

Introduction:

We are delighted to present a musical journey that delves into the profound themes of war and peace, exploring the human experience through the lens of music. From the tumultuous echoes of conflict to the serene harmonies of reconciliation, our program invites audiences to reflect on the enduring impact of war and the timeless quest for peace.

Program:

Gabriel Fauré - "Les Berceaux"

Gabriel Urbain Fauré (12 May 1845 – 4 November 1924) was a French composer, organist, pianist and teacher. He was one of the foremost French composers of his generation, and his musical style influenced many 20th-century composers.

"Les Berceaux" (1879) is a poignant French art song depicting mothers bidding farewell to sons sailing afar. Set against the sea's backdrop, it embodies themes of time's passage and inevitable separation. The piece, with lyrics by poet Sully Prudhomme, evokes nostalgia, yearning, and the transient nature of human existence. Fauré's delicate melodies and sensitive composition capture the bittersweet emotions of departure, intertwining tender lullabies with the melancholy strains of the sea.

Our journey begins with Gabriel Fauré's "Les Berceaux," a poignant reflection on the devastation wrought by war. Through the gentle rocking of cradles, Fauré evokes the universal longing for peace and security amidst the chaos of conflict.

Christoph Willibald Gluck - "Che farò senza Euridice" from Orfeo ed Euridice

Christoph Willibald (Ritter von) Gluck (2 July 1714 – 15 November 1787) was a composer of Italian and French opera in the early classical period. Born in the Upper Palatinate and raised in Bohemia, both part of the Holy Roman Empire, he gained prominence at the Habsburg court at Vienna.

"Che farò senza Euridice" is a poignant aria from Christoph Willibald Gluck's opera "Orfeo ed Euridice," first performed in Vienna in 1762. It serves as a dramatic centerpiece, capturing the raw emotion of Orpheus, the grieving protagonist, as he laments the loss of his beloved Euridice.

transporting us to the depths of despair and longing, Gluck's aria captures the anguish of separation and loss in the aftermath of war. As Orpheus laments the absence of his beloved Euridice, we are reminded of the human toll exacted by conflict.

Johannes Brahms - Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 120, No. 2

Johannes Brahms (7 May 1833 – 3 April 1897) was a German composer, pianist, and conductor of the mid-Romantic period. Born in Hamburg into a Lutheran family, he spent much of his professional life in Vienna. He is sometimes grouped with Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven as one of the "Three Bs" of music, a comment originally made by the nineteenth-century conductor Hans von Bülow.

Brahms composed for symphony orchestra, chamber ensembles, piano, organ, voice, and chorus. A virtuoso pianist, he premiered many of his own works. He worked with leading performers of his time, including the pianist Clara Schumann and the violinist Joseph Joachim (the three were close friends). Many of his works have become staples of the modern concert repertoire.

Brahms has been considered both a traditionalist and an innovator, by his contemporaries and by later writers. His music is rooted in the structures and compositional techniques of the Classical masters. Embedded within those structures are deeply Romantic motifs. While some contemporaries found his music to be overly academic, his contribution and craftsmanship were admired by subsequent figures as diverse as Arnold Schoenberg and Edward Elgar. The detailed construction of Brahms's works was a starting point and an inspiration for a generation of composers.

Johannes Brahms' Viola Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 120, No. 2, is a cherished gem of the viola repertoire, originally composed for clarinet and piano. Brahms adapted this work for viola, recognizing the instrument's warm and expressive qualities, and it has since become a cornerstone of the viola literature.

Composed in 1894, this sonata is part of Brahms' late-period compositions, where he delved deeply into introspection and emotional complexity. Opus 120, No. 2, showcases Brahms' mastery of form and harmony, while also revealing his profound understanding of the viola's unique timbre and capabilities.

The first movement, marked *Allegro amabile*, envelops listeners in a world of lyrical beauty and melodic richness. Brahms' exquisite writing for the viola allows the instrument to sing with a soulful expressiveness, weaving seamlessly with the piano accompaniment.

Brahms' Sonata, Op. 120, No. 2, offers a powerful exploration of the human spirit amidst adversity. From the somber depths of despair to the triumphant resolve of the finale, Brahms' music speaks to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of war's trials.

Claude Debussy - "Clair de Lune"

Debussy c. (22 August 1862 – 25 March 1918) was a French composer. He is sometimes seen as the first Impressionist composer, although he vigorously rejected the term. He was among the most influential composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Debussy's timeless masterpiece bathes us in the serene beauty of moonlit tranquility, offering a respite from the ravages of war. As the delicate melodies unfold, we are transported to a world of peace and solace, where the scars of conflict begin to heal.

Paul Hindemith - Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11, No. 4

Paul Hindemith (16 November 1895 – 28 December 1963) was a German and American composer, music theorist, teacher, violist and conductor. He founded the Amar Quartet in 1921, touring extensively in Europe. As a composer, he became a major advocate of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) style of music in the 1920s, with compositions such as *Kammermusik*, including works with viola and viola d'amore as solo instruments in a neo-Bachian spirit. Other notable compositions include his song cycle *Das Marienleben* (1923), *Der Schwanendreher* for viola and orchestra (1935), the opera *Mathis der Maler* (1938), the *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber* (1943), and the oratorio *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* (1946), a requiem based on Walt Whitman's poem. Hindemith and his wife emigrated to Switzerland and the United States ahead of World War II, after worsening difficulties with the Nazi German regime. In his later years, he conducted and recorded much of his own music.

