



BEETHOVEN & SIBELIUS

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 & 5, AT 8 PM

NASHVILLE SYMPHONY

RUTH REINHARDT, *conductor*

STEWART GOODYEAR, *piano*

LERA AUERBACH

Icarus

12 minutes

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Concerto No. 4 in G major for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 58

34 minutes

I. Allegro moderato

II. Andante con moto

III. Rondo: Vivace

Stewart Goodyear, piano

INTERMISSION

20 minutes

JEAN SIBELIUS

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43

44 minutes

I. Allegretto

II. Andante; ma rubato

III. Vivacissimo

IV. Finale: Allegro moderato

*This concert will last approximately one hour, 50 minutes,
including a 20-minute intermission.*

LERA AUERBACH

Icarus

Born on October 21, 1973,
in Chelyabinsk in the
former Soviet Union.

Currently resides in New York City.

Composed:

2011, using
material from
her 2006
Symphony No. 1

Estimated length:

12 minutes



First performance:

July 18, 2011, at the Verbier
Festival in Switzerland.

First Nashville Symphony performance:

These are the Nashville
Symphony's first performances
of this work.

Already during her childhood in the former Soviet Union—where she grew up in a city known as the “gateway” to Siberia—Lera Auerbach felt drawn to composition and wrote her first opera at the age of 12. She also continued a dual track training as a pianist and emigrated to the U.S. in her late teens, studying both piano and composition at The Juilliard School (where Milton Babbitt was among her mentors).

Auerbach’s extensive catalogue ranges from solo and chamber works to symphonies, ballets and operas. She has composed for such unusual forces as chorus with saxophone quartet (her choral cycle *72 Angels: In splendore lucis*) and was commissioned by the National Geographic Society to undertake an expedition that resulted in her choral symphony *Arctica*, which reflects on Inuit traditions and environmental catastrophe. This versatility extends beyond music. Auerbach has been called a renaissance woman, and in addition to composing, she is a prolific poet, playwright and visual artist who views all of these expressions as interrelated.

At the same time, Auerbach remarks that all of her music is “abstract.” she gives her pieces evocative titles so as “to invite the listener to feel free to imagine, to access his/her own memories, associations.” *Icarus*, one of her best-known orchestral works, represents her own reconsideration of what she had composed as the final two movements of her Symphony No. 1 of 2006, whose title *Chimera* refers to a mythic being. In 2011, Auerbach refashioned this music into an independent tone poem and gave it the title *Icarus*.

Something in the music recalled to her the story of Icarus, the son of the inventor Daedalus in classical mythology, who is given wings of wax crafted by his father to escape from their prison on Crete. Thrilled by the new perspective of soaring above the earth, Icarus disregards Daedalus’s warnings that he must not fly too close to the sun or the ocean: in his ecstatic ascent, the sun melts his wings and the boy plunges to his death.

“The desire to go beyond the boundaries into the ecstatic visionary realm of soaring flight is essentially human,” Auerbach observes. “In some ways, this desire to transcend everydayness is what it means to be human.”

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Whatever story you choose to associate with these musical events, Auerbach’s vividly dramatic style and mastery of suspense convey an irresistible narrative power. This is further enhanced by her ear for striking sonic colors, such as having some of the strings play with the wood of the bow, or amplified crystal glasses that are rubbed to elicit an eerily ethereal aura. The music alternates between frenetically tempestuous energy and lyrical but unsettling rumination, eventually coming to rest on an elegiac, tragic note.

Scored for 3 flutes (2nd and 3rd doubling piccolo and alto flute), 3 oboes (3rd doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (3rd doubling bass clarinet), 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 5 percussionists, 2 harps, celesta, piano and strings.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58

Born on December 16, 1770,
in Bonn, Germany.

Died on March 26, 1827,
in Vienna, Austria.

Composed:
1805-06

**Estimated
length:**
34 minutes



First performance:

December 22, 1808, in Vienna,
with the composer as the soloist.

**First Nashville Symphony
performance:**

April 6, 1954, at War Memorial
Auditorium, with Guy Taylor
conducting and Rudolf Firkušný
as the soloist.

