

Notes on the Program

By James M. Keller, Program Annotator, The Leni and Peter May Chair

Welcome to *Phil the Hall*, a program celebrating the best of New York City through its community connections and rich musical history. Each of the works in this concert have special meaning to the New York Philharmonic, past and present, starting with the very first notes of the very first work the Orchestra played in our very first concert. (It went on to become a pretty big hit; we think you'll know it.) We'll travel through music by composers who have not only been significant to American classical music, but who have been near and dear to the Philharmonic, including Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland,

and Steven Stucky. And we'll introduce brand-new works by two of New York's newest and brightest, participants in the Philharmonic's Very Young Composers program.

The first four notes of **Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 5** — *da-da-da-DAAA!* — may be the most famous in all of music. But music is made up of more than just notes, of course. It's also composed of silences, which in their way are every bit as important. Beethoven's Fifth actually opens with a silence, an eighth-note rest that, in retrospect, is as palpable as the eighth-note

***Allegro con brio*, from Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 *An die Freude (To Joy)*, from Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125**

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 16, 1770 (probably, since he was baptized on the 17th), in Bonn, Germany

Died: March 26, 1827, in Vienna, Austria

Works composed and premiered: Symphony No. 5, composed 1804–08; premiered December 22, 1808, at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, with the composer conducting. Symphony No. 9, composed mostly 1822–24; premiered May 7, 1824, at Vienna's Kärntnertor Theater, Michael Umlauf, conductor (with the composer standing beside him to indicate tempos)

New York Philharmonic premieres and most recent performances: Symphony No. 5, premiered at the Orchestra's inaugural concert on December 7, 1842, Ureli Corelli Hill, conductor; most recently performed, July 26, 2018, at Bravo! Vail in Colorado, Joshua Weilerstein, conductor. Symphony No. 9, premiered May 20, 1846, George Loder, conductor, marking the US Premiere, with Antoinette Otto, soprano, Mrs. Boulard, alto, R. Munson, tenor, P. Mayer, bass,

and a chorus of more than 300; most recently played, July 31, 2017, in Santa Barbara, California, Alan Gilbert, conductor, with Susanna Phillips, soprano, Sasha Cooke, mezzo-soprano, Joseph Kaiser, tenor, Morris Robinson, bass, and the Los Angeles Master Chorale



Castle Garden in Battery Park, where the Orchestra performed the US Premiere of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony

Gs that follow it, like taking a giant breath before launching into a breakneck race.

Of this masterful symphony, one of the most iconic pieces of music ever written, composer Robert Schumann commented:

this symphony invariably wields its power over people of every age like those great phenomena of nature that fill us with fear and admiration at all times, no matter how frequently we may experience them.

The Fifth Symphony has been part of the New York Philharmonic from the beginning. The work opened the Orchestra's very first concert on December 7, 1842. Since that launch, the Philharmonic has gone on to perform the symphony more than 500 times, in locations from Central Park to Beijing, China, and the United Nations General Assembly.

In 1846 the four-year-old New York Philharmonic performed a special concert to raise funds to build a dedicated concert hall — there wasn't one in the city and the project would not be realized for many years. Ticket

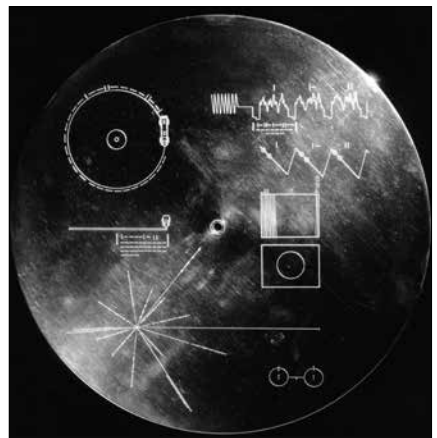
buyers paid the extraordinary sum of \$2 for the event at Castle Garden in Battery Park (now the Castle Clinton National Monument). The program included the US Premiere of **Beethoven's Symphony No. 9**, performed by 400 instrumentalists and singers.

