Music and War Throughout the Ages

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MUSIC AND WAR THROUGHOUT THE AGES

by

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Music and War Throughout the Ages

War has always had a powerful influence on music. At times it has the ability to motivate composers even more than love, religious belief, or money. Throughout the ages, both war and music about war have changed dramatically. The destructive power of war has reached its ultimate capabilities — the potential to eliminate all life. As war has become more and more horrible, and has caused unprecedented amounts of needless deaths, the world's view of war has changed completely. This change in attitude toward war is evident also in the development of war music.

Early war compositions celebrated the glory and splendor of war and emphasized the triumph of the victor. Many of these battle pieces were composed for the public's entertainment, and were quite popular and lucrative. At the outset of the World Wars, the music was still very optimistic and patriotic, expressing the hope that the good guys would soon emerge victorious. But as the conflict dragged on, composers began more and more to understand the horror and agony of war, and that neither side would be a victor. Laments and requiems were composed with greater frequency. Patriotic and entertaining 'battle music' was now a thing of the past. In fact, many of the post-war works were harsh, extremely dissonant, and chaotic, expressing anti-war and sometimes anti-government sentiments. The tragedies of the Holocaust and of the Atom bomb that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought about the composition of very serious, mournful, and sometimes angry works in the latter part of the century. As war-related compositions continue to be written in the future, they will most probably continue to denounce war and to express a desire for peace.

THE EARLY PERIOD - Ancient Greece through the Renaissance

Ancient Greek art often dealt with war. This is one of the central themes in Greek dramas and odes and especially in Homer's The Iliad. The Greek Gods were frequently depicted in battle. The Greeks also understood the importance of music to be used in war. A few flutes could keep the soldiers in step, summon forth their bravery for the conflict and give the signal for the attack. The Roman troops used trumpets for this purpose. In the Middle Ages, minstrels were to "blow and beat strenuously and unceasingly during the action." During this time period, war was considered a
noble pursuit and men looked forward to showing their bravery and strength. The art of the Middle Ages likewise emphasized the triumphant side of war. War music was seldom much different than other music, however, and could only be distinguished by the war-related text. *Deo Gracias* (no. 1) and Guillaume Dufay's motets about war are examples.

In the Renaissance period, drums began to be used in the military to signal the movements of the troops, and have retained this function to the present day. During this period the battle piece also began to gain popularity. The earliest piece by a known composer is *Alla Battaglia* by Heinrich Isaac (no. 2), which contains musical elements common to many battle pieces: repeated notes, a sectionalized form (for each of the stages of the battle) and simple, diatonic harmonies. But it was Clément Janequin's *La Guerre* (no. 4) that made the battle piece popular. It became "one of the best-known pieces of the entire century, copied by many other composers and arranged for keyboard or lute solo and for all varieties of instrument ensemble."² (See nos. 5-7.) *La Guerre* creates the confusion of war with fast repeated notes, imitation, and plenty of nonsense words to suggest the sounds of battle. William Byrd also wrote an important keyboard piece entitled *The Battell* (no. 8). It is divided into ten distinct sections for each phase of the conflict. These renaissance pieces continued to celebrate war, contained no dissonances and were usually in major modes.

**BAROQUE ERA (1600-1750)**

There were many important wars during this period, including the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), the Great Northern War (1700-1721) and the Austrian Wars (1740-1748), but civilians were seldom involved. Therefore war retained its glorious interpretation in music. One of the greatest advances in the genre came with Claudio Monteverdi's development of 'stile concitato', or fast repeated notes. He used this technique in his eighth book of Madrigals, *Madrigali guerrieri ed amorosi* (nos. 14-16), to represent the intensity of war. In *Altri canti d'amor* (no. 15), he uses fast scales in contrary motion to suggest conflict.

Battle music began to appear in the organ pieces in Portugal and in several operas of Handel, Purcell and Lully. This music used the stock devices of quick notes and scales, fanfares, diatonic major tonality, duple meter and sectionalized form - each with a descriptive heading. Jean François Dandrieu introduced an innovative technique in *Les caractères de la guerre* (no.20). To
illustrate cannon shots, he used tone clusters -- to be played in the low register of the keyboard. Heinrich Biber took the imitation of war sounds even further in his Battalia (no. 19), an extremely daring piece for its day. It uses col legno, layering of melodies, polymeter and mild dissonances and even requires the double basses to put a sheet of paper under their A string to make a snare drum sound.

**CLASSICAL / EARLY ROMANTIC PERIODS (1750-1827)**

The war music of these periods continued to be used mainly for entertainment purposes. This was a period of great revolution in the United States, in France and in Europe generally. Battle music became extremely popular with the newly formed middle classes, especially if these pieces incorporated patriotic references to “Yankee Doodle”, “La Marseillaise”, or other nationalistic tunes. These battle pieces were often of little artistic value and were dished out in large quantities, but the public devoured them -- buying them to take home and play on their own pianos, which had now become widely available. Some manufacturers had even added percussive pedals to their pianos to aid battle re-enactment. Few of these pieces are played today. They are all very similar in style, each including war marches, bugle calls, cannon shots, patriotic anthems and victory celebrations. James Hewitt's Battle of Trenton (no. 28) and Ferdinand Kauer's La conquete d'Oczakow (no. 26) are typical of this genre.

The concept of the battle piece was eventually extended to battle symphonies for massive orchestral forces. Franz Neubauer wrote a seven movement symphony called La Bataille (no. 31). Peter von Winter's Schlacht-Sinfonie (no. 36) included a chorus. Carl Maria von Weber's large-scale work Kampf unt Sieg was written upon Napoleon's defeat. Even Beethoven, who was often caught up in the revolutionary excitement of the day, contributed with his popular Wellington's Victory (no. 34), the piece for which he was best known during his lifetime. Other successful types of pieces were patriotic cantatas, hymns and oratorios, written by the likes of Beethoven, Cherubini, Gossec and Méhul. The nationalistic urges of the early Romantic period easily found their expression in these glorified battle compositions.
ROMANTIC PERIOD (1828-1900)

Since there were fewer important wars fought during these years (Opium Wars, Mexican War, Crimean War), the public began to lose interest in battle music. Most war-related pieces turned to historical wars for their inspiration. One of the important pieces was Franz Liszt's *Hunnenschlacht* (no. 41), written about the battle between the Huns and Christians in 451 A.D. *Hunnenschlacht* did not rely on cannon noises or bugle calls to express war. Instead, Liszt contrasted two distinct motives throughout the piece, one eventually emerging as the victor. This piece, along with the composer's *Héroïde funèbre* (no. 39) and the lament *Funérailles* (no. 40), brought new depth to music about war.

