

UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Jean Sibelius' *Valse Triste*, Richard Strauss' *Horn Concerto No. 1*, and Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7*

Dances Rustic and Macabre

CONDUCTED BY ROBERT STAHLY

WITH 2024 CSU CONCERTO COMPETITION WINNER

AYO DERBYSHIRE, HORN

MARCH 7, 2024 • 7:30 P.M. • GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL



COLORADO STATE
UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

7 MARCH 2024, 7:30 PM | GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL

Program:

Valse Triste – Op. 44/1 (1903–4)

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Horn Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major – Op. 11 (1882–3)

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

1. *Allegro*
2. *Andante*
3. *Allegro*

Ayo Derbyshire - Horn

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 7 in A Major – Op. 92 (1811–2)
Beethoven (1770–1827)

Ludwig van

1. *Poco sostenuto – Vivace*
2. *Allegretto*
3. *Presto – Assai meno presto*
4. *Allegro con brio*

Conducted by: Robert Stahly

Masters of Music – Instrumental Conducting - Recital

PERSONNEL:

DR. RACHEL WADDELL, Music Director and Conductor

ROBERT STAHLY, Assistant Conductor

Flute

Jenna Moore, Principal

Lucy McCrossan

Ella Patterson

Oboe

Madina Rashidova, Co-Principal

Sarah Veldhuizen, Co-Principal

Clarinet

Alfredo Ramirez, Principal

Katrina Whitenect

Bassoon

Charlie Beauregard, Co-Principal

James Scott, Co-Principal

Horn

Jacob Anderson, Principal

Sophia Marino

Rachel Richardson

Trumpet

Kris Usrey, Principal

Dylan Crabill

Percussion

Colin Ferry, Principal

Quinn Harlow

Violin 1

Annie Smith, Concertmaster

Jessica Rosado

Russell Wolfe

Kirby Miller

Isabel Ulate

Hallie Harris

Chelsea Smith

Violin 2

Cesar Reyes, Principal

Kathryn Carlos

Lamarana Balde

Grace Marsh-Wood

Melissa Kelley

Katelyn Gould

Hanna Recker

Armando Villa-Ignacio

Ryan Thompson

Violas:

Ethan Buell, Principal

Shawn Murphy

Percy Slovut

Charlie Wootton

Emily Rowe

Madison Ramonette

Laurel Wettstein

Cellos:

Avery Smith, Principal

Laurel Ave

Isaac Dinsmore

Matt Fox

Kristin Weninger

Lillian Rogers

Faith Hunn

Mae Ferry

Basses:

Cristian Mazo, Principal

Max Williams

Max Johnson

Thomas Hasler

Nick Hailey

Alison Podgorski

Librarians

Rob Stahly, Head Librarian

Lamarana Balde

Avery Smith

THE CSU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WISHES TO THANK:

Mike Solo
Valerie Reed, Peter Muller, and their Team
Jennifer Clary
Nicole Darling
Jim Doser
James Mephram
Charles Beauregard
Ethan Urtz

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY MUSIC APPLIED FACULTY

Violin

Ron Francois
Leslie Stewart

Viola

Margaret Miller

Cello

Romina Monsanto

Bass

Forest Greenough

Guitar

Jeff Laquatra

Flute

Ysmael Reyes
Michelle Stanley

Oboe

Pablo Hernandez

Clarinet

Wesley Ferreira
Sergei Vassiliev

Saxophone

Peter Sommer
Dan Goble

Bassoon

Cayla Bellamy

Trumpet

Stanley Curtis

Horn

John McGuire

Trombone

Drew Leslie

Tuba/Euphonium

Stephen Dombrowski

Percussion

Eric Hollenbeck
Shilo Stroman

Harp

Kathryn Harms

Piano

Bryan Wallick
Tim Burns

Organ

Joel Bacon

Voice

Nicole Asel
Tiffany Blake
John Lindsey



AYO DERBYSHIRE is an active freelancer in Colorado, playing in chamber and orchestral settings along the Front Range. Ayo graduated from Colorado State University in 2019 with a B.A. in Music, where he studied Horn performance on a full scholarship with Dr. John McGuire and was Principal Horn of the CSU Symphony Orchestra for all four years. Currently, Ayo is pursuing a Master's in Computer Information Systems while taking music classes at CSU. He is a tenured member of the Fort Collins

