



HARVARD RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

- federico cortese - conductor -

8 PM | FRI | MARCH 5 | SANDERS

KIRCHNER | Music for Orchestra No. 2

CHOPIN | Piano Concerto No. 1

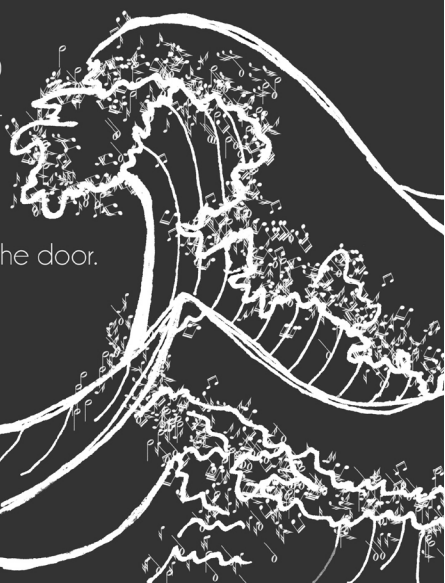
- pianist Kenric Tam '12 -

BRAHMS | Symphony No. 3

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Yuga Cohler '11, music director

saturday, march 6th, 2010 | paine hall, 8pm

- Prokofiev Symphony No. 1 in D Major, Op. 25, "Classical"
Poulenc Concerto in d minor for two pianos
 Stephanie Brinton '10 and Lindsey Brinton '12, *pianos*
 2009-2010 Concerto Competition Winners
Sheets Nightclub Scenes for Solo Piano and Orchestra
 Zachary Sheets '13, *composer*
 2009-2010 Composition Competition Winner
Mozart Symphony No. 35 in D Major, K. 385, "Haffner"



sunday, april 25th, 2010 | paine hall, 8pm

- T.B.D. *Selected by the 2010-2011 Music Director-Elect*
Beethoven Concerto for Piano No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15
 Robert Levin, *piano*
Dvorak Symphony No. 7 in D minor, Op. 70



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HISTORY OF THE HRO

The Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra (HRO) is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States. It traces its history back to the night of March 6, 1808, when six Harvard men first formed the Pierian Sodality, an organization dedicated to the consumption of brandy and cigars, as well as to the serenading of young ladies. Its midnight expeditions were not confined to Cambridge, but rather extended to Watertown, Brookline, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Boston – wherever, in short, dwelt celebrated belles. Among the Sodality's other activities included the serenading of then Harvard College President John Kirkland in 1819. According to a June 29, 1840 entry in the Sodality's record book, the group's late-night music-making antics earned them fame that "did wax exceedingly great, and did reach all the places round about Cambridge."

The early Pierians had so much spirit that in the 1830s, the Faculty of Harvard College publicly admonished the Sodality for absenting themselves from Cambridge for a whole night, serenading. Administration censure was so great, in fact, that in 1832, the Pierian Sodality was reduced to one man: Henry Gassett.¹ According to a March 29, 1943 issue of *Time* magazine, Gassett held meetings with himself in his chair, paid himself dues regularly, played his flute in solitude and finally persuaded another flautist to join in duets. It seemed the Sodality was in danger of disappearing. Gradually, however, other members were elected, and the Sodality played on. The Sodality not only played on, but also profoundly influenced the development of music in Cambridge and Boston over the next fifty years. In 1837, Sodality alumni formed the Harvard Musical Association with an aim to foster music at the college. The Harvard Glee Club and the Boston Symphony Orchestra both owe their existence to the early Pierians.

