Thursday, January 24, 8pm
Friday, January 25, 1:30pm  |  THE PETER AND ANNE BROOKE CONCERT
Saturday, January 26, 8pm  |  THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION OF VOLUNTEERS CONCERT
Tuesday, January 29, 8pm  |  THE ARLENE M. JONES MEMORIAL CONCERT

JOHN STORGÅRDS conducting

KAJIA SAARIAHO  “CIEL D’HIVER” (2013)

MOZART  PIANO CONCERTO NO. 22 IN E-FLAT, K.482
Allegro
Andante
Allegro—Andantino cantabile—Tempo primo
MARTIN HELMCHEN
{INTERMISSION}

SIBELIUS  SYMPHONY NO. 6, OPUS 104
Allegro molto moderato
Allegretto moderato
Poco vivace
Allegro molto

SIBELIUS  SYMPHONY NO. 7, OPUS 105, IN ONE MOVEMENT

THIS WEEK’S PERFORMANCES OF KAJIA SAARIAHO’S “CIEL D’HIVER” ARE SUPPORTED IN PART BY INCOME FROM THE MORTON MARGOLIS FUND IN THE BSO’S ENDOWMENT.

BANK OF AMERICA AND TAKEDA PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY LIMITED ARE PROUD TO SPONSOR THE BSO’S 2018-19 SEASON.
FRIDAY-AFTERNOON CONCERT SERIES SPONSORED BY THE BROOKE FAMILY

The evening concerts will end about 10:10, the afternoon concert about 3:40.

Concertmaster Malcolm Lowe performs on a Stradivarius violin, known as the “Lafont,” generously donated to the Boston Symphony Orchestra by the O’Block Family.
First associate concertmaster Tamara Smirnova performs on a 1754 J.B. Guadagnini violin, the “ex-Zazofsky,” and James Cooke performs on a 1778 Nicolò Gagliano violin, both generously donated to the orchestra by Michael L. Nieland, M.D., in loving memory of Mischa Nieland, a member of the cello section from 1943 to 1988.
Steinway & Sons Pianos, selected exclusively for Symphony Hall.
The BSO’s Steinway & Sons pianos were purchased through a generous gift from Gabriella and Leo Beranek.
The program books for the Friday series are given in loving memory of Mrs. Hugh Bancroft by her daughters, the late Mrs. A. Werk Cook and the late Mrs. William C. Cox.
Special thanks to Fairmont Copley Plaza, Delta Air Lines, and Commonwealth Worldwide Executive Transportation.
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In consideration of the performers and those around you, please turn off all electronic equipment during the performance, including tablets, cellular phones, pagers, watch alarms, messaging devices of any kind, anything that emits an audible signal, and anything that glows. Thank you for your cooperation.
Please note that the use of audio or video recording devices, or taking pictures of the artists—whether photographs or videos—is prohibited during concerts.

The Program in Brief...
The Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho is one of the most prominent contemporary successors of Jean Sibelius, who virtually single-handedly established Finland’s significance in the world of orchestral music, and whose Sixth and Seventh symphonies are also on this week’s program. A 2014 re-orchestration of the second movement of her 2002 orchestral work Orion, Saariaho’s Ciel d’hiver is a wonderfully nuanced exploration of the drama of light, darkness, and the passing of time, painted in brilliant orchestral colors. The BSO has performed a number of Saariaho pieces, including two commissioned works: her cello concerto Notes on Light, a BSO 125th anniversary commission, and her orchestral work with electronics, Circle Map.
Having moved to Vienna from Salzburg in his mid-twenties, Wolfgang Mozart quickly established his reputation as both pianist and composer with a fantastically varied series of piano concertos, most of which he premiered himself. He completed his Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-flat, K.482, while working on his opera *The Marriage of Figaro*, and was soloist in its premiere in December 1785. The largest of Mozart’s concertos, it features a wealth of thematic ideas and a wide range of contrast in its approach to the orchestra, from the power of trumpets and timpani in the outer movements to chamber-musical delicacy in the subdued, minor-key slow movement.

The music of Jean Sibelius is inextricably linked to the culture and geography of his native land. Throughout his career he turned to Finnish legend for inspiration for many of his symphonic poems, and he infused his seven symphonies with a similar sense of narrative and atmosphere to go along with his distinctive use of the orchestra. He conceived and worked on his Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh symphonies simultaneously, working out, in each, new approaches to the development of musical ideas and the overall architecture of the symphonic form. At first blush, the Sixth Symphony is a traditional four-movement work, but Sibelius avoids traditional notions of theme and structure while conjuring astonishingly distinct, effervescent musical environments. In the Seventh Symphony, he abandons the symphonic genre’s traditional structure of movements, casting the work in a single twenty-minute span in which contrasting episodes blend seamlessly from one to the next.

Completed in 1923 and 1924 respectively, the Sixth and Seventh symphonies were among Sibelius’s last-completed works, followed only by the tone poem *Tapiola* and the incidental music to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, both completed in 1926. He was publicly honored and recognized through the remainder of his life, and his alma mater, the Helsinki Music Institute, was renamed in his honor in 1939, but his thirty-year compositional silence at the end of his life remains a mystery.

Robert Kirzinger

Kaija Saariaho

“Ciel d’hiver” (2013)

KAIJA SAARIAHO was born in Helsinki, Finland, on October 14, 1952, and has lived in Paris since 1982. She composed her orchestral work “Ciel d’hiver” on a commission from Musique Nouvelle en Liberté, completing the score on October 18, 2013. The premiere was given by the Orchestre Lamoureux under Fayçal Karoui’s direction at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, on April 7, 2014. “Ciel d’hiver” is a re-orchestration of the second movement of Saariaho’s three-movement “Orion,” which was commissioned by the Cleveland Orchestra and premiered in Cleveland on January 23, 2003, Franz Welser-Möst conducting. These are the first BSO performances of “Ciel d’hiver.”