Symphony, playing second Horn after previously serving as fourth Horn. Additionally, he has performed with the Cheyenne Symphony and Greeley Philharmonic. In 2017, Ayo was awarded 1st place in the Engelbert Schmid Horn Competition, presented by Siegfried's Call. The competition was nationwide for horn players aged 18-30, and Ayo was judged and selected by iconic horn players such as Phil Myers, William Vermeulen, and Leelanee Sterrett. He was also awarded the Wendel Diebel Performance Award from the CSU School of Music, Theatre, and Dance in recognition of achieving a high level of performance. In the summers of 2017 and 2018, Ayo was a Fellow of the Texas Music Festival in Houston, playing different symphonic concerts each week while studying with Houston Symphony's William VerMeulen and Rob Johnson. He also played as a Fellow with the Hot Springs Music Festival and the Denver Young Artists Orchestra.



Conductor **ROBERT STAHLY** passionately furthers orchestral music through programs that reimagine classical works alongside engaging new and underperformed works. Mr. Stahly made his debut conducting Copland's "The Tender Land" in the Spring of 2023 at Colorado State University. His most recent recital was a celebration of contemporary music featuring five living composers. He also conducted portions of Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Symphony No. 33" in performance at the

CCM Opera Bootcamp. Perpetually studying his craft, Mr. Stahly additionally participated in conducting workshops at the Eastman School of Music, Bard College, University of Missouri Kansas City, and University of Colorado. His conducting teachers include Harold Farberman, Gianmaria Griglio, Mark Gibson, Apo Hsu, Neil Varon, Kevin Noe, Gary Lewis, Wes Kenney, and Dr. Rachel Waddell.

Mr. Stahly is the Apprentice Conductor for the Fort Collins Symphony, the Conductor of the Denver Young Artists Orchestra String Ensemble and former Conductor of the Longmont Youth Symphony String Ensemble. Active as a performer, he is the former Associate Principal Cellist with the Longmont Symphony Orchestra and is the cellist for the Elevation String Quartet. A conductor who is passionate about music education, Mr. Stahly continues to visit school music programs to coach new generations of musicians and teachers. During his 13 years at Longmont High School Mr. Stahly tripled the size of the orchestra program while at the same time increasing the quality and diversity of the ensembles. In 2016, he was recognized as one of the top six educators in the St. Vrain Valley School District with an "Encore Award" and in 2019 he was a finalist for "Teacher of the Year." Mr. Stahly received Bachelor's Degrees in Music Education, Tuba Performance, and a String Pedagogy Certificate from Colorado State University in 2008. In 2022 he returned to CSU to pursue a Master's Degree in Orchestral Conducting.

PROGRAM NOTES:

Valse Triste – Op. 44/1 (1903–4)

Composer: Jean Sibelius (born: 20 September 1865 in Hämeenlinna, died: 20 September 1957 in Järvenpää)

Duration: 6'

Instrumentation: Flute, Clarinet, two Horns, Timpani, and Strings

Jean Sibelius faced a challenging youth after his indebted father passed away from typhoid when Jean was only three years old. His mother sold what she could and moved the family in with relatives. Despite the challenge, his family was supportive, and his uncle gave him a violin when he was ten years old. By the age twenty-one Sibelius was an accomplished violinist and sought to make a career of it. Ultimately, he would see far more success as a composer than as a violinist. As a composer he is credited with developing a strong national identity through his unique musical compositions.

By 1903 Sibelius had written two symphonies and was celebrated across Finland; his music was performed by prestigious ensembles outside of Finland like the Berlin Philharmonic. Finish judge and writer (and brother-in-law) Arvid Järnfeldt approached Sibelius to write incidental music for his new play *Kuolema (Death)*. After running up significant bills at restaurants and bars in Helsinki enjoying his success, Sibelius charged very little for the composition. The piece was immediately successful at home and outside of Finland.

