

Shmanners: Symphony

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["Shmanners Theme" by brentalfloss plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy!

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy!

Travis: And you're listening to Shmanners!

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette.

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear. You're so close.

Travis: Yeah, we're recording in a different setup. There's no desk betwixt us now. We sit upon a couch... canoodling?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Recording?

Teresa: Recording.

Travis: Yeah, just recording.

Teresa: We are wearing the same color shirt, though, for those of you watching the video. [chuckles]

Travis: It wasn't on purpose. No one's watching the video, this is just—this is like how coaches will review game tape with players the next day.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: This is so we can go back through and say, "Right there, right there. That was a joke you should have laughed at."

Teresa: Right there, yeah.

Travis: That's most—it's mostly for me—

Teresa: Mostly.

Travis: To point out the jokes you should have laughed at.

Teresa: Like that one?

Travis: No.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: That, I just lost steam.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That wasn't a joke so much. But we're talking about symphonies today.

Teresa: Yes!

Travis: And I wanted to start off with just a fun fact that I know.

Teresa: Okay?

Travis: The word "symphony" is actually a combination of two words. "Sym," like simulation, and "phony," for fake. Because you know how like real music comes from like the radio or CDs or cassettes or like your computer speakers? Well, what a symphony is, is instead of playing real music, they use these things called instruments to create a music-like kind of experience. I worked really hard on writing that in my head today.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I got nothing. Got nothing. Where you—you were laughing at me there, right? Not with.

Teresa: Hm... yes.

Travis: I thought it was funny because I said it's like fake music.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: But actually, because then it's...

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Because then it's...

Teresa: It's not helping, to explain the joke.

Travis: But do you get it?

Teresa: Yes!

Travis: Okay, let's talk about symphonies!

Teresa: All right. So, have you ever been to the symphony?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Where and what? Tell me how. Dish!

Travis: Oh, see, I knew you were gonna ask follow-up questions. I know I've been to symphony like... my high school had like a symphony, you know, kind of club symphony thing.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Been to that. And I've been to musical performances. I know like there was one where we had some theater friends who did like the

Declaration of Independence, that they would read along with like the symphony—

Teresa: Okay, yeah.

Travis: They'll play stuff.

Teresa: Mm-hm.

Travis: I think that's it. I'm not a symphony guy, you know?

Teresa: It really requires an occasion, I think.

Travis: And patience.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: And focus and attention span. If they—there needs to be more fancy things, like opera—

Teresa: Okay, yeah.

Travis: Ballet, symphony, that let you like get up and walk around like it was a bowling alley.

Teresa: You know, that's actually how I saw a symphony performance. Every year, my—the college I went to has a gala event. I mean, it's based—it's for donors, right?

Travis: Ooh-la-la.

Teresa: And they take the performing arts center and like piece it out into—like there's some dance exhibitions and some musical numbers. And the—on the other side of the auditorium, they have a bunch of choral—chorale numbers, right?

Travis: I think it's choral, I think you were right.

Teresa: Choral?

Travis: Corral I think is where you keep horses.

Teresa: No, I mean, there's a different—I'm digressing. But they also had instrumentals. Like, there was a couple of like quartets and then there would be—

Travis: Then it's an octet. If there's a couple of 'em? It's an octet.

Teresa: They didn't play together.

Travis: Oh, it was amp to amp!

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Two rival quartets!

Teresa: Just different rooms. You have to have different rooms for things, so people can walk around! And go in and out and listen to the performances and all kinds of stuff.

Travis: Like an art exhibit?

Teresa: Kind of.

Travis: Yeah, more of that!

Teresa: Yeah. It was pretty cool.

Travis: I would love to listen to a symphony for three and a half minutes.

Teresa: Yeah, a lot of people did.

Travis: Before I'm like, "Next. I get it, music."

Teresa: Yeah. So, that was—that's my only experience. I feel like I've been to the opera more than I've been to see a symphony performance, or an orchestra.

Travis: I've been to the ballet more than either of those.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah, that's pretty cool. So, here we go, let's have a brief history of some of the musicians, the instruments and such, okay? Music is—

Travis: Have you guys heard of this stuff?

Teresa: It's pretty cool. It's been around like *forever*.

Travis: If you haven't, you should check it out. I think you would like it. There's something for everyone! From country music to... pop country music, there's something for everybody.

