

Total performance time: approximately 120 minutes, including an interval of 20 minutes

Heroic: The Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra

Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra

[Valeriy Sokolov](#) violin

[Keri-Lynn Wilson](#) conductor

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

Overture to La forza del destino (1862) 7'

Yevhen Stankovych (b.1942)

Violin Concerto No.2 (2006) 23'

Myroslav Skoryk (1938–2020)

Melody in A minor (1913) 5'

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Symphony No.3 in E flat, 'Eroica',
Op.55 (1804) 50'

i. Allegro con brio

ii. Marcia funebre: adagio assai

iii. Scherzo: allegro vivace – Trio

*iv. Finale: allegro molto –
poco andante – presto*

INTERVAL

With thanks to
Charles and Angela Chadwyck-Healey
for their kind support

The complex, melodramatic plot of **Verdi's** *La forza del destino* – spanning a wide temporal and geographical range and encompassing passion, vengeance and disguised identity – is driven by one principal factor: fate. As the title itself reveals, 'the force of destiny' is behind the events to which the opera's characters are subjected, and the work's 'fate' music is introduced at the very outset, in the Overture. Six arresting brass notes – like hammer-blows of fate itself – immediately set the tone, announcing a ghostly ascending motif that permeates the Overture, reminding us even during gentler passages that its ominous presence is never far away. Yet the Overture brims with melodic invention and ends in a spirit of optimism, suggesting that – for now at least – the caprices of fate have been vanquished.

Ukrainian composer Yevhen **Stankovych** was born in Svalyava and studied at the Lviv Mykola Lysenko Conservatory. Among his teachers was Myroslav Skoryk (1938–2020), with whom he later shared the chair of the National Union of Composers of Ukraine between 2004 and 2010; both were made a 'Hero of Ukraine' in 2008. In the 1970s, Stankovych faced Soviet censorship of his folk opera *When the Fern Blooms*, which received its premiere only in 2017. Since 1998 he has been Professor of Composition at Kyiv Conservatory, now the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music.

Stankovych's seamless Violin Concerto No.2 begins with a curt orchestral statement before the violin enters, punctuated by tubular bells and bongo drums. The violin duets with wind solos above a cushion of strings, its material exuding an improvisatory, folk-like air. The apparently spontaneous flow is interrupted by an orchestral outburst, reprising the sinister descending four-note idea of the opening – in common with Verdi's Overture, one senses fate catching up with the protagonist, and true enough, the music becomes increasingly anguished, interspersed with moments of introspection from the soloist. After a last, glittering orchestral statement, the work ends softly with the violin's last pizzicato utterance.

Stankovych said of the Concerto: 'It so happened that several very near and dear people died. Such tragic events make one reflect on the meaning of existence and the short span of life in this world ... In music, the drama of human life is condensed through tragic compositions. The world has always been like this: you have to fight to get what you really need. You have to fight for a good cause, because unfortunately evil is always there. Therefore, as long as we live, we must make every effort to fill this world with good things.'

The High Pass is a film made by director Volodymyr Denysenko in 1981 and was broadcast in two parts on Ukrainian television in 1982. It tells the story of a family from the Carpathian Mountains in Central Europe who are divided between loyalty to each other and their opposing views of what is best for Ukraine. The film's music was

composed by Myroslav **Skoryk**; the *Melody*, originally for flute and piano, has become his most popular piece and has developed into a kind of spiritual hymn for the country. Denysenko was limited by Soviet rules and could not communicate everything he wanted to say in the film, but Skoryk's heartfelt score adds layers of meaning.

Beethoven began his Symphony No.3 during the summer of 1803. It was originally to be called 'Bonaparte' after Napoleon, the revolutionary Frenchman whom Beethoven idolised at the time. But admiration turned to disgust when Napoleon appointed himself Emperor in May 1804. Beethoven's secretary, Ferdinand Ries, recalled:

In writing this symphony, Beethoven had been thinking of Bonaparte, but Bonaparte while he was First Consul. At that time Beethoven had the highest esteem for him, and compared him to the greatest consuls of Ancient Rome ... I was the first to tell him the news that Bonaparte had declared himself Emperor, whereupon he broke into a rage and exclaimed, 'So he is no more than a common mortal! Now, too, he will tread under foot all the rights of Man, indulge only his ambition; now he will think himself superior to all men, become a tyrant!' Beethoven went to the table, seized the top of the title-page, tore it in half and threw it on the floor. The page had to be recopied, and it was only now that the symphony received the title *Sinfonia eroica*.