THE SCORE OF “CIEL D’HIVER” calls for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons (second doubling contrabassoon), four horns, two trumpets, two trombones, tuba, percussion (two players: I. crotales, glass chimes, shell chimes, triangle, tam-tam, three suspended cymbals; II. vibraphone, two suspended cymbals, glass chimes, triangle, small bell, tam-tam, bass drum), harp, celesta, piano, and strings. “Ciel d’hiver” is about ten minutes long.

Among the most sought-after composers in the world, Kaija Saariaho is best-known in the United States for her acclaimed opera *L’Amour de loin*, which, following its 2000 premiere in France, has been produced throughout the world. In 2016 the opera was staged at New York’s Metropolitan Opera; it was the first opera by a woman to have been performed there since 1903. Other major works include her second opera *Adriana Mater* and the oratorio *La Passion de Simone*, along with more than a dozen concertos and several works for orchestra alone. Saariaho’s music has been performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra on several occasions. Most recently, the orchestra gave the American premiere of her *Circle Map* for orchestra and spatialized electronics in November 2012. The orchestra and cellist Anssi Karttunen gave the world premiere of her cello concerto *Notes on Light*, a BSO 125th-anniversary commission, in February 2007. Her *Nymphéa Reflection* and *Chateau de l’âme* have also appeared on BSO subscription concerts, in April 2006 and October 2000, respectively, the latter work also being played by the BSO at Tanglewood in August 2002.

The success and international impact of her stage works (*L’Amour de loin* won the prestigious Grawemeyer Award in 2003) suggest that Saariaho is, at heart, a dramatic composer, an accurate view in some ways. Her sense of musical drama, though, has its roots in the inner life of sound itself, in details that we hear and process but that are far more subtle than what can be represented by notes and articulations on a page. Sound as sensual and tactile experience leads to works of dramaturgical force and physical presence that impart to an audience a fresh way of hearing, a new way of encountering beauty.

Saariaho’s search for a way of expressing the unique sound-world of her imagination began in childhood, but its novelty had little precedent in tradition. Her studies at the Sibelius Academy in Finland were part of the process of finding her own musical language. The most important music school in Finland, and one of the most important in the world, was founded as the Helsinki Music Institute in 1882. It was renamed for Jean Sibelius, himself an alumnus, in 1939, eighteen years before his death. The conservatory was the primary training ground for such
The success of these musicians stems in part from the combination of rigorous traditional training and a willingness, or rather the necessity, to explore new and unusual artistic concepts and new ways of creating and assembling sound. Along with such invigorating (but not altogether new) ideas as group improvisation, non-traditional instruments, and chance procedures, the most important development in music in the 1980s was the explosion in the availability of technological tools for the analysis, creation, and modification of sound. The hotbed of exploration in the field was Paris's IRCAM, where Kaija Saariaho engaged in research beginning in 1982. Her orchestral work Verblendungen ("Dazzlements"; 1982-84) for orchestra and prerecorded tape, was a major step. Verblendungen's visual impetus was that of a thick paintbrush stroke gradually thinning out. Its glacial progression, long-range differentiation of materials, and gradual but extreme transformation of a very complex sonority reveal it as a prototype of Saariaho's methods. Although sound itself is the focus and meaning of her work, visual metaphors provide evocative titles for many of her pieces, e.g., Lichtbogen ("Electric Arc"), Nymphéa ("Water Lilies"), Ciel d'hiver ("Winter Sky").

Ciel d'hiver was commissioned by Musique Nouvelle en Liberté ("New Music in Freedom"), a French organization dedicated to presenting new concert music to a broad audience. As mentioned above, the piece is a 2013 orchestration of the second movement of the composer's 2002 orchestra piece Orion. Orion was scored for very large orchestra including four percussionists and two timpanists, two harps, and quadruple woodwinds, a Mahler-sized orchestra versus the pared-down, mid-19th-century-sized (except the percussion) Ciel d'hiver ensemble. (In Orion, incidentally, the movement is called by its English-language equivalent, "Winter Sky," a nod to the American origin of its commission.) "Orion" refers to the hunter of ancient mythology, and specifically to the prominent constellation that appears in the Northern Hemisphere's winter sky. The piece as a whole evokes our physical experience of the night sky as well as the mysteries and memories we relate to the night and to the figure of Orion (the last movement is called "Hunter").

As a standalone movement, Ciel d'hiver focuses our attention on the outsized significance of small, colorful, glittering details within a broad expanse, our awareness of time passing, and the very nature of physical sensation. In the first half of the piece, successive solo instruments etch lines into the shimmering orchestral field. Piccolo is the first soloist, introducing a falling three-note figure, G-flat, F, B, that is fundamental to the work's harmony. Solo violin picks up the thread, followed by clarinet, oboe, and muted trumpet. Meanwhile the orchestral background evolves seamlessly. Following the solo passages, the first violins play the three-note idea several times, initiating the contrapuntal layering of several related melodic lines based on the core motif, as well as inverted (rising instead of falling) and lengthened versions of itself. In the second half of the piece, the texture becomes vertical, the three-note idea transformed into progressions of dense, complex orchestral chords in constantly changing timbres, encompassing the entire bass-to-treble range of the ensemble. Small details emerge sporadically, such as a tiny cello solo near the end that is echoed, more slowly, in violins. The piece ends in a high, sparkling cloud of sound.

Robert Kirzinger

Composer/annotator ROBERT KIRZINGER is the BSO's Associate Director of Program Publications.

Wolfgang Amadè Mozart
Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-flat, K.482

JOHANNES CHRISTOSTOMUS WOLFGANG GOTTLIEB MOZART, who began calling himself Wolfgang Amadeo around 1770 during his first trip to Italy and switched to Wolfgang Amadé in 1777, but who never used Amadeus except in jest, was born in Salzburg, Austria, on January 27, 1756, and died in Vienna on December 5, 1791. He entered this piano concerto into his catalog on December 16, 1785, and played the premiere a week later, on December 23, as an entr'acte at a performance of the oratorio “Esther” by Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf. Antonio Salieri, who conducted the oratorio, may also have conducted the concerto. Mozart left no cadenzas for this concerto; at these performances, Martin Helmchen plays a first-movement cadenza by Martin Hecker.