Teresa: Well, not really, because for a long time, being able to go and hear music or even have—like being exposed to music, outside of church—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Especially in like European-centric cultures, was something that only rich people did.

Travis: Well, yeah, I would say even today, the idea of owning a piano or electric guitar or something, it's not exactly not price prohibitive.

Teresa: Well, sure! But I mean, we have lots of ways to listen to music now.

Travis: That's true. The radio, cassettes, CDs, computer speakers, symphonies.

Teresa: [chuckles] Yes, all of those are true. During the Renaissance, musical performances were organized by and for the wealthy, right? It was a commodity that people kind of used to show off, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And so, the largest musical group you could find was called a consort, which was three to five musicians and probably a singer.

Travis: Is that where "concert" came from?

Teresa: Maybe? I don't know specifically. But that would make sense. It's spelled differently.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So, the aristocrats were always thinking about, "How can I make sure that everyone knows I'm rich and a big deal?"

Travis: "And richer and bigger dealer than the other person."

Teresa: That's right. And one way that they did that was make their band bigger than your band.

Travis: There it is.

Teresa: Yeah. And so, they would try and like find and arrange more talent. This is how we get kind of the patronage system, right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: So, they were trying to like make it so that they had more access to musicians and they had more kind of like, they were in "the in crowd" with composers. And like, it was a very cool, big deal to kind of have your own on-retainer orchestra.

Travis: Yeah. So, for those who don't know, a patronage, patron system is basically that, right? Having musicians and composers and stuff on retainer.

So it's like, "Hey, you're very talented, and I see you as kind of a jewel in my crown, to show off. And so, I don't want you having to work. I want you to spend your time playing music for me, or composing music for me, or whatever."

Teresa: Mm-hm.

Travis: "So, I'm going to basically pay you to live as a musician. And in return, when I want you to come play for me, you drop everything else."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "If I ask you to write a song for me, you drop everything else."

Teresa: And basically, you— "I get to show you off wherever I go."

Travis: Right.

Teresa: "If I want to take you with me, you come."

Travis: Yeah, I bet they also were like, "And if Steve asks you to play at one of his parties, you say no!"

Teresa: "You have to say no."

Travis: "I don't like Steve! He thinks that his hedge maze is better than my hedge maze. But my hedge maze has 27 dead ends, and his hedge maze only has 25 dead ends. Don't tell him I told you that though, I don't want him to add extra dead ends to his hedge maze."

Teresa: Yes. Here is an example from history of that, something—

Travis: The hedge maze—the hedge maze thing?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Aw...

Teresa: No, the wanting to be better than everyone else.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: Not about hedge mages. Mazes. [chuckles]

Travis: That's tough. I almost said hedge mage.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Which would be a great thing to have in your hedge maze.

Teresa: Can we continue?

Travis: Is a corn maze a version of hedge maze? Discuss. I've said hedge maze too much, and it's lost all meaning to me.

Teresa: [chuckles] Okay, so—

Travis: Maze-maze. That's probably already been used.

Teresa: That's probably it. All right, so, Claudio Monteverdi was a musician who had a group of musicians, right? And his benefactor was Francesco Gonza, who is the grandson of the Medici family, right?

Travis: Ooh, okay.

Teresa: Who pretty much bankrolled the entire Italian Renaissance. His marriage was delayed due to his military career, and he wanted the celebration to be a bash of historical proportions. Monteverdi went, "That sounds cool. I do have an opera I want to write." To which Francesco said, "Sounds great. Here's a blank cheque." And so—

Travis: And then—and then he said, "I don't know what that is. We don't have cheques right now."

Teresa: No, you know what I mean.

Travis: I do.

Teresa: He gave him—he bankrolled the whole thing so that he could be shown as a big deal—

Teresa: Yes.

Teresa: At his wedding. On the 27th of February, 1607, the opera La favola d'Orfeo, in Mantua, was the celebration of Gonzaga's marriage to Margaret of Savoy. There was—it's a sweeping, epic piece retelling the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. And I mean—

Travis: And now we have Hadestown. It's all linked!

Teresa: I'm not gonna say it's directly linked.

Travis: Are you saying that he wrote Hadestown?

Teresa: No, I'm not saying that.

Travis: But you're not not saying it!

Teresa: But the thing about this was, it was an enormous undertaking, because of the amount of instruments that were included in this performance.

Travis: 27 violins.

