

Kol Nidrei, Adagio on Hebrew Melodies, Op. 47

Max Bruch

(b. 1838, Cologne, Germany; d. 1920, Friedenau, near Berlin, Germany)

Most famous today for his gorgeous violin concertos, the German composer Max Bruch was fascinated with the folk melodies of many lands. This lifelong passion inspired two of his finest instrumental works: the *Scottish Fantasy* for Violin and Orchestra (using Scottish folk songs) and the beautiful cello work *Kol Nidrei, Adagio on Hebrew Melodies* (based on the traditional Hebrew chant for the *Kol Nidrei* or “All Vows” prayer sung on the eve of the Day of Atonement, four days prior to this concert).

Though Bruch was not Jewish himself, he composed *Kol Nidrei* in 1880-81 for the Jewish community of Liverpool, England, where he served for several years as conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Its solo part was written for the great German cellist Robert Hausmann, for whom Brahms also created the cello part in his Double Concerto for Violin and Cello. Capitalizing on the warm-toned cello's resemblance to the human singing voice, Bruch uses it here to represent the cantor singing to the congregation. After a brief orchestral introduction, the cello — with expressive hesitations between every few notes — sings the *Kol Nidrei* melody, first in a relatively high range, then very low. A second traditional melody appears midway through the piece as the tempo moves a little more quickly and the full orchestra sings its broad and flowing tune above harp and violin arpeggios. This melody, set to the words “O weep for those that wept on Babel's stream” by Lord Byron, was devised by Isaac Nathan in the early 19th century; he claimed that it was a Hebrew tune of very ancient origins.

Symphony No. 5 in C minor

Ludwig van Beethoven

(b. 1770, Bonn, Germany; d. 1827, Vienna, Austria)

For many generations, Beethoven's Fifth has defined the symphonic experience in the popular imagination, just as *Hamlet* stands for classical drama and *Swan Lake* for the ballet. It established the dramatic scenario of the symphony as a heroic progression from tragedy to triumph — and musically here from the minor mode to the major — that was imitated by countless later composers from Brahms to Shostakovich. Moreover, it wages its epic battle with a breathtaking swiftness and a concentrated power its imitators could not match.

Europe was a troubled place when Beethoven wrote this work between 1806 and 1808. The Napoleonic Wars surged across Europe, and the martial tone of many of the Fifth's themes and the prominent role for trumpets and timpani reflected a society constantly on military alert. And, until Napoleon's defeat in 1815, Beethoven lived on the losing side. In July 1807, when he was in his most intense phase of work on the Fifth, the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit brought a temporary truce with the capitulation of Prussia and the cession of all lands between the Rhine and Elbe to France. This humiliation stimulated an uprising of patriotic feeling among the German-speaking countries, and Beethoven shared in this fervor. Thus, it is not surprising that the triumphant song of the Fifth's finale seems as much a military victory as a spiritual one.

Beethoven himself gave the description of the four-note motive that pervades the ***Allegro con brio* first movement**: “Thus Fate knocks at the door!” he told his amanuensis Anton Schindler. This is the most famous of the pithy rhythmic ideas that animated many of Beethoven's middle-period masterpieces; its dynamism as entrance is piled upon entrance drives this movement on its relentless course. The terseness and compression of this music are

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astonishing, conveying the maximum of expressive power with the minimum of notes. Beethoven only pauses for breath briefly as the violins introduce a gentler, more feminine second theme, and more tellingly later, as the solo oboe interrupts the recapitulation of the Fate theme — brought back with pulverizing power by the entire orchestra — with a plaintive protest of a mini-cadenza.

The ***Andante con moto*** second movement might be called Beethoven's "War and Peace." In an original treatment of the double-variations form devised by Haydn (two different themes alternating in variations), he mixes variants on a peaceful, pastoral melody with episodes of martial might in C Major that foretell the victory to come. Ultimately, even the pastoral music is trumpeted forth in military splendor. The movement closes with a haunting, visionary coda.

E.M. Forster's novel *Howard's End* contains one of the most eloquent passages ever about classical music as it describes the Fifth's quirkily ominous **Scherzo**. "The music started with a goblin walking quietly over the universe, from end to end. Others followed him. They were not aggressive creatures ... They merely observed in passing that there was no such thing as splendour or heroism in the world." Horns respond to the cello goblins with a military fanfare derived from the Fate motive. After the comical trio section in which Beethoven asked double basses to be agile melodists (a feat beyond players' capacities in his period though not today), the goblins return, even more eerily in bassoons and *pizzicato* strings. Then ensues one of Beethoven's greatest passages: a dark, drum-filled journey groping toward the light.

The music finally emerges into C-Major daylight with the **finale's** joyful trumpet theme. This is the grandfather of all symphonic triumphant endings and remains the most exhilarating and convincing. In a masterstroke, Beethoven brings back the Scherzo music to shake us from any complacency. E.M. Forster again: "But the goblins were there. They could return. He had said so bravely, and that is why one can trust Beethoven when he says other things."