Other composers created meaningful music dealing with war. Berlioz' *Grande Symphonie funèbre et triomphale* was written for the tenth anniversary of the French Revolution. Smetana's *Ma Vlast* (no. 44) contains movements about the Hessian armies. Verdi's subtly political operas (as no. 38) often contained exciting battle scenes. The most familiar war-related piece of the Romantic period is still Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* (no. 45), a favorite of today's audiences.

CIVIL WAR

In the United States, descriptive battle pieces were still popular during the Civil War. Only a few significant compositions come from this era. The piano pieces of Louis Gottschalk were a step above the rest. One of the pieces that he performed often throughout the war was *L'Union* (no. 42). This is a virtuosic piece that includes quick successive octave passages and a dazzling cadenza. He quotes and combines the tunes "Star Spangled Banner", "Hail Columbia", and of course, "Yankee Doodle", without which no battle composition was complete.

The Civil War had a tremendous effect on music in several ways. Many young men who joined the war effort played in the army's brass bands. When the war was over, many of these bands continued playing in communities and for important musical events. Patrick Gilmore, a former Union Army Bandmaster, staged some colossal concerts after the war in New Orleans, in Boston, and at the World Peace Jubilee. In the latter event there were 2,000 in the orchestra and 20,000 in the choir. Down in New Orleans, these lingering military bands also gave birth to the one musical language that Americans can truly call their own -- jazz. Another important side-effect of the war
was the poetry of Walt Whitman. In this century hundreds of composers have used Whitman's anti-war poems as the basis and inspiration of their songs and other compositions.

EARLY 20TH CENTURY / WORLD WAR I

Numerous wars and uprisings dotted the globe around the turn of the century: the 1905 Russian Revolution, the Russo-Japanese War, the Boer War, the Spanish-American War, etc. But nothing could prepare the world for what broke out in 1914 – the First World War. Ironically, just a few months before the war started, Gustav Holst was putting the finishing touches on an ominous new piece called *Mars, the Bringer of War* (no. 49). The war began with a great deal of optimism and volunteering. By 1916, most of this optimism had been shattered to pieces. The war had a tremendous effect on the musical world. Several composers had enlisted and many were killed in battle. Two of the many lives cut short were the gifted young composers Ivor Gurney and George Butterworth. Often during this period, German music was banned outright, resulting in more works by native composers being performed in France, Britain, and the United States. Concerts including their works were given in concert halls and hospitals to raise funds for the Red Cross and for the many widows and children left orphaned and destitute by the war. Much of this music had only a functional purpose, and did not long endure beyond the war, but the part it played was a very important one.

Other composers chose not to write music about the war, perhaps agreeing with Richard Strauss, who felt that lesser known composers would take advantage of the war just to get their pieces performed. Notable composers who did not write war-related music were Bartók, Berg, Rachmaninoff, Satie, Sibelius, and Stravinsky. From this point on, most composers began to re-evaluate their societal positions on war. More laments expressing grief for those lost in war were written than patriotic pieces. Serious war compositions were written more to comfort than to entertain. Edward Elgar’s *The Spirit of England* was one of the most significant laments to come from the war, played for years after the war on each Remembrance Day. Before the war, Elgar had written his *Pomp and Circumstance* marches to encourage young men to join the war effort. It didn’t take him long to re-evaluate his ideas.

Other important works came from this era. Charles Ives’ *Second Orchestral Set* (no. 52) was written upon his learning of the sinking of the ship *Lusitania*. Ives also wrote a poignant set of
Debussy wrote *En Blanc et Noir* (no. 51) as his reaction to German aggression and the song *Noël des enfants qui n’ont plus de maisons* about the poor children left homeless by the war. Years later, Ralph Vaughan Williams used the poetry of Walt Whitman for his choral piece *Dona Nobis Pacem* (no. 61), which recalled the tragedy and suffering of war.

**WORLD WAR TWO**

In 1939, Hitler invaded Poland, followed in 1940 by invasions of Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland and France. By 1941 every great world power was in the war, and by 1945, all but six of the world’s independent nations had joined the fighting. It is estimated that over 40 million people were killed in World War Two, of which many were civilians. Powerful new machinery allowed homes and entire cities to be destroyed in minutes. More than 200 war-related compositions were written during the war. Many of these now portrayed the reality and horror of war, but often these compositions were more political than artistic.

The Soviets wrote the most music during the war, having received strong government support to compose songs and operas that would fortify the soldiers and unite the people. American composers also offered their services to the government to write music for films, benefit concerts and army bands. Samuel Barber was commissioned to write his *Symphony no. 2* (no. 74) by the U.S. Air Force. Such commissions were rare, since most of the government’s money was directed towards the war effort. Most of the significant war compositions were independently written. Stravinsky’s *Symphony in Three Movements* (no. 70) was his personal reaction to the war. Hindemith’s powerful oratorio *When Lilacs Last Bloom’d*... (no. 81) is a significant work that was dedicated to the soldiers killed in the war. Aaron Copland’s *A Lincoln Portrait* (no. 71) and his *Symphony no.3* (no. 72) both come from the war years. Roy Harris’ *Fifth Symphony* was often broadcast during the war and became America’s symbol of alliance.

Works written early in the war tended to be more optimistic and hopeful about the war’s outcome, but as the war continued, music became more despairing, pessimistic, and bitter. This change can be seen in the symphonies of Shostakovich and Prokofiev, both of whom wrote 2 symphonies during the war. Prokofiev’s *Sixth Symphony* (no. 76) is much darker and more tragic than his *Fifth Symphony* (no. 75). The same is true of Shostakovich’s *Symphonies no. 7 and 8* (nos. 67 and 68). The Eighth Symphony was so violent, pessimistic and gloomy that it was
censored by the state. Shostakovich must have understood that the world would never be the same.