Hindemith's *Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11, No. 4*, was composed in 1919, a time when the musical landscape was heavily influenced by the works of Johannes Brahms and Claude Debussy. While Hindemith's musical style and aesthetic differed significantly from both Brahms and Debussy, the compositions of these two composers undoubtedly had an impact on Hindemith's *Sonata*, albeit in different ways.

Impact of Brahms:

Johannes Brahms was a leading figure of the Romantic era, known for his rich harmonic language, intricate counterpoint, and profound emotional depth. Hindemith, like many composers of his time, was undoubtedly influenced by Brahms' compositions, particularly in his approach to form and structure.

Hindemith's *Sonata, Op. 11, No. 4*, reflects Brahmsian influences in its adherence to classical forms and its exploration of thematic development. While Hindemith's harmonic language is more dissonant and modernistic compared to Brahms, traces of Brahms' influence can still be heard in the sonata's use of motivic development and contrapuntal techniques.

Impact of Debussy:

Claude Debussy, on the other hand, was a pioneering figure of Impressionism, known for his use of colorful harmonies, innovative textures, and evocative imagery. While Hindemith's musical style diverged significantly from Debussy's, the influence of Debussy's innovations in harmony and texture can still be discerned in Hindemith's *Sonata*.

Hindemith's *Sonata, Op. 11, No. 4*, exhibits traces of Debussy's influence in its exploration of timbre and texture, as well as its harmonic language. While Hindemith's harmonic palette is

more dissonant and chromatic compared to Debussy's lush, impressionistic harmonies, one can detect moments of parallelism and chordal coloration reminiscent of Debussy's aesthetic.

In summary, Hindemith's Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11, No. 4, was undoubtedly influenced by the compositions of Brahms and Debussy, albeit in different ways. While Brahms' influence can be heard in the sonata's adherence to classical forms and thematic development, Debussy's influence is evident in its exploration of timbre, texture, and harmonic language. However, Hindemith's unique musical voice ultimately shines through in this innovative and forward-thinking work.

Hindemith's Sonata, Op. 11, No. 4, challenges us to confront the harsh realities of war with unflinching honesty. Through its angular melodies and dissonant harmonies, Hindemith's music serves as a stark reminder of the human cost of conflict.

"Schindler's List" Theme Songs

"Schindler's List" is a film directed by Steven Spielberg, released in 1993, which tells the story of Oskar Schindler, a German businessman who saved the lives of more than a thousand Polish-Jewish refugees during the Holocaust by employing them in his factories. The film's soundtrack was composed by John Williams, and it includes several poignant pieces of music that capture the emotional depth and gravity of the story. Here, I'll introduce three key pieces from the "Schindler's List" soundtrack:

"Theme from Schindler's List":

The "Theme from Schindler's List" is the signature piece from the soundtrack, featuring a hauntingly beautiful violin melody that captures the pain, anguish, and resilience of the Holocaust survivors. John Williams' composition evokes a sense of longing and sorrow, reflecting the tragic events depicted in the film. The haunting melody is often associated with the film's themes of loss, remembrance, and hope in the face of adversity.

"Remembrances":

"Remembrances" is another notable piece from the "Schindler's List" soundtrack, featuring a poignant solo violin accompanied by orchestral strings. This piece serves as a musical reflection on the memories of the Holocaust, with the violin conveying a sense of mourning and introspection. John Williams' evocative composition captures the weight of history and the profound impact of the Holocaust on both survivors and future generations.

"Jewish Town (Krakow Ghetto - Winter '41)":

"Jewish Town" is a somber and atmospheric piece from the "Schindler's List" soundtrack that depicts life in the Krakow Ghetto during the winter of 1941. John Williams' composition uses

sparse instrumentation and haunting melodies to evoke the desolation and despair of the Jewish residents as they endure persecution and suffering under Nazi occupation. The music creates a sense of foreboding and tragedy, underscoring the harsh realities faced by those living in the ghetto.

Each of these pieces from the "Schindler's List" soundtrack contributes to the film's powerful narrative and emotional impact, serving as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of unimaginable adversity. John Williams' masterful compositions elevate the storytelling, imbuing the film with a sense of poignancy and depth that lingers long after the credits roll.

The haunting melodies from John Williams' iconic score for "Schindler's List" pay homage to the resilience of the human spirit amidst the horrors of war. Through music, we honor the courage of those who resisted oppression and the compassion of those who extended a helping hand in the darkest of times.

Chinese Traditional Song - "Jasmine"

Closing our performance with a tribute to the enduring quest for peace, we present the enchanting melody of "Jasmine." This timeless folk song embodies the spirit of resilience and hope, offering a glimpse of harmony amidst the chaos of war.

Conclusion:

As we bring our musical journey to a close, we invite you to reflect on the themes of war and peace that have resonated throughout our program. Through the universal language of music, we hope to inspire dialogue, empathy, and understanding, as we strive towards a future defined by harmony and reconciliation.