

FREEEROICA

Recomposition of Beethoven's 3rd Symphony 'Eroica'

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Stegreif loves those free spirits, revolutionaries and dissenters. All those who had their own ideas about the world and were courageous enough to live them. With freeEroica the orchestra dedicates itself to the first self-determined freelance composer in the history of classical music and his third symphony.

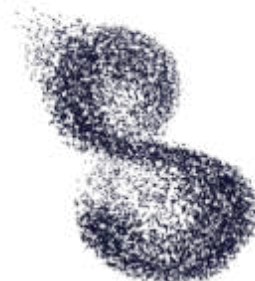
Ludwig van Beethoven's Eroica is marked by the French Revolution and its values: liberty, equality, fraternity. Originally composed for Napoleon Bonaparte, Beethoven decided immediately after Napoleon's self-coronation that the tyrant was not a historical hero and not a suitable dedicatee for the symphony, which itself represents a revolutionary act in music history.

freeEroica is about revolutions – both historical and musical – about the courage to fight for something, about heroes and the sacrifices they are willing to make, about resistance and solidarity, and above all about the search for freedom.

Without sheet music, without a conductor, and without chairs, the orchestra strives toward them, seeking out even the smallest of upheavals—even if these consist “only” of entering the concert hall without shoes or taking the audience on a journey from 18th-century France to the present day. In this way, the Eroica is brought to life anew through performance, improvisation, and recomposition. Broken bars, large majestic red cloth, and disrupted orchestral arrangements make Beethoven's quest for the new and unexpected tangible in a work that, as part of the centuries-old canonical repertoire, no longer breaks with today's listening expectations.



Photo: Frederik Ferschkel



Stegreif

THE IMPROVISING
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Premiere: July 2019, Detect Classic Festival

Recomposition/arrangement: Alistair Duncan, Mike Conrad

Musical direction: Sebastian Caspar

Choreography: David Fernández

Scenography: Franziska Ritter

Press reviews:

"The bold opening is followed by a performative journey of discovery. [...] They flood Berlin's Theater im Delphi with music and breathe new life into the thematic material of Beethoven's Third Symphony – sometimes true to the original, sometimes slightly altered." – Opernwelt, July 2025

"In the end, the impression remained that in this 90-minute musical performance, young musicians had undermined virtually everything that had previously defined the interpretation of Beethoven's music. [...] None of the audience members were disappointed in the end, as standing ovations and minutes of applause rewarded the orchestra for an eventful and completely unconventional concert." – Allgemeine Zeitung, April 9, 2025

"This was combined (...) in an extremely entertaining and original way with choreographed movements by the musicians, the only prop being a long red cloth, as if to connect with Beethoven's revolutionary spirit. At the final applause, the musicians stood half-wrapped in it in the pose of the bare-breasted allegorical figure in Eugène Delacroix's most famous painting of the French Revolution, 'Liberty Leading the People': but with raised musical instruments instead of the tricolor." – FAZ, September 25, 2019

Duration: approx. 65 min (without intermission)

Participants (28 people in total):

- 24 musicians: 1.1.1.1.Sax - 2.1.1.0 - Timp, drums, electric guitar + amplifier - Str: 4/3/2/2/1+amp
- 4 Staff: stage director, light designer, production management, production assistant

Room requirements and equipment:

This programme is designed as a stage production for a seated auditorium. Some aisles in the auditorium should be kept free during the performance. However, it is possible to adapt the room concept to unseated auditoriums with a moving audience.

Minimum stage size: portal size 10m, depth of 7m, approx. 70 square metres in total

Extract of required technology:

- adequate lighting equipment
- Stage platforms at different heights
- Stereo P.A., appropriate to the venue
- complete concert drum set, three timpani (26", 29", 32") with two stools
- Guitar amplifier, bass amplifier, a wireless handheld microphone with stand, megaphone

Stegreif normally plays without amplification. If special room acoustics require amplification, clip microphones and radio links are required.

Complete tech rider on request.



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