

YALE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

BEETHOVEN'S

5TH

William Boughton
Conductor

April 28, 2024
5:00 pm

Ludwig Van Beethoven –
Symphony No.5

Nina Shekhar – Lumina

Ottorino Respighi –
Pini di Roma



Yale Symphony Orchestra

William Boughton, Director

PROGRAM

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

Ludwig van Beethoven

1. Allegro con brio
2. Andante con moto
3. Scherzo: Allegro
4. Allegro – Presto

INTERMISSION

Lumina

Nina Shekhar

Pini di Roma

Ottorino Respighi

1. I pini di Villa Borghese
2. Pini presso una Catacomba
3. I pini del Gianicolo
4. I pini della via Appia

{Please silence all portable electronic devices}

William Boughton, *Conductor*

Born into a musical family - his grandfather (Rutland Boughton) was a composer, his father a professional viola player and his mother a singer. After studies, at New England Conservatory (Boston), Guildhall School of Music (London) and Prague Academy as a cellist, he entered the profession in

London playing with the Royal Philharmonic, BBC and London Sinfonietta Orchestras.

The experience of playing in orchestras led to a passion to pursue a career in conducting studying with George Hurst and then Sir Colin Davis. In 1980 he formed the English String Orchestra initially focusing on early 20th Century English repertoire but developing it into late



20th and 21st Century Contemporary music commissioning over 20 works from composers such as Peter Sculthorpe, John Joubert, Anthony Powers, Michael Berkeley, John Metcalf, Stephen Roberts and Adrian Williams. The depth of his partnership with the ESO was epitomised in 1985 when, as Artistic Director of the Malvern Festival, he collaborated with Sir Michael Tippett to present a musical celebration of the composer's eightieth birthday which was the subject of a BBC "Omnibus" documentary.

With the ESO he built a significant discography of internationally acclaimed recordings with Nimbus Records - predominantly of English music, a number of which reached the Top Ten in the US Billboard charts.

Between 1986-93 he was also Artistic & Music Director of the Jyväskylä Sinfonia in Finland and guest conducted with numerous orchestras including the London Symphony, Philharmonia, San Francisco, Royal Philharmonic, Finnish Radio, Mittel Deutsch Radio, working with artists such as Nigel Kennedy, Leonidas Kavakos, Emmanuel Ax, Radu Lupu and Viktoria Mullova.

In October 1993, William Boughton was award-

ed an Honorary Doctorate from Coventry University in recognition of his expertise in British music. In November 1995, he and the ESO presented a weekend of music celebrating the 60th birthday of English composer Nicholas Maw, marking another milestone in his championship of contemporary English music. In 1996 William Boughton commenced a second term as Artistic Director of the Malvern Festival.

The 2005/6 Season was his final year with the ESO in which they celebrated the Orchestra's 25th Anniversary performing a 'Complete Beethoven Symphony Cycle', and created a new series of pre-concert performances of British contemporary music, including works by Birtwistle, Knussen, Watkins, Woolrich, Holloway and Turnage.

In July 2007 he became the 10th Music Director of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra (NHSO), with whom he instituted a 'Composer in Residence' Scheme (Augusta Read Thomas, Christopher Theofanidis, Hannah Lash) and started a major Walton Project with concerts, lectures/talks and recordings on the Nimbus Label. With the NHSO he has received two ASCAP Awards (2011 & 2014) for Adventurous Programming and received critical acclaim for the Walton Project, with Gramophones Edward Greenfield nominating it for 'Record of the Year' (2010). In October 2014 two new recordings were released with the New Haven Symphony of William Walton and Augusta Read Thomas.

His commitment and dedication to the younger generation is epitomized through his teaching – creating a cello studio in one of the poorest areas of New Haven, building the NHSO's Education Dept, working with the State and Regional Youth Orchestras and teaching at the Yale School of Music. In May 2016 he visited Central China University for Conducting Master-classes and conducted the Hubei Symphony. He regularly records for both Nimbus and Lyrita Labels and guest conducts in the USA.

Symphony No. 5

Ludwig van Beethoven

Ask the proverbial man on the street to sing or whistle the first notes of Beethoven that come to mind, and he will almost certainly perform the opening bars of this symphony. It is without question one of the most arresting openings ever written, immediate in its dramatic impact, memorable in its simplicity. It has become a musical symbol of the image we carry in our minds of a composer, rugged and uncompromising. Yet the work's first performance does not seem to have made the overwhelming impression on its audience one might have expected. The conditions of the concert were not what one would call optimal: four enormous works besides the Fifth Symphony were performed (the Sixth Symphony, the Piano Concerto no. 4, two movements of the *Mass* in C, and the *Choral Fantasia*), the performers were woefully under rehearsed, and the hall was freezing. "There we sat from 6:30 till 10:30 in the most bitter cold" wrote Reichardt, a friend of the composer's, "and found from experience that one could get too much of a good thing and still more of a loud."