Sibelius wrote six short pieces of music for the play. They each set a specific mood and scene, *Valse Triste* being especially intense and evocative. Here is how the first program described this music:

It is night. The son, who has been watching beside the bedside of his sick mother, has fallen asleep from sheer weariness. Gradually a ruddy light is diffused through the room: there is a sound of distant music: the glow and the music steal nearer until the strains of a waltz melody float distantly to our ears. The sleeping mother awakens, rises from her bed and, in her long white garment, which takes the semblance of a ball dress, begins to move silently and slowly to and fro. She waves her hands and beckons in time to the music, as though she were summoning a crowd of invisible guests. And now they appear, these strange visionary couples, turning and gliding to an unearthly waltz rhythm. The dying woman mingles with the dancers; she strives to make them look into her eyes, but the shadowy guests one and all avoid her glance. Then she seems to sink exhausted on her bed and the music breaks

off. Presently she gathers all her strength and invokes the dance once more, with more energetic gestures than before. Back come the shadowy dancers, gyrating in a wild, mad rhythm. The weird gaiety reaches a climax; there is a knock at the door, which flies wide open; the mother utters a despairing cry; the spectral guests vanish; the music dies away. Death stands on the threshold.

Sibelius would continue to write music into the 1920's. Despite composing immensely popular and lasting works such as his *Violin Concerto*, seven symphonies, and *Finlandia*, he abruptly stopped composing major works after 1927. He spent the last thirty years of his life retired from music, facing the challenges of everyday life and a tumultuous Europe.

Horn Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major – Op. 11 (1882–3)

Composer: Richard Strauss (born: 11 June 1864 in Munich, died: 8 September 1949 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen)

1. *Allegro*
2. *Andante*
3. *Allegro*

Duration: 16'

Instrumentation: 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons, 2 Horns, 2 Trumpets, Timpani, and Strings.

Richard Strauss grew up with the sounds of exceptional horn playing ringing in his ears. His father was renowned principal horn of the Munich Court Orchestra Franz Strauss. Richard showed early promise in music, starting piano at the age of four. His father was able to provide access to fabulous teachers who encouraged him to explore music. He wrote his first small piece at age six and composed for the remainder of his life. Richard Strauss was eighteen when he wrote his Horn Concerto No. 1; old enough to have developed his compositional craft with this lovely showcase for horn, but young enough to have not yet explored the shocking harmonies and topics he would later frequently utilize.

The concerto is structured in three movements: two fast outer movements with a slow movement in between. This was the standard practice for European style concerti of the time. Strauss makes the less standard but not unprecedented decision to have each movement flow into the next without pause. He wastes no time with an orchestral introduction or exposition and introduces the soloist right away after one chord from the orchestra. The opening fanfare is contrasted by long lyric melodies played by the solo horn.

The energy dissipates as we slip into a somber second movement. Strauss showcases the horns' ability to play long romantic melodies. The movement is full of chromatic twisting emotional turns and brilliantly colorful orchestration. The finale is energetic and bouncy, starting with fanfares similar to the first movement. This movement shows the horn's rambunctious and agile side with fast daring leaps. With the drive of a runner in a race the movement energetically drives to the finish.

His compositions became increasingly adventurous harmonically, incorporating exceptional dissonance. Some of the topics of his music became increasingly dark, especially his operas *Salome* and *Elektra*. Strauss is also well known for his symphonic tone poems (*Don Juan*, *Don Quixote*, *Till Eulenspiegel*), but his best-known work is likely *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, featured in the iconic *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Strauss would also go on to be a prominent conductor. He was appointed director of the Bavarian and later Berlin Opera and toured across Europe and North America.

