The Star Wars Epic – Part II – John Williams, arranged by Robert W. Smith

The *Star Wars* movie phenomenon has captured the imaginations of three generations of movie fans worldwide. Beginning in 1977 with the release of Episode IV: *A New Hope*, the vision of George Lucas combined with the music of John Wiliams has resulted in the most successful series of films and most the recognized movie music in history.

Robert W. Smith has drawn upon the imagination of John Williams and George Lucas to create SUITE FROM THE STAR WARS EPIC – PART I and PART II, which includes music from all six movie episodes. PART I opens with "Duel of the Fates" from Episode I: *The Phantom Menace,* and the journey through the galactic empire begins. The hauntingly beautiful "Across the Stars" from Episode 2: *Attack of the Clones* is followed by the theme from Episode 3: *Revenge of the Sith,* completing the first part of the listener's interstellar musical travel.

PART II continues with "Princess Leia's Theme" from Episode IV: *A New Hope.* Episode V and VI (*The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi)* give us the menacing sounds of "The Imperial March" and the lighthearted, yet powerful "Forest Battle." The suite continues with the "Star Wars (Main Title)," drawing the musical epic to a fitting conclusion.

SUITE FROM STAR WARS EPIC is dedicated to John Williams, whose life's work and musical legacy will endure for centuries to come. - *note by Robert W. Smith*

A Matador's Tale – Mark Lortz

This programmatic work depicts a bullfight beginning with the matador's fanfare entrance. The first stage, *tercio de varsa,* moves to a tango where the bull enters the arena and confronts the matador. The next stage, *the tercio de banderillas,* is where the matador attempts to plant two barbed sticks (*banderillas)* into the bull's shoulders, causing it to make desperate and ferocious charges. In the final stage, *tercio de muerte,* the music comes to a rousing end representing the matador's final blow. - *note by Mark Lortz*

Marching Song from "Two Songs Without Words" - Gustav Holst

Gustav Holst's *Two Songs Without Words* were composed for small orchestra in 1906 and received their first performance at the Royal College of Music, London, under the composer's baton in the same year on July 19th. They were dedicated to Ralph Vaughan Williams who wrote to Holst:

> “'My dear V' It was nice to open your parcel and find my initials over your pieces - I don't know what you owe to me - but I know all I owe to you - if I ever do anything worth doing it will be greatly owing to having such a friend as you "at my command" as the folk-songs say, always ready to help and advise - and someone whose yea is always yea and nay, nay - which is a quality one really wants in a friend and so seldom gets.”

The second of the two, entitled *Marching Song,* is quintessentially English in nature. If you are familiar with Edward Elgar’s numerous *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, the harmonies and style of *Marching Song* should sound familiar. Holst uses the piece as an exploration of tones, allowing each group of instruments – woodwinds, brass, and strings – to state the main theme in their unique timbre, strings are thick and lush, the woodwinds are delicate, yet strong, and the brass are loud and majestic. - *note by David Tedford*

Symphony No. 5 in C minor – Ludwig van Beethoven

Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony did not immediately become the world’s (or even the composer’s) most famous symphony. During his lifetime, the Third, the mighty “Eroica,” was performed more often and the second movement of the Seventh (movements were often heard separately) was deemed “the crown of instrumental music.” But over the 19th century, the Fifth gradually came to epitomize both Beethoven’s life and musical style. The Fifth Symphony picked up further associations in the 20th century, be they of Allied victory during the Second World War or through its frequent appearances in popular culture.

It is not hard to account for both the popularity and the representative status of the Fifth. The celebrated music critic Donald Francis Tovey called it “among the least misunderstood of musical classics.” With the rise of instrumental music in the 18th century, audiences sought ways to understand individual works, to figure out their meaning. One strategy was to make connections between a piece of music and the composer’s life. In this regard, no life and body of work have proved more accommodating than Beethoven’s, whose genius, independence, eccentricities, and struggles with deafness were already well-known in his own time.

Music and Meaning In the fall of 1801, at age 30, Beethoven revealed for the first time the secret of his increasing hearing loss and stated in a letter that he would “seize Fate by the throat; it shall not bend or crush me completely.” It has not been difficult to relate such statements directly to his music. The struggle with “Fate” when it “knocks at the door,” as he allegedly told his assistant Anton Schindler happens at the beginning of the Fifth, helped endorse the favored label for the entire middle period of his career: heroic.

