



**Tchaikovsky & Pride** 

June 9-11, 2023

# Program

# Masterworks Series

# HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Carolyn Kuan, music director

# **TCHAIKOVSKY & PRIDE**

Friday, June 9, 2023 / 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, June 10, 2023 / 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 11, 2023 / 3:00 p.m.
Belding Theater, The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts

CAROLYN KUAN, conductor
QUINN MASON, composer
2022-2023 JOYCE C. WILLIS ARTIST IN RESIDENCE
IAIN BELL, composer
YUKI IZUMIHARA, visual designer

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74, TH 30, "Pathétique"

I. Adagio – Allegro non troppo

II. Allegro con grazia

III. Allegro molto vivace

IV. Finale: Adagio lamentoso

#### -INTERMISSION-

QUINN MASON (b. 1996) 2022-2023 JOYCE C. WILLIS ARTIST IN RESIDENCE she dreams of flying

World Premiere

Commissioned by the Hartford

Symphony Orchestra

(b. 1980)

Stonewall '69: A Symphonic Suite
World Premiere Commissioned
by the Hartford Symphony
Orchestra, in celebration of
those who hope, dream
and practice joy

Yuki Izumihara, visual designer

The post of Music Director is endowed by The Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation. Cameras and recording equipment are not permitted during the performance. As a courtesy to the performers and other audience members, please turn off watch alarms and cell phones.

The Hartford Symphony Orchestra receives major support from the Greater Hartford Arts Council, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and with support from the Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut Office of the Arts which also receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

## The 2022-23 Masterworks Series is presented by



# The 2022-23 Masterworks Series is also sponsored by The Elizabeth M. and Harriette M. Landon Foundation

The Joyce C. Willis Artist in Residence is made possible the Joyce C. Willis Fund for Excellence and Equity in the Arts grant provided by



#### About the Artists



## **Quinn Mason**

### Composer

Quinn Mason (b. 1996) is a composer and conductor based in Dallas, Texas. He currently serves as the Hartford Symphony Orchestra's Artist in Residence. He recently served as the Detroit

Symphony Orchestra's Classical Roots composer in residence for 2022 (the youngest composer appointed to that role) and as KMFA's inaugural composer in residence.

Quinn has been described as "a brilliant composer just barely in his 20s who seems to make waves wherever he goes." (Theater Jones) and "One of the most sought after young composers in the country" (Texas Monthly).

His orchestral music has received performances by many renowned orchestras in the US, including the San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Amarillo Symphony, Utah Symphony, National Youth Orchestra of the United States, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI and numerous others.

As a conductor, Quinn has led numerous orchestras, including the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles, Harmonia Orchestra, MusicaNova Orchestra and the Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra. He also recently served as the Houston Ballet Orchestra's youngest ever guest conductor. Quinn studied conducting at the National Orchestral Institute with Marin Alsop and James Ross, and with Christopher Zimmerman (Fargo-Moorhead Symphony), Kevin Sütterlin (Fox Valley Symphony), Miguel Harth-Bedoya (Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra) and Will White (Harmonia Orchestra).

His chamber music has been presented by celebrated organizations such as Voices of Change, Midsummer's Music, The Cliburn, One Found Sound, loadbang, MAKE trio, Atlantic Brass Quintet, Axiom Brass, and the Cézanne, Julius and Baumer string quartets. His solo music has been championed by distinguished soloists such as Lara Downes (pianist), Holly Mulcahy (concertmaster, Wichita Symphony) and Jordan Bak and Michael Hall (viola soloists).

A multiple prize winner in composition, he has received numerous awards and honors from such organizations as the American Composers Forum, Voices of Change, Texas A&M University, ASCAP, the Dallas Foundation, Dartmouth College Wind Ensemble, National Flute Association, the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of New York, the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, the Heartland Symphony Orchestra and the Arizona State University Symphony Orchestra. In 2020, Quinn was honored by the Dallas Morning News as a finalist for 'Texan of the Year'.