As a musical organization, the Pierians were also interested in performance. In 1860, shortly after Harvard President James Walker made Harvard the first institution to add music as a regular subject of study in the curriculum, the Pierian Sodality was given permission to "hire a hall and give a public concert, on condition that no tickets be sold."² Thus began the performing career of the Pierians. They began to give regular concerts, and rehearsed to prepare for them. Eventually, the orchestra's performances garnered

enough attention to be reported in the *New York Times*, which wrote in 1891: "The Pierian Sodality is especially strong this year...containing some of the best musical talent of the university."³

By the turn of the century, the Pierian Sodality could at last justly refer to itself as the Harvard University Orchestra. It had grown into a serious musical organization and had become the largest college orchestra in America. It deemed itself ready for its first out-of-state tour, the Centennial Tour of 1908, which took the orchestra through New York state, and was so successful that other tours quickly followed. In 1921, the Sodality toured New York City, Providence, and even played in Washington's National Theater for First Lady Mrs. Warren Harding and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge.³ The orchestra gradually built an international reputation and played for many distinguished audiences in the country.

It was not until November of 1936 that members of the Pierian Sodality finally condescended to assist the Radcliffe Orchestra in some of its larger concerts. Joint concerts became more frequent in the late thirties, and in 1942, the Pierians suggested that the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra be formed. Since the Sodality's membership was depleted during the years of World War II, and since the Radcliffe Orchestra lacked certain instruments, both groups benefited from the merger. Thus the men and women of Harvard and Radcliffe united in their music-making efforts, and the HRO as it is today was born.

It is said that around 1950, HRO stopped making history and started making music with a degree of seriousness never before seen at the university. The orchestra continued to improve in quality and reputation as it took tours to Mexico (1962), Washington, D.C. (1966), and Canada (1972). It performed in venues such as Carnegie Hall and, in 1978, placed third in the Fifth Annual International Festival of Student Orchestras. The 1980s and 1990s saw tours of the former Soviet Union (1984), Asia (1985 and 1988), Europe (1992), and Italy (1996). Most recently, HRO conducted successful tours of Brazil in 2000, Canada in 2004, and South Korea in 2008.

¹ Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard: 1636-1936* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2001), p.295.

² "News From Harvard," *The New York Times*, Dec. 16 1891.

³ "Harvard Orchestra on Tour," *The New York Times*, Dec. 19 1921.

HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

202nd Season, 2009-2010

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Michael Viscardi '10
*concertmaster (Chopin,
Kirchner)*

Foster Wang '10
*concertmaster
(Brahms)*

Andres Camacho '10

Chad Cannon '10

Hillary Ditmars '12 §

Benjamin Dobkin '12

Kevin Donoghue '11

Herman Gudjonson '12

Julia Kete '13

Yunsoo Kim '11

Eric Lin '12

Alexis Medina '13

Joshua Ra '13

Annemarie Ryu '13

Diana Tsen '11

Maria Xu '12

VIOLIN II

David Bracher '11

Hanna Choi '12

Jeremy Stein Cushman '12

Tim Hsieh '10

Taylor Lane '11

Eugene Lee '10

Rachel Lee '10 §

JungHyun Lim '13

Ariel Mitnick '13

Charlotte Nicholas '13

Sydney Sawyer '13

Arpi Tavit-Shatelyan '13

Jeremy Ying '13

Simone Zhang '12

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principal

Lucy Caplan '12 *

Christopher Chang '12

Ashley Fabrizio '11

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Jackie Havens '10

Brandon Jones '13

Elizabeth Letvin '13

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Cerianne Robertson '13

Gabriel Walker '13

Serena Zhao '12

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principal

Alex Cox '12

Miguel Cutiongco '12

Shoshanna Fine '10 *

Adam Letvin '10

Evan Martino '13

Theodore Peng '13

Alexander Sahn '13

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HARVARD-RADCLIFFE ORCHESTRA

— 202nd Season, 2009-2010 —



FEDERICO CORTESE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Friday, 5 March 2010, 8:00 P.M.
Sanders Theatre, Harvard University

~Program~

Frédéric François Chopin (1810-1849)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11

- I. Allegro Maestoso
- II. Romance (Larghetto)
- III. Rondo (Vivace)

Kenric Tam '12, concerto competition winner

~Intermission~

Leon Kirchner (1919-2009)

Music for Orchestra II

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90

- I. Allegro con brio - un poco sostenuto
- II. Andante
- III. Poco allegretto
- IV. Allegro