The Fifth Symphony seems to present a large-scale narrative. According to this view, a heroic life struggle is represented in the progression of emotions, from the famous opening in C minor to the triumphant C-major coda of the last movement. For Hector Berlioz, the Fifth, more than the previous four symphonies, "emanates directly and solely from the genius of Beethoven. It is his own intimate thought that is developed; and his secret sorrows, his pent-up rage, his dreams so full of melancholy oppression, his nocturnal visions, and his bursts of enthusiasm furnish its entire subject, while the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and orchestral forms are there delineated with essential novelty and individuality, endowing them also with considerable power and nobility."

In Beethoven's Time Beethoven composed the Fifth Symphony over the course of some four years, beginning in the spring of 1804, during the most productive period of his career. Among the contemporaneous works were the Fourth and Sixth Symphonies, Fourth Piano Concerto, Violin Concerto, Mass in C, three "Razumovsky" string quartets, and the first two versions of his opera Fidelio. Large-scale pieces like the opera, or commissions like the Mass, interrupted his progress on the Fifth, most of which was written in 1807 and early 1808.

The Symphony premiered later that year on December 22 together with the Sixth (their numbers and order reversed) at Beethoven's famous marathon concert at Vienna's Theater an der Wien. This legendary event also included the first public performance of the Fourth Piano Concerto (the composer as soloist), two movements from the Mass, the concert aria "Ah! Perfido", and the "Choral" Fantasy, Op. 80. Reports indicate that all did not go well as the under-rehearsed musicians struggled with this demanding new music and things fell apart during the "Choral" Fantasy. But inadequate performance conditions did not dampen enthusiasm for the Fifth Symphony, which was soon recognized as a masterpiece. The novelist, critic, and composer E.T.A. Hoffmann wrote a long and influential review in which he hailed "Beethoven's Romanticism … that tears the listener irresistibly away into the wonderful spiritual realm of the infinite."

A Closer Look Another reason for the great fame and popularity of the Fifth Symphony is that it exemplifies the fingerprints of Beethoven's heroic style. One of these identifying features is its "organicism," the notion that all four movements seem to grow from seeds sown in the opening measures. While Beethoven used the distinctive rhythmic figure of three shorts and a long in other works from this time (Tovey remarked that if this indeed represents fate knocking at the door it was also knocking at many other doors), here it unifies the entire Symphony.

After the most familiar of all symphonic openings (Allegro con brio), the piece modulates to the relative major key and the horns announce the second theme with a fanfare using the "fate rhythm." The softer, lyrical second theme, first presented by the violins, is inconspicuously accompanied in the lower strings by the rhythm. The movement features Beethoven's characteristic building of intensity, suspense, a thrilling coda, and also mysteries. Why, for example, does the oboe have a brief unaccompanied solo cadenza near the beginning of the recapitulation? Beethoven's innovation is not simply that this brief passage may “mean” something, but that listeners are prompted in the first place to ask themselves what it may mean.

The second movement (Andante con moto) is a rather unusual variation form in which two themes alternate, the first sweet and lyrical, the second more forceful. Beethoven combines the third and fourth movements, which are played without pause. In earlier symphonies, he had already replaced the polite minuet and trio with a more vigorous scherzo and trio. In the Fifth, the Allegro scherzo begins with a soft ascending arpeggiated string theme that contrasts with a loud assertive horn motif (again using the fate rhythm). The trio section features extraordinarily difficult string writing, in fugal style, that defeated musicians in early performances. Instead of an exact return of the opening scherzo section, Beethoven recasts the thematic material in a completely new orchestration and pianississimo dynamic. The tension builds with a long pedal point—the insistent repetition of the same note C in the timpani—that swells in an enormous crescendo directly into the fourth movement Allegro, where three trombones, contrabassoon, and a piccolo join in for the first time in the piece. This finale, like the first movement, is in sonata form and uses the fate rhythm in the second theme. The coda to the Symphony may strike listeners today as almost too triumphantly affirmative as the music gets faster, louder, and ever more insistent. Indeed, it is difficult to divest this best-known of symphonies from all the baggage it has accumulated through two centuries and to listen with fresh ears to the shocking power of the work and to the marvels that Beethoven introduced into the world of orchestral music.
— note written by Christopher H. Gibbs, adapted by David Tedford