



John Wesley Strickler, *Music Director & Conductor*

GIVE ME FIVE!

2010 SCHOOL CONCERTS

Presented by

the

GULF COAST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Listening Guide

by

Timothy James Bergman, D.M.A.

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GIVE Me FIVE!

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Listening Guide of the 2010 School Concerts, presented by the Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra. The purpose of these concerts is to educate and entertain young students while exploring great music with a symphony orchestra. I'm pleased that your school and students will be participating in a memorable event.

Give Me Five! focuses on what is undoubtedly the most famous piece for orchestra, Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. It has maintained a powerful grip on listener's imaginations for a little over two hundred years. It is also a testament to Beethoven's keen mind and discipline during a period in his life when he had to accept his deteriorating deafness as irreversible and inevitable. The victorious message contained in the music of his Fifth Symphony, achieved through struggle, grace, humor, reflection, and contemplation, is a message for the ages.

As conductor and scriptwriter, I've sought to highlight the qualities of this great work through insightful demonstrations and use good-natured humor to break down the barriers that can intimidate young audiences. Some additional musical surprises are also in store for the audience, adding to the fun of active listening. However, these concerts carefully preserve the integrity of the music selections and cultivate an appreciation for music-making and music listening as a noble, human activity.

I hope this Listening Guide will be an aid to your students and remind all of us to love music!

Timothy James Bergman is executive director of the Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra. Since 2001, he has been music director of the Gulf Coast Symphony Youth Orchestra, an educational program of the GCSO. Previously, he was music director of the Greater Miami Youth Symphonies, the Louisiana Youth Orchestras, and assistant conductor of the Baton Rouge Symphony. He earned degrees from Stetson University, the University of Connecticut, and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Miami.

About the Compact Disc and School Concerts

The accompanying compact disc performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 was conducted by famed American composer and conductor Gunther Schuller. It was recorded on September 16-17, 1995 at the Manhattan School of Music, with an orchestra of professional musicians personally selected by the conductor. The original CD, issued by GM Recordings, also included Symphony No. 1 by Johannes Brahms.

This recording was a companion to Schuller's *The Compleat Conductor*, a pedagogic text for aspiring and experienced conductors. It was a demonstration of Schuller's musical interpretative ideals for delivering a faithful and accurate performance of Beethoven's score. His intent was to reveal Beethoven's unique mercurial genius while pulling away from interpretative indulgencies that have accumulated since the Symphony premiered in 1808.

In many respects, Schuller's approach paralleled the "authenticity" or "early music" movement. The "authenticity movement" viewed the performance of music written before the 20th-century as a re-creative process based on understanding the performance practices of past eras and utilizing "authentic instruments" (or reproductions of instruments) pertinent to their time. The movement gained momentum in the 1980s and, despite heated debate (by no means ended in the present), has had enormous influence on contemporary musicians and listeners.

Countering the tenets of certain "authenticists," Schuller applied his musical intellect to realizing a performance based first and foremost on textual fidelity to Beethoven's score, with a scholar's eye to historical knowledge, as applied to the modern orchestra.

For the School Concerts, the performances by the Gulf Coast Symphony of Beethoven's masterpiece will attempt to emulate Schuller's example. To help achieve that goal, GCSO will use the respected "critical" edition of score and parts edited by Jonathan Del Mar, published in 1999 by Bärenreiter, to ensure textual accuracy.

BEETHOVEN BIOGRAPHY

Ludwig van Beethoven was born December 16, 1770 and showed an interest in music by age 3. His first music teacher was his father, a musician in the Court of Bonn. Beethoven gave his first public performance at age 7 and published his first composition by age 12.

In 1784, age 14, he was appointed organist of the court of Maximilian Franz, Elector of Cologne. Prince Franz sent Beethoven to Vienna in 1787 to meet Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (no definite record of such a meeting exists) and further his musical education, but the death of Beethoven's mother soon brought him back to Bonn. After serving as a violinist in the Opera of Bonn, Beethoven went back to Vienna in 1792 and never returned to his home city. Further studies with Haydn, Albrechtsberger, and Antonio Salieri (Mozart's antagonist in the fictitious *Amadeus*) solidified his training through 1799. Meanwhile, Beethoven astounded the Viennese public with his virtuosity and improvisatory skills on the piano.

