

Symphony No. 95 in C minor composed in 1791, was the third of the symphonies composed by Haydn for the Salomon concerts, and it had its first performance during the London season of that year. It is one of the most striking and individual of the whole series of great works.

As a whole this symphony has characteristics which remind us of earlier phases in Haydn's development, particularly of the 'Sturm und Drang' period; but at the same time its muscular style and often intellectual manner make it a summing up of several aspects of Haydn's genius.

The opening powerful five-note motive (with its whole-to-half semitonal contrast) is developed with an extraordinary concentration and strength, resulting in one of the most tightly-knit and impressive of Haydn's first movements.

The Adagio is a short set of variations on a rather Mozartian theme of great clarity and simplicity, and it contains a number of surprises in the manner of the 'Surprise' symphony which immediately preceded this one.

A further element from earlier Haydn appears in the form of the cello solo in the trio section of the Minuet accompanied by pizzicato strings.

The finale is a magnificently athletic movement in the bright key of C major. As in the first movement there is a remarkable concentration on one short melodic shape (the opening of the first theme) which is thus submitted to extensive contrapuntal treatment with in one place a very definite echo of the first movement's motto. No wonder that Haydn provides such an inspiring example to 'unity-minded' composers of the twentieth century. KL

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Next concert: Thursday 25 February

ROBERT SHERLAW JOHNSON *piano*

Alkan

Sonata "Les quatre ages" opus 33

Sherlaw Johnson

Sonata no. 1

Messiaen

Selection from Catalogue d'Oiseaux

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*in association with the*

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# CHORAL CONCERT

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Conductor: RAYMOND MONELLE

THE USHER HALL

WEDNESDAY, 3rd MARCH, 1971

at 7.30 p.m.

PROGRAMME TEN NEW PENCE

The National Federation of Music Societies, to which the E.U.M.S. is affiliated, supports this concert with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

# Programme

DIE ERSTE WALPURGISNACHT  
BALLAD BY GOETHE

Mendelssohn (Op. 60)

Goethe wrote his "First Walpurgis Night" in 1799. In this poem the druids of ancient Gaul were meant to embody his ideal of humane wisdom, in contrast to the foolishly superstitious Christians who ousted them. He sent the piece to Zelter, who could find no music worthy of it; it had to wait until 1831, when Mendelssohn, visiting Italy, was captivated by it, and found himself composing a setting almost willy-nilly. He wrote with great enthusiasm to his sister of this work, which he saw as a "new kind of cantata." He was right; this blend of oratorio, opera and song-cycle became a model for the nineteenth century, and a favourite of the Mendelssohn family and audiences everywhere. It is of unflinching inspiration, fresh, warm and full of fantasy, in Mendelssohn's best "Midsummer Night's Dream" manner. The modern preference for "sacred" works has eclipsed its popularity.

The overture depicts wintry weather, and the coming of spring. The heathen people throng up the slopes for their spring rites, ignoring the fears of a timorous old woman. Placing sentries against their Christian conquerors, they enact a vivid and wild orgy, ending, as dawn rises, with a majestic druidic hymn. Christian watchmen run off terrified, and the work closes with the druidic hymn echoing through the forest.

No. 1. A druid (tenor), and chorus of people and druids.

Es lacht der Mai! der Wald ist frei  
Von Eis und Reifgehänge.  
Der Schnee ist fort; am grünen Ort  
Erschallen Lustgesänge.  
Ein reiner Schnee liegt auf der Höh';  
Doch eilen wir nach oben,  
Begeh'n den alten heil'gen Brauch  
Allvater dort zu loben.  
Die Flamme lodre durch den Rauch!

Hinauf! Hinauf!  
So wird das Herz erhoben.

May is laughing! the forest is free  
From ice and hoar-frost.  
The snow is away; songs of joy  
are heard on the green.  
A pure snow lies on the heights;  
let us hasten up there  
to celebrate the ancient rites,  
to praise the Father-god.  
The flame is flickering through the  
smoke!  
Uprise! Uprise!  
Thus the heart is uplifted.

No. 2. An old woman of the people (contralto), and chorus of women.

