

101
*Great Orchestral
Classics*

101
*Grands Classiques
pour Orchestre*

101
*Klassische
Meisterwerke
für
Orchester*

2



101 Great Orchestral Classics - Volume 2

The founder of the Strauss musical dynasty, Johann, the son of an inn-keeper, formed his own dance orchestra in 1825, the year of the birth of his son and name-sake Johann Strauss II, who reigned undisputed Waltz King in Vienna from his father's death until the end of the century. The Radetzky March, composed by the older Johann Strauss in 1848, celebrates the victory of the Austrian general, the 82-year-old Count Radetzky, over Italian insurgents at Custozza in that year.

Beethoven, grandson of a distinguished director of music to the Archbishop of Cologne in Bonn and son of a drunken singer in the musical establishment of the same patron, moved in 1792 to Vienna. There introductions to the nobility assured him of patronage, confirmed by his own remarkable ability as a pianist and composer. Deafness made a continued career as a performer impossible, but at the time of the fourth of his five Piano Concertos, completed in 1806, he felt himself still able to perform in public. In the event the benefit concert given under the patronage of Prince Lobkowitz in a bitterly cold suburban theatre in late December 1808 proved far too much of a good thing. The programme was extremely long, lasting some four hours, and the players were under-rehearsed, leading to disaster in the final Choral Fantasia, which came after a number of vocal items, two symphonies and the Fourth Piano Concerto. In the last of these, however, Beethoven played beautifully, and, in the words of a patient member of the audience, sang on his instrument, in the slow movement, playing a beautiful sustained melody with a deep melancholy feeling.

Johannes Brahms, the son of a jobbing double-bass-player in Hamburg, made his first concert tour in 1853 with the Hungarian violinist Reményi, who gave him his first taste of Hungarian music. A subsequent longer lasting friendship with another Hungarian violinist, Joseph Joachim, contributed to a later series of Hungarian Dances for piano duet, a form for which there was always a ready domestic market. The dances drew on current gypsy music,

composed largely for the entertainment of the well-to-do, rather than genuine gypsy tradition.

The tradition of writing Christmas Concertos developed during the last years of the 17th century, for performance in church on Christmas Eve. The Christmas element in what was generally a normal Church Concerto Grosso, for string orchestra and a small group of two solo violins, solo cello and harpsichord, was a pastoral movement, in the rhythm and form of a Sicilian shepherd dance, the Siciliano. The connection with Christmas lay simply in the presence of shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem when Christ was born. Corelli's Christmas Concerto is the most famous of all.

The American composer George Gershwin attempted to bridge the gap between American forms of popular music and European classical tradition. While a considerable amount of what he wrote was for the popular market, Rhapsody in Blue, commissioned in 1924 by Paul Whiteman for jazz band and piano is a sort of jazz piano concerto. The opening clarinet solo was provided by a member of the band and the orchestral arrangement was provided by another musician, but Gershwin felt able to arrange his own Piano Concerto himself in the following year.

The famous Boccherini Minuet is taken from one of the Italian composer's 125 string quintets, which he wrote partly for his own use, scoring them for two violins, one viola and two cellos. Boccherini was himself a distinguished cellist and seems to have spent most of his career in Spain, where he died in relative poverty in 1805.

The Norwegian nationalist composer Edvard Grieg was associated with Ibsen in providing music for his play Peer Gynt, a self-centred picaresque folk hero, who returns finally to meet again his beloved Solveig, whom he left at the outset for adventures in strange countries.

Mussorgsky was one of the group of five Russian nationalist composers that formed the so-called Mighty Handful in the second half of the 19th century. At first an army officer and later forced into a variety of positions in the Civil Service

after the liberation of the serfs caused family money difficulties, he left much unfinished at the time of his final illness, accentuated by alcoholism, in 1881. Night on Bare Mountain is a musical witches' sabbath, originally intended as part of an opera, and later arranged by Mussorgsky's colleague and friend Rimsky-Korsakov.

The Swan was the only part of the Carnival of the Animals that Saint-Saëns allowed to be published. The original work, which now enjoys wide popularity, was a private joke, with its procession of unlikely creatures, including fossils, critics and pianists. It was written in 1886.

Mozart wrote his last three symphonies in the space of a few weeks in the summer of 1788. They were probably intended for autumn subscription concerts, but after seven years in Vienna the novelty of Mozart's presence had worn off, and now he found himself increasingly short of money. Symphony No. 41, the so-called Jupiter Symphony, is the last of the group, and ends with a remarkable fugal movement, in which one group of instruments enters after another in imitation.

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STEREO

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101 GREAT ORCHESTRAL CLASSICS

Volume 2

1. JOHANN STRAUSS I: Radetzky March (3:08)

(from Naxos 8.550100)

Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra/Ondrej Lenárd

2. BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 4 - Andante (5:36)

(from Naxos 8.550122)

Stefan Vladar/Capella Istropolitana/Barry Wordsworth

3. BRAHMS: Hungarian Dance No. 1 (3:00)

(from Naxos 8.550110)

Budapest Symphony Orchestra/István Bogár

4. CORELLI: Christmas Concerto - Pastorale (4:13)

(from Naxos 8.550403)

Capella Istropolitana/Jaroslav Kr(e)chek

5. GERSHWIN: Rhapsody in Blue (16:54)

(from Naxos 8.550295)

Kathryn Selby/Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra/Richard Hayman

6. BOCCHERINI: Minuet (4:27)

Capella Istropolitana

7. GRIEG: Peer Gynt Suite - Solveig's Song (4:34)

(from Naxos 8.550140)

Czecho-Slovak State Philharmonic Orchestra/Stephen Gunzenhauser

8. MUSSORGSKY: Night on Bare Mountain (11:51)

(from Naxos 8.550051)

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra/Daniel Nazareth

9. SAINT-SAËNS: Carnival of the Animals - The Swan (3:07)

(from Naxos 8.550335)

Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra/Ondrej Lenárd

10. MOZART: Symphony No. 41 - Molto allegro (9:27)

(from Naxos 8.550113)

Capella Istropolitana/Barry Wordsworth

Total Playing Time: 66'17"



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