

# BSO SESSIONS

## SEASON 1, EPISODE 5: FLOW

**Nicholas Hersh**, conductor

**Jonathan Rush**, conductor

**BÖHME**

**Sextet for Brass, op. 30**

I. Adagio ma non tanto - Allegro molto

**BEETHOVEN**

**Sextet for Winds, op. 71**

II. Adagio

Nicholas Hersh, conductor

**BÖHME**

**Sextet for Brass, op. 30**

II. Scherzo: Allegro vivace

**BEETHOVEN**

**Sextet for Winds, op. 71**

IV. Rondo

Nicholas Hersh, conductor

**FARRENC**

**Sextet in C Minor, op. 40**

I. Allegro

II. Andante sostenuto

Jonathan Rush, conductor

**STRAVINSKY**

**Octet for Winds**

Jonathan Rush, conductor

CREDITS:

**BEETHOVEN** March for Wind Sextet, WoO 29

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# OSKAR BÖHME

## Sextet for Brass, op. 30

### ABOUT THE COMPOSER

*Born 1870 in Potschappel, Germany; died 1938 in Orenburg, Russia*

- Böhme was born in Germany and started his musical career as a trumpet player.
- He moved to St. Petersburg where he eventually won a job playing cornet with the prestigious Mariinsky Theatre, a position he held for 24 years.
- In the 1930s, Böhme lost his job and was exiled from St. Petersburg during the Stalin regime. He ended up in the small provincial city of Orenburg where he worked as a school music teacher.
- Böhme was eventually arrested and shot after a fake trial during Stalin's Great Purge. Although his catalog of music is small, Böhme's musical contributions to brass repertoire are cherished.

### FUN FACT

The last years of Böhme's life were shrouded in mystery — that is, until 80 years later and after extensive research, German correspondent Christian Neef published *The Saint Petersburg Trumpeter*, shining light on details of Böhme's life never known before.

### ABOUT THE PIECE

- Böhme most likely wrote his Brass Sextet in 1906 — less than ten years after moving to Russia.
- The Romantic work, which reveals both Russian and German influences, is one of the most beloved pieces of chamber music in the brass repertoire.

### THE WORLD AT A GLANCE

## 1906

⋮

#### MUSIC

Gustav Mahler's  
Symphony No. 6

⋮

#### ART

Claude Monet's  
*Water Lilies*

⋮

#### LITERATURE

Upton Sinclair's  
*The Jungle*

⋮

#### MEDICINE

The term "allergy"  
is coined

⋮

#### HISTORY

Persian Constitutional  
Revolution continues

# BEETHOVEN

## Sextet for Winds, op. 71

“Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy.” – Beethoven

### ABOUT THE COMPOSER

*Born 1770 in Bonn, Germany; died 1827 in Vienna, Austria*

- Beethoven was born into a musical family. His grandfather was a prominent musician, and his father was his first music teacher and maintained a rigorous practice schedule for Beethoven. His father attempted to promote him as a child prodigy, even lying about his age.
- Beethoven began studying composition and published his first work when he was 13 years old. He moved to Vienna to advance his studies and took lessons with Haydn.
- Beethoven’s talents as a musician gained him the attention of a group of wealthy patrons in Vienna, most notably Prince Lichnowsky and Prince Lobkowitz, who helped support his career.
- By the time his first two symphonies premiered, Beethoven was recognized as one of the most important composers of his generation and a successor to the recently deceased Mozart.
- Around his 30th birthday, Beethoven’s hearing began to deteriorate. He fell into a deep depression but wrote with resolve to his brother “seize fate by the throat; it shall certainly not crush me completely.” During the last decade of his life, Beethoven was almost completely deaf. It was during this period that he would create some of the most moving works of all time.
- Beethoven is widely considered one of the world’s greatest and most influential composers. He ushered in the Romantic era, and his music is some of the most recognizable and most frequently performed still today, almost 200 years after his death.

### FUN FACT

Beethoven was a rebel. He showed disdain throughout his lifetime for authority and social rank, unafraid to stand up to royalty and nobility. In fact, after getting into an argument with Prince Lichnowsky once, Beethoven left a note saying “What you are, you are by accident of birth; what I am, I am by myself. There are and will be a thousand princes; there is only one Beethoven.”

### ABOUT THE PIECE

- Beethoven started composing music for winds in the 1790s while employed by the Archduke Maximilian Franz in Bonn. Franz employed a wind ensemble to accompany his meals, and it has been said that Franz thought wind music helped his digestion.
- Beethoven was 26 and in his Early Period when writing this work, which is evident by its Mozart-inspired sound. The Sextet was written in 1796, several years before Beethoven’s first symphony, but would not be premiered for another decade.

