



BEETHOVEN

Symphonies

4 AND 5

Gianandrea
Nosedà



National Symphony Orchestra
The Kennedy Center



National Symphony Orchestra

Gianandrea Noseda conductor

Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat major, Op. 60

1. Adagio - Allegro vivace 10'34"
2. Adagio 9'25"
3. Allegro vivace 5'17"
4. Allegro ma non troppo 6'27"

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

5. Allegro con brio 6'41"
6. Adagio con moto 8'50"
7. Allegro 4'41"
8. Allegro 10'28"

Beethoven, Symphony No. 4 was recorded live on January 20, 21, and 22, 2022 and Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 was recorded live on January 13, 15, and 16, 2022 in the Concert Hall of The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.

Recording producer Blanton Alspaugh, *Soundmirror*.

Recording engineer Mark Donahue, *Soundmirror*. **Mastering engineer** Mark Donahue, *Soundmirror*.

Executive Producers Nigel Boon and Genevieve Twomey, *National Symphony Orchestra*.

BEETHOVEN Symphonies Abstracted Art, © 2019 Mo Willems **Cover design** Scott Sosebee.

Orchestra photos Scott Suchman. **Gianandrea Noseda photo** Stefano Pasqualetti. **Mo Willems photo** Trix Willems.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat major, Op. 60 (1806)

Beethoven's career as a composer spanned some 40 years, from his youthful essays to the last string quartets. His output, however, was not evenly distributed over those decades. There were years when he composed little or nothing at all; at other times he wrote incredible amounts of great music over a remarkably short period of time. During such periods, it is hard to reconcile Beethoven's extreme speed with the usual image of the composer toiling endlessly over his sketches.

1806 was one of the most prolific years in Beethoven's life. He completed his three Razumovsky quartets, the Fourth Piano Concerto, the Fourth Symphony, and the Violin Concerto. He also started work on what would later become the Fifth Symphony.

The 36-year-old Beethoven was in the middle of his so-called "heroic" period, shortly after the "Eroica" and just before the no-less-heroic Fifth. The Fourth has traditionally been seen as a kind of respite between these two mighty works, in accordance with the old theory that opposed the dramatic "odd-numbered" symphonies to the more lyrical "even-numbered" ones.

As an experiment, let us forget this theory for a moment. We will then find that the Fourth is animated by the same incessant flow of energy and the same irresistible pull to move ahead as its more tempestuous companions. It is just as perfect a representative of the "heroic period" as any other work. The emotions expressed may be lighter and less tragic, but they are expressed with the same force throughout.

The slow introduction to the first movement is certainly one of the most suspenseful Beethoven ever wrote. The idea of starting a B-flat-major symphony with a slow-moving unison theme in B-flat

minor may have come from Haydn's Symphony No. 98, but the polarity is much greater in Beethoven, whose introduction is full of a sense of mystery that was entirely new in music. One finds it hard to believe that Haydn had written his London symphonies only a decade earlier and was still alive in 1806!

Slow introductions are usually linked to the subsequent Allegros by means of some transition that builds a bridge between the two tempos. In Beethoven's Fourth, there is a clear separation instead of a bridge. A drastic shift of keys and a sudden general rest bring the music to a virtual standstill before the energetic Allegro vivace is launched. Now there will hardly be a moment of pause until the end of the movement. The concise exposition begins with a brisk and vibrant theme, and even the more lyrical moments are full of motion and excitement.

The development section employs one of Beethoven's favorite musical techniques, namely thematic fragmentation. The first theme is "decomposed" almost to its atoms; for a while, it receives a new lyrical counter-melody that is, however, soon brushed aside by a tutti outburst. The recapitulation is prepared by a long tremolo on the kettledrum, over which the strings gradually put the thematic "atoms" back together for the triumphant return of the theme.

The second movement is the only large-scale lyrical Adagio in a Beethoven symphony before the Ninth. In the Fourth Symphony, Beethoven unfolds a beautiful *cantabile* ("singing") theme over a characteristic rhythmic accompaniment that eventually rises to the status of a theme in its own right. The *cantabile* theme returns several times, in a more and more ornamented form, its appearances separated by some rather powerful statements. The

movement ends with a timpani solo followed by two concluding orchestral chords.

