Kodály: Psalmus Hungaricus

Bartók: Dance Suite

with the
London Philharmonic Choir
Raymond Nilsson, tenor

Janos Ferencsik
conducting The
London Philharmonic Orchestra
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<th>No.</th>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>I. Moderato</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>II. Allegro molto</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>III. Allegro vivace</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>IV. Molto tranquillo</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>V. Comodo</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>VI. Finale</td>
<td>03:58</td>
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KODALY:
Psalmus Hungaricus, Op. 13
Raymond Nilsson, tenor, with the
London Philharmonic Choir and the
London Philharmonic Orchestra,
conducted by Janos Ferencsik

BARTOK: Dance Suite, London
Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted
by Janos Ferencsik

Both compositions on this record were
written for the same occasion: the music
festival held in Budapest on November 19,
1923, to commemorate the fiftieth anniver-
sary of the merging of the twin Hungarian
cities of Buda and Pesth. Both are the prod-
ucts of composers who worked hand-in-hand
to ferret out, study and disseminate the true
folk music of Hungary, distinguishing it from
the Gypsy music that was so long believed
to be genuinely Hungarian. And both works
reflect – though in vastly different ways – the
influence of this research, without present-
ing any direct quotations from actual folk
songs or dances.

In composing the Psalmus Hungaricus – long acclaimed as one of the truly great
choral works of this century – Zoltan Kodaly
drew his text from the works of the sixteenth
century Hungarian poet, Michael Veg. This
text is an old Hungarian version of the Fifty-
fifth Psalm with interpolations and exten-
sions that were – and still are – full of his-
toric associations for the often-oppressed
Hungarian people.

In a lengthy preface to the published
score, A. v. Tóth has written, “Michael Vég,
the poet-teacher of Kecksmét, had followed
the custom of his time in interspersing the
translation of the Psalm with touching lam-
etations and lyric episodes to utter the grief
over the sorrow of his nation. His version of
the Psalm is therefore replete with personal
and national associations. His free transla-
tion thus assumes the significance of a new
and independent piece of poetry – a truly
‘Hungarian’ Psalm.

“These qualities of the text must have
appealed strongly to Kodaly, the lofty
national poet. His musical setting exhausts
both the national and subjective elements
of the poem, and moulds them into one per-
fected and homogeneous unit of great vision-
ary beauty, and of tremendous lyric and dra-
matic strength.”

The Psalmus Hungaricus, scored for solo
tenor, chorus and orchestra, is in one con-
tinuous movement, with an orchestral intro-
duction and, later in the work, an orchestral
interlude. The following English translation
of the original Hungarian text is by Edward
J. Dent.

**Chorus**
When as King David sore was afflicted,
By those he trusted basely deserted,
In his great anger bitterly grieving,
Thus to Jehovah prayed he within his heart.

**Tenor solo**
God of my fathers, bow Thine ear to me,
Turn not away the light of Thy countenance,
Leave me not lonely in my misery,
O that I had but the wings like a dove
I would flyaway far into the wilderness;
If to my prayer, Lord, Thou hadst attended,
Better it were to dwell in the desert,
Than live with wicked liars and traitors
Who will not suffer that I should speak the
truth.

**Chorus**
When as King David sore was afflicted, etc.

**Tenor solo**
Nightly and daily go they about me,
Seeking how they may take me in the snare,
And by false witness seek to destroy me,
Make me a prisoner; then would they shout
with joy!
Violence and strife rage fierce in the city,
Mischief and malice, envy and sorrow,
Boasting of riches, pride of possession;
Ne'er in all the world saw I such deceivers!
They take their evil counsel in secret,
Fatherless children slay they and murder,
God's high commandment they have
despised,
Swollen with substance, drunken with lust
and pride.

**Chorus**
When as King David sore was afflicted, etc.

**Tenor solo**
I could have borne so sore an affliction,
Were it an enemy that had reproachd me,
Yes, in truth I could then have endur'd it,
For then I could have hidden myself from
him.

