

The Broadway Symphony
George Shangrow, conductor

presents their fifth

Musical Feast

March 3, 1990

Kane Hall, UW

The Fairy's Kiss: Divertimento

Sinfonia
Danse suisse
Scherzo
Pas de deux

Igor Stravinsky

Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini

Geisa Dutra, piano

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Intermission

Mountain Symphony

Promise
Secrets
Life
Motion

Michael Young

This concert is sponsored by Western Pianos & Organs

Igor Stravinsky - Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la fee" ("The Fairy's Kiss")

In 1928, Igor Stravinsky wrote a ballet score based on the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, "The Ice Maiden". The story of the ballet centers on a fairy who kisses a child on the cheek at birth. Twenty years pass and the fairy returns to kiss the now young man whom she carries off with her.

The action takes place to the following sequence of musical events: 1. Sinfonia (Andante, Allegro, Vivace) during which the fairy kisses the child and disappears. 2. Swiss Dances - Waltz (Tempo giusto, Poco piu lento) which depict a village fair. The child, now grown, is being betrothed. 3. Scherzo (Moderato, Allegretto grazioso) in which the fairy leads the young man to a mill where his betrothed is playing round games with her friends. 4. Pas de deux (Adagio) which describes the young man and his fiancée. 5. Variation (Allegretto grazioso) for the betrothed. 6. Coda (Presto) during which the young man is left alone as his betrothed leaves to try to find her wedding veil.

Musically Stravinsky sought to pay tribute to Tschaikowsky. As he wrote on the score, "I dedicate this ballet to the memory of Peter Tschaikowsky, identifying his muse with the Fairy, and it is from this fact that the ballet becomes an allegory. His genius has in like degree marked the score with a destined kiss - a mystic influence which bespeaks the whole work of this great artist."

Heard within the score are the following Tschaikowsky melodies: "Lullaby in the Storm", from "Children's Songs", op. 54; "Humoresque" for piano, op. 10, no. 2; "Nata Valse", from Six Pieces for piano, op. 51; and "A Peasant Plays the Harmonica" from "Children's Album", op. 39.

The ballet was composed for Ida Rubinstein and introduced by her on November 27, 1928 with Stravinsky conducting. It was popular and received subsequent performances during the same year in Brussels, Monte Carlo and at La Scala in Milan. The Divertimento version heard in today's performance was arranged by Stravinsky from the ballet's original score. Stravinsky claimed he was able to do "without difficulty, on account of straightforward plan."

The listener will find much to delightfully startle one's musical sensibilities. Stravinsky cleverly superimposes differing metrical designs upon each other so that the jaunty tunes sound as if they are in one meter while really being written in another. The accents are offset and the rhythm patterns so subtly done that even the performers are lulled into mild disbelief at what Stravinsky has accomplished. Just when one feels they have reached "toe-tapping" familiarity with the music, Stravinsky jolts us out of ennui with a "misplaced" accent or extra beat that carries the rhythm beyond the expected conclusion.

Geisa Dutra

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Geisa Dutra began her musical studies with her mother, Isabel Dutra, and gave her first recital at the age of five. She later studied with Hetero Alimonda at the Universidade de Rio de Janeiro and won nine Brazilian piano competitions. In 1983 she was awarded a scholarship from the Johannesen International School of the Arts in Victoria, Canada, where she came to perform and study with Joseph Bloch, Robin McCabe and Bela Siki. Ms. Dutra was one of twelve pianists chosen worldwide to receive the 1985 full tuition scholarship to participate in the Van Cliburn International Piano Institute in Texas. In that same year, she was invited by the renowned Hungarian pianist Bela Siki to study with him at the University of Washington with a full tuition scholarship until receiving her Master's Degree in piano performance in 1988. Ms. Dutra has performed throughout the United States and in Canada, Europe and South America with appearances on National Public Radio and on television. As an orchestral soloist she has appeared under the baton of Roberto Duarte, Alceo Bochinnio and Gerard Schwarz.

Sergei Rachmaninoff - Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 43

Paganini wrote a set of Caprices for solo violin. The last of this set of pieces (No. 24) serves as the theme on which the "Rhapsody" is based. The theme, which may seem somewhat insignificant to many listeners, not only inspired Paganini to use it in the collection of violin pieces, but he and Brahms both wrote a set of variations on the theme. The "Rhapsody", which is in reality a set of variations on this very theme, provides a setting for a third major composer, Rachmaninoff, to try their hand at expanding on the theme in the variation form.

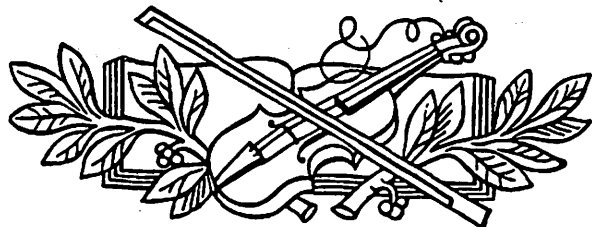
Composed between July 3 and August 24, 1934, while Rachmaninoff was living on Lake Lucerne in Switzerland, it was first performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra in Baltimore on November 7, 1934 with the composer as the piano soloist and Leopold Stokowski conducting.

