

# Program Notes

Title: Festive Overture, Op. 96

Composer: Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Date of Composition: 1954



Dmitri Shostakovich, one of the 20th century's most celebrated composers, composed his "Festive Overture" in 1954. This vibrant and exhilarating work was written in response to a commission to mark the 37th anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia. It is a piece that radiates the energy and enthusiasm of any occasion.

Shostakovich's Festive Overture is known for its relentless energy and driving rhythm. The brass and percussion sections play a prominent role in creating a sense of celebration and grandeur.

Amidst the exuberance, Shostakovich weaves memorable and melodic themes that add a touch of sophistication to the piece. The composer skillfully employs the full range of the orchestra, making use of brilliant brass fanfares and intricate woodwind passages to create a rich and dynamic texture. It is in a traditional A-B-A form, where the central section (B) provides a brief contrast to the energetic outer sections.

Dmitri Shostakovich's Festive Overture is a magnificent musical work that encapsulates the joy and spirit of celebration. Its relentless pace, memorable melodies, and powerful orchestration make it a thrilling experience for both performers and listeners alike.

Title: Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major, K. 364

Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Date of Composition: 1779



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, a musical genius of the Classical era, composed his Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major, K. 364, in 1779. This remarkable work is often regarded as one of Mozart's most brilliant compositions, showcasing his exceptional melodic craftsmanship and mastery of form.

The Sinfonia Concertante is unique for its use of two solo instruments, typically the violin and viola. These instruments engage in a delightful interplay throughout the piece, creating a captivating dialogue between the soloists. Mozart's gift for crafting exquisite melodies is evident in this

work. The music is characterized by its lyrical and expressive themes that are shared between the violin and viola. The orchestra plays a vital role in this composition, providing a rich and supportive backdrop for the soloists. It often engages in thematic conversations with the soloists, adding depth to the musical tapestry.

The first movement is a lively and cheerful Allegro, where the soloists introduce the main themes and engage in playful exchanges. The second movement is a sublime Andante in C minor, contrasting the brightness of the first movement. It features some of Mozart's most heartfelt and expressive writing. The final movement, marked Presto, is a joyful and rhythmic conclusion that showcases Mozart's skill in creating vivacious and exuberant music.

Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major, K. 364, is a masterpiece that showcases the composer's extraordinary talent. Its blend of virtuosic solo writing, expressive melodies, and orchestral brilliance make it a timeless gem in the world of classical music, a testament to Mozart's enduring genius.

Title: Symphony No. 2, "Romantic"

Composer: Howard Hanson (1896-1981)

Date of Composition: 1930



Howard Hanson, an American composer and conductor, created his Symphony No. 2, often referred to as the "Romantic Symphony," in 1930. This work stands as a significant contribution to American classical music and has become a cherished piece in the symphonic repertoire.

The "Romantic Symphony" is aptly named for its lush and expressive melodies. Hanson's gift for creating sweeping, emotional themes is on full display, evoking a sense of nostalgia and yearning. The symphony is known for its rich orchestration, featuring full and colorful instrumentation that adds depth and warmth to the music. Hanson skillfully employs the orchestra to create a lush sonic landscape. The symphony consists of three movements, each with its own distinct character, allowing the listener to embark on a musical journey filled with contrasts and emotions.

The first movement begins with a serene Andante, which gradually builds into an Allegro con anima (with spirit). It sets the stage for the symphony's overall expressive and lyrical

character. The second movement, *Andante con tenerezza* (with tenderness), is marked by its emotional depth and introspection. It features some of the most beautiful and poignant melodies in the work. The final movement, *Allegro con brio* (with vigor and brilliance), introduces a lively and spirited theme that brings the symphony to a triumphant conclusion.

Howard Hanson's Symphony No. 2, "Romantic," is a testament to his talent for creating music that stirs the emotions and connects with the listener on a deep level. With its rich orchestration and memorable melodies, it stands as a cherished work in the American classical music tradition, celebrating the power of musical expression.