



Gateway Chamber Orchestra

Romantic Strings

October 27 - 28, 2013

Intermezzo for Strings

Youtube link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53zXP0A9hFA>

About the composer

Franz Schreker (1878 – 1934) was an Austrian composer who was most widely known for his operas. He wrote music with a very unique sound by blending composition techniques from several different time periods and styles.



About the music

Intermezzo for Strings was one of Schreker's first compositional successes, and won a composition contest in 1901. An intermezzo is a short, *lyrical* (pretty, and sometimes sad) piece of music. Sometimes intermezzos were performed between acts or sections of operas.

In slow, lyrical music like the *Intermezzo*, watch the left hand of the string players. You may notice that it looks like they are trying to shake the instrument. This shaking creates a *vibrato*, or a type of shake that gives each note a prettier sound.

So, instead of the notes sounding like this:



They sound like this:



You will also see the left hand getting really close to the main part, or the body, of the instrument, especially at the end of the *Intermezzo*. The *pitch* (highness or lowness of the sound) is controlled by the left hand. As the hand gets closer to the body of the instrument, or higher on the string, the pitch of the string gets higher.

Clarinet Concerto

Youtube links

Part 1 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmMFL1zZ-tU>

Part 2 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCHNf9YI2OE>

About the Soloist

[Read about featured Clarinetist, Mingzhe Wang](#)

About the composer

Aaron Copland (1900 – 1990) was an American composer whose music was usually based on American folk songs. He was most known for his orchestral music, and for writing music in a style that sounded like an old cowboy movie.



About the music

Copland's Clarinet Concerto was written in late 1940s, while Copland was working as a music teacher. The Concerto was commissioned by Benny Goodman, a famous jazz clarinet player from this time period (*commissioned* means that Benny Goodman paid Copland to write the music for him to perform).

The first youtube link (above) features Goodman on the clarinet, and the orchestra conducted by Copland. Around seven minutes into the video, the music changes from a slow, pretty sound at the beginning to a bit of a more up-beat sound. This section of the music where the clarinetist performs by himself or herself is called a *cadenza* (from seven minutes to nine minutes on the recording). Once the orchestra begins playing again, there is a very clear difference in the style from the beginning section. The second youtube link for the *Clarinet Concerto* is a live performance of the second *movement* (or section) of the Concerto.

Adagietto from Symphony No. 5

Youtube link

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjz2TvC2TT4>

About the composer

Gustav Mahler (1860 – 1911) is another well-known Austrian composer from the late 1800s. He is most known for his symphonies and orchestral music that used folk songs and children's songs as melody and background music.



About the music

The *Adagietto* is the fourth movement, or section, of Mahler's fifth symphony. A symphony is a long composition that is usually divided into four movements, or sections. Movement 1 is usually fast and loud. The second movement is slower and prettier, followed by a third movement that is usually a little like a dance or waltz. Most symphonies end with a fourth

movement that is usually a little louder and faster than the first movement. Mahler's Fifth Symphony is an unusual symphony because the composer decided to write five movements instead of four. Mahler inserted a slow, pretty fourth movement (the *Adagietto*) before ending with a final, fifth movement. *Adagietto* is an Italian word that means "slow, but not too slow."

There are three things to listen for in the *Adagietto* that make this movement easy to remember. First, Mahler featured the harp, an instrument that is usually very hard to hear when the entire orchestra is playing. The harp introduces a lot of the major sections by playing very slow *arpeggios* (the notes of a chord played one at a time, in this piece, from highest to lowest). On the music, an arpeggio looks this way:



Listen for the harp's arpeggios throughout the *Adagietto*.

The second thing to listen for is a special way of composing, called *anticipation*.

Anticipation is a way of composing music that uses short pauses and specific notes to make the listener wonder what is about to happen. Anticipation is like starting a sentence and then waiting before you decide to finish it. Listen for the orchestra to play three notes in a row, and then pause on the third note before playing the rest of the melody. This happens several times in the movement.

Finally, the *Adagietto* goes from extremely quiet at the beginning to very loud near the end. In music, the word to describe loud and soft is *dynamics*. The very quiet sections at the beginning are labeled as *pianissimo* (Italian word meaning very quiet. Abbreviated *pp* on the music). The very loud sections near the end are labeled as *fortissimo* (very loud. Abbreviated *ff* on the music). The entire movement gradually swells from very soft to very loud, a technique called *crescendo* (Italian word meaning get louder).

Simple Symphony

Youtube Link

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwSwopSro0k>

About the composer

Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976) lived in England in the early part of the 20th century. Although he wrote music for several types of ensembles, his most well-known compositions are his works for string orchestra.



About the music

Like all most other symphonies, the *Simple Symphony* is written in four sections or *movements*. Rather than compose new music for the Simple Symphony, Britten used pre-existing melodies (melodies that had already been written) as the basis of his new work.

- The first movement is the *Boisterous Bourrée*, based on a common French dance.
- The second movement is the *Playful Pizzicato*, based on a scherzo, or a dance that may sound like a fast waltz. (the 2nd movement begins at 2:35 on the youtube link)
 - *Pizzicato* means that the string players will put down their bows, and pluck the strings with their fingers.
- The third movement is the *Sentimental Sarabande*. A Sarabande is another type of dance like a scherzo, although Britten's Sarabande is much slower than the second movement (the 3rd movement begins at 5:50 on the youtube link).
- The fourth and final movement is the *Frolicsome Finale*. Listen for a *tremolo*, or a quick back-and-forth movement of the bow on the same pitch or note throughout this movement. Also listen for a return of the *pizzicato* somewhere in this movement. (the 4th movement begins at 13:12 on the youtube link)