FEDERICO CORTESI

conductor



From the moment of his debut in September 1998, stepping in at short notice to conduct Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* in

place of an ailing Seiji Ozawa, Federico Cortese's work as Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony was widely praised. Serving in that position from 1998-2003, Mr. Cortese led the Boston Symphony several times in Symphony Hall and at Tanglewood. His conducting of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* was particularly heralded. Additionally, he has served as Music Director of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras since 1999 and is currently Music Director of the New England String Ensemble and Associate Conductor of the Asian Youth Symphony Orchestra. Other appointments have included Music Coordinator (in lieu of Music Director) and Associate Conductor of the Spoleto Festival in Italy, Assistant Conductor to Daniele Gatti at the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and Assistant Conductor to Robert Spano at the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

Federico Cortese has conducted operatic and symphonic engagements throughout the United States, Australia and Europe. Recent engagements in the US include, among many others, the Dallas, Atlanta, San Antonio, New World and Louisville Symphonies; as well as

many operatic productions including Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with the Boston Lyric Opera, Puccini's *La Bohème* with Opera Theater of St. Louis as well as at with the Yale Opera program, and Previn's *Streetcar named Desire* with the Washington Opera. In Europe, his opera experience includes conducting productions of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* in Parma, Italy as part of the Verdi's Centennial Festival; Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Spoleto Festival in Italy; Niccolò Piccini's *La Bella Verità* at the Teatro Comunale, Firenze, with the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino; and a new production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with the Finnish National Opera in Helsinki. Recent successes include guest conducting Britain's Opera North, the BBC Scottish Symphony, the Slovenian Philharmonic, the Oslo Philharmonic, the Zagreb Philharmonic and the Goettingen Symphony to name just a few.

In Australia, he has conducted the Sydney Symphony, the Tasmania Symphony, the Australian Youth Orchestra, the West Australia Symphony Orchestra, the Queensland Orchestras, and a production of *Madama Butterfly* for Opera Australia in Melbourne.

Federico Cortese studied composition and conducting at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome and subsequently studied at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna. In addition, he has been a conducting fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center. In 2009, he was appointed as a Senior Lecturer in the Harvard music department. In addition to music, Mr. Cortese studied literature, humanities and law, earning a law degree from La Sapienza University in Rome.

KENRIC TAM

soloist



Kenric Tam '12 made his debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in 2006. His playing has

been recognized as "remarkable for its voluptuous sound and perfection" by the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, and he has been praised for "his dazzling technique, and his maturity of interpretation" by the *Oakland Tribune*. In 2008, Kenric was awarded the silver medal at the prestigious Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition. Kenric was named a Presidential Scholar at the White House by President Bush and performed at the Kennedy Center. Kenric is the prizewinner of numerous international piano competitions, including the first prize of the 2009 Stravinsky Awards Piano Competition, the first prize of the 2007 Schimmel International Piano Competition in Arizona, the grand prize winner of the 2007 Mondavi Young Artists Competition, the second prize of the 2007 MTNA National Piano Competition, the first prize of the 2006 "Individualis" International Music Competition in Ukraine, the second prize of the 2006 Eastman International Piano Competition in New York, the first prize of the 2006 Bronislaw Kaper Awards, and the first prize of the 2005 Lennox International Young

Artists Competition in Texas. As the first prizewinner of the 2005 Palatino Palatino Solo Piano Competition, Kenric was awarded a grand piano.

Kenric has been invited to be Artist-in-Residence and perform two solo recitals at the University of California next January. Last May, Kenric was the only pianist featured in the HBO documentary, "MasterClass" where he worked with Michael Tilson Thomas for a week in Miami. Kenric has performed extensively with such symphonies as the Symphony of the Southwest in Arizona, the Richardson Symphony in Texas, the Music Academy Festival Orchestra, the Fremont Symphony, the Peninsula Symphony, and numerous other San Francisco Bay Area orchestras. In 2007, he toured Eastern Europe with the San Jose Youth Symphony as the featured soloist, playing in world-class venues such as the Liszt Academy in Budapest, the Dvorak Hall in Prague, and the Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw. In addition to his orchestra performances, Kenric has been invited to play solo recitals for the Braunschweig Classix Festival in Germany, the Steinway Society, the 10th Annual World Pedagogy Conference, and the Piano Technician's Guild of California.