Later in life, Strauss faced some unfortunate challenges. Nearly all of his money was confiscated at the end of World War I as "enemy assets". He then found himself in the difficult position of having Jewish family members and living in Germany at the same time. Strauss was apolitical and avoided association with the Nazi party, but at age 68 he cooperated when he was appointed president of the Reichsmusikkammer (Reich Music Chamber) overseeing art and music under the regime. Past writers propose that he felt that acquiescence would be the best way to put himself in a position to try and protect his relatives. He used his position to continue performing music of banned composers like Mahler, Debussy, and Mendelssohn. While he was able to protect and rescue his daughter-in-law and her son, at least twenty-six of his relatives were killed in the camps. In April 1945 Strauss was apprehended by U.S. Army forces at his home. An "off limits" sign was placed in his yard to protect him. In the end he was able to take part in and conduct at a large celebration for his eighty-fifth birthday. He passed away after a heart attack one month later.

Symphony No. 7 in A Major – Op. 92 (1811–2) - 45'

Composer: Ludwig van Beethoven (baptized: 17 December 1770 in Bonn, died: 26 March 1827 in Vienna)

1. *Poco sostenuto – Vivace*
2. *Allegretto*
3. *Presto – Assai meno presto*
4. *Allegro con brio*

Duration: 45'

Instrumentation: 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons, 2 Horns, 2 Trumpets, Timpani, and Strings.

After writing the surprising and innovative Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, Beethoven took a break from pursuing his next symphonic works for several years. The circumstances of this time in Beethoven's homeland placed unique strains on his already increasingly difficult personal life. The Napoleonic Wars created uncertainty and fear in the population, led to inflation, and drained the fortunes of many of the nobility who sponsored Beethoven. At the same time that he was writing his Seventh Symphony he was also writing the "Immortal Beloved" letter, his hearing was increasingly failing, and his general health was so poor that he spent much time in the spa town of *Teplitz* trying to recover. Despite these hardships, the Seventh Symphony, in the radiant key of A Major, is joyous, festive, and full of vitality. Maynard Solomon describes the symphony as "A festive paradise, outside of time and history, untouched by mortality."

After adding new instruments in the Fifth Symphony and writing the unusually programmatic Sixth Symphony with an extra movement, audiences must have been in immense suspense to see what Beethoven would do next. Instead, Beethoven created what is, in many ways, a conventional symphony. There are no unusual instruments or voices in this classical style ensemble, the movements are structured in a common form of the time, and there is no program (or storyline) for this symphony. What is unique and innovative about this symphony is its unusual interest in rhythm. Rhythmic motifs seem to almost be more important, or at least equal, to melodic motifs. The rhythms permeate every section of music with driving repetition. These unusual and innovative rhythms may have had some influence from Beethoven's other compositions. At the behest of George Thomson of Edinburgh, Beethoven wrote an astonishing 179 folk song arrangements of Scottish, Welsh, and Irish songs between 1809 and 1820. Many of the melodies of this symphony feel like they could be, at least inspired by, folk tunes. The rhythmic vitality of each movement with heavy upbeat emphasis evokes dance. Wagner is famously quoted as labeling this symphony "the apotheosis of the dance." While Beethoven makes use of common compositional forms of the time such as *Sonata Allegro*, Theme and Variation, and Rondo, he manipulates the proportions of these sections. Repetition features heavily in this symphony. Much like hearing the verse and chorus repeated several times in a pop song, listen for what is new or has changed each time you hear a familiar section of music.

The first movement begins with a rather significant slow introduction; almost a movement in itself. Expansive melodies unfold as Beethoven invites us into his symphonic world. Sudden loud outbursts contrast gentle fading melodies, until we fall into silence. Silence figures prominently in each movement of this symphony. Sometimes it is quiet and peaceful, as if in nature, other times it is a sudden gaping chasm of silence: uncomfortable and unexpected. One wonders what the influence of Beethoven's worsening hearing is having on the way he perceives and writes music. At the start of the exposition before meeting the primary

first theme we are greeted by a bouncing energetic rhythm. This dactylic rhythm pervades the entire rest of the movement. Beethoven used harmony in uncommon ways, taking sudden turns to distantly related keys, or pounding on dissonant chords. The remainder of the exposition and development present and manipulate material as they move through unexpected keys. As expected, Beethoven begins to restate the music from the beginning of this fast section, but it is now transformed into a rambunctious celebration.

