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FIFTY-SEVENTH
SEASON
1937-1938



Wednesday Evening, December 8

FIFTY-NINTH ANNUAL CHORAL UNION CONCERT SERIES, OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
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The Critics* Hail the Recording of **"ROMEO and JULIET"**

by

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA **SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY** **CONDUCTOR**

Scribner's (Sept.): — "The Boston Symphony Orchestra's recording of Tchaikovsky's 'Romeo and Juliet' is as electrifying an achievement as other triumphs of Higher Fidelity in Symphony Hall would lead you to expect. . . ."

MOSES SMITH, *Boston Transcript*, Sept. 14: — "The performance of the Tchaikovsky Overture-Fantasy, 'Romeo and Juliet' (Victor Set M-347; three twelve-inch records), prompted the record reviewer of the *Manchester Guardian* (a presumably unprejudiced source) to say that 'for sheer brilliance and resonance of tone the Boston players have no equals.' It is an exciting presentation, and the mechanical recording is similarly brilliant."

COMPTON PAKENHAM, record editor of *New York Times*, Aug. 1: — "This album is particularly for those who felt the bite of Koussevitzky's recent set of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. The passage describing the strife of the Montagues and Capulets is given a magnificent sting. One can feel the venom of the contending parties, visualize the shifting brawl, and almost see the flash of steel on steel."

JEROME D. BOHM, *New York Herald-Tribune*, Aug. 8: — "The performance leaves little to be desired from the tonal aspect and the conductor has exercised uncommon restraint in his treatment of the music."

THOMAS ARCHER, *Montreal Gazette*, July 31: — "The work seems to glow and throb with youthful passion and tenderness. This may be said in particular of the wonderful cantilena theme obviously representing the lovers and which is treated as the Boston Symphony Orchestra would treat it, namely with a surpassing sense of lyrical romance. The climaxes are tremendous."

JAY WALZ, *Washington (D.C.) Post*, Aug. 8: — "Victor says the performance turned in by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony makes Album M-347 the peer of all 'Romeo and Juliets' in the catalogue. I would not be one to dispute that claim. . . . Any who sit down and wait for a better 'Romeo and Juliet' are just wasting time."

*Coincident with the surge of popularity of phonograph records, magazines and newspapers are today establishing special reviewers for recordings.



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FIFTY-SEVENTH SEASON, 1937-1938

Boston Symphony Orchestra

SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY, *Conductor*

RICHARD BURGIN, *Assistant Conductor*

Concert Bulletin

WEDNESDAY EVENING, *December 8*

with historical and descriptive notes by

JOHN N. BURK

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Boston Symphony Orchestra

[Fifty-seventh Season, 1937-1938]

SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY, *Conductor*

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Boston Symphony Orchestra

FIFTY-SEVENTH SEASON, 1937-1938

SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY, *Conductor*

WEDNESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 8

Programme

HAYDN.....Symphony in G major, No. 88 (B. & H. No. 13)

- I. Adagio; Allegro
- II. Largo
- III. Menuetto; Trio
- IV. Finale: Allegro con spirito

PROKOFIEFF....."Lieutenant Kije," Orchestral Suite, *Op. 60*

- I. Birth of Kije
- II. Romance
- III. Kije's Wedding
- IV. Troika
- V. Burial of Kije

INTERMISSION

SIBELIUS.....Symphony No. 2 in D major, *Op. 43*

- I. Allegretto
 - II. Tempo andante, ma rubato
 - III. Vivacissimo; Lento e suave
 - IV. Finale: Allegro moderato
-

STEINWAY PIANO

SYMPHONY IN G MAJOR, No. 88 (B. & H. No. 13)

By JOSEF HAYDN

Born at Rohrau, Lower Austria, March 31, 1732; died at Vienna, May 31, 1809

This symphony was composed for performance in Paris in the year 1787. It is scored for one flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings.