Kenric is a sophomore biology concentrator at Harvard. He studies piano with Ms. Wha-Kyung Byun at New England Conservatory of Music through Harvard/NEC joint degree program.



NOTES ON THE MUSIC

chopin - piano concerto no. 1

Frédéric François Chopin (1810-1849), one of the most famous composers of the Romantic era, was identified early in childhood as a precocious musical prodigy. Raised in Warsaw, Poland by a musically-inclined family, little Chopin was performing public concerts in local salons by age 8, prompting immediate comparison with the previous wonderkids of the piano: Mozart and Beethoven. In 1826, Chopin began composition studies at the Warsaw Conservatory, and in late 1830, he set off for Paris, ultimately achieving widespread fame and popularity as a composer, pianist, and teacher.

Unlike other composers, Chopin's oeuvre consists predominantly of works for piano. In fact, Chopin wrote in a letter, "Mozart encompasses the entire domain of musical creation, but I've only got the keyboard in my poor head. I know my limitations." Nevertheless, Chopin's unique style of piano music inspired and influenced many contemporaries and later composers, including Schumann, Liszt, Brahms and Scriabin. Yet, there is a unique, expressive character to Chopin's music that cannot be attributed to any other composer. Arthur Rubinstein, a renowned Chopin interpreter, comments that Chopin's music "conquers the most diverse audiences. When the first notes of Chopin sound through the concert hall there is a happy sigh of recognition. All over the world men and women know his music. They

love it. They are moved by it. [...] His music is the universal language of human communication."

Indeed, Chopin's voice at the piano truly comes to life in his *Concerto No.1 in E minor, Op.11*. Although designated as "No.1" since it was the first of his concertos to be published, the E minor concerto was actually written after the *Concerto No.2 in F minor, Op.21*. Composed in 1830 before Chopin left for Paris, the Concerto No.1 was premiered in Warsaw later that year as part of Chopin's farewell concert. Chopin himself played the solo part and the work was an immediate success.

The E minor concerto consists of a typical three-movement structure. In the first movement, the orchestra begins with a lengthy introduction, establishing two main themes that the soloist develops later in the movement. The first theme in E minor conveys an intensely heroic and majestic quality that many have described as an expression of Polish nationalistic spirit. In contrast, the second theme in E major sings with a smoothly-sustained lyrical melody that captures an essence of peace and tranquility. All together, the movement is epic in scale, showcasing a diverse spectrum of expressivity from the soloist.

The second movement is a Romance of breathtaking beauty, with delicate melodies sung by the piano and a gorgeous palette of harmonic colors emanating from the orchestra. In a letter, Chopin wrote that this slow

NOTES ON THE MUSIC

chopin - piano concerto no. 1



movement has a "romantic, calm and partly melancholy character. It is intended to convey the impression which one receives when the eye rests on a beloved landscape that calls up in one's soul beautiful memories - for instance, on a fine moonlit spring night. I have written for violins with mutes as an accompaniment to it. I wonder if that will have a good effect?"

After the final hushed whispers of the Romance have dissipated, the concerto concludes with a bright and cheerful rondo. This

finale features distinctive rhythmic elements derived from the *Krakowiak*, a popular Polish dance in syncopated duple-time. Throughout much of the movement, the soloist performs with a playful, delicate nature, giving each entrance and melody a touch of glitter and sparkle. The concerto ends with exuberant energy, leaving the listener convinced of the piano's wide range of expressive potential and Chopin's mastery in bringing forth such expression.

