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Chapman Symphony Orchestra 47th Season

Chapman Symphony Orchestra

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CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRAS

The Chapman University Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra, under the leadership of Professor John Koshak, have received wide recognition for their outstanding performances and are considered to be among the finest university ensembles on the West Coast.

The Chapman Orchestras received national recognition when they were presented the coveted ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) award at the American Symphony Orchestra League Annual Conference for their performances of music by American composers.

In frequent demand for performances, the orchestras have performed at the Music Educators National, Divisional, State, and Southern Section Conferences and the Chamber Orchestra has been the featured performing ensemble for the CMEA (California Music Educators Association) Southern Section Conference. The Chamber Orchestra tours annually on the West Coast of the United States and has performed extensively on international tours in Europe, China, Hong Kong, and Japan. In January, 2000, following their West Coast tour, the Chamber Orchestra toured Europe with concerts in Prague, Budapest, Vienna, and Salzburg.

The Chamber Orchestra received international recognition during its concert tours in Europe and the Orient. In Brno, Czechoslovakia, a reviewer wrote: "The Chamber Orchestra conducted by John Koshak, showed its sound technical skill, remarkable balance and richness of expression." The orchestra has received enthusiastic reviews from critics throughout California. The Orange County Register described the orchestra's per-

formances of Ives' Unanswered Question, as "esoteric, exotic, innovative and enlightening." A Los Angeles Times critic described the Chapman Chamber Orchestra's performance as "an attractive combination of Mozart, Stravinsky, Berg and Milhaud, which displayed the skill, and musical promise of the orchestra." He added, "The ensemble responded to the tasteful direction of conductor John Koshak with precision, balance, cleanly articulated phrasing and dynamic subtlety."

The Chapman Symphony Orchestra has also received critical acclaim for its performances. A Los Angeles Times reviewer wrote, "John Koshak and his orchestra admirably negotiated the complexities of Paul Hindemith's Symphonic Metamorphosis. A good deal of forward motion characterized this reading. In the finale, Koshak masterfully controlled the balances, transitions and dramatic pacings." Another Los Angeles Times reviewer said, "Two major 20th-century symphonies offered formidable challenges for the Chapman Symphony Orchestra, but under John Koshak's assured leadership, the ensemble laid all fears to rest. Koshak has clearly put a great deal of thought into Shostakovich's 12th Symphony. The conductor knew each movement has its own particular character, and he allowed the transparent adagio to act as a period of repose and reflection. Before intermission, the orchestra put the same energy and zeal into Stravinsky's Symphony in Three Movements (1945). Koshak made the most of the work's rhythmic traits; the syncopated string pizzicato, timpani strokes and brass chords were all delivered with panache and precision."

CHAPMAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

JOHN KOSHAK, MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR • JONI LYNN STESHKO, GUEST CONDUCTOR

Flute

Yoon Cho**
Lauren Kamieniecki**
Suzanne Schwetz

Oboe

Maralynne Mann*
Decie Boone
Abigail Jones
Matthew LaGrange

English Horn

Abigail Jones

Clarinet

Suzanne Crandall**
Deanne Saum**
Monica Mann
Eric Underwood

Bassoon

Heather Cano**
Mindi Johnson**
Kelly Derrig

Horn

Elisha Wells*
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Abby Orr*

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Adrian Hernandez
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Melissa Roskos

Harp

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Jennifer Deirmendjian
Peter Eykemans
Johanna Kroesen
Shigeru Logan
Beth McCormick
Bud Neff
Marisol Padilla
Pat Pearce

(violins continued)

Vanessa Reynolds
Diana Salazer
Miki Toda
Sam Townsend
Sam Yoon

Viola

Jared Turner*
Matthew Byward
Pamela Curtis
Justin Grossman
Helen Hayward
Joe Martinez
Noelle Osborne
Tracy Salzer
Luisa Schlinger
Victoria Schultz
Alicia Thomas

Cello

Meaghan Brown**
Hsueh-Hwa Lu**
Katie Andersen
Sue Campbell
Justin Dubish
Eric Harris
Alex Harrison
Seungmi Hur
Anna Jin
Rick Meier
Hilkka Natri
David Whitehill

Bass

Karen Middlebrook*
Keith Jones
Robert Klatt

(basses continued)

