Temple University Symphony Orchestra

José Luis Domínguez, conductor
Alexandr Kislitsyn, violin

Thursday, February 16 • 7:30 PM
Temple Performing Arts Center
1837 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19122
Program

The Hebrides, Op. 26
Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Le quattro Stagioni
(“The Four Seasons”), Op. 8
Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

I. La primavera (“Spring”), RV 269
   Allegro – Largo – Allegro: Danza pastorale
II. L’estate (“Summer”), RV 315
   Allegro non molto – Adagio – Presto
IV. L’inverno (“Winter”), RV 297
   Allegro non molto – Largo – Allegro

Alexandr Kislitsyn, violin

| Intermission |

Symphony No. 5
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
in C Minor, Op. 67

I. Allegro con brio
II. Andante con moto
III. Scherzo. Allegro
IV. Allegro – Presto

The use of photographic, audio, and video recording is not permitted.
Please turn off all electronic devices.
One hundred ninety-seventh performance of the 2022-2023 season.
Temple University Symphony Orchestra
José Luis Domínguez, conductor

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Yuan Tian, Associate Concertmaster
Sendi Vartanovi, Assistant Concertmaster
Zi Wang
Irina Rostomashvili
Samuel Allen-Chapkovski
Taisiya Losmakova
Suhan Liang
Minghao Zhu
Sofia Solomyanskaya
Alexander Covelli
Juan Yanez
J Pelton
Eunice China
Ryujin Jensen
Kyungmin Kim

VIOLIN II
Andrew Stump, Principal
Abigail Dickson, Associate Principal
Sherry Chen, Assistant Principal
Kyle Stevens
Yucheng Liao
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Mochon
Alysha Delgado
Theo Shultz
Nicolas Sontag

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Adam Brotnitsky, Principal
Jasmine Harris, Associate Principal
Arik Anderson, Assistant Principal
Meghan Holman
AJ Stacy
Shannon Merlino

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Brannon Rovins, Co-Principal
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Lily Eckman, Assistant Principal
Alfonso Gutierrez
Max Culp
Marcela Reina
Chloe Kranz
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Samay Ruparelia
Yohanna Heyer
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Catherine Huhn
Samantha Humen
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Mohan Bellamkonda, Associate Principal
Dan Virgen, Assistant Principal

*Principal, Mendelssohn
*Principal, Beethoven
Program Notes

The Hebrides, Op. 26

Felix Mendelssohn

Of the composers who produced symphonies in the quarter century after the death of Beethoven, Felix Mendelssohn’s are considered the most “Classical.” His music in general reflects the spirit of the eighteenth century in terms of sound, balance, clarity, and proportion. A number of typical “Romantic” features, however, are also evident in his life and in many of his works. These include a sense of historicism, exemplified by the role Mendelssohn played in reviving the large sacred works of J. S. Bach, largely unheard and unknown since the time of Bach’s death (and even before) until Mendelssohn and Zelter revealed The Saint Matthew Passion to the musical world in 1829. His contribution was, aside from musical archeologist, as conductor, which assumed an increasingly central, powerful role in the interpretation of music as the nineteenth century progressed. Mendelssohn also played the works of Bach written for organ, as his family had converted from Judaism to the Lutheran faith. From Bach, Mendelssohn appreciated the role of counterpoint in music.

At the heart of the romantic movement was Mendelssohn’s reverence for nature, displayed in his paintings, his prose writings, and, among others, in the enchanted musical depiction of the forest in the overture to A Midsummer Night’s Dream, a masterpiece he wrote in his ‘teens. Mendelssohn was well-read, another accomplishment of several (Schumann, Berlioz, etc.) nineteenth-century composers, and works by Goethe and Shakespeare, along with the current fascination with Celtic legends, all contributed to his musical inspiration. Moreover, he was talented in a number of artistic fields, a trait found among many nineteenth-century composers in contrast to most eighteenth-century composers: he was a composer, an accomplished pianist, an impresario, a conductor, and also a talented painter. He did, however, fit in with most of the early half of the century’s most famous composers by dying young. His life, however, did not outwardly exemplify the starving misunderstood artist, a basic tenet of romanticism. Fortunate aspects of his life have been held against him and his music: that he was born wealthy, seemed outwardly content, composed with Mozartean facility, and was not involved in the more blatant artistic excesses of the period such as passionate,
scandalous love affairs, as were Berlioz, Chopin, Liszt, Wagner, and Verdi, to name only a few. It was truly an era of “Sex, Drugs, and Rock ’n’ Roll.”

