

Can(n)ons of Freedom (2026)

CHRIS BRUBECK N **BORN 1952**

Chris Brubeck, son of legendary jazz pianist and composer Dave Brubeck, was born in Los Angeles in 1952, attended high school at the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan (where he taught himself electric bass), and majored in bass trombone at the University of Michigan, where he also led, toured and recorded with his innovative rock bands New Heavenly Blue and Sky King. From 1978 to 1988, Chris toured as bassist and bass trombonist with his father in the Dave Brubeck Quartet, recording a dozen albums with the group. He has since performed widely and recorded on bass, trombone, piano, guitar and vocals with the Brubeck Brothers Quartet (featuring his brother Dan on drums, Mike DeMicco on guitar, and Chuck Lamb, Taylor Eigsti and others on keyboards), with Triple Play (an acoustic blues–jazz–folk trio with guitarist Joel Brown and harmonica virtuoso Peter Madcat Ruth), and with such diverse artists as Frederica von Stade, Ben Luxon, Dawn Upshaw, Bill Crofut, Meryl Streep, Willie Nelson, B.B. King, Gerry Mulligan, Bela Fleck, Bobby McFerrin, Stephane Grappelli, Bobby Womack, Tower of Power, Patti Labelle and Imani Winds.

While continuing to perform, Chris Brubeck has developed a parallel career as a classical composer, a discipline in which he is largely self-taught. His works include two concertos for bass trombone, which have been recorded and performed widely in Europe and America, as well as concertos for one and three violins, trumpet, and one and two guitars, three off-Broadway musicals, choral works and many songs (for which he writes both music and lyrics). In 2008 he composed *Ansel Adams: America* for Orchestra and Projected Photographs in collaboration with his father, which was a Grammy finalist for Best Instrumental Composition. Chris Brubeck has held residencies with the Stockton Symphony, Henry Mancini Institute in Los Angeles, and colleges and universities across America.

Brubeck wrote of *Can(n)ons of Freedom*, “In 1775, a group of courageous colonists decided that they would risk everything to live free and not yield to the dictatorial control and disruptive whims of a king. This is the original spirit of resistance that led to the Revolutionary War, our Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights, and an unending quest for a truly democratic republic. But these grand ideals had to be backed up by bold action. Charles Peltz, the Music Director of the Glens Falls Symphony [fifty miles south of Fort Ticonderoga, the inspiration for the piece], has collaborated with me on other patriotic orchestral works and asked me to compose a new work to celebrate an incredible chapter in our military history that surprised the world in the early days of the American War of Independence.

“George Washington’s all-volunteer army was vastly outnumbered and outgunned by England’s professional military’s occupation of Boston. However, Washington’s generals came up with an ingenious plan; capture the lightly defended Fort Ticonderoga and ‘repurpose’ the 59 cannons, mortars and ammunition. Bolder yet, construct large sleds, powered by teams of oxen and horses to haul the tons of cannons across a frozen Lake George, then pull the heavy artillery over the icy, hard ground, sliding over the cushioning snow left by ‘providential’ blizzards across New York State and Massachusetts. The ragtag caravan struggled all the way to the hills above Boston where the British were stationed as the occupying force. This entire military operation was conducted in secret and only when the British Army woke up to see the stolen cannons from Ticonderoga pointing down on them from Dorchester Heights in March of 1776 did the Redcoats realize they were outwitted, outmaneuvered and forced to retreat from Boston Harbor with over 9,000 troops. In modern parlance, the British Army and Navy were caught with their pants down, and with great humiliation had to sail out of Boston. The British Empire was humbled and King George III was apoplectic about the audacity of George Washington and our all-volunteer army. He vowed to have his revenge!

“To paint this revolutionary story with music, I employed timpani with *glissando* pedals, bass drum, military snare and field drum rhythms, layered with low brass and strings to evoke the cannon-hauling over the frozen 300-mile New England route. Some melodic ideas are inspired by authentic fife and drum corps tunes played during the Revolutionary War. In music, a *canon* is a repeating musical theme that folds back in on itself very much like a round. So there are two kinds of *Can(n)ons* represented with this work. The sounds and compositional techniques work together to salute those patriotic warriors, in most cases just a generation beyond immigrating from Europe in order to find freedom and opportunity in the American Colonies.

