huck
Cat Dean
Calli Graver
Alyson Harvey
Amber Johnson
Renee Macdonald
Kimberly Martinez
Megan McFadden
Meghan McGinty

Sarah A. Michal
Heather Mitchell
Christine Nass
Natasha Nelson
Elisabeth Kotzakidou Pace
Sam Rauch
Rebecca Roy
Sarah Sensenig
Cecelia Snow
Lisa Stein
Kaitlyn Tierney

Tenors

Aldo Aranzulla
Sam Barge
Brendan Barker
Noah Donahue
Roberto Guevara, Jr.
Jonathan Hartwell
Bryan Umberto Hoyos
Colin Raymond Kase
Jordan Klotz
Joshua Lisner
Max Marques
DonLeroy Morales
Timothy Morrow
Jacob Nelson
Nicholas Petroski
Reid Shriver
Steven Soph
Royce Strider
Arturo Tapia-Minchez
Daniel Taylor
Tyler Tejada
Knox VanHorn
Carson Zajdel

Basses

Christopher D. Aldrich
Graham Bier
Gordon Blodgett
Michael Carson
Kyle Chastulik
Peter Christian
Connor Fluharty
Loren Greer
Gabriel Harley
Ian Martin
Bryan McClary
Jonathan Mortensen
Luis Orrego
Carlos Pedroza
Erik Potteiger
Stephen Raytek
John T.K. Scherch
Andrew J. Shaw
Sergey Tkachenko
D'quan Tyson
Jackson Williams
Michael Wisnosky

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1824
Beethoven
Symphony No. 9

Music
Mendelssohn
Concerto for Two
Pianos

Literature
Scott
Redgauntlet

Art
Ingres
Vow of Louis XIII

History
Eric Canal
finished

1934
Price
Piano Concerto
in One
Movement

Music
Rachmaninoff
Rhapsody on
a Theme of
Paganini

Literature
Graves
I Claudius

Art
Dali
Cousine

History
Lindbergh baby
kidnapped

The Philadelphia Orchestra has been at the forefront in the discovery of the music of Florence Price. Its recording of her First and Third symphonies won a GRAMMY Award for “Best Orchestral Performance” in 2022. On this concert we hear Price’s Piano Concerto in One Movement. The full score of the piece was thought to have been lost and was reconstructed from various sources. In 2018, however, the original manuscript copy was discovered and the Philadelphians gave the first North American performance in its original orchestration since the composer’s death in 1953.

Among the masterpieces of Western music there are a handful of compositions that changed the course of its history. Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony is one: a work long celebrated both for its musical qualities and its extra-musical implications. Beethoven had not composed a symphony in nearly a decade when he produced the extraordinary—and for some initially baffling—Ninth. He set Friedrich Schiller’s “Ode to Joy,” a poem with a powerful Enlightenment message that has continued to resonate and inspire for now just over two centuries.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world with three weekly broadcasts on SiriusXM’s *Symphony Hall*, Channel 76, on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 4 PM.

The Music

Piano Concerto in One Movement

Florence Price

Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, April 9, 1887

Died in Chicago, June 3, 1953



In early-20th-century America, orchestral music was largely regarded as the province of dead white men, a field in which a living Black woman had no apparent hope of gaining any foothold. This makes Florence Price's career all the more unlikely, and therefore more remarkable. Price faced the unrelenting double challenge of racism and gender bias her entire life. Nevertheless, she persisted and earned a crucial place in American music history that is still in the process of being fully recognized and celebrated.

Hardships and Tremendous Successes Price was born into an upper-middle-class mixed-race family in Arkansas. Her mother, a music teacher, provided her first musical training. Graduating at the top of her high school class, Price was accepted into the New England Conservatory of Music to study piano and organ but won admittance only by “passing” as Mexican in order to avoid the heightened racial bias against Blacks. After graduating in 1906, she taught at colleges in Arkansas and Georgia before moving to Chicago in 1927 to escape racially motivated violence and segregation. Once in Illinois, she continued her education with the leading music teachers in the Chicago area.

In 1932 Price's Symphony No. 1 in E minor won a Wanamaker Foundation Award and was performed the following year by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra—the first time a major orchestra had performed a work by a Black American woman. The conductor on that occasion was Frederick Stock—one of only a handful of conductors in America at the time willing to program Price's orchestral music. It was Stock who then encouraged her to write a piano concerto.