IN ADDITION TO THE SOLO PIANO, the score calls for an orchestra of one flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Between the end of 1783 and the early summer of 1788, Mozart wrote a baker's dozen of piano concertos, all but one of the series falling into the span from February 1784 (K.449 in E-flat) and December 1786 (K.503 in C). In those five years, which were the years both of Mozart's most delirious public success and of his great decline in popular favor, he also wrote, among many other things, the last three of the six string quartets dedicated to Haydn and the D major quartet, K.499, the two piano quartets, the quintet for piano with winds, the viola quintets in C and G minor, Eine kleine Nachtmusik, the Prague Symphony, Figaro, and Don Giovanni. In 1784, hardly able to keep up with the demand for his own appearances as pianist, he wrote six concertos, then three each in 1785 and 1786. K.482, written in the middle of Figaro, is the last of the 1785 set. Both majestic and gentle—Girdlestone aptly says
that “combining grace and majesty...this one is the queenliest” of Mozart’s concertos—it offers a remarkable contrast to its two predecessors, the D minor, K.466, and the C major, K.467, both of them hyperinventive and audaciously personal. The E-flat concerto and the lovely A major, K.488, that followed two-and-a-half months later, are a gentle interlude in the series. With the C minor concerto, K.491 (March 1786), and the grand C major, K.503 (December 1786), Mozart returned to a denser manner of composition and to a higher level of intellectual ambition. Mozart begins here with a formula we find often in his pieces in E-flat, a firm, fanfare-like phrase and a quiet response. This is one of his trumpets-and-drums concertos, though in E-flat the sonority is mellow rather than brilliant.

Mozart, being Mozart, can make something remarkable even of these conventional fanfares—the sudden fortissimo in the middle of the second measure in the *Sinfonia concertante* for violin and viola, for example, or here the odd phrase-length of three bars. The really personal note, however, comes in the answer, which here consists of a series of softly dissonant suspensions in two horns with the two bassoons in unison providing a bass. The harmonies outlined by that bass are not extraordinary; the specific articulation and presentation, on the other hand, is altogether individual and delightful. (It is also, on the most modest possible scale, an example of Mozart’s post-1782 sense of texture.) Statement and answer are repeated, only this time the horn suspensions are given a sound never before heard in one of Mozart’s concertos, the sound of clarinets, still a novel instrument in the middle-'80s and one for whose round softness Mozart had a special feeling. The bass to the clarinets, everything now being an octave higher than before, is given to non-bass instruments, namely violins. In twenty seconds of music, Mozart has set the stage for us. It is a movement rich in lyric themes, this Allegro, relatively casual in its development, exceptionally inventive in its non-automatic recapitulation.

We read that at the first performance in Vienna the audience demanded (and got) an encore of the Andante. It is a most wonderful movement. Its theme is a lament, long and irregular, for muted strings, all broken lines, sighs, and pathetic silences. We hear three variations on this paragraph, the first two for the piano alone or with a quiet accompaniment of strings, the third an extraordinary dialogue that engages the entire orchestra (save trumpets and drums, which are silent throughout this movement). But on either side of Variation II Mozart puts an independent episode, the first for winds alone, the second a string-accompanied duet for flute and bassoon. The last variation, more expansive than the theme and the two variations that came before, spills into a coda that, for pathos and magic of harmony, surpasses everything we have yet heard. The Andante is the concerto’s true center, sensuous, deeply pathetic, surprising and complex, yet utterly clear.

From here Mozart moves into a 6/8 hunting finale on a theme that is a slightly more formal, less capricious variant of the one in the B-flat concerto, K.450, of March 1784. Like the finale of the earlier great concerto in E-flat, K.271 (January 1777), this movement is interrupted by a slower interlude in 3/4, though not so specifically minuet-like this time. It harks back to the textures of the Andante, beginning with the wind music from the world of serenades and looking ahead to the perfumes of Fiordiligi’s and Dorabella’s garden, and alternating these fragrant sounds with the union of the piano and the orchestral strings. Here in the Allegro portion of the movement are several instances where Mozart wrote shorthand rather than a completely realized piano figuration, passages where the soloist is asked to meet the challenge of putting flesh on the bones and color on the skin. The formality and simplicity of the opening theme allow room for subtle alterations of shape and harmony at its various returns. The whole movement is indeed a feast of gentle wit, the best of all the jokes—and it is a wistful one—being saved for the very end.

Michael Steinberg

MICHAEL STEINBERG was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1976 to 1979, and after that of the San Francisco Symphony and New York Philharmonic. Oxford University Press has published three compilation volumes of his program notes, devoted to symphonies, concertos, and the great works for chorus and orchestra.

THE FIRST KNOWN AMERICAN PERFORMANCE of Mozart’s E-flat piano concerto, K.482, was given on February 16, 1859 by the Philharmonic Society of Boston, with Benjamin J. Lang as soloist and Carl Zerrahn conducting.

THE FIRST BOSTON SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES of K.482 took place on November 3 and 4, 1933, with soloist Egon Petri under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky. Subsequent BSO performances featured George Copeland (under Koussevitzky), Evelyne Crochet (Charles Munch), Stephen Bishop (Colin Davis), Alicia de Larrocha (Bernard Haitink and, later, Dennis Russell Davies), Mitsuko Uchida (Kurt Sanderling), Paul Badura-Skoda (Leonard Slatkin), Robert Levin (Bernard Haitink), Garrick Ohlsson (Miguel Harth-Bedoya), Christian Zacharias (Christof Perick), Till Fellner (the most recent subscription performances, with Bernard Haitink in April 2012), and Emanuel Ax (on numerous occasions between 1980 and 2016, with conductors Erich Leinsdorf, Seiji Ozawa, James Conlon, Bernard Haitink, Lionel Bringuier, Charles Dutoit [August 12, 2016], and Andris Nelsons [February 2017, followed by out-of-town performances at New York’s Carnegie Hall and in Montreal]).