The first movement is dominated by the motto heard at the beginning. Use of rhythmic motif as an integrating device, developed by C.P.E. Bach and Haydn, emerges here as the dominating compositional force. The entire main theme is derived from it; it also serves as the sinister accompaniment to the flowing second subject. The music is characterized by its great strife and tension. As the movement relentlessly pushes forward, this conflict seems to become more tragic and moving - a feeling accentuated by a pathetic oboe *cadenza* and the wistful sighs from the woodwinds in the closing bars.

The second movement, in A-flat, harks back to the 18th century *minuet* (indeed, in one of the early sketches it is marked *Andante quasi menuetto*). It consists of a theme and variation combined with elements of rondo form. The grace and dignity of the main subject alternates with the bold second subject, which has a

march-like character in spite of the 3/8 meter. These two themes are connected by a modulating passage in the strings. In the coda the pace quickens and the bassoon sings a transformation of the main theme. Bold A-flat arpeggios and the heralding cry of the principal subject bring the movement to a close.

The *Scherzo* in c minor has none of the high spirit one might expect. Instead, the music is full of subtly shifting shadows, the atmosphere mysterious and foreboding. The somber main theme rises from the depths of the strings. After moving forward, uncertain of its destination, the music comes to a halt. A second attempt is made and after a little progress again there is a pause. Here Beethoven, as if rejecting all that has gone on before, strikes out in a completely new direction. The vague shapes of the first eighteen bars give way to a granite-like theme hammered out in the horns. The *trio* combines the scholarly pretensions of fugue with an almost impish sense of humor. Totally unlike the uncertainty they display at the beginning of the movement, the cellos set off briskly in the key of C major. When the *scherzo* returns, however, the shadows grow even more intense. Then all movement is stilled except for the quiet beat of the timpani, echoing at first the rhythm of the horn theme, then becoming a continuous tapping. The first violins grope their way towards C major, reaching this blazing key at the start of the *Finale*.

The sheer impact of the orchestral fanfare which opens this movement is increased by the addition of three trombones, a piccolo, and a contrabassoon, all new to the Beethoven symphonies. Both the second theme, with its driving triplet rhythm, and the closing theme are based on this fanfare. After a sudden and dramatic pause at the end of the development, the horn theme from the *scherzo* makes a spectral reappearance, leading back through a transition of swelling suspense to the recapitulation.

— Leif Bjaland (1984)

Lumina

Nina Shekhar

Lumina explores the spectrum of light and dark and the murkiness in between. Using swift contrasts between bright, sharp timbres and cloudy textures and dense harmonies, the piece captures sudden bursts of radiance amongst the eeriness of shadows.

— Nina Shekhar

Pini di Roma

Ottorino Respighi

The *Pines of Rome* constitutes the second of three related works by Respighi (composed between his *Fountains and Festivals*) which together are commonly referred to as “The Roman Trilogy” or “The Roman Triptych”. All three fall under the categorization of symphonic ‘tone poems’, which essentially reflects the composer’s ability to write music that conveys something ‘extra-musical’ – for instance by using music as a means of depicting a visual landscape or some other scene from nature. This is particularly apparent in Respighi’s *Pines* as the composer, across four distinct yet musically seamless movements, attempts to capture the innate character of Rome’s coniferous trees across four unique locations in the so-called ‘Eternal City’. In this light, Respighi’s Roman compositions should be viewed: music that not so much delights in its own self-contained creation, as in describing another form of artistic creation from which it has derived its own musical inspiration. In providing some final thoughts of his own ahead of the *Pines*’ American debut (exactly one hundred years ago this year) to the program editor at the time Lawrence Gilman, Respighi sought to specify what made this particular composition unique from his first of three tone-poems. “While in his preceding work, *Fountains of Rome*, the composer sought to reproduce by means of tone an impression of Nature, in *Pines of Rome* he uses Nature as a point of departure, in order to recall memories and vision. The centuries-old trees which so characteristically dominate the Roman landscape becomes witnesses to the principal events in Roman life.” Thus Respighi’s *Pines* are more than just painting a literal musical picture of his beloved pine-trees throughout the city of Rome. Instead, for

Respighi it's all about evincing and eliciting from his audience the forgotten memories as well as subconscious feelings associated with Rome's ancient past, all the while subjecting them to the irresistible influence of his musical 'hypnosis'. The desired effect of all this? No other than to create a multi-sensual experience for the listener, who is carried on the wings of Respighi's music throughout the Roman city landscape, by blending sound with sight, image with imagination. In other words, to create a symphonic synesthesia.

