

On Tour at Carnegie Hall: Beethoven's Triple Concerto and Ein Heldenleben

Sunday, March 14, 2027 · 14:00 · Carnegie Hall
Antonio Pappano, conductor · Maxim Vengerov, violin · Alisa Weilerstein,
cello · Kirill Gerstein, piano

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	BEETHOVEN 1770–1827 <i>Triple Concerto in C major, Op. 56</i>	36'
2	STRAUSS 1864–1949 <i>Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40</i>	45'
TOTAL MUSIC		81'

Ludwig van Beethoven

1770–1827

Triple Concerto in C major, Op. 56

36 minutes

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Allegro. The concerto begins very quietly, with cellos and basses alone muttering the main theme, and builds from there. When the soloists enter it is the cello that goes first, as it will in the other two movements. The movement is spacious and unhurried, and much of its pleasure lies in the way the three soloists pass ideas among themselves, in the manner of chamber music.

Largo. The slow movement is short, more an introduction than a movement in its own right. The cello sings a long melody in A flat major, the violin joins it, and the piano does little more than decorate. The music does not come to an end: it leads straight into the finale.

Rondo alla polacca. The cello slips into the main theme of the finale, a polonaise, the courtly Polish dance in triple time that was fashionable across Europe at the time. The mood is festive and good-humoured to the end.

Richard Strauss

45 minutes

1864–1949

Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The six sections run into one another, but each has a clear character.

The Hero. The piece opens with its main theme, a long, striding melody for horns and cellos that climbs through nearly three octaves in E flat major, the key of the ‘Eroica’. Other ideas pile up around it until the whole orchestra stops on an expectant, unresolved chord, followed by silence.

The Hero’s Adversaries. Into the silence come the critics: thin, chattering woodwind, each instrument carping in its own register, with two tubas grumbling in the parallel fifths that students of harmony are taught to avoid. The hero’s theme sinks into the minor before he shakes them off.

The Hero’s Companion. A solo violin, played by the orchestra’s leader, enters with a long sequence of cadenzas, by turns flirtatious, tender, sulky and scolding. The hero answers in the low strings and horns. Eventually the two come together in a broad love scene, the most richly scored music in the work, with the critics briefly audible in the distance.

The Hero’s Deeds of War. Trumpets sound from offstage and the battle begins. Percussion drives the music on, and the hero’s theme fights its way through against the adversaries’ music, with the companion’s at his side. It ends with the opening theme returning in triumph.

The Hero’s Works of Peace. Here Strauss quotes himself. Fragments of Don Juan, Also sprach Zarathustra, Death and Transfiguration, Don Quixote and Till Eulenspiegel, among others, drift past, woven together so smoothly that they can be hard to pick out one by one.

The Hero's Retreat from the World and Fulfilment. After a last outburst of anger the music settles. The hero's rising theme is reshaped into a slow, falling melody for the strings, the most touching passage in the score, and the work closes quietly in E flat major, a long way from the swagger with which it began.



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