Price's Piano Concerto in One Movement premiered in Chicago in 1934, with the composer as soloist and Stock conducting. It was dedicated to Helen Armstrong Andrews, Price's patron and friend. Other performances followed soon after, eliciting almost universal critical acclaim. One reviewer wrote in the *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, “There [in the Concerto] is real American music, and Mrs. Price is speaking a language she knows,” acknowledging both the Concerto's technical assuredness and its musical roots in African-American tradition.

Lost Masterpieces After her death in 1953, Price and almost all her 300 compositions (including about 100 songs) faded into obscurity. Several decades later, scholars including

Barbara Garvey Jackson, Helen Walker-Hill, and Rae Linda Brown started researching her career and music and her compositions also gradually began to appear on concert programs again. Most importantly, a collection of Price's scores and papers were miraculously discovered in a derelict house outside St. Anne, Illinois, in 2009—it had been Price's summer home near the end of her life. Further fueled by this unexpected discovery, the simmering Price revival gathered momentum and in 2018 the publishing house of G. Schirmer acquired the rights to her entire catalogue.

In 2015 the Center for Black Music Research in Chicago commissioned Trevor Weston, a composition professor at Drew University, to reconstruct the orchestration of Price's Piano Concerto. Although the original orchestral score had been lost for several decades, some of the orchestral parts were discovered in the early 1990s, and Price had left a piano rehearsal score, plus a two-piano reduction of the Concerto, annotated with some of her ideas on orchestration. Weston reconstructed the missing orchestral parts, and his orchestration premiered in 2016.

Then, two years later, the original manuscript copy turned up unexpectedly at an auction in the same Illinois town, St. Anne, where so many of Price's other scores had been recently rediscovered. Schirmer quickly readied the publication of the Concerto's original orchestration, which was released in 2020.

A Closer Look As its name suggests, the Piano Concerto in One Movement is played without a break, but with three sections corresponding to the three traditional movements of a Classical piano concerto. A sparse introduction, presenting the first section's main theme, leads quickly into an extended piano cadenza. Then the theme—an original melody in which Price draws on the flavor of the spiritual—develops into a propulsive, energetic quasi-sonata form. The slower central section is a lyrical Adagio whose melody suggests the nostalgic, yearning quality of African-American “sorrow songs” such as “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child” or “Deep River.” Call-and-response exchanges within the orchestra confirm the allusion.

Price believed the “juba”—a lively, syncopated plantation dance that predates the Civil War—was as essential to African-American music as the spiritual. She included a “juba” (although not always named as such in the score) in every one of her larger works. The final section in this Concerto is a rollicking, exultant “juba” whose lively rhythms clearly underscore how integral that dance form was to the development of ragtime.

—Luke Howard

Luke Howard is associate director of the School of Music at Brigham Young University, and for many years wrote program notes for The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Aspen Music Festival, and Utah Opera. His research focuses on classical music in popular culture and the reception histories of well-known concert works.

Florence Price composed her Piano Concerto in One Movement in 1934.

The Concerto first appeared on a Philadelphia Orchestra Digital Stage concert in February 2021, with pianist Michelle Cann and Yannick Nézet-Séguin. That appearance marked the first North American performance of the Concerto in its original orchestration at least since Price's death in 1953, and possible since the mid-1930s. These current performances are the first on Orchestra subscription concerts.

The piece is scored for solo piano, flute, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, timpani, percussion (bass drum, crash cymbal, snare drum, suspended cymbal), and strings.

Performance time is approximately 18 minutes.

The Music

Symphony No. 9 (“Choral”)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born in Bonn, December 16, 1770

Died in Vienna, March 26, 1827



Throughout his career, Beethoven was a fervent believer in Enlightenment values and sought ways to express his beliefs in many of his compositions. One of the reasons for the broad and sustained appeal of his Ninth Symphony is that people enjoying or seeking freedom see this work as exquisitely expressing a message they wish loudly to proclaim. The message is simple, one we learn as children: People should live together in joyous brotherhood.