An additional feature that affected Mendelssohn’s musical imagination was his extensive traveling. He was only twenty when his trip to the Hebrides Islands off the west coast of Scotland inspired this magnificent overture. Fingal’s Cave is one of the astonishing caverns on the tiny Hebridean island of Staffa, named for a hero of Scots and Irish legend. The word “staffa” means staff or column in Old Norse and indicates a spectacular series of caves made of natural colonnades of basalt such as to give the appearance of being man-made. Fingal’s Cave, the most famous of them, is 227-feet long and presents a multi-colored spectacle: On one side are basalt pillars of red, maroon, and brown, sumptuously decorated with green and gold seaweeds and lichens, highlighted by flecks of pure white from limestone. From the roof depend yellow, crimson, and white stalactites. Whenever the sea is calm enough, visitors may be rowed directly into the cave, where the sound of murmuring waves is constant. The poet Carl Klingemann had accompanied Mendelssohn on this expedition; two days after they entered the cave, he noted “A greener roar of waters surely never rushed into a stranger cavern—comparable on account of the many pillars, to the inside of an immense organ, black and resounding, lying there absolutely purposeless in the utter loneliness.” Mendelssohn’s own reaction was more musically direct: a motive occurred to him that captured the constant murmuring sound. He wrote to his beloved sister Fanny on the day he visited the cave, providing her with the musical motive he used as the principal theme of the overture: “In order to have you understand how extraordinarily the Hebrides affected me, the following came to my mind there.”

In Rome, in December 1830, the composer finished the first version of the overture but remained dissatisfied with it. From Paris on 21 January 1832 he wrote to his family indicating his so-far unachieved intentions: “I cannot present “The Hebrides” here, because I do not consider it...ready. The D-major middle section is very silly. The whole so-called development tastes more of counterpoint than of whale-oil and seagulls and cod-liver oil, and it ought to be the other way around.” He then revised the score and allowed it to be performed from manuscript at a concert of the London Philharmonic Society on 14 May 1832. Mendelssohn reported “It went splendidly and sounded so droll amongst all the Rossini things.” Subsequently, the
manuscript, according to the composer, was revised three more times, with the final version presented to the London Philharmonic Society.

The overture opens with the theme Mendelssohn conjured up while visiting the cave and which he sent to his sister, indicative of the ebb and flow and murmuring of the water. It is heard many times, related rhythmic ideas grow out of it and a second, longer theme emerges in the cellos and the bassoons. By this point, the composer has established the basis for a sonata-allegro movement with the themes in B minor and D major. It is in the Development that Mendelssohn fittingly presents the sea’s agitation and a hint of a storm. The music easily conjures seagulls, if not the revolting taste of cod-liver oil. The music works itself up into two big climaxes, the first signaling the Recapitulation and the other right before the end. The final measures present a sudden dying away on the opening theme.

