

**LIVE**  
FROM LINCOLN CENTER



**September 17, 2008, 8:00pm on PBS**

**New York Philharmonic**

**Opening Night Gala Concert with Sir James Galway**

To inaugurate his Valedictory Season as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, Lorin Maazel has chosen music by two French composers, Berlioz and Ibert; and a Russian, Tchaikovsky: the *Roman Carnival* Overture by Berlioz; Ibert's Flute Concerto, with the redoubtable Sir James Galway as soloist; and, after the intermission, Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. And, as has by now become a virtual Live From Lincoln Center tradition, our cameras and microphones will be in place in Avery Fisher Hall on Wednesday evening September 17 to bring the excitement of the Opening Night Gala directly into your homes.

Composed originally as the Overture to Act II of Berlioz's opera, *Benvenuto Cellini*, the *Roman Carnival* Overture instantly won an independent life for itself in the concert hall. With its whiplash opening and riotous ending it is an ideal beginning for this festive evening.

Hector Berlioz was a musical revolutionary at heart, and he dealt with "big" subjects. Jacques Ibert (1890-1962), on the other hand, came from the generation of French composers whose primary mission seems to have been to entertain. Among his more than 100 compositions are two symphonies, six symphonic poems, numerous suites from his music for the theater, and three concertos. The Flute Concerto is a staple of the repertory for flute and orchestra, and in Sir James Galway it has one of its most dedicated champions.

The Fourth Symphony of Tchaikovsky was conceived during a period of intense emotional distress on the composer's part. In 1876, at the age of 36, he had entered into a "marriage" with a woman that lasted but a few weeks and which at one point drove him to attempt suicide by standing waist-deep in the icy waters of the Moscow River. Suffering from a nervous collapse which "bordered on insanity" he was taken to Switzerland by his brother for a complete rest and change. There he put the finishing touches on the new Symphony.

The miracle is that the score betrays none of the self-doubt with which Tchaikovsky tortured himself at the time of its creation. In fact here is music of assurance and self-confidence, bold and heroic in its extroverted vitality...with one caveat: the motto brass fanfare which opens the work, and which recurs midway through the final movement, was characterized by Tchaikovsky as symbolizing his "vain terrors" and "fears of the unknown". In a further revelatory description Tchaikovsky wrote: "Although there is no actual musical resemblance, the work is modelled after Beethoven's Fifth". This, then, is another symphony in which the underlying motivating force is Man and his eternal struggle with Destiny. Needless to say Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony has long since been one of the cornerstones of symphonic literature.

And so begins another season of Live From Lincoln Center: Lorin Maazel and the New York Philharmonic in music by Berlioz, Ibert and Tchaikovsky on Wednesday evening, September 17, with guest flute soloist, Sir James Galway. As always I leave you with a word of caution: since some stations carry Live From Lincoln Center on a tape-delayed basis, check your local PBS outlet for the exact date and time of the telecast in your area.

Enjoy!

By MARTIN BOOKSPAN