



School of Music
University of Missouri

2023-2024 Series | Large Ensemble

University Philharmonic Orchestra

Dr. John McKeever, conductor
Tenson Liang, soloist

September 21, 2023 | 7:00pm
Missouri Theatre

Program

Le carnaval romain, op. 9 **Hector Berlioz**
(1803-1869)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-Flat major, s. 124 **Franz Liszt**
(1811-1886)

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Quasi adagio
- III. Allegretto vivace
- IV. Allegro marziale animato

Tenson Liang, piano

Intermission

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, op. 67 **Ludwig van Beethoven**
(1770-1827)

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Allegro
- IV. Allegro

Berlioz – Le carnaval romain, op. 9

Premiered in Paris on February 3, 1844, *Le carnaval romain* (The Roman Carnival) almost instantaneously became one of Berlioz's most popular and adored pieces alongside *Symphonie fantastique*. Though the piece itself is a concert overture, the musical material dates back to Berlioz's unsuccessful opera *Benvenuto Cellini*, 1838, about the Renaissance era artist of the same name. Notwithstanding its brilliant score, *Benvenuto Cellini* was a failed opera for various reasons, and it was quickly withdrawn by the composer. Fortunately for audiences and orchestras alike, Berlioz desperately wanted to salvage what he could from this work and thus *Le carnaval romain* was born. In writing an opera about an Italian artist, Berlioz drew from his own experiences living in Rome as a winner of the coveted Prix de Rome in 1830. In particular, the opera and this overture drew inspiration from the carnival season, the period of intense and wild celebration leading up to Lent.

Le carnaval romain is constructed in two large sections. After an energetic but brief preview of coming attractions, we are treated to a beautiful and expressive English horn solo. This melody comes from a love duet from *Benvenuto Cellini*. This tune quickly grows until it is passed around the entire orchestra with the lively, rhythmic accompaniment of two tambourines as well as trumpets and cornets who lead this lover's tune to its next logical step: a dance! At first heard as though from a distance, quickly the vibrant rhythm of a saltarello explodes through the orchestra. This traditional Italian dance, named for the jumping step it features, was also adapted by Berlioz from *Benvenuto Cellini*. As the intensity of the dancing at the carnival grows, we hear snippets of the love duet return in the winds and brass, now transformed from something loving to something almost laughing, filled with joy, excitement, and tension as the party reaches its peak. The dance comes to an end with a huge cheer from the orchestra as the excitement of the evening pours over everyone and on into the night.

Liszt – Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-Flat major, S. 124

When it came to his first piano concerto, Liszt took his time to bring the piece into the world. Liszt first jotted down sketches for this concerto's main theme in the early 1830s, and by 1834 he had completed the first draft of the piece. This version of the concerto was in the standard three-movement form and was never premiered. In 1839, Liszt returned to the concerto and heavily revised the work, retaining the principal theme but transforming the piece from a three-movement work into a four-

part single-movement work that is meant to be played without any stops between movements. This version of the work was not orchestrated until 1849 and the piece was again revised in 1853. It was not until February 17, 1855, that the work was premiered with Liszt at the piano and Hector Berlioz conducting (on a program that also featured *Le carnaval romain*).

“Das versteht Ihr alle nicht, haha!” (None of you understand this, ha-ha!) These words were “set” to the main theme of this concerto, the first music you will hear, by either Liszt himself or his son-in-law, conductor Hans von Bülow. While this concerto has become a staple of our concert halls today, it was originally met with mixed reviews from confused audiences. A significant factor in the audience’s mixed response was the innovative, though not entirely new, form that Liszt used in this concerto. As mentioned above, the piece has four sections similar to those of a symphony: fast, slow, scherzo, and fast but the work is meant to be performed without any pauses between the movements. This form combines with Liszt’s repetition and variation of familiar motives throughout the entire work to give the piece a cyclical feel. The expected extended orchestral tutti passages, alternating with featured solo moments, do not exist in this piece. Instead, the piano and orchestra are much more integrated and frequently share moments of true dialogue.