On March 29, 1795, Beethoven made his first public appearance in Vienna, featuring performances of his own compositions. He focused his energies on composing and publishing his works, reaching a milestone in 1800 with the premiere of his Symphony No. 1. The innovative qualities of his music were evident and he was looked upon as heir to the legacy of great composers.

About 1796, Beethoven noticed his hearing was affected by sensations of whistling and buzzing, with a painful reaction to loud noises. This condition, whose medical origin has led to much speculation by historians, signaled a progressive hearing loss, beginning in the left ear and spreading to the right.

By 1798, his deafness was unmistakable and he confessed his "greatly deteriorated" hearing in letters written in 1801. In 1814, he began using ear trumpets, a selection of which were made for him by Johann Nepomuk Mäzel, the inventor of the metronome. Unfortunately, they proved of limited use. His last public performance on piano was in January 1815. In 1818, he started to use conversation books whereby visitors could communicate to him in writing (a fascinating record of daily, if often one-sided, conversations). By 1821, he

was totally deaf in most respects, although he could detect low frequency sounds in his left ear.

In a personal document written in 1802 that was never made public (known as the “Heiligenstadt Testament”), Beethoven described his anguish over his hearing loss and growing alienation with other people (as described by Helen Keller, blindness separates people from things, whereas deafness separates people from people). However, he also expressed the courage to continue living and prevail by fulfilling his artistic vision.

Appropriately, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 of 1803 was subtitled “Eroica” (“Heroic”). It was originally dedicated to Napoleon Bonaparte, When Napoleon turned his back on political reforms and proclaimed himself Emperor of France, Beethoven replaced the dedication with a more vague phrase, “composed to celebrate the memory of a great man.”*

The “Eroica” exemplified Beethoven’s “middle period” in which heroism and struggle infused his compositions, pushing the boundaries of convention and looking toward the emerging Romanticism of music. His “late period”, beginning around 1815, produced compositions of increased intellectual depth, introspection, and structural innovations.

Contemporaries described Beethoven as stubborn and irascible. Growing deafness amplified these traits as he withdrew from social contact. Philosophically, he supported democratic ideals in an age of political upheavals. In 1815, he adopted his nephew Karl, after the death of his brother Kaspar Karl. Beethoven’s life became troubled by Karl’s unhappiness and custody battles with his mother.

In addition to his deafness, Beethoven had numerous and lengthy bouts of illness beginning in his twenties. His final years brought declining health, although his creative powers remained strong. He died in 1827 due to liver disease (cirrhosis or hepatitis).

Beethoven usually composed in a slow and deliberate manner, preferring to work out his sketches and ideas before producing a finished composition. The support of wealthy patrons and the universal fame he enjoyed in his lifetime contributed to an independence from daily financial worry. However,

the lavish attention he poured on his nephew and the production of his concerts did put a strain on finances.

Beethoven composed a total of 138 numbered works (opus numbers), plus 205 additional works published after his death. Among these were the opera *Fidelio*, 9 symphonies (including the Ninth with its choral hymn “Ode to Joy”), 2 masses (including *Missa Solemnis*), A Choral Fantasy for piano, chorus and orchestra; overtures, 5 piano concertos, a violin concerto, 16 string quartets, 32 piano sonatas, plus chamber music and vocal works.

**Historical side note:* Beethoven’s connection to Napoleon continued soon after the premiere of Symphony No. 5 in December 1808. France declared war on Austria in April 1809. On May 10-11, Napoleon laid siege on Vienna and occupied it for a time. During the battle, Beethoven hid in a basement, covering his ears with pillows to protect what was left of his hearing from cannon shell blasts.

Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67

Ludwig van Beethoven

b. December 16, 1770; Bonn

d. March 26, 1827; Vienna

Composed: 1807-08 in Vienna; sketches from 1800, 1801, and 1804

Dedicated: Prince Franz Joseph von Lobkowitz and Count Andreas Razumovsky, Beethoven's patrons; the prince and count were brothers-in-law

Premiere: December 22, 1808; Theatre an der Wien; conducted by Beethoven

For: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon; 2 French horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones; timpani; strings (1st & 2nd violins, violas, cellos, basses)

Duration: About 35 minutes

BACKGROUND OF SYMPHONY NO. 5

True to his work ethic, Beethoven took great pains in composing the Fifth Symphony. His surviving sketches show numerous rewrites and discarded passages, providing glimpses into his creative process.