Könnt ihr so verwegen handeln?  
Wollt ihr denn zum Tode wandeln?  
Kennet ihr nicht die Gesetze  
Unsrer harten Überwinder?  
Rings gestellt sind ihre Netze  
Auf die Heiden, auf die Sünder.  
Ach, sie schlachten auf dem Walle  
Unsre Väter, unsre Kinder.  
Und wir alle  
Nahen uns gewissem Falle.  
Auf des Lagers hohem Walle  
Schlachten sie uns unsre Kinder.

How can you be so foolhardy?  
Do you want to stray into death?  
Do you not know the laws  
of our hard conquerors?  
All around are their nets  
for the heathen and sinners.  
Ah, they kill our fathers  
and our children on the ramparts,  
and we are all  
near to certain doom.  
Upon the high rampart of the camp  
our children are butchered.

No. 3. The priest (bass), and chorus of priests.

Wer Opfer heut' zu bringen scheut,  
Verdient erst seine Bande.  
Der Wald ist frei! das Holz herbei,  
Und schichtet es zum Brande!  
Doch bleiben wir im Buschrevier  
Am Tage noch im Stillen,  
Und Männer stellen wir zur Hut,  
Um eurer Sorge willen,  
Dann aber lasst mit frischem Muth  
Uns unsre Pflicht erfüllen.

Whoever shuns to bring sacrifice  
today,  
earns his bonds.  
The forest is free! Get wood,  
and pile it for a fire!  
By day we lurk quietly  
in the undergrowth,  
and appoint guards,  
to allay your fears;  
thereafter let us fulfil  
our duty with fresh courage.

No. 4. Chorus of druid watchmen.

Vertheilt euch, wackre Männer, hier,  
Durch dieses ganze Waldrevier,  
Und wachtet hier im Stillen,  
Wenn sie die Pflicht erfüllen.

Spread out, valiant men,  
through the whole woodland,  
and watch here in silence,  
while the sacred duty is fulfilled.

Nos. 5 and 6. A druid watchman (bass), and chorus of watchmen and heathen people.

Diese dumpfen Pfaffenchristen,  
Lasst uns keck sie überlisten!  
Mit dem Teufel, den sie fabeln,  
Wollen wir sie selbst erschrecken.  
Kommt! mit Zacken und mit Gabeln  
Und mit Gluth und Klapperstöcken  
Lärmen wir bei nächt'ger Weile  
Durch die leeren Felsenstrecken.  
Kauz und Eule,  
Heul' in unser Rundgeheule.

These mouldy popish Christians,  
let us boldly outwit them!  
Let us scare them  
with their own imagined devil.  
Come! with prongs and pitchforks,  
with bonfires and rattles,  
let us make a din by night  
through the bare rocky places.  
Screech-owl and barn-owl,  
join in our caterwauling.

No. 7. The priest (bass), and chorus of druids and heathen people.

So weit gebracht dass wir bei Nacht  
Allvater heimlich singen!  
Doch ist es Tag, sobald man mag  
Ein reines Herz dir bringen.  
Du kannst zwar heut' und manche  
Zeit  
Dem Feinde viel erlauben.  
Die Flamme reinigt sich vom Rauch:  
So reinig' unser Glauben!  
Und raubt man uns den alten Brauch,  
Dein Licht, wer will es rauben!

Thus secretly we sing praises  
to thee, Father-god, by night.  
Now it is day, and time to bring  
A pure heart to thee,  
Though thou concedest so much  
to the enemy, now and many a time.  
The flame is cleansed from smoke:  
so cleanse our faith!  
Even if they rob us of our ancient  
rites,  
who will rob us of thy light!

No. 8. A Christian watchman (tenor), and chorus of Christian watchmen.

Hilf, ach hilf mir, Kriegsgeselle!  
Ach, es kommt die ganze Hölle!  
Sieh', wie die verhexten Leiber  
Durch und durch von Flamme  
glühen!  
Menschenwölf' und Drachenweiber  
Die im Flug vorüber ziehen.  
Welch entsetzliches Getöse!  
Lasst uns, lasst uns alle fliehen!  
Oben flammt und saust der Böse,  
Aus dem Boden  
Dampfet rings ein Höllenbroden.