Le quattro Stagioni ("The Four Seasons")

Antonio Vivaldi

Antonio Vivaldi was a famous Venetian violin virtuoso who was listed in a 1713 visitors’ guide to Venice as a tourist attraction—“among the best to play the violin are Gian Battista Vivaldi and his priest-son [Antonio].” Other facts about him that every undergraduate music student knows are: he was a priest who had flaming red hair and was thus known as “il prete rosso” (the red priest); he composed at least 400 concertos, with around 220 for violin, many of them written for a conservatory of foundling girls; none other than Johann Sebastian Bach studied Vivaldi’s music assiduously by copying and rearranging it and thus thoroughly assimilated the Italian concerto process; and although today we don’t hear them often, he was widely known for his forty-some operas, written for Venice, an important opera center. For almost forty years he was Maestro de’concerti (Music Director) of the Pio Ospedale della Pietà, a famous music conservatory for girls, who gave weekly concerts attended by visitors from all over Europe, among them such celebrities as Johann Wilhelm von Goethe and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

The violin concertos that comprise The Four Seasons, undoubtedly Vivaldi’s most famous composition currently, were written for strings alone, to be performed with at least one, maybe two keyboard instruments as continuo. Vivaldi himself (possibly) wrote a sonnet for each concerto to help explain the music, with the descriptions in the sonnets closely matched by the
musical depiction in the orchestra. To make assurance doubly sure, Vivaldi has each line from the sonnets reprinted over the specific passage of music to which it pertains.

It was Vivaldi who brought the late Baroque concerto form to a high point of achievement: his concerti featured three movements, Fast-Slow-Fast, with movements I and III in ritornello form, in which a refrain (ritornello) is heard at the beginning of the movement and then, alternating with virtuosoic, episodic solo statements often featuring modulatory sequences, appear fragments of the ritornello (which means “little return,”) throughout the movement, which then concludes with a full statement of the ritornello, providing thematic and tonal stability. Sometimes even bits of the ritornello find their way into the solo passages, although this is not a regular practice.

An examination of the three-movement concerti in each eason will provide some examples of the interaction between text and music. In “Spring” (Op. 8, No. 1) the opening ritornello in E major is labeled “Spring has returned.” The first solo section for violin, accompanied by two violins from the orchestra, is called “Song of the Birds” and features trills and delicate scales from the soloist. Partway through the episode, more description from the sonnet is given: “greeted by the birds in happy song.” Then comes a ritornello fragment, followed by a second episode labeled “And fountains fanned by little zephyrs,” featuring softly murmuring violins. One could compare it with Wagner’s “Forest Murmurs” from Siegfried, composed a century and a half later. A second recalling of ritornello material is followed by an episode featuring “the lightning flash and thunder,” depicted by rushing scales in the violins with low tremolos for the entire string group.

The second movement, a Largo e pianissimo sempre, expresses the next part of the sonnet: “While upon the flowering meadow/Amid the murmuring leaves and boughs/Sleep goatherd and his trusty dog.” The solo violin plays a long, lyrical melody, typical of middle movements, then the music portrays something not mentioned in the sonnet. Apparently the “trusty dog” is an commited watchdog, for the violas are instructed to imitate its bark “very loudly and abruptly.” Indeed the vigilant dog continues to bark throughout the rest of the movement. The third movement, again in ritornello format, depicts the text “To country bagpipe’s festive sound/Dance nymphs and shepherds underneath/Beloved springtime’s brilliant skies.” In Vivaldi’s
music one hears the imitation of bagpipes in the violin melody and in the sustained notes in the lower strings, meant to imitate the bagpipe’s drone.

“Summer,” Op. 8, No. 2 (G minor): In the opening movement (Allegro con molto) the text begins “Under the heat of the summer sun, man and beast droop.” The opening music material obligingly droops in sympathy. A contrasting episode for solo violin depicts three different birds (Cf. Beethoven’s “Pastoral” Symphony): the cuckoo, the turtledove, and the goldfinch. The whispering of soft zephyrs is forestalled by “impetuous winds” heard in the rushing scales of the violins and a lachrymose violin solo paints the weeping of a shepherd who fears a violent storm. An imitation of loud winds concludes the movement. In the second movement (Adagio: Presto) the shepherd’s slumber is interrupted by the sound of distant thunder. He tries to regain slumber but is tormented by flies and gnats. The third movement is labeled Presto; Impetuous summer storm). The text for the ritornello is “Ah, his fears were all too justified.” Darting scales in the violins criss cross in the manner of flashing lightning. Cellos and double basses provide the roar of thunder.