“As our country looks forward in 2026 to its 250th birthday, it is important to look to the past and honor the history of our founding fathers, clever and educated patriots, who fought alongside brave farmers and tradesmen who made the highest sacrifices. They left their families behind to serve the high ideals of a nation based on laws and guaranteed freedoms. Collectively, our American ancestors worked together and pushed our newborn democracy into a revolutionary reality. Their stunning story is the musical inspiration for *Can(n)ons of Freedom*.”

Concerto No. 3 for Piano and Orchestra in C major, Op. 26 (1921)

SERGEI PROKOFIEV N **1891-1953**

In a 1962 interview, Madame Lina Llubera Prokofiev, the composer's first wife, recalled her husband's working method at the time he wrote the C major Piano Concerto: "Prokofiev toiled at his music. His capacity for work was phenomenal. He would sit down to work in the morning 'with a clear head,' as he said, either at the piano or at his writing desk. He usually composed his major works in the summer, in the mountains or at the seaside, away from the turmoil of city life. Always he sought places where the rhythm of work was not interrupted, where he could rest and take long walks. So it was with the Third Piano Concerto, which he completed during the summer of 1921 while staying at St. Brévin-les-Pins, a small village on the coast of Brittany in France."

Prokofiev himself described the Concerto No. 3: "The first movement opens quietly with a short introduction. The theme is announced by unaccompanied clarinet and is continued by the violins. Soon the tempo changes to *Allegro*, and the strings lead to the statement of the principal subject by the piano. A passage in chords for the piano alone leads to the more expressive second subject, which is heard in the oboe with pizzicato accompaniment. The second movement consists of a theme with five variations. The finale begins with a staccato theme for bassoons and pizzicato strings that is interrupted by the blustering entry of the piano. The orchestra holds its own with the opening theme, however, and there is a good deal of argument, with frequent differences of opinion as regards key. Eventually the piano takes up the first theme and develops it to a climax. With a reduction of tone and a slackening of tempo, an alternative theme is introduced in the woodwinds. The piano replies with a theme that is more in keeping with the caustic humor of the work. This material is developed, and there is a brilliant coda."

Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68 (1855-1876)

JOHANNES BRAHMS N 1833-1897

In 1853, when Brahms was twenty, Robert Schumann wrote an article for the widely distributed *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* hailing his young colleague as the savior of German music, the rightful heir to the mantle of Beethoven. Encouraged by Schumann to undertake a symphony, Brahms made some attempts in 1854, but he was unsatisfied with the symphonic potential of the sketches and diverted them into the First Piano Concerto and *German Requiem*. He began again a year later and set down a first movement, but that music he kept to himself. Seven years passed before he sent that movement to Clara, Schumann's widow, to seek her opinion. She was pleased with the sketch and encouraged him to finish the rest so that it could be performed. Brahms, however, was not to be rushed. Eager inquiries from conductors in 1863, 1864 and 1866 went unanswered. It was not until 1870 that he hinted about any progress at all beyond the first movement.

The success of the superb *Haydn Variations* for orchestra of 1873 seemed to convince Brahms that he could complete his initial symphony, and in the summer of 1874 he began two years of labor — revising, correcting, perfecting — before he signed and dated the score of the First Symphony in September 1876. It is a serious and important essay ("Composing a symphony is no laughing matter," according to Brahms), one that revitalized the symphonic sonata form of Beethoven and combined it with the full contrapuntal resources of Bach, a worthy successor to the traditions Brahms revered. In the years since its premiere, the Symphony No. 1 has been among the most performed and beloved of Brahms' works.

The first movement begins with a slow introduction energized by the heartbeat of the timpani. The violins announce the upward-bounding main theme in the faster tempo that launches a seamless sonata form. The second movement starts with a placid, melancholy song led by the violins. After a mildly syncopated middle section, the bittersweet melody returns. The brief third movement, with its prevailing woodwind colors, is reminiscent of the pastoral serenity of Brahms' earlier Serenades. The finale begins with an extended slow introduction based on several thematic ideas, which lead to a noble chorale intoned by trombones and bassoons. The finale proper starts with a new tempo and a broad hymnal theme, and progresses in sonata form, but without a development section. The work closes with a majestic coda in the brilliant key of C major featuring the trombone chorale from the introduction.