



Cheyenne  
Symphony  
Orchestra

**Masterpiece 2 – Classical to Contemporary**

**November 16, 2024**

***The Inheritors Overture*—Allison Loggins-Hull**

Loggins-Hull is one of the most successful of the new generation of young composers, and her musical style is a reflection of her diverse musical interests. During her youth she was exposed to all manner of music—classical, rock, jazz, rhythm and blues, electronic, acid jazz, and a “lot of weird stuff.”

She is clearly in the forefront of avant-garde composers for flute combined with various other instruments, but is increasingly writing for larger ensembles, as well. A virtuoso performer, Loggins-Hull is engaged in an active career of composing and performing, not only in the New York City area, but nationally, as well. A graduate of SUNY Purchase in flute performance, she also holds a MA in composition from NYU. The breadth of her music activities is impressive: composition, solo performances, television, radio, movies—you name it. To that, she adds a dedicated career in education at a variety of distinguished institutions. Her latest distinction is a most impressive engagement by the venerable Cleveland Orchestra in a three-year composing fellowship.

Her musical style is nothing, if not imaginative. Electronic effects, elaborate percussion, vocals for the flutist, she consistently challenges the listener in a constant kaleidoscope of novel and creative musical concepts.

*The Inheritors Overture* is scored for chamber orchestra, was commissioned by the Raleigh Civic Chamber Orchestra, and received its première by that group in 2020. Notwithstanding her reputation as a composer of diverse musical combinations and styles, in *The Inheritors Overture* she has chosen to score for the resources of the conventional, small chamber orchestra: strings with a reduced woodwind, brass and percussion section. Eschewing many of the markers that provide clear shape and architecture in much of traditional musical styles, she rather has composed a work that focuses on the expression of an intense emotional idea. And while specific in focus, it nevertheless expresses a variety of evolving interpretations of that thought.

And the thought is: “the intergenerational transmission of trauma.” *The Inheritors Overture* takes as its focus the narrative of descendants of victims of slavery and the Holocaust, and by implication, all of humanity that suffers from outrageous transgressions wrought by their fellow humans. The perspective of narrative is central to the work, for the very title refers to the “inheritance” of each succeeding generation of those victims—each generation, being removed in time, but not in emotional burden of the dark legacy of its ancestors.

Thus Loggins-Hull has written a work that is full of emotion, but surely abstract in details. It is episodic in form, each of the few sections taking a distinctive interpretation of the “inherited” outrages—just as human generations inevitably pass on altered narratives of their legacies. Accordingly, the composer created distinctive textures and orchestral color combinations for each generation’s episode—as the narrative of feelings evolves with time. One will seek with difficulty for “tunes” or melodies here, for

Loggins-Hull works with dense clusters and “clouds” of melodic fragments and layers of rhythms and colors. But there is one informing, ubiquitous melodic fragment that is the central, recognizable shape. It’s simply three notes, first heard at the beginning in the trumpet solo. It appears throughout, in many guises.

After the “voices” of the various musical anguished episodes, Loggins-Hull ends the narrative of tragedy with an unexpected harmonious serenity, punctuated by a symbolic affirmation by all. The implied optimism for humanity is pellucidly clear.

### **Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219 (“Turkish”)—Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Visitors to the small, sparse museum located in the putative home of the Mozarts in Salzburg will see a glass display case containing the little violin of the young Wolfgang. And it reminds us of the centrality of the violin in Mozart’s younger days. Indeed, his father, Leopold, was the author of the most celebrated tutor for the violin in the eighteenth century. Little Wolfgang was his prize pupil, and his performances on the violin were a mainstay of his celebrity during all those barnstorming tours as a child. A little older, and back home in Salzburg, Mozart led the little court orchestra as a virtuoso concertmaster. In 1775, at the age of nineteen, Mozart composed all five of his violin concertos, for own use, of course. Though composed rather quickly in succession, each concerto shows growing mastery of the genre, culminating in the important A Major concerto. In many respects it is his swansong for the violin, for after leaving Salzburg for Vienna a few years later, he never again played the violin in any significant situations, preferring to play the viola in private music making with his friends.