“Winter,” Op. 8, Nr. 4 (F minor): The first movement begins with a depiction of the shivers caused by winter’s cold, portrayed by trills (also commonly known as “shakes”) in the violins. The solo violin plays fast-moving arpeggios and trills, portraying the bitter winter wind. The movement ends with rapid tremolos depicting chattering of teeth. The third movement provides an aural scenario of attempting to walk on ice and a plunging scale suggests falling into the freezing water. But soon all are safely and warmly indoors, listening to the howling winds. Over the final seven measures of this concerto Vivaldi wrote: “This is winter, but such that it brings joy.”
Beethoven liked to work on several, often contrasting, works simultaneously. During the long gestation of his fifth symphony, from 1804 to 1808, he sketched and completed a number of other compositions, including the Piano Concerto No. 4, Symphony No. 4, Symphony No. 6 ("Pastoral"), the Concerto for Violin, his opera Fidelio, the "Appassionata" Sonata and several others. More than one of these compositions featured a rhythmic motive of three shorts and a long. On 22 December 1808 Beethoven presented a “monster concert” in Vienna of his own works that included the premieres of the fifth symphony, the sixth symphony, the fourth piano concerto with himself as soloist and several other compositions.

The fifth and sixth symphonies present a study in contrasts: one is in minor, the other in major mode; one is dynamic in its force and movement, the other at many points leisurely, even static. The fifth symphony is in fact one of the most tightly structured compositions in a composer's oeuvre remarkable for tightly structured works, and in all of classical music. Foremost, of course, is the ubiquitous rhythmic motive of three shorts and a long, initiated by a silent downbeat. Thus, we hear the three shorts as a mighty upbeat landing with force on the next downbeat, an effect Beethoven amplifies by lengthening the already long note, not only through note values but also by adding a fermata, thus providing another unifying device: starting and stopping, what seems like building up speed and then slamming on the brakes. The opening motive, which is heard in virtually every measure throughout the entire first movement, when repeated in sequence and growing loudness, has been likened to a snowball rolling down a mountain, gathering volume and force. I always imagine Beethoven driving a Lamborghini, gathering great speed but being forced to stop – usually at kind of screeching halt – at various points along the way. Then he is 0 to 60 again almost immediately.

Another unifying device is the overall tonal plan. The ultimate goal is the triumphant replacement of c minor by C major, with many minor-major
struggles along the way. At various points (e.g., the Recapitulation in the first movement, the brass theme in the second movement, the trio of the third movement) C major seems to triumph, but that is only temporary. Ultimately, C major does not prevail until the final movement because, in Beethoven’s hands, the four-movement symphony is a drama or a psychological journey, the dénouement of which must be deferred until the finale. The suspense must not end prematurely, whereas in general in the eighteenth-century symphony the weight of the piece is in the first two movements and the finale is a kind of audience dismissal, lively exit music, a notable exception being Mozart’s final symphony, the “Jupiter,” which was undoubtedly a huge inspiration for Beethoven, with its magnificent fugal finale. To heighten suspense and audience attention, Beethoven even links the third and fourth movements of this symphony with a mysterious bridge passage leading into a mighty crescendo, providing yet another element of unity. He also uses “motivic reminiscence,” bringing back the three-shorts-and-a-long motive from the Scherzo before the Recapitulation of the finale, to heighten that arrival point, from which the rest of the symphony triumphs in C major.

