

Minnesota Orchestra

Nicholas Collon, conductor

Jon Kimura Parker, piano

Friday, July 15, 2022, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

Carlos Simon	<i>Fate Now Conquers</i>	ca. 5'
Ludwig van Beethoven	Concerto No. 3 in C minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 37 Allegro con brio Largo Rondo: Allegro <i>Jon Kimura Parker, piano</i>	ca. 34'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	ca. 20'
Ludwig van Beethoven	Symphony No. 2 in D major, Opus 36 Adagio molto – Allegro con brio Larghetto Scherzo: Allegro Allegro molto	ca. 34'

Nicolas Collon's profile appears on page 46; Jon Kimura Parker's on page 8.

pre- and
post-concert

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thank you

This concert is sponsored by Julie and Doug Baker, Jr.

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#), including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities. The July 15 concert will also be broadcast live on [Twin Cities PBS \(TPT-2\)](#) and available for streaming at minnesotaorchestra.org and on the Orchestra's social media channels.





Carlos Simon

Born: 1986
Washington, D.C.

Fate Now Conquers

Premiered: October 8, 2020

Tonight the Minnesota Orchestra launches its Summer at Orchestra Hall series with music that perfectly encapsulates the festival's theme of "The Beethoven Influence"—a piano concerto and symphony composed by Ludwig van Beethoven himself, preceded by a recent work of American composer Carlos Simon that was inspired by Beethoven's music and the wrestling with fate that powers some of Beethoven's most famous compositions.

The road to "The Beethoven Influence" festival has been a long one. Curated under the leadership of pianist and Creative Partner Jon Kimura Parker, it was originally slated for 2020 to coincide with Beethoven's 250th birthday, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic until large audiences could once again enjoy a full slate of summer concerts and activities. Simon's *Fate Now Conquers* was similarly impacted by the pandemic. It was written on a commission from the Philadelphia Orchestra for premiere at the end of March 2020, but with the world in lockdown at that time, the premiere was instead given on October 8, 2020, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra in a concert filmed without audiences and shared digitally.

a literary title

The title of Simon's composition comes from the ancient Greek poet Homer's *Iliad*—specifically, a passage from Book XXII that was of such importance to Beethoven that he copied it into his personal diary in an 1815 entry: "But Fate now conquers; I am hers; and yet not she shall share in my renown; that life is left to every noble spirit. And that some great deed shall beget that all lives shall inherit."

Across five action-packed minutes, using the same instrumentation as an early Beethoven symphony (pairs of wind and brass instruments—no trombones or tuba—plus timpani and strings), Simon fashions his own dramatic representation of the timeless struggle with fate, using some Beethoven fragments as building blocks and reference points. Simon has provided the following comments on his music and the *Iliad* quotation in Beethoven's journal:

"Using the beautifully fluid harmonic structure of the second movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, I have composed musical gestures that are representative of the unpredictable ways of fate. Jolting stabs, coupled with an agitated groove with every persona. Frenzied arpeggios in the strings that morph into an ambiguous cloud of free-flowing running passages depict the uncertainty of life that hovers over us.

"We know that Beethoven strived to overcome many obstacles in his life and documented his aspirations to prevail, despite his ailments. Whatever the specific reason for including this particularly profound passage from the *Iliad*, in the end, it seems that Beethoven relinquished [himself] to fate. Fate now conquers."

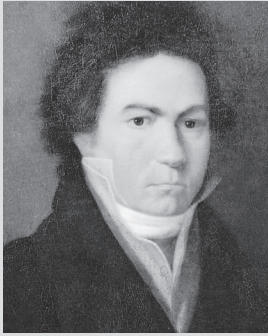
about the composer

Carlos Simon is one of the most in-demand classical composers working in the U.S. today. Last year brought two high honors: he began serving as composer in residence at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and was named a recipient of the Sphinx Organization's most prestigious accolade, the Sphinx Medal of Excellence. In just the next 10 months he will have new works performed by the Boston Symphony, Detroit Symphony, National Symphony, New York Philharmonic and Glimmerglass Festival. The Minnesota Orchestra, too, has commissioned a major new work from Simon; called *brea(d)th*, it is to be scored for orchestra, choir and vocal soloists with libretto by Marc Bamuthi Joseph. Its themes are of great importance in Minneapolis and around the world—racial equity, community healing, reflection, intention and organized hope—and it will premiere in May 2023. In addition, this October the Orchestra will perform Simon's *An Elegy: A Cry from the Grave*, dedicated to Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner and Michael Brown.

