

**Concerts of Thursday, May 30, and Saturday, June 1, at 8:00p, and Sunday, June 2, 2019, at 3:00p**

**Donald Runnicles, Conductor**

**Christina Smith, flute**

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

***Leonore* Overture No. III, Opus 72b (1806)**

**Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)**

***Halil*, Nocturne for Solo Flute with Piccolo, Alto Flute, Percussion, Harp and Strings (1981)**

Christina Smith, flute

**Intermission**

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

**Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Opus 68, “Pastorale” (1808)**

*I. Awakening of cheerful feelings upon arriving in the country. Allegro non troppo*

*II. Scene by the brook. Andante molto moto*

*III. Merry gathering of country-folk. Allegro*

*IV. Thunderstorm. Tempest. Allegro*

*V. Shepherd’s song. Happy, thankful feelings after the storm. Allegretto*

## **Notes on the Program by Ken Meltzer**

### ***Leonore Overture No. III, Opus 72b (1806)***

**Ludwig van Beethoven was baptized in Bonn, Germany, on December 17, 1770, and died in Vienna, Austria, on March 26, 1827. The first performance of the *Leonore Overture No. III* took place in Vienna at the Theater an der Wien on March 29, 1806, as part of the premiere of the revised version of *Fidelio*. The *Leonore Overture No. III* is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings. Approximate performance time is fourteen minutes.**

**First Classical Subscription Performance: March 16, 1950, Henry Sopkin, Conductor.**

**Most Recent Classical Subscription Performances: March 11-13, 2010, Vassily Sinaisky, Conductor.**

Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*, occupied a special place in the composer's heart. In his Will, Beethoven said of his beloved work: "before all others I hold it worthy of being possessed and used for the science of art."

The creation of *Fidelio* (called *Leonore* by the composer) was hardly an easy process. Toward the end of his life, Beethoven confessed to his friend, Anton Schindler: "Of all my children, (*Fidelio*) is the one that caused me the worst birth-pangs, the one that brought me the most sorrow, and for that reason, it is the most dear to me." Beethoven composed at least three versions of *Fidelio*. The *Leonore Overture No. III* premiered as part of a revised version of the opera, first performed on March 29, 1806.

Beethoven's *Fidelio* is based upon a work created during the French Revolution by lawyer and writer Jean Nicolas Bouilly. It was a story that greatly appealed to Beethoven, a staunch advocate of democracy and freedom. *Fidelio* takes place in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Spain. The evil governor Don Pizarro has imprisoned the nobleman Don Florestan for daring to speak out against his corrupt regime. In an attempt to rescue her husband, Florestan's wife, Leonore, disguises herself as the young man, Fidelio. This allows Leonore to gain employment at the jail where her husband is imprisoned.

When Pizarro learns that the benevolent minister, Don Fernando, is coming to inspect the prison, he vows to kill Florestan, thereby concealing evidence of his wrongdoing. Leonore discovers her husband in a dungeon. She places herself in front of Florestan, and holds Pizarro at bay with her pistol. The sound of trumpets heralds Don Fernando's arrival. Fernando soon learns of Pizarro's misdeeds and orders him imprisoned. Florestan and all the political prisoners are freed. All hail Leonore as their savior.

The Overture begins with an extended slow-tempo introduction (*Adagio*), featuring a portion of Florestan's prison aria, "In des Lebens Frühlingstagen ist das Glück von mir gefloh'n" ("In the spring days of life happiness has flown from me"). The principal *Allegro* section features the introduction and development of the Overture's principal themes. At the climax of the development section, Beethoven provides one of his most dramatic effects. An off-stage trumpet twice sounds, heralding the approach of the minister, Don Fernando. A recapitulation of the principal themes leads to a series of quiet ascending figures by the strings, masterfully building the suspense almost to the breaking point. The tension is released by the breathless rush of activity in an overwhelming *Presto* coda, featuring blazing versions of the opening theme and a transformation of Florestan's lament.

