

Sibelius

Suite from Pelléas and Mélisande opus 46

1. At the Castle Gate
2. Mélisande
3. At the Seashore
4. A Spring in the Park
5. The Three Blind Sisters
6. Pastorale
7. Mélisande at the Spinning Wheel
8. Entr'acte
9. The Death of Mélisande

Sibelius wrote some of his most characteristic and original music when writing for the theatre. The freedom from the need for development and cohesion, so obvious in his symphonies allowed a different facet of his genius to surface, that of mood painting. Sibelius's music to Shakespeare's the Tempest, his last major work, is for some, Sibelius's greatest work.

Sibelius was one of a number of composers attracted to Maurice Maeterlinck's play Pelléas et Mélisande. Faure, Schoenberg and Debussy all composed works inspired by the play. The play's themes are doomed and forbidden love and cycles of life and destruction. Mélisande falls in love with her husband's brother and dies giving birth to their child. The story has a striking resemblance to the tale of Francesca da Rimini in Dante's Divine Comedy which inspired music by Tchaikovsky. Sibelius's music was written and premiered in 1905.

The opening number "at the castle gate" is well known as the theme music for the BBC TV programme "Sky at Night". The moods of the different short movements are very contrasting, ranging from terror to pastoral peacefulness to a lament for Mélisande's death. This lament is the last and longest movement and it is achingly beautiful, the passionate middle section is the emotional heart of the work.

Dvorak

Romance for violin and orchestra opus 11

The Romance was written for a concert in Prague in aid of the Czech Theatre Pension Fund in 1877, probably at the instigation of the leader of the theatre orchestra Josef Minkus who was the soloist in the first performance. The main theme of the work is taken from the slow movement of an earlier string quartet which he no longer intended to publish. Two other themes in this sonata form movement are new to this work. Apart from the climax of the short development section the work is gentle, poetic and warm. Subtle orchestration and idiomatic writing for the violin has made this short work a concert favorite.

Interval

Faure

Pavane opus 50

Faure wrote his Pavane for piano in 1887 with optional parts for chorus. He later orchestrated the work for small orchestra when it was used to accompany dancers. Serge Diaghilev used the music in a production for Ballets Russes.

A pavane is a slow, processional, courtly dance from Spain. When Adrian Boult heard the composer play the work he noted the tempo was much faster than usual practice, implying a neo-classical rather than a romantic approach. Faure's juniors, Debussy and Ravel both wrote PAVANES' of equal beauty and poise.

Schubert

Symphony number 5 in B flat major

Schubert wrote his 5th symphony while still in his early twenties. Like his other early symphonies it was written for a rehearsal orchestra in which he and his friends played for their own enjoyment. While the first three symphonies are very much modelled on those of Haydn and Mozart with little of Schubert's later lyrical and harmonic gifts shining through, the fourth and fifth are transitional works where Schubert is beginning to develop his unique voice. This is characterised in the 4th by more drama and intensity, while in the 5th it is his sublime lyrical gift which is to the fore.

The orchestra is the smallest called for by any of his symphonies with no clarinets, tympani or trumpets. This gives the work an intimate feeling. For the first time, he starts a symphony quietly with wood wind chords leading to a simple and gentle first theme which is restated with a beautiful flute decoration. A lively tutti follows and leads into a second subject which more playful with interchanges between woodwind and strings. The development section begins with the introductory wood wind chords before a brief period of storminess and drama before the sunshine returns with the recapitulation. Unusually the first subject is restated in the subdominant not the tonic which is usual practice.

The second movement is in a gentle 6/8 time and begins with a simple homely theme which is gradually extended to show a more introspective inner sadness.

No one can make major key music sound sad like Schubert! The contrasting middle section with a lyrical tune over a pulsing accompaniment from the strings is similar to later Schubert with its effortless changes of key every few bars. The first section returns with added harmonic twists to keep you guessing when it will end.

The third movement is a dramatic minor key scherzo which owes much to Beethoven with its rhythmic drive and sudden changes in dynamics. The trio section could not be more different with a simple major key folk song like tune.

The finale is an allegro with Haydn like high spirits and energy. The first and second themes are cultured and elegant while the transition linking theme is full of "Sturm und Drang" fire and drama. This wonderful, multifaceted work ends in high spirits.

Elgar

Chanson de Matin

Elgar wrote Chanson de Matin and its companion piece Chanson de Nuit early in his career. It was originally written in 1890 for violin and piano and later orchestrated for the Proms in 1901. It has always been a favourite with audiences who love its Edwardian elegance and charm.

Programme notes by Andy Evans

DUNDEE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Francesco Scattolin (Leader)

Judith Buttars

Darryl Dick

Robert Dick

Cello

Nicola Chakraverty

Anna Woodward

Mary Wells

Madhavi Nevader

Oboe /cor anglais

Steve Wiggetts

Jane Jarvis

Violin 2

Jane Ilse

Emily McDonald

Will Fuller

Simon Evans (Soloist)

Sally Carus

Bass

Rebecca Elliot

Louise Major

Clarinet

Jenny Murphy

Jane Harrison

Timps /percussion

Alison Russell

Viola

Elsbeth O-Riordan

Angela Green

Jill Duguid

John Halliday

Flute

Susie Will

Kirsty Jamieson

Bassoon

Lynsey Martin Kimmitt

David Wallace

Horn

Kevin Murphy

Arwen Rimmer

Francesco SCATTOLIN

Violin leader

Francesco earned his degree in 1995 from the state conservatory of music "Agostino Steffani" in Castelfranco, Veneto, Italy, under the direction of maestro Giuseppe Volpato.

In 1996 he recorded a CD with contemporary artists for the record label Velut Luna di Padova. He has since collaborated with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Udine (now the Orchestra Sinfonica del Friuli Venezia Giulia), and the Orchestra del Teatro Olimpico di Vicenza el Solisti di Aquileia.

In 1998 he became a member of the Orchestra di Filarmonia Veneta "Gian Francesco Malipiero" and the Orchestra d'Archi Italiana under the direction of Mario Brunello where he has performed in some of the most important theatres in Italy.

Andy EVANS

Conductor

Andy, like many doctors, was torn between medicine and music as a career when a teenager. He was then a clarinettist but as a junior doctor he took up the horn. He is currently principle horn of the Dundee and Perth Symphony Orchestras and also plays with a number of chamber ensembles. Andy has composed classical music for the last 15 years. He won the iCompose competition and consequently had "Danse" performed and recorded by members of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Andy was a prize winner in a BBC competition and as a result his work "and Mary said" was recorded by the Henschel Quartet and the Tölzer Knabenchor from Munich for Neos records. An orchestral work "the joy of small things" has been performed by the Highland Chamber Orchestra and the Dundee Symphony Orchestra.

Andy has previously conducted the Nottingham Symphony Orchestra and the Nottingham Wind Soloists. He currently works at Dundee University as an academic breast radiologist.

Simon EVANS

Soloist

Simon started playing the violin aged 10 after spending his evenings listening to his older brother playing violin sonatas with his sister. He became leader of the Denbyshire and North Wales Youth Orchestras by the age of 14 and a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales.

Despite having a busy career as a Consultant Chest Physician, Simon has always been an active musician, playing in the Manchester University and Havant Chamber Orchestras. He also led the Dartington Summer School Orchestra for a couple of courses. His real love however is chamber music and gives concerts with the Aurora String Quartet and other musicians.

PS. Simon and Andy are identical twins!

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DUNDEE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Conducted by Andy Evans

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