Jean Sibelius

Symphony No. 6, Opus 104
Symphony No. 7, Opus 105, in one movement
JEAN (JOHAN JULIUS CHRISTIAN) SIBELIUS was born at Hämeenlinna (Tavestehus in Swedish), Finland, on December 8, 1865, and died at Järvenpää, at his country home near Helsingfors (Helsinki), on September 20, 1957. He took the galvanized form of his first name in emulation of an uncle. Though he refers to plans for his SYMPHONY NO. 6 in a letter dating from May 1918, Sibelius completed the work only in February 1923, himself conducting the first performance on the 19th of that month in Helsinki—the last time he conducted in Finland. Sibelius completed his SYMPHONY NO. 7 on March 2, 1924, and conducted the first performance on March 24, 1924, in Stockholm. The first performance in Helsinki took place on April 25 that year, with Robert Kajanus conducting.

THE SCORE OF SIBELIUS’S SYMPHONY NO. 6 calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets and bass clarinet (the latter used in no other Sibelius symphony), two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, timpani, harp, and strings.

THE SCORE OF SIBELIUS’S SYMPHONY NO. 7 calls for two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings.

The Sixth Symphony is a hard nut to crack. Indeed, had Sibelius called it a “symphonic fantasia”—the title he considered using for his Symphony No. 7—we would probably worry less about its deviations from what we generally take a “symphony” to be and instead accept its particularities for what they represent: the product of a composer whose notions of “symphony” and “tone poem” are inextricably combined, whose major symphonic works successfully inhabit both those worlds.

The composer’s affinity for his country’s land and folklore is apparent in his music from the start. His earliest piece, for violin and cello pizzicato, was called Waterdrops. As a young violin student, Sibelius would spend hours improvising on the instrument while wandering in the woods or by the lake near his family’s quiet home in Finland’s interior. Years later, as he observed in his diaries, the beauties of the land near his country estate in Järvenpää, the small country village, northeast of Helsinki, to which he moved in 1904, helped distract him from the atrocities of civil war that ravaged Finland in the final phase of its struggle against Russia at the close of World War I. Perhaps it is the elemental nature of his music that explains the composer’s international popularity even during his own lifetime: the basic impulse strikes home entirely without our needing to analyze his achievement.

In the spring of 1889, in his last days as a student at the Helsinki Conservatory (now called the Sibelius Academy), Sibelius was named “foremost amongst those who have been entrusted with bearing the banner of Finnish music” by the influential Finnish critic Karl Flodin. On April 28, 1892, the first performance of the twenty-six-year-old composer’s eighty-minute-long symphonic poem Kullervo for soloists, male chorus, and orchestra proved something of a national event.* Soon after this came the symphonic poem En Saga, written for Robert Kajanus, conductor of the Finnish National Orchestra. Shortly after that, Sibelius wrote the Karelia Suite for an historical pageant at the University of Helsingfors. Other tone poems would include the four episodes of the Lemminkäinen Suite (begun in 1895; The Swan of Tuonela is the third, and best-known, of these), Finlandia (1900), Pohjola’s Daughter (1906, based on the same segment of the Kalevala that inspired an aborted operatic project about ten years earlier), and, much later, Tapiola (1926), the only major orchestral work to follow his last symphony, the Symphony No. 7 (1924).

At the same time, a sense of geography informs the symphonies: Sibelius’s writing for the strings can be biting and jagged on the one hand, open and ethereal on the other. Woodwinds frequently undulate in pairs, birdlike. Groundswells of brass and drums, rocking figures throughout the orchestra, somehow seem relevant to the Nordic land- and seascape. Bengt de Torne, one of Sibelius’s biographers, recalled that “One day I mentioned the impression which always takes hold of me when returning to Finland across the Baltic, the first forebodings of our country being given us by low, reddish granite rocks emerging from the pale blue sea, solitary islands of a hard, archaic beauty, inhabited by hundreds of white seagulls. And I concluded by saying that this landscape many centuries ago was the cradle of the Vikings. ‘Yes,’ Sibelius answered eagerly, and his eyes flashed, ‘and when we see those granite rocks we know why we are able to treat the orchestra as we do!’ ”

In a letter of May 20, 1918, Sibelius wrote of plans for his Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh symphonies: My new works—partly sketched and planned. My Fifth Symphony in a new form—practically composed anew, I work at it daily. Movement I entirely new, movement II reminiscent of the old, movement III reminiscent of the end of the first movement of the old. Movement IV the old motifs, but stronger in revision. The whole, if I may say so, a vital climax to the end. Triumphant. The Sixth Symphony is wild and impassioned in character. Sombre with pastoral contrasts. Probably in four movements with the end rising to a sombre roaring of the orchestra, in which the main theme is drowned. The Seventh Symphony. Joy of life and vitality, with appassionato passages. In three movements—the last an “Hellenic rondo.”

All this with due reservation... It looks as if I were to come out with all of these three symphonies at the same time. As usual, the sculptural more prominent in my music. Hence this hammering on the ethical line that takes hold of me entirely and on which I must concentrate and hold out.
With regard to symphonies VI and VII the plans may possibly be altered according to the development of the musical ideas. As usual, I am a slave to my themes and submit to their demands. By all this I see how my innermost self has changed since the days of the IV. symphony. And these symphonies of mine are more in the nature of professions of faith than my other works.

