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The East Slovakian town of Košice boasts a long and distinguished musical tradition, as part of a province that once provided Vienna with musicians. The State Philharmonic Orchestra is of relatively recent origin and was established in 1968 under the conductor Bystrik Rezucha. Subsequent principal conductors have included Stanislav Macura and Ladislav Slovák, the latter succeeded in 1985 by his pupil Richard Zimmer. The orchestra has toured widely in Eastern and Western Europe and plays an important part in the Košice Musical Spring and the Košice International Organ Festival.

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8.223450
Emile Waldteufel (1837 - 1915)

Volume 4

Like Johann Strauss, Emile Waldteufel came from a family of dance musicians, being preceded in the business by his father Louis (1801-84) and brother Léon (1832-84). Despite their Germanic surname, the family were French. This is explained by the fact that they hailed from Alsace, which despite strong German traditions had been fully integrated into France since 1793.

Emile Waldteufel was born in Strasbourg on 9 December 1837, just seven weeks after the elder Johann Strauss gave his first concert on French soil in that very city. When he was seven the family moved to Paris for Léon to take up a place as a violin student at the Paris Conservatoire. Emile Waldteufel was to live in Paris for the rest of his life, and he in turn studied piano at the Conservatoire from 1853 to 1857, his classmates there including Jules Massenet.

Meanwhile the family dance orchestra was becoming one of the best-known in Paris, increasingly in demand for Society balls during Napoleon III's Second Empire. In 1865 Emile was appointed court pianist to the Empress Eugénie in succession to Joseph Ascher (composer of 'Alice, where art thou?'), performing at Court functions not only in Paris but in Biarritz and Compiègne. From 1867 the Waldteufel orchestra played at Napoleon III's magnificent Court balls at the Tuileries.

After the Franco-Prussian War the orchestra again presided at the Presidential balls at the Élysée. Yet so far Emile Waldteufel's dances had been known only to a relatively limited Society audience. By the time international fame came he was almost forty. In 1874 he happened to be playing at a soirée attended by the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII. The Prince complimented him on his waltz Manolo and agreed to help launch his music in London.

The result was a long-term publishing contract with the London firm of Hopwood & Crew. Since the firm was half-owned by Charles Coote, director of Coote & Tinney's Band, the premier London dance orchestra, this also gave access to the musical programmes of Queen Victoria's State Balls at Buckingham Palace. For several years Emile Waldteufel's music dominated the programmes there, generating him world-wide fame as he turned out a string of works that enjoyed huge popularity - including his best-known work Les Patineurs ('The Skaters') in 1882.

His French publisher Durand, Schoenwerck was now forced to buy the French rights to these works from Hopwood & Crew. So later did the German firm of Litolf, in whose editions the works sometimes appeared under slightly different German names. In addition, to suit Germanic custom, in 1883 Litolf retrospectively began an opus numbering system. This began at 101 to make arbitrary allowance for early works, and for various reasons many works were numbered out of chronological sequence, thereby providing a source of much confusion ever since.

In 1890 and 1891 Waldteufel conducted at the Paris Opéra Balls, and his orchestra continued to provide dance music for Presidential Balls, as well as for other Society functions, until 1899, when he retired. He continued to compose, but in a style that was already outdated. He died in Paris on 12 February 1915 at the age of 77. His wife, a former singer Célestine Dutau, whom he married in 1871 and by whom he had two sons and a daughter, had died the previous year.

Waldteufel was recognised as a good-natured person, with a ready sense of humour - characteristics that are readily perceivable in his music. Unlike the music of Johann Strauss, Waldteufel's perhaps scales no great architectural heights, but rather seeks to enchant by the grace and charm of his melodies and their gentle harmonies. By comparison with Strauss's very masculine creations, there is undoubtedly more of a feminine feel about Waldteufel's waltzes. Unlike Strauss, he conducted with a baton rather than a violin bow, and he composed at the piano, his works being orchestrated later. The standard Waldteufel orchestration was for strings, double woodwind, two cornets, four horns, three trombones and ophicleide (or tuba), plus timpani and percussion.

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recordings, Alfred Walter, recalls having a lot of Waldteufel's music at his childhood home in Southern Bohemia - not only for piano but also in arrangements for piano trio which were played in his musical family. If in recent decades Emile Waldteufel's music has been overshadowed by that of the Strausses, it is with correspondingly greater freshness that we are able to rediscover its grace and charm today.

The Works

Unfortunately Paris newspapers did not report the titles of dances played at Society balls. Thus the best available dating of Emile Waldteufel's works comes from publication records and dates of registration with the French performing right society S.A.C.E.M. In the following notes, the original French titles are given, together with English translations and the titles under which the works were published in Germany.

Zig-zag ('Zick-Zack'), Polka, Op. 248 (1891)

In the form of a miniature concerto for cornet and orchestra, this sparkling piece is indeed true to its title in the impression it gives of sharp change of direction as one theme follows another, with contrasted rhythms and orchestration. The dance was registered with S.A.C.E.M. in January 1891, and it may well have been played during that year's Carnival season, during which Emile Waldteufel was also conducting at the Opéra Ball.

Les Fleurs ('The Flowers'), Valse, Op. 190 (1883)

A charming story about the origins of this waltz has been handed down through generations of Emile Waldteufel's descendants. According to his great-granddaughter, the composer was one evening on the balcony of his apartment with his young son Henri, when they heard the old and frail voice of a street-seller selling his product - a papasoy called 'plaisirs'. This he did by repeating a simple sung phrase: 'Voilà plaisirs, Madame. Régalez-vous!' As the street seller turned the corner, the voice drifted away; but one could just faintly hear the same few notes. The next day, when Henri came home from school, his father was just putting the finishing touches to the waltz Les Fleurs, inspired by the street-seller's chant. The phrase in question is quoted at the very beginning of the introduction, developed in the second of the four waltz sections, and reprised as the climax of the coda. The waltz was dedicated to Madame Madeleine Lemare.