Teresa: 41 instruments, including, but not limited to two cornets, two basses, two harpsichords, two organs, 10 violins and a harp. So this is—

Travis: And a partridge in a pear tree. Ha, just a little joke. He didn't have a partridge in a pear tree.

Teresa: No, he didn't.

Travis: No...

Teresa: So, this is the way that it cemented itself in opera history as being like the first fully realized performance of its kind. I mean, but it wasn't actually a proper orchestra.

Travis: No, it didn't have any saxophones.

Teresa: Well—

Travis: How could you have an orchestra without saxophones? How would they play Baker Street? My favorite saxophone solo.

Teresa: No. No, no, no. Not about the musicians.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: It's about the way that the "opera" was performed. So, okay, if you listen to this opera, you hear that each kind of instrument has its own like solo, right? But that's not really how orchestral music works.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Teresa: They all kind of like play together, right?

Travis: It's much more about layers.

Teresa: Right, exactly.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: It's kind of a multi-string alchemy, kind of like where everybody has different parts that go together, but there are solos, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But not in this. It was pretty much just, "We trade parts, like each one of us gets to do one little thing."

Travis: It's much more like an a cappella group, right? Where you hear all their voices layering in the sounds.

Teresa: Right, yeah!

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah, and it makes an orchestra more than the sum of its parts.

Travis: Yeah, it's not just a big band.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Exactly. But so, obviously, you had to spend *a lot* of money to hire this many instrumentalists, right?

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: For example, Jean-Baptiste Lully, who was the composer—

Travis: Nailed it.

Teresa: Thank you. For King Louis the XIII, wrote the 24 Violins of the King, which is a multi-string piece composed of violins, cellos and violas playing as one, okay? So this was like—

Travis: One big note.

Teresa: [titters] Not all the same note.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: But all playing together, right? Which was like the beginning of the idea of the orchestra, the way that they layer in together.

Travis: So, I know very little about like the technical side of music, is there... is it like what makes an orchestra or a symphony or whatever, is like their playing... kind of intertwining. Not just like this is the drum part, this is the violin part, it's like they're kind of like counter melodying each other, or whatever the term would be, right? That it's like they need to be played at the same time or it doesn't sound right.

Teresa: Yeah. I think so. More like that is—okay, we'll get into a little later some actual definitions, because at this point, we are using the word "symphony" and the word "orchestra" kind of interchangeably, although they are slightly different. And I'll explain about that a little later. So, here's the next layer of this. It has to do with Jean-Baptiste Lully. So, he added other instruments to this group, because the king was like, "Make it bigger and make it better, because I'm the king."

And so, the king said, "I want all the instruments to start together." Okay? Because he had this idea of like this grand kind of entrance, right? So then, this moment began to be called the first stroke of the bow, which is something that you'll see like when an orchestra starts playing, you'll see a kind of like collective like lift and up, right? Of everybody kind of like getting ready to start at the same time.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Teresa: That starts here. And so, with all of these new innovations—

Travis: These bow strokers.

Teresa: Okay—brought from the French court, we have the next like kind of like level up from all the other courts around. They're like, "I gotta have this too" and "Now we're gonna make a big instrument group." And then we've got all these like one-ups that you were talking about.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: And here is one of the largest on record, Roman Angelico Carnelli, who on special occasions would have upwards of 100 musicians playing at one time.

Travis: That's a big room.

Teresa: That is a big room.

Travis: There was no room left for anyone to watch. [chuckles]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It's just them all crammed in like, "If you can move your elbow? I have a solo."

Teresa: They had to open the windows and the audience stood outside. [chuckles]

Travis: "Shh! I'm trying to listen!"

Teresa: [chuckles] Okay, so, we're up to the 1700s now.

Travis: And it's the moment you've all been waiting for. So, how about a word from another Max Fun show?

[break]

Travis: We're back.

Teresa: 1700s, the next innovation, we've got Antonio Vivaldi.

Travis: I know that dude! I like Vivaldi—

Teresa: You do! You've heard about that guy.

Travis: He did the Four Seasons.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: He stayed at that hotel all the time. He loved it.

Teresa: Eh-eh...

Travis: It's all the jokes I have, babe!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Did you think I was gonna go deeper in Vivaldi reference?! Ah, yeah, let me pull out all my Vivaldi puns.