AFTER THE WAR

Once the War was officially over, people all over the world rejoiced. Ralph Vaughan Williams’ *Thanksgiving for Victory* (no. 77) was written and recorded to be broadcast on the day the war ended as a celebration and a plea for peace. Yet there were many scars that would not be healed, and some of the great changes in the world would alter the course of music history forever. One of the most important changes was the emergence of the United States as the dominant force in music, since, as a result of dangerous world conditions, many of the world’s leading composers had emigrated to the United States. Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schoenberg, Paul Hindemith, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Edgar Varèse, Kurt Weill, Darius Milhaud and Bela Bartók were among the major composers to make the United States their home. They became the teachers for the next generation of American composers.

Russia had also emerged as a major power after the war, and as a result, the music of Russian composers, like Prokofiev and Shostakovich, now entered into the mainstream of Western music. During the war in Germany, the Nazi regime turned mainly to music of their glorious past, mostly to Wagner, Brücker and Beethoven, and only encouraged new compositions that would promote pride in being part of the Aryan race. After the death of Richard Strauss in 1949, the long and strong tradition of Germanic music had largely been ended.

Two themes began to dominate war compositions in the years following the war – the Holocaust and the Atom Bomb. These were the nightmares that had shocked the world. This new type of war music was extremely dissonant, chaotic, and frightening. To represent the terrible agony of these events, composers had to develop new techniques and styles. Some experimental and electronic music was especially graphic in its portrayal of suffering. Groans, shrieks, explosive outbursts, yelling, ghostly whispering, tone clusters, sprechstimme, sirens and chains were all used to create walls of horrific sound. The most important work written about the Atom bomb is Penderecki’s *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (no. 100). This powerful work, written for strings only, uses many innovative techniques to depict vividly the bombing of Hiroshima. Other notable pieces are Penderecki’s *Dies Irae* (no. 98) – an absolutely terrifying piece about the Holocaust, Schoenberg’s *A Survivor from Warsaw* (no. 96) – a twelve-tone piece that says more about the Holocaust in eight minutes than has been written in “whole volumes”, Shostakovich’s
Symphony no. 13 (no. 97) – the “Babi Yar” symphony dealing with the Holocaust, and Gorecki’s Symphony no. 3 (no. 99) – which uses text scribbled on a cell wall by a young Jewish war prisoner.

VIETNAM WAR

During this highly unpopular war, numerous composers openly protested with their music. Some of their compositions are not only anti-war, but also anti-government. Requiems and laments were written for the Vietnamese and other pieces were written to make fun of the U.S. troops.¹⁵ Many pieces used extreme methods in order to convey the absurdity of fighting and bloodshed in Vietnam. Salvatore Martirano’s L’s G.A. (no. 102) is a recitation of the Gettysburg Address by a man wearing a gas mask and inhaling helium. War Scenes (no. 103) is a set of songs by Ned Rorem that uses gory texts by Walt Whitman and emphasizes the ridiculousness of war. Even composers who had been strong supporters of the United States in World War II, now turned decisively in the other direction. Gail Kubik’s A Record Of Our Time (no. 105), which uses harsh, violent texts against war and government, and simulates a raging mob — is a completely different message than was given in Kubik’s earlier World War II piece, A Litany and a Prayer (no. 73), which was a sincere prayer in behalf of the government and the nation. This serves as an ideal example of how much society’s views on war have changed since the World Wars. Faced with the threat of total nuclear annihilation, many people view war as something never to be repeated again.

Things have really changed since the time of the Greeks and the Renaissance. Although war has always been around, never has it had the destructive capabilities that it does now. Music about war has changed accordingly. Once exciting, lighthearted and entertaining, now it describes the horror and suffering, the absurdity and meaninglessness of killing and war.
Music Studied for this Project:

MEDIEVAL
1. Deo Gracias, Anglia (The Agincourt song) - Anonymous [c.1415]
Two burdens and five verses. A medieval carol that narrates the battle of Agincourt. The music is not descriptive of war.

RENAISSANCE
The earliest battle piece by a known composer. Written for four instruments, although it may have originally had a text. It uses repeated notes, open fifths and the typical battle rhythm: \( \text{\textdaggerright} \text{\textdaggerright} \). It also has the sectionalized form characteristic of later battle pieces. Tonal and imitative in F major.

3. Una sañosa Porfia - Juan del Encina [c.1492] Spain
A solemn lament with simple instrumentation. Only the text, which deals with a war in Granada, makes this piece war-related.

4. La guerre: Escoutez tous gentilz - Clément Janequin [1555] Italy
The most popular war song of the Renaissance -- written to commemorate the victory of Francis I at the Battle of Marignano. It was copied and arranged hundreds of times throughout the century for lute, keyboard, and all sorts of instrumental ensembles. It uses mainly the tonic and dominant chords and the melodies outline triads like trumpet fanfares. General confusion is caused by using a very lively tempo, fast repeated notes, short scalar patterns, imitation and onomatopoetic nonsense words for text. The recurring rhythmic motive is \( \text{\textdaggerright} \text{\textdaggerright} \text{\textdaggerright} \). The text does not represent the suffering of war -- just the nobility of war and the glory of victory. This piece was so successful that Janequin wrote several similar pieces later on -- La bataille de Metz, and La guerre de Rentry are examples.

5. La guerre (La bataglia) - Francesco da Milano [1536] Italy
Essentially a lute transcription of Janequin's popular La guerre.

6. Pavane: La batalille - Tylman Susato [1551] Italy
For an instrumental ensemble -- also based on La guerre. The last section uses repeated fast notes. On the recording L'homme armé (Erato ECD 88168) trumpets, recorders, shawms, drums and cymbals are used. The recording ends with a chorus singing another tune in the background, creating mild chaos.

7. Battaglia: sento un rumore - Andrea Gabrieli Italy
For eight voices -- modeled on Janequin's La guerre. The last section also uses nonsense syllables: fa di da di da and fun fun fun.

From 'My Ladye Nevells Booke'. Made up of twelve sections, each depicting a phase of the battle:
section is solidly in C major with much repetition. The marching is represented by steady rhythms. The drum is represented by one repeated low chord, while the flute moves in the high register. The trumpets just arpeggiate the C chord. During the fight, the battle is represented by large repeated I and V chords in fast tempo. Though the tempo slows down briefly for the burying of the dead, the piece ends triumphantly with a joyous victory celebration.