### Iain Bell

Composer

Born in London, Iain Bell is best known for his vocal music (opera and song), and has worked with singers including Rolando Villazon, Stuart Skelton and Jamie Barton. He has developed a close artistic

partnership with Diana Damrau, for whom he has written various works including his first opera 'A Harlot's Progress' (2013, Theater an der Wien - Vienna) and 'Aurora', his 2018 concerto for coloratura soprano.

His subsequent operas have been staged at houses including the Royal Opera House ('In Parenthesis'), Houston Grand Opera ('A Christmas Carol'), Welsh National Opera ('In Parenthesis', 'A Christmas Carol'), New York City Opera ('Stonewall'), English National Opera ('Jack the Ripper: the Women of Whitechapel'), Teatro de la Ciudad - Mexico City ('Stonewall') and the Teatro Sociale - Trento ('A Christmas Carol').

On the concert stage, he has been commissioned by/performed at venues including Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Salzburg Mozarteum, the Munich Opera Festival, BOZAR - Brussels, the BBC Proms, the Enescu Festival and the Konzerthaus in Vienna, working alongside such esteemed musicians as Carolyn Kuan, Carlo Rizzi, Gianandrea Noseda, Helmut Deutsch and Kathleen Kelly.

Recent highlights include Krystian Lada's production of his monodramas 'The Man With Night Sweats' and 'Comfort Starving' in Krakow - Poland, a collaboration with the LSO on his orchestral song cycle 'The Hidden Place' and 'BELL Canto' a gala at Prague's Smetana Hall with the Prague Philharmonia featuring excerpts from three of his operas, with Damrau and Petr Nekoranec as soloists. Future plans include the world premiere of 'Beowulf' with the BBC Symphony & Chorus at London's Barbican Centre, a new production of his monodramas in Salzburg, and the unveiling of 'Stonewall'69: A Symphonic Suite' with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Carolyn Kuan.



#### Yuki Izumihara

Visual Designer

Yuki Izumihara (she/her) is a scenic, projection, and production designer born in Shimonoseki City, Japan and based in Los Angeles. Ms. Izumihara's work is influenced by years of martial arts

training and is animated by a belief in discipline, ethics and craftsmanship.

Recent engagements include projection design for *Beethoven Dreams* with Santa Barbara Symphony, *Holiday Wonderland with* Cirque Musica, *The Cuban Vote* with Miami New Drama (winner of Carbonell Awards Outstanding Achievement of an Artistic Specialty for Projection Design); production design for *Semele*, *Tosca, An American Dream* with Opera Santa Barbara, *QUANDO* with Heartbeat Opera, *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *desert in* with Boston Lyric Opera; content creator for *Cardi B x Art Basel*; scenic design for *Menstruation: A Period Play* with Big Little Theatre Company, *Unrivaled* with Boston Court, *INTERSTATE* with East West Players, *The Capulets and the Montagues* with Opera Omaha; *Sanctuaries* with Third Angle New Music. Her work has been featured at LA Opera, the New World Symphony, The Adrienne Arsht Center, San Diego Opera, the Hammer Museum, Getty Villa Museum, and various theaters in Los Angeles.

As an artist, graphic designer, and animator with an emphasis on spatial composition and color narrative, Yuki aims to clarify, establish and amplify project identities through visual language, including Jack Perla's *Poets' Cabaret* Series, Long Beach Opera's 2022 vision//revision season art, title card design for Opera Philadelphia's *La voix humaine*, Opera Omaha's ONE Festival 2018-2022, and various projects in developmental stages.