The premiere performance of the Fifth Symphony was an exhausting experience for performers and audience alike. The assembled musicians performed a long and difficult program of new Beethoven works with only a single rehearsal, including Symphonies Nos. 5 & 6, Piano Concerto No. 4 (played by Beethoven), selections from Mass in C, the Choral Fantasy, and an aria ("Ah, Perfido!").

The music was poorly executed and at one point Beethoven, as conductor, had to stop and restart the Choral Fantasy. The theatre was also unheated during a bitter winter night. Musician J.F. Riechardt, who shared a box with Prince Lobkowitz, later wrote: "There we sat from 6:30-10:30 in the most bitter cold, and found by experience that one might have too much even of a good thing."

It's not surprising that the Fifth Symphony drew little critical response under such trying circumstances. Riechardt described it as "...a grand, very

elaborate, too long of a Symphony in C minor....” However, a second performance a year and a half later prompted a rapturous review by E.T.A. Hoffman in the periodical *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* (“General Music Journal”):

“Radiant beams shoot through the deep night of this region, and we become aware of gigantic shadows which, rocking back and forth, close in on us and destroy all within us except the pain of endless longing—a longing in which every pleasure that rose up amid jubilant tones sinks and succumbs. Only through this pain [...] do we live on and are captivate beholders of the spirits.”

The Symphony was published in 1809 and soon acquired its status as a central item of the orchestral repertoire. As an emblem of classical music, it was featured in the inaugural concerts of such diverse orchestras as the New York Philharmonic (1842) and the National Symphony Orchestra (Washington D.C., 1931).

Shorter in length than the groundbreaking “Eroica” Symphony (55 minutes compared to 35 for the Fifth), the Fifth Symphony nonetheless packs much emotional power and musical detail in its lean structure. The Fifth seems to cry out for an interpretation of its dramatic musical content. Beethoven’s love of contrasts—sometimes violent in their juxtaposition—are a particular highlight of the Fifth (i.e., sudden “softs and louds,” unexpected accents, tempo and rhythmic changes, shifts of mood and character, the brilliant link between the 3rd and 4th Movements). The Fifth is a dramatic journey from darkness and conflict (C Minor) to triumph and victory (C Major).

Beethoven’s search for new sounds and expression are also revealed with the addition of piccolo, contrabassoon, and three trombones in the fourth movement. Previous to the Fifth, these instruments had not been included in the genre of the symphony, or in orchestral concert music as a whole.

CD TRACK 1 — 6:21

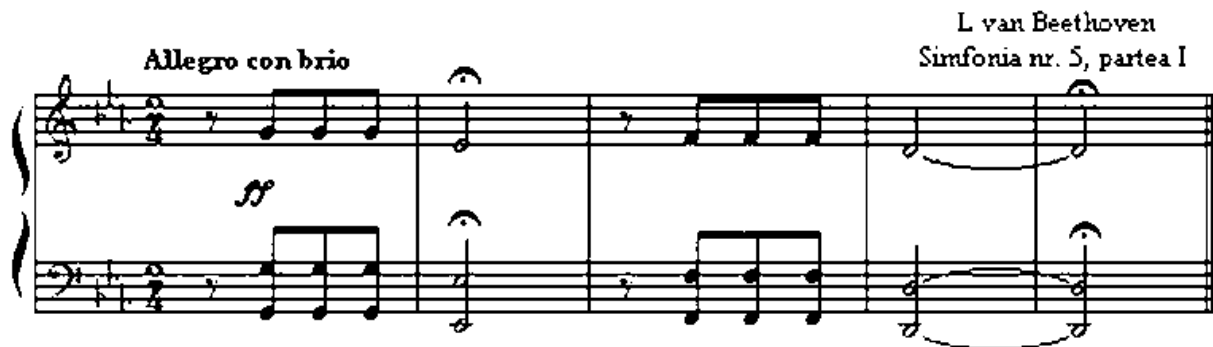
Movement I — Allegro con brio (“Quick; Lively, with spirit”)

Sonata-allegro form

Exposition, Development, Recapitulation (return of exposition) and Coda.