It was first performed at concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, November 8, 1889. The most recent performance at a concert in Symphony Hall was in the Monday and Tuesday series, October 25-26, 1937. The symphony was last performed in the Friday and Saturday series on January 11, 1935, Adrian Boult conducting.

WHEN one pauses to admire and often returns to the individual beauties of this symphony of Haydn, it is startling to note that it was merely the eighty-eighth in the chronological listing of Mandyczewski, which reaches one hundred and four; that their composer wrote symphonies for a particular occasion literally by the dozen. This symphony, composed in 1787, was in the second of two sets of six written for the Parisian society: "*Concert de la Loge Olympique.*" For Saloman's concerts in London he also wrote twelve.

This symphony has moved Donald Francis Tovey to one of his illuminating and diverting dissertations. He writes:

"Very clever persons, who take in music by the eye, have pointed out the extraordinary resemblance between the opening theme and that of the *Finale* of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony. The resemblance is equivalent to the scriptural warrant of the minister who, wishing to inveigh against a prevalent frivolity in head-gear, preached upon the text, 'Top-knot, come down!' — which he had found in Matt. XXIV. 17 ('Let him which is on the housetop not come down').

"The Top-knot school of exegesis still flourishes in music. This theme of Haydn's is as pregnant as that in Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, but it means something totally different both in harmony and in rhythm; nor did Beethoven's theme, in all the transformations it went through in his sketch-books, resemble it more in the earliest stages than in its final form. But the strangest thing about Beethoven's originality was that he was quite capable of amusing himself by noting discoveries in the best Top-knot manner. There is a coincidence of no less than nine notes between the theme of the *Finale* of Mozart's G minor Symphony and that of the *Scherzo* of Beethoven's C minor Symphony, and he noted it in his sketch-book! The point of noting it is precisely the utter contrast and absence of any significance common to the two ideas.

"Of the glorious theme of the slow movement I was told by John Farmer that he once heard Brahms play it with wallowing enthusiasm, exclaiming, 'I want my Ninth Symphony to be like this!'

"Here is a clear case of a movement that is to be measured by its

theme. From that theme Haydn himself tries in vain to stray. He modulates to the dominant. That is treated as an incident in the course of the melody, which promptly repeats itself in full. The modulation is tried again with a new continuation. But the new continuation wistfully returns in four bars through the minor mode. Let us, then, have a variation. But not too varied; only a little decoration in counterpoint to our melody. But perhaps the full orchestra, with trumpets and drums, which were not used in the first movement, can effect a diversion. What it does effect is that a sequel shows enough energy to lead fully into the key of the dominant, instead of merely on to its threshold, so that the whole great tune now follows in that key.

“The old sequel then returns to the tonic, and to the tune. Another *tutti* introduces the minor mode, and leads to a key, F major, related only to the tonic minor. This is definitely a remote modulation, and in F major the tune enters but has to exert itself with new rhetoric before it can return to its own key. There we hear it yet again, with a short coda in which Brahms’s Ninth Symphony retires into a heaven where Brahms, accompanied by his faithful red hedgehog, can discuss it with Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert over a dinner cooked by Maître du Clavecin Couperin, and washed down by the best Bach. *Der Rote Igel* was Brahms’s favorite Vienna restaurant, and when the manager told him, ‘Sir, this is the Brahms of wines,’ he replied, ‘Take it away and bring me some Bach’; *scilicet*: brook, or water.”

“The Minuet is cheerful, with a quiet joke on the drums. The Trio is one of Haydn’s finest pieces of rustic dance music, with hurdy-gurdy drones which shift in disregard of the rule forbidding consecutive fifths. The disregard is justified by the fact that the essential objection to consecutive fifths is that they produce the effect of shifting hurdy-gurdy drones.

