

"The secret, he felt, lay in the use of alternating current, because to him all energies were cyclic. Why not build generators that would send electrical energy along distribution lines. . . in multiple waves?" (teslasociety.com)



Welcome to Bionic Symphony! I am so delighted to be able to share this concert experience with you, and I'd love to take this opportunity to prepare you a bit for what lies ahead.

This concert did indeed start in my mind with the idea of alternating electrical current, or more specifically the notion that extreme energy, and ultimately power, can be generated by alternating differing signal types in rapid succession. A quick glance at the program page shows that this idea – switching back and forth between old (Classical) and new (Neo-Classical) music – is still very much alive.

Then I began to think about the very "Sympho" idea of using that generation of power to create something new and very large-scale, something specifically inspired by human aspirations. Bionic Symphony is the end result of experiments precipitated by those initial thoughts, and I couldn't be more excited to share this music and these creations with you.

See you on the other side.

Yours,



Paul Haas
Artistic Director & Founder
Sympho, Inc.

The Bionic Symphony

Sympho

Paul Haas *artistic director and conductor*

PRELUDIO

Tüür Passion (A)

PART I

Haydn Symphony No. 104 "London" (*Adagio*)

Prokofiev Classical Symphony (*Allegro*)

Haydn Symphony No. 101 "Clock" (*Andante*)

Stravinsky Tarantella

Haydn Symphony No. 104 "London" (*Finale: Spiritoso*)

INTERLUDIO

Tüür Passion (B)

PART II

Mozart Symphony No. 35 "Haffner" (*Allegro con spirito*)

Prokofiev Classical Symphony (*Larghetto*)

Stravinsky Concerto in D (*Rondo: Allegro*)

INTERLUDIO

Tüür Passion (C)

PART III

Bizet Symphony in C Major (*Allegro vivo*)

Mozart *Ave Verum Corpus*

Prokofiev Classical Symphony (*Gavotta – non troppo allegro*)

Mozart Symphony No. 41 "Jupiter" (*Molto allegro*)

INTERLUDIO

Tüür Passion (D)

PART IV

Stravinsky Concerto in D Major (*Arioso: Andantino*)

Prokofiev Classical Symphony (*Finale: Molto vivace*)

POSTLUDIO

Rameau *L'Entrée de Polymnie*

About the Program

Before we talk about individual pieces of music, here are some things it's helpful to know about *Bionic Symphony*:

Everything has been designed to lead you organically from the beginning of this concert to its end. The music will run continuously, with only minimal pauses between movements, for about 90 minutes. While that places extraordinary demands on the performers, it doesn't require a thing of you. Except perhaps to visit the restroom before the concert begins.

Bionic Symphony is a large-scale work, composed of four "bionic symphonies" (Parts I, II, III, and IV in the program order), connected by interludes. The music in these "bionic symphonies" alternates between Classical (in this case by Mozart and Haydn) and Neoclassical (music that uses Classical forms and conventions as a starting point for the creative process) movements or short pieces.

What is a Symphony? In *Reader's Digest* terms, it's a musical piece of Classical origins, usually but not necessarily in four movements, where those movements were typically in the order *fast-slow-dance-fast*. (The dance movements could be slow or fast but were usually in triple meter.) The first movement is typically in sonata form, where (after an optional slow introduction) initial material is presented in an "exposition", then toyed with in the "development", and finally re-presented in more final terms in the "recapitulation".

More importantly, and in terms we can all understand, a Symphony is a journey contemplated and then travelled, a problem encountered and then solved. As we progress from the Classical into the Romantic period, especially with composers like Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms, we start to encounter thematic and other organic links between movements. In some later instances (e.g., Sibelius's Symphony No. 7), there are no breaks, yielding a Symphony in one movement.

Our "bionic symphonies" this evening are designed to integrate the feeling and sweep of a Symphony: in either two, three, or four movements, they have their own journey to travel or their own problem to solve. Indeed, the evening as a whole, if you look at it carefully, is itself of Symphonic proportions: four movements, each with its own flavor, and designed with a forward momentum from beginning to end. This program is anchored by the inclusion in each smaller "bionic symphony" of a movement of Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*. In part, those were chosen because they fit musically where they are placed extraordinarily well. On the other hand, the use of that music and the Tüür throughout the evening was intended to bind *all* of the music into a "super" symphony of grand proportion and sweep.