Beethoven’s first biographer, Anton Schindler, claimed Beethoven made this statement about the famous four-note Motive that permeates this movement: “Thus Fate knocks at the door.” The Motive’s rhythmic structure (short-short-short-long) is identical to the letter “V” in Morse code and was used by the Allies during World War II as a musical reference to “V for Victory.”

The oboe cadenza (see 3:50) was an innovative feature, having no precedent in symphonies written by Beethoven or other composers.



EXPOSITION

(0:00) THEME A (C Minor) - The famous four-note Motive with two statements and dramatic pauses. The Motive becomes Theme A, dominated by strings. Two more statements, with pauses, lead to great cascades of the Motive.

(0:36) BRIDGE 1 (modulation) - French horns play an emphatic form of the Motive (Bridge Variant).

(0:39) THEME B (E-flat Major) - This sunny, lyrical theme is passed between violins, clarinet, and flute, then builds to a joyous outburst. The Motive shadows Theme B, at first softly in the cellos and bass, then with increasing power as it takes over the entire orchestra, ending on a dramatic silence.

(1:13) EXPOSITION REPEAT - The foregoing are heard again.

(2:26) BRIDGE 2 (modulation) - French horns and clarinets aggressively state the Bridge Variant and are answered by massed strings with dramatic pause.

DEVELOPMENT

(2:30) Theme A returns, similar to the beginning, and quickly builds in volume and momentum.

(2:58) The Bridge variant of the Motive reappears. The variant is then simplified into a mysterious swaying between winds and strings, with a short outburst in the middle (recall Hoffman's "gigantic shadows...rocking back and forth..."). The Development closes with a powerful return of the Motive.

RECAPITULATION (C Minor)

(3:35) THEME A - The Motive sounds, with dramatic pauses, but more emphatic than before. The First Theme is interrupted by:

(3:50) CADENZA - Oboe plays a plaintive solo (marked Adagio - "Slowly")

(4:01) The First Theme resumes; more cascades of the Motive.

(4:20) BRIDGE 3 - Bassoons (instead of French horns) announce the emphatic Bridge Variant of the Motive.

(4:22) THEME B - Violins and flute pass the Second Theme back and forth; clarinet joins the flute. As before, the Motive shadows the Second Theme, through the joyous outburst, then takes over the orchestra.

CODA

(5:00) The Motive drives forward, but is halted first by timid clarinets, bassoons, and French horns, then by more insistent winds and timpani.

(5:13) As if changing tactics, the Bridge Variant comes into play and pushes ahead with the strides of a giant.

(5:23) A variant of the Second Theme emerges from the strides, then is passed between massed strings and winds.

(5:57) The Motive surges to its two most powerful statements with dramatic pauses.

(6:03) The Motive sounds mysteriously with wistful bassoon, clarinet and flute, then fires up for a defiant conclusion.

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CD TRACK 2 — 8:36

Movement II — Andante con moto (“Moderately slow, with movement”)

Double variation form: A B A¹ B¹ A² A³ B² A⁴ A⁵ A⁶ Coda

L. van Beethoven
Simfonia nr. 5, partea II

Andante con moto
Vle, Vlc.

p dolce

f *p*

(0:00) A (A-flat major) - The triple meter suggests a dance, but theme A has a hymn-like quality that seems to look forward to peace beyond victory. Violas and cellos begin; woodwinds play a benediction-like tag. A transition anticipates the B theme and brings a joyous outburst, leading to:

(1:05) B (C major) - A regal and festive theme, with dominating French horns and trumpets. Soft, reflective strings and bassoons bring on:

(1:42) A¹ (A-flat major) - Violas and cellos play a brief variation. The original form of the theme returns, along with the anticipation of B.

(2:47) B¹ (C major) - The brass-dominated theme returns with greater excitement. Soft strings and bassoons also return, but cellos now add rhythmic accompaniment that is similar to the Motive of Movement I.

(3:24) A² (A-flat major) - Violas and cellos play a more florid variation.

(3:39) First violins carry on; clarinets and bassoons punctuate their progress.

