

PROGRAM NOTES
QUINCY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
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Berlioz *Roman Carnival Overture*

Hector Berlioz's mastery of orchestration combined with his imaginative compositional style showcases his diverse use of sound, as heard in *Roman Carnival Overture*. This overture, a stand-alone concert piece for large symphony orchestra, draws from Berlioz's unsuccessful, but deeply personally meaningful opera *Benvenuto Cellini*. The overture utilizes musical themes found within the opera, most notably drawing upon the carnival scenes from the story, and hence, earning its festive title. Berlioz further evokes a sense of Italian identity through his use of the vigorous rhythm of the *saltarello*, a 14th century Italian dance in triple time, at the opening of the overture. The dance creates rhythmic drive from the onset of the work, drawing us closer to the exuberant and untamed celebration of the ending.

Berlioz completed *Roman Carnival Overture* in 1843, following the completion of his most famous works, *Symphonie Fantastique* and *Romeo et Juliette*, and concurrently with his treatise on instrumentation. The overture follows in the footsteps of his older works with its variety of musical colors and instrumentation and his unusual use of melody and form. By creating a long, sweeping phrase for the solo English horn, Berlioz begins to insert his personal sense of wandering that is not satisfied until the final chord of the work. The excitement intensifies through the rolling celebratory theme in the strings and winds juxtaposed with the fanfare closing call of the brass, hitting a moment of uncertainty before the final A-major cadence, signaling an end to Berlioz's wandering.

Sibelius *Symphony No. 5*

Jean Sibelius's *Fifth Symphony* showcases his lyrical abilities, contrasting against his increasingly modernist colleague's move toward avant-garde works. The work, composed in 1915 for the composer's 50th birthday, a Finnish national holiday, and premiered by Sibelius himself, would undergo several revisions during his lifetime. These changes allowed the work to cross boundaries from the traditional symphony, as Sibelius later merged the first and second movements, creating a seamless transition between the icy intensity of the first movement and jovial scherzo second movement. His guiding philosophy surrounding the symphony surely led Sibelius to continue his revisions until 1919:

“I wished to give my symphony another – more human – form. More down-to-earth, more vivid.”

In addition to this characteristic principle of the work, Sibelius felt that the work was an act of the divine, giving the composer more pressure to create what he felt to be the most flawless interpretation of the musical ideas he had:

"It was as if God the Father was throwing pieces of mosaic from the edge of heaven and asking me to figure out what the pattern was."

As a result of his intricate work in creating the symphony, the work represents Sibelius's position in our musical history as a composer clinging to the traditional Romantic standards of musical language while using personal creativity and experimentation to push the boundaries of the symphony.

Theofanidis *The Legend of the Northern Lights*

Christopher Theofanidis created *The Legend of the Northern Lights* for KV 265 - a non-profit focused on merging science and art. Theofanidis centers the work around a narrative, which propels the music forward over stunning visuals, created by Emmy-nominated astronomer José Francisco Salgado. From Theofanidis's own words on the organization and work:

"KV 265's admirable goal of fusing science with the arts appeals to me very deeply, as I have always thought that the deepest aspirations of humanity can be found in both disciplines. In this particular case, the vehicle for bringing these two things together is a simple children's story told with narration, music, and film, and it is one that tries to underscore the idea that the journey of evolving is driven by our basic need to both admire and to technically understand something."

Theofanidis utilizes various musical motifs throughout the work to signal the various celestial bodies in the video, creating a seamless transition between narrated storytelling and musical action. The resulting work intertwines scientific explanation with a musical journey, leading us through a cultural exploration of the northern lights and accompanied by a children's story. Atmospheric winds and brass project through the shimmering string sections, clearing midway for a solo violin, and further pushing the narrative surrounding *The Legend of the Northern Lights*.