For space reasons, the discussion of each individual movement or piece will be exceedingly brief.

Estonian composer Erkki-Sven Tüür wrote *Passion* (actually the second movement of a three-movement work for string orchestra) in 1993. It starts from a mysterious, primeval place and gradually expands, growing to a point of searching and almost frenetic activity; it coalesces into a brief period of harmony and simplicity before returning to its sonic origins. We will perform this piece in sections throughout the concert, broken off at meaningful musical inflection points.

Our first “bionic symphony” begins with the slow introduction to the first movement of **Haydn’s Symphony No. 104**, which begins in a regal fashion typical for its time (1795), incorporating trumpets, timpani, and some breathtakingly beautiful soft passages for strings. Instead of continuing on with the Haydn, we take a left turn into **Prokofiev’s Classical Symphony**, premiered over 120 years later in 1918. Leaving Russian history lessons aside, this is one of the iconic works of Neo-Classical music. On its surface, this is music that borrows heavily from Classical forms and idioms (it is full of dominant-tonic cadences, trills from the upper neighbor, sparse textures and Alberti bass figures), but you’ll know it’s not written by Mozart about 10 seconds in when all of a sudden it scoots down a whole step to the totally foreign key of C. You may not recognize the key, but you will certainly hear the “scoot”. This and myriad other musical clues will help you place this in the 20th century as opposed to the 18th. Next, the second movement from **Haydn’s Symphony No. 101**, though technically a bit slower than one beat per second, is so close to the ticking of a timepiece that it has earned itself the “Clock” nickname. Whatever your feelings about nicknames, this movement takes a surprising turn about two and a half minutes in, with a sudden change to minor and a darker affect. **Stravinsky’s Tarantella** provides a furious, if brief, palate cleanser before the fourth movement of the same piece with which we opened: **Haydn’s Symphony No. 104**.

Mozart’s Symphony No. 35 kicks off our second “bionic symphony”. This movement, written in 1782, sounds like it begins with a slow introduction, but it becomes apparent fairly quickly that the regal opening music is only a disguised version of a fast and furious theme that erupts about 25 seconds in. One of the hallmarks of a mastery of high Classical style was the ability to play with the audience’s expectations, and this is but one example of Mozart’s ability to do that — at age 26. After the floating and ethereal second movement of **Prokofiev’s Classical Symphony**, we skip our traditional dance movement and plunge into a headlong sprint to the finish line with the third movement of **Stravinsky’s Concerto in D** for string orchestra, written in 1946 while the composer was in Hollywood. This is one of the more “modern”-sounding pieces on the program, but even it relents after about a minute into a graceful reminiscence of the Classical style before resuming its precipitous course.

The first movement of **Bizet’s Symphony in C**, written in 1855 when the composer was only 17, is the only non-Classical piece on the program that is not technically part of the Neo-Classical *movement*, which occurred during the first half of the 20th century. In spirit, though, as well as in its musical details, this music embodies at least as full a grasp of Classical style and affect as any of the other pieces in this

concert, not to mention Bizet's application of early Romantic period ideas of instrumentation and execution. (This music can easily and fruitfully be compared to another piece not on this program: Mendelssohn's 1826 Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, also written when he was only 17.) Mozart wrote his iconic **Ave Verum Corpus** for chorus and string orchestra six months before his death at age 35, while his wife was pregnant with their sixth child. After the third (or dance) movement of **Prokofiev's Classical Symphony**, which was later transformed into the "Departure of the Guests" from the composer's 1930s ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, we launch into the *Finale* of **Mozart's Jupiter Symphony**. Woody Allen has famously said that this movement proves the existence of God. We will not comment, except to say that this movement most certainly proves the erstwhile existence of one of the most phenomenal human beings ever to grace our planet. If you listen carefully towards the end, you'll hear the simultaneous fugal treatment of all five of the main themes of this movement.