An Enlightenment Testament As a child of the Enlightenment, Beethoven grew up during the American and French revolutions. He followed political events throughout his life and experienced war close at hand when Napoleon’s troops invaded Vienna in 1805 and again in 1809. His first large-scale composition, written at the age of 19, was an impressive cantata commemorating the death of Emperor Joseph II, who had done so much to liberalize the Austrian empire during the early 1780s. Years later Beethoven wrote his lone opera, *Fidelio*, which tells the story of a loving wife’s brave efforts to save her husband, an unjustly jailed political prisoner. Through her heroic deeds he is rescued and tyranny exposed.

For his final symphony Beethoven turned to a lengthy poem by Friedrich Schiller that he had long wanted to set to music: the “Ode to Joy” (1785). Schiller’s famous words state that in a new age the old ways will no longer divide people; “all men shall become brothers.” Since the premiere of the Ninth Symphony in Vienna in May 1824, performances of the work have become almost sacramental occasions, as musicians and audiences alike are exhorted to universal fraternity.

The Ultimate Symphony On a purely musical level, few pieces of music have exerted such an impact on later composers. How, many wondered, should one write a symphony after the Ninth? Schubert, Berlioz, Brahms, Wagner, Bruckner, Mahler—the list goes on and on—all dealt with this question in fascinating ways that fundamentally shaped 19th-century music. Schubert, who most likely attended the 1824 premiere, briefly quoted the “joy” theme in his own final symphony, written the following year. Most Bruckner symphonies begin in the manner of the Ninth. Mendelssohn, Mahler, and Shostakovich followed the model of using a chorus. Wagner was perhaps the composer most influenced by the work, arguing that in it Beethoven pointed the way to the “Music of the Future,” a universal drama uniting music and words that, in short, was realized in Wagner’s own operas.

Composers are not the only people who have become deeply engaged with the Ninth, and struggled with its import and meaning. For nearly two centuries the work has surfaced at crucial times and places, appropriated for widely diverse purposes. As the ultimate “feel-good” piece, the Ninth has been used to open the Olympic Games and bring nations together in song. Yet during the Nazi era it was often performed to celebrate Hitler’s birthday. Its melody is the official anthem of the European Union—but it was also the anthem of Ian Smith’s racist regime in Rhodesia during the 1970s. Within more recent memory, we have heard protestors playing recordings of the Ninth in Tiananmen Square in Beijing and jubilant students also chose it as their theme as the Berlin Wall fell in 1989. There were commemorative performances in the wake of 9/11, when the Ninth was once again enlisted for its hopeful message.

A Resisted Masterpiece In a penetrating essay, “Resisting the Ninth,” music historian Richard Taruskin has pointed to ways in which some musicians and listeners from the beginning have resisted the Ninth Symphony, embarrassed by what they consider its naive optimism. This Symphony, Taruskin states, “is among connoisseurs preeminently the Piece You Love to Hate, no less now than a century and a half ago. Why? Because it is at once incomprehensible and irresistible, and because it is at once awesome and naive.”

Those who revere the Ninth Symphony may be surprised to hear that some have resisted it now or at any time. Undoubtedly its message has been “neutered” as it has been trivialized in movies and TV commercials, and often treated by musicians in purely musical terms rather than in humanistic ones. For some modern listeners, Taruskin argues, its message may be difficult to take seriously anymore: “We have our problems with demagogues who preach to us about the brotherhood of man. We have been too badly burned by those who have promised Elysium and given us gulags and gas chambers.” Yet Beethoven understood that great works of art matter, in part because they constitute a threat to tyrants. Beethoven strove for ways to express a deeply felt political vision.

A Closer Look The opening of the first movement (***Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso***) grows out of a void. Against the murmurings of the low strings emerge falling fifths in the violins that build to a loud and imposing first theme. It has been likened to the creation of the world; certainly no symphony before had sounded anything like it. Beethoven switched the expected order of movements (another feature later composers would imitate) by following the allegro with the scherzo (***Molto vivace***). A favorite with audiences from the beginning (especially the prominent role given to the timpani), it projects both humor and power. The lyrical slow movement (***Adagio molto e cantabile***) seems to explore more personal, even spiritual realms.