Teresa: Well, here's the thing about Vivaldi. He is credited with the trend of writing concertos, which is one soloist up against the rest of the orchestra's full sound. Okay? And so, this became popular, where everyone was trying to like copy that idea. So now, instead of the soloist being like all by itself, right? You have the soloist on top of the orchestra. So we've got—you were almost talking about counter melodies earlier.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Teresa: That's one of the ways that you can do it. You put like the bassist or whatever underneath at like a different harmony, or whatever, trying to make it so that it lifts up the other pieces. Or you know, stuff like that.

Travis: Yes. Like when you go to a ballet and you have, usually the ballerino, who's like, "I'm here to make her look good."

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And he's like flipping her all around, throwing her all around. And he is basically, not all the time, but sometimes just like, "Yeah, man, I'm here to basically act like a jack lifting a car, and I'm gonna throw you around to make you look good."

Teresa: Exactly. Okay. So, here is our next innovation, because everybody wants to one-up each other and is constantly trying to make it bigger and better, right? The next innovation we have is the keeping of time.

Travis: Before that they weren't doing it?

Teresa: Well...

Travis: They're just like, "Whatever. Feel it."

Teresa: No, no, no, no, everyone—

Travis: "Follow your heart."

Teresa: Everyone kind of worked together, but there was—there was no like—there was no conductor. This hadn't happened yet.

Travis: *What?*

Teresa: So, even before there was a conductor, the first violinist would be in charge of kind of like keeping the beat.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Like making it so that everyone could follow along with what they were doing. And then you had—

Travis: They realized that violence is never the answer.

Teresa: Eh...

Travis: Violins is never... I'm just gonna—I'm gonna stop talking.

Teresa: [titters] No, don't do that.

Travis: Because that was nothing.

Teresa: It's okay. It was all right.

Travis: No, it wasn't!

Teresa: It was a pun?

Travis: Violins is never the answer? That's nothing. That's the kind of joke I would make in front of our kids, and they would make me explain it to a point where I'd have to leave the room from shame and embarrassment.

Teresa: Yeah, that's true. That's true. [chuckles]

Travis: "No, because it's like 'violence' sounds like 'violence.'" And they'd be like, "Yeah, but what does it mean?" And I'm like, "It doesn't... hm..."

Teresa: [titters] Anyway. But as music got more and more complicated, the violinist was having a hard time doing both jobs. And so, there came a concert master who would be in charge of this, and they would keep time using a rolled-up page of sheet music or an extra violin bow to keep everyone on the right tempo.

Travis: Okay, now that's—

Teresa: That is the conductor! Right?

Travis: That seems true the first time, right? That it's like, "All I have is this rolled-up piece of paper or a violin bow." You would think after the first time they'd be like, "Let's have something other than just this thing. Get me a stick."

Teresa: Well, I mean—

Travis: "Or someone go get me a twig. Drum guy, you got an extra one of those things?"

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: "It's just, I feel stupid up here with the bow. I'm telling you guys to stroke your bow while I'm waving mine around, it's weird!"

Teresa: I know, anyway, anyway. Okay, so, at this point we're at like the 1750s. When someone referred to an orchestra, they were talking about a group of musicians with at least a few pairs of strings, flutes, oboes, horns and sometimes timpani. And the reason why is because there were plenty of

musicians available to play things like horns and timpani, because they had learned to play these instruments in military bands.

Travis: Oh, sure, sure, sure. Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah. Pretty cool, so that they would like make a career out of it. First you do it in the military, and then you become a member of an orchestra.

Travis: Or opposite!

Teresa: Oh?

Travis: Because like the boogie-woogie bugle boy of Company B played the boogie-woogie bugle *before* he joined Company B. And now, he blows a-toot, a-toot, a-toot-diddelyada, a-toot-diddelyada and an eight-to-the-bar of boogie rhythm.

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: But he can't play a note unless the bass guitar playing with him.

Teresa: I was waiting for that.

Travis: He the company jump when he plays reveille. [sings] He's the boogie-woogie bugle boy of Company B.

Teresa: But what came next was the clarinet, not the bugle.

Travis: They didn't have clarinets yet?

Teresa: No... It's a—it's a pretty sophisticated instrument.

Travis: It's got a lot of buttons and doodads on it!

Teresa: And so, at this point, everybody had kind of like a declared like personality to their music—their instrument. So like flutes would symbolize love, and sometimes shepherds and stuff. And trumpets would symbolize

glory, and like a horn would symbolize the hunt. But the clarinet had nothing it was directly tied to. And the—

Travis: Until Peter and the Wolf. And the clarinet was the wolf, I think.

Teresa: Was it?

