

JOAN TOWER



ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Born September 6th, 1938 in New Rochelle, New York

FAMILY & CAREER

She was originally trained as a classical pianist. After moving to Bolivia at age 9, her piano skills improved as she studied intensely for 12 years. Her father supported her music endeavors, making sure that she always had a piano and a piano teacher wherever she traveled. After 12 years of living in Bolivia, her family moved back to America when her father had tuberculosis.

MUSIC

As a composer, her works were influenced by studying Latin American music along with other composers such as Stravinsky, Beethoven, and Messiaen. This variety of musical styles makes her music interesting and fun to listen to.

Joan Tower founded the Da Capo Chamber Players (based in New York), where she played as the pianist for 15 years. Her music has been performed by the Milwaukee Ballet, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Emerson Quartet, Muir Quartet, and other well established orchestras in Chicago, New York, and St. Louis.

Outside of being a pianist and composer, Tower is committed to educating the next generation of composers as Professor of Music at Bard College. In addition to her many accomplishments in composition, Tower was the first woman to win the Grawemeyer Award for her piece titled *Silver Ladders*.

MADE IN AMERICA BY JOAN TOWER

ABOUT THE MUSIC

WHAT KIND OF PIECE IS IT?

Joan Tower composed *Made in America* as a commissioned piece for the League of American Orchestras and Meet the Composer in 2004. *Made in America* is a thirteen minute composition written for around an 80 member-sized orchestra.

WHEN WAS THE PIECE COMPOSED?

This piece was composed when Joan and her family moved from America to Bolivia in South America for her father's career. Tower mentions the challenge of learning an entirely new language and adapting to the culture of a new community.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

After moving back to America, Tower felt inspired to base the main theme on America the Beautiful, a classic patriotic tune, composed by Samuel A. Ward to show her appreciation for America. The main theme remains prevalent throughout the entire piece.

DISCUSSION

Think about a time when you had to learn how to fit in. Was it easy?



Program Notes for kids

Made in America
Saturday, October 12th
8 p.m.
Michigan Theater

JOAN TOWER

Made in America

STRAVINSKY

Divertimento from The Fairy's Kiss

DVOŘÁK

Cello Concerto in B Minor, Op. 104

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

ABOUT THE COMPOSER



Antonin Dvořák | Born September 8, 1841 in Muhlhausen, Bohemia | Died May 1, 1904, Prague in Czechoslovakia

Antonin Dvořák was born the oldest of eight children. His father wanted him to follow in the family trade by becoming a butcher. However, Dvořák wanted to learn the violin. By the time he was six he was already taking music lessons. When he was 12, his parents decided to send him to school to learn German. While at school, he continued his lessons in music, also learning theory as well as studying violin, voice, organ, and piano. Then in 1857, Dvořák began attending the Prague Organ School where he learned how to compose.

By 1874 Dvořák had written four symphonies and two operas. In 1882, Dvořák went to London to conduct several of his own works. Then in 1891 Dvořák was invited to be the director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. Dvořák arrived in the United States in 1892 and spent three years there teaching, conducting and composing. While he was there, he wrote his famous Ninth Symphony, also called “The New World Symphony,” the *American String Quartet*, and his *Cello Concerto*.

Toward the end of his career Dvořák got homesick and went back to Prague to return to teaching at the Prague Conservatory. He continued to compose, writing several beautiful pieces based on folk stories and two operas based on fairy tales. Today he is remembered for his use of Czech folk music in symphonic and chamber music.

ABOUT THE PERFORMER

Nineteen-year-old American cellist Zlatomir Fung is the first prize winner at 2018 Alice & Eleonore Schoenfeld International String Competition, the 2016 George Enescu International Cello Competition, the 2015 Johansen International Competition for Young String Players, the 2014 Stulberg International String Competition, and the 2014 Irving Klein International Competition. Zlatomir was selected as a 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholar for the Arts and was awarded the 2016 Landgrave von Hesse Prize at the Kronberg Academy Cello Masterclasses. He is a winner of the 2017 Astral National Auditions and the 2017 Young Concert Artists International Auditions.

Outside of music, Zlatomir enjoys philosophy, cinema, and chess. Currently, he is studying at The Juilliard School with Richard Aaron and Timothy Eddy, where he is a proud recipient of the Kovner Fellowship

CELLO CONCERTO IN B MINOR

BY ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

ABOUT THE MUSIC

WHAT KIND OF PIECE IS IT?

A *concerto* is a composition that highlights a specific instrument, in this case the cello. This concerto has three movements, or sections, that contrast each other.

WHEN WAS THE PIECE COMPOSED?

This concerto was started in 1894 and finished 1895.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This is the last solo concerto that Dvořák wrote, and it showcases the abilities of the cello and all it is capable of.

FUN FACTS

Dvořák wrote this concerto for his friend, cellist Hanuš Wihan.

IGOR STRAVINSKY

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Born on June 5th, 1882 Oranienbaum, Russia | Died April 6th, 1971 New York City, New York.

The Russian composer was most known as a modern and post-romantic composer. As a child, he and his father would attend concerts, exposing him to the music world where he acquired a strong interest in Tchaikovsky’s music.

Though his father was a well known musician as the bassist of the Kiev Opera House, he did not want Igor to pursue music, leading him to study law and philosophy at St. Petersburg University. However, Igor continued to compose in college, showing his compositions to Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who later adopted him as a private student.

Stravinsky gained a lot of positive attention from his compositions and became a well-known composer. However, the release of his composition “The Rite of Spring”, performed in Paris on May 29, 1913, caused utter controversy and chaos as the audience protested and rioted about the unresolved dissonant harmonies and bold rhythms in the piece. Thus marked the beginning of an early modernist era in music.

Stravinsky’s compositions began to lean toward Neoclassical** style after World War I. As a result of the Russian Revolution, he decided to compose limiting his pieces exclusively for his own use as both a concert pianist and conductor. In 1938, a majority of Stravinsky’s music was banned due to his unusual use of rhythm and abstruse harmony and form in modern and experimental ideas which came with World War II. Alas, he moved to California in 1940 to focus on modernism.

THE FAIRY’S KISS

BY IGOR STRAVINSKY

ABOUT THE MUSIC

WHAT KIND OF PIECE IS THIS?

It is a *Ballet* with one act and four scenes. Ballets were originally dances held in Italian-Renaissance courts. However, overtime it traveled to France and others parts of Europe and developed into a version of concertized dance.

WHEN WAS IT COMPOSED?

This piece was composed in Paris, France in 1928. As a composer, Igor Stravinsky looked up to Tchaikovsky throughout his entire career. Thus, “Divertimento” from *The Fairy’s Kiss* was written as a homage in 1928 to his music icon for the 35th anniversary of Tchaikovsky’s death.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The piece is based off a short story tale by Hans Christian Andersen, “The Ice Maiden”, which Stravinsky uses as an allegory to Tchaikovsky’s music career. In the tale, a young boy is kissed by a fairy, marking his potential doom in the future. Then, as the story progresses, the young boy grows to a young man who is about to be married. On his wedding day, the Fairy pays him a visit where he is tricked and led away from the wedding, where the Fairy kisses him once again.

DEFINITION

Neoclassical Features:
Constantly changing rhythms,
metric imbalances, original
orchestration, dissonant
harmonies