

Programme Notes

TRAGIC OVERTURE Op 81

Johannes Brahms 1833-1897

Brahms wrote two orchestral overtures, practically at the same time: the Academic Festival Overture Op 80, which was a consciously jolly piece, written as a tribute to Breslau University which had given him an honorary doctorate, and the Tragic Overture Op81, a much more melancholic piece. It is not a deep-down black tragedy and was not composed with any specific drama in mind. It is simply a piece for orchestra of a deliberately serious nature, which some commentators have suggested exhibits Brahm's stoic resignation in the face of life and fate. The form is quite straightforward: three main themes worked through; a middle section in the form of a march based on the first of them; and a restatement leading to a coda of formidable dark force.

Two chansons: Nuit and Matin

Sir Edward Elgar 1857-1934

arr. Richard Ling

Two short pieces originally composed for violin and piano or small orchestra and orchestrated for full orchestra by Elgar in 1901. Chanson de Matin is the more well-known but Chanson de Nuit is in many ways the more carefully crafted and delicate composition. They were first performed together by Sir Henry Wood in September 1901.

The Skater's Waltz – (Les Patineurs)

Emil Walkteufel 1837-1915

The Skater's Waltz – or Les Patineurs – was written in 1882 and was inspired by the rink of skaters at the Bois de Boulogne in Paris, an event depicted in an 1868 painting by August Renoir. The work has featured in a number of films, notably Chariots of Fire and Rocketman, and its composer Emil Waldteufel dominated the musical scene in London in the late 1800's winning favour with the Prince of Wales, who was later to become King Edward VII.

Marching Song Opus 22 No.2

Gustav Holst 1874-1934

arr. Richard Ling

This is the second part of a composition called "Two Songs without words". Along with the first part "Country Song" it was composed in 1906 and dedicated to Ralph Vaughan Williams. It is, as one commentator has written, "vintage Holst, tuneful and engaging".

SYMPHONY No 1 Op 1

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov 1844-1908

Rimsky-Korsakov composed this work between 1861 and 1865 and it was premiered in December 1865. The composer revised the work nearly twenty years later, in 1884. It is written in the traditional four movements, and because it contains Russian folk and oriental melodies it has been dubbed the First "Russian Symphony." Emily Melendes of "The Orchestra Now" writes, "The piece brims with youthful exuberance and pizzazz, and while perhaps lacking the sophisticated compositional mastery of his later works, it tells a tale of adventure and discovery, one rife with Russian identity and tender recollections of home. From the bombastic statement of the first movement, to the swelling sincerity of the second, the frenzied energy of the Scherzo, and the densely packed resplendence of the fourth movement, Rimsky-Korsakov's Symphony No. 1 is a treat".

Programme notes by Adrian Targett