It was not intended as such, but the fourth of Ludwig van Beethoven's five piano concertos turned out to mark an informal farewell—as the soloist in his own concertos, that is. By the time of the Piano Concerto No. 5, his worsening deafness made it no longer possible to play that role. Since moving to Vienna as a young man, Beethoven had initially established his reputation as a powerful keyboard personality. His first recorded public appearance in the city took place in 1795, during which the 24-year-old artist introduced “a new concerto on the piano-forte” (likely the Second Piano Concerto, though possibly the First).

Beethoven gave the public premiere of the Fourth Piano Concerto as part of a famous marathon concert on December 22, 1808, which also unveiled *both* the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, among other works. All of these are from the height of Beethoven's “heroic” period. In fact, he wrote various parts of these scores at around the same time. The unmistakable four-note rhythmic motif that carries through the first movement of the Fourth Concerto is obviously related to the “Fate” motto of the Fifth Symphony.

But Beethoven's aggressively dramatic energy—the signature of the “heroic” style—is in some ways tamed by a more serene, even intimate lyricism in the Concerto No. 4. As would happen with Sibelius and his symphonies, commentators suggested extramusical, programmatic interpretations of the music that have persisted in the public mind. The Romantics in particular were fond of reading the middle Largo movement as a miniature tone

poem that recounts the myth of Orpheus taming the Furies in the Underworld as he seeks to reunite with his beloved Eurydice.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The opening involves a startling innovation (though Mozart foreshadowed it). Beethoven prefaces the conventional orchestral exposition with a solo spotlight for pianist/protagonist at the very start. The attitude is subdued, almost prayerful, akin to a rhapsodic improvisation. But this is all precisely planned: the opening bars introduce the insistent, four-note motif, establishing a tension between lyrical and dynamic dimensions that is fundamental to the Concerto.

The aura of reverie is prolonged as the orchestra, in a new key, enters in. In his book on the Beethoven concertos, Leon Plantinga observes that the piano soloist takes on the role of the leader of the musical events, “showing occasional fine bursts of virtuosity, but remaining all the while devoted to the cause of tranquil and nuanced reflection, a curb on the orchestra's propensity for energetic motion, for direct action.”

With the orchestra reduced to strings that play gestures associated with operatic recitative, the Largo presents a remarkably original and implicitly dramatic dialogue. Beethoven stages the exchanges between the soloist and orchestra as a slow convergence of what are initially opposed perspectives, stern declamations versus the soft, lyrical pleading of the piano. As the ferocity of the

orchestra begins to abate, the soloist erupts in a dazzling fountain of trills. Beethoven introduces trumpets and drums for the first time in the Rondo finale, which contains the concerto's most extroverted music. He adds a new twist to his juxtaposition of lyrical and dynamically energetic attitudes with a gently pensive idea that strays far

from the battlefield spirit implied by the main theme's call-to-arms bravado.

In addition to the solo piano, scored for flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings.

JEAN SIBELIUS

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43

Born on December 8, 1865,
in Hämeenlinna, Finland.

Died on September 20, 1957,
in Järvenpää, Finland.

Composed:
1901-02;
revised 1903

**Estimated
length:**
45 minutes



First performance:

March 8, 1902, in Helsinki, Finland
with the composer conducting.

**First Nashville Symphony
performance:**

January 29, 1952, at War
Memorial Auditorium, with
Guy Taylor conducting.

Jean Sibelius began writing symphonies during a very confusing moment in Western music at the turn of the 19th century into the 20th. The future of the genre had been called into question by the “progressive” developments of program music spearheaded by Richard Strauss. The reliable structure of tonal harmony that had provided bedrock for long-form compositions like symphonies was showing severe strain, and experiments in atonality were just around the corner.

It was in this context that Sibelius made one of the most impressive and original symphonic debuts in music history with his First Symphony. Not long after came the thoughts that he would organize into the Second Symphony, one of his best-loved achievements. Its success further cemented the composer's reputation as a symphonist, and he went on to make five more contributions to the genre.

Sibelius's orchestral music evokes such an astonishing sense of spaciousness, of foreground against background, that it inevitably conjures imagery of landscapes—and often specifically Northern, extreme ones, at the limits. The composer

deeply loved the natural beauty of his native Finland. But, it's worth recalling that he began sketching his Second Symphony while traveling with his family in Italy in 1901. This journey to the South—particularly to Florence and Rapallo—provided his imagination with a counterpart to the familiar, lonely landscapes of the North.

