

Prelude

“Inside Masterworks”

HARTFORD
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September 2017

bringing music to life

Masterworks #1: Beethoven's Eroica | October 6-8, 2017

Classical Fusion: Honoring a long tradition of multiculturalism

“Music has always been transnational; people pick up whatever interests them, and certainly a lot of classical music has absorbed influences from all over the world.” -Yo-Yo Ma



During our opening Masterworks weekend, the Hartford Symphony Orchestra proudly breaks new ground: we will host a naturalization ceremony on the stage of a Masterworks concert. Symphonic music gives voice to our common humanity, conveying emotions without the need for words. The many influences on orchestral music cross boundaries, borders, ethnicities and cultures. Music, a unifying force, always welcomes the flavors of varied cultures. With music as a pathway for true inclusion, we now welcome the newest citizens of our community.

On our opening Masterworks, we present Beethoven and the Japanese composer Yugo Kanno, whose composition *Revive, Concerto for Koto and Shakuhachi*, includes traditional Japanese instruments. The pairing honors a long tradition of exploring multiple cultures within classical music. Classical music's rich multicultural history is evident in the repertoire we know:

- *Les Indes Galantes*, an opera by French composer, Jean-Philippe Rameau (a contemporary of Bach and Handel), set in Asia and South America, made an early 18th century attempt to portray the music of other cultures.ⁱ
- In the late 18th century, with rising curiosity about Turkish culture (given the defeat of the Ottoman army by the Austro-Hungarian empire), Mozart composed his Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major – dubbed the *Turkish*. His opera, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, sung in German but set in Turkey, similarly portrays Turkish music influences.ⁱⁱ
- Verdi's opera *Aida*, a story of ancient Egypt,

was commissioned by the Khedive of Egypt to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal in the early 1870s and premiered at the Cairo opera house.ⁱⁱⁱ

- Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherzade* is a vibrant portrait of the Arabian Nights, and Borodin's opera, *Prince Igor*, evokes the world of the Turko-Tatar warriors of the ancient Russian steppes.^{iv}
- Georges Bizet's 19th century opera *The Pearl Fishers* takes place in Ceylon – now known as Sri Lanka; while Bizet never visited India to gather musical source material, French composer Albert Roussel traveled to India before composing his opera *Padmavati*.^v
- In the early 20th century, French composer Claude Debussy's fascination with the Indonesian Gamelan inspired many of his piano works; the well-known *Bolero* by Maurice Ravel similarly reflects Asian-inspired influences.^{vi}
- Camille Saint-Saëns, inspired by the sounds heard during his travels through the Middle East, created his Fifth Piano Concerto, nicknamed *The Egyptian*.^{vii}

In the United States, the impact of African-American culture on music is extensive. Jazz influences are well-documented in the music of Gershwin, Ravel and others, but we must also acknowledge the musical influences of the many black composers who are too often overlooked, or considered



Joseph de Boulogne

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Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

outside of the classical lexicon. We offer just a few of the many accomplished examples:

- The contributions of 18th century Afro-French composer, violinist and conductor, Joseph de Boulogne, or Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges, are so vast and profound that he was called the "black Mozart".^{viii}



Duke Ellington

- In the late 19th century and early 20th century, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, son of a doctor from Sierra Leone, achieved great success as a composer. In New York, white orchestral musicians dubbed him the "African Mahler".^{ix} The biography "Black Mahler" by Charles Elford tells his life story.

- Scott Joplin's ragtime compositions (*Maple Leaf Rag* and others) made a lasting impact on 20th century composer Paul Hindemith, in his composition *Rag Time For Orchestra*. Joplin's opera, *Treemonisha*, is the first by an African-American composer to have been recorded commercially in its entirety.^x

- While best known for his "big band" music, Duke Ellington composed extensively for orchestra, chamber and solo piano.^{xi}

The multicultural impact on music continued throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Two operas by Philip Glass, *Satyagraha* (based on the life of Mahatma Gandhi) and *Akhenaten*, (set in ancient Egypt) were inspired by the sounds and subjects of the Middle East.^{xii} Canadian composer Colin McPhee lived in Bali for six months in the 1930s, interviewed Balinese musicians, borrowed gamelan instruments, and began his own gamelan: an orchestra of metallophones and gongs. His composition, *Tabuh-Tabuhan*, was the first attempt to reproduce the Balinese music using a traditional European orchestra.^{xiii}