Aside from composing concert works in a variety of genres from large ensembles to chamber music and opera, Simon is an experienced and award-winning film composer, music director and keyboardist who has toured nationally and internationally. His newest album, *My Ancestor's Gift*, has drawn acclaim and is available on Navona Records, and his work *Let America Be America Again* (text by Langston Hughes) will be featured in an upcoming PBS documentary chronicling the inaugural Gabriela Lena Frank Academy of Music, a class he was part of in 2017. He holds a doctorate degree from the University of Michigan, where he studied with Michael Daugherty and Evan Chambers, as well as degrees from Georgia State University and Morehouse College; in addition, he was a Sundance/Time Warner Composer Fellow.

Instrumentation: flute, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings

Program note by **Carl Schroeder**.



Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 15, 1770,
Bonn, Germany

Died: March 26, 1827,
Vienna, Austria

Concerto No. 3 in C minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 37

Premiered: April 5, 1803

Ludwig van Beethoven completed the main work on the score of his Third Piano Concerto in 1800. He was the soloist in the first performance, which took place in Vienna on April 5, 1803. His Symphony No. 2 (which is also featured on tonight's program) and oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives* were introduced on the same occasion.

The concert at which Beethoven introduced this concerto is alarming to read about. That day there was a rehearsal that went non-stop from eight in the morning until three in the afternoon, by which time everyone was dotted with fatigue and more than ready to stop. At this point, Beethoven's patron Prince Carl von Lichnowsky sent out for cold cuts and wine to stoke up the exhausted musicians, then asked them to run through *Christ on the Mount of Olives* "just one more time." The concert itself began as scheduled at six o'clock, but ran so long that some pieces which had been planned were not performed.

Ignaz von Seyfried, the newly appointed young conductor at the Theater an der Wien, was recruited to turn pages for Beethoven, "but heaven help me!—that was easier said than done," he reported. "I saw almost nothing but empty leaves...for he played nearly all of the solo part from memory since, as was so often the case, he had not had time to set it all down on paper. He gave me a secret glance whenever he was at the end of one of the invisible passages, and my scarcely concealable anxiety not to miss the decisive moment amused him greatly and he laughed heartily at the jovial supper which we ate afterward."

lean and spare

Although not much time had elapsed since Beethoven composed his Second Piano Concerto, this one does suggest an advance, especially in the sense of a specific and vivid human and musical presence. There are voices other than Beethoven's behind those works, of course. Mozart's C-minor Concerto is one Beethoven particularly admired; once, on hearing it, he sighed, "Ah...we shall never be able to do anything like that." But doing "anything like that" was not really his agenda anyway; he had business of his own to attend to, and that he did superbly.

allegro con brio. The Third Piano Concerto is and feels tight compared to its expansive predecessor. The first movement's gestures, the stark octaves, the sharply profiled rhythms, are those of a tensely dramatic music. Even so, the orchestral exposition of the first movement is remarkably spacious. The piano enters with three explosive scales and then plays its own version, at once elegant and forceful, of the opening theme. Soloist and orchestra together discourse on this. The contrasting lyric theme reappears as well. Brilliant keyboard writing plays an increasingly prominent role, and the solo brings its part of this chapter to a flashy conclusion with a spectacular scale through four and a half octaves. For this movement we have a cadenza by Beethoven, and an assertive and pianistically brilliant affair it is. Even more remarkable is Beethoven's way of bringing the orchestra back in after the cadenza. There always tends to be a drop in tension after the razzle-dazzle of the cadenza; Beethoven, however, takes pains to make sure this moment is arresting and not conventional: he gives us something mysterious and tension-laden.