# Program Notes

#### **Quinn Mason**

Born March 23, 1996 in Shreveport, Louisiana

World Premiere: This program features the World Premiere of this work. Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, tam-tam, triangle, suspended cymbal, bass drum, chimes, harp,

and strings: violin I, violin II, viola, cello, and bass

Duration: 12'

she dreams of flying (2023)
WORLD PREMIERE
COMMISSIONED BY THE HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Composer and conductor Quinn Mason is the inaugural Joyce C. Willis Artist-in-Residence for the Hartford Symphony Orchestra during the 2022-2023 season, part of a visionary initiative to support Black artists in collaboration with the HSO, Hartford Stage and Amistad Center made possible through a generous grant from The Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation. During his HSO residency, Mason has composed she dreams of flying for premiere at these concerts, and is also working with the Learning & Social Impact Department on community and education initiatives with HSO partners throughout Hartford.

Quinn Mason was born in 1996 in Shreveport, Louisiana and studied composition in Dallas at Southern Methodist University's Meadows School of the Arts and University of Texas, and has also worked closely with renowned composers David Maslanka, Jake Heggie, Libby Larsen, David Dzubay and Robert X. Rodriguez. Mason has achieved remarkable distinctions for a musician still at the beginning of his career his orchestral works have been performed by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Utah Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Utah Symphony Orchestra, Italian Radio National Orchestra, and many others; his compositions for wind band have been played by leading community and universities ensembles across the country; and his chamber, vocal and solo piano works have been featured by Voices of Change, Atlantic Brass Quintet, the Cézanne, Julius and Baumer string quartets, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Principal Hornist David Cooper, pianist Lara Downes and violinist Holly Mulcahy. Quinn Mason is also a conductor, having studied with Marin Alsop, James Ross, Miguel Harth-Bedoya and Will White, and guest conducted the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra (Washington, D.C.), Houston Ballet Orchestra, and other professional and youth orchestras across the country.

Among Mason's rapidly accumulating awards and honors are those from the American Composers Forum, Texas A&M University, ASCAP, Dallas Foundation, National Flute Association, International Clarinet Association, Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of New York, Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, and Arizona State University Symphony Orchestra. In 2020, he was honored by the *Dallas Morning News* as a finalist for "Texan of the Year," and in 2022 served as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Classical Roots Composer-in-Residence (the youngest composer appointed to that role) as well as the inaugural Resident Composer at KMFA, Austin's classical music radio station.

Mason wrote, "she dreams of flying is a tribute to persistence and inspiration. The composition begins with an offstage trumpet motif over a soft string pad — a theme that persists in being heard by showing up throughout the piece in different forms, usually more prominent each time. From the beginning, the work builds, along the way showcasing the strengths and virtuosity of the orchestra. As the music becomes more inspired, the ideas get more complex, with the theme becoming more and more part of the texture until it is stated in full near the end.

"she dreams of flying was written for and is dedicated to Carolyn Kuan, one of the most inspiring people I've ever met."

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#### Iain Bell

Born January 1, 1980 in London

World Premiere: This program features the World Premiere of this work. Instrumentation: 3 flutes with third flute doubling on piccolo, 2 oboes with second oboe doubling on English horn, 2 clarinets with second clarinet doubling on bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, side drum, tam-tam, tubular bell, vibraphone, tambourine, woodblock, claves, whipcrack, vibraslap, metal woodchimes, suspend cymbal, glockenspiel, triangle, xylophone, harp, and strings: violin I, violin II, viola, cello, and bass Duration: 25'

Stonewall '69: A Symphonic Suite (2019, 2022)
WORLD PREMIERE
COMMISSIONED BY THE HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

London-born lain Bell has established himself among his generation's leading composers of opera and vocal music. His first opera, A Harlot's Progress, to a libretto by British author Peter Ackroyd based on Hogarth's etchings, was premiered in 2013 at Vienna's Theater an der Wien by a cast headed by celebrated German soprano Diana Damrau, with whom Bell has developed a continuing association. Bell's A Christmas Carol, a one-man version for tenor and chamber orchestra of Charles Dickens' timeless tale, was premiered at Houston Grand Opera in December 2014 by Jay Hunter Morris in a production by noted British actor and director Simon Callow. In Parentheses, Bell's critically acclaimed third opera, was based on David Jones' 1937 epic poem recounting his experiences in World War One and premiered by Welsh National Opera in May 2016 with further performances at the Royal Opera House. London that summer. In 2019, Bell premiered two operas — *Jack the Ripper: the* Women of Whitechapel opened at English National Opera with a cast including Josephine Barstow, Susan Bullock, Lesley Garrett and Alan Opie, and Stonewall was premiered at New York City Opera to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising; Stonewall was shortlisted as one of the best new operas of the year at the Annual Excellence in Opera Awards and was cited as one of New York