In his original orchestration, Respighi provides the performer with brief narrative vignettes at the start of each of the four movements, to signify both the scene that is being described and the tone with which he wishes it to be expressed. An approximate translation in English is given below. The poetic inspiration for the *Pines of Rome*, to which Respighi gestures in his notes ('poet'), is directly drawn from the writings of his contemporaneous Italian compatriot, Gabriele D'Annunzio.

I. The Pines of Villa Borghese ("I pini di Villa Borghese") - Allegretto vivace

Children are at play in the pine groves of Villa Borghese; they dance round in circles. They play at soldiers, marching and fighting, they are wrought up by their own cries like swallows at evening, and they come and go in swarms. Suddenly the scene changes and...

Afternoon:

The first stop in Respighi's musically curated tour-guide to the pines of Rome is the evergreen Villa Borghese public gardens (located just north of the city center and Roman forum). With not so much as a musical word of warning, Respighi thrusts his 'traveler-listener' into a scene bursting full of youthful ebullience, which appears to be directed towards a children's game ("Ring around a Rosy") involving a combination of both singing and dancing. It is said that Respighi took musical inspiration in this movement



Umbrella Pines in the Villa Borghese by James Müller (1839)

from his wife Elsa, who some years prior had sung him some tunes from her childhood and which make their appearance here in one form or another. Kick-started by a sizzling trumpet fanfare and a similarly dazzling fluty flourish, Respighi loses no time getting the fun and games off to a spritely start. Also note the special use of the ‘ratchet’ instrument, highly distinctive in sound, which may best be conceived as a live prop in this game – the nature of which is arguably best left to the audience’s bold imagination! A chirpy oboe tune (perhaps signifying one child taking their turn) gives way to a cordial and polite exchange between the other different members of the orchestra (representative of the other children trooping around the outskirts of this game’s ring?). Through various musical contortions, mimicking no less the agility and excitement of the children involved, Respighi makes the game appear to become ever more unruly, even hinging on getting out of control! The music in degrees becomes increasingly rude, raucous, and rambunctious, with the previously pleasant singing now turning into obstreperous and outright jeering. After several ill-timed trumpet protests, the game breaks down into total childish anarchy and ends abruptly. (Respighi’s 1924 audience actually booed their disapproval at hearing this for the first time!).

II. Pines Near a Catacomb

(“Pini presso una catacomba”) - Lento

...we see the shades of the pine-trees fringing the entrance to a catacomb. From the depth rises the sound of a mournful chant, floating through the air like a solemn hymn, and gradually and mysteriously dispersing.

Evening:

Now for the subterranean and cavernous burial grounds of pagan Rome (‘catacomb’ literally means ‘next to a quarry’). Whilst Respighi gives us no precise indication for the location of these catacombs, it could be one of many scattered throughout modern Rome, but which, in accordance with pagan custom, had to be located outside of the boundaries of the ancient city. The first few seconds of the piece possess an eerily unsettling as well as lugubrious quality, as Respighi’s listener is taken (most probably against their will!) to a lifeless ancient site of death. These catacombs dated between the 2nd and 5th centuries CE and were used by the Christian and Jewish populations living in Rome as a sacred

space in which they were allowed to bury their dead, albeit outside of the prescribed grounds ('pomerium') of the pagan city. Just as awe-inspiring as intimidating, the catacombs of a Rome were truly 'labyrinthal', consisting of an



of an underground network of tunnels which spanned several miles and were all but unknown to the passerby walking above.

The low and largely undiscernible infernal rumblings at the beginning are meant to be redolent of Gregorian plainchant (as taken from the *Liber Usualis*) and evocative of priests leading a congregation in that singing. If the listener is able to hold their nerve through this, they will be rewarded by two more uplifting and particularly beautiful passages, first by the flutes and then by a trumpet solo, marked in the score as '*il più lontano possibile*' ('as far away as possible'). A distinctly rhythmical theme (often considered the Sanctus of the Gregorian Mass), which is almost impossible to miss, introduces the second half of this movement. Through several unison repetitions of this same musical idea, the orchestra builds up to an overwhelming crescendo that at its climax calls for the deepest 'walking' bass notes of the organ, strings, and piano. Almost as quickly as the buildup has occurred does the plainchant die out and take its repose into the depths of the aged catacombs for ever more...