9. **In fields abroad** - Byrd
A song for high voice and four viols. The song laments the death of soldiers in faraway lands. There are four verses -- the last is not related to war.

10. **Look and Bow Down** - Byrd [1588]
A simple setting of a poem written by Queen Elizabeth on the defeat of the Spanish Armada - in G minor.

**BAROQUE**

11. **Courrant de Bataglia** - Michael Praetorius [1612] Germany
A binary dance that is not especially programmatic. Uses brass and percussion for a war-like sound on this recording: (Michael Praetorius -- Decca 414 633-2)

A simple diatonic piece for lute in G major. It does not evoke images of battle, despite the descriptive title.

13. **A Battle and no Battle** - John Bull England
A piece for keyboard built on a ground bass similar to Byrd's *The Battell*. Based on only a few repeated patterns and three or four major chords. Bull also wrote some shorter battle pieces: *Battle Pavan, Battle Galliard* and *Coranto Battle*.

14. **Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda** - Claudio Monteverdi [1624] Italy
Very important for the introduction of his 'stile concitato', or fast repeated notes. He used this technique to create the excitement of war in his music. This work is also important for the quality that it brought to the war music genre.

15. **Altri Canti d'amor** - Monteverdi [1638]
This madrigal also uses 'stile concitato' with fast scalar passages in contrary motion to suggest conflict.

16. **Hor che'l ciel e la tierra** - Monteverdi [1638]
Here slower sections of peace alternate with faster sections of excited rhythms. The singers repeat the words "guerra, guerra!"

17. **Capriccio sopra la battaglia** - Girolamo Frescobaldi [1637] Italy
A very sectional keyboard piece with repeats indicated every few measures. It goes through several keys and has trumpet-like fanfare melodies and repeated rhythmic patterns.

18. **Galliard Battaglia** - Samuel Scheidt [1621] Germany
A 3-part instrumental piece with majestic rhythms and repeated sections. It uses simple harmonies, echo effects, fast repeated notes and scalar patterns. (Arranged by the Canadian Brass)

An extremely innovative piece for its time. Biber used lots of special effects to represent war: Polyrhythms, eight simultaneous melodies, col legno, daring dissonances, tremolos and putting a sheet of paper under the A strings of the double basses to make it sound like a snare drum.

20. **Les caractères de la guerre** - Jean François Dandrieu [1718] France
A harpsichord piece that is notable for its early use of tone clusters ("cannon shots") where the performer was to hit the lowest notes of the keyboard with the flat of his hand. The piece also has descriptive subtitles. In an orchestral version, drumrolls were added. It emphasizes the heroic nature of war.

An exciting, quick-moving aria in C major. It has martial rhythms and text about war.

22. **Joshua (Oratorio) - “Warlike Symphony”** - Handel [1747]
After the walls of Jericho come tumbling down, Handel writes a lament and then this warlike symphony (allegro con fuoco). It has fast notes and repeated motives.

23. **La battaglia del re di Prussia** - Carl Heinrich Graun [1740] France
This battle piece is notable for being the first to use sonata form. Low bass notes simulate gun shots. No dissonance.

**CLASSICAL / EARLY ROMANTIC**

24. **Bataille** - Johann Friedrich Klöffler [1777] German
Symphony for two orchestras representing opposing forces. This work was extremely popular and lucrative. It was performed all over Europe. In numerous sections, the main innovation was having two orchestras do battle with each other, precluding Ives.

25. **Contretanz ("La bataille")** - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart [1788] Austria
A diatonic C major work with a Turkish march and some martial rhythms in typical Mozartian style. Some fast repeated notes appear.

26. **La conquête d'Oczakow: Sonata Militaire** - Ferdinand Kauer [1788] Austria
Depicts vividly the war between the Turks and the Russians in 1788. To describe a bomb blowing up, Kauer writes 64th notes in ascending and then descending sixths. Cannon shots are represented by hand crossing to low notes. The attacks are represented by ascending sequences. The bloody battle consists of a series of fast repeated rhythmic patterns. The battle dies down with descending diminished seventh arpeggios. Triumph is represented by a heroic fanfare. The Russians win.

27. **Marche des Marseillois et l'air Ça ira** - Claude-Bénigne Balbastre [1792] Austria
For organ or piano. A set of variations on the French revolutionary hymn, “La Marseillais” and on the patriotic tune “Ah Ça ira.” It includes a brief combat section and a low tone cluster for a cannon shot. Ascending sixteenth note scales represent the fleeing of the enemy.
28. **Battle of Trenton** - James Hewitt [1792] America
Typical of the popular battle pieces for piano with lots of descriptive titles in multiple sections. Mostly in major tonality with trumpet calls, guns, and laments. It includes popular tunes like "Yankee Doodle."

29. **Symphony no. 100 "Military"** - Franz Joseph Haydn [1794] Austria
When the second movement of this symphony was first performed it had to be encored several times. It used military instruments -- the cymbal, bass drum and triangle, which amazed the audience.

30. **Missa in Tempore Belli** - Haydn [1796]
A mass that was influenced by Napoleon's march towards Vienna. In the Agnus Dei, the words 'Dona Nobis Pacem', usually sung softly, are here set with forte high notes and loud fanfares. This shows how war influenced music other than the stock battle pieces. The listeners were probably surprised.

31. **La Bataille** - Franz Neubauer [1794] Austria
A large-scale work in seven movements, each giving the typical phases of battle, from the morning scene to the advance, the battle, the slow retreat to camp and the victory celebration. The agony of defeat is not included. The battle is again represented by fast repeated notes. Comes complete with bugle calls and drum rolls.

32. **The Siege of Tripoli: An Historical Naval Sonata** - Benjamin Carr [1801] America
Important as a battle piece for its virtuosic writing. It had fast four octave scales and diminished seventh arpeggios.

33. **Symphony no. 3 "Eroica"** - Ludwig von Beethoven [1803] Germany
This symphony was a revolutionary one for Beethoven in terms of its length and content. It was of course originally dedicated to Napoleon Bonaparte until he declared himself Emperor. Upon hearing this, Beethoven tore the dedication sheet out and penned in the words: "Heroic Symphony in memory of a great man." The work contains a slow funeral march as well.