Par-ci, par-là ('Hither and Thither'), Polka, Op. 239 (1883)

Again true to its title, this lively polka does indeed give the impression of darting all over the place as it progresses exhilaratingly from start to finish. Waldteufel delivered it to his publisher in January 1883. However, by then enthusiasm for Waldteufel's music in Britain and the British Empire was past its peak of the late 1870s, and Hopwood & Crew were therefore negotiating a new arrangement with Durand, Schoenewerk in Paris, whereby the latter would assume the prime publishing rights. As a result of this arrangement, Durand, Schoenewerk thereafter published newly delivered works, while a few works from 1882/83 remained on the London firm's shelves. Among them was Par-ci, par-là, which as a result remained unpublished until the supply of new works ran out. It finally appeared in 1892 and received the final opus number of the Hopwood & Crew catalogue.

Solitude, Valse, Op. 174 (1881)

This is a most delightful waltz, offering a lovely broad opening melody and some wonderfully varied and delicately shaded themes to follow. It was dedicated to Henry Blount, younger son of Sir Edward Blount (1809-1905), a British banker who became President of the Société Générale in Paris. In later years Henry Blount was to be a leading figure in a Parisian tragedy. In May 1897 he was chief organiser of a Grand Charity Bazaar that was held annually in the Rue Jean-Goujon. Usually Emile Waldteufel and his orchestra performed at the bazaar, but on this occasion the organising committee introduced a new attraction - the cinematograph. At 4 p.m. on the first day of the bazaar a fire broke out, started by lamps used in connection with the cinematograph and fuelled by the tarpaulin above the apparatus. The flames spread rapidly, and there was panic in the crowded arena.
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**Fleurs et baisers ('Flowers and Kisses' / 'Blumen und Küsse'), Valse (1904)**

Though Émile Waldteufel continued to compose after his retirement, few of the resultant works were published. One of the few exceptions was this waltz, published by Auguste Bosc in 1904. It suggests that the composer's invention was little diminished by the years. It carries a dedication to Madame Jules Denler.

**Toujours fidèle ('Ever Faithful' / 'Treuliebchen'), Valse, Op. 169 (1879)**

The cornet is again prominently featured in the introduction to this waltz which, despite the particularly lovely arsino third section, never managed to achieve the popular acclaim of other works from the time of Émile Waldteufel's great successes. Delivered to Hopwood & Crew in 1879, it was published the following year and introduced to London by Coote & Tinney's Band at a State Ball at Buckingham Palace in June 1880. The waltz carries a dedication to Madame le Normand de Grandcour.

**L'Esprit français ('The French Spirit' / 'Geistesfunken'), Polka, Op. 182 (1882)**

This joyful polka, starting with a gradual crescendo, is noteworthy also for its exquisitely piquant scoring, especially in the trio section, where double basses and flutes indulge in conversation to delightful effect. Its playfulness may derive something from its dedication to the Marquis Philippe de Massa (1825-1910), a popular figure in Parisian Society. During the Second Empire the Marquis helped arrange the entertainments at Napoléon III's annual series of autumn house parties at the castle of Compiegne, 80 kilometres north of Paris, where the Emperor entertained his guests in less formal surroundings. Besides dancing, the entertainments included billiards, table-quilts, parlor games such as 'charades', 'forfeits' and 'consequences', private theatricals (including many amusing sketches

written by the Marquis), charades, and tableaux vivants. To accompany these last, as well as for the dancing, Émile Waldteufel often presided at the piano. Invitations to the Compiegne house-parties were much prized, and a popular story concerned the lady who allegedly had to sell a mill in order to pay for her wardrobe for Compiegne. 'At least she has kept enough flour to make up her face' came the swift rejoinder.

**Toujours ou jamais ('Ever or Never' / 'Immer oder Nimmer'), Valse, Op. 156 (1877)**

This is another of the waltzes that contributed a great deal to the spread of Émile Waldteufel's fame in the late 1870s. Its tender, unusually long introduction features a beautiful clarinet solo, after which it develops into one of Waldteufel's finest sequences of waltz melodies. The piquant rhythmic shifts, dynamic contrasts and effective use of counter-melody are especially telling, not least in the con grazia part of the third waltz section. The whole piece has a magnificent melodic sweep and was dedicated by the composer to his friend Louis Soumis.

**Hébé ('Hobo'), Valse, Op. 228 (1888)**

Named after the goddess of youth and cupbearer of Mount Olympus, this was one of the very last waltzes composed by Émile Waldteufel under his contract with Hopwood & Crew, which expired at the end of 1888. On 18 March of that year he had written to Charles Coote of Hopwood & Crew, informing him that Durand, Schoenewerk had made him a proposition to enter into a new contract and inviting a corresponding offer from Hopwood & Crew. In the event he signed a new contract with the firm of Crazn, which was just then looking for a big-name replacement for Johann Strauss, who had himself moved to another publisher.

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2. Les Fleurs, Waltz, Op. 190 (10:22)
5. Fleurs et baisers, Waltz (6:07)
7. L’Esprit français, Polka, Op. 182 (3:54)
8. Toujours ou jamais, Waltz, Op. 156 (11:17)

Recorded at the House of Arts in Košice from 9th to 13th December, 1991.
Producer: Rudolf Hentšel
Engineer: Gejza Toperczer
Music Notes: Andrew Lamb

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