

BEETHOVEN 7 & MARQUEZ

Kristan Toczko *Harp*
Evan Mitchell *Conductor*

📅 MARCH 8, 2020

🕒 2:30 P.M.

📍 THE ISABEL

PROGRAM

Danzon No. 2 MARQUEZ (1950-)

Concerto for Harp & Orchestra, Op. 117 BAKER (1937-)

Allegro
Largo
Siguiriya

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92 BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Poco sostenuto - Vivace
Allegretto
Presto
Allegro con brio

TODAY'S MUSIC

with Evan Mitchell

Richard Wagner made the (very astute) observation that Beethoven's Seventh Symphony was the "Apotheosis of the Dance." The opening movement is like a supercharged jig, the iconic build of the second movement is like an impassioned couple's dance, the boisterous scherzo bursts with joy, and the final three minutes of this symphony make up perhaps the most energized final gesture of any of Beethoven's symphonies. The last time we performed Beethoven's Seventh was six years ago and it elicited the loudest audience reaction I can recall since joining the Kingston Symphony. I'm hoping we can top that this afternoon.

Naturally, it behooves us to craft a program filled with music that compels us to physically react, feel the rhythm, dance a little. While the two pieces which lead into Beethoven's Seventh are less well known, I am convinced you'll go home after this concert with a big grin on your face. This is a stupendous afternoon of music.

Arturo Marquez's *Danzon No. 2* is a likely candidate for the most performed Mexican orchestral piece. Sadly, that's not saying much as the *Danzon* is still a virtual unknown. The spirit of the romance of this particularly fiery dance is imbued in every bar.

There is a pervasive feeling of the unique rhythmic pattern throughout and the fire and the passion can obscure the remarkable craft of the piece. It's brilliant, colourful, and perfectly proportioned - an astonishing way to start a concert.

Michael Conway-Baker's *Harp Concerto* is a virtuoso showcase of the harp, couched with beautiful melodies and passage after passage of sublime music. What always strikes me about this magnificent piece is how it changes moods seemingly without effort. Yet I don't understand how it manages to provide such evocative snapshots so deftly. While the orchestra exists as a subordinate accompaniment to the harp, this is a concerto which makes full usage of the colour and emotional canvas the orchestra provides. Its finale, a Spanish Siguiriya flamenco dance, is as fiery as anything ever written for the harp.

As for Beethoven's Seventh, it needs no introduction. At this point Beethoven is simply creating remarkable, unparalleled music. In addition to its additional wonders, you can feel the gravitational pull towards the Ninth, in all its majesty. Hold on tight, folks. We're getting close.