

University of Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
Roger Zahab, director
Cully D. Murphy and Miranda Bartira Sousa, assistant conductors

December 8, 2021, Wednesday at 8 pm
Bellefield Hall Auditorium

Egmont Overture, op. 84

Ludwig van Beethoven

Prelude for strings (1946, rev. 1962)

Julia Perry
arr. Roger Zahab

Roger Zahab, conductor

Serenade in A major, op. 16. (1858/59, revised version 1875)

Johannes Brahms

I. Allegro moderato
II. Scherzo. Vivace

Cully D. Murphy, conductor

Série Brasileira (Brazilian Suite) (1891 – first performance in the United States)

Alberto Nepomuceno

I. Alvorada na Serra (Dawn in the Hills)
II. Intermédio (Intermezzo)
III. Sesta na Rede (A Nap in the Hammock)
IV. Batuque

Miranda Bartira Sousa, conductor

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Composer, conductor, and reluctant vocalist, **Cullyn D. Murphy** (he/him) focuses on amplifying the already existent musical components of sight, taste, touch, and smell in order to gain access to different modes of storytelling through music. More recently, he has been revisiting his rock band roots in communal music-making by creating music that engages with different varieties of performer input through unconventional notation and co-composition. Murphy's music has been described as "theatrical," "riveting and inventive," and "push[ing] the idea of what music and musical organization is." (Composer's Toolbox) As a conductor, Murphy has most recently conducted with the Parkland Orchestra, the University of Louisville Symphony Orchestra, and at the International Thespian Festival.

Miranda Bartira Sousa is a Musicology PhD student at the University of Pittsburgh. Her research interests are Brazilian popular and concert music from the turn of the twentieth century, from an intersectional and decolonial standpoint. Miranda is a bassist and plays regularly with the Pitt Symphony. She worked as an orchestral musician, music teacher and researcher in Brazil for over a decade before coming to the US to pursue a PhD.

Julia Perry wrote her Prelude for piano in 1946 and revised it in 1962. In the 1980s I found a copy of her manuscript in the American Music Center. Under the title she had written "[arrangement for string orchestra available]" but I have never been able to locate it. I made this arrangement for the University of Pittsburgh Orchestra in August 2020 in her honor.

Further improvements were made in consultation with Christopher Wilkins on July 7, 2021 in preparation for a performance by the Akron Symphony Orchestra on July 9th.
Roger Zahab

Notes on the Program by Miranda Bartira Sousa

Ludwig van Beethoven - Overture to Egmont, Op. 84 (1809/1810)

The concept of heroism has been frequently associated with Beethoven's music, and sometimes with his own life and personality. Egmont (Op. 84), composed as incidental music for a play by J. Wolfgang von Goethe (1754-1832), is part of Beethoven's "heroic" period. The play tells the tragic story of a Dutch nobleman called Count Egmont, who fought for freedom and was condemned to death for standing up against Spanish imperialist rule over the Netherlands in the 16th century.

Tonight, the Pitt Symphony will be playing the Overture to Egmont. The somber opening featuring dramatic chords in the key of F minor is followed by a heroic allegro, culminating with a festive ending in F Major. The structure of the overture mimics the play's story: the slow introduction represents feelings of anxiety facing the brutal enemy; the allegro symbolizes the fight for freedom, while the coda (with themes drawn from the last number of the incidental music, Victory Symphony) celebrates the hero whose martyrdom liberates his country from Spanish oppression. Though the play is loosely based on Count Egmont's life, the overture also represents Beethoven's own preoccupations regarding his nation's standing during the Napoleonic Wars.

Johannes Brahms - Serenade no. 2 in A Major, Op. 16 (1858/1859)

Between the years of 1850-60, Johannes Brahms composed two Serenades for orchestra. These pieces are representative of the composer's early career, when he was testing the waters of symphonic composition. The Serenade in A Major was composed in honor of the court of Detmold (Hamburg), where Brahms gained a position with the help of pianist Clara Schumann. Traditionally, a serenade is better understood as a piece meant for easy listening, but it is already possible to recognize some elements of Brahms' symphonic style in the Serenade no.2: gracious melodies in the woodwinds, cross rhythms, and the use of hemiola. Tonight, the Pitt Symphony will be playing the first two movements of Serenade n. 2: the Allegro moderato, with moving melodies in the winds, and the playful and rhythmic Scherzo.

Alberto Nepomuceno - Série Brasileira (Brazilian Suite, in four movements)

1. Alvorada na Serra
2. Intermédio
3. Sesta na Rede
4. Batuque

The Série Brasileira (Brazilian Series) is a collection of four short pieces for full orchestra, by romantic composer Alberto Nepomuceno (1864-1920). Nepomuceno was a central figure in Rio de Janeiro's musical scene during the turn of the twentieth century, acting as a composer, conductor, music instructor and director of the National Conservatory, and

as an entrepreneur, promoting concerts with modern repertoires for that time, as well as voice repertory sung in Portuguese (lingua mater).

The first movement, Alvorada na Serra (Dawn in the Hills) is based on the folk child's song Sapó Cururu. It depicts a day dawning in the mountains of the Serra do Mar, a cordillera that crosses the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, in southeast Brazil. Flute and clarinet perform cadenzas that emulate the sabiá, an endemic yellow songbird that is considered to be a national symbol.