Mike Wendell
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CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents the

Chapman
Symphony Orchestra
47th Season

John Koshak
Music Director and Conductor

Joni Lynn Steshko
Guest Conductor

Saturday, November 4, 2000 • 8:00 PM
Chapman Auditorium • Chapman University

PROGRAM

Karelia Overture, Op. 10

Jean Sibelius
(1865-1957)

Karelia Suite, Op. 11
Intermezzo
Ballade
Alla Marcia

Intermission

Symphony No. 2 in B Minor, Op. 5

Alexander Borodin
(1833-1887)

Allegro
Scherzo: Prestissimo-Allegretto-Prestissimo
Andante
Finale: Allegro

JONI LYNN STESHKO



During the past decade, Joni Lynn Steshko has conducted orchestras throughout North America and in St. Petersburg, Russia. Professional orchestras she has conducted include the Santa Barbara Symphony, the St. Petersburg (Russia) Congress Orchestra, the Huntsville (Canada) Festival Orchestra, the Aspen Music Festival, the Savannah Symphony,

and the New World Symphony. She has conducted University and Conservatory orchestras at the University of Southern California, the University of California, Los Angeles, and California State University (Fullerton), as well as the youth orchestras of the Irvine Youth Symphonies, the California State University Northridge Youth Academy, the Pacific Symphony Institute, and the Young Musicians Foundation Debut Orchestra.

Dr. Steshko is currently Guest Conductor (2000-2001 season) at Chapman University where she conducts the Chapman Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, and Opera, as well as teaching conducting. She has served as Orchestra Manager for the USC Thornton Symphony (Sergiu Comissiona, principal conductor), Thornton Chamber Orchestra (Yehuda Gilad, Artistic Director) and Thornton Opera (Timothy Lindberg, Conductor). In addition, Dr. Steshko is the assistant conductor of the Colburn Chamber Orchestra, Ronald Leonard, Music Director. She recently served as the assistant conductor of the Santa Barbara Symphony, Gisele Ben Dor, Music Director. In

addition, she held the position of conductor with the Irvine Youth Symphony. In December of 1996 she acted as cover conductor for the San Francisco Ballet's *Nutcracker* performances in the Los Angeles area. For three years, she was the Assistant Conductor of the USC Symphony, Chamber Orchestra and USC Opera, as well as conductor of the USC Conductor's Orchestra. In 1995, Dr. Steshko was Apprentice Conductor of the Huntsville (Canada) Festival Orchestra and in 1985 she was Music Director of the UCLA Theater Arts Fall production.

Dr. Steshko is a graduate of the renowned conducting program of the University of Southern California where she studied with Daniel Lewis. Other conducting studies were with Murray Sidlin of the Aspen Music Festival, Alexander Politshuk and Georgy Ergemsky of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, and Jon Robertson of UCLA. In addition, she studied choral conducting with the late Roger Wagner and opera with William Vendice of the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, the late Henry Holt, and Gunther Schuller.

In 1991 Dr. Steshko was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for study at the Stravinsky Archives in the Paul Sacher Foundation in Basel, Switzerland. While at USC, she received the Fritz Zweig Conducting Award, the Conducting Studies Department Award, and the Brandon Mehrle Special Commendation.

Dr. Steshko recently completed her doctoral dissertation on Igor Stravinsky's *Firebird* Ballet, the result of which will be a new, critical edition of the 1919 *Firebird Suite* to be published by Schott Music in Mainz, Germany.

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC FACULTY

John Koshak, *Director of Instrumental Music and University Orchestras*

Mischa Lefkowitz
Violin

Warren Gref
Horn

Robert Becker
Viola

David Washburn
Trumpet

Richard Treat
Cello

David Stetson
Trombone

David Black
String Bass

Fred Greene
Tuba

Lawrence Kaplan
Flute

Kent Hannibal
Percussion

Leslie Reed
Oboe

Mindy Ball
Harp

Michael Grego
Clarinet

Jeffrey Cogan
Guitar

John Campbell
Bassoon

Gary Matsuura
Jazz Ensemble

Gary Matsuura
Saxophone

Robert Frelly
Wind Ensemble

Brian Drake
Horn

Joni Lynn Steshko
Guest Conductor

UPCOMING SCHOOL OF MUSIC EVENTS

November 10, 8:00 PM

University Choirs

November 11, 8:00 PM

University Chamber Orchestra

November 12, 8:00 PM

University Guitar Ensemble

November 14, 8:00 PM

University Jazz Ensemble

November 19, 8:00 PM

Instrumental Chamber Music

December 1, 2, & 3, 6:00 PM

Annual Holiday Wassail

December 5, 8:00 PM

University Percussion Ensemble

December 9, 8:00 PM

University Wind Ensemble

For additional information, please call the Chapman University
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- in memory of James Young

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Chapman University Orchestras
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866

Please Print.