Travis: No.

Teresa: I can't remember.

Travis: I don't know!

Teresa: *I don't know.* And the composers were like, "Yes, this is gonna be it." And so, everything from this point on started to have *real* heavy clarinet.

Travis: It just really sunk in what you were saying, that when the clarinet came around, people were like, "No one knows what this means, so we're gonna use the heck out of it."

Teresa: Yup!

Travis: We can use it and people are like, "I don't know what I'm supposed to be feeling right now." [chuckles]

Teresa: I mean, that's the thing, right? So like—

Travis: I'm just picturing like someone opening a case and like Steam, you know, fog pouring out as they pull out the clarinet. And someone being like, "This is gonna change everything!"

Teresa: [laughs] "It's called clarinet and it's gonna change the world."

Travis: "My boys in RND have been working on a little thing, we're calling it the clarinet."

"Yeah, but what's it symbolize?"

"That's just it. Nobody knows."

Teresa: So, this is where we get the, like the kind of heyday of classical music that we really think about. Like Hayden and Mozart, and like just this idea—

Travis: White Snake.

Teresa: No...

[break]

John: Sleep is important, but it's difficult sometimes. I'm John Moe. On Sleeping With Celebrities, famous people help conk you out by talking in soothing voices about unimportant things. Maria Bamford on parking.

Maria: I parked in a bus stop. That's just not right. I am not a bus.

John: Roxane Gay on airports.

Roxane: My favorite airport is Indianapolis. It has a really smart layout.

John: Alan Tudyk on yardsticks.

Alan: You hand somebody a yardstick, yardsticks become part of the family.

John: Granted, it's a weird idea, but it's lots of fun and it works. Listen wherever you get podcasts.

[break]

Manolo: Hey, it's Sue, the subway train.

[piano notes play]

Manolo: Hey, guess what, Sue? I just inherited a game show. And I have to continue it, because there are people out there who like to curl up into a ball and listen to it.

[piano notes play]

Manolo: Yeah, it's a podcast where listeners submit game show ideas for others to play on air.

[piano notes play]

Manolo: Well, it is. In fact, the dumber the better.

[piano notes play]

Manolo: Right, right, it's called Dr. Gameshow. Some curled up balls consider it a tradition, while others call it a train wreck.

[piano notes play]

Manolo: No, not you Sue, it's Dr. Gameshow. If you're the sort that likes to listen to people competing for refrigerator magnets, then curl up into a ball and listen to Dr. Gameshow, every other Wednesday on maximumfun.org.

[piano notes play]

[break]

Travis: I knew that wasn't one of 'em.

Teresa: And we've also got Beethoven who busts onto the scene. And he was like, "I'm gonna up the drama of this whole thing by adding like a contrabassoon and adding like drums and horns and stuff." So like it—there were lots of things that were happening kind of all at the same time.

Travis: The wolf is a French horn.

Teresa: Oh, okay?

Travis: Yeah. Yeah... The clarinet is the cat.

Teresa: Oh?

Travis: Yeah. The duck is an oboe, bird is a flute. Yeah, it's basic stuff.

Teresa: Good to know. I would be remiss if I did not add a quick little side note here. So far, all I have mentioned are male composers.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: And most musicians were also male, but there were some very incredible female composers. One such is Fanny Mendelssohn. But up until like the turn of the 20th century, despite the wealth of female talent, they really weren't part of the orchestral world.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Teresa: Which is really sad. Anyway, let's see, some more touchstones, we've got the mid-1800s harps come back into the symphony, and trumpets. But it took a while at this point to figure out what the like... the bottom of the bass section was going to be. And there were a couple of different contenders, but we turned out that the—the tuba won out.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: So, now the tuba is part of the orchestra. And then we've got the next one, who I'm only going to mention a little bit, because he was so instrumental in the whole—

Travis: Get it? Instrumental?

Teresa: Wagner.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Wrote some really amazing pieces of music, even though he was not a good guy.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And then you've got like... you've got all of these really great composers, you've got innovation after innovation. And then it kind of got a little stagnated, because—

Travis: It wasn't cool anymore!

Teresa: Well, no, it's not that it wasn't cool, it's that all the old stuff was so cool, that people really stopped writing new stuff, right?

Travis: Oh, sure, sure.

Teresa: So like, they all wanted to hear the greatest hits. And then once you've heard the greatest hits, you don't really go back to hear the greatest hits again.