radio station WQXR's Best Classical Concerts of 2019. Bell has also written works for orchestra and chamber ensembles, as well as other significant vocal compositions including: *These Motley Fools* (2014, a setting extracts of Shakespeare's fools premiered by the American countertenor Lawrence Zazzo); *of you* (2017, a Carnegie Hall commission to poems by e.e. cummings for American mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton); *Aurora*, a Concerto for Coloratura Soprano (2018, BBC Proms with soloist Adela Zaharia); the orchestral song cycle *The Hidden Place* (2019, Diana Damrau); *We Two* (2020, a cycle of Walt Whitman poetry commissioned by the Salzburg Mozarteum for bass-baritone Douglas Williams); and *Amore Immortale* (2022, cycle of Dante poetry premiered at the LIFE Victoria Festival Barcelona by baritone Mattia Olivieri).

lain Bell's opera *Stonewall* was commissioned by New York City Opera for their "Pride Initiative," the company's project to present an L.G.B.T.-themed production every year during Pride month to commemorate the anniversary of the Stonewall riots, the spontaneous protests at the Stonewall Inn in New York's Greenwich Village by members of the gay community in response to a police raid on June 28, 1969 that has come to signify the birth of the gay rights movement. Bell's work was preceded in City Opera's series by Charles Wuorinen's *Brokeback Mountain* and Peter Eotvos' *Angels in America. Stonewall*, with a libretto by Pulitzer- and Grammy-winner Mark Campbell based on those protests, was premiered at Lincoln Center's Rose Theater on June 19, 2019, the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, directed by Leonard Foglia and conducted by Carolyn Kuan.

Of the symphonic suite drawn from the opera, Bell wrote, "Stonewall, in all its varied forms, has proven to be an unexpected source of joy in my career. I was commissioned to compose the opera completely out of the blue. Being midway through orchestrating my fourth opera, Jack the Ripper: the Women of Whitechapel, I would only have five months to compose and fully orchestrate the work. NYCO was nonetheless adamant that I was the man for the job, so I got down to it, and enjoyed every second, feeling so honored to be asked. I was overwhelmed by the warmth of response to the piece, and equally delighted when requests began to be made by choirs and musical directors asking me to arrange various moments for concert performance.

"The icing on the cake was being approached by Carolyn Kuan, the opera's inaugural conductor, to compose an orchestral suite based on highlights of the score for the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. This was an absolute dream come true. Not only would I get the chance to work with Carolyn again — undoubtedly the most gifted conductor I've ever had the good fortune to collaborate with — but I would have the chance to revisit a score that has been such a gift to me, and explode it open for the concert stage. Without the constraints of vocal balance, text-led structure, and the previous orchestra size of forty players, I would be able to let melodies rise and climb beyond the limits of the human voice, whilst adding more detail to the orchestral texture. An example of the latter: in the opening minute of both the opera and the suite, I convey a subway train on its tracks — with all these instruments now at my disposal, I was able to add a cheeky staccato dialogue between the French horns and bassoons, thereby intensifying the propulsive surge forward. Having 25+ violins enabled me to bring a

further sheen to the orchestral color, with an enlarged percussion section adding yet another level of shimmer and thrust.

"I decided that the suite would follow the same three-movement structure as the opera. The first movement (*Downtown, tonight*) charts the journey of various characters from the opera on their way to the Stonewall Inn that fateful Friday night. The second (*No ... just NO!*) is a distillation of the defiance and violent eruption of the riot itself. The third and final movement (*The Light of Day*) takes us to the 'morning after the night before,' embodying the sense of hope so key to both the opera and the Pride movement.

