

STL SYMPHONY

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Friday Morning Classical Concerts

Beethoven and Schumann

Friday, January 18, 2019 10:30am

Karina Canellakis, conductor

Renaud Capuçon, violin

BEETHOVEN *Leonore Overture No. 3*

SCHUMANN Violin Concerto

R. STRAUSS Symphonic Fantasy from *Die Frau ohne Schatten*

HINDEMITH *Symphonic Metamorphosis*

Leonore Overture No. 3

Composer: Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

First performance: 1806

Run time: 17:00

[Listen on YouTube](#)

What is an Overture? – A piece of instrumental music which precedes an opera, oratorio, or play.

Who is Leonore and why does she have three overtures? – Beethoven revolutionized concert music with his symphonies, but his one attempt at composing an opera, *Fidelio* (originally titled *Leonore*), didn't see the same success. *Fidelio* is a celebration of freedom. The opera tells the story of Leonore, a woman who disguises herself as a male prison guard named Fidelio to rescue her husband from prison. Beethoven revised the opera at least four times, writing a new overture each time (three *Leonore Overtures* and a *Fidelio Overture*). In fact, Beethoven spent more than ten years trying to perfect this one opera.

Violin Concerto in D minor

Composer: Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

First performance: 1937

Run time: 36:00

[Listen on YouTube](#)

What is a concerto? – A work for solo instrument and orchestra. Most often concertos are written in three movements. In Schumann's Violin Concerto movements 2 and 3 are played without a break.

How does a concerto disappear for more than 70 years? – Robert Schumann's only violin concerto was written in 1853 for his friend violinist Joseph Joachim. The Concerto was completed in just 13 days and only a few months before Schumann would be hospitalized for a suicide attempt. Schumann had struggled with mental health since his childhood.

After Schumann's death the Concerto was never published or performed and ended up in the Prussian State Library in Berlin, with a proviso that it be neither played nor published until 100 years after Schumann's death (1956). Two of Joachim's grandnieces tracked down the Concerto in 1933 only to be denied the opportunity to premier the piece, as the Nazi government wanted the premier performance to be in Berlin by a German violinist. The piece was finally premiered in 1937.

Symphonic Fantasy from *Die Frau ohne Schatten*

Composer: Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

First performance: 1947

Run time: 22:00

[Listen on YouTube](#)

Die Frau ohne Schatten (The Woman Without a Shadow) was German composer Richard Strauss' seventh of 15 operas. Strauss spent more time working on *Frau* than any of his other compositions. The opera premiered in 1919, just after the end of WWI. At the end of the war, a lot of Germany, including the opera houses, had been destroyed, and complex operas like *Frau* were unlikely to be performed in the near future. If an opera is not being performed, the composer is not getting paid, so Strauss created a "symphonic fantasy" from the opera about three decades after the 1919 premiere, giving the music from *Frau* new life in the concert hall.

HINDEMITH *Symphonic Metamorphosis*

Composer: Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

First performance: 1944

Run time: 22:00

[Listen on YouTube](#)

In 1936, during WWII, the Nazi government put a ban on Paul Hindemith's music, compelling the German composer to immigrate to the United States. *Symphonic Metamorphosis* is the first piece Hindemith wrote in his new home. Composers often find inspiration in the music of others, and Hindemith was no exception. He found his inspiration for *Symphonic Metamorphosis* in the music of his contemporary, Carl Maria von Weber. *Symphonic Metamorphosis* is a four-movement work. In each movement, Hindemith borrows a musical theme from one of Weber's compositions and morphs it into a truly original composition.



Friday Morning Classical Concerts

Potential activities to enrich student learning

1. Freedom is a main theme in Beethoven's *Fidelio*, but you don't have to listen to the entire opera to hear Beethoven's musical take on freedom. In just the overture alone, *Leonore Overture No. 3*, the listener is taken on a ride through oppression, resolve, hope, and joyous deliverance. What elements of music do you hear that perpetuate this dramatic sequence of freedom?
2. Discuss the historical events that occurred around the time Beethoven composed *Leonore Overture No. 3* and how these events might have influenced the composer and his musical work (i.e. the end of the French Revolution in 1799 and German occupation of Vienna in 1805 and the fall of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 during Napoleon's Coalition Wars.)
3. Identify the mood Schumann is trying to create in each movement of his Violin Concerto in D minor. How does Schumann use tempo, dynamics, and other musical elements to create these moods and to create dramatic contrast between them?
4. Each movement of Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis* begins with a statement of a theme originally composed by Carl Maria von Weber. Locate the theme/melody. As you listen, what elements of music and/or compositional devices do you hear Hindemith using to develop and expand on the theme?

Know before you go

Visit slo.org/educationvisits for additional classroom resources including a virtual tour and history of Powell Hall, information on the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and a *Know Before You Go* sheet on concert etiquette.

After the concert

1. Learn from the pros: discuss how your experience at the symphony has informed your understanding of the instrumental technique and musicianship being taught in the classroom. For example: evaluate the SLSO's ability to blend sound between sections and incorporate that skill into your classroom.
2. Complete the following statements with your students: I noticed..., I value..., I wonder...
3. Today's concert explores music from three different time periods in the history of orchestral music. As we move across the timeline, what do you notice about the size of the orchestra and the instrumentation of each piece? What other differences did you notice?