By the time he wrote this letter, Sibelius had already led the premiere of the Fifth Symphony on December 8, 1915, his fiftieth birthday. A revised version followed a year later, the final version only in November 1919. The SYMPHONY NO. 6 was completed in February 1923, the Seventh in March 1924. The ideas outlined by Sibelius in May 1918 ultimately intermingled in ways he could not have foreseen; the specific adjectives he used don’t entirely apply to the works he finally completed. But it is in the area of large structure, the overall shape of these works, that his early thoughts are particularly interesting. It was the Fifth Symphony, not the Seventh, that turned out in three movements, while the Seventh emerged as a single, twenty-two-minute span. The Sixth Symphony, while hardly “wild and impassioned,” did turn out “in four movements”—but these four movements don’t behave in quite the way we expect. And there is the point. Sibelius was an innovator capable of enormous strides as he moved from one work to the next. Each of his symphonies from the Third to the Seventh plays very much by its own rules, questioning or stretching the notion of “symphony” while still remaining interpretable within the context implied by that name, which, as we basically understand it, means a confluence of sounds originated by an orchestra, and typically laid out in four sections called “movements,” with a particular thematic and harmonic structure that enables us to follow the musical discourse from beginning to end. That said, let us look at just a few of the things that make Sibelius’s Symphony No. 6, while still a “symphony,” rather strange and mysterious.

As already noted, the four movements don’t “behave” as we might expect. Yes, there are four of them, but there isn’t a slow movement, and, as Michael Steinberg puts it, “there is virtually no slow music.” Were we to impose “normal” expectations, the third movement might fulfill them, since it is fast, scherzo-like in character. But what does “normal” mean after two movements that have defied expectations? Or is there really something about the third movement that conforms? More on that below.

Further, it is hard—and probably irrelevant—to identify recurrent melodic themes. There are “themes” in the sense that certain recognizable ideas or moods prevail at different times, and this provides a sense of tension and release, growth and change, as passages of music moving at different rates of speed succeed each other. The device of using slower music unexpectedly to supplant a previous long passage of faster music occurs at several key places and helps provide a foothold, but, intriguingly, these occurrences remain unsettling even after repeated hearings of the work.

What about the harmonies? From the start there is that unsettled, otherworldly, even antique character to the music. At the very beginning Sibelius achieves this effect by emphasizing the high strings, as divided second and then first violins, supported only by violas, engage in Palestrina-like polyphony. (In fact, the strings play a predominant role throughout this symphony, even as the woodwinds, brass, and drums add their contributions to the otherwise typically Sibelian texture. Note, too, that this is the only symphony by Sibelius other than his First to include a harp, which provides its own characteristic sound.) Aside from the airy austerity of the opening, there is a real “antique” quality founded in Sibelius’s use of modal harmonies. The initial melodic configurations center around the note D, but the constant presence of the note C (rather than C-sharp, the normal “leading tone” of a do-re-mi scale on the home note of D, and which helps define the key of D in both its major and minor modes) harks back to the medieval Dorian mode, which you can hear at the piano by playing the sequence of white notes from D to D.

The C/C-sharp dichotomy is further emphasized in different ways: the first accented chord of the symphony (measure 17) includes a C-sharp as its bass in the second violins, but the C-sharp in the low strings at measures 62-65 is countered by a C-natural that sounds against it in the timpani (mm. 64-65). The first music that we can hear as being settled in an actual “key” once the music reaches its real Allegro tempo is in C, thereby negating the earlier suggestion of D through emphasis on a harmonically distant area, and effectively wiping out altogether the C-sharp necessary to define the key of D. Meanwhile, the timpani, typically tuned to the first and fifth notes of the home scale, are here tuned to A, C, and F (but with re-tunings along the way, however, to include various other notes); only at the end of the third movement do they hammer out the repeated D’s that finally and firmly propel the music of that movement onto a closing chord of D minor. Thus, despite suggestions of the Dorian mode, the third movement conforms to “normal” expectation insofar as its final harmony is concerned, in addition to the fact that its character is “right,” as observed earlier. But the beginning of the finale takes us once more in a different direction and back to the sound-world of the first two movements.

To return, finally, to the large view, with a look at the ending. The solemn antiphony that begins the last movement harks back to the melodic contours of the symphony’s opening, but this is a different sort of music, faster, more personal and conversational in the interplay of its instrumental groupings. The energy level builds, and the music grows increasingly lively and resolute, with plenty of forceful accents and elemental turbulence. A variant of the material that opened the movement returns to prepare another section of fast music, this leading to the closing pages, in which a final, impassioned prayer gives way to one last, spare comment from the violins and violas—the drum...
playing first C-natural, and then D, as softly as possible—which had begun the symphony nearly a half-hour earlier. The D of the violins fades into silence, and with that silence the symphony ends.

In his 1959 biography of Sibelius, Harold Johnson wrote of the composer’s astonishment at the revelations expounded by analysts of his Sixth Symphony. Sibelius’s response to their findings: “You may analyze it and explain it theoretically. You may find that there are several interesting things going on. But most people forget that it is, above all, a poem.” Further, as Sibelius wrote in May 1918, his symphonies had become “professions of faith,” and it is not hard to sense something of this in the way he ends the first, second, and last movements of this symphony—with lean, concise phrases virtually devoid of sentiment, as if accepting the inevitability of a larger plan. In Sibelius’s Sixth Symphony, as in so much of his music, there is a convergence of the ancient and modern, of the elemental and the spiritual, raising questions with no immediate or apparent answers.

The essential background to Sibelius’s SYMPHONY NO. 7 is simply enough set out, and tied to that of the Fifth and Sixth symphonies. On his fiftieth birthday, December 8, 1915—celebrated as a national holiday—Sibelius conducted the premiere of his Fifth Symphony in Helsinki. He had subjected the score to last-minute alterations even at the final rehearsal and, despite its success, was not satisfied. He introduced a revised version a year later, in December 1916, but still continued to work on the score, finishing only several years later and presenting that version to the public in November 1919. Meanwhile, however, ideas for two more symphonies had begun to germinate: in May 1918, in the letter quoted above on page 51, Sibelius wrote that he might “come out with all of these three symphonies [i.e., the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh] at the same time” and even offered general descriptions of the two new works. The Seventh was to be “in three movements—the last an Hellenic rondo.” As it happened, Sibelius did not finish all three works at once: the Sixth was completed in January 1923, the Seventh, as he noted in his diary, “on the second of March 1924, at night.”