First Name

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I want information for: ☐ Chapman University Orchestras ☐ Orange County Youth Symphony Orchestra

PROGRAM NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS

The **Bach “Coffee” Cantata** was composed ca. 1732. Picander, author of this and many of Bach’s sacred and secular texts, wrote his first satire on coffee drinking in 1727. Coffee had been introduced in Europe about a century before the birth of Bach. It’s wide spread popularity in England, France and Holland eventually led to the new drink conquering Germany as well. Reactions to the new craze differed widely. Some rulers tried to outlaw coffee drinking; others saw it as a welcome source of revenue. Coffeehouses opened everywhere, becoming the favorite meeting place for artists, scientists and men of letters. Women were not allowed, but did not want to be deprived of something men could have. Of all German cities, Leipzig seems to have been the most “coffee-conscious town.” In 1725, shortly after Bach’s arrival in Leipzig, there were already eight coffeehouses. It is thought that Bach composed this cantata for the *Collegium musicum* whose concerts were usually given in a coffeehouse. The original text finished with Aria No. 8. Bach added the final recitative and trio, giving the story a humorous twist.

- Historicus:** Be quiet! Stop chattering, and listen to what is taking place. Here comes Herr Schlendrian with his daughter, Lieschen. He is growling like a honey bear. Hear for yourselves what she has done to him.
- Schlendrian:** Don’t our children cause us one hundred thousand troubles! What I say every day to my daughter Lieschen bears no fruit. You stubborn child, you wicked girl, when will I achieve my purpose? Put the coffee away!
- Lieschen:** Dear father, don’t be so strict. If I can’t drink my little cup of coffee three times a day, to my distress, I’ll be like dried-up roast goat.
- Lieschen:** Oh, how sweet the coffee tastes, nicer than a thousand kisses, mellower than wine. Coffee, coffee, I must have, and if anyone want to please me, then pour me a cup of coffee.
- Schlendrian:** If you won’t give up coffee, then you can’t go to weddings, nor will I permit you to go for walks.
Lieschen: Oh yes, but leave me my coffee!
Schlendrian: Now I have the little monkey...I will get you no more whalebone petticoats of fashionable width.
Lieschen: I can easily agree to that.
Schlendrian: You shall not go to the window to see people passing by.
Lieschen: This too – only I beg you to leave me my coffee.
Schlendrian: You’ll get no more silver or gold ribbons for your hat.
Lieschen: Yes, yes! But leave me my pleasure.
Schlendrian: You naughty Lieschen, so you agree to everything!
- Schlendrian:** Maidens have difficult dispositions and are not easily convinced. Yet, if one finds the right approach then one may happily succeed
- Schlendrian:** Now do what your father says!
Lieschen: In everything, except coffee!
Schlendrian: Well then! You have to resign yourself never to have a husband.
Lieschen: Oh yes, father, a husband!
Schlendrian: I swear that it will never happen.
Lieschen: Until I renounce coffee? Father, listen, I shall no longer drink it.
Schlendrian: Then you shall finally have a husband.
- Lieschen:** Even today, dearest father, find one please. Oh, a husband, truly this suits me.
- Historicus:** Now old Schlendrian goes and searches to find a husband without delay. But Lieschen secretly spreads the rumor: no suitor will come into my house, unless he promises me and puts into the marriage contract, that he allows me to brew coffee whenever I please.
- Trio:** Cats must have their mice and maidens their coffee. Mother loves coffee, and the grandmother drank it too...So why condemn the daughters?