When the Symphony was published in 1806 it was described as having been 'composed to celebrate the memory of a great man', by now probably meaning Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia who had died a hero's death in 1806, and who had been a good friend of the work's dedicatee, Beethoven's patron Prince Lobkowitz.

The *Eroica* was on a new and ambitious scale. The first two movements alone are twice the length of their counterparts in Beethoven's first two symphonies. The famous opening theme forms the basis of much of the first movement, skilfully woven into the music's fabric. When the opening is reprised, Beethoven treats the theme to fresh instrumental combinations, and the vast coda, with its bold harmonic excursions, stretches the material almost to breaking point.

In the slow movement, an expansive funeral march, the sombre opening is contrasted with a sunnier theme, and there is an imposing fugue. A brilliant Scherzo fizzles along, propelled by syncopated rhythms, and the Trio section features the first orchestral use of three horns. The finale, for which Beethoven adapted music from the last movement of his ballet, *The Creatures of Prometheus*, is a theme with 10 variations. Moments of Haydnesque wit are juxtaposed with two more fugues, and after the truly heroic final variation, the coda summarises the preceding material before a swift dynamic change ushers in a frenetic passage, driving the symphony towards its jubilant final bars.

Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra

Created in 2022 by Keri-Lynn Wilson, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Opera and the Polish National Opera, the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra is an ensemble composed of leading Ukrainian musicians from inside the embattled country, as well as recent refugees and Ukrainian members of European orchestras. It was formed to defend Ukraine's cultural legacy as the country fights for its freedom.

Its inaugural tour took place in Europe and the United States in the summer of 2022 and included performances in Warsaw, the BBC Proms, the Edinburgh Festival, Snape Maltings Concert Hall, the Les Chorégies d'Orange festival in France, Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, Dublin, Amsterdam, New York City (Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park) and the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. Keri-Lynn Wilson serves as its music director. Now under the patronage of Ukraine's First Lady, Olena Zelenska, the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra will come together each summer to tour capital cities and festivals of the world.

The 2023 tour is generously supported by Ann Ziff, Bruce & Suzie Kovner, and Bloomberg Philanthropies, and is produced by Askonas Holt and the Polish National Opera in association with the Metropolitan Opera.

The Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra is the musical voice of Ukraine. Universal and understandable without translation, music is a language we can use to speak to the world. Thank you for attending this concert by the UFO as part of its 2023 Summer Freedom Tour to hear the timeless message of liberty contained in the eternal classics of its programme. Music will speak to silence aggression.

– First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska.

Flute Ihor Yermak*, Andriy Lemekh

Oboe Yurii Khvostov*, Ievgen Marchuk

Clarinet Oleg Moroz*, Vasyl Riabitskyi

Bassoon Mark Kreshchenskyi*, Roman Vasylichenko

Horn Dmytro Taran*, Dmytro Mytchenko,
Igor Szeligowski*, Oleg Bezushkevych

Trumpet Ostap Popovych*, Vladyslav Spyrydonenko*

Trombone Taras Zhelizko*, Vasyl Shparkyi, Andrii Shparkyi

Tuba Oleksandr Pryzhenkov

Timpani Dmytro Ilin*

Percussion Yevhen Ulianov, Sviatoslav Yanchuk

Harp Nataliia Konovalenko

Violin I Marko Komonko (*leader*), Yaromyr Babskyi,
Viktor Ivanov, Kyrylo Bondar, Mykola Haviuk,
Alisa Kuznetsova, Andrii Chaikovskiy, Marta Bura,
Marta Semchyshyn, Viktor Hlybochanu, Anna Bura,
Mihaly Stefko, Iryna Solovei, Marta Kolomyiets

Violin II Nicolai Tsygankov*, Alina Komisarova,
Roman Sokruta, Adrian Bodnar, Kyrylo Markiv,
Viktor Semchyshyn, Mariia Sichko, Liudvika Ivanova,
Olha Malyk, Yuliya Tokach, Hanna Vikhrova,
Marta Kachkovska

Viola Andrii Chop*, Ustym Zhuk, Yevheniia Vynogradska,
Dmytro Khreshchenskyi, Valentyna Bugrak,
Andrii Tuchapets, Iya Komarova, Hryhorii Zavhorodnii,
Roksolana Dubova, Lyudmyla Garashchuk

Cello Artem Shmahaylo*, Lesya Demkovych,
Yevgen Dovbysh, Denys Karachevtsev, Vladyslav Primakov,
Maksym Rymar, Olha Boichuk, Yuliia Bezushkevych

Double bass Ivan Zavgorodniy*, Nazarii Stets, Yurii Pryriz,
Mykola Shakhov, Viktor Ashmarin, Serhii Dikariev

* principal