

# ***The Hero Within: Overcoming Adversity***

**1.X.1905**

**Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)**

*I. Predtucha (Foreboding)*

*II. Smrt (Death)*

**Down by the Riverside (North American Ballad No. 3, 1979)**

**Frederic Rzewski (b. 1938)**

**Rubinstein in Berlin (2008)**

**Frederic Rzewski (b. 1938)**

**Variations and Fugue in E flat major, Op. 35 "Eroica"**

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

Program notes:

Each work on the program is a struggle for a better world. 1.X.1905 is Janacek's heartbreaking response to the tragic killing of an innocent civilian by an Austrian soldier during a demonstration for a Czech university in Brno. Janacek wrote on the manuscript: "Here an ordinary worker František Pavlík falls, stained with blood. He only came to plead for a university... and was killed by cruel murderers." The demonstration and his sacrifice were ultimately successful as a Czech university was eventually established. The Negro Spiritual *Down by the Riverside* is a yearning to reach the Promised Land of the North, to make it above the Ohio River where slavery was prohibited. Political activist composer Frederic Rzewski elucidates the dichotomy of envisioning a better, more peaceful world and the harsh reality of the present. *Rubinstein in Berlin* is for speaking pianist and adapts text from the famed pianist Artur Rubinstein's autobiographical "My Younger Years." Rubinstein documents his struggle with failure and poverty but in coming to terms with his situation, discovers the secret of happiness. Beethoven's monumental Piano Variations are a bold, powerful statement of hope and a wholehearted yearning for freedom. The work is based on a theme from his ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus*. The same theme was later used for the fourth movement of his *Eroica* Symphony. The music encourages and empowers us to find our own inner hero and help make the world a better place above all odds.