Help, oh help me, comrades in-arms,  
all hell is let loose!  
Look how their bewitched bodies  
blaze and flame through and  
through!  
Werewolves and she-dragons  
glide through the air.  
What a ghastly uproar!  
Let us, let us all flee!  
The devil flames and roars above us,  
from the ground  
steams an infernal vapour.

No. 9. General chorus of druids and heathen people.

Die Flamme reinigt sich vom Rauch:  
So reinig' unser Glauben!  
Und raubt man uns den alten Brauch,  
Dein Licht, wer kann es rauben!

The flame is cleansed from smoke:  
so cleanse our faith!  
Even if they rob us of our ancient  
rites,  
who can rob us of thy light!

(trans. by H.M.)

INTERVAL

For a sequel to his *succès de scandale*, the *Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky turned in 1914 to Kireievsky's account of Russian folk wedding rituals. He began a ballet score for chorus and a huge orchestra. Soon this setting was abandoned; a score was begun, using a pianola, harmonium, two cymbaloms and percussion. At last, in 1921, Stravinsky wrote the final version, for soloists, chorus, four pianos and percussion. This was performed by Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, with highly stylised choreography by Bronislava Nijinska; but like the *Rite of Spring*, the *Wedding* is nowadays usually given as a concert piece.

Stravinsky's melodies are pentatonic and fragmentary; a few tiny melodic cells permeate the work, matching the desultory quality of the text, which resembles snatches of conversation overheard from another room. There is little real impersonation; the bridegroom is sometimes a tenor, sometimes a bass or two basses, while the bride's mother is at one point a tenor. Rhythm is paramount, a rhythm of complete sharpness and clarity, but great irregularity. Stravinsky presents a work absolutely clean of Romantic *espressivo*, in spite of the text's frequent intimacy and earthiness. Great power is thus lent to the work's beautiful conclusion; it was decades before any composer could match this simplicity and primeval force. Like Mendelssohn's *Walpurgis Night*, this was indeed a "new kind of cantata."

*The Wedding* will be sung in English.

Part one: Scene one. *The bride's chamber*. The bridesmaids comb the bride's tresses; the bride, Nastasia Timofeevna, bewails her lot, and is consoled by the bridesmaids and by her parents. They sing of the bridegroom's love, in the symbol of a nightingale, and the mother calls for the Virgin Mary's aid.

Scene two. *At the bridegroom's*. The men, invoking the Virgin's aid, comb and oil the locks of the bridegroom, Fetis Pamfilievitch. His parents lament the loss of their son. But all are exhorted to "come to the wedding," in the name of the apostles and all the angels.

The bridegroom (two bass soli) asks for his parents' blessing, and kneels before them like a "falling feather"; the blessings of St Damien and St Luke are invoked for the couple, their families and future children.

Scene three. *The bride's departure*. Like a princess leaving her palace for a foreign land, the bride goes, with the blessings of St Cosmo and St Damien, of the Virgin and all apostles; she will cling to her husband "as

the hops entwine together." All depart, except the two mothers, who implore their children not to forget them.

Part two: Scene four. *The wedding feast*. The guests sing a song about two berries on a tree. Poor old Palagy Stanovitch laments the loss of a precious ring; the company ridicules him, and sings another song about a grey goose. Nastasia is advised of her wifely duties, and entrusted to her husband. Fetis, too, is told of his duties, both material and amorous. The guests become more tipsy and resume their singing; the marriage-broker teases the bride's father, and a guest shouts for all to "raise their voices!" A married couple is chosen to go and warm the bed, and the bridal pair discuss it—is it narrow? how cold is it? The jolly feast is described, with "nine kinds of beer," the bride is praised—"black her brows and beautiful!"—and the future homestead, with its bath and fire. The company dissolves into tipsy chatter. Those who are warming the bed go out, the couple are laid in the bed, and all depart. Fetis kisses his bride and presses her hand on his heart. He ends with a tender benediction: "My own dearest treasure, let us live in happiness, so that all may envy us."

R.M.

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