The third movement is a scherzo, although Beethoven didn't use that word as a title. The music abounds in playful elements and a general mood of exuberant joy. The Trio moves in a slower tempo and has a simpler melody; it is based on the juxtaposition of the orchestra's wind and string sections. Beethoven added an interesting twist to the usual scherzo form here: he expanded on the standard form (Scherzo - Trio - Scherzo) by means of a second appearance of the Trio and a third Scherzo statement.

The fourth-movement finale, marked "Allegro ma non troppo," begins with a theme in perpetual sixteenth-note motion; the flow of the sixteenth is only briefly interrupted by melodic episodes. This movement is light in tone and cheerful in spirit. Like the slow introduction to the first movement, the finale also shows how much Beethoven had learned from Haydn. But, once again, most of the music sounds like no one but Beethoven. The repeated and unresolved dissonances at the end of the exposition, sound rather close to a similar passage in the first movement of the "Eroica." Also, Haydn probably wouldn't have entrusted the return of the perpetual-motion theme to the solo bassoon, in what is one of the most difficult passages for the instrument in the classical repertoire. One feels that this music could go on *ad infinitum*, but it is suddenly cut short by a hesitant, slower rendition of the main theme in the violins, continued by the bassoons, and abruptly ended by a few energetic chords played by the whole orchestra.

Notes by Peter Laki



Symphony No. 4 by Mo Willems

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 (1808)

“The reviewer has before him one of the most important works by the master whose pre-eminence as an instrumental composer it is doubtful that anybody would now dispute....” These words were written by E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776–1822), writer and composer, in 1810, a year and a half after the first performance (which he had not heard), in a review of the score of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. Although writings about this work would now fill a small library, few authors in the past 198 years have equalled Hoffmann’s sensitivity, and his ability to combine a poet’s imagination with the thoroughness of a musical scholar.

Hoffmann immediately understood the significance of the symphony’s opening motif, the famous ta-ta-ta-TA: “Nothing could be simpler than the main idea of the opening Allegro, consisting of only two bars and initially in unison, so that the listener is not even certain of the key. The mood of the anxious, restless yearning created by this subject is heightened even further by the melodious secondary theme.” The *fermata*, the long-held note at the end of the first extended phrase, gives, according to Hoffmann, “presentiments of unknown mysteries.”

Everything in the first movement is, one way or another, derived from that opening ta-ta-ta-TA. The rhythm is almost always present in the bass or in the treble, in its original form or with modifications. Whether or not this theme represents “Fate pounding at the portal,” as Beethoven is supposed to have said, the dramatic tension of the music and the heroic struggle it portrays cannot be missed.

In the second-movement, *Andante con moto*, two themes alternate in a kind of “double variation” form. A gentle opening melody is followed by loud military fanfares, and the movement is based

largely on the transitions back and forth between these two kinds of material. In the course of the variations, the character of the first theme changes from lyrical to mysterious.

The mood becomes dark again in the third-movement, *Allegro*. Beethoven did not use the title “Scherzo” here, although it is obviously one of the fast movements in $\frac{3}{4}$ time with a contrasting middle section that he elsewhere called “scherzi” (jokes). This time, however, we feel a chilly wind blowing as the cellos and double basses begin the *pianissimo* theme of the movement. Soon a variant of the first movement’s ta-ta-ta-TA motif appears on the horns; it sounds even more austere now that all four notes have the same pitch (that is, the last note does not drop a third as it did in the first movement). The Trio, which starts out as a fugue with an agile theme played by the cellos and double basses, provides some comic relief for a moment, but then a most extraordinary thing happens. The theme of the first section returns, but the strings play *pizzicato* (“with the strings plucked”) and the *legato* (“continuous”) melody is broken up into mysterious-sounding staccato notes. If the first version of the theme made a chilly impression, this time it is definitely freezing, and the recapitulation is followed by a section characterized by the deepest despair music has ever expressed. We hear a *pianissimo* kettledrum solo over the long-held notes of the strings; against this thumping background, a violin theme (related to the first theme of the movement) gradually emerges and rises higher and higher against the insistent *ostinato* in basses and timpani. In one of the most fantastic “darkness-to-light” transitions in the orchestral literature, we reach, after 50 measures of suspense and a stunning crescendo, the glorious Allegro in C major which proclaims the victory at the end of a long battle.