Hatred and wrath of wicked men oppress
me.
O that I had but the wings like a dove
I would flyaway far into the wilderness;
If to my prayer, Lord, Thou hadst attended,
Long, long ago far hence I would have
wonder’d;
Better it were to dwell in the desert,
Better to hide me deep in the forest,
Than live with wicked liars and traitors
Who will not suffer that I should speak the
truth.
But it was thou, my friend whom I trusted,  
(Did we not take sweet counsel together?)  
Thou whom I reckon’d true friend and faithful,  
Thou art the man whose hand would have struck me down!  
And let Thy judgment fall heavy on them,  
Cut down this people, Lord, in Thine anger,  
Send out Thy truth, let unbelievers perish!

Tenor solo and Chorus
I give Thee honor, Lord, and worship Thee,  
Evening and morning and at the noonday,  
Thou that abidest, Thou art my helper  
When those that hate Thee sorely do oppress me,  
I give Thee honor, Lord, and worship Thee, etc.

Orchestral interlude

Tenor solo
So in Jehovah I will put my trust,  
God is my stronghold and my comforter;  
I cast my burden always on the Lord,  
His hand in mercy will raise me from despair.

Chorus
Thou art our One God, righteous in judgment,  
Vengeance is Thine for those that do evil,  
Thou shalt not bless them, trusting in vain things,  
Thou shalt take them away as with a whirlwind.  
As for the righteous, Thou dost preserve them,  
They that show mercy shelter find in Thee.  
Those that are humble Thou dost raise on high.

Those that are mighty scatter’st and destroyest.  
Whom for a space Thy wrath has chastised,  
And has like silver tried in the furnace,  
Forth from the fire Thou suddenly tak’st him,  
Once more in honor Thou wilt raise him on high!

The words King David wrote in his Psalter,  
Fifty and fifth of prayers and of praises,  
And for the faithful bitterly grieving;  
As consolation, I from it made this song.

The Dance Suite by Bela Bartok is characterized by a certain grotesque, diabolical quality, and seems to have stemmed directly from the folk dance rhythms which he found during his many years of research. According to the composer’s own word, however, all of the material is original, having been only inspired by the traditional folk music.

The suite is divided into six sections – five dances and a Finale. These are played without pause, and are connected by a ritornello – or refrain – which makes its appearance as a brief interlude between the movements. The names and styles of the folk-like dances were not indicated by Bartok on the score, the movements bearing only the customary tempo markings: I. Moderato; II. Allegro molto; III. Allegro vivace; IV. Molto tranquilla; V. Commodo, and VI. Finale (Allegro).

In Bela Bartok: His Life and Works, Emil Haraszi says that the first movement is “suggestive of a dance of elves and gnomes.” The second movement he describes as “a wild revel, as though legions of gnomes had been left loose at the hour of midnight.” In the third movement “the fiery spirit of full-blooded peasant nature bursts into flame.” He calls the fourth movement “pastoral,” and in the fifth speaks of “floating shades ... (whose) progress is leaden, incorporeal and bodiless.” The Finale, writes Haraszi, “a kind of summary of the preceding movements, starts with a scarcely audible tap-tapping, and rises, through an orgy of rhythm, to the force of a hurricane.”

Bartok, it should be pointed out, carried his folk music research far beyond the borders of his native land. It encompassed all of Central Europe and even dipped down into North Africa to trace folk origins in the music of the Arabs. In an article written in 1944, a year before his untimely death, he indicated that the first and fourth dances in the suite contain some Arabic characteristics; the second, third and ritornello are Magyar; the fifth is Roumanian, and the Finale is a synthesis of all three styles.

Original Liner Notes by PAUL AFFELDER

JANOS FERENCSIK was born in Budapest in 1907, and has conducted concert and opera performances in most of the European capitals. At present, he is general music director and first conductor of the Budapest State Opera and leading conductor of the Hungarian State Philharmonic. His first visit to England was in 1957, at the invitation of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

RAYMOND NILSSON is an Australian tenor of Swedish ancestry. For the past several years, he has been a principal tenor of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. In addition, he has sung leading roles in operas and modern concert works for the B.B.C. on both radio and television, and has appeared regularly as a soloist at the Promenade Concerts in London’s Royal Albert Hall.
Some notes on the history of Everest Records and the digital remastering

When Everest Records was founded by Harry Belock in 1958 as a division of Belock Instrument Corp., the aim was to produce a catalogue of stereo recordings of the highest possible technical standard, with interesting and innovative classical repertoire played by some of the best artists and orchestras.