Sibelius’s Seventh Symphony would be his last. The year 1925 saw the completion of his symphonic poem Tapiola, but then, aside from some minor works and revisions to earlier ones, the final three decades of the composer’s life were marked by musical silence, the so-called “silence from Järvenpää”—described by one writer as “perhaps the most profound silence in musical history.” For a long time there were rumors of an Eighth Symphony, and it was even announced for presentation on several occasions—one of them the first-ever Sibelius symphony cycle, given by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra during the 1932-33 season. Sibelius himself seems to have confirmed the score’s existence on several occasions; perhaps it was destroyed after his death in accordance with his own wishes. Confronted with the Seventh Symphony, one is tempted to wonder whether Sibelius could have produced a satisfactory Eighth, one that could have satisfied him at all: the Seventh is absolutely breathtaking in its individuality and achievement. But we know from the succession of his earlier works that Sibelius was a composer capable of enormous strides when he moved from one work to the next, so we are left without a satisfactory answer. We have only the Seventh as his last word on the subject of the symphony.

The Seventh did not turn out, as projected, in three movements, but as a single movement, and it was called on the occasion of its premiere not a “symphony” but a “symphonic fantasia.” The music is continuous, but there are divisions that help us know where we are as the music proceeds. Following the printed score, we have this sequence of tempo markings (underlinings mine):
- Adagio—Vivacissimo—Adagio—
- Allegro molto moderato—Allegro moderato—
- Vivace—Presto—Adagio—
- Largamente molto—Affettuoso—Tempo

But we do not really hear all these changes and should not try to do so during the course of a performance. However, three of the divisions (underscored in the list of tempos above)—and perhaps this reflects something of Sibelius’s original three-movement intent after all—are large enough that they shape our sense of the symphony’s overall structure: the opening Adagio, which, at about eight minutes, takes a bit more than one-third of the symphony’s total playing time; the scherzo-like Vivacissimo, whose material returns briefly following its associated Adagio; and the Allegro moderato, which has two themes and which behaves in outline almost like a “normal” symphonic movement. We can hear the material from the Presto onward as a coda to and reflection upon the whole. Operating at another level of activity, and clearly audible, is a very specific bit of musical material that serves to herald our arrival at important junctures: a solemn incantation for solo trombone, which grows almost mystically from the opening Adagio, shapes the brass-dominated character of the second Adagio (midway through, following the Vivacissimo), and then returns near the end to restore the atmosphere of awe and nature-awareness that characterizes the beginning and serves to frame the work in its entirety.

The symphony begins with a call to attention from the timpanist (whose contribution to this piece must be one of the most extraordinary in the entire musical literature), strings rising slowly from the depths, a curiously-hued chord for strings, drum, winds, and horns, and woodwinds fluttering like birds against an ocean backdrop. Then, richly colored by the violas, music, for divided strings, of an awe-inspired reverence. Slowly, the entire orchestra adds to the texture, and from this full sound, to which the individual sonorities of strings, winds, brass, and drums each
make their particular contribution, as they will throughout the symphony, the trombone incantation sounds apart, summoning our attention and drawing us into the proceedings, preparing us for all that is to follow. Now, everything that happens—from the rushing strings and chattering woodwinds of the Vivaceissimo, to the brass-subdued tidewaters of the second Adagio, to the near dancelike simplicity (at least at its start) of the Allegro, to the echoes, in the closing pages, of the beginning, and that final chord of barely relieved tension—happens logically and inevitably.

Our sense of “inevitability in music” can serve with reference to specific elements of the music itself—rhythm, motivic construction, thematic relationships—and the way these elements work together to determine the course of the music’s progress. This holds for the music of Sibelius, but there is also something more—the inevitability of nature. Sibelius, from his childhood, cherished a continued awareness of the world around him; he was awed by those forces that would exercise their control for centuries to come. And through his music we sense that, for Sibelius, “those granite rocks” of the Baltic seascape were but the smallest embodiment of nature’s powers.

Marc Mandel

MARC MANDEL is Director of Program Publications of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE OF SIBELIUS’S SYMPHONY NO. 6 was given by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski on April 23, 1926.

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE OF SIBELIUS’S SYMPHONY NO. 7 was given by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra on April 3, 1926.

THE FIRST BSO PERFORMANCES OF THE SIBELIUS SIXTH were given in February/March 1930 by Serge Koussevitzky, who also conducted it in several later seasons, the last of those occasions being in March 1946 in Boston and New York (his third BSO performance of the work in that city). Subsequent BSO performances were given by Sir Thomas Beecham, Colin Davis, Michael Tilson Thomas (including the BSO’s only Tanglewood performance, in August 1987), Robert Spano, Paavo Berglund (who paired it with the Seventh Symphony, as John Storgårds is doing this week), and Thomas Adès (November 2012).

THE FIRST BSO PERFORMANCES OF THE SIBELIUS SEVENTH were given by Serge Koussevitzky in December 1926. In all, Koussevitzky and the BSO played the work thirty-five times between December 1926 and December 1948, including performances in Symphony Hall, in the Berkshires (1937, 1940, and 1941), and out of town (including six in New York, between January 1927 and January 1941). Later Boston Symphony performances were given by Charles Munch (including the most recent Tanglewood performance, on July 30, 1965), Richard Burgin (once, in Providence, substituting for Munch, who was ill), Colin Davis (first in January 1975, then later in March 1980 in Boston, New Haven, and Philadelphia), Antonio Pappano (April 2001), and Paavo Berglund (March 2004, when it was preceded by the Symphony No. 6 as in this week’s concerts led by John Storgårds).

* Kullervo drew its inspiration from the so-called “Finnish national epic,” the Kalevala, a conflation of Finnish folk tales, lyrics, narrative, and magic charms compiled in 1835 after extensive field research by Elias Lönnrot and then expanded fourteen years later to twice its original length by Lönnrot and David Euopeaues. The Kalevala would serve Sibelius as a source of inspiration on numerous occasions. Two available English-language editions of the Kalevala are referenced on page 69 of this program book.