Thanks to the steady progress of ethnomusicology, young musicians routinely study Asian and African music. Performances of music from Indonesia are more common: there are more than 200 gamelan

ensembles in the United States, with dozens of composers writing music for them.^{xiv} As musicians of Western-European descent learn the Asian and African traditions, there is an increased counter-flow of Asian and African-American composers whose works reflect rich cultural mixtures.^{xv} One notable Asian composer, Chou Wen-Chung, was born in China in 1923. He came to Yale to study architecture then switched to Boston's New England Conservatory to study music.^{xvi} His works, often based on Chinese subjects, paved the way for his student, Tan Dun, who traveled to the U.S. in 1986 to study at Columbia.^{xvii} Born in central Hunan, conductor-composer Tan Dun created the award winning score for the film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.^{xviii}

The inter-connectivity created by music is the essence of Yo-Yo Ma's Silkroad Project:

"In a world with 195 countries, 7.5 billion people, and more than 6,900 languages, music can bring us together in unexpected ways. Whether it's a performance, learning program, or cultural collaboration, Silkroad is making connections that encourage empathy, trust, and joy."



Tan Dun

Please join the Hartford Symphony Orchestra for Beethoven's Eroica, **October 6-8, 2017**, in a celebration of the world's cultures. Finding our common bonds in music inspires and uplifts: and most important, it creates a more hopeful world.

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Wondering How the Music Will Sound?

Try HSO'S LISTENING GUIDE below, with links to the pieces you'll hear on our concert stage!

To hear Beethoven's Egmont Overture, performed by the Vienna Philharmonic and conducted by Leonard Bernstein:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QY8G4OJG6c>

To hear Beethoven's glorious Eroica Symphony No. 3, by the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Richard Muti:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vj4JFAQ0N8c>

For a special treat, click here to enjoy a feature length film about Beethoven's Eroica: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFA_tT8_v-Q

Yugo Kanno's *Revive* was performed by the Seattle Symphony in 2015:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKTXHnuGP_o

We also invite you to enjoy:

A recording of the Overture from Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxFbg7v4bw>

Joseph DeBoulogne's violin concertos:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNg_weY_Hls

Colin McPhee's *Tabuh-Tabuhan*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fck3yS5DAUM>

Learn more about Tan Dun from his website: <http://tandun.com/about/>
or hear his Percussion Concerto:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_aX6VoSe40



Tan Dun

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The return of Casey's Classics
Recommended recordings for your listening pleasure!

Want the best recordings of the pieces you'll experience on the concert program?

Coleman Casey, HSO's dear friend, Director Emeritus and beloved in-house audiophile, offers the following recommendations for recordings of selections featured on our upcoming Masterworks Concert:

Otto Klemperer's classic recordings of Beethoven's Eroica Symphony and his Egmont Overture with the Philharmonia Orchestra (EMI/WARNER) from the late 1950's have withstood the test of time. These are conceptions hewn from granite: tough-minded, majestic, and infinitely imposing. Although slow by today's performance standards, they have a projection and sense of momentum that are unforgettable.

Did you borrow this Prelude? Get your own free copy!

Whether you're a ticket buyer, donor, curious about the music, or know someone who is, just send an email to rsovrnsky@hartfordsymphony.org. We'll make sure you receive Prelude by email, in advance of each HSO Masterworks concert!

i <http://bit.ly/2xVolKn>

ii Ibid

iii Ibid

iv Ibid

v Ibid

vi Ibid

vii http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Classical_music

viii <http://chevalierdesaintgeorges.homestead.com/page1.html>

ix <http://chevalierdesaintgeorges.homestead.com/song.html>

x <https://www.musicomh.com/features/spotlight-classical-musics-debt-to-africa>

xi <http://chevalierdesaintgeorges.homestead.com/ellington.html>

xii <http://bit.ly/2xVolKn>

xiii http://musicmavericks.publicradio.org/features/essay_gann06.html

xiv Ibid

xv Ibid

xvi Ibid

xvii Ibid

xviii Ibid

xix <http://bit.ly/2wfukL5>