"In the first act of the opera, each of the principals has an aria illustrating their journey downtown to the bar. It was incumbent on me to decide which of my 'babies' to cherry-pick for the suite's first movement. The music had to be representational of highlights from the score — with all the characters' varied personalities — whilst maintaining a sense of propulsion and anticipation. It opens with an explosion of Maggie's defiant subway train monologue, transitioning into Andy's starving lament to a slice of pizza. In the case of Renata, a drag queen, and Jessica, an escaped conversion therapy patient, I had the greatest of fun splicing their musical motifs together, fashioning a hybrid of both, retaining the groove in the baseline with its subtle wink to Motown riffs of the past.

"The excitement of the first movement moves to a depiction of the violence of the uprising itself in the second, opening with whispers of what will later be heard as chants of resistance. This is swiftly followed by a rendering of Maggie's anthem *No ... just No!* — her response to further harassment from the police, rendered even more forceful by the enlarged orchestra. This movement comes to a head as we hear the music of the riot 'proper.' The woodwinds voice various choirs of protest, with the unpitched percussion section adding jerks, punches and blows throughout. The protest moves between various families of the orchestra until they all sound together, climbing to their inescapable climax as the movement reaches its brutal conclusion.

"The final movement starts with the inky darkness of pre-dawn, the low strings sounding beneath a polyphonic choir of night birds in imitation woodwinds, quoting the main *Downtown, tonight* theme. The strings then take the lead, in something of an early morning chorale or Requiem to the savagery of the night before. Chinks of light then pierce through in the pitched percussion, melting into the choral finale, embodying both a sense of hope and emboldened responsibility to effect a change.

"It was both a joy and honor to compose this suite for the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, I am delighted to attend its world premiere with you all."

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# Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Born May 7, 1840 in Votkinsk, Russia Died November 6, 1893 in St. Petersburg

World Premiere: October 28, 1893

Most Recent HSO Performance: November 14, 2012

Instrumentation: 3 flutes with third flute doubling on piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, tam-

tam, and strings: violin I, violin II, viola, cello, and bass

Duration: 46'

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74, "Pathétique" (1893)

Tchaikovsky died in 1893, at the age of only 53. His death was long attributed to the accidental drinking of a glass of unboiled water during a cholera outbreak, but that theory has been questioned in recent years with the alternate explanation that he was forced to take his own life because of a homosexual liaison with the underage son of a noble family. Though the manner of Tchaikovsky's death is incidental to the place of his Sixth Symphony in music history, the fact of it is not.

Tchaikovsky conducted his B minor Symphony for the first time only a week before his death. It was given a cool reception by musicians and public, and his frustration was multiplied when discussion of the work was avoided by the guests at a dinner party following the concert. Three days later, however, his mood seemed brighter and he told a friend that he was not yet ready to be snatched off by death, "that snubbed-nose horror. I feel that I shall live a long time." He was wrong. The evidence of the manner of his death is not conclusive, but what is certain is the overwhelming grief and sense of loss felt by music lovers in Russia and abroad as the news of his passing spread. Memorial concerts were planned. One of the first was in St. Petersburg on November 18th, only twelve days after he died. Eduard Napravnik conducted the Sixth Symphony on that occasion, and it was a resounding success. The "Pathétique" was wafted by the winds of sorrow across the musical world, and became — and remains — one of the most popular symphonies ever written, the quintessential expression of tragedy in music.