Piccolo, contrabassoon, and three trombones (instruments Beethoven had never used in his first four symphonies) join the orchestra for this exuberant celebration, in a movement in which their various themes follow one another with a naturalness and inevitability that is one of the greatest miracles of Beethoven's music. The movement follows the traditional sonata pattern of exposition, development, and recapitulation, but between the last two, another surprise awaits us. (It is another miracle that after a thousand hearings, it still strikes us as a surprise.) The last section of the third movement returns, and the transition from darkness to light is enacted all over again. However, nothing is repeated literally; the orchestration is new, the "darkness" is made less gloomy by the more melodic woodwind parts. The transition is new as well: the "chilly" string melody is totally absent, and we reach the triumphant Allegro much faster and more easily than the first time. The celebrated British musical commentator, Donald Francis Tovey (1875-1940) wrote very eloquently about the effect of this passage:

Beethoven recalls the third movement as a memory which we know for a fact but can no longer understand: *There is now a note of self-pity, for which we had no leisure when the terror was upon our souls: the depth and the darkness are alike absent, and in the dry light of the day we cannot remember our fears of the unknown. And so the triumph resumes its progress and enlarges its range until it reaches its appointed end.*

That "appointed end," the "Presto" Coda with its 54 measures of C-major chords, has raised, we must say, a few eyebrows. Yet it seems that a shorter coda would not have been enough to balance out the enormous tensions of the symphony. Like an airplane that, after landing, runs on the ground for a long time before coming to a complete stop, Beethoven's Fifth ends gradually; after the thematic material has disappeared, the music still continues with a bare restatement of the C-major tonality. Finally, even the C-major chord goes away, replaced by a single unison C that marks the final arrival.

Notes by Peter Laki



Symphony No. 5 by Mo Willems

Gianandrea Noseda

Music Director and Conductor

Gianandrea Noseda is one of the world's most sought-after conductors, equally recognized for his artistry in both the concert hall and opera house. The 2022–2023 season marks his sixth as Music Director of the National Symphony Orchestra.

Noseda's artistic leadership has inspired the National Symphony Orchestra and reinvigorated it both at home at the Kennedy Center and beyond via streams, recordings, and on tour to New York where in 2019 it earned rave reviews both at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. The artistic partnership between Noseda and the NSO continues to flourish with the NSO recording label distributed by LSO Live for which Noseda also records as principal guest conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. The first recording on the label was released in 2020 featuring Dvořák's Symphony No 9 and Copland's Billy the Kid. The label's next releases over the course of 2022 and 2023 will include D.C. native George Walker's Five Sinfonias and a Beethoven Cycle.

In September 2021, Noseda began his tenure as General Music Director of the Zurich Opera House where the centerpiece of his tenure in Zurich is a new Ring Cycle.

Noseda has conducted the most important orchestras and at the leading opera houses and festivals including the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Concertgebouw Orchestra, Edinburgh Festival, La Scala, Munich Philharmonic, Met Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, NHK Symphony, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre National de France, Philadelphia Orchestra, Royal Opera House (UK), Salzburg Festival, Verbier Festival, Vienna Philharmonic, Vienna State Opera, and Vienna Symphony.

From 2007 until 2018, Noseda served as Music Director of Italy's Teatro Regio Torino where he ushered in a transformative era for the company matched with international acclaim for its productions, tours, recordings, and film projects. His



leadership resulted in a golden era for this opera house.

Other institutions where Nosedà has had significant roles include the BBC Philharmonic which he led from 2002–2011; Principal Guest Conductor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra from 2011–2020; the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, where the Victor de Sabata Chair was created for him as Principal Guest Conductor from 2010–2014; and the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, which appointed him its first-ever foreign Principal Guest Conductor in 1997, a position he held for a decade. He served as Artistic Director of the Stresa Festival from 2000–2020. He was also Principal Guest Conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 1999 to 2003; Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI from 2003 to 2006; and Principal Conductor of the Cadaqués Orchestra from 1994 to 2020.

Nurturing the next generation of artists is important to Nosedà, as evidenced by his ongoing work in masterclasses and tours with youth orchestras, including the European Union Youth Orchestra, which he again took on tour in summer 2022. In 2019 he became Music Director of the Tsinandali Festival and Pan-Caucasian Youth Orchestra in the village of Tsinandali, Georgia.