One other orchestral novelty of this piece is Liszt’s use of the triangle in the scherzo portion of the concerto. It was such an unusual and unexpected sound at the time of the work’s premiere that some members of the musical public referred to this piece as Liszt’s “triangle concerto.” While today no one would argue that this is not a *piano* concerto, that triangle part is so prominent that it is often called for in orchestral auditions.

Beethoven – Symphony No. 5 in C minor, op. 67

As I sit here writing program notes that I know will ultimately be read on electronic devices with your search engine of choice just taps away, I find myself asking what I can possibly add to the written story of this piece that hasn’t already been said by quite literally hundreds of other conductors, musicians, and scholars over the two hundred plus years since this piece’s premiere. The answer, unsurprisingly, is shockingly little.

I can tell you that Beethoven began the composition of this piece in earnest in 1804, though sketches can be found as early as 1800. I can tell you that the piece was premiered on December 22, 1808, at one of the most notoriously miserable concerts in the history of music, a long-running, bitterly cold evening that not only featured the premiere of the fifth symphony but also the sixth symphony and included the entire Choral Fantasy, two movements of the C Major Mass, a

concert aria, and the fourth piano concerto all played by an ad-hoc orchestra that was underpaid and under-rehearsed. I can point out that the piece is written in the standard four-movement symphonic style with a fast first movement, a slow second movement, a scherzo, and a fast finale. I can highlight that the third and fourth movements flow together without a stop and that the final movement of a symphony in C minor ending in C major was a revolutionary idea. Of course, I would be a poor commentator if I did not mention that this is the first time the piccolo, contrabassoon, and trombones were used in a symphonic orchestra, but these are all just facts and this is Beethoven!

This piece has become a ubiquitous part of our culture. I would guess there are few people alive who have not heard the opening two measures of this piece, even if they do not know where it comes from. It can be heard everywhere from commercials to funk tunes to Disney movies. It has become ingrained in our society and tragically it has become commonplace. Here in 2023, Beethoven's fifth symphony can be about as revolutionary to us as flipping a light switch, but the work *should* be as revolutionary to us as if we were a person from 1808 who walked into a home and saw someone flip a light switch!

So, if what you want is Beethoven facts, I encourage you to use the device you are currently holding to search for "Beethoven 5 program notes" and you will be greeted with reams of scholarly commentary. But I would instead prefer to invite you to participate in this performance as a listener. You are about to hear Beethoven's fifth symphony. Whether you have heard the entire work before or not, I want to ask you now to listen to this work as though it is something new. Allow yourself to fully engage in the music you are about to hear for the next thirty minutes. If we are doing our jobs well, your heart should be absolutely pounding with excitement by the time we reach the final measures and hopefully, you will leave here with the sense of having witnessed something revolutionary.

Program notes by John McKeever

Guest Soloist Biography

Heralded by the Mandarin Daily News for his “impeccable technique and sensitive musicality,” **Tenson Liang** stands as a distinguished pianist, recognized as a rising star within the classical music world. His innovative artistry and profound musical insight have garnered him numerous accolades, including top honors at prestigious competitions such as the International Hong Kong Piano Festival and the International West Virginia Piano Competition.

Dedicated to the cause of music education, Mr. Liang’s passion extends beyond the concert stage and into the realm of teaching. His teaching engagements have spanned across esteemed events, including the Music for All Festival in Kansas City, the Emerald Coast Music Alliance, the Taipei Youth Music Festival, and the Formosa Summer Music Festival. Furthermore, Mr. Liang is the visionary founder of Classical Music Express in Kansas City, an initiative aimed at democratizing classical music. Through this endeavor, he has orchestrated a multitude of free concerts, bringing the beauty of classical music to every corner of Kansas City. He firmly believes that the transformative power of classical music should not be confined to the walls of concert halls but should resonate with all who share his passion.