Travis: I would love to be at like a Mozart thing where he was playing, and he's like, "And here's some stuff from one of my new symphonies." And people are like, "No, boo! Boo! Go back—go back—we want to hear the old stuff!"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "Do the one in B major," or whatever it is.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: "Number five! What's that one called? Do that one. Play Ode to Joy!"

Teresa: Oh, yeah, that was a good one. That was Beethoven.

Travis: They're basically the same person.

Teresa: No, they're not .

Travis: Eh.

Teresa: Not at all.

Travis: Ask any seven-year-old.

Teresa: Completely different writing styles, sir.

Travis: Sure!

Teresa: Stop that.

Travis: Okay. They're both old, white dudes, who are dead!

Teresa: I mean, okay, then yes, they are the same, I guess?

Travis: Thank you. I'm glad that you admit that I'm right.

Teresa: All right. So, what they decided to do is they were going to bring in a completely new section of the orchestra, to make it hip and fun and cool.

Travis: Is this guitars?

Teresa: No, we've got kind of like... got kind of little like mini sections. You'll like pull out several of the—of the instrumentalists to do like a special part of it.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: And like kind of—

Travis: Not like we're adding xylophones now.

Teresa: I mean, yeah, they did start to add a lot of extra stuff like that.

Travis: Yeah. That's my favorite, when you really let the percussionist let loose, and they're back there playing some wild stuff. And it's like, "Yeah, this is our cow horn setup that we've got, and these are our xylophones that like wrap around us or whatever. And we're going wild back here like it's a Styx concert."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: The Styx piano player sits in a circular piano.

Teresa: Oh, does he?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Oh?

Travis: I don't know if he still does it. But at one point when he would play "Come Sail Away," he would sit in the middle of the thing and it would like rotate.

Teresa: That's cool.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I don't know if I've ever seen that. We went to see Styx once, didn't we?

Travis: We did.

Teresa: Did he do that there?

Travis: This was not Styx in its heyday when we saw it, baby, yeah.

Teresa: Oh, I mean, of course not. [chuckles] Okay, so, the orchestra continued to evolve into what we see today. And then also we've got now like professional instrumentalists who go to school for things. We don't have like as many of the like patrons. We've got more like a pipeline, I would say, like if you go to school for it and like—

Travis: Yeah. Well, there's symphonies like in cities and college and stuff—

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Where it's not like, "I need to find a rich dude who's looking to put together a symphony." It's like, "Well, this is like the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and that's who I want to play for." Or it'd be like the Chicago—I'm sure Chicago has more than one.

Teresa: Certainly. So then, let's talk about those definitions—

Travis: Well, back in the past real quick, can I tell a story about my favorite composer?

Teresa: Oh, sure!

Travis: I really like Rachmaninoff.

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: And there's a story of Sergei Rachmaninoff—

Teresa: That totally tracks.

Travis: Yeah, I like Rachmaninoff. It's fun to say. And he decided he wanted to be friends with Igor Stravinsky. Even though it was like two wildly different guys. And he was like, "I want to be friends with this guy." And he heard that Stravinsky liked honey. So in the middle of the night, Rachmaninoff just showed up at his front door with a giant jar of honey, and he was like, "We should be friends now." And they were! They became friends!

Teresa: That's great!

Travis: It's just such a wild thing of like, "I don't know how to make friends as an adult, so I got you a giant jar of honey. And not only that, I brought it to you at 2AM. We should hang out."

Teresa: [chuckles] "This will work."

Travis: "We're friends now."

Teresa: Totally. Okay, so, technically, the orchestra refers to a large musical ensemble, usually containing string, woodwind, brass and percussion. Although, it can refer to several different ensembles, such as a chamber orchestra, right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Which is a smaller size. A pit orchestra, which is usually something that accompanies a show, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Or even a concert band, which is more like the things that we would have seen like at college or whatever, right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: And because, technically, the word "symphony" refers to the composition, the musical composition.

Travis: Okay, that's what I was going to ask, because I have also heard symphony like when someone says, "I am writing a symphony."

Teresa: Exactly, yes. A symphony is a large-scale musical piece that usually requires 50 to 80 instruments to perform it. For example, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is played by an orchestra.

Travis: So like when you go to see a ballet, it is performed by a dance company, right? You're not saying, "Look at that ballet up there doing a great job."