In examining the Sixth Symphony, whether as performer or listener, care must be taken not to allow pathos to descend into bathos. It is virtually certain that Tchaikovsky was not anticipating his own death in this work. For most of 1893, his health and spirits were good, he was enjoying an international success unprecedented for a Russian composer, and work on the new Symphony was going well. He wrote to his nephew Vladimir Davidov in February that he was composing "with such ardor that in less than four days I have completed the first movement, while the remainder is clearly outlined in my head." Tchaikovsky was pleased with the finished work. "I give you my word of honor that never in my life have I been so contented, so proud, so happy, in the knowledge that I have written a good piece," he told his publisher, Jurgenson, as soon as he had finished the score in August. The somber message of the music, therefore, seems not to have been a reflection of the moods and events of Tchaikovsky's last months.

The music of the "Pathétique" is a distillation of the strong residual strain of melancholy in Tchaikovsky's personality rather than a mirror of his daily feelings and thoughts.

Though he admitted there was a program for the Symphony, he refused to reveal it. "Let him guess it who can," he told Vladimir Davidov. A cryptic note discovered years later among his sketches suggests that the first movement was "all impulsive passion; the second, love; the third, disappointments; the fourth, death — the result of collapse." It is not clear, however, whether this précis applied to the finished version of the work, or was merely a preliminary, perhaps never even realized, plan. That Tchaikovsky at one point considered the title "Tragic" for the score gives sufficient indication of its prevailing emotional content.

The title "Pathétique" was suggested to Tchaikovsky by his elder brother, Modeste. In his biography of Peter, Modeste recalled that they were sitting around a tea table one evening after the premiere, and the composer was unable to settle on an appropriate designation for the work before sending it to the publisher. The sobriquet "Pathétique" popped into Modeste's mind, and Tchaikovsky pounced on it immediately: "Splendid, Modi, bravo. 'Pathétique' it shall be." This title has always been applied to the Symphony, though the original Russian word carries a meaning closer to "passionate" or "emotional" than to the English "pathetic."

The Symphony opens with a slow introduction dominated by the sepulchral intonation of the bassoon, whose melody, in a faster tempo, becomes the impetuous first theme of the exposition. Additional instruments are drawn into the symphonic argument until the brasses arrive to crown the movement's first climax. The tension subsides into silence before the yearning second theme appears, "like a recollection of happiness in time of pain," according to American musicologist Edward Downes. The tempestuous development section, intricate, brilliant and the most masterful thematic manipulation in Tchaikovsky's output, is launched by a mighty blast from the full orchestra. The recapitulation is more condensed, vibrantly scored and intense in emotion than the exposition. The major tonality achieved with the second theme is maintained until the hymnal end of the movement.

Tchaikovsky referred to the second movement as a scherzo, though its 5/4 meter gives it more the feeling of a waltz with a limp. This music's rhythmic novelty must have been remarkable in 1893, and the distinguished Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick even suggested that it should be changed to 6/8 to avoid annoyance to performers and listeners. Charles O'Connell, however, saw the irregular meter as essential to the movement's effect, "as if its gaiety were constantly under constraint; directed, not by careless joy, but by a determination to be joyful."

The third movement is a boisterous march whose brilliant surface may conceal a deeper meaning. Tchaikovsky's biographer John Warrack wrote, "On the face of it, this is a sprightly march; yet it is barren, constructed out of bleak intervals, and for all the merriness of its manner, essentially empty, with a coldness at its heart."

The tragedy of the finale is apparent immediately at the outset in its somber contrast to the whirling explosion of sound that ends the third movement. A profound emptiness pervades the finale, which maintains its slow tempo and mood of despair throughout. Banished completely are the joy and affirmation of the traditional symphonic finale, here replaced by a new emotional and structural concept that opened important expressive possibilities for 20th-century composers. Olin Downes dubbed this

movement "a dirge," and, just as there is no certainty about what happens to the soul when the funeral procession ends, so Tchaikovsky here leaves the question of existence forever hanging, unanswered, embodied in the mysterious, dying close of the Symphony.

Wrote former Boston Symphony Orchestra program annotator Philip Hale, "The somber eloquence of the 'Pathétique,' its pages of recollected joy fled forever, its wild gaiety quenched by the thought of the inevitable end, its mighty lamentations — these are overwhelming and shake the soul."

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