“Haydn never produced a more exquisitely bred kitten than the main theme of the *finale*. . . . The movement is in rondo form, which is by no means so common as might be expected in Haydn’s symphonies and larger quartets. Haydn has a way of beginning an important *finale* like a big rondo and then, after one episode, running away into some sort of fugue that gives an impression of spacious development which suffices without further formal sections. The completeness of rondo form in the present *finale* thus rather reduces its scale in comparison with many *finales* that are actually shorter. This is a melodic quality, not a formal or dramatic defect.”



"LIEUTENANT KIJE," ORCHESTRAL SUITE, *Op.* 60

By SERGE PROKOFIEFF

Born at Sontsovka, in the Ekaterinoslav government, Russia, April 23, 1891

The suite was derived from the incidental music which Prokofieff composed for a Soviet film, "Lieutenant Kije," produced by the studio Belgoskino in Leningrad, in 1933. The suite, completed and published in 1934, was first performed in Moscow. It had its first performance in the United States in Boston, October 15, 1937, by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

It is scored for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, tenor saxophone, cornet, two trumpets, four horns, three trombones and tuba, bass drum, military drum, triangle, cymbals, tambourine, sleigh bells, harp, celesta, piano and strings.

THE film "Lieutenant Kije" is not known in this country, but a description of its subject kindly supplied by Nicolas Slonimsky will help toward an understanding of the spirit of the music: "The subject of the film is based on an anecdote about the Czar Paul I, who misread the report of his military aide, so that the last syllable of the name of a Russian officer which ended with 'ki' and the Russian intensive expletive 'je' (untranslatable by any English word, but similar in position and meaning to the Latin 'quidem') formed a non-existent name, Kije. The obsequious courtiers, fearful of pointing out to the Czar the mistake he had made, decided to invent an officer by that name (as misread by the Czar). Hence, all kinds of comical adventures and quid-pro-quo's."

I. THE BIRTH OF KIJE (*allegro*). As befits one who is born in full regimentals in the brain of a Czar, Lieutenant Kije is introduced by a cornet fanfare off stage, followed by the tattoo of a military drum, and the shrill of the fife. As the other instruments fall in line, the music keeps its parade-like strut. There is a short *andante* (still in character), a return of the fife, drum and cornet.

II. ROMANCE (*andante*). This movement and the fourth are written with a part for baritone solo, alternative versions following in which this part is given to the tenor saxophone, double bass solo, and other of the deeper instruments. The song is thus translated in the score:

Heart be calm, do not flutter;
Don't keep flying like a butterfly.
Well, what has my heart decided?
Where will we in summer rest?
But my heart could answer nothing,
Beating fast in my poor breast.
My grey dove is full of sorrow —
Moaning is she day and night.
For her dear companion left her,
Having vanished out of sight,
Sad and dull has gotten my grey dove.

III. KIJE'S WEDDING (*allegro fastoso*). The melodic character of

this movement suggests that Kije's nuptials, like his melancholy wooing, were not free from associations of the tavern.

IV. TROIKA (*moderato*). Again a tavern song is introduced to an accompaniment suggestive of the motion of the Russian three-horse sleigh —

A woman's heart is like an inn:
All those who wish go in,
And they who roam about
Day and night go in and out.

Come here I say, Come here I say,
And have no fear with me.
Be you bachelor or not,
Be you shy or be you bold,
I call you all to come here.

So all those who are about,
Keep going in and coming out,
Night and day they roam about.

V. BURIAL OF KIJÉ (*andante assai*). The description of the film explains the entire cheerfulness which attended the laying away of the imaginary lieutenant. His brief career is summed up in this movement. A cornet fanfare off stage introduces him again, and the themes of his romance and his wedding are invoked. The vanishing voice of the muted cornet returns Kije to the insubstantial medium whence he was created.