The second movement, Intermédio (Intermezzo), is borrowed from Nepomuceno's 3rd String Quartet (also called Brasileiro), and is based on two genres of dance music that were very popular in turn-of-the-century Rio de Janeiro: the habanera and the maxixe. Originally from Cuba, the syncopated rhythms of the habanera were nineteenth-century's dance fever not only in South America, but also in Europe. The maxixe, considered by many as the "father" of samba, originated in Brazil from the mix of Portuguese music and dances performed by African slaves. If you would like to know how a maxixe sounds, pay attention to the violins when they accompany woodwind solos!

Sesta na Rede (Nap in the Hammock) is a dreamy lullaby, in which whole-tone, pentatonic and modal scales demonstrate Nepomuceno's awareness of sound materials characteristic of the music of nineteenth-century avant-garde European composers such as Claude Debussy, but also of Brazilian folk music. The use of these scales (called "exotic" in Brazilian music theory) creates a hypnotic effect: strings simulate a swinging hammock, while lyric melodies in the woodwinds symbolize the dreams and nightmares of the sleeping hero.

The last movement, Batuque, originally named Dansa de Negros (Negro Dance), was composed as a piano piece in 1884, and later adapted to full orchestra. It celebrates emancipation in the state of Ceará, where Nepomuceno was born. Ceará was the first state to abolish slavery in Brazil, five years before the rest of the country. Nepomuceno was personally involved in the abolitionist cause, and the Batuque honors the ideal of universal racial freedom. The piece is divided in two parts: the first one features a heroic syncopated melody in call-and-response form, characteristic of many genres of African music; the second section represents the negro dance itself; it gets louder and faster to the end, in a cathartic celebration of the victory over oppression, resembling the ideals of the other hero of tonight's concert, Egmont.

The Série Brasileira is very popular among concert audiences in Brazil, but it has never been performed in the United States. Enjoy this premiere with the exciting performance of the Pitt Symphony!

Personnel for this concert

Ludwig van Beethoven: Egmont Overture, op. 84

flute 1 – Evelyn Markle
flute 2/picc – Makaylia Gerver
oboe - Amelia Van Howe+, Kaylyn Shearer+
clarinets – Katrina Rakusan, Meliksah Dolap
bassoons - Linda Fisher*, Michael McAleese
horns - Niobe Tsoutsouris, Madison Faizon
trombones as horns – Ryan Harden, Jacob Vogel
trumpets - Andrew Levin, Dominic Frankeny
timpani – Alexander Azar

Julia Perry: Prelude for string orchestra

violins I - Annabelle Crowley, Matthew Alford
Ingrid Shu, Anna Gorske
Alyssa Depaoli, Tori Turchick
Katherine Yang, Michael Hu
Rishika Sau, Kyoungah Lee

violins II - Sam Smith, Carleigh Ziencik
Kevin Gu, Miriam Layne
Jessica Knapp, Maria Schrecengost
Siri Harish, Sophia Krumroy
Sasha Sluis-Cremer

violas I - Elyssa Allen, Robbie Fishel, Ben Green,

violins II - Kimia Rafiee, Alex Gehman, Thomas Scheurich

cellos I - Alicia Loui, Hannah Niederhiser, Kyle Demi

cellos II - Talia Mekinulov, Rena Li, Madison Coburn

double basses - Nat Clementi, Spencer Levering, Miranda Bartira Sousa, Stephen Cheney, Elijah Alfieri

Johannes Brahms: Serenade no. 2 in A major, op. 16: I. Allegro moderato & II. Scherzo. Vivace

Flutes - Karinna Martin, Evelyn Markle

Oboes - Kaylyn Shearer+, Amelia Van Howe+

Clarinets - Claire Cheng, Katrina Rakusan

Bassoons - Linda Fisher*, Michael McAleese

Horns: Niobe Tsoutsouris, Madison Faizon

Alberto Nepomuceno: Brazilian Suite

piccolo - Makaylia Gerver flute/picc

flute - Janelle Craig, Evelyn Markle

oboe - Kaylyn Shearer+, Amelia Van Howe+

clarinets - Meliksah Dolap, Claire Cheng

bassoons - Linda Fisher*, Michael McAleese

horns - Niobe Tsoutsouris, Madison Faizon

trumpets - Andrew Levin, Dominic Frankeny

trombones - Ryan Harden, Jacob Vogel

bass trombone. - Joshua Branstetter

tuba - Dr. A J Johnson*

piano - Robert Frankenberry+

percussion - Alexander Azar, Cullynn D. Murphy, Robert Frankenberry

strings for Beethoven, Brahms, and Nepomuceno

Violin 1

Matthew Alford (leader- Nepomuceno), Annabelle Crowley (leader - Beethoven)

Ingrid Shu, Anna Gorske

Alyssa Depaoli, Tori Turchick

Katherine Yang, Michael Hu

Rishika Sau, Kyoungah Lee

Violin 2

Sam Smith, Carleigh Ziencik

Kevin Gu, Miriam Layne

Jessica Knapp, Maria Schrecengost

Siri Harish, Sophia Krumroy

Sasha Sluis-Cremer

Viola

Elyssa Allen, Robbie Fishel

Kimia Rafiee, Alex Gehman

Ben Green, Thomas Scheurich

Roger Zahab

Cello

Alicia Loui, Hannah Niederhiser
Kyle Demi, Talia Mekinulov
Rena Li, Madison Coburn

bass

Spencer Levering (principal for Nepomuceno, Brahms)
Nat Clementi (principal for Beethoven, Perry)
Stephen Cheney
Elijah Alfieri
Miranda Bartira Sousa

* *faculty artist*

+ *guest artist*