

Event Brief: An Evening of Overtures

The Institute will attend *An Evening of Overtures* with the Naples Philharmonic. Led by Associate Conductor Manuel López-Gómez, the concert brings together some of music's most memorable openings, spanning opera, classical music, Latin American music, and Broadway.

About the Overture

An overture is an instrumental introduction that traditionally opens an opera, ballet, or other large-scale work. While early overtures often served simply to signal that a performance was beginning, composers increasingly used them to establish mood, themes, characters, and dramatic tension before the story itself began.

The program offers a chance to hear this development across different eras and styles, including overtures by Glinka, Nicolai, Rossini, Mozart, and Dvořák, as well as an overture from *The Sound of Music*.

What to Look For

I. First Impressions — How Music Sets the Stage

An overture has a difficult task: it must capture your attention and establish a musical world before you know exactly what is coming. Notice how each composer uses tempo, volume, melody, rhythm, and instrumentation to create a particular first impression. Ask yourself: *What does this music make me expect?*

II. Themes — Listening for What Returns

Listen for melodies, rhythms, and musical ideas that emerge and return throughout each piece. Notice how composers introduce, develop, repeat, and transform these ideas. Rather than trying to identify every instrument, listen for the musical ideas that give each work its character and unity.

III. Drama Without Words — Music as Expression

Many of these overtures come from operas and other dramatic works, yet they communicate without words. Notice how music can suggest joy, tension, anticipation, conflict, celebration, or resolution without explicitly telling you what to think. Consider what this reveals about music's ability to communicate something meaningful through sound alone.

Cultural Formation: Why Orchestral Music?

I. The Need for Cultural Formation

The Institute forms virtuous leaders for the marketplace and public square. This requires more than just professional skills; leaders must be formed with a deeper sense of meaning and an appreciation for truth, beauty, and goodness. Accordingly, education should “combine excellence in humanistic and cultural development with specialized professional training.”¹

To that end, The Institute provides a core suite of professional skills that all leaders need, personal formation to enable them to use those skills well, and cultural formation that cultivates the search for truth and forms “the human spirit...in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, and to contemplate...”²

II. Orchestral Music

Orchestral music offers a particularly direct encounter with beauty because it communicates through order, proportion, rhythm, harmony, and sound. An overture demonstrates how a composer can organize these elements to create an experience of anticipation, drama, and resolution before a story has even begun. As you listen, resist the temptation to treat the music merely as background. Give your attention to the work itself and consider what it reveals about the capacity of beauty to move and form the human person.

¹ Pope Saint John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 23.

² *Ibid.*