The suite was performed at a Lamoureux concert in Paris, February 20, 1937, the composer conducting, and likewise figured in the opening programme of the International Modern Music Festival in Venice on September 6. There was an "incident" at the Parisian performance, wherein Eugène Bigot conducted other works of Prokofieff and Miaskovsky's "*Concertino Lyrique*." "A well-intentioned gentleman with an accent," according to the correspondent of the *Musical Times* (March), "attempted to tell the audience about Russian music in general and Prokofieff in particular. But he did not get very far. By the time he had reached his third or fourth platitude folk became impatient, and when a French audience becomes impatient it lets it be known in shrieks, hoots, howls, whistlings, and Gallic vociferations indicative of displeasure. The lecturer beating a retreat to the tune of what was by now a rather tumultuous invitation to disappear, Bigot put in an appearance and got on with the concert."

The reviewer of *Le Ménestrel* was more succinct. "At the beginning of the concert, a 'speaker' [the English word is used] came forth to read remarks which were loudly cut short by a public of little patience. If he intended to elucidate the two composers, he taught us little. If to spread national propaganda, the attempt was clumsy and useless as well." "Lieutenant Kije," the English writer remarked, "made a stunning impression."

The following compositions of Prokofieff have been performed at the concerts of this orchestra:

1922. March 3, Song Without Words (Nina Koshetz, singer; Pierre Monteux, conductor).
1924. October 24, Scythian Suite (Serge Koussevitzky, conductor).
1925. April 24, Violin Concerto No. 1 (Richard Burgin, violinist). (First performance in the United States.)
1926. January 29, Piano Concerto No. 2 (Serge Prokofieff, pianist).
April 23, "*Sept, ils sont sept*," Incantation for tenor (Charles Stratton), chorus (trained by Malcolm Lang) and orchestra. (First performances in America.) The performance was repeated in the same programme.
October 8, Suite from the ballet "Chout."
November 12, Suite from the opera, "The Love for Three Oranges."
1927. January 28, Classical Symphony.
March 4, "*Sept, ils sont sept*" (Mr. Stratton, tenor; Cecilia chorus).
April 1, Classical Symphony.
October 21, Suite from the ballet, "Le Pas d'Acier."
1928. March 2, Scythian Suite.
October 26, Classical Symphony.
December 14, Violin Concerto No. 1 (Lea Luboschutz, violinist).
1930. January 31, Scythian Suite.
January 31, Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor (the composer as soloist; first performances in the United States).
November 14, Symphony No. 4 (composed for the 50th anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; first performances).
1932. February 12, Classical Symphony.
November 4, Four Character portraits from the opera "Le Joueur" (after Dostoievsky).
December 30, Piano Concerto No. 5 in G major (the composer as soloist; first performance in the United States).
1934. April 13, "*Sept, ils sont sept*" (Charles Stratton, and Cecilia Society Chorus).
1935. January 25, Suite from the Ballet "Chout."
November 8, Concerto No. 1 (Joseph Szigeti, soloist; Richard Burgin, conductor).
1936. January 1, Classical Symphony.
1937. February 5, March and Scherzo from "The Love for Three Oranges";
Piano Concerto No. 3 (the composer as soloist); Scythian Suite.
October 15, "Lieutenant Kije" (first performance in the United States);
"Russian Overture" (first performance in the United States).



ENTR'ACTE
CRITICAL LISTENING

By WILLIAM WALTON

The English composer contributed the following article to "The Monthly Musical Record" (October, 1936).

IT may be lack of time or opportunity, or it may be lack of inclination, but there are a great many people today who do not give to art in any of its forms anything like the serious thought they are prepared to give to such pastimes as golf or bridge. To these they do, in fact, devote considerable thought and study, discussing, in season and out of season, points of technique and the merits of individual players. In matters pertaining to art, many of them voice a notion whose usual expression is something like this: "I don't know much about art; but I do know what I like." Like the cinema fan, they seek to be entertained without giving anything to the art to which they look for entertainment; and from art, as from anything else, they take away about as much as they give, and that is very little indeed.