If it seems that Beethoven is treating the symphony as a drama, he in fact is. One of his greatest influences was the “French rescue opera” of the 1790s, his favorite practitioner of which was Luigi Cherubini. In the rescue opera, an altruistic young firebrand (tenor) speaks out against a tyrannic dictator (menacing baritone), is thrown into a deep dungeon, and then rescued at great personal peril, by his beloved (soprano). Beethoven composed what is today the most famous rescue opera, a French tale in German translation, Fidelio, or Conjugal Love (final version, 1814). It is his only opera; search though he did, he never again found a suitable libretto. Instead he transferred drama and human psychology to instrumental works, especially the symphony. In both his personal life, such as it was, and in his compositions, Beethoven believed in overcoming chaos, opposition, tyranny and tragedy, resulting in triumph, liberty, order and joy. Tonal music such as the symphony represents has a number of inherent obstacles that must be overcome, most clearly lodged in tonal opposition, but Beethoven always created a number of other “problems,” of a formal nature, deriving artistic and personal
gratification in “solving” them. Various examples will be noted along the way.

I. Allegro con brio The movement is in C minor and is permeated with the rhythmic motive, even the second key area in E-flat major (listen to the low strings). In terms of drama (and Beethoven’s Lamborghini) the modulation to E-flat is sudden and last-minute. Also abrupt are some dynamic changes, especially from very loud to very soft, with fortissimi achieved by powerful crescendi. Strange “irregularities,” some a bit startling, occur at various points. The principal techniques of developing material are modulation and fragmentation and here Beethoven takes fragmentation to the ultimate degree. He uses two notes from a horn call and passes them around in sequential imitation, then reduces the pattern to just one note. One could only surpass this extreme fragmentation by silence, the use of which Beethoven was a master, once again learning from rescue opera, where to the prisoner in the dungeon, silence can be more terrifying than sound. The Development section seems almost to disintegrate, the typical “Beethoven blackout,” lowering the temperature only so it can be built up again even higher.

Instead of getting on with the Recapitulation, Beethoven halts the momentum by extending what is already a long note with a fermata by adding an oboe cadenza, an element from the concerto, not the symphony. It is startling but serves, once again, as a braking device. The Recapitulation then proceeds in the key of C major rather than minor and in fact ends there. But it is too early for this resolution, the story is not yet over. At this point, Beethoven must return to c minor. This he does in a Coda, in the eighteenth century a short extension of the form with closing, cadential material. Beethoven, however, has a lot of damage to repair here and needs time and space. His Coda is equally as long as was the Exposition, Development, and Recapitulation, each of them approximately 125 measures. Beethoven is changing the very shape of symphonic movements. The two main events of Beethoven’s extensive Codas are further development (Beethoven includes development techniques pervasively throughout a movement) and the ultimate goal of cadencing, completely nailing down the tonic (here c minor) and erasing
any other tonality from the listener’s memory. Because his tonal wanderings are so extensive, the final cadencing must be particularly long and forceful.

II. *Andante con moto* This movement is in a large sense a relaxation of mood away from the tension of the first. Being by Beethoven, however, it has its own tensions. The format may be characterized as variations on two related themes, but much more happens than that. The opening theme, in the violas and the cellos, is a calm, pastoral melody in A-flat major that touches on its relative minor, F. The contrasting but related idea is a wind march in C major that incorporates the same upbeat as the first theme and then presents the rhythmic motive of three shorts and a long. In the rescue opera, the arrival of the cavalry was signaled by a trumpet or horn call and the brass play the same role in this symphony and are associated with arrival in C major. After complicated variations that also incorporate developmental techniques, the movement ends quietly in A-flat major.