largo. For the slow movement, Beethoven chooses the key of E major, and the sound of the first hushed chord in the piano is a shock that does not lose its magic. This *Largo* is a movement of immeasurable depth, beautiful melodies and wonderful sounds. The sheerly sensuous element is manifest with special magic in the quietly suspended transition passages in which the dialogue of flute and bassoon is accompanied by plucked strings and wide-ranging, delicate piano arpeggios. Just before the close, which is itself a surprise, Beethoven gives a brief, written-out cadenza to be played *con gran espressione* (with great expression).

rondo: allegro. Beethoven starts the finale with a pun. On the piano, G-sharp, the third note of the E-major scale and the note on which the principal melodies of the *Largo* begin, is the same as A-flat, the sixth note in the scale of C minor and first accented note of the finale's main theme. Later in this vigorous *Rondo* he makes the pun more obvious. And with admirable surefootedness, he introduces a fugued interlude just when a change of pace and texture is needed. This movement, too, has a cadenza at its end. And like Mozart in his concerto in the same key, Beethoven has the music emerge from that cadenza with a rush to the finish in a new key (C major), a new meter (6/8) and a new tempo (*presto*).

Instrumentation: solo piano with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings

Program note excerpted from the late **Michael Steinberg's** *The Concerto: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford, 1998), used with permission.

The Creative Partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall position is supported by Marilyn and Glen Nelson.

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 2 in D major, Opus 36

Premiered: April 5, 1803

Beethoven liked to get away from Vienna during the summer, and in April 1802 he rented rooms in the village of Heiligenstadt, which had fields and forests where he could take long walks. He remained there a long time, not returning to the city until October, but his lengthy stay had nothing to do with the beauty of the setting. That summer the composer finally had to face the dark truth that his hearing was failing, that there was no hope, and that he would eventually go deaf; evidence suggests that he considered suicide that summer.

dark despair, sunny music

Yet from these depths, Beethoven wrote some of his most genial music, a fact that should warn us not to make easy connections between a creator's life and his art. The Symphony No. 2, chief among the works he completed that despairing summer, is as sunny a piece of music as he ever wrote, with an atmosphere of non-stop energy that made it seem audacious to those who first heard it. Like the Piano Concerto No. 3 that precedes it on tonight's program, it received its premiere at a performance in Vienna on April 5, 1803.

adagio molto–allegro con brio. The slow introduction begins with a great explosion: the orchestra has a unison D, marked *fortissimo*, and then moves through an unexpected range of keys, its rhythms growing increasingly animated as it proceeds. At the *Allegro con brio*, Beethoven introduces as his main theme a figure for lower strings that seems almost consciously athematic: there is nothing melodic about this motif, which rushes ahead, curving around a 16th-note turn as it goes. Yet built into it is a vast amount of energy, and much of the development will grow out of the turn. The second subject, innocent and good-natured, arrives in the wind band. Beethoven develops both these ideas, but the turn-figure dominates the movement, including a muttering, ominous modulation for strings at the end of the development. The movement drives to a wonderful climax, the sound of trumpets stinging through a splendid mass of orchestral sound, and the turn-figure propels the music to a close on the same unison D that opened the movement.

larghetto. The second movement is not really a slow movement in the traditional sense, but a moderately-paced sonata-form movement built on a profusion of themes. Beethoven develops these lyric ideas at luxurious length: this is the longest movement in the symphony.

scherzo: allegro. The *Scherzo* erupts with another unison D, and out of this explosion leap three-note salvos. Beethoven seems unusually alert here to *where* these sounds are coming from: the

three-note cannonades jump up from all over the orchestra. By contrast, the trio brings a gentle tune, but the remarkable thing about both scherzo and trio is that each opening statement is quite brief, while the second strains are long and take the music through unexpected harmonic excursions.

allegro molto. The finale opens with an abrupt flourish, and from this brief figure Beethoven generates most of the last movement, deriving much of the music from the flourish's opening F-sharp/G slide and its concluding drop of a fifth. Full of boundless energy and good spirits, this rondo offers a flowing second theme for lower strings (Beethoven marks it *dolce*) and a genial tune for woodwinds over chirping string accompaniment. But the opening flourish always returns to whip this movement forward and to give the music its almost manic character, and the symphony drives to a conclusion that is—one last time—a ringing D for full orchestra.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings

Program note by **Eric Bromberger**.