Yes, they know what they like. So does my dog. Nevertheless, when left to his own devices in the choice of food he displays execrable, even vile, taste. Or, to pitch the theme in a higher key: You like tomatoes, I do not. Nine times out of ten your likes or my dislikes give no indication whatever of the quality of the thing liked or disliked. On the tenth occasion it may be a connoisseur who speaks. With a palate trained by long experience of comparing and contrasting, he will savor your specimen, noting its smoothness or harshness, its ripeness, its fruitiness, and so forth. In short, he will discriminate; and when he speaks he will give not merely an opinion but a judgment; he will say not merely, "I like this," but, "This is good or bad." Art has its connoisseurs. We call them critics; and we leave it to them to tell us what things are good and what bad because we will not take thought to become critics ourselves. Doing and contemplating are both normal activities, both essential to a full life; but whereas no one cares to make a fool of himself on the golf course or at the bridge table, it is not difficult to hide one's ignorance of music or pictures. We take pains, therefore, to put up a good performance at games, whereas we take no steps whatever to improve our knowledge of art.

In spite of broadcast and other popular courses in appreciation — or, sometimes, because of them — many people still regard complex art organizations such as symphonies with a kind of religious awe, as things not to be understood of the people. A modern symphony by Bax or Vaughan Williams is by no means a parlor game, nor will it,

on a first hearing, yield, even to the trained listener, too many of its riches. It is not, however, necessary nor wise to begin one's serious listening with a modern symphony. Ideal as a starting point is Beethoven, in whose classic outlines was emerging the new romanticism that was to find its fruition in Schubert, Schumann, Chopin and Wagner. A study of these composers would familiarize the listener with all the commonly used musical forms, and with most of the devices employed in building up a complex organization of tones — thematic material as distinct from tunes, modulations, gradations, climaxes, and the various aspects of development. Add to our list Debussy, as the precursor of modern harmonic experiment, and Bach, probably the greatest musician of all time, and of them all nearest in spirit to the twentieth century, and we have a traditional background whose æsthetic value has been settled historically once and for all. A palate nurtured in these models will have detected a quality common to all, a quality I have elsewhere called "thoroughbredness," one found in all great art as in all great people. We cannot all make a joint; but a study of a piece by Chippendale will give us an unerring sense of what a good joint should be. Neither can we all write a progression of chords, or even name them when heard; but a study of a Bach chorale will give us a sense of how chords should progress.

All this is very important for two reasons. First, because all music that it has been agreed to call great has been evolved from and illuminated by what has gone before. Therefore a training that has followed the path of history enables the mind to pick out, in new scores, here and there a familiar feature by means of which the musical logic may, however imperfectly at first, be grasped. Thus we shall never be wholly in the dark. And whatsoever we grasp, little or much, we may savor for its quality. When a composer breaks away completely from tradition, he runs the danger of being completely unintelligible. This is why Schönberg's later work appeals only to a small coterie of admirers.

In the second place, a standard of quality is necessary, because we all enjoy at times music which lacks thoroughbredness. The hymns and songs of childhood, and music associated with moments of happiness or quiet, evoke memories so pleasant or otherwise that our critical faculties are overlaid by them. In like manner it would seem that the atmosphere of a modern dancing-room reduces its frequenters to a condition that it would be an injustice to infants to describe as infantile, producing a complete collapse of all critical faculty. There may be great pleasure, there is certainly nothing wrong, in enjoying the day-dreams evoked by music; but we ought, if critical listening is our aim, to be aware that it is not music we are enjoying. It follows

that the man who says he knows what he likes may, in many instances, never have enjoyed music at all.

We may demur to Stravinsky's denial to music of any expressiveness whatsoever, either of feelings, emotions, or psychological states; but there can be no doubt that we ought, whilst listening, to try to divest our listening of everything extraneous — or, to use Stravinsky's word, of "dope." Dope includes everything that diverts the mind from the contemplation of music as a sound-pattern. The ascription to music of literary notions and dramatic conflicts is an example. These, even if they were present in the mind of the composer, are irrelevant to the listener, whilst listening. They are merely interesting historically. They may explain the order in which the material occurs; but what matters is whether or not the order is a good musical order, and whether or not the material is good material.