-- Hanjay Wang

NOTES ON THE MUSIC

kirchner - music for orchestra II



In 1988 the Boston Symphony Orchestra commissioned several distinguished composers, who had personal connections to Leonard Bernstein, to write a brief variation for full orchestra on Bernstein's well-known song "New York, New York," from *On the Town*. The new variations were collected and performed as a musical "bouquet" for Bernstein during the celebrations at Tanglewood in honor of his seventieth birthday that summer. Kirchner began his variation with an introduction that alluded to both of his greatest mentors (Stravinsky and Schoenberg) and then introduced several of the most striking motives from "New York, New York" into the main body of the work. After the birthday performance

Bernstein joked with Kirchner about his proclivity for transforming one composition into another: "I know you: you're going to take the first two minutes, and you're going to use it to write your own piece." Bernstein was correct.

When the New England Conservatory of Music commissioned Kirchner to compose a work for the Conservatory's Symphony Orchestra, material from the birthday tribute served as the opening to the new work, which he initially titled *Orchestra Piece*. (This is the work on this evening's program.) In recognition of this connection, Kirchner dedicated the score "to Leonard Bernstein, and to Igor and Arnold," the reference to Stravinsky and Schoenberg an hom-



NOTES ON THE MUSIC *kirchner - music for orchestra II*

age to their influence not only in this work but on his entire oeuvre.

After Kirchner conducted the premiere of the *Orchestra Piece* with the N.E.C. Symphony Orchestra in January 1990, critic Richard Dyer noted that although it was only about ten minutes long, its "gestures are large and generous It may also be the only piece of Kirchner's that reminds us of how long he lived near Hollywood—this is not small-screen music but the real old-fashioned wide-screen, Technicolor, surround-sound thing. And while Kirchner has never particularly gone in for writing 'American' music, this piece is American through and through in its jazzy exuberance and in its bluesy soul."

When Kirchner conducted it again the following summer, with the Harvard Chamber Orchestra in Sanders Theatre, critic Anthony Tommasini also commented on the work's American features and compared it to "a 10-minute tidal wave. It begins with onrushing splashes that swell and crest, then abate for a calmer middle section, only to crest again and lead to the crashing climax. The musical language recalls the twelve-tone Schoenberg . . . yet abounds with whiffs of Ellington big-band chords and spiky American rhythms."

In June 1991 Kirchner was

invited, for the second time, to participate as pianist and conductor at the prestigious Aldeburgh Festival in England. Founded in 1948 by Benjamin Britten, Aldeburgh was now directed by British composer Oliver Knussen. During Kirchner's first visit to Aldeburgh two years earlier, Knussen had conducted Kirchner's *Music for Orchestra* at the Festival. [The *Music for Orchestra* was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic for celebrations of its 125th anniversary in 1968.] In the meantime Kirchner had completed the new *Orchestra Piece*, and thus Knussen suggested that the two works might be performed together as a pair. With Kirchner's enthusiastic blessing Knussen decided to program them together on a concert with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra in London in the fall. After this successful experiment, Kirchner decided to designate the new composition as *Orchestra Piece (Music for Orchestra II)*, with the note that it may be performed either with *Music for Orchestra (Music for Orchestra I)* or independently. *Music for Orchestra I* and *II*, both individually and twinned, have been performed by many of the world's leading orchestras and conductors.

-- Robert Riggs

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Visit us at www.hrorchestra.org

NOTES ON THE MUSIC

brahms - symphony no. 3



For Clara Schumann's sixty-fourth birthday, Brahms had intended to bring her a bouquet. But the flower shop was out of his way—so he presented her with the manuscript of his *Third Symphony* instead. Months earlier, Brahms had spent his summer in lovely Wiesbaden, where he was able to devote himself entirely to his music. Keenly aware of the looming legacy left by Beethoven in the symphonic genre, Brahms had spent two decades mulling over his *First Symphony*. But not so with the *Third*: it was completed in less than four months, conceived in a flash of inspiration. Clara, who Brahms had always regarded as an indispensable judge of his work, was struck by the elegant coherence and thematic unity of the *Third Symphony*; after playing through a piano reduction of the work, she wrote to the composer, "All the movements seem to be of ... one beat of the heart."