### THE WORLD AT A GLANCE

## 1796

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#### MUSIC

Giacomo Puccini is born

⋮

#### LITERATURE

Jane Austen begins writing *Pride and Prejudice*

⋮

#### MEDICINE

First smallpox vaccination is administered

⋮

#### HISTORY

French Revolutionary Wars continue

# LOUISE FARRENC

## Sextet in C Minor, op. 40

### ABOUT THE COMPOSER

*Born 1804 in Paris, France; died 1875 in Paris, France*

- Louise Farrenc, née Dumont, was raised in an artist's colony in Paris, and her father and brother were both successful sculptors.
- She started studying music at an early age, taking lessons with the composer Johann Nepomuk Hummel (who studied with Mozart) and showing a great deal of promise as a pianist. At age 15 she began to study composition with a professor from the Paris Conservatory.
- At 17, Louise married a fellow musician, Aristide Farrenc, and the two performed concerts together throughout France. Aristide was extremely supportive of Louise's career as a composer, and they had one daughter together who ended up becoming a professional pianist herself. Later on, Louise and Aristide opened Editions Farrenc, which became the most successful music publishing house in Paris over the next 40 years.
- Farrenc attracted fame as a performer and became the only woman to be appointed professor at the prestigious Paris Conservatory. She served as a Professor of Piano there for 30 years.
- After many years of demanding fair compensation from the Conservatory, Farrenc was eventually granted equal pay to her male counterparts, but only after her career as a composer gained notoriety.
- Farrenc wrote over 60 works and enjoyed great success in her lifetime. After her death, her music fell into obscurity in the male-dominated canon of Western classical music, though thankfully her work is now seeing renewed interest and recognition.

### (NOT SO) FUN FACT

It would be another 100 years before another woman was awarded the position of professor at the Paris Conservatory.

### ABOUT THE PIECE

- Written in 1852, this piece was composed for piano and winds, an unconventional combination at the time, and is generally considered the first work to use this particular instrumentation.
- Virtuoso pianist that she was, the majority of Farrenc's early works are written for piano. However, it is her chamber music that is often considered her greatest work. This piece contains the best of both worlds, incorporating her masterful knowledge of the piano into her lyrical treatment of chamber winds.

### THE WORLD AT A GLANCE

## 1852



#### MUSIC

Johannes Brahms' Piano Sonata No. 2



#### TECHNOLOGY

Elisha Otis designs first safety elevator



#### LITERATURE

Nikolai Gogol dies



#### HISTORY

Frederick Douglass delivers his famous speech "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"

# IGOR STRAVINSKY

## Octet for Winds

“The trouble with music appreciation in general is that people are taught to have too much respect for music; they should be taught to love it instead.” – Stravinsky

### ABOUT THE COMPOSER

*Born 1882 in Oranienbaum, Russia; died 1971 in New York City, U.S.*

- Although Stravinsky was born into a musical family, his parents preferred him to pursue a more stable career. Stravinsky studied law at the Saint Petersburg State University but rarely attended class.
- While in school, Stravinsky befriended the son of the composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Stravinsky stayed with the Rimsky-Korsakov family for a summer and started taking private theory lessons with Nikolai.
- Stravinsky married his first cousin, Katherine Nosenko, despite the church frowning upon marriage between first cousins. The couple had two children together.
- Sergei Diaghilev, the leader of the dance company Ballets Russes, was in the audience at a performance of one of Stravinsky’s early works and was struck by the composer’s unique sound.
- Stravinsky’s first project with Diaghilev was *The Firebird*, which received such widespread acclaim that Stravinsky became a sensation overnight.
- His third ballet *The Rite of Spring* shocked audiences so much that it caused a near-riot.
- In the 1920s, after relocating to Paris, Stravinsky developed a vast circle of friends from different disciplines including Coco Chanel, Jean Cocteau, and Pablo Picasso.
- After the death of his wife, Stravinsky relocated to the U.S., settling in LA. Vera de Bosset, a dancer and artist that Stravinsky met in Paris, moved to the U.S. to be with him. The two married and had two children together.
- Stravinsky passed away in New York City in 1971. To this day, his works have a profound influence on modern music.

### FUN FACT

Stravinsky once received a warning from the Boston police for writing an unusual arrangement of the Star-Spangled Banner (which was performed by the BSO to open the 2016-17 season!).

### ABOUT THE PIECE

- Composed in 1922, the Octet for Winds showcases the beginning of Stravinsky’s Neoclassical phase.
- The piece is written for an unusual combination of wind and brass instruments that Stravinsky claimed came to him in a dream.
- The work was premiered at the Paris Opera House with Stravinsky conducting, the first time he conducted a premiere of his own work. The new style expressed in the work was not well received at the premiere. Aaron Copland, who was in attendance, referred to it as “a mess of 18th-century mannerisms.”
- The piece would go on to reach iconic status and influence composers for generations to come.

### THE WORLD AT A GLANCE

## 1922

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#### MUSIC

Louis Armstrong moves to Chicago, where he gains international recognition

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#### ART

Paul Klee’s *Twittering Machine*

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#### MEDICINE

First successful insulin treatment of diabetes

⋮

#### HISTORY

Ghandi is sentenced to prison by British authorities

⋮

#### OTHER

Tomb of Tutankhamun is discovered