### ***Halil*, Nocturne for Solo Flute with Piccolo, Alto Flute, Percussion, Harp and Strings (1981)**

**Leonard Bernstein was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, on August 25, 1918, and died in New York on October 14, 1990. The first performance of *Halil* took place at the Frederic Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv, Israel, on May 27, 1981, with Jean-Pierre Rampal as soloist, and the composer conducting the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition to the solo flute, *Halil* is scored for piccolo, alto flute, timpani, four snare drums (high and low), four tom-toms (high and low), bass drum, cymbals (pair), two suspended cymbals (high and low), two gongs (high and low), tam-tam, two triangles (high and low), four wood blocks (high to low), whip (frusta), glockenspiel, xylophone, vibraphone, chimes, and strings. Approximate performance time is sixteen minutes.**

### **These are the First Classical Subscription Performances.**

This work is dedicated "To the Spirit of Yadin and to his Fallen Brothers." The reference is to Yadin Tanenbaum, a nineteen-year-old Israeli flutist who, in 1973, at the height of his musical powers was killed in his tank in the Sinai. He would have been twenty-seven years old at the time this piece was written.

*Halil* (the Hebrew word for "flute") is formally unlike any other work I have written, but is like much of my music in its struggle between tonal and non-tonal forces. In this case, I sense that struggle as involving wars and the threat of wars, the overwhelming desire to live, and the consolations of art, love and the hope for peace. It is a kind of night-music which, from its opening 12-tone row to its ambiguously diatonic final cadence, is an ongoing conflict of nocturnal images: wish-dreams, nightmares, repose, sleeplessness, night-terrors and sleep itself, *Death's twin brother*.

I never knew Yadin Tanenbaum, but I know his spirit.

— Leonard Bernstein

## **Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Opus 68, “Pastorale” (1808)**

**Ludwig Van Beethoven was baptized in Bonn, Germany, on December 17, 1770, and died in Vienna, Austria, on March 26, 1827. The first performance of the “Pastorale” Symphony took place in Vienna at the Theater-an-der-Wien on December 22, 1808, with the composer conducting. The “Pastorale” Symphony is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, timpani and strings. Approximate performance time is forty-three minutes.**

**First Classical Subscription Performance: December 7, 1950, Henry Sopkin, Conductor.**

**Most Recent Classical Subscription Performances: March 14-16, 2013, Jun Märkl, Conductor.**

### **Beethoven in the Country**

How lucky you are, to be able to go soon to the country; I cannot enjoy that happiness until the 8<sup>th</sup>. I am happy as a child at the thought of wandering among the clusters of bushes, in the woods, among trees, herbs, rocks. No man loves the country more than I; for do not forests, trees, rocks re-echo that for which mankind longs.

Ludwig van Beethoven wrote these words to his friend, Therese von Malfatti, in May of 1810. Beethoven, who maintained a lifelong reverence for the beauties and mysteries of nature, extolled “the ecstasy of the woods...every tree said to me, ‘Holy! Holy!’”

Englishman Charles Neate, a founder of London's Philharmonic Society, spent considerable time with Beethoven in Vienna in 1815. Neate remarked that he had “never met anyone who so delighted in Nature, or so thoroughly enjoyed flowers or clouds or other natural objects. Nature was almost meat and drink to him; he seemed positively to exist upon it.” One of Beethoven’s favorite sayings was: “The morning air has gold to spare.” Beethoven the composer often received musical inspiration during long walks in the countryside. Regardless of the weather, Beethoven rose early each morning and, with music sketchbook in hand, spent several hours outdoors.

### **“A recollection of country life”**

Beethoven composed his Sixth Symphony during a period that spanned the summers of 1807 and 1808. He conducted the work’s premiere as part of the extraordinary December 22, 1808 Theater-an-der-Wien concert. In addition to the Sixth Symphony, Beethoven offered the premieres of his Fifth Symphony and *Choral Fantasy*, as well as the first public performance of the Fourth Piano Concerto (in the latter two works he served as piano soloist). The concert also

included four movements from the Mass in C, the soprano aria, *Ah! Perfido*, and a piano improvisation.