Nosedà's intense recording activity counts more than 70 CDs on Chandos, Deutsche Grammophon, and other labels, many of which have been celebrated by critics and received awards. He has made numerous recordings with the London Symphony Orchestra and is in the midst of a multi-year project to record the complete Shostakovich Symphonies with the LSO for LSO Live. He has championed the works of neglected Italian composers through his *Musica Italiana* recordings for Chandos which have been celebrated for their artistic contributions.

Gianandrea Nosedà's cherished relationship with the Metropolitan Opera dates back to 2002. At the Met he has conducted 13 operas and nearly 100 performances mainly of new productions. Many of his critically acclaimed performances have been broadcast on radio, Met Live in HD, and released as DVDs.

A native of Milan, Nosedà is Commendatore al Merito della Repubblica Italiana, marking his contribution to the artistic life of Italy. He has been honored as Musical America's Conductor of the Year (2015) and International Opera Awards Conductor of the Year (2016). In December 2016, he was privileged to conduct the Nobel Prize Concert in Stockholm.



*The NSO Music Director Chair is generously endowed by **The Sant Family**.*

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National Symphony Orchestra

The 2022–2023 season marks the National Symphony Orchestra's 92nd season, and Gianandrea Noseda's sixth season as its music director. The Italian conductor serves as the Orchestra's seventh music director, joining the NSO's legacy of such distinguished leaders as Christoph Eschenbach, Leonard Slatkin, Mstislav

Rostropovich, Antal Doráti, Howard Mitchell, and Hans Kindler. Its artistic leadership also includes Principal Pops Conductor Steven Reineke and Artistic Advisor Ben Folds.

Since assuming the leadership of the NSO, Gianandrea Noseda has brought a



renewed sense of energy and focus to the orchestra, which has resulted in wide-ranging recognition from local, national, and international publications, increases in subscription and single ticket sales, and the expansion of the Orchestra's reach through live streamed concerts and recordings. The New York Times called the NSO and Nosedá's 2019 Carnegie Hall appearance "spectacular," while the Washington Post wrote that "There's a certain flair going on at the National Symphony Orchestra," consistently reinforcing that this artistic partnership continues to gain momentum.

The National Symphony Orchestra label was launched in 2020 with its first release, Dvořák's Symphony No. 9. Both George Walker's Sinfonia No. 4, the first of the NSO's complete collection of George Walker's Sinfonias, and the initial release of the NSO's Beethoven Symphony cycle (Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3) were released in 2022.

Founded in 1931, the Orchestra has always been committed to artistic excellence and music education. In 1986, the National Symphony became an artistic affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the

Performing Arts, where it has performed a full season of subscription concerts since the Center opened in 1971. The 96-member NSO regularly participates in events of national and international importance, including official holiday celebrations through its regularly-televised appearances on PBS on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol, live-streamed performances from the Kennedy Center Concert Hall on medici.tv, and local radio broadcasts on Classical WETA 90.9 FM, making the NSO one of the most-heard orchestras in the country.

Additionally, the NSO's community engagement projects are nationally recognized, including NSO In Your Neighborhood, an annual week of performances in schools, churches, community centers, and other unexpected venues; Notes of Honor, which offers free performances for active, veteran, prior service, and retired members of the military and their families; and Sound Health, a collaboration with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and its affiliated organizations. Career development opportunities for young musicians include the NSO Youth Fellowship Program and its acclaimed, tuition-free Summer Music Institute.

For more information, visit nationalsymphony.org

BEETHOVEN Symphonies Abstracted

Mo Willems



Mo Willems is an author, illustrator, animator, playwright, and was the inaugural Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence, where he collaborated in creating fun new stuff involving classical music, opera, comedy concerts, dance, painting, and digital works with the National Symphony Orchestra, Ben Folds, Yo-Yo Ma, and others. Willems is best known for his #1 *New York Times* bestselling picture books, which have been awarded three Caldecott Honors (*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*, *Knuffle Bunny*, *Knuffle Bunny Too*), two Theodor Geisel Medals, and five Geisel Honors (*The Elephant & Piggie* series). Willems' art has been exhibited around the world, including major solo retrospectives at the High Museum (Atlanta) and the New-York Historical Society (NYC).