I think Stravinsky would probably concede that a genuine composition has its own peculiar vitality, its musical personality; its own special æsthetic flavor, that makes a work characteristically Chopin, say, or Beethoven, or Elgar. It is my inability to savor any such æsthetic flavor in the work of Brahms that prevents me from enjoying any but a few small works by that composer. There is something wrong, and I am sure it is not the music.

Indeed, unless we feel that the quality is really cheap, or the construction bad, we are not justified in condemning a work because we do not like it, or even dislike it. If a work is masterly in construction, only a consensus of adverse opinion can condemn it æsthetically. An individual in such a case can only like or dislike. Chopin, we are told, disliked Beethoven's music because it was hard and rough. We are not told that he was unwise enough to say it was bad. He left that to Debussy and Cyril Scott; and with all deference to both in their proper spheres, the world was not amused.



SYMPHONY NO. 2, IN D MAJOR, *Op.* 43

By JEAN SIBELIUS

Born December 8, 1865, at Tavastehus, Finland; living at Jarvenpää, Finland

Begun in Italy in the spring of 1901, the symphony was completed in Finland before the end of the year. It was first performed on March 8, 1902, at Helsingfors under the composer's direction. The first performance in this country was by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Theodore Thomas, Conductor, January 2, 1904. Wilhelm Gericke introduced it at the Boston Symphony Concerts on March 11 of the same year. Subsequent performances have been given December 31, 1909; January 6, 1911; March 10, 1916; November 11, 1921; March 7, 1924; October 18, 1929; January 15, 1932; November 25, 1932; October 20, 1933; October 11, 1935.

The Second Symphony is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani and strings. The score is dedicated to Axel Carpelan.

THE information comes to us in the recently translated life of Sibelius by Karl Ekman that the Second Symphony was begotten, not in the midst of a Finnish winter, as might have been supposed from early descriptions of its "gloomy" qualities, but in the midst of a Mediterranean spring. Life was smiling upon Sibelius in that year (1901). He was having some measure of recognition — but what was far more important — he was feeling his strength in the symphonic form, developing by strides. He was entirely under the spell of Italy, as winter turned into spring. Sibelius recalled these months in his own words for Ekman: "At the beginning of March the weather grew milder and I was able to enjoy the beautiful scenery to the full in one of the loveliest parts of Italy. It was the season for violets — the woods were filled with their scent. I used to take long walks from the town of Rapallo along the hills on the shore, covered with pines, olive trees and cypresses, to Zoagli, Santa Marguerita, Santa Miguella and Portofino. The blue sunny Mediterranean lay bordered by the most luxuriant flora."

"In Rapallo my family lived in the Pension Suisse, for myself I rented a workroom in a little villa in the hills, surrounded by a most interesting garden — roses in bloom, camelias, almond trees, cactuses, agaves, magnolias, cypresses, vines, palms and quantities of flowers."

Programmes have been attributed to the score, despite the explicit denial of the composer in an interview given to the London Daily Telegraph in December, 1934 of any programme intentions whatever in his symphonies. "My symphonies," he then said, "are music conceived and worked out in terms of music and with no literary basis. I am not a literary musician; for me music begins where words cease. A scene can be expressed in painting, a drama in words; a

symphony should be first and last music. Of course, it has happened that, quite unbidden, some mental image has established itself in my mind in connection with a movement I have been writing, but the germ and the fertilization of my symphonies have been solely musical. When I set out to write symphonic poems it is another matter."

Sibelius has always avoided wordy discussions of his particular works. As he wrote a friend at the very time this symphony was in progress: "I could initiate you, my comprehending friend, into my work, but I do not do it from principle. To my mind it is the same with compositions as with butterflies: once you touch them, their essence is gone. They can fly, it is true, but are no longer so fair."

