Point—Line—Plane
Zachary Wadsworth (1983–)
Written: 2007
Movements: One
Duration: Six minutes

In his TED^{X} lecture at the University of Calgary, Richmond native Zachary Wadsworth reminisces about his first Richmond Symphony concert. It was a "Kicked Back Classics" concert and "at the end there was free pizza." The first piece was Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and even though Zachary had heard it "a million times," it was as if he was hearing it for the very first time. He heard "these emotions that I had no words to express, emotions that would be cheapened by words." Zachary asked himself how Beethoven could move people without using words. "And that's the moment I became a composer."

He went on to earn graduate degrees from Cornell University (DMA) and Yale University (MM), and is an honors graduate of the Eastman School of Music (BM). He has taught at the Interlochen Center for the Arts and the University of Calgary, and he is currently an Assistant Professor of Music at Williams College. "My job as a composer is to pick you up in whatever emotional state you find yourself in and to move you into a different one that—whether it's happy or it's sad—is immensely beautiful," he says. Of *Point—Line—Plane* he writes:

> The title of this work comes from a geometrical postulate which outlines the nature of physical space. It states, essentially, that a line is merely a collection of points, and a plane is likewise merely a collection of lines. This progressive axiom implies a kind of narrative form, in which the simplest elements gradually grow, spread, and move outward.
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> Musically, the fundamental element becomes an unaccompanied, twisting melody that travels between the many instruments of the orchestra. Soon, this theme splits into harmony with itself, growing into a chorale in which four melodies combine to create block harmonies. Finally, as the music continues to spread, large chords provide a plane over which short melodic statements in the winds recall the since-transformed opening melody. Thus, the opening idea, simple in realization but endlessly complex in connotation, has become a whole world: pitch—melody—harmony.
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> *Point—Line—Plane* was commissioned by the Yale Philharmonia, Shinik Hahm, music director. It premiered on April 5, 2007 at Yale University. This piece is dedicated to Caroline Shaw, a brave and honest friend.

Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 35
Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897–1957)
Written: 1946
Movements: Three
Style: Romantic
Duration: 26 minutes

Erich Wolfgang Korngold is famous today for his brilliant Hollywood movie scores, but these are only half the story. Before emigrating from an unstable Europe in 1934 he was one of the most popular and successful composers in Europe. Korngold was a child prodigy. When he was ten, he played his cantata *Gold* for Gustav Mahler, who quickly dubbed him a genius. The following year he composed a ballet that was performed at the Vienna Court Opera. By the age of fifteen, Richard Strauss had pronounced Korngold's orchestral music "amazing," adding that, "One's first reactions . . . are awe and fear." Korngold's Hollywood career was no less brilliant. He received two Oscars: for *Robin Hood* and *Anthony Adverse.* In addition to his work for the film industry, he continued to compose and publish music for the concert hall until his death in 1957.

The *Violin Concerto* provides the listener with the best of Korngold's two worlds. Written in 1945-46 and premiered by Jascha Heifetz in 1947, he took much of the musical material from his film scores. The first movement borrows tunes from two films. The expressive first theme is from *Another Dawn* (1937); the second subject is from *Juarez* (1939). The style is decidedly romantic. The tunes are like episodes, returning in different guises to produce different effects upon the listener. The newly-composed material between the episodes offers the soloist an opportunity to display her virtuosity.

Symphony No. 4, Op. 29, "The Inextinguishable"
Carl Nielsen (1865–1931)
Written: 1914–1916
Movements: Four, played without pause
Style: Late Romantic
Duration: 36 minutes

For Carl Nielsen, World War I was a time when "the whole world [was] disintegrating," and when "national feeling, which hitherto was regarded as something lofty and beautiful, has become like a spiritual syphilis that has devoured the brain, and it grins out through empty eye sockets with moronic hate." Instead of writing music about the destructive power of war, he took the opposite approach with a new symphony, his fourth:

> I shall soon have a new symphony ready. It is very different from my other three and there is a specific idea behind it, that is, that the most elementary aspects of music are Light, Life, and Motion, which chop silence to bits. It's all those things that have Will and the Craving for Life that cannot be suppressed that I've wanted to depict.

The subtitle of the symphony, "*the Inextinguishable,*" is "a single word that seeks to hint at what only the music itself has the power to express fully: the elementary will to live."

The first movement of Nielsen's *Fourth Symphony* begins with a ferocious struggle between the woodwinds and the strings, each tenaciously holding onto their tunes, and their different keys. The brass join in with their explosive utterances. Eventually the melee dies down and the clarinets play a beautiful and peaceful melody that seems to embody Nielsen's "life force." The first movement works

through the contrast of these opening ideas and then leads directly to the second movement, stunning for its charm and simplicity, almost like a renaissance country dance. The third movement is a different story. While the violins “soar like the eagle riding on the wind” with a long and anguished melody, the celli and timpani interject a contrasting tune in short percussive hits. Throughout the movement, there is constant tension between those contrasting ideas. A short burst of violent activity ushers in the explosive fourth movement. Here Nielsen stages an actual musical battle. A second set of timpani, on the other side of the stage, joins the fray. The timpanists volley back and forth over the orchestra as it tries valiantly to rise above the fracas. The symphony closes as the timpani, at first with resignation and then triumph, give way to the inextinguishable will to live.