34. **Wellington's Victory** - Beethoven [1813]
It is odd that despite Beethoven's complete mastery of the symphony, string quartet and piano sonata, during his lifetime this was his most popular and well-known piece. Johann Melzel, who invented the "Panhormoniken" originally asked him to write if for the instrument, then suggested that he orchestrate it. The public loved it, but not the critics, who stated that all of the cannons and rattles made it impossible to hear the actual music. Beethoven, however, seemed to take it seriously and had great success with it.

The piece is in two parts. In the first, we hear the approach of the British, marching to drum and trumpet. Then "Rule Britannia" is played as their theme. Next, the French approach to drum and trumpet fanfare, with the tune "Marlborough" (or "He's a Jolly Good Fellow") as their theme. The British are in the heroic key of Eb and the French in C. The C trumpet announces the attack answered by an identical fanfare in the Eb trumpet. Then both engage in battle. Each side has a timpani for cannon blasts, a ratchet (gun noises) and their trumpet. At the beginning of the "Sturm
March’ section, the British begin to dominate the fighting. Less and less do we hear the French cannons and finally the British key of Eb is reached. The British have broken through to the French side and have won the battle. In 6/8 the French theme returns slowly in minor, symbolizing their defeat. The second part of Wellington’s Victory is the victory symphony, which because of the lack of rattles and cannons, is musically superior to the first part. Beethoven develops the British theme extensively and quotes “God Save the King.” A rousing piece but certainly not as great as his better known pieces today.

35. Der glorreiche Augenblick - Beethoven [1814]
A lengthy and elaborate cantata that Beethoven wrote as a tribute to the Congress of Vienna.

36. Schlacht-Sinfonie - Peter von Winter [1813] Germany
A very popular choral symphony (one of the earliest) that competed with Beethoven's Wellington's Victory. A large scale work in one continuous movement based on the defeat of Napoleon by the Germans. The text is heroic and triumphant. It glorifies war and the faithful defense of the homeland.

ROMANTIC / CIVIL WAR
37. Grande Symphonie funebre et triomphale - Hector Berlioz [1840] France
Commissioned by the French government to commemorate the 1830 revolution. Berlioz quickly began, completing the draft in less than forty hours. Originally written for wind instruments to be played in the open air, he later added parts for strings and chorus. The work was very well received. It begins with a funeral march and ends with a hymn of praise.

38. I Lombardi alla prima Crociata - Giuseppe Verdi [1843] Italy
The longest battle scene in a Verdi opera appears in act IV - "Inno di Guerra e Battaglia". He represents the conflict by having the band play against the orchestra. The chorus shouts out "Guerra, Guerra" as the battle is being fought between the Lombards and the Musulmans. It uses repeated notes and triadic outlines like most battle music. A minor second represents the defeat of the Musulmans, which is followed by a fortissimo victory hymn.

Liszt had planned to write a Revolutionary Symphony, inspired by the 1830 French Revolution, that would include national themes. Only this, the first movement, was completed. In the preface to the work, Liszt writes "Everywhere and always is heard among the trumpets at victory a low accompaniment of death rattles, and of groans, of prayers and of blasphemies, of sighs and farewells..." Wellington’s Victory may have been a model for this piece. It creates a solemn funeral-like atmosphere.

40. Funérailles - Liszt [1849]
This is a funeral march with some beautiful piano writing. It is based on the Hungarian Revolution of 1849 and is a lament for the lives that were lost. It also deals with the recent death of Chopin, whose A flat Polonaise he refers to in the middle section. Chopin's death came both as a blow and a relief to Liszt. The piece builds up to a magnificent march-like section.

41. Hunnenschlacht - Symphonic Poem no. 11 - Liszt [1856-57]
About the battle between the Huns and the Christians in 451 AD. This work elevated the status of the battle piece. It is based on a painting by Wilhelm von Kaulbach, wherein the survivors of the battle envision the fight continuing between the dead in the heavens. Liszt represented the two sides by two distinct motives. It is programmatic, but not explicit in the use of war music devices. The first part is the battle, with syncopated, driving rhythms. The Huns' motive is played menacingly in the low strings, bassoons and brass. The Christians' motive is the chorale “Crux Fidelis.” These two themes are conflicted throughout the work until the Christians come out victorious.

42. **L'Union** - Louis Gottschalk [1862] America
A virtuosic piano battle composition that Gottschalk performed often during the Civil War. Rapid octaves in the low register suggest cannons. The piece contains grandiose versions of the “Star Spangled Banner”, “Yankee Doodle” and “Hail Columbia.” It also has a dazzling cadenza. The drums played in the middle section can be made very effective by placing a sheet of paper on the low piano strings.24

43. **Triumphlied** - Johannes Brahms [1870-71] Germany
A work for eight part chorus, orchestra and solo baritone. It celebrates the German victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1871 and has an extended Halleluia section.

44. **Ma Vlast** - Bedrich Smetana [1875-79] Bohemia
Three of the symphonic poems from this work are war-related. Blaník is made up of marches and quotes the Hussite chorale “Ye who are God’s warriors.” Šárka is about a group of Amazon-like women who slaughter all of the sleeping men. Tábor is again about the Hussite army.

45. **1812 Overture** - Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky [1882] Russia
The most famous war piece in the repertoire today. It quotes several patriotic themes, such as La marseillaise and the Russian hymn, “God preserve thy people.” Even though crowds love it, critics didn't, and neither did Tchaikovsky, who called it a "very noisy" piece with "no great artistic value."25 The ending, with its bells and cannons, represents the victory of the Russians over Napoleon's army.

46. **Ein Heldenleben** - Richard Strauss [1897-98] Germany
In this tone poem written mostly about himself, Strauss does battle with his critics in the section called "The Hero's deeds of war". The hero theme conflicts with the critic theme and includes some daring dissonances and plenty of drama.

47. **Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh** - Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov [1903-05] Russia
Suite from an opera. The third movement is "The Tartar invasion and Battle of Kerzhenets". This movement has driving rhythms and dramatic climaxes. It makes much use of the percussion and brass.

48. **Le coq d'or** - Rimsky-Korsakov [1908]
An opera about a golden cockerel who is to warn the kingdom of approaching war. After a battle, the king laments the loss of his sons. This is mostly an anti-war piece.

**EARLY 20TH CENTURY / WORLD WAR I**
49. Mars, the Bringer of War - from The Planets - Gustav Holst [1914] England
Completed ironically just before the outbreak of war. This powerful work is in 5/4 meter with huge
climaxes and strong rhythms. Drum rolls and trumpets do battle over a threatening ostinato figure.