Teresa: Yes, correct.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Correct, just like that. And then we get philharmonic in there, which is like another term that you might find in your city, if you're gonna go and

see someone perform a symphony, right? You might go to the philharmonic, or you might go to the orc—see the Cincinnati Orchestra, or whatever, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And—

Travis: The pops.

Teresa: The...

Travis: Pops? They call it that, right?

Teresa: I think that has to do with the type of music that they are playing.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Popular music, not—it doesn't have to be like, you know, rock and roll, right? But it's like—

Travis: That is one of the oldest things you've ever said.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: That when you're like, "Popular music, you know, like the kids' rock and roll."

Teresa: No, not rock—it doesn't have to be rock and roll. [chuckles]

Travis: But I know—but I just like—that you were like, when you thought of popular music, your go-to was, "You know, like rock and roll."

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: It's the oldest you've ever sounded.

Teresa: It's the oldest I've ever sounded.

Travis: You sounded like a 70-year-old man who hears like Ariana Grande and he's like, "What is this, rock and roll?"

Teresa: [chuckles] Okay, so we've got philharmonic, which is technically also different from an orchestra. Because you can have a philharmonic society, because it has the classical Greek roots, meaning lovers of harmony.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: So, made up of musicians and other lovers of music who organized orchestras to perform music for the general public. So, it's without the patronage of a king or anything, and it's usually not like organized. It's something that would be more organized like by the city, right?

Travis: So, you would go see a symphony performed by an orchestra, at the philharmonic?

Teresa: Perhaps. I mean, because the orchestra could call themselves a philharmonic, if they were not associated with any like one society.

Travis: Okay, so, philharmonic could organize an orchestra to perform a sympathy at a music hall.

Teresa: Yes. Absolutely.

Travis: Boom, okay.

Teresa: That's all true, yes. Orchestra doesn't actually begin to describe the group of musicians until the 1600s, because if you break it down into its Greek roots as well, it means a place where contests take place.

Travis: Well... I guess if you're competing for like first chair?

Teresa: I guess so.

Travis: I would never want to be first. I think it says a lot about me.

Teresa: No, mm-mm, too much pressure.

Travis: I'm the same guy that like when I played on a baseball—like at an intramural softball team, when there were too many people at the field, and they're like, "Do you want us to trade out?" I'm like, "No, I'm perfectly happy sit—"

Teresa: "I just wanna sit here on the bench!"

Travis: "I'm part of it. I'm over here."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: If I join an orchestra I'll be like, "I'll be 12th chair." And they're like, "We only need 10 chairs." And I'm like, "Cool! I'll be over here, in the wings, playing my Game Boy."

Teresa: [chuckles] Sounds great.

Travis: "Let me know if two other people get hurt or whatever."

Teresa: [chuckles] At the orchestra.

Travis: Yeah, the orchestra, if you get into some full contact... symphony. I'll be in there.

Teresa: Yeah. Okay, so, if our—if our Shmanners Fanners want to go to the orchestra to see them play a symphony, here are some things that you need to know. It is a dress up event. Not like—you don't have to wear like a formal attire, like a floor-length gown or whatever. But you should try and look a little spiffy, right? It is a kind of like see and be seen place. And it is associated with the aristocracy, so you should dress up a bit.

Travis: Also, they don't like it when you bring your own instruments from home and start playing along with them. They...

Teresa: No.

Travis: Ugh. They... let me just tell you, they get real mean about it.

Teresa: You should also arrive early before the house opens for seating, because if you are late, you will probably not be seated until intermission. Specifically because people are really trying to concentrate on listening to the music, and any kind of like interference is highly frowned upon.

Travis: Well, because a lot of it... I don't know how true this is, I guess is the best way of putting it, but I don't think they're like amplified all that much?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Right? So it's not like, in your words, a rock and roll show.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Where it's like so loud that no one's gonna notice you coming in and sitting down or whatever. Especially like their... the ebbs and flows, the highs and lows, the... pianissimo and fortissimos.

Teresa: Ooh, nice!

Travis: Thank you. I was in choir. But like those things of like, there are really quiet moments to have the dynamics of the up and down. And the idea of like timing it out like, "Okay, we're about to hit a loud part. Go, go, go, get your seat!"

Teresa: [chuckles] Obviously, turn off your phone, right? Like I said, it's a—and like you said, it's—there's a lot of dynamics. And your ring going off while there's just a piccolo playing is not good.