His Second Symphony provoked intense enthusiasm, and the work was immediately interpreted by some Finns as a kind of musical allegory for the contemporary struggle of their homeland under the yoke of czarist Russia—the finale representing the breakthrough of liberation. But Sibelius grew impatient with such programmatic reductions of his music. Decades later, he called his Second Symphony “a confession of the soul.”

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Conceived on an epic scale, the Second Symphony relies on elements—motifs, chords, timbral colors, rhythms and even tempo changes—that share a kind

of musical logic Sibelius later referred to as “inner connections,” like an underground root system. The breath-like, pulsating gesture we first hear suggests it may be the accompaniment to something about to begin. Its repeated rising notes contain the germ for much of what will materialize later.

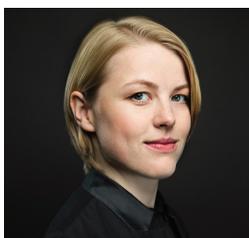
In contrast to the conventional method of presenting the main material and then fragmenting it, Sibelius reshuffles a series of contrasting fragments (some pastoral, others passionate) and reconnects these into larger, mosaic-like wholes as the movement progresses.

The monumental second movement is also highly varied, moving between the gloomy first theme in the bassoons and a luminous prayer first played by the strings. What intervenes is a remarkably tempestuous clouding over, which builds to a hefty brass chorale propelled by a terse

rhythmic motif. With its manic, whirling speed, the Scherzo poses maximal contrast to the calming stasis of the oboe’s ninefold repeated B-flat at the start of the Trio—an echo, in its repetitions, of the opening of the Symphony. This movement segues directly into the vast finale, which reprises developments that have occurred earlier in the Second. The triumphant main theme emerges in its most heroic guise in the final pages as the true destination of everything that has led up to this point.

Scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani and strings.

— Thomas May is the Nashville Symphony’s program annotator.



GUEST CONDUCTOR: Ruth Reinhardt

Ruth Reinhardt is quickly establishing herself as one of today’s most dynamic and nuanced young

conductors, building a reputation for her musical intelligence, programmatic imagination and elegant performances.

In the 2022/23 season, Ms. Reinhardt makes U.S. debuts with the New York Philharmonic, Kansas City Symphony, Nashville Symphony, Louisville Orchestra and Rhode Island Philharmonic. European engagements include debuts with the Bamberger Symphoniker, Musikkollegium Winterthur, Münchner Rundfunkorchester, RSB Berlin, Goteborgs Symfoniker, Warsaw Philharmonic, Uppsala Chamber Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica del Principado de Asturias and Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, and returns to Malmö Symphony and Kristiansand Symphony, among others.

In recent seasons, Ms. Reinhardt has led the symphony orchestras of San Francisco, Detroit, Houston, Baltimore, Fort Worth and Milwaukee, as well as the Los Angeles and St. Paul Chamber Orchestras. In Europe, recent debuts include the Orchestre National de Radio France, Tonkünstler Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, DSO-Berlin and MDR

Leipzig Radio Symphony, among many others. She also returned to conduct the Cleveland Orchestra at Blossom Music Festival, the Seattle Symphony and the Dallas Symphony, where she was assistant conductor from 2016 to 2018. In the summers of 2018 and 2019, she served as the assistant conductor of the Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra.

Ruth Reinhardt received her master’s degree in conducting from The Juilliard School, where she studied with Alan Gilbert. Born in Saarbrücken, Germany, she began studying violin at an early age and sang in the children’s chorus of Saarländisches Staatstheater, Saarbrücken’s opera company. She attended Zurich’s University of the Arts (Zürcher Hochschule der Künste) to study violin with Rudolf Koelman, and began conducting studies with Constantin Trinks, with additional training under Johannes Schlaefli. She has also participated in conducting master classes with, among others, Bernard Haitink, Michael Tilson Thomas, David Zinman, Paavo Järvi, Neeme Järvi, Marin Alsop and James Ross. Reinhardt was a Dudamel Fellow of the Los Angeles Philharmonic (2017-18), conducting fellow at the Seattle Symphony (2015-16) and Boston Symphony Orchestra’s Tanglewood Music Center (2015), and an associate conducting fellow of the Taki Concordia program (2015-17).