50. Visions Fugitives no. 19 - Sergei Prokofiev [1915] Russia
Prokofiev's response to the February Revolution. A chromatic work that uses the extreme registers
of the piano. A very quick and short piece.

51. En blanc et noir - Claude Debussy [1915] France
For two pianos, this is louder and more dissonant than usual for Debussy. The piece was influenced
by the events of war. Debussy was alternately despairing and riled at the mention of the German
armies. The second movement quotes a poem by Villón- 'Ballade contre les ennemis de la
France'. This movement contains cannon noises, bugle blasts, drum rolls, marching feet, a
Lutheran chorale and of course, a reference to "La marseillaise."

52. Second Orchestral Set, 3rd mvmt. - Charles Ives [1915] America
Called "From Hanover Square North of the End of A Tragic Day the People Again Arose". This
piece was inspired by an incident on May 7, 1915 when Ives received news of the sinking of the
ship Lusitania by a German submarine. Waiting for the train home he heard an organ grinder
playing "In the Sweet Bye and Bye". The crowd at the station slowly began to hum along and then
eventually to join in singing in a wonderful chorus. Then the train came in and the song faded
away. The piece has the typical Ivesian dissonances, polyrhythms and confusion.

53. He is There - Ives [1917]
A patriotic war song that quotes a lot of war tunes - "Battle Cry of Freedom", "Marching through
Georgia", "Over there", and "Tenting tonight".

54. In Flanders Fields - Ives [1917]
This song has more dissonant quotations of patriotic music. The text speaks of "row on row of
crosses" and larks singing "amidst the guns". This is a lament for those who lie dead in Flanders
Fields.

55. Tom Sails Away - Ives [1917]
A song that begins with happy scenes from childhood, juxtaposed with today when brother Tom
sails off to war "in freedom's cause". This mysterious and slow song quotes "Over there".

56. Four songs from "Fringes of the Fleet" - Edward Elgar [1917] England
These songs deal with submarines, mines, ships going off to war and sailors. These themes were
pretty popular at war time.

57. Le tombeau de Couperin - Maurice Ravel [1918] France
Intended as a homage to François Couperin, each movement was also dedicated to a soldier killed
in WWI. The music itself is not descriptive of war or of lament for war.

58. Aoua! from Chansons Madécasses - Ravel [1926]
This mournful and sometimes violent song speaks of the suffering and bloodshed that the whites
have brought upon these natives. It is a dissonant song with war cries and a long ostinato. Accompanied by flute, cello and piano.

59. **Symphony no. 3** - **Georges Enescu** [1919] Romania
An appealing symphony that is Enescu's masterpiece. Calls for a large orchestra and a wordless chorus in the final movement. Enescu was trying to portray the cycles of war and peace that he had lived through.²⁸

60. **Symphony no. 2** - **Dmitry Shostakovich** [1927] Russia
Written for the 10th anniversary of the Russian Revolution and known as the "October" symphony. Out of a confusing cluster section at the beginning emerges a march and a dance. A chorus joins in the finale. This is a brooding piece in one continuous movement.

Vaughan Williams sets Walt Whitman's "Beat! Beat! Drums!" with harsh, savage dissonances. He also sets "Reconciliation" and "Dirge for Two Veterans." The piece passes through the horror of war but the final mood is one of peace.

62. **Comedy on the Bridge** - **Bohuslav Martinů** [1937] Czechoslovakia
A radio-opera written as a parody of war. Five people get stuck in the middle of a bridge when the soldiers on either side won't let them exit. Eventually a war breaks out and they are told to get off the bridge to make way for the victory parade.

**WORLD WAR TWO**

63. **Symphony no. 1** - **Martinů** [1939]
The third movement of this work was written a month after the shocking destruction of the city of Lidice in Czechoslovakia. It is a slow, chromatic lament of great intensity.

64. **Symphony no. 2** - **Martinů** [1943]
A pastoral symphony dedicated to his countrymen. The third movement has trumpets quoting "La marseillaise" and uses lots of percussion. It has a triumphant ending.

65. **Quartet to the End of Time** - **Oliver Messiaen** [1941] France
This is an apocalyptic work - using text from Revelations about the destroying angel as its inspiration. Messiaen uses bird songs and interesting harmonies in its several movements. He wrote this while a prisoner in WWII.

66. **A Child of our Time** - **Michael Tippett** [1941] England
Tippett began to compose this oratorio before the war. It deals with the topics of suffering, starvation and death in war. It also includes the negro spirituals "Steal Away", "Nobody Knows the Trouble I See", "Go Down Moses", "By and By", and "Deep River". Some parts have violent and graphic texts: "And a time came when in the continual persecution one race stood for all. Away with them! Curse them! Kill them! They infect the State!" These texts are a reference to the Nazis and their ideas.

67. **Symphony no. 7** - **Shostakovich** [1941]
The most famous and most performed symphony written during the war. Much of the first
movement is a lengthy march which suggests the march of the Germans to invade Russia, which is what was happening at the time Shostakovich began the symphony. He also stated that it has just as much to do with the grim pre-war years in Russia.29

68. Symphony no. 8 - Shostakovich [1943]
This is much darker than his previous symphony. It uses a great deal of repetition, suggesting the length of the war. It also has a few "bomb blasts" in it. The work was censored in Russia for being too pessimistic and gloomy. Here Shostakovich contemplates the horrors of war and yearns for peace rather than victory. He wanted to "reflect the terrible tragedy of the war."30 The first movement gradually moves from a slow dirge to an urgent Allegro. The second and third movements are strict marches employing hollow textures, such as tuba and piccolo. The last movement progresses coldly like a machine. The tension never resolves at the end.

69. Symphony no. 2 - Arthur Honnegger [1942] Switzerland
A major work from the war period that ends triumphantly. The first movement is brilliantly orchestrated. The symphony is subtitled "Liturgie" because the three movements are given liturgical titles: Dies Irae, De profundis clamavi and Dona Nobis Pacem. Honnegger wanted to "revolt against the torrent of barbarism, stupidity, suffering, mechanization and bureaucracy"31 which was common to the times.