By 1884, the year the *Third Symphony* saw its birth and completion, Brahms was fifty-one years old and firmly established in lifelong bachelorhood. He was so completely dedicated to composition that he frequently rejected teaching and conducting positions, eschewing even celebrations in his honor. It is little wonder then that *frei aber froh*—"free but happy"—was his personal motto. And it is with *frei aber froh* that the *Third Symphony* begins: the three massive opening chords (F major to b diminished to F major) are orches-

trated so that the top voice, carried by the flute, is comprised of the notes F-A-flat-F. The acronym of his personal motto, this F-A-F motive sometimes functions as melody and other times as harmonic support—but whether boldly exposed for cleverly disguised, it is the underlying thematic framework for the entire symphony. However, this musical assertion of "free but happy" is not all confidence and bravura. Max Kalbeck, Brahms' friend and biographer, pointed out that statements of the F-A-F theme are fraught with harmonic ambiguity, frequently teetering between major and minor as the middle A transforms to A-flat and back.

Following a passionate introduction of enveloping chords and lush string melodies, the first movement (*Allegro con brio*) quickly calms into a charming exchange of woodwind melodies. In his youth, Brahms had contributed to his family's livelihood by playing popular music at private gatherings and *Schänken* (respectable working-class places for eating and entertainment). Furthermore, when the collapse of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution brought an influx of political refugees through Hamburg, Brahms was exposed to music of the *style hongrois*, which blended Hungarian and gypsy performance practices. These early experiences cultivated a lifelong fascination with folk music, irregular rhythms, triplet figures, and the use of *rubato*; Brahms himself had compiled collections of



NOTES ON THE MUSIC

brahms - symphony no. 3

European folksongs. The themes of the first movement, with their lilting folk-like quality and simultaneous triple-against-duple meter, are so lovely for this reason: they are expertly crafted in a style Brahms both loved and knew well.

The second movement *Andante* is filled with beautiful melodic material for the clarinet, one of Brahms' favorite instruments. With dynamic markings hardly rising above piano, the *Andante* is both restrained and idyllic, beginning in cheerful C Major and modulating to G Major before leading to a recapitulation in C major and a peaceful *coda*. Clara Schumann, delighted with the work's pristine and pastoral quality, wrote to Brahms, "What a work! What a poem! From start to finish one is wrapped about with the mysterious charm of the woods and forests ... I hear the babbling brook and the buzzing of insects...."

Italian for "joke", the *scherzo* is typical of symphonic third movements. Yet contrary to conventions, the *Third Symphony's poco allegretto* is unexpectedly poignant, opening with a cello theme heart-wrenching in its tenderness. The cello melody is answered by the full string section before the woodwinds introduce the central *trio* section. Chromatic modulations then lead to the return of the main theme, played by the horn and then passed on to the oboe and flute. The major key theme finally returns for the last time in the strings, with the

coda reaching a moving climax before the movement ends in C minor.

The final movement *Allegro*, for all its brooding vitality and passion, is where the harmonic ambiguity introduced in the first movement is finally resolved. It begins with a melancholy melody in the bassoon and strings, followed by dramatic statements alternated between winds and strings. The tension of the movement is further reinforced by chromatic passages and dotted rhythms, which persistently permeate the exposition, development, and recapitulation sections. It is thus in the *coda* that something miraculous occurs: the principal subject is restated and transformed into F major. The entire symphony is then brought together and resolved, ending with the touching solace of an effulgent F major chord.

Of all the symphonies by Brahms, the *Third* is shortest—it is also the most restrained, with all its movements ending in serenely stretched chords. However, it is perhaps Brahms' most personal symphony, and in its concise unity there is undeniable beauty. Or, as the influential music critic Eduard Hanslick once remarked, "Many music lovers will prefer the titanic force of the *First Symphony*; others, the untroubled charm of the *Second*, but the *Third* strikes me as being artistically the most nearly perfect."

-- MengRuo Yang

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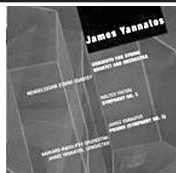


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