Our fourth – and greatly abbreviated – "bionic symphony" begins with the second movement of **Stravinsky's Concerto in D**. Aside from noting that you recently heard the third movement of this same piece, a quick note about the accompaniment figure, which is a hallmark of classical style: this low-high-high-high pattern (or boom-chuck-chuck-chuck, depending on who your piano teacher was!) is both borrowed and manipulated by Stravinsky to create a piece that is thoroughly modern in affect. We're then off to the races with the blindingly fast fourth movement of **Prokofiev's Classical Symphony**.

In closing, and completing our journey back through time, you will hear one of the most sublime moments in music history: the **Entrance of Polymnie** from Rameau's ballet *Les Boréades*.

[For the sleuths among you: there is a piece of music commissioned for this concert and receiving its world premiere tonight, hidden *inside* one of the pieces on this program.]



About the Artists

According to *The New York Times*, Sympho founder and artistic director **Paul Haas** “is surely on the brink of a noteworthy career.” *Time Out New York* calls him a “visionary”. He is the Music Director of the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas (SoNA), and his guest conducting engagements have included performances with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, San Antonio Symphony, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, and the New World Symphony, among others, as well as festival appearances. Recently, Paul’s performance with the National Symphony Orchestra and Itzhak Perlman as soloist caused the *Washington Post* to write:

“The young conductor Paul Haas was all about fresh thinking and visceral engagement. His musicmaking...revealed a keen musical mind and an impressive feeling for the natural pulse and trajectory of a score... Haas’s sensitivity to rhythmic and dynamic gradation, and his ability to marry heartfelt expression with disciplined playing from the NSO...would have been impressive in a conductor three times his age. If Thursday’s concert was an accurate barometer of his talents, Haas is headed for a significant podium career.”

As former Music Director of the renowned New York Youth Symphony, which performs regularly at Carnegie Hall, Mr. Haas and the NYYS were awarded the ASCAP–League of American Orchestras Leonard Bernstein Award for Educational Programming, the first and only time that coveted award has ever been presented to a youth orchestra. Recently, Mr. Haas was selected out of hundreds to perform in the League of American Orchestras’ prestigious National Conductor Preview.

Haas also enjoys an active composing career. He conducted the premiere of his “Matthew Says” for orchestra, chorus, and two violin soloists at Carnegie Hall in 2007 and has premiered nine other orchestral pieces of his in New York City during recent seasons. San Francisco-based Hope Mohr Dance commissioned a large-scale score by Haas, premiering the work (“The Unsayable”) in March 2011. Recently, *New York Magazine* singled out Haas as one of the “New New York School” of composers.

Paul Haas is a graduate of Yale University and The Juilliard School, where he studied conducting as a Bruno Walter Fellow with Otto-Werner Mueller. His other conducting teachers include Michael Tilson Thomas, with whom he shared the podium in concert with the New World Symphony, and Leonard Slatkin, with whom he studied as one of four participants in the National Symphony Orchestra’s National Conducting Institute. He also studied opera conducting in Dresden, Germany, at the Hochschule für Musik. Haas currently resides in New York City with his wife and two daughters. For more information about Haas, please visit www.paulhaas.com.

Sympho is a trailblazing orchestra and concert production company that creates powerful and emotional musical experiences, collaborating with leading artists and using unexpected performance methods and unorthodox venues. “Refits the Classical Experience for a New Century,” proclaimed *The New York Times* headline for Sympho’s first concert. “Something momentous has occurred,” raved the *San Francisco Chronicle*. And *Symphony Magazine* declared, “Something important was happening, something with emotional stakes.”

In February 2011, Sympho and Haas created a critically-acclaimed concert event for the opening night of the Park Avenue Armory’s Tune-In Music Festival, ranked by New York’s WQXR FM as the “Top New Music Event of 2011”. According to salon.com, Sympho’s January 2012 multimedia Green Lama concert “was like nothing I’ve ever seen before and, dare I say it, even bordered on the spiritual.” Sympho’s upcoming TOWER, a little over a week away, is a concert that places performers and audience on the double-helix interior staircases of Ann Hamilton’s stunning 80-foot-tall sculpture and arts venue in California, set amidst the picturesque vistas of the Sonoma wine country. The Oliver Ranch Foundation has commissioned Sympho to follow in the footsteps of luminaries Meredith Monk and the Kronos Quartet in creating a site-specific work to be performed in the 24-foot-diameter Tower. For more information about Sympho, please visit www.SymphoConcerts.org.



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