The work differs somewhat from the traditional theme and variations in that the theme is not fully announced until the first variation, "Precedente", when the violins announce it, only to have it taken over by the piano. Twenty-three more variations follow, most of them brief, but still providing enough suggestion of the theme to maintain the connection to and identity of the theme.

One rather unusual feature of the work is the introduction of the "Dies Irae" melody in the seventh, tenth, and final variations. Normally included in the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead to describe the happenings on the Day of Judgment, composers such as Berlioz, Liszt, Saint-Saens, and Tschaikowsky have made use of the melody for not only the dramatic effect, but also for symbolic and/or humorous purposes.

The inclusion of the "Day of Wrath" motive in this work is a bit of a puzzlement. Musical authorities have speculated that many of Rachmaninoff's musical works are intended to convey some esoteric meaning. However, Rachmaninoff has refused to reveal any such hidden interpretive insights. Why the "Dies Irae" melody is included in the context of this work remains a mystery.

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Much of Rachmaninoff's music would seem suitable for the movies. The listeners could close their eyes and readily imagine the screen filled with images before them with Rachmaninoff's music behind the action. There are such passages in the "Rhapsody". It is perhaps not surprising that when Rachmaninoff died in 1943, it was in Beverly Hills, California.

It has been written of Rachmaninoff, "Rachmaninoff will take his place in history as a great and original personality, not only as a pianist of genius, in which capacity he has already become a part of history, but also as a prominent composer with flashes of true genius...He stands side by side with Tschairow, not only as disciple and follower, but also in musical personality. Rachmaninoff is the extreme expression of turbulent Russian Bohemianism, a passive and heroic soul."

-Gary Fladmoe



Michael Young and the Mountain Symphony

Composer Michael Young was born in San Francisco, and at the age of 21 (in 1960) moved to Seattle, and has lived in the Pacific Northwest ever since. While attending the University of Washington, Michael studied composition with the late George Frederick McKay and organ with Walter Eichinger. While they were both composition professors at Cornish Institute, Michael became friends with fellow composer Gregory Short, it is to Mr. Short's influence that Michael credits his blossoming as a composer. Over a 25 year period, Michael has been the organist for various churches in Seattle, Spokane, and Vancouver B.C., and is pleased to have several of his hymn setting included in the new Hymnal of the Episcopal Church of America (The Hymnal 1982). Since 1976 Mr. Young has been on the music faculty at Whitworth College in Spokane, teaching music theory, composition, organ, orchestration, and counterpoint.

Michael is perhaps unique among composers in having a fanatical love of the mountains and the great out-of-doors. Over the years he has stood on more than 270 different mountain summits, ranging from Mt. Rainier to Mt. Cleveland in Glacier Park, Montana; from pre-eruption Mt. St. Helens to Mt. Ruapehu, the highest mountain on the North Island of New Zealand. "A Mountain Symphony" was written during the composer's sabbatical leave in 1987-88, while visiting Minnesota and New Zealand. Orchestration was completed during the summer of 1988. The symphony is dedicated to the composer's "dearest friends in the world, Gregory and Bonnie Short." Although not a programmatic work, this music is intended to be a tribute to the beauty and rugged grandeur of the mountains, which hold many contrasting moods. Cast in four movements, the Symphony is scored for large orchestra, including piano, harp, Eb clarinet, contrabassoon and alto saxophone. The second movement features the ethereal sounds of various kinds of wind chimes, quietly jostled amid splashes of solo instrumental color.

The accompanying poetry was written by Rolf Larson (a mountaineering friend of Michael's) after hearing the first demotape of the Symphony (played on piano).

Movement 1: Promise

Mitre peaks aspire,
time frozen teeth of some primeval beast.
The crag-crested horizon,
like distended jaws
await the unwary.

If one listens carefully,
a low growl can be heard
on the edge of a spring-icy breeze

It challenges from cold stone-stingy heights.

It promises in the latent exuberance
of a life expectant earth
trembling beneath a high country
snow blanket.

Movement 2: Secrets

Eyes are drawn skyward
following yellow brushstrokes of morning light
as they caress the mountain panoramas
In dawn stillness, a
takes adoringly mirror the splendor
of their surroundings,
displaying rock in warm detail.

A new day begins innocent and clear.

Movement 3: Life

Free! Free! The marmot whistles,
Sound adds dimension to the riddle.
Hear! Hear! Screams the eagle.
See me! Hear me! I am regal.
Cha..ha ha, the squirrel laughs.
May I speak on life's behalf.

Movement 4: Motion

The wild beckons,
I respond.
Through motion my pulse quickens,
racing to match nature's vigorous beat.
Footfalls
eagerly grasp the earth in search of destination.

Hands

swinging forward in search of balance, reaching
to grasp the future.

Eyes

explore the images and illusions
illuminated by sunlight.

Spirit

exults in a universe of possibilities.

I revel in the flow of life's sacred harmonies.

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