The Philharmonic would turn to the work to mark profound occasions, including the death of President Abraham Lincoln in 1865 (when the finale's ode *An die Freude* [To Joy, more commonly known as the *Ode to Joy*] was omitted as being inappropriate for the occasion). The Orchestra also performed it in a 1919 "Peace Festival" to commemorate the end of World War I; in a 1946 memorial concert for President Franklin D. Roosevelt, attended by delegates of the fledgling United Nations; on New Year's Eve 1999 to ring in the new millennium; and in 2002, on the first anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

When it was new, many listeners were baffled by Beethoven's revolutionary piece, partly by its unprecedented length (the complete symphony runs about 70 minutes, twice the length that was typical at the time), partly by the use of a chorus in the

Did You Know?

- **Beethoven's Fifth Symphony's** famous first movement was included on two Golden Records attached to the *Voyager 1* and *2* spacecraft launched by NASA in 1977. The records included a variety of images and sounds intended as greetings from Earth. Both *Voyager* craft are still on their journeys, having passed by the last planets in our solar system to interstellar space.
- Beethoven conducted the World Premiere of his last symphony, **the Ninth**, but he couldn't hear it. He'd become almost completely deaf and was assisted by another conductor. At the end he was turned around so he could see audience members waving hats and handkerchiefs to signal their enthusiastic approval.



Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is included on the Golden Record affixed to NASA's Voyager spacecraft.

finale (until then, symphonies had been strictly instrumental). That finale, which sets the ode “To Joy” by the poet and playwright Friedrich Schiller, would become an anthem of international unity, extolling the brotherhood of all mankind. A famous performance came in December 1989, when Leonard Bernstein led an orchestra and chorus of musicians from six countries — including several players from the New York Philharmonic — in concerts in East and West Berlin to mark the demolition of the Berlin Wall. For the occasion, Bernstein changed the word “joy” in the text to “freedom.”

This concert sets such venerable music alongside the World Premiere of works by two participants in the New York Philharmonic’s **Very Young Composers** (VYC) program. Created by VYC Director Jon Deak, a composer and former New York Philharmonic Associate Principal Bass, VYC is an afterschool program that provides children ages 9 to 15 the opportunity to explore musical ideas and transform them into finished compositions, to be performed by professional musicians. Participants hone their creations by collaborating with Philharmonic

Teaching Artists in workshops and rehearsals, culminating in astonishing works of art that reveal the power of children’s imaginations.

Works by Very Young Composers have been performed by the full Orchestra in Young People’s Concerts, annual YPCs for Schools, and, for the first time, last summer at the Concerts in the Parks, Presented by Didi and Oscar Schaffer. Last June, two of these works were heard by 82,000 people in Central Park, Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx, Cunningham Park in Queens, and Prospect Park in Brooklyn, and two more were performed at an indoor concert at Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island.

Paloma Dineli Chesky is an 11-year-old American-Brazilian composer and singer. She began studying piano at the age of five at the Lucy Moses School at Kaufman Music Center, and she has been part of the VYC program since she was nine. Her composition *Peace in All Worlds* was premiered in a chamber music performance following a 2018 Philharmonic concert. She originally wrote **Rising** for small ensemble, and has arranged it for full orchestra for these concerts, in which she also performs as vocalist.

New Work by Very Young Composer



Rising

Paloma Dineli Chesky

Born: July 3, 2007, in New York City

Student at: Professional Performing Arts School, Manhattan

World Premiere: these concerts

Paloma says:

Rising is one of my all-time favorite compositions. What inspired me to write this piece was going through challenges. I think everybody has faced some difficulties in life, whether losing a loved one, breaking a bone, having a bad grade in school, or even political challenges in your country. *Rising* was written to show that no matter what challenge you are facing you can overcome it and it won't bring you down.