The **Presto** finale opens with what Wagner called the “terror fanfare,” a dissonant and frantic passage that leads to a “recitative” (so marked in the score) for the cellos and basses. Fragments from the previous three movements pass in review—a few measures of the opening theme of each—but are in turn rejected by the strings. After this strange, extended instrumental recitative comes an aria-like melody: the famous “Ode to Joy” tune to which later will be added words. After some seven minutes the movement starts over again: The

“terror fanfare” returns, this time followed by a true vocal recitative, with the bass soloist singing “O friends, not these tones! But rather, let us strike up more pleasant and more joyful ones.” The chorus and four vocal soloists take up the “joy” theme, which undergoes a series of variations, including a brief section in the Turkish manner, with cymbals, triangle, drum, piccolo, and trumpets. The music reaches a climax with a new theme: “Be embraced, ye millions, ... above the starry canopy there must dwell a loving Father,” which is later combined in counterpoint with the joy theme and eventually builds to a frenzied coda.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Christopher H. Gibbs is James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College and has been the program annotator for The Philadelphia Orchestra since 2000. He is the author of several books on Schubert and Liszt, and the co-author, with Richard Taruskin, of The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition.

Beethoven composed his Ninth Symphony from 1822 to 1824.

The Philadelphia Orchestra performed the first three movements of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in March 1902, with Fritz Scheel conducting. The Orchestra's first complete performance of the work took place in March 1903, again with Scheel. The most recent subscription performances were in June 2022, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin, soprano Angel Blue, mezzo-soprano Mihoko Fujimura, tenor Limmie Pulliam, bass-baritone Ryan Speedo Green, and the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir.

The Orchestra has recorded the Symphony five times: in 1934 with Leopold Stokowski for RCA; in 1945, 1962, and 1964 with Eugene Ormandy for CBS; and in 1988 with Riccardo Muti for EMI. A live recording from 2006 with Christoph Eschenbach is also available as a digital download.

The work is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, triangle), strings, four vocal soloists, and a four-part chorus.

The Ninth Symphony runs approximately 70 minutes in performance.

Text/translation begins on the next page.

Ode to Joy

(Friedrich Schiller)

Bass

*O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!
Sondern lasst uns angenehmere
anstimmen, und freudenvollere.*

Bass and Chorus

*Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!
Deine Zauber binden wieder,
was die Mode streng geteilt;
alle Menschen werden Brüder
wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.*

*Wem der grosse Wurf gelungen,
eines Freundes Freund zu sein,
wer ein holdes Weib errungen,
mische seinen Jubel ein!
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele
sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle,
weinend sich aus diesem Bund!*

*Freude trinken alle Wesen
an den Brüsten der Natur;
alle Guten, alle Bösen
folgen ihrer Rosenspur.
Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,
einen Freund, geprüft im Tod;
Wollust war dem Wurm gegeben,
und der Cherub steht vor Gott.*

Tenor and Chorus

*Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen
durch des Himmels prächt'gen Plan,
läufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,
freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen.*

Bass

O friends, not these tones!
But rather, let us strike up
more pleasant and more joyful ones.

Bass and Chorus

Joy, thou lovely spark of the gods,
daughter of Elysium;
drunk with fire, we tread
thy holy realm, O heavenly one!
Thy magic joins again
that which custom has torn apart;
all men become brothers
wherever thy gentle wings are spread.

He who has had the great fortune
of being a friend's friend,
he who has won a gracious wife,
let him join the celebration!
Yes, even he who can call
only one soul on earth his own!
And let the one who could never do this
steal from our midst in tears!

All living beings drink joy
at Nature's breast;
all good things, all evil things
walk her rose-strewn path.
She gave us kisses, she gave us vines,
she gave us a friend true to the grave;
wantonness was given to the worm,
and the cherub stands before God.

Tenor and Chorus

Happily, as his suns fly
across heaven's magnificent expanse,
brothers, run your course
joyfully, like a hero to victory.

Chorus

*Seid umschlungen, Millionen!
Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!
Brüder über'm Sternenzelt
muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.*

*Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?
Such' ihm über'm Sternenzelt,
über Sternen muss er wohnen.*

Chorus

Be embraced, ye millions!
This kiss goes to all the world!
Brothers, above the starry canopy
there must dwell a loving Father.

Do you fall prostrate, O millions?
Do you worship the Creator, O world?
Look for Him above the starry canopy;
He must live above the stars.

English translation by Paul J. Horsley

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