(3:55) Cellos and basses play a boisterous statement; the orchestra pauses at the peak.

(4:15) A³ (A-flat major) - Strings softly play a hesitant, step-like rhythm. Clarinet, then bassoon play a fragment of the theme. Flute, oboe, and clarinets extend the fragment into a swirl of sound when the steps come to a halt. A build-up dispels the lingering doubt and:

(5:02) B² (C Major) - The regal theme sounds boldly, poised and ready for what lies ahead. It dissipates to soft strings that gain momentum for:

(5:41) A⁴ (A-flat Major) - Flute, clarinet, and bassoon play a skipping variation. Flute and oboe begin a transition passage. Strings take over and lead an energetic upward climb to:

(6:17) A⁵ (A-flat Major) - Full orchestra statement: Violins play the theme; flutes, clarinets, and bassoons answer them in close canon. Another upward climb arrives at a calm statement of the benediction and theme.

(7:00) A⁶ (A-flat Major) - [Più moto (“faster; more movement”)] A shift to faster tempo brings new life. A bassoon quietly plays over a rustic “oom-pah” accompaniment by the strings. Oboe adds a sly smile to a short phrase by the violas and cellos. First violins and cellos athletically reach upward and the music brakes, returning to the slower tempo for the calm benediction and theme.

(7:51) CODA (A-flat Major) - Clarinets and bassoons sweetly intones a fragment of A. Violas, cellos, and basses play a rhythmic wind-up that increases in strength. Two soft chords bring reassurance and the full orchestra firmly brings the movement to an end.

CD TRACK 3 — 4:35

Movement III — Allegro (“Lively”)

Movements III and IV are linked together. A short version of the 3rd also appears within the 4th. Because of this, these movements should be regarded as one unit.

Scherzo form: (scherzo and trio)

The scherzo (“joke”) was developed by Beethoven as a faster, more playful and expressive form of the minuet and trio (a contrasting section, so called because it originally featured three instruments). This brief scherzo is unique among all others he wrote, for it functions as an epilogue to the tensions of the previous movements and a prologue to Movement IV.

L. van Beethoven
Simfonia nr. 5, partea III

Allegro

pp

pp

SCHERZO (C Minor)

(0:00) **THEME 1** - Cellos and basses play a hushed, ghostly theme. Upper strings and winds quietly join in. Two lingering pauses interrupt the flow.

(0:16) **THEME 2** - French horns perform a thrusting march-like theme that seems to refer to the Motive of Movement I. Woodwinds and upper strings take over.

(0:31) **THEME 1** - The ghostly theme returns and is slightly extended to:

(0:49) **THEME 2** - French horns again take the lead, but now the full orchestra lends its full weight to the theme.

(1:05) **THEME 1** - The main theme is now varied and greatly extended, maintaining its mystery through a built up to a brief statement of Theme 2.

TRIO (C Major)

(1:31) THEME 3 - Cellos and basses introduce a rambunctious theme, imitated by violas and bassoons, then second violins, and finally first violins. Woodwinds, brass, and timpani cap this section which is repeated.

(2:02) Cellos and basses play a halting fragment of Theme C. A variation of the previous imitative passage is played, now greatly extended and achieving enormous momentum by the full orchestra.

(2:29) The halting fragment begins again and proceeds in a similar fashion. However, it transforms to a soft, calmer appearance. Flute falls from a sun-filled height, to oboe, then clarinet and bassoon, to cellos and basses playing pizzicato (“plucked”). The latter bring back:

SCHERZO (C Minor)

(2:58) Theme 1 - After the first pause, pizzicato cellos and bassoon play the theme, joined by the rest of the strings.

(3:17) Theme 2 - Hushed clarinet, oboe, bassoon, and staccato strings maintain a spectral mood for this theme.

(3:34) Theme 1 - Staccato strings and bassoon now present a nearly “skeletal” version of Theme 1, with subdued reminders of Theme 2 sounded by oboe and French horn. A brief statement of Theme 2 arrives at:

(4:02) Transition - Timpani mysteriously intones the rhythm of Theme 2 (highlighting its similarity to the Motive of Movement I) at the most extreme level of softness. Strings provide a static “pedal point.” First violins then play a twisting, swaying version of Theme 1, with basses lending more rhythmic variety. The violins wind upward, then reach a ceiling in which the entire orchestra quietly enters and builds to a powerful wave of sound to:

CD TRACK 4 - 10:16

Movement IV – Allegro (“Lively”)

This movement is arrived through Movement III, performed without a break.