To Read and Hear More...

The website saariaho.org is the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of information on Kaija Saariaho and her music. One can even view the complete score of Ciel d’hiver on the site. Also valuable are the websites of her publisher, Chester Music (www.chestermusic.com) and of the Finnish Music Information Center (core.musicfinland.fi/composers/kaija-saariaho). The article on Saariaho in the Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians and Grove Music Online is by Kimmo Korhonen with Risto Nieminen, but dates from 2001. Books in English about the composer and her music include Kaija Saariaho: Visions, Narratives, Dialogues, a collection of essays edited by Tim Howells (Routledge), and Pirkko Moisala’s slim Kaija Saariaho (Illinois University Press); both are more than five years old.

There are no commercial recordings yet of Ciel d’hiver in its standalone form, although there are a couple of performances viewable on YouTube. In its original form as the second movement of Saariaho’s Orion, there are recordings available with Jukka-Pekka Saraste leading the BBC Symphony Orchestra live from the 2005 London Proms (on the BBC Proms label), and Christoph Eschenbach with the Orchestre de Paris (Ondine). The latter is available as part of a CD box set of Saariaho’s orchestral works, or as a single disc that also includes the BSO-commissioned cello concerto Notes on Light and Mirage for soprano, cello, and orchestra featuring cellist Anssi Karttunen and soprano Karita Mattila. Saariaho’s acclaimed opera L’Amour de loin is available both on CD, featuring soloists Marie-Ange Todorovitch, Ekaterina Lekhina, and Daniel Belcher with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin under Kent Nagano (harmonia mundi), and on DVD, featuring Dawn Upshaw, Monica Groop, and Gerald Finley with the Finnish National Opera under Esa-Pekka Salonen in the production directed by Peter Sellars.
Many other fine recordings of Saariaho’s music are also available, on disc or via download. Robert Kirzinger


Recordings of K.482 include—listed alphabetically by soloist, who also doubles as conductor unless otherwise noted—Géza Anda’s with the Camerata Academica of the Salzburg Mozarteum (Deutsche Grammaphon), Emanuel Ax’s with Eduardo Mata and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra (RCA), Daniel Barenboim’s with the English Chamber Orchestra (Warner Classics), Alfred Brendel’s with Sir Charles Mackerras and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (Philips), Imogen Cooper’s with the Northern Sinfonia (Avie), Angela Hewitt’s with Hannu Lintu and the National Arts Centre Orchestra (Hyperion), Jen’o Jandó’s with Máté Antal and the Concentus Hungaricus (budget-priced Naxos), Murray Perahia’s with the English Chamber Orchestra (Sony), András Schiff’s with Sandor Végh and the Salzburg Mozarteum Camerata Academica (London), and Mitsuko Uchida’s with Jeffrey Tate and the English Chamber Orchestra (Philips).

Robert Layton’s *Sibelius* in the Master Musicians series is a useful life-and-works study (Schirmer). The major biography of Sibelius, in Finnish, is by Erik Tawaststjerna. All three volumes have been translated into English by Robert Layton, but only the first two were published in this country (University of California; the third volume was published by Faber & Faber in London). Also useful are Andrew Barnett’s *Sibelius*, a detailed, single-volume study of the composer’s life and music (Yale University Press), and *The Sibelius Companion*, edited by Glenda Dawn Ross, a compendium of essays by a variety of Sibelius specialists (Greenwood Press). Lionel Pike’s collection of essays, *Beethoven, Sibelius, and “the Profound Logic,”* is recommended to readers with a strong technical knowledge of music (Athlone Press, London). Michael Steinberg’s program notes on all seven Sibelius symphonies are in his compilation volume *The Symphony—A Listener’s Guide* (Oxford paperback). Philip Coad discusses the composer’s symphonies in his chapter “Sibelius” in *A Guide to the Symphony*, edited by Robert Layton (Oxford). English-language editions of the *Kalevala*, the collection of Finnish folk legends that served as inspiration for a number of Sibelius’s works, include translations by Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr. (Harvard University paperback) and Keith Bosley (Oxford World’s Classic paperback).

The Boston Symphony Orchestra recorded Sibelius’s Sixth and Seventh symphonies in 1975 with Colin Davis conducting as part of conductor and orchestra’s complete, standard-setting Sibelius symphony cycle (Philips). This week’s guest conductor, John Storgårds, has recorded all of Sibelius’s symphonies with the BBC Philharmonic (Chandos). Other Sibelius symphony cycles of note include two led by Paavo Berglund, one with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the other with the Helsinki Philharmonic (both on Warner Classics); Herbert Blomstedt’s with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra (Decca); Osmo Vänska’s with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra (Bis; Vänska has also recorded the Sixth and Seventh more recently with the Minnesota Orchestra, also for Bis), and Leif Segerstam’s with the Helsinki Philharmonic (On dine).

Historic recordings led by a number of Sibelius-championing conductors include, among others, and on various labels, the very first recording of the Sixth, from 1934 with Georg Schnéevoigt and the Finnish National Orchestra; a live 1933 performance of the Seventh with Serge Koussevitzky leading the BBC Symphony Orchestra; and no fewer than four performances of the Seventh under the direction of Sir Thomas Beecham: commercial recordings with the New York Philharmonic from 1942 and the Royal Philharmonic from 1955, and live performances with the Royal Philharmonic from 1955 and the Helsinki Philharmonic from 1954. The seven-CD box set “Jean Sibelius: Historical Recordings and Rarities, 1928-1948” includes symphonies and other orchestral works led by Beecham,
Sir Adrian Boult, early Sibelius champion Robert Kajanus (recordings of the First, Second, Third, and Fifth symphonies), Koussevitzky (the aforementioned recording of the Seventh), Schnéevoigt, and (conducting his Andante festivo for strings and timpani in a New Year’s Eve broadcast, January 1, 1939, with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra) the composer himself (Warner Classics).