70. Symphony in three movements - Igor Stravinsky [1942-45] America
Although not explicitly about war, Stravinsky later commented that the third movement, with its grotesque brass band music, was influenced by the newsreels Stravinsky had seen of goose-stepping soldiers. This is Stravinsky's impression of the world events and "those abhorrent pictures."32

71. A Lincoln Portrait - Aaron Copland [1942] America
This popular patriotic work includes a narration of the Gettysburg address to honor the dead of World War II. It is a noble work that is still frequently performed.

72. Symphony no. 3 - Copland [1946]
Copland composed this to celebrate the end of the war. A Fanfare for the Common Man is incorporated into the fourth movement. It is an optimistic work expressing relief and joy for the war's end. It is also an honest portrayal of the terrible images of war.

73. A Litany and a Prayer - Gail Kubik [1943] America
A prayerful and solemn work that asks God to bless the nation, the government, the world, and each home. It is a respectful and hopeful piece with some daring harmonies and chromaticism. The Prayer is narrated over a repeated march rhythm.

74. Symphony no. 2 - Samuel Barber [1944] America
Barber was commissioned by the Air Force to write this piece while he was serving in the Army. It contains sounds of aircraft signals in the second movement. This was a large-scale and bold work, which ran contrary to Barber's nature. He later disliked the piece though it was precisely suited to the times.
75. **Symphony no. 5 - Prokofiev** [1944]
Completed in the dark years of WWII, with many dramatic outbursts and a lament in the third movement.

76. **Symphony no. 6 - Prokofiev** [1944-47]
Prokofiev stated that this was particularly inspired by the war years. "Now we are rejoicing in our great victory, but each of us has wounds which cannot be healed." It is much darker and less optimistic than his 5th symphony and evokes the great tragedy of war.

77. **Thanksgiving for Victory - Vaughan Williams** [1944]
This was written and recorded to be performed and broadcast on the day the war ended as a celebration of peace. It is not a pompous or proud work - rather it is simple and humbly thankful. Purely diatonic, it asks for a better future. Narrated.

78. **Symphony no. 6 - Vaughan Williams** [1948]
Although Vaughan Williams never revealed a program, this symphony has generally been considered his 'War Symphony.' Movement one emphasizes the trumpets and percussion. The slow movement is a sort of lament upon viewing a barren wasteland.

79. **Metamorphosen - Richard Strauss** [1945]
Written for 23 string instruments. A chromatic, sad work that was written at the time of Germany's defeat. It quotes extensively from the funeral march of Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony* to express remorse.

80. **Epitaph (on the Grave of a Young Cavalry Officer killed in the Valley of Virginia)**
   - **David Diamond** [1945] America
This brief song is tonal and peaceful - the poem speaks of all the things lost by the young soldier -- and also of his peaceful present situation.

81. **When Lilacs Last Bloom'd: A Requiem for Those We Love**
   - **Paul Hindemith** [1946] America
An intense setting of Walt Whitman's poem in a dissonant language. This work is dedicated to President Roosevelt and the soldiers killed in WWI. The tenth section speaks of the suffering of war, both by the living and the dead, and includes an offstage bugle playing Taps. A significant choral work of the era.

**POST WAR WORKS**

82. **Billy Budd** - **Benjamin Britten** [1951] England
Although not directly connected with a war, this opera has a battle scene in it. There is a big explosion on the stage and all of the crew gives a cheer. The fight is unsuccessful however.

83. **War Requiem - Britten** [1961]
A monumental work composed at the rededication of a British cathedral which had been destroyed by German bomb raids in WWII. Britten combines the Latin text of the Requiem with the powerful poetry of Wilfred Owen, a young British soldier killed in WWI. This is one of the most powerful war-related compositions of the century and makes a strong plea for peace. It also describes the
agonies of war extremely well. The stupidity of war is exemplified in Owens' retelling of the story of Abraham and Isaac. After the angel came to tell him not to slay his son, "the old man would not so, but slew his son, and half the seed of Europe, one by one." The power of this section is matched only by the final *Libera me* and the *Strange Meeting*, where the two soldiers of opposing sides, represented by the tenor and baritone soloists, meet in the afterlife. One of the soldiers reveals that he had been killed by the other and then suggests "Let us sleep now." The original soloists were Peter Pears (British), Dietrich Fischer Diskau (German) and Galina Vishnevskaya (Russian). Their nationalities were no coincidence for this symbolic performance. The War Requiem is just as powerful and meaningful today as it was in 1961.

84. **Dialogues des Carmelites** - Francis Poulenc [1953-55] France
This opera is set in the French Revolution and deals with the execution of Carmelite nuns. In the final chilling scene there is a march to the guillotine and their untimely demise.

85. **Symphony no. 11** - Henry Cowell [1953-54] America
Subtitled "7 Rituals of Music", the sixth movement is called "War." It has lots of repeated patterns and plenty of fortissimo chords.

86. **Il Canto Sospeso** - Luigi Nono [1956] Italy
This is based on words taken from letters written by resistance leaders that were killed in the war. All of the syllables are broken up, creating an odd pointillistic effect.

87. **La Guerra** - Renzo Rossellini [1956] Italy
A dramatic opera that simulates siren sounds and other war noises. It has a tragic ending.

This is based on the Bible text "To everything there is a season..." The second to least section portrays "a time of hate and war." This section has repeated notes and loud dynamic levels with a moderate level of dissonance. The piece was effective enough to win the Pulitzer Prize.

89. **Symphony no. 11** - Shostakovich [1957]
This symphony is titled "The Year 1905" - the year when Bloody Sunday occurred. The first movement is the quiet but foreboding Palace Square. In the second movement the citizens who are peacefully petitioning for help from the czar are slaughtered by his guards.

90. **Cantata para America Magica** - Alberto Ginastero [1960] Argentina
Written for soprano soloist and 53 percussion instruments. The third movement, "Canto para la partida de los guerreros", has to do with war. It is a primitive war dance, very complex rhythmically and energetic. The soprano must be dramatic to sing over the large ensemble.

91. **When Lilacs in the Dooryard Bloom’d** - Roger Sessions [1964-70] America
Another cantata based on Whitman's poem. This setting contains disjunct choral lines and much dissonance. There are complex rhythms and atonal harmonies. Whitman wrote the poem as a response to Lincoln's death. Sessions' cantata is a dramatic and powerful work.