Sonata Allegro: Exposition, Development, Recapitulation, Coda & Extension

For the first time in the genre of the symphony, piccolo, contrabassoon, and three trombones are added to the orchestra. The return of Movement III within the body of this movement was a structural innovation that also had no precedent (see 5:22).

L. van Beethoven
Simfonia nr. 5, partea IV

Allegro

EXPOSITION

(0:00) THEME 1 (C Major) - A new tempo is established (slower) and the full orchestra (including piccolo, contrabassoon, and trombones) presents a victorious, march-like theme. Joyousness seems to overflow and the theme quickly gains a dance-like character.

(0:33) THEME 2 (C Major) - French horns and woodwinds present a grand, heroic theme. When violins take up the theme, low strings, bassoon, and contrabassoon provide a rhythmic accompaniment that suggests the Motive of Movement I.

(0:59) THEME 3 (G Major) - Strings command a scampering theme of alternating force and grace. [The short ascending line in the cellos during the soft passages will grow in the Development to virtually a stand-alone theme (THEME 3A).] After a tremendous rush of energy and a near-stop...

(1:25) THEME 4 (G Major) - Violas and clarinet carry a descending theme of seemingly simplicity. Piccolo provides a couple of flourishes and a joyous scramble builds up again, setting up the return of:

(1:56) EXPOSITION REPEAT - The foregoing are heard again.

DEVELOPMENT

(3:58) Theme 3 is modified and varied. Theme 3A begins to softly emerge, first by violas and cellos, then violins and violas. Woodwinds soar to an impressive height and bring on:

(4:21) Strings forcefully state Themes 3 and 3A simultaneously; brass add their voice to Theme 3A, then 3A is treated in imitation by full orchestra. Fragments of Theme 3 hang on until the arrival of:

(4:55) A powerful treatment of 3A. An atmosphere of expectation is set for the return of Theme 1. Tension reaches a breaking point, but what follows is...

(5:22) SCHERZO (Movement III variant) - The Scherzo returns, as if a reminder of where the journey began. A “skeletal” version of the Scherzo’s Theme 2 is played by pizzicato strings. Clarinets, then oboe, quietly alternate with strings. Pulsating clarinets, French horns, and violas mysteriously intone the rhythm of Theme 2 (similar to the timpani at the end of Movement III). A sudden crescendo with the help of timpani announces:

RECAPITULATION (C Major)

(5:54) THEME 1 - Full orchestra again expresses joyous victory.

(6:28) THEME 2 - The grand, heroic second theme also returns. The hint of the Motive from Movement I also returns - first by the cellos, basses, and contrabassoon; then piccolo.

(6:58) THEME 3 - This theme returns, as does the subtle presence of Theme 3A. Again the rush of energy and near-stop.

(7:24) THEME 4 - This deceptively simple theme brings the entire orchestra to a new level of tension and, finally, a new place:

CODA

(7:51) THEMES 3 & 3A - Much like the Development section, these two themes are presented simultaneously, but 3A takes command with the full woodwinds and brass. Short, powerful chords imply that a stopping point may soon be reached. Instead:

(8:21) THEME 2 (Variation) - Loud bassoons, then soft French horns, present a fragment of Theme 2 and presents it as a virtually new theme. The orchestra takes on the theme and piccolo adds playful flourishes. Massed strings and contrabassoon strongly announce the fragment again and another buildup occurs. Excited piccolo trills and flourishes add to the radiance.

(9:03) TRANSITION - Strings and woodwinds (including French horns) bounce back and forth. The volume and speed steadily increases. Trumpets and timpani cap off the end of a sweeping rush and:

EXTENSION

(9:14) PRESTO (“Very fast”) - Theme 4 quietly, but irresistibly, pushes the orchestra with swinging accents. A roaring swell of sound is created and:

(9:29) THEME 1 - The orchestra blazes in full glory. The onrush of joy is unstoppable and the symphony ends with a brilliant final hold over rolling timpani.