There is no denying a strain of revolutionary ardor in the first and last movements. When Georg Schneevoigt, fellow countryman of Sibelius, performed this symphony as guest conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Boston, March 7 and 8, 1924, he told Philip Hale that as an intimate friend of Sibelius, he could vouch for the composer's intention of depicting in the work varying moods of the Finnish people — pastoral, timid, aspiring, insurrectionary. There are no doubt moods akin to these in the music. But it would surely be wiser to respect the composer's reticence in this case, to allow the "butterfly" to flutter freely, and not pin it down with any factual political consciousness.

For music of deliberate patriotism, one may turn to the symphonic poem "Finlandia," and the choral "Song of the Athenians," expressions of mass feeling and a militant assertion of freedom. They were directly a part of a general fervor which possessed Helsingfors in 1899, a wave of patriotic indignation over constitutional restrictions and an autocratic muzzling of the Finnish press by the Russian government. These works made Sibelius a cynosure and a hero of the movement. But the symphonic emotion of Sibelius must have been something far deeper than a sudden wave of this sort. The currents of his two symphonies of that period (the First, 1898 and the Second, 1901), are surely personal rather than mass conscious, the expression of an artist alone with his art, the musical speech of neither group nor nation but of an individual who was subtly affected by his heritage and surroundings.

A mood of independent assertiveness, connected with the prevailing nationalist thought, but also broadly attributable to the idealistic quest of developing youth, was upon Sibelius at this time, and had been in the preceding nineties. This important phase in the composer's life has been clearly described by Karl Ekman. As early as 1890 Sibelius was drawn into a youthful circle in Helsingfors, with

whom the watchword was Swedish and Finnish unity against Eastern interference. His talented brothers-in-law to be — Arvid Järnefelt, an editor sworn to the cause, and Eero Järnefelt, the painter, the poet Axel Gallén, the painter Albert Edelfelt, the writer and champion of their language, Karl August Tavaststjerna, these young men and others met constantly, talked interminably upon burning questions, incited each other to zeal in building up a literature, a folk lore, a music, in short a new and self-reliant culture of Finland. Sibelius was thus stimulated into wedding his music with the mythology of his people. Sibelius was the creative musician of the group, but Kajanus too was a moving spirit among them. "The Symposium," they called themselves; a painting of that name (originally called "Problem"), by Gallén, once shocked all Helsingfors by its "Bohemianism." It shows a group brooding over their wine glasses at a restaurant table, Sibelius seated disheveled and glowering in the foreground, while about them hover spectral wings, and a moon half obscured. A sinister melancholy is the dominant note. But it should also be observed that if the young men revelled in a becoming melancholy, they were not permanently cast down by it, nor was gaiety forbidden. "Sibelius," says Ekman, "excelled in lively conversation alternating between playful jest and grave earnest. When words failed him, he seated himself at the piano and poured out his soul in endless improvisations, to which those present listened in breathless excitement. Hour after hour passed in this way and no one noticed the flight of time."

"Our sittings," says Sibelius himself, "were not based on the treasures of Bacchus to the extent that some may suppose. We allowed our imagination to soar, our thoughts to play. The waves rolled very high. Life passed in review. We discussed the most varied subjects, but always in an optimistic and revolutionary spirit. The way was to be cleared for new ideas in all spheres."

"The Symposium evenings were a great resource to me at a time when I should otherwise have stood more or less alone. The opportunity of exchanging ideas with kindred souls, animated by the same spirit and the same objects, exerted an extremely stimulating influence on me, confirmed me in my purposes, gave me confidence."

Immediate results of this movement upon the work of Sibelius were "Kullervo," "En Saga," the "Lemminkäinen" legends. The circle drifted apart about 1895, but Sibelius pursued the course in which it had given him an impetus, completing the Lemminkäinen cycle, and composing more poems of legendary heroes. The First and Second Symphonies might be considered to have brought to full fruition this romantic and emotional period in the composer's life.