Over the last decade, Willems has become the most produced playwright of Theater for Young Audiences in America, having written or co-written four musicals based on his books. He began his career as a writer and animator on PBS's *Sesame Street*, where he garnered six Emmy Awards (writing). Other television work includes two series on Cartoon Network: *Sheep in the Big City* (creator and head writer) and *Codename: Kids Next Door* (head writer). Willems is creating new TV projects for HBOMax, where his live action comedy special *Don't Let the Pigeon Do Storytime!* and *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Underground Rock Experience* currently streams.

“Beethoven’s symphonies have moved millions of people. One evening, at a concert almost 250 years after his birth, Beethoven’s work moved me to paint them. The idea of creating art specifically to view while listening to Beethoven’s symphonies, compelled me to spend a year researching, listening, and painting. The result is nine abstractions, a visual art piece for each symphony, rendered in panels, whose sizes represent the lengths of each movement.

Through this project, I got to know Beethoven in a new way. When you listen to a symphony you are invited to a dialogue with its creator. I had the opportunity to see his technique change over his career and to feel the journey of his musical notes.

I hope these abstractions will spark something in you, as a listener and a viewer. Maybe you’ll even respond to Beethoven with your own art!”

National Symphony Orchestra

Violins

Nurit Bar-Josef
Concertmaster
Ying Fu
*Associate Concertmaster, The
Jeanne Weaver Ruesch Chair*
Ricardo Cyncynates
Assistant Concertmaster
Jane Bowyer Stewart
Teri Hopkins Lee
Pavel Pekarsky
Heather LeDoux Green
Joel Fuller
Lisa-Beth Lambert
Wanzhen Li
Jing Qiao

Marissa Regni *Principal*
Dayna Hepler
Assistant Principal
Desimont Alston
Cynthia R. Finks
Deanna Lee Bien
Glenn Donnellan
Natasha Bogachek
Carole Tafoya Evans

Jae-Yeon Kim
Hanna Lee
Benjamin Scott
Malorie Blake Shin
Marina Aikawa
Peiming Lin
Angelia Cho
Derek Powell

Violas

Daniel Foster *Principal*
Abigail Evans Kreuzer
Assistant Principal
Lynne Edelson Levine
Denise Wilkinson
James Francis Deighan
Eric deWaardt
Nancy Thomas
Jennifer Mondie
Tsunasakamoto
Ruth Wicker
Mahoko Eguchi

Cellos

David Hardy *Principal*
Glenn Garlick
Assistant Principal
Steven Honigberg
David Teie
James Lee
Rachel Young
Mark Evans
Eugena Chang
Loewi Lin
Britton Riley

Basses

Robert Oppelt *Principal*
Richard Barber
Assistant Principal
Jeffrey Weisner
Ira Gold
Paul DeNola
Charles Nilles
Alexander Jacobsen
Michael Marks

Harp

Adriana Horne *Principal*



Flutes

Aaron Goldman *Principal*
 Leah Arsenault Barrick
Assistant Principal
 Alice Kogan Weinreb
 Carole Bean *Piccolo*

Oboes

Nicholas Stovall *Principal*
 Jamie Roberts
Assistant Principal
 Harrison Linsey
 Kathryn Meany Wilson
English Horn

Clarinets

Lin Ma *Principal*
 Eugene Mondie
Assistant Principal
 Paul Cigan
 Peter Cain *Bass Clarinet*

Bassoons

Sue Heineman *Principal*
 Steven Wilson
Acting Assistant Principal
 Lewis Lipnick *Contrabassoon*

Horns

Abel Pereira *Principal*
 Laurel Bennert Ohlson
Associate Principal
 Markus Osterlund
 James Nickel
 Scott Fearing
 Robert Rearden

Trumpets

William Gerlach *Principal*
 Tom Cupples
 Keith Jones

Trombones

Craig Mulcahy *Principal*
 Kevin Carlson
Assistant Principal
 David Murray
 Matthew Guilford
Bass Trombone

Tuba

Stephen Dumaine *Principal*

Timpani

Jauvon Gilliam *Principal*
 Scott Christian
Assistant Principal

Percussion

Eric Shin *Principal*
 Scott Christian
 Joseph Connell *

Keyboards

Lambert Orkis *Principal*
 Lisa Emenheiser *

Organ

William Neil *

Librarians

Elizabeth Cusato Schnobrick
Principal
 Susan Stokdyk *Associate*
 Karen Lee *Assistant*



* Regularly engaged extra

** Temporary position





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