In the past season, Mr. Liang’s performances have illuminated the stage with brilliance, notably featuring a recital where all four Chopin Ballades graced the audience in Kansas City, alongside another extraordinary performance that showcased Beethoven’s 4th Piano Concerto and Liszt’s 1st Concerto at Whitmore Hall in Columbia. His outstanding musicality earned him the MNTA Graduate Division Competition’s top honors, as well as an honorable mention from the Jefferson City Symphony Orchestra Piano Concerto Competition. He has also received acclaim as the winner of the Emerging Artist competition, and his exceptional piano performance was celebrated with distinction at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Tenson Liang’s journey in music began in Taipei, Taiwan, where he commenced his piano studies at the tender age of five. His path took a unique turn when he earned a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering in Taiwan before dedicating his life to his true passion: the piano. In 2016, he embarked on an educational voyage to the Peabody Conservatory, where his musical prowess blossomed. A year later, in 2017, he

brought his prodigious talent to the UMKC Conservatory, enriched by major music scholarships, including the Lorraine Watson, HJ Chartrand, and Joanne Baker Piano Scholarships.

Currently, Mr. Liang continues his artistic exploration at the University of Missouri (Mizzou) under the mentorship of Dr. Peter Miyamoto. His illustrious journey has been shaped by esteemed teachers, including Gwyneth Chen, Brian Ganz, and Alon Goldstein. His accolades encompass notable achievements, such as claiming First Prize at the National Taiwan Mandarin Daily News Piano Competition, securing a Gold Medal at the Taiwan National Young-Artist Piano Competition, and reaching the finals of both the Wideman International Piano Competition and the West Virginia International Piano Competition.

Tenson Liang has been an avid participant in numerous music festivals, adding rich layers to his musical education. Notably, he partook in the 9th Rebecca Penneys Piano Festival, where he had the privilege of studying under the guidance of eminent maestros like Boris Slutsky, Alan Chow, Alvin Chow, Arthur Greene, Christopher Harding, Michael Lewin, Jerome Lowenthal, Roberto Plano, Roberta Rust, and Ann Schein. These experiences have further enriched his artistic palette, fueling his boundless passion for classical music.

Personnel

Flute/Piccolo

John Goodson
Lauren Marino
Nicholas Wu

Oboe/English Horn

Sophia Fasone
Sadie Middleton

Clarinet

Elizabeth Ganey
James Langen

Bassoon/Contrabassoon

Luke Frith
Molly Legg
Noah Lucas

Horn

Henry Albright
Hayden Alley
Sydney Hendrickson
Maddie Hogan
Erica Ohmann

Trumpet/Cornet

Layden Dukes
Jesse Hamilton
Emily Rahn
Brandon Sconce

Trombone

Eva Oelsner
Titus Weinzierl
Noah Wright

Timpani/Percussion

Mary Emmons
Will Garstang
Sarah Hasekamp
Olivia Sletteland
Greyson Smallen

Violin

Maya Anand
Kip Atteberry
Nathan Bronstein
Sophie Edwards
Breanne Garstang
Sofia Heredia
Tori Hollister
Wendy Kleintank *
Sam Li
Andrea Lin
Brandon Merchant
Alexandre Negrão +
Ethan Sanders
Lyubov Stratienco
Sydney Studer
Simon Whitty
Zephyr Yellman

Viola

Meredith Blucker-Sliter *
Ella Frank
Inyoung Kim
Parker Krudop
Kara Lawson
Elaina Mauer
Jojo O

Cello

Broderick Beebe
Cheyenne Blair
Syd Bolden
Felipe Celis
Megan Espeland
Max Hartsfield
Sara Lawson
Jennifer Lochhead
Gray Morima
Mason Murphy
Drake O'Hearn
Ananta Sharma
Preston Smith
Kathryn Wenger
Dean Wibe *

Bass

Sammy Asel *
Kelsey Atteberry
Sam Caldwell
Luke Reaume
Trey Rolfes

Assistant Conductor

Carlos Verano

+ - concertmaster

* - principal string