Dreamtime Ancestors   Christopher Theofanidis
                                                                                    b.1967

Dreamtime Ancestors is a three-movement tone poem for orchestra that includes optional readings before each movement. It is based on the Australian aboriginal creation myths of õdreamtime,ö when multiple generations, õdreamtime ancestors,ö are connected to each other in the past, present, and future. Dreamtime is also referred to as õall-at-once time.ö

The work is dedicated to the late composer Stephen Paulus, õa wonderful human being and music maker, who is a part of us of all, past, present, and future.ö

Composed in 2015*Dreamtime Ancestors* was commissioned by a consortium of orchestras and sponsored by New Music for America.

Born in Dallas, TX and a graduate of Yale, the Eastman School of Music, and the University of Houston, Christopher Theofanidis has been the recipient of the Masterprize, the Rome Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Charles Ives Fellowship, among others. He is a former member of the faculty of the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and the Juilliard School in New York City, and currently teaches at Yale. For the 2006-07 season he was composer-of-the-year of the Pittsburgh Symphony, during which he composed a violin concerto for Sarah Chang.

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 55, *“Eroica* õ   Ludwig van Beethoven
                                                                                    1770-1827

Few musical manuscripts have elicited so much musicological discussion as has Beethovenøs personal conductorøs copy of his Symphony No. 3. The story of its original dedication to Napoleon, the chief military defender of the French Revolution with its ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, and the subsequent violent erasure of the dedication when Napoleon crowned himself emperor, has been told time and again.

Reality, however, is often more complex than history books would have it. Beethoven was clearly disgusted at Napoleonøs coronation, exclaiming: õIs he then, too, nothing more than an ordinary human being? Now he, too, will trample on all the rights of man...become a tyrant.ö But his disappointment with the Emperor was tinged in no small part by self-interest. Hoping at the time to establish a foothold in the musical life of Paris, the composer had planned to travel there with his mentor, Prince Lobkowitz, using the premiere of the Symphony as a passport to the French capital and lucrative commissions. Napoleonøs coup, and the resultant political upheavals, disrupted these plans and are the probable reason why the Symphony, finished at the beginning of 1804, did not receive its premiere in Vienna until a year later.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the Symphony is how Beethoven ó who had surprising difficulty coming up with melodies ó was able to make so much out of so little. The opening theme is nothing more than an arpeggiated E-flat major chord; the Scherzo theme is a descending E-flat major scale; and the theme for the Finale is a brief simple bass pattern that he had used three times previously ó in the Piano Variations, Op. 35, in one of his

Contredanses (WoO. 14, no. 7) and in the grand finale of his ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus*, Op. 43 ó repeated beneath a set of spectacular variations. Only the second movement, the Funeral March, begins with a fully formed theme.

It is hard for us today to appreciate the revolutionary impact of this symphony on Vienna's audience. The constantly modulating keys, rhythmic shifts, large dynamic leaps and unfamiliar harmonies baffled Beethoven's friendly but conservative public, and the reception was anything but enthusiastic. It took a few years for the Viennese to warm to this innovative work.

Although it would take many pages of in-depth musical analysis to explain what was so different and disturbing about this Symphony, here are some highlights that we now take for granted after over 200 years of development and change in Western music:

To begin with, there is the sheer length and scope of the work. The first movement alone is longer than anything that had been written up to this time. It follows a complex and, at times, astonishing, key structure, whose wanderings and surprises blur the distinctions between the basic components of sonata form (The coda, for example, is another mini-development in a distant key.)

The A*ndante*, entitled õFuneral March for a Hero,ö counters even the most poignant Mozartian second movement with a totally new depth of emotional intensity and grandeur. The *Scherzo* ó an earlier Beethoven invention to replace the sometimes stately, sometimes thumping minuets of Mozart and Haydn ó breaks with tradition in its Trio, scored as a section solo for the horns.

Instead of creating a sprightly and upbeat rondo, in the style of his predecessors, Beethoven gives a weight and importance to the Finale that would inspire both his own future symphonic writing (culminating in the Ninth Symphony) and that of his successors. The theme is nothing more then a skeleton, actually more a ground bass than a true melody. The variations that constitute this lengthy movement are also quite new in structure. While variation forms tended to be somewhat static, adhering throughout to a single key and the standard phrase length of the original theme, Beethoven includes variations in different keys and of varying lengths; he even breaks away from the variations altogether for a while in the middle of the movement. Whereas most sets of variations progress steadily from the simple to the complex ó or, at least, the more ornamented ó Beethoven was less interested in bravura than in giving each variation its own mood, for which he also employed an innovative use of orchestral solos and ensembles.

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