

Notes regarding Easter music:

The two Easter violin/piano duet music selections, the first during preservice and the second at post-service, combine to draw our attention to the viral dissemination of the news surrounding the resurrection of Jesus. Starting with the first news early on Easter morning, there was a juxtaposition of disbelief and hope. Just as the snippets of unbelievable and incredible information were communicated contagiously early on, as the day progressed, there was a resulting atmosphere of cacophony, breathlessness, and emotional ups and downs. In the intensive, almost explosive, passage of events during Easter day and evening, the thoughts and emotions morphed into feelings of breathtaking, heart-pounding euphoria mixed with incredibility.

We can only partially identify with such an experience as we might consider, for example, a sporting event where a last-moment score turns the *'agony of defeat into the thrill of victory'*, in the paraphrased words of Jim McKay of ABC's Wide World of Sports. The Lord of the Rings author, J.R.R. Tolkien, even coined the word *eucatastrophe*, literally meaning 'good-catastrophe', for describing a sudden turn of events that changes a terrible, impending, and probable doom into a miraculous and wonderful outcome. Tolkien calls the Incarnation of Christ the *eucatastrophe* of "human history" and the Resurrection the *eucatastrophe* of the Incarnation.

The preservice piece is the opening movement (Sinfonia) of J.S. Bach's Cantata "*Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal*" ("We have to go through a lot of hardship"). Bach composed the cantata in Leipzig for the Third Sunday after Easter, called Jubilate, in which he contrasted sorrow and joy. For example, the words of the Cantata's fifth movement are a paraphrase of Psalm 126, summarized in verse 5: "*Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy*" and verse 2a "*Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy*".

There is no 'rest' or calmness in this opening movement, but rather a hubbub of interlaced music phrases. As you listen, consider the emotional ups and downs of the women and disciples, and even the tomb guards and Jewish leaders, as various events unfolded on Easter day. The music has a multiplicity of ascending and descending passages, as if in competition with each other. Imagine walking with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus as they spoke to a 'stranger' (Jesus in disguise) as recorded in Luke 24:21-24, "*Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.*"

The post-service piece, entitled Beethoven Virus is a remix of the third and last movement of Beethoven's Pathétique Sonata and is reworked in a variety of different instrumental arrangements including violin plus piano. Beethoven's original sonata, made up of three movements, '*eucatastrophizes*' the motif from a somber "Grave" first movement, through a melodious "Adagio cantabile" second movement, and then culminating in a dance-like "Rondo: Allegro" third movement.

The modern 'Beethoven Virus', arranged around 2002 by the South Korean musical group BanYa, accentuates the Rondo:Allegro third movement with a mood of viral and contagious celebration. The repetitive base notes of the piano are like a fast, excited heartbeat, and when combined with the violin's 'Jewish celebratory dance' soprano theme, we are using the music to reflect the *eucaastrophe* joy of the resurrection. In today's society, we might imagine 'high-fives' along with the telling and retelling of the various moments leading up to and culminating with victory. Perhaps it is fitting to reflect on the lyrics of the hymn, Lord of the Dance (see below), as we celebrate the free gift of eternal life sealed through the prophecy, conception, birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,  
And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,  
And I came down from heaven and I danced on the  
earth: At Bethlehem I had my birth.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,  
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,  
But they would not dance and they wouldn't follow me;  
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John;  
They came with me and the dance went on:

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,  
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame:  
The holy people said it was a shame.  
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me on  
high, And they left me there on a cross to die:

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,  
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;  
It's hard to dance with the devil on your back.  
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone;  
But I am the dance, and I still go on:

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,  
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

They cut me down and I leapt up high;  
I am the life that'll never, never die.  
I'll live in you if you'll live in me:  
I am the Lord of the dance, said he.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,  
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

If you wish to listen to these pieces later online, here are links:

a) J.S. Bach - Cantata BWV 146 "Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal":  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WK1dDEbPdlo>; (first 8 minutes)

b) Also, Bach used this movement in his Violin Concerto in D minor BWV1052:  
<https://youtu.be/bZF0hkGGr8A?si=r7nMFUzvNDu4TmRW> (first 7:15 minutes)

Beethoven Virus:

a) [https://youtu.be/C6KW8CwQ2BE?si=TM\\_fFh7K0SeAhhh9](https://youtu.be/C6KW8CwQ2BE?si=TM_fFh7K0SeAhhh9) (violin + piano)

b) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAcvkhzMFIU> (band)