The A Major concerto is perhaps the best violin concerto of the latter half of the eighteenth century, and probably the most frequently played violin concerto. It certainly merits the attention, for this is a work that marks Mozart’s emerging mature style in every way. In the first movement Mozart’s imagination comes to the fore immediately, for upon the entrance of the soloist, the whole atmosphere of the movement changes for a bit, as the bustling tempo of the orchestra is replaced by a brief slow passage of considerable *gravitas* for the soloist. The faster tempo resumes, but in the middle of the movement, we encounter darkly colored excursions in minor keys and somber emotion. This is rather typical of music from this period in Mozart’s life, and some listeners may remember similar passages in his so-called “Little G Minor” symphony from the same period. The middle movement is predictably a lyrical one, simply of exquisite beauty.

It is the last movement that gives the concerto its moniker, and starts out as a fairly conventional dance (it’s a minuet) in a form in which the main idea alternates with other contrasting ideas. But, it is in the contrasting section that occurs just before the last statement of our familiar main theme that Mozart “drops the bomb.” For this surprise he employs a kind of “Turkish” march in A minor—a style familiar to most from his “Rondo alla Turca” in his A major piano sonata. It’s different in every way: tempo, meter, mood, culture—you name it. So-called “Turkish” music was all the rage then in Vienna, owing to the threat to the city by the Turks for centuries (museums in the city today are full of artifacts from the wars). All of the major composers wrote pieces with what the Viennese thought of as Turkish qualities: cymbals, drums, triangles, piccolo,

thumping bass lines, etc. You will remember Beethoven's use of the conceit in the last movement of his Ninth Symphony. Well, it comes as a complete surprise, here, rather like an uninvited drunken guest at the party, and it's all great fun. The basses enhance the effect of tomfoolery by striking the strings with the wooden part of their bows. Just when things seem out of control, the graceful minuet returns, and all's put right. Surprising, the movement ends quietly, almost with a sigh, not apologetically, but definitely rather like conciliatory relief.

### **Symphony No. 4 in Bb Major, op. 60—Ludwig van Beethoven**

This symphony, along with the first and second symphonies of Beethoven, has not nearly the reputation of the rest of them. It especially stands in great contrast to its immediate predecessor, the monumental third—the “Eroica,” a work that changed forever the significance of the genre. Any great work of art must be judged by its intrinsic qualities, yet it often is illuminating to consider it in the context of the life of the artist. Beethoven finished this symphony in 1806 at a propitious time in his life; he was thirty-six years old, and widely recognized for his genius. Moreover, he had just finished a series of significant compositions that, had he never composed again, alone would have been sufficient to establish his reputation permanently. They include: his opera, *Fidelio*; the piano sonatas “Pathetique,” “Moonlight,” “Waldstein,” and “Appassionata;” the “Rasumovsky” quartets; the violin concerto; the first four piano concertos; and, of course, the aforementioned “Eroica.” What is more, he had endured some of his typically hopeless infatuations with unobtainable women, and was gradually coming to terms with his deafness—having considered suicide. And then comes the charming, light, fourth symphony, that for all the world seems like a reversion to the style of some ten years earlier when Joseph Haydn was the toast of the world and Beethoven was a journeyman.

The symphony begins with a slow introduction—a Haydnesque touch—that mysteriously wanders through some pretty remote keys: Bb minor and Gb major and minor. It concludes with a wonderful example of a Beethoven crescendo into the triumphal allegro of the movement proper. Note throughout this movement his imaginative use of the wind instruments in thematic statements. The slow movement eschews Beethoven's want to manipulate and develop, and simply unwinds a beautiful melody over a throbbing accompaniment. The usual dance-like third movement—a Beethovenian scherzo—entertains with his characteristic manipulation of accents that surprise. Ever the innovator—even in this modest work—he expands the usual form from three parts to five, more or less repeating the last two sections. The last movement is a kind of perpetual motion of continuous sixteenth notes, driving merrily along to a happy ending.

Although this symphony sits in the middle of works with considerable gravitas, Beethoven obviously felt a need to compose a cheerful work of affirmation as relief. It is not light in quality, only in mood, and reveals to us a side of the stormy and enigmatic composer that, while rare, is nonetheless genuine.

--Wm. E. Runyan  
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