Travis: That's true in any theater experience.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Be it ballet, be it theater, be at a concert, whatever. At least put your phone on silent, even if it's like a loud show, or whatever. You know,

you're going to see like, you know, a band perform whatever, put your phone on silent.

Teresa: Some general theater etiquette as well is like study the program and look at the instruments and try and like understand what's happening. And there's like usually some conductor's notes in the program that'll tell you about the piece and about like, for instance, if the symphony has like movements that are named, it might be interesting to figure out what those are.

Travis: How important do you think it is in a symphony that has, I don't necessarily want to say a story or a theme or whatever, to know what it is to enjoy the thing, versus just like feeling it?

Teresa: Well, I mean, you mentioned Peter and the Wolf, do you think that you would care so much about it if you didn't know that each of the instrumentals represent different animals?

Travis: That's a good point. Yeah, I think, you know, there's many musical things that I appreciated, and then I learned there was deeper things behind it and I was like, oh, wait, this rules.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I feel that way about Hazards of Love, where it's like, yeah, these songs are great. And then Griffin was like, "Now let me read you the liner notes." And I was like, "Okay." And I was like, oh, okay, this is a masterpiece.

Teresa: Yes, exactly. That's what you should do. You should read the liner notes.

Travis: The liner notes, which is the program.

Teresa: The program.

Travis: Get yourself a big souvenir foam finger too. They love when you wave those things around.

Teresa: No. No.

Travis: Like, "Ah, violas are number one!"

Teresa: No, they don't. But they do like when you clap. Sometimes it can be difficult to know when to clap, but I'm here for you. The good way to know is, you can clap when the concert master or the first violinist appears on stage, you can also clap when the conductor makes their entrance, and at the end of the last movement of the piece. And you will know this, because the conductor will lower their hands completely. Not just like down a little bit to turn the page or to like start it very small at the next section. They would lower their hands completely, and then you'll know to clap.

Travis: In a symphony, do the pieces move seamlessly into one another?

Teresa: Sometimes.

Travis: Yeah?

Teresa: But sometimes they don't. Sometimes there are—there are pauses between movements.

Travis: They'll try to trick you. Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That's how they get you.

Teresa: Yeah. So you know, if you would like to go, most cities have an orchestra. I know that music hall here in Cincinnati puts on some lovely performances.

Travis: We should also, we talked about it earlier, about like the pops and popular stuff or whatever. There's so many options. Like, I don't know if it's still going, but there was like a Stardew Valley like symphony, you know, orchestra experience you could go to. I know Final Fantasy ones happen a

lot. Jason Charles Miller performed with a Final Fantasy one a couple times, because he's done some music from it. Or they'll do like Star Wars a lot.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: All of these things. And so even if you're like, "Eh, I don't know if classical music is for me." You don't have to—like, it's not limited to that. There's lots of different options. Sometimes you can find where they will like have a live orchestra that plays with a movie, right?

Teresa: Oh, yeah!

Travis: Or something like that. It's so cool.

Teresa: Oh, there's one of those I want to go see. It's the Avatar: The Last Airbender, where they play the soundtrack.

Travis: Especially when it gets to "Secret Tunnel." That's gonna be a wild room.

Teresa: That's gonna be great.

Travis: Hey, everybody! Thank you so much for listening. Thank you to our researcher, Alex, without whom we couldn't have done this episode. Thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we couldn't do the show. And thank you to you for listening. You are the piccolos to our timpani.

Teresa: Aw.

Travis: I don't know how those two—

Teresa: I think it works. It works, it's fine.

Travis: Yeah, it works? Okay, great.

Teresa: Yeah, it's good.

Travis: Let's see, it's a new month, so go to—we might have already recorded one, I can't remember. Anyways! If you go to mcelroymerch.com, you can find all the merch there. Champions Grove is still on sale, we're down to four packages left. And we just started a new year sale, 10% off for those last four packages. They are each four-person attendance packages, so you can go check that out at championsgrove.com. What else, Teresa?

Teresa: We always thank Brent 'brentalfloss' Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. We also thank Bruja Betty Pin-up Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners. If you love to get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today. Also, we are always taking your topic submissions, your questions, your idioms. We love those shows. So, please send us all those things!

Travis: Send us those things that she mentioned.

Teresa: [chuckles] Those things to shmannerscast@gmail.com, and say hi to Alex, because she reads every single one.

Travis: And that's going to do it for us. So join us so join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required!

Travis: You've been listening to Shmanners.

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

["Shmanners Theme" by brentalfloss plays]

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