III. *Scherzo. Allegro* This is in many ways a strange “dance” movement, replacing the pace and bowing gestures of the aristocratic Menuet of the eighteenth century. As a believer in the ideals of the French Revolution and in the supremacy of the artist, Beethoven bowed to no member of the aristocracy. As he wrote in a fury to Prince Lichnowsky, one of his most loyal patrons: “There have been princes before you and there will be princes after you, but there is only one Beethoven!” The Scherzo, which Haydn had already used in some of his works, was in triple meter like the Menuet but was faster and, in Beethoven’s hands, more developmental, even contrapuntal. The Scherzo section begins with a “Mannheim rocket” (an upward-shooting arpeggio) in c minor in the strings, begun in a low register and presented in starting and stopping manner. This merges into the French horn playing the characteristic rhythmic motive on repeated notes. The effect so far is mysterious and eerie. The Trio represents the “scherzo” (joking) nature of the movement, with its elephantine double bass lines, frequently stopping and starting up again, complete with stumbling *fugato* passages. The repeat of the Scherzo is even more ghostly than the original. It is not a literal Da Capo, but a written
out re-orchestrated variation of the first Scherzo. Here winds play the Mannheim rocket, the staccato bassoons suggesting the brittle sounds of skeletons dancing. Towards the end there is a “Beethovenian blackout,” the same device used at the end of the Development in the first movement. We are now in no man’s land; from nothing Beethoven’s music reaches out into the darkness, searches for, and finds the “solution.”

IV. Allegro A tremendous crescendo leads into the finale, which completely confirms the triumphant key of C major. Beethoven uses the most basic material in his opening theme, the C major triad. Another unifying device is the triadic nature of the opening themes from each movement. On this note, the opening of the first movement is in fact not a triad, only two notes, G and E-flat, and can thus ambiguously be heard as part of either C minor or E-flat major. In only two notes Beethoven presented the core problem of the entire symphony, the struggle between minor and major! In this movement Beethoven uses the piccolo, the contrabassoon and the trombones for the first time in his symphonies, significantly instruments from the opera orchestra. The finale is very expansive with more than one theme in each key area, all themes saturated with the rhythmic motive. Triumph, however, must once again be deferred. The momentum is ground to a halt before the Recapitulation with a reminder of the ghostly Scherzo, past adversity and suffering recalled, which makes the ultimate confirmation of C major all the more meaningful. The delightful Coda, with its sense of joy and invitation to the dance (it not only invites, but demands movement and is in fact a bit manic), serves not just as an extension of the finale, but reaches clear back to the opening of the symphony, as if to erase or at least obscure the past.

Notes by Stephen A. Willier, Associate Professor of Music History (Ret.)
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Temple University

Temple University’s history begins in 1884, when a young working man asked Russell Conwell if he could tutor him at night. It wasn’t long before he was teaching several dozen students—working people who could only attend class at night but had a strong desire to make something of themselves. Conwell recruited volunteer faculty to participate in the burgeoning night school, and in 1888 he received a charter of incorporation for “The Temple College.” His founding vision for the school was to provide superior educational opportunities for academically talented and highly motivated students, regardless of their backgrounds or means. The fledgling college continued to grow, adding programs and students throughout the following decades. Today, Temple’s more than 35,000 students continue to follow the university’s official motto—Perseverantia Vincit, or “Perseverance Conquers”—with their supreme dedication to excellence in academics, research, athletics, the arts and more.

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Temple University 2022-2023 Season
Upcoming Events

Tuesday, February 21 at 7:30 PM
Master’s Recital: Carleen Baron, soprano
Rock Hall Auditorium

Wednesday, February 22 at 7:30 PM
Student Recital: Elijah Nice, percussion
Klein Recital Hall

Thursday, February 23 at 4:00 PM
Master Class: Mark McEwen, oboe
Rock Hall Auditorium

Thursday, February 23 at 4:30 PM
Rite of Swing Jazz Café: Hemanth Kemana Group
Temple Performing Arts Center Lobby

Thursday, February 23 at 7:30 PM
World Music Lecture-Performance: Jeffrey Werbock, Azerbaijani mugham
Rock Hall Auditorium

Friday, February 24 at 1:00 PM
Music Studies Colloquium: Lukas Ligeti
Presser Hall 142

Friday, February 24 at 2:00 PM
Guest Lecture: Sarah Whitney, career coach for musicians
Rock Hall Auditorium

Friday, February 24 at 7:30 PM
Master’s Recital: Jasmine Harris, viola
Rock Hall Auditorium

All events are free unless otherwise noted. Programs are subject to change without notice.
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