Tonight the Minnesota Orchestra gives its first performance of **Carlos Simon's *Fate Now Conquers*** in what is also the first time it has played Simon's music for an in-person audience at Orchestra Hall. In May 2021, the Orchestra's string section performed Simon's *An Elegy: A Cry from the Grave* for broadcast and livestream audiences only in the final digital-only concert before small-capacity audiences were welcomed back to the Hall the following month.

The Minnesota Orchestra, then known as the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, gave its initial performance of **Ludwig van Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto** on March 14, 1919, at the Minneapolis Auditorium, with founding Music Director Emil Oberhoffer conducting and Rudolph Ganz as soloist. That concert was the penultimate subscription program of the shortened 1918-19 season—the start of which had been delayed the previous fall due to a six-week ban on all public gatherings as the Spanish influenza pandemic hit the U.S.

The Orchestra first played **Beethoven's Second Symphony** during its inaugural season, on January 5, 1904, at the International Auditorium with Oberhoffer conducting. It was also the ensemble's first performance of any work by Beethoven.



Yue Bao, conductor

Conductor Yue Bao serves as the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation Assistant Conductor of the Houston Symphony. She made her subscription debut with the Houston Symphony on their opening night concert of the 2020-21 season, and has led the orchestra at their summer concert series at the Miller Theater in both 2021 and 2022. She made her Chicago Symphony Orchestra debut at the 2021 Ravinia Festival and has since debuted with the San Francisco Symphony and Detroit Symphony Orchestra. She was the Bruno Walter Memorial Foundation Conducting Fellow at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. In 2018, she served as the David Effron Conducting Fellow at the Chautauqua Music Festival, where she returns as a guest conductor for the 2022 season. In 2019, she toured China with the Vienna Philharmonic, assisting Andrés Orozco-Estrada. Equally at home with both symphonic and operatic repertoire, she has conducted Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Kurt Weill's *Mahagonny: Ein Songspiel*, and Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Medium*. Along with her Artist Diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she was the Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow and studied with Yannick Nezet-Séguin, Bao holds bachelor of music degrees in orchestral conducting and opera accompanying from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and a master of music degree in orchestral conducting from the Mannes School of Music. More: dornmusic.com.



BRKFST Dance Company

BRKFST Dance Company is a group of collaborative breaking choreographers based in St. Paul, Minnesota, and founded in 2014. BRKFST performs regionally, premiering work at Walker Arts Center, the Southern Theater and the Cowles Center. In 2022 they toured to Dublin, Ireland, for Dance2Connect (D2C) Hip Hop Festival, performing "60/40." Their film *Dreamers* (2019) was deemed official selection in 11 international film festivals receiving "Grand Jury Award" (In/Motion Festival 2021) and "Best Experimental Film" (Tirana International Film Festival 2020). BRKFST has set repertoire and original work on dancers at the University of MN—Twin Cities, Carleton College, D2C Festival (Ireland) and Bates Dance Festival (Maine). More: brkfstdance.com.

performers/choreographers

- Danielle Banovetz
- Lisa 'MonaLisa' Berman
- Renée Copeland
- Azaria 'AZ' Evans-Parham
- Travis 'Seqa' Johnson
- Michael 'Myke the Titan' Romero
- Marie Thayer
- Joseph 'MN Joe' Tran