Tales of Hemingway

Michael Daugherty

(b. 1954, Cedar Rapids, Iowa)

There is no one in American classical music quite like Michael Daugherty. While other composers look more or less to European-based high culture for their aesthetic inspiration, he finds such American pop icons as Elvis Presley, Desi Arnes, and even J. Edgar Hoover stimulate his creative juices. Who else could write a *Metropolis Symphony* based on the "Superman" comic strip, an opera called *Jackie O*, or *Elvis Everywhere* for three Elvis impersonators and the Kronos String Quartet?

Nevertheless, Daugherty is a paid-up member of the classical-music establishment. A professor of music at the University of Michigan, he holds a doctorate in composition from Yale University, and a Fulbright fellowship took him to Paris to study with the renowned Hungarian composer György Ligeti. But perhaps his early roots provide a better clue to his unique style. Born the son of a professional jazz and country-and-western drummer in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he grew up playing drums and keyboards in jazz, rock, and funk bands. During his college years, he even played a Hammond organ to accompany pop vocal stars at country fairs across the Midwest.

Today Daugherty's musical style joyously mixes elements from pop, rock, and big band jazz with the more serious ethos of classical music. And his infectious eclecticism has helped make him one of the ten most frequently performed composers at symphony orchestras around the country. His use of instruments is dazzling, and his layering of high-energy, often conflicting rhythms is hard to resist; however, a more melodious neo-Romantic style has also grown more prominent in his music, as we will hear in his new cello concerto, *Tales of Hemingway*.

Composed for **Zuill Bailey**, *Tales of Hemingway* is Daugherty's musical ode to the immortal American writer Ernest Hemingway. Just over a year old, it was premiered by Bailey with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra on April 17, 2015. **Daugherty has written his own eloquent guide to the work:**

Tales of Hemingway evokes the turbulent life, adventures, and literature of American author and journalist Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961). Hemingway’s distinctive body of work was also informed by his larger-than-life experiences.

Hemingway was surrounded by music during his youth in Oak Park, Chicago, where his mother was a prominent music teacher and he played the cello in school orchestras. Hemingway’s family owned a remote summer home on Walloon Lake near Petoskey, Michigan, where hunting, fishing, and camping were a family ritual. As an adult, Hemingway’s passion and expertise for deep-sea fishing in the Florida Keys and Cuba, big-game hunting in Africa, bullfighting in Spain, and boxing in Paris were legendary.

Hemingway experienced the horrors and ironies of war as a Red Cross ambulance driver in World War I (1918) and as a journalist on the front lines of the Spanish Civil War (1937) and World War II (1944–45). In the 1920s, Hemingway was part of Gertrude Stein’s ‘Lost Generation’ in Paris, where he haunted the bars and cafés with F. Scott Fitzgerald. During his lifetime, many of his works were made into Hollywood films, and his writing was syndicated in magazines and newspapers around the world, making Hemingway an international celebrity and a household name. His terse, direct, accessible writing style, combined with a mastery of dialogue and brilliant use of omission and repetition, made him one of the most influential and original writers of the 20th century. My cello concerto is divided into four movements, each of which is inspired by one of Hemingway’s short stories or novels:

I. Big Two-Hearted River (1925, Seney, Michigan). *In this story, Nick Adams is an emotionally scarred and disillusioned soldier from World War I who escapes to northern Michigan for a camping/fishing trip to try to regain control of his life. I have composed serene and passionate music that evokes a leitmotif in Hemingway’s writing: his belief that one can be healed by the power of nature through exploring isolated outdoor terrains.*

II. For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940, Spanish Civil War). *Hemingway tells the tale of the last three days in the life of Robert Jordan, an American teacher turned demolition expert who has joined the anti-fascist Loyalist guerillas in Spain. Jordan accepts a suicide mission to blow up a bridge, only to fall in love with Maria, a young Spanish woman of the Loyalist guerilla camp. The cello strums and plucks, leading the martyr’s march to battle the Fascists and to Jordan’s eventual death. As the chimes explode at the conclusion of the movement, the epitaph of the novel rings forth: ‘And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.’*

III. The Old Man and the Sea (1952, Cuba). *In Hemingway’s Nobel Prize-winning novella, Santiago is a poor, old fisherman whose luck changes when he takes his small boat deep into the Gulf Stream. After an epic struggle, he catches a gigantic marlin. As he makes the long journey home, sharks relentlessly attack his boat and devour the marlin. I have composed an elegy to the struggle of life and death between man and nature.*

IV. The Sun Also Rises (1926, Pamplona, Spain). *The main character in this groundbreaking novel is Jake Barnes, bitter and wounded by war, living in Paris as an unhappy expatriate journalist. Aimless in life, he makes a journey to the Festival in Pamplona, Spain. Along the way, he is joined by other adrift souls of the ‘Lost Generation.’ For the final movement of the concerto, I have created an exciting and dramatic sound world where I imagine Jake Barnes, his entourage (and Hemingway) in Pamplona at the Fiesta, watching the running of the bulls and reveling in the spectacle of the bullfights. We also hear musical illuminations of the novel’s enigmatic epigraph: ‘the sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose.’*

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