III. The Pines of the Janiculum ("I pini del Gianicolo") – Lento

There is a thrill in the air: the pine-trees of the Janiculum stand distinctly outlined in the clear light of the full moon. A nightingale is singing.

Nighttime:

Leaving the catacombs behind, Respighi has a view to show his musical tourist, except this time it is to be seen from the top of the Janiculum Hill! Despite not being one of the hallowed 'seven hills' of ancient Rome (since it lies just west of the Tiber River), the Janiculum remains an impressive landmark of the modern city of Rome with a view in the east direction of both



Sunset from the Convent of Sant' Onofrio on the Janiculum by David Roberts (1856)

the Forum and the Colosseum. This movement of all the movements feels the most aligned with Nature. Whilst the first was focused on the children frolicking in the gardens of Villa Borghese and the second on the manmade catacombs of Rome's ancient forbearers, the Pines of the Janiculum are focused on the scene of nature itself under the luminescent glare of the full moon. An elaborate flourish by the piano (known as an '*arabesque*') sets the tone for this meditative movement and gives way to a contemplative clarinet line, effortlessly carrying the listener along with it into the heights of the clear night's sky. The orchestral marking for this most lyrical of musical lines is '*come in sogno*' ('dreamlike'), which is not just a fitting description for the mood of this movement as a whole but one which captures the essence of the entire *Pines of Rome*, being a fantasized tour of the city's foremost pine-trees and its environs. The various sections of the orchestra (strings and woodwind) each have their own moment, often in carefully curated dialogue with one another, conversing through the stillness of this beautiful and dreamy Roman nightscape. The ebb and flow of this musical reverie comes to a peaceful close in a similarly intricate piano passage that originally opened the movement. As a final musical afterthought, however, Respighi adds a *coda*, in which the clarinet solo reappears, this time '*come in eco*' ('echo-like'), and yields to perhaps the most special extramusical effect in the whole piece: a pre-specified recording of a nightingale ('*usignolo*'), commercially named 'R6015' by the Concert Record Gramophone Company!

IV. The Pines of the Appian Way ("I pini della via Appia") - Tempo di Marcia

Misty dawn on the Appian Way: solitary pine-trees guarding the magic landscape; the muffled, ceaseless rhythm of unending footsteps. The poet has a fantastic vision of bygone glories: trumpets sound and, in the brilliance of the newly-risen sun, a consular army bursts forth towards the Sacred Way, mounting in triumph to the Capitol.

"Appia longarum teritur regina viarum"

(translation: The Appian Way is called 'The queen of the highways')

- Publius Papinius Statius

Dawn:

This is Respighi's grand finale to the *Pines of Rome*. Brace yourself for the proud pines of the ancient and formidable Appian Way! Over the course of just four short minutes, he is able to captivate his listener throughout, by building up his musical narrative from the quiet-



View of the Appian Way by Geoffrey Scowcroft Fletcher (1987)

est pounding to the loudest stampede of the full orchestra. The scene has already been set by the tweeting of the

nightingale in the epilogue of the previous movement (Janiculum): it is now the earliest light of day. Respighi's tempo marking is now "*Tempo di Marcia*" (i.e. of a military march) which makes this movement without a doubt the most momentous of them all! This directive suits Respighi's theme here extremely well, since he is depicting the relentless advance of a distant Roman army, returning back to the city in the hour of triumph. The Appian Way is hardly a specific location, being the oldest and most significant of Ancient Rome's roads (built in 312 BC by Appius Claudius Caecus) and spanning over 350 miles from the capital to the port city of Brindisi on the south-east coast. Respighi therefore wants us to imagine that we are standing on the outskirts of the ancient city of Rome, perhaps at