Sibelius begins his Second Symphony with a characteristic string figure, a sort of sighing pulsation, which mingles with the themes in the first pages and recurs at the end of the movement. One would look in vain for a "first" and "second" theme in the accepted manner. There is a six bar melody for the wood winds, a theme given out by the bassoons, another of marked and significant accent for the violins, and another, brief but passionate, for the violins. These themes are laid forth simply, one after the other, with no transitions or preparations. Yet the tale is continuous as if each suggested, quite naturally, the next. There follows the theme for the flutes which Cecil Gray refers to as what "would in ordinary parlance, no doubt, be called the 'first subject.'" It appears as nothing more than a high sustained C-sharp, followed by a sort of shake and a descending fifth. The phrase would be quite meaningless outside of its context, but Sibelius uses it with sure effect over the initial string figure to cap his moments of greatest tension, and finally increases it by twice its length to an eloquent period. The initial scraps of themes succeed each other, are combined, gather meaning with development. The whole discourse unfolds without break, coheres in its many parts, mounts with well-controlled graduation of climax. The fusion of many elements is beyond the deliberate analyst. It bespeaks a full heart, a magnificent fertility, an absorption which pervades all things and directs them to a single end.

The slow movement opens, as did the first, with a string figure which is an accompaniment and yet far more than an accompaniment. Various wood winds carry the burden of melody, introduced and maintained in an impassioned minor, *lugubre*. Thematic snatches of melody follow each other in rich profusion. In the opening movement, Sibelius has made telling use of the time-honored contrast between the lyric and the incisive, proclamatory elements. In his *andante* this sharp opposition is notably increased. An oratorical, motto-like theme, launched by stormy, ascending scales, keeps drama astir. As the melodic themes recur, an undercurrent of the spinning, whirring figures in the strings, such as are to be found in almost any score of Sibelius, dramatizes lyricism itself.

The third movement pivots upon a swift 6-8 rhythm; it suggests Beethoven in its outward contour, but is more tumultuous than gay. A suspensive pause with pianissimo drum taps introduces the tender trio in which the oboe sings a soft melody which is echoed by its neighbors and subsides in a pianissimo from the solo 'cello. It is as peaceful and unruffled in this symphony of violent contrasts as its surroundings are stormy. The *vivacissimo* and trio are repeated — with a difference.

There creeps into the trio, at first hardly perceptibly, the solemn chant of the finale, as yet but softly intoned, and adroitly, without any sense of hopping over an awkward stile, the master leads his hearers straight into the finale, which is at once in full course. There are two principal themes, the first making itself known as an elementary succession of half notes, the second a longer breathed, incendiary

melody with an accompanying scale figure adding fuel to its flame. The structure* of the movement is traditional, with two themes alternating, interlarded with episodic matter; the simple scheme serves its contriver in building with great skill a long and gradual ascent to a climax in full splendor. Rising sequences, mounting sonorities, contribute to the impressiveness of the final conflagration.

*Bengt de Törne points out in his "Sibelius — A Close-Up," that this finale is in reality a "classical sonata movement," which, "having no big coda like those to be found in Beethoven's work, . . . preserves the form of a Mozart allegro." Yet D. Millar Craig, the English commentator, writes of the "big coda" to this movement. That two analysts should choose for disagreement over nomenclature this particular ringing and clarion conclusion is only less surprising than that it should be associated in any way with Mozartean poise. Mr. Törne allays the perplexity which his academic comparison arouses by adding: "Like all true innovators — and unlike those whose bloodless, intellectual productions aim at overthrowing the great traditions in art — Sibelius believes that the new and transforming ideas must come from within, not from the exterior form. And like Dante he is a revolutionary by temperament although a conservative by opinion."



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