



101
*Great Orchestral
Classics*
Volume 8

New World Symphony
The Sorcerer's Apprentice
Xerxes

Karelia Suite
Sleeping Beauty
The Blue Danube
Hungarian Dance
"Elvira Madigan"
Concerto
and others



DDD

101 Greatest Orchestral Classics - Volume 8

The March from the Karelia Suite by the Finnish composer Jean Sibelius was originally part of incidental music for a staged work in 1893. It has since then become all too familiar as accompaniment or signature tune to a variety of television programmes throughout the world. The border region of Karelia was of particular patriotic relevance in Finland, at a time when Russian domination was proving increasingly irksome.

Mozart spent the last ten years of his life in Vienna, in relative independence from his father, who remained in provincial Salzburg, but without a patron. Initial success was followed by a period of difficulty, which seemed about to end with the triumph of *The Magic Flute* in 1791, the year of Mozart's sudden death. The earlier Vienna years provided the opportunity for a magnificent series of piano concertos, performed by the composer at subscription concerts that he organised. Concerto No. 21 in C major has won recent popularity through the film *Elvira Madigan*.

Nationalism and interest in the relatively exotic were in part the symptoms of 19th century romanticism. Brahms, a stolid native of Hamburg, where he was born in 1833, made his first concert tour with a refugee Hungarian violinist and later became a firm friend of another Hungarian violinist, Joseph Joachim. The melodies of Hungarian gypsy music appealed to him and found a suitable vehicle in the popular form of piano duets, the medium Brahms first used for his Hungarian Dances, later orchestrated.

Johann Sebastian Bach, the most distinguished of a vast family of musicians in Saxony, reached the social summit of his career relatively early in life. From 1717 until 1723 he was Director of Court Music to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen and it was during this period that he was able to concentrate his attention largely on instrumental music. The six Brandenburg Concertos, dedicated to the Margrave of Brandenburg, whose patronage seemed promising, include a variety of instruments. The third of the set is scored for

three-fold divisions of violins, violas and cellos, with a continuous bass (basso continuo) for harpsichord and bass instrument.

In 1892 the Bohemian composer Antonín Dvořák was invited to head the new National Conservatory of Music in New York, a private foundation that sought to establish a national form of American music. Dvořák's symphony *From the New World*, as Bohemian as it is American, was completed in 1893, and was partly inspired by a Czech version of Longfellow's poem *Hiawatha*. The famous slow movement uses an evocative principal melody played by the *cor anglais* (English horn or tenor oboe).

The French ballet-master Marius Petipa was a leading figure in Russian ballet in the second half of the 19th century and largely responsible for its remarkable flowering. In 1875 Tchaikovsky had been engaged to provide music for *Swan Lake*, but it was not until 1888 that he was commissioned to write music for a second ballet, *The Sleeping Beauty*, its libretto by Petipa and based on the well known fairy-tale. It marks the height of achievement in the art of Russian ballet of the period, revived in a variety of later versions throughout the world.

Beethoven made an early attempt at writing a violin concerto before he left his native city of Bonn, where, like his father and grandfather before him, he was in the musical establishment of the reigning Archbishop of Cologne. He later completed another concerto for the instrument, but published separately two Romances, typically lyrical slow movements that might have served his earlier concerto, had he finished it. The second of these, in F major, is the better known of the two and was completed in 1798.

Walt Disney's *Fantasia* has added vivid illustration to the story of the sorcerer's apprentice, whose attempts at magic in the absence of his master lead to disaster. The musical depiction of the tale is by the French composer Paul Dukas. The work is described as a symphonic scherzo and is based on Goethe's ballad of 1797, *Der Zauberlehrling*.

Handel, born in Germany and resident for a few years in Italy, moved to

London as a composer of Italian opera, an expensive art-form of varying popularity. His opera *Serse* (*Xerxes*) opens with the hero's song of admiration for the vegetation around him, better known to later generations as Handel's *Largo*, transformed by a series of transcriptions.

Johann Strauss the younger, successor to his father as a dominant figure in light music in Vienna in the 19th century, wrote his waltz *By the beautiful blue Danube*, better known by its shorter title, as a choral work for the Vienna Men's Choir. The music came first, then the words, and finally a version that dispensed with the chorus altogether, the form in which it is best known.

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STEREO

101 GREAT ORCHESTRAL CLASSICS



Volume 8

1. SIBELIUS: Karelia Suite - Alla marcia (4:31)

(from Naxos 8.550103)

Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra/Kenneth Schermerhorn

2. MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 21 - Andante (6:43)

(from Naxos 8.550202)

Jenő Jandó/Concentus Hungaricus/András Ligeti

3. BRAHMS: Hungarian Dance No. 5 (2:14)

(from Naxos 8.550110)

Budapest Symphony Orchestra/István Bogár

4. J. S. BACH: Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 - Allegro (3:23)

(from Naxos 8.550047)

Capella Istropolitana/Bohdan Warchal

5. DVOŘÁK: New World Symphony - Largo (11:58)

(from Naxos 8.550271)

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra/Stephen Gunzenhauser

6. TCHAIKOVSKY: Sleeping Beauty (4:31)

(from Naxos 8.550079)

Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra/Ondrej Lenárd

7. BEETHOVEN: Romance for Violin No. 2 (9:48)

(from Naxos 8.550149)

Takako Nishizaki/Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra/Kenneth Jean

8. DUKAS: The Sorcerer's Apprentice (11:22)

Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra/Kenneth Jean

9. HANDEL: Xerxes - Largo (3:39)

(from Naxos 8.550014)

Capella Istropolitana/Richard Edlinger

10. JOHANN STRAUSS II: Blue Danube Waltz (9:24)

(from Naxos 8.550337)

Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra/Ondrej Lenárd

Total Playing Time: 67'33"

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