the Porta Triumphalis ('Triumphal Gate') just inside the Tiber (the city's boundary-marker, or 'pomerium'). Wherever we choose to imagine ourselves, the army is drawing ever nearer, 'musicalized' by the incessantly rhythmical drumbeats of the timpani to capture the sound of soldiers' boots pounding the ground. An insinuating oboe solo adds to the atmosphere of foreboding given that we sense the Roman army's approach but, due to the misty conditions outlined in the composer's introduction, we are unable to clearly see it. Gradually, Respighi turns up the dial of volume and intensity, introducing other instrumental contributions such as the dotted-rhythm fanfares by tubas, trumpets, and trombones, which are played antiphonally. For authenticity, Respighi's brass orchestration specifically calls for the '*buccine*', which were military bugles played by an 'aeneator' in an ancient Roman legion, to accompany the marching army. (Despite the fact that more common brass substitutes are used today, Respighi remains the only composer ever whose music has explicitly called for the use of such an instrument!) The great organ is once again in use and marks its entry (softly at first) with a low and sustained rumbling base note, that is intended to sonically emulate the groundtrembling effect that the marching boots of this Roman army might have had on the Appian Way. Through a series of unexpected musical contours, Respighi playfully tricks his observant pine-listener into thinking that the climax of the piece has been reached, only to modulate into a different key or suddenly drop the volume before bringing it back up again. Slowly but surely, the army has arrived and proceeds to thunder its way onto the Via Sacra ('Sacred Way'), which was the final leg of the Roman 'triumph' (i.e. a military victory parade) connecting the Colosseum to the top of the Capitoline Hill. Finally, the climax is reached, and deafeningly so: the orchestral brass plays a final five-note fanfare three times one after the other, the bass notes of organ and orchestra pound twice, and then the final chord heroically brings Respighi's *Pines* to a symphonically 'triumphant' close

— Philip Balkan '24

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Yale Symphony Orchestra



About the Orchestra

The Yale Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1965 by a group of students who saw the growing potential for a large orchestral ensemble to thrive on campus. The YSO provides a means for students to perform orchestral music at the conservatory level while taking advantage of all that Yale, a liberal-arts institution, has to offer.

The YSO boasts an impressive number of alumni who have gone on to successful musical careers with: New York Philharmonic (Sharon Yamada, 1st violin), the Boston Symphony Orchestra (Haldan Martinson, principal 2nd violin, and Owen Young, cello), the Los Angeles Philharmonic (David Howard, clarinet), the San Francisco Symphony (the late William Bennett, oboe), Philadelphia Orchestra (Jonathan Beiler, violin), Toronto Symphony (Harry Sargous, oboe, ret.) and the Israel Philharmonic (Miriam Hartman, viola); as well as music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Marin Alsop; National Public Radio commentator Miles Hoffman; composers Michael Gore, Robert Beaser, Conrad Cummings, Stephen Paul Hartke, Robert Kyr, and more.

Throughout its history the YSO has been committed to commissioning and performing new music. Notably, the YSO presented the European premiere of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* in 1973, the world premiere of the definitive restoration of Charles Ives' *Three Places in New England*, the U.S. premiere of Debussy's *Khamma*, and the East Coast premiere of Benjamin Britten's *The Building of the House*.

The YSO programs orchestral works written by new and emerging composers, as well as lesser-known works by established and obscure composers. The full list of YSO premieres can be seen at <https://yso.yalecollege.yale.edu/give-yso/premieres>.

The YSO has performed with internationally recog-

nized soloists; including Yo-Yo Ma, Frederica von Stade, Emmanuel Ax, David Shifrin, Thomas Murray, and Idil Biret. Each year the YSO is proud to perform major solo concerti played by the student winners of the William Waite Concerto Competition.

The YSO has performed at New York City's Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center, and St. Patrick's Cathedral. In the past ten years, the YSO has toured domestically and internationally, including a 2010 tour of Turkey with acclaimed pianist Idil Biret. Ms. Biret rejoined the orchestra for a recording of Paul Hindemith's piano concerti, which were released in 2013 on the Naxos label.

Past tours have brought the orchestra to Portugal, Korea, Central Europe, Italy, Brazil, and Russia. The YSO completed its first tour of Mexico in March of 2023. The full list of YSO tours can be seen at <https://yso.yalecollege.yale.edu/history/touring>.

The YSO is famous for its legendary Halloween Show, a student-directed and -produced silent movie, performed around midnight in full costume. Long a Yale tradition, the Halloween Show sells out Woolsey Hall days in advance, and the production details and storyline remain closely guarded secrets until the night of performance. Recent cameo film appearances include James Franco, Woody Allen, Alanis Morissette, Rosa DeLauro, Jodie Foster and Jimmy Kimmel.

The YSO music directors include Richmond Browne, John Mauceri, C. William Harwood, Robert Kapilow, Leif Bjaland, Alasdair Neale, David Stern, James Ross, James Sinclair, Shinik Hahm, George Rothman, and Toshiyuki Shimada. This year is William Boughton's fifth year as Director.

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