For the first Everest recording sessions in 1958, an Ampex 300-3 half-inch three-channel recorder was used. Later on the label moved to use a Westrex 35 mm 3-track magnetic film recorder, which had a wider possible dynamic range, less print-through, less tape stretch and less ‘wow and flutter’, and which was the basis for the highly acclaimed typical “Everest-sound”.

For the process of digital remastering of the 35 mm master tapes an Albrecht MB 51 machine was used for analog playback. The output was captured in highest digital resolution of 192 kHz sampling rate and 24 bit word length using state-of-the-art converters. In the digital domain the recording was carefully restored and remastered using top-quality mastering and restoration equipment.

...from the original LP release:

“The remarkable EVEREST sound on this record is the result of a revolutionary new method of magnetic recording developed by EVEREST utilizing 35 mm magnetic film. Below is a graphic representation of this new material. What you see here, your ears will quickly verify when you listen to an EVEREST recording.

Notice that now EVEREST engineers have over 3 times the normal space available [than] on ¼” tape. This means distortion free, perfect sound. 35 mm magnetic film allows EVEREST engineers to make recordings with
- No distortion from print through
- No distortion from lack of channel width
- Absolute minimum of “wow or flutter”
- Highest possible signal to noise ratio
- Greatest quality and dynamic range ever recorded

With 35 mm magnetic film, the base material on which the magnetic oxide is coated is five times thicker than conventional tape and is similar to the film used for motion pictures. This thickness permits the recording of extremely high sound intensities without the danger of layer-to-layer “print-through”. The width of 35 mm magnetic film is such that it can accommodate three channels, each of which is as wide as the standard ¼” recording tape. Because of this great channel width, it is possible to produce stereo recordings in which the usual background noise is inaudible. Another similarity of magnetic film to motion picture is that it has sprocket holes cut along each edge. The drive mechanism is also similar to motion picture cameras in that sprocket gears engage these sprocket holes affording a smoothness of motion that reduces “wow and flutter” to an absolute minimum.

The film has another advantage in its great tensile strength which effectively eliminates pitch changes due to “tape stretch”, a condition heretofore almost impossible to control.

Drawing on the extensive experience in the motion picture sound field BELOCK INSTRUMENT (of which EVEREST is a division), requested Westrex Corporation to build special equipment to EVEREST’S exacting specifications in order to accomplish these advantages. This equipment includes the use of special recording heads which afford complete wide band frequency response beyond that normally specified in any present-day motion picture recording. It is of interest to note, that when soundtracks of great motion pictures originally recorded on 35 mm magnetic film are released as phonograph records, that normal technique is to re-record the sound from 35 mm magnetic film to conventional tape. EVEREST, through its advanced processes and equipment, is the only record company able to transfer all Master Records directly from the 35 mm magnetic film to the recording heads.

To assure maintaining the high quality of EVEREST sound on every EVEREST recording, the same equipment that is used in the BELOCK Recording studios is utilized for recordings made anywhere in the world. By utilizing specially designed portable versions of EVEREST 35 mm equipment, EVEREST engineers are able to make recordings and maintain the rigid standards and excellence of quality available in the Studios.

The advanced engineering and special equipment, in addition to meticulous attention to detail, results in the EVEREST sound, a sound that has been acclaimed as superb by critics and record enthusiasts throughout the world.

Executive Producer: Mark Jenkins for Countdown Media/Everest • Digital Transfers and Remastering: Lutz Rippe at Countdown Media using the original master tapes • Artwork preparation: Eckhard Volk at Countdown Media • Digital Booklet: Dirk Böing, Martina Grüthling • Original Producer: Bert Whyte for Everest Records • Original Recording Engineer: Joe Kane • Original Artwork: Alex Steinweiss • Recording Location and Date: Walthamstow Assembly Hall, London (November 1958) • Original Recording on 35 mm 3-track magnetic film, released as SD6 3202 • Analog playback of original master tapes on an Albrecht MB 51 • Digital restoration and remastering using Algorithmix software products © & © Countdown Media GmbH
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Khatchaturian: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in D-flat Major
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Raoul Poliakin and his orchestra

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Beethoven: Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68 “Pastorale”
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London Symphony Orchestra & Josef Krips, Conductor