A sudden shift to minor begins the second movement like a shock of cold water. The movement is ripe with emotion right from the start; incredible given the simplicity of the melody. In an interview, Bernstein once said of this simple melody “You can’t really say he’s a great melodist.” This incredibly popular movement has been much loved, even at the premiere where it was given an encore. It appears in numerous movies: *The Black Cat* (1934), *Mr. Holland’s Opus* (1995), *The Fall* (2006), *The King’s Speech* (2010), *X-Men: Apocalypse* (2016). Some conductors choose a slower tempo to dramatize the melancholy melody. Beethoven seems to have had a more energetic and persistent impetus for this music, given that he indicates a tempo (speed) of *Allegretto* (a little lively) and begins with string writing that sounds more like a snare drum part than a melody for strings. The movement intensifies as more and more instruments join in the melody and Beethoven adds rhythmic density and variety. A second sweeter melody contrasts the first, but the persistent rhythmic motif is still present in the bass line. The first melody turns us back to the minor mode. Beethoven studied fugues, including Bach’s, as a child, and loved them. He begins this rather passe Baroque style exactly at the Golden Ratio of the movement. Rather than functioning as the climax, the energy of the fugue percolates and intensifies through the layers of melody launching us into a full outburst, the true climax of the movement. After a partial restatement of the major mode second theme, Beethoven returns to the initial minor material. The melody unwinds through descending registers getting softer and softer, as if we were saying goodbye to each of the instruments as they recess away. The final chord strikes, identical to the first, closing the curtain on this scene.

Scherzo literally means joke, and Beethoven is going to play a joke on us. The most common form for a third movement of a symphony at the time would have been the Minuet Trio. Beethoven’s First Symphony features a (too fast to dance) Minuet and Trio, but had begun using the label *Scherzo* since his Second Symphony. In this highly repetitive joke, Beethoven will play around with our expectations of what we will hear next, and for how long we will let something go on. Reminiscent of the Minuet-Trio-Minuet format, this five-part movement is created by adding repetitions where audiences of the time would not have expected them. The movement again opens with a rhythm before a melody. Nimble melodies are quickly tossed between different instruments, always with unrelenting rhythmic drive. Loud and soft passages quickly contrast each other, often at unexpected times. The expected Trio section

takes a break from driving rhythm into pastoral calm. While Beethoven gives no program for this symphony, that has not stopped many authors from coming up with their own worth-reading proposals. The beginning material returns, but it contains all of the repetitions that are normally omitted, and the dynamics have been changed. Could this be a Rondo, or Theme and Variation form? An audience of the time may have been nervous about what they had gotten themselves into, and for how long it would continue. The Trio section makes its return, again stated in full. The initial material is then restated for a second time! Fortunately, this time without taking any repeats in the music. When the Trio section begins to repeat again, Beethoven must have known the audience was growing tired of this repetition. The chord in the orchestra suddenly turns sour, and the movement concludes with five raucous laughs from Beethoven.

Beethoven begins the final movement again with a rhythmic idea that will permeate the entire movement. A heavy-footed accompaniment supports a whirling melody in the violins, perhaps inspired by an Irish reel. The melody itself bears a striking resemblance to one of the Irish folk songs Beethoven had been arranging: *Save me from the grave and wise*. Beethoven continues his unusual use of distantly related harmonies giving the repetitive themes renewed vitality as they present themselves in new keys and colors. While Rondo would have been a common choice to cast the finale of a symphony, Beethoven instead uses *Sonata Allegro* procedure as he did in the first movement. This combination gives us some sense of security in terms of expectations for when a new melody might start or repeat, paired with unexpected harmonic turns. Bernstein comments on Beethoven's composition: "Everything is so unpredictable, and yet so right. It all checks." The coda of this movement again slams the listener into an unexpected harmony. He uses this drama to ratchet up the tension leading the orchestra to an exuberant outburst. This climactic section occurs proportionally quite late in the movement, and is marked *fff* (really really loud), the very first time such a dynamic has been marked into a symphony.

— Program notes by Robert Stahly

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