Marc Mandel

Guest Artists
John Storgårds
Making his BSO subscription series debut with these concerts, Finnish conductor John Storgårds is chief guest conductor of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, principal guest conductor of Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra Ottawa, artistic partner of the Münchener Kammerorchester, and artistic director of the Chamber Orchestra of Lapland. His only previous BSO appearance was in 2011 at Tanglewood, leading the orchestra in an all-Sibelius program. Mr. Storgårds maintains a dual career as a conductor and violin virtuoso and is widely recognized for his creative programming. He appears with such orchestras as the WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln, Bamberg Symphony, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, and BBC Symphony Orchestra, as well as the major Nordic orchestras. Mr. Storgårds was chief conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra from 2008 to 2015. He appears with the Sydney, Melbourne, and NHK symphonies, the Boston, St. Louis, Toronto, and Vancouver symphony orchestras, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic. Soloists with whom he collaborates include Yefim Bronfman, Sol Gabetta, Håkan Hardenberger, Kari Kriikku, Gil Shaham, Baiba Skride, Christian Tetzlaff, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Frank Peter Zimmermann. Mr. Storgårds’s vast repertoire encompasses all of the symphonies by Sibelius, Nielsen, Bruckner, Brahms, Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann. He gave an historical cycle of all fifty-four symphonies by Mozart (including the unnumbered works), led Finnish premieres of Schumann’s only opera Genoveva and the composer’s early “Zwickau symphony,” and gave world premieres of Sibelius’s Opus 117 Suite for violin and strings and the three Late Fragments. As a violinist, Mr. Storgårds gave the Finnish premiere of Schumann’s own violin version of his cello concerto and his Violin Sonata No. 3. He regularly performs world premieres of works by such contemporary composers as Kaija Saariaho, Brett Dean, Per Nørgård, and Péteris Vasks. Many of these composers have dedicated their works to him. In opera, he has led works by Strauss, Verdi, and Mozart, the Finnish premiere of Haydn’s Orlando paladino at Finnish National Opera, and a new production by Paul-Émile Fourny of Mozart’s Don Giovanni at the Savonlinna Opera Festival. He also conducted the world premiere of Sebastian Fagerlund’s opera Höstsonaten – Autumn Sonata at Finnish National Opera. Mr. Storgårds’s discography includes works by Schumann, Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn along with Holmboe and Vasks, acclaimed cycles of symphonies by Sibelius (2014) and Nielsen (2015) for Chandos, and works by the American early avant-garde composer George Antheil. Other releases feature works of Norgård, Korngold, and Rautavaara, the latter receiving a Grammy nomination and a Gramophone Award in 2012. His recording with the Chamber Orchestra of Lapland of concertos for theremin and horn by Kalevi Aho received the distinguished ECHO Klassik Award in 2015. John Storgårds studied violin with Chaim Taub. He was concertmaster of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen before studying conducting with Jorma Panula and Eri Klas. He received the Finnish State Prize for Music in 2002 and the Pro Finlandia Prize 2012.

Martin Helmchen
Berlin-born pianist Martin Helmchen made his acclaimed U.S. orchestral debut at Tanglewood in 2011, performing Schumann’s Piano Concerto with the BSO under Christoph von Dohnányi. He made his Symphony Hall debut with the BSO in 2015, playing Beethoven’s Emperor Concerto, also under Dohnániyi, and most recently returned as soloist in Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 3 under Andris Nelsons in November 2017. Highlights of his 2018-19 season include a recital at Symphony Hall in Chicago and debuts with the San Diego and Kansas City symphonies. Mr. Helmchen has also appeared with the orchestras of Dallas, Grand Rapids, Houston, Portland (Oregon), Saint Louis, and San Francisco, as well as with the Cleveland Orchestra at the Blossom Festival. He played Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 4 with the Aspen Festival Orchestra and Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 25 with the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra under Thierry Fischer. He has performed with Japan’s NHK Symphony and most of Europe’s most important orchestras, among them the Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, Vienna Philharmonic, and Prague Symphony. He was artist-in-residence with the Tonhalle Orchestra of Zurich in 2011-12 and has collaborated with such other renowned conductors as Herbert Blomstedt, Sir Mark Elder, Valery Gergiev, Philippe Herreweghe, Pablo Heras-Casado, Vladimir Jurowski, Sir Roger Norrington, and David Zinman, among many others. Mr. Helmchen has performed in recital at prestigious venues around the world, including the Frick Collection and Carnegie’s Weill Recital Hall in New York City, the Coast Recital Society, San Francisco Performances, ArtSpring, Wigmore Hall in London, and Alte Oper in
Frankfurt. He also appears regularly at major German festivals, the Schubertiade Lockenhaus, and the Marlboro Festival, and was artist-in-residence at Germany’s 2017 Schwetzingen SWR Festival. With a passion for chamber music, largely ignited by his early collaborations with the late cellist Boris Pergamenschikow, he performs regularly with Heinrich Schiff and Marie-Elisabeth Hecker. Other partners include Juliane Banse, Veronika Eberle, Julia Fischer, Sharon Kam, Gidon Kremer, Sabine Meyer, Christian Tetzlaff, Lars Vogt, and Tabea Zimmermann. Since 2010, he has been associate professor of chamber music at the Kronberg Academy. Martin Helmchen’s 2007 debut disc of Mozart concertos with the Netherlands Chamber Philharmonic was released by PentaTone, followed by a second Mozart concerto disc in 2013. His first solo CD, of works by Schubert, won an ECHO Award in 2009. Other PentaTone discs include the Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Dvořák concertos and Schubert’s complete works for violin and piano with Julia Fischer. Martin Helmchen studied with Galina Iwanzowa at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin, with Arie Vardie at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hanover, and with William Grant Naboré. Among his many distinctions, he won the 2001 Clara Haskil International Piano Competition at age nineteen.