Three *Wunderhorn* Songs from fourteen songs to texts from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn or Youth’s Magic Horn*. The texts of these songs are all taken from the famous anthology of German folk poems, collected by Ludwig Archim von Arnim and Klemens Brentano and published in the first decade of the nineteenth century under the title of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. They were first published in 1892. As Dika Newlin puts it, the *Wunderhorn* anthology was “a typical product of the romantic *Zeitgeist*, with its stress on the simple, artless life of the “little people” and the glamour of bygone days. This is perhaps why it was so popular because of the nineteenth century’s nostalgic yearning after the lost innocence of a remote past

Rheinlegendchen (Rhine Legend)

Standing on the river bank I am thinking about my sweetheart who doesn't stay around.
I shall throw my golden ring into the river!
It flows gently down the river to the ocean.

A fish swallows the ring, that fish is served to the King for dinner
The King says "Whose ring is this?"
My sweetheart says "That is my ring!"

He jumps up and runs to me, bringing the golden ring back!
So when you stand on the river bank, be sure to toss in your golden Ring!

Das Irdische Leben (The Earthly Life)

The child cried, "Mother, I am so hungry! Give me bread or I shall die!"
"Wait my child. Tomorrow we shall do the harvesting."
When the harvest work was completed the child continued to cry,
"Mother, I am so hungry!"
"Give me bread or I shall die!"
"Wait my dear child. Tomorrow we will prepare the grain!"
When the grain was prepared the child continued to cry,
"Mother, I am so hungry! Give me bread or I shall die!"
"Wait my darling child. Tomorrow we will bake the bread!"
And when the bread was baked the child was dead.

Verlorne Müh' (All in Vain)

Girl: Little Fellow, do you want to go out and play?
We can go look at the lambs. Come along!
Boy: Foolish Girl! I will not come along!
Girl: Well then, maybe you would like to nibble something?
Here, I have something in my pocket. Go ahead! Take a bite! Take it, Little Fellow.
Boy: No, Foolish Girl, I will not take it from you!?
Girl: Well...I think it's my heart you want. Is that right?
You want my heart! You shall think of me forever and ever and ever!
Take it, fellow, take my heart!
Boy: No! Foolish Girl, I will not take your heart! No!

Joaquín Turina was born in Seville and he kept the flavor of Andalusia in his music even though he left Seville at the age of twenty, never to return. He studied composition in Paris and became close friends with deFalla and studied composition with d'Indy. He taught at the Madrid Conservatory and even though he was persecuted during the Spanish Civil War, he was awarded the Grand Cross of Alfonso X the Wise in 1941.

Poema en forma de canciones (Poems in the Form of Songs) poetry by Ramon Campoamor

Nunca Olvida...(Never Forget...)

Now that I am leaving this world, before giving account to God
I will give my confession here between the two of us.
With all my soul I forgive those whom I've always hated.
You, whom I've loved so much, I will never forgive!

Cantares (Song)

Oh! I feel you closest to me when I leave you,
Because your face is always present with me in the shadow of my kind.
Oh! Say it to me again; for while I was under your spell,
I would listen to you without hearing you and I would look on you without seeing you.

Los dos miedos (The Two Fears)

At eventide of that day, she was far from me. "Why do you get so close!" she would say. "I am frightened of you"
And after the night had passed, she said near to me:
"Why do you always distance yourself from me?! "I am frightened without you!"

Las locas por amou (Crazy for Love)

I will love you, goddess Venus. If you prefer, I will love you a long time and sanely.
And the goddess Citeres responded, "I prefer, like all women, to be loved a short time and insanely."
I will love you, goddess Venus, I will love you.

CHARLES E. IVES was one of America's most individualistic composers. He had begun to experiment with unorthodox harmonies and sonorities long before such experimentation was fashionable among American composers. Ives' concluding paragraph of the Postface to *114 Songs* gives the "best possible introduction to Ivcs' idea of a song's function". (Howard Boatright)

"A song has a few rights, the same as other ordinary citizens...If it feels like kicking over an ash can, a poet's castle, or the prosodic law, will you stop it? Must it always be a polite triad...a ribbon to match the voice? Should it not be free at times from the dominion of the thorax, the diaphragm, the ear, and other points of interest?....Should it not have a chance to sing to itself, if it can sing?...If it happens to feel like trying to fly where humans cannot fly, to sing what cannot be sung...who shall stop it?—in short, must a song always be a song!