Nicholas Collon, conductor

British conductor Nicholas Collon is Founder and Principal Conductor of Aurora Orchestra, Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Guerzenich Orchester in Cologne. Under his direction Aurora Orchestra has become Associate Orchestra (and, from 2022-23 season Resident Orchestra) at the Southbank Centre and appears every year at the BBC Proms. Collon has received guest invitations from orchestras such as the Residentie Orkest, where he was Chief Conductor 2016-2021 (latterly also Artistic Advisor), Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, Danish National Symphony, Bamberg Symphony, Dresden Philharmonic, DSO Berlin, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Oslo Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony and many of the leading British orchestras. In summer 2022 he conducts both the Finnish Radio Symphony and Aurora Orchestra at the BBC Proms. His first commercial recording with the Finnish Radio Symphony was released in May 2022 on Ondine—Sibelius' Symphony No. 7 and suites from *King Christian* and *Pelleas and Melisande*. Collon has conducted operas at English National, Welsh National, Oper Koeln and Glyndebourne on Tour. More: intermusica.co.uk, nicholascollon.co.uk.

profile Jon Kimura Parker, creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall

Known for his passionate artistry and engaging stage presence, pianist Jon Kimura Parker has performed regularly at the Berlin Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, London’s South Bank, the Sydney Opera House and the Beijing Concert Hall. In 2019 he was appointed the Minnesota Orchestra’s first-ever creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall, a new role in which he is serving as a creative force behind the Orchestra’s summer festival and appearing each summer as a host, performer and personality. He is also artistic director of the Honens International Piano Competition and artistic advisor for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival.

Highlights of Parker’s 2021-22 season included concerto appearances with the Phoenix, Peninsula, San Antonio, Rhode Island and Kansas City orchestras, a special appearance with the Galilee Chamber Orchestra in Toronto, recitals including Portland Piano International, and performances with Cho-Liang Lin at Chamber Music International in Dallas and with Paul Huang at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York. He also tours as a member of the Montrose Trio, which he founded with Martin Beaver and Clive Greensmith. Following their first tour in 2015, *The Washington Post* described them as “poised to become one of the top piano trios in the world.”

A collaborator in a wide variety of styles, Parker has performed with Doc Severinsen, Audra McDonald, Bobby McFerrin, Pablo Ziegler and Sanjaya Malakar, among many others. As a founding member of Off the Score, he also performed with Stewart Copeland—the legendary drummer of The Police—for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival’s 20th Anniversary Season, featuring his own arrangements of music by Prokofiev, Ravel and Stravinsky. He has accompanied Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham and Luca Pisaroni in recital.

A committed educator, Parker is professor of piano at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. His students have won prizes in major competitions internationally and given concerto performances in the U.S., Europe, Russia and China. He has also lectured at the Juilliard School and given master classes at Yale. This season he chaired the jury of the Hilton Head International Piano Competition.

Parker’s discography of a dozen albums features music ranging from Mozart and Chopin to Barber, Stravinsky and John Adams. His most recent recording *Fantasy*, built around William Hirtz’s *Wizard of Oz Fantasy*, was described by *Musical Toronto* as giving “a big, clear picture window of a rich soul and great artistic depth.” His YouTube channel features a series of *Concerto Chat* videos that explore the piano concerto repertoire. In addition, his *Whole Notes* series, featuring performances of great composers, is available on Amazon Prime Video. He is now



Tara McMullen

recording master class videos for Tonebase on major works of the piano concerto repertoire.

Parker studied with Edward Parker and Keiko Parker, Lee Kum-Sing at the Vancouver Academy of Music and the University of British Columbia, Marek Jablonski at the Banff Centre and Adele Marcus at the Juilliard School. Winner of the Gold Medal at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition, Parker is an Officer of The Order of Canada and has received honorary doctorates from the University of British Columbia and the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto.

Known to friends—new and old—as “Jackie,” Parker is married to violinist/violist Aloysia Friedmann, and their daughter Sophie graduated from Rice University in 2021. For more information, visit jonkimuraparker.com.

Jon Kimura Parker, creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall, holds the Marilyn and Glen Nelson Chair.