A somewhat abstract and aleatoric, serious work for band. It has had thousands of performances since its publication, and was written as a protest of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

93. **Apotheosis of the Earth - Husa** [1970]  
For wind bands. This piece in the second section depicts the utter destruction and disintegration of the earth, probably after a nuclear war. It is a serial composition and one of the most performed end-of-world pieces.

94. **Look Down Fair Moon from Canta lunatici - Bernard Rands** [1980] England  
Another setting of Whitman's poetry in a song cycle dedicated to diverse poems about the moon. This brief song starts very high with a mumbling woodwind accompaniment. Then when the poem speaks of 'faces ghastly', the voice skips to the low husky range accompanied by grotesque sounds out of the brass.

Based on Walt Whitman's poem. Whitman often visited the wounded soldiers during the Civil War, tending to their needs. This moving work begins with a ghostly atmosphere -- representing the suffering soldiers, and moves to a powerful climax. For chamber orchestra and baritone, also includes some synthetic sounds.

**HOLOCAUST**

96. **A Survivor from Warsaw - Arnold Schoenberg** [1947] Austria  
An extremely dramatic and emotional work representing the Holocaust. It is highly structured using twelve-tone technique. Taken from a true story by a survivor of the Nazi camps. The most dramatic moment is when the prisoners must count off before going to the gas chamber. The counting starts slowly then becomes faster and faster and then they all break out into a hymn. Here the chorus enters for the rest of the piece. The first part is all narrated using Sprechstimme.

97. **Symphony no. 13 - Shostakovich** [1962]  
This symphony has a very dark sound to it because of the low orchestration, men's chorus and bass soloist. The text deals with the persecution of the Jews and how the Russian poet identifies with the persecution and oppression - sympathizes with his sorrow and pain. Other parts of the text celebrate the vitality of the human spirit, pay homage to Russian women, confront fears and honor the hero.

98. **Dies Irae - Krzysztof Penderecki** [1967] Poland  
This is a disturbing work that is dedicated to those murdered at Auschwitz. Penderecki creates a frightening atmosphere in this oratorio with choral tone clusters, glissandos and chanting. He also uses quarter tones, unspecified pitches, sirens, chains and bells to create a chaotic sound mass. The setting is definitely scary yet fitting for the horrific subject. The shouting and chaotic groaning in the piece are terrifying.

99. **Symphony no. 3 - Henryk Gorecki** [1977] Poland  
For soprano and orchestra. A very simple minimalist work that is quite expressive. The slow second movement is based on the text taken from the scribblings of an eighteen year old Jewish girl on the wall of her prison cell in Zacopane.
ATOM BOMB
100. Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima - Penderecki [1959-60]
Another terrifying work by Penderecki dedicated to those who died or were affected by the dropping of the atom bomb at the end of WWII. The piece uses massive tone clusters, all sorts of percussive string effects and indeterminacy to depict the horror of the event. Weird plucking and pizzicato effects suggest the aftermath of the bomb drop. The piece also simulates plane engines noises and other war sounds. Absolutely frightening.

101. One antipersonnel-type CBU bomb will be thrown into the audience - Phil Corner [1969]
America. Never performed. Only the title exists.

VIETNAM
An odd recitation of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address by a man wearing a gas mask. He inhales helium while reciting in a high-pitched voice. Along with this are film clips of the war and deafeningly loud pre-recorded music. A strong protest of the war.

The style of these songs is quite different from Rorem's usual style. These gory war songs set to Whitman's poetry are angry and dissonant with large vocal leaps and loud abstract piano accompaniment. He dedicated these to those who fought in Vietnam -- both sides.

The only composition to come out of the Vietnam Era that is still performed today. Written for electric string quartet with 13 number symbolic sections in an arch form. Players are called upon to shout, count in German, play some percussion instruments (like striking a gong or bowing wine glasses). There are many innovative textural devices that make this piece very interesting. Some parts are violent while others are melancholy.

105. A Record of Our Time - Gail Kubik [1970]
In stark contrast to Kubik's earlier piece, A Litany and a Prayer, which supported the government. This piece is strongly anti-war and even anti-government. This shows how much public opinion about war had changed from WWII to the Vietnam War. The work starts out with a prayer, then a backstage narrator with an altered voice speaks out saying 'this is what the prayer really meant' and the chorus responds with a prayer of violence, wishing death and suffering to their enemies. It is a very bitter and surprising twist. In the middle of the work, the chorus begins chanting war slogans one by one until all together they sound like a raging mob. A harsh piece towards war.

Originally commissioned for Nixon's second Inauguration. It was based on Lincoln's second Inaugural Address. The scheduled performance was canceled after they realized that some of the references to war in the Address might be embarrassing to President Nixon, who was in the midst of the Vietnam controversy. For Orchestra and Narrator.

107. Illumination Rounds - David A. Lang [1982]
This piece for viola and piano deals with guns. It is percussive and somewhat violent.
ENDNOTES:

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15 [ARNOLD] p. 322.
16 [ARNOLD] p. 31.
18 Liner Notes – Haydn, Symphony no. 100 (Lydian 18081).
21 [ARNOLD] p. 56.
22 Liszt’s remarks in the preface to Héroïde Funèbre.
23 Liner Notes – Liszt piano works (Digital LDRS 71096).
25 [ARNOLD] p. 94.
26 Liner Notes – En blanc et noir – for two pianos (Philips 9500 434).
27 Liner Notes – Ives, Symphony no. 3 (CBS IMT 37823).
28 Liner Notes – Georges Enescu, Symphony no. 3 (Olympia OCD 443).
29 Liner Notes – Shostakovich, Symphony no. 7 (EMI CDC 7 49494 2).
30 Liner Notes – Shostakovich, Symphony no. 8 (Digital 411 616-2).
31 Liner Notes – Honnegger, Symphony no. 2 (Deutsche Grammophon 423 242-2).
32 Liner Notes – Stravinsky, Rite of Spring (Sony SK 45796).
33 Liner Notes – Prokofiev Complete Symphonies (Chandos Chan 8931-34).
34 Liner Notes – Vaughan Williams Symphony no. 6 (EMI CDH7 63308 2).
36 Liner Notes – Shostakovich, Symphony no. 11 (D.G. 429 405-2).
38 Liner Notes – Shostakovich, Symphony no. 13 (Digital 417 261-2).