THE CIRCUS BAND (Ives)

All summer long, we boys dreamed 'bout big circus joys!
Down Main Street, comes the band,
Oh! "Ain't it a grand and a glorious noise!"

Horses are prancing, Knights advancing;
Helmets gleaming, Pennants streaming,
Cleopatra's on her throne!
That golden hair is all her own.

Where is the lady all in pink?
Last year she waved to me I think,
Can she have died?
Can! that! rot!
She is passing but she sees me not.

THE GREATEST MAN (Anne Collins)

My teacher said us boys should write about some great man,
so I thought last night 'n thought about heroes and men that had done great things,
'n then I got to thinkin' 'bout my pa;
he ain't a hero 'r anything but pshaw!
Say! He can ride the wildest hoss 'n find minners near the moss down by the creek;
'n he can swim 'n fish, we ketched five new lights, me 'n him.
Dad's some hunter too
Oh my! Miss Molly Cottontail sure does fly when he tromps through the fields 'n brush!
(Dad won't kill a lark 'r thrush.)
Once when I was sick 'm though his hands were rough he rubbed the pain right out.
"That's the stuff!" he said when I winked back the tears.
He never cried but once 'n that was when my mother died
There're lots o' great men -George Washington 'n Lee,
but Dad's got 'em all beat holler, seems to me!

IMMORTALITY (Ives)

Who dares to say the spring is dead, in autumn's radiant glow!
Who dares to say the rose is dead in winter's sunset snow!
Who dares to say our child is dead!
If God had meant she were to die,
She would not have been.

SERENITY (Whittier)

O, Sabbath rest of Galilee!
O, calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee, the silence of eternity
Interpreted by love.

Drop thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease:
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess, the beauty of thy peace.

AUTUMN (Ives)

Earth rests!
Her work is done, her fields lie bare,
and 'ere the night of winter comes to hush her song and close her tired eyes,
She turns her face for the sun to shine upon and radiantly,
radiantly, through Fall's bright glow, he smiles and brings the peace of God!

MEMORIES (Ives)

A. Very Pleasant

We're sitting in the opera house;
We're waiting for the curtain to arise with wonders for our eyes;
We're feeling pretty gay, and well we may,
"O, Jimmy, look!" I say, "The band is tuning up and soon will start to play."
We whistle and we hum, beat time with the drum.
A feeling of expectancy, a certain kind of ecstasy.... Sh's's's. Curtain!

B. Rather Sad

From the street a strain on my ear doth fall,
A tune as threadbare as that "old red shawl",
It is tattered, it is torn, it shows signs of being worn,
It's the tune my Uncle hummed from early morn,
"Twas a common little thing and kinda sweet,
But 'twas sad and seemed to slow up both his feet;
I can see him shuffling down to the barn or to the town, a humming.

CHARLIE RUTLAGE (from Cowboy Songs and other Frontier Ballads)

Another good cowpuncher has gone to meet his fate,
I hope he'll find a resting place, within the golden gate.
Another place is vacant on the ranch of the X I T,
"Twill be hard to find another that's liked as well as he.
The first that died was Kid White, a man both tough and brave,
While Charlie Rutlage makes the third to be sent to his grave,
Caused by a cowhorse falling, while running after stock;
"Twas on the spring round up, a place where death men mock,

He went forward on morning on a circle through the hills,
He was gay and full of glee, and free from earthly ills; (whoopee ti yi yo, git along little dogies, etc)
But when it came to finish up the work on which he went,
Nothing came back from him; his time on earth was spent.
"Twas as he rode the round up, a XIT turned back to the herd;
Poor Charlie shoved him in again, his cutting horse he spurred;
Another turned ; at that moment the horse the creature spied
and turned and fell with him, beneath poor Charlie died.

His relations in Texas his face never more will see,
But I hope he'll meet his loved ones beyond in eternity,
I hope he'll meet his parents, will meet them face to face,
and that they'll grasp him by the right hand at the shining throne of grace.

PROGRAM NOTES

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) • Karelia Overture, Op. 10 • Karelia Suite, Op. 11

Sibelius grew to maturity at a time of fervent Finnish nationalism, as the country broke away from its earlier Swedish and later Russian overlords. Brought up in a Swedish-speaking family, Sibelius acquired knowledge of Finnish language and traditional literature at school and the early Finnish sagas proved a strong influence on his work as a composer. After early training in Helsinki and later in Berlin, Sibelius made his career in Finland, where he was awarded a state pension. Although he lived until 1957, he wrote little after 1926, feeling out of sympathy with current trends in music.

