

SIBELIUS (1865-1957) Rakastava

The Lover – The Way of the Lover – Good evening, my love! Farewell!

The history of Rakastava is a curious one; in 1893 Sibelius won second prize in a competition for original compositions for male voices with *Rakastava* (The Lover), a setting of three runos from the 1st book of the Kanteletar. The following year he arranged them for male voices and strings and in 1898 made a further arrangement for mixed voices. In 1911 he recomposed the three pieces for string orchestra with brief parts for timpani and triangle. It was subsequently published as a suite, *Rakastava* Op 14.

The final result, considered to be one of the composer's most beautiful and original pieces for small ensemble, has been seen by some as having a closer kinship to the Fourth Symphony of the same year than to anything else that he wrote around 1893; others, however, see it as an excellent illustration of the composer's development; after 18 years he employed the same melodies and, to a certain extent, the same harmonies, but in the suite for strings the melodies undergo an almost magic transformation in terms of rhythmic and contrapuntal subtleties.

The opening of the first movement admirably illustrates these harmonic and metric subtleties characteristic of the composer's maturity. The second movement has the simplest of modulations and virtually no change of general texture; the entry of the double basses, pizzicato, more than halfway through, is extremely effective and beautiful. The final movement is by far the most extended and elaborate. A verbal description of how it progresses would give the impression of it being formless, episodic and unsatisfactory; the aural effect however is the very reverse.

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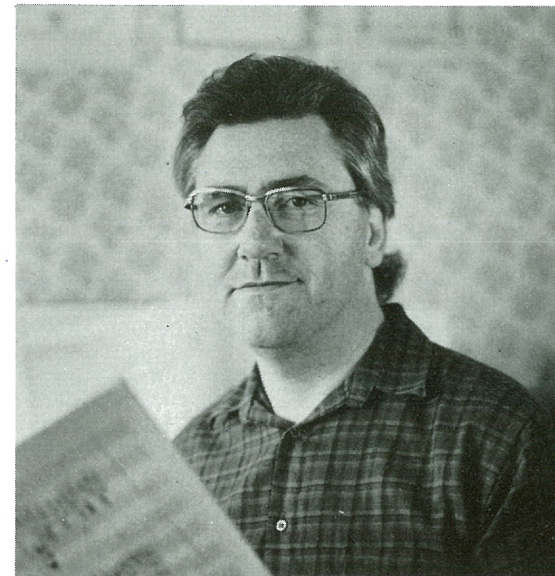
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Derek Bourgeois

DEREK BOURGEOIS

Organ Concerto (Op 101)

1. Allegro moderato
2. Andante espressivo
3. Allegro

This concerto was written during the latter half of 1986 for Oundle International Organ Week. It is scored for a standard Chamber Orchestra of double wind, two horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings. Because of the baroque nature of the instrument at Oundle, much of the concerto is cast in a neo-classical framework.

The first movement starts off on the organ in a clear key of G major almost in the manner of a trio sonata, but has a more romantic middle section, which is processional in nature, getting gradually louder and nearer. The recapitulation is interspersed with aggressive outbursts on the organ of a far more astringent nature than anything yet heard, and the movement ends abruptly in the 'wrong' key of F sharp major.

The second movement is slow and lyrical in the key of A flat minor. It is cast in a clear cut ternary form, and its middle section, which although essentially harmonically unstable, is centred on the remote key of E major. The recapitulation of the opening section is more forceful and builds to a big climax which is followed by an enigmatic and uncertain coda.

The finale, in G minor, incorporates several baroque forms but is centered around a recurring fugal section, the theme of which acts as a *perpetuum mobile* throughout the movement. Towards the end, the organ plays a chorale, whilst the strings of the orchestra maintain the fugal texture.