The work Beethoven subtitled “Pastorale Symphony, or a recollection of country life,” is a symphonic ode to the wonders of the outdoors. By this stage of his life, Beethoven was increasingly unable to enjoy the sounds of nature he so touchingly and vividly portrays in the “Pastorale.” The continued decline of his hearing prompted this revelation in the famous October, 1802 letter to his brothers, the *Heiligenstadt Testament*:

But how humiliated I have felt if somebody standing beside me heard the sound of a flute in the distance and *I heard nothing*, or if somebody heard *a shepherd sing* and again I heard nothing—Such experiences almost made me despair, and I was on the point of putting an end to my life—The only thing that held me back was *my art*. For indeed it seemed to me impossible to leave this world before I had produced all the works I felt the urge to compose; and thus I have dragged on this miserable existence—a truly miserable existence...

But there is no sense of despair in Beethoven’s “Pastorale,” the most lyrical of his Nine Symphonies.

There are several other factors that set the “Pastorale” Symphony apart from the other eight. It is the only Beethoven Symphony cast in five movements, as opposed to the traditional four. And while several of Beethoven’s Symphonies (notably the Third, Fifth, and Ninth) have extra-musical associations, the “Pastorale” is by far the most overtly programmatic, with each movement containing a descriptive title.

Beethoven himself cautioned listeners that the “Pastorale” Symphony was “More an expression of feeling than a painting.” In his sketchbooks, Beethoven observed: “All painting in instrumental music, if pushed too far, is a failure.” In the final analysis, the vivid depictions of a murmuring brook, birdcalls, peasant dances, a violent thunderstorm, and a shepherd’s piping are but a part of a moving and dramatic symphonic experience.

### **Musical Analysis**

I. *Awakening of cheerful feelings upon arriving in the country. Allegro ma non troppo*—The “Pastorale” Symphony opens with the first violins’ presentation of a cheerful melody that forms the basis for virtually the entire movement. Soon, the ensemble joyously proclaims the principal melody. The flowing, second theme is first played by the cellos, echoed by the first violins and flutes. Beethoven’s genius in thematic manipulation is perhaps never more apparent than in the development section, based in great part only upon a descending phrase derived from the second measure of the opening theme. The recapitulation of the main themes, inaugurated by the strings, leads to an extended coda spotlighting the woodwinds.

II. *Scene by the brook. Andante molto moto*—The flowing brook is suggested by repeated, undulating figures in the strings. The opening theme is introduced by the first violins; the second theme, by the bassoon. The entire movement is noteworthy for its relaxed lyricism and grace, but perhaps the most famous passage occurs at the close, when the nightingale (flute), quail (oboe) and cuckoo (clarinet) join in song.

The final three movements are played without pause.

III. *Merry gathering of country-folk. Allegro*—After a tripping figure in the strings, the flutes and strings sing a rustic song that soon explodes with joyous energy. The next sequence, featuring the oboes, accompanied by the violins and bassoon, seems to have been inspired by a village band Beethoven frequently heard in the Viennese countryside “Three Ravens” Tavern. The final theme is yet another vigorous dance. A closing, *Presto* variation of the opening theme leads to the storm sequence.

IV. *Thunderstorm. Tempest. Allegro*—The approach of the storm is depicted by tremolos in the lower strings and furtive exchanges between the second and first violins. Suddenly, the storm erupts in all its fury. Orchestral color is enhanced by the addition of the piccolo and trombones, as well as the prominent use of the timpani. The storm finally abates, and a brief ascending passage by the flute serves as a bridge to the final movement.

V. *Shepherd’s song. Happy, thankful feelings after the storm. Allegretto*—The finale opens with a brief passage for the clarinets and horns suggesting a *ranz des vaches*, a traditional herdsman’s call. Out of this passage emerges the principal melody, initially played by the first violins. Beethoven introduces several subsidiary motifs, but the finale is, in essence, a series of joyful variations on the principal theme. The final measures feature a brief (muted) horn reprise of the *ranz des vaches*, capped by two *fortissimo* orchestral chords.