The Karelia overture and suite, Op. 10 and 11, written in 1893 are published portions of a quantity of music written for a pageant. A generation ago the overture was reasonably familiar, but has since dropped out of the concert repertory. It is typical early Sibelius, with vigorous, distinctive themes, and is scored noisily and heavily for full orchestra, including piccolo and tuba.

David Whitehill, Conducting Major

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887) • Symphony No. 2 in B Minor, Op. 5

Though a doctor of chemistry and fulltime chemist, Alexander Borodin's (1833-1887) childhood passion for music never left him. Borodin performed an amazing balancing act throughout his adult life, maintaining his careers as a chemist and researcher, a husband, father of an adopted daughter, and a musician. Because of his busy life, Borodin spent much of his summer "vacations" composing. Borodin had almost no formalized training in music. As a child, he had some lessons with local amateur musicians and tutors, but after entering medical school, his musical training came to an end. His lack of training had an effect on his compositional career; on a few occasions, as with the initial reading of the Symphony No. 1 in E-flat Major, the composer's numerous errors nearly cost him performances and led to less than favorable initial impressions.

The Symphony No. 2 in B Minor is among Borodin's principal instrumental works. Given Borodin's career and his limited composition time, he frequently failed to complete works; the second symphony is one of the few works completed entirely by Borodin (some changes were made by Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov during the publication process which took place after Borodin's death).

The first movement, Allegro, opens with a stately motto like theme that is heard repeatedly throughout the movement. The second part of the theme, though not as grandiose as the first, nonetheless retains some of the first theme's heroic qualities. The second, more lyrical theme compliments the first theme nicely. The movement loosely resembles sonata form, though the themes are not fully developed in the Germanic style that had been standard in Western Europe for some years. Instead, the themes are merely juxtaposed in rapid succession. After the recapitulation, a final statement of the motto ends the movement.

The Scherzo is quick and playful in character. The composer Balakirev added a few notes to this movement before

The Karelia suite contains considerably more attractive music than the overture. The Intermezzo is both delightful and exhilarating. It is a perfect example of Sibelius' application of very simple melodic motives. The plagal cadence at the end is beautiful, especially because of the high horn E flat. The Ballade is well orchestrated and laid out, with a variety of pleasant sounds. The thematic material, while not uncharacteristic, is a little uninspired and becomes boring with repetition. The 26 bar close of the Ballade is strikingly calm--it is attached to an eight bar final statement of the original theme, in the original key, which provides the movement with a familiar conclusion. The final movement, Alla Marcia, returns to the large orchestra to of the Intermezzo, and includes the exhilarating and delightful music of the opening. The craftsmanship of this work is resourceful, original, and simple; it is true Sibelius.

the symphony was first published; the introductory brass chord, for example, is not Borodin's. The middle section of the movement, which is more sustained and lyrical, is followed by the return of the scherzo section.

The third movement, Andante, opens with one of Borodin's most beautiful melodies, first played by the French horn. A melodic fragment that leads to a new theme first presented by the English horn breaks the calmness. Following a violent eruption, a third theme appears and develops into a grandiose central section. The strings then take the passionately lush horn melody and play it in full glory. Fragments of the movement's themes lead to the final cadence and the horn and harp remind the listener of the opening theme once again.

The Finale begins over open fifths sustained from the previous movement. The movement, in B Major, is extremely rhythmic and dance-like. The continuous rhythmic motion in the opening is relieved in the somewhat disjunct middle section. During this middle part, the trombones and horns play a passage recalling Rimsky-Korskov's Russian Easter Overture. The main melody then returns and leads to an ingenious statement of the theme accompanied by special effects in the strings. This provides a great backdrop for the coda to begin and move the symphony to its dramatic end.

Despite its problems in composition and orchestration, the symphony is effective and has managed to survive in the symphonic repertoire for over a century. Borodin had a natural gift for melody and compositional ideas, but unfortunately, as did many Russian composers of the time, lacked the training necessary to be a first, or even second, rate composer. Nonetheless, there is something to be said and enjoyed about the natural rawness in Borodin's music.

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