

Charles GOUNOD (French, 1818-1893)

Petite Symphonie pour instruments à vent

Ever wondered who wrote that beautiful melody 'Ave Maria' on Johann Sebastian Bach's famous Prelude in C Major (Well-Tempered Clavier Book I)? Or that chirpy theme music to 'Alfred Hitchcock presents' on TV? They were both written by the Frenchman Charles Gounod in the nineteenth century and while these two pieces may be his biggest and most popular "hits", they certainly do not help to portray Gounod as the influential French composer he was in his day.



In 1839, Gounod won the prestigious *Prix de Rome*, travelled to Italy and discovered the music of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina and other composers of that time and was very drawn to them. He also met Fanny Mendelssohn, sister of the famous Felix Mendelssohn, who introduced him to the works of Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven; music of these composers were not performed and heard much in France during that time.

Back in France, Gounod wrote a wide range of music, in particular, sacred oratorios and operas. He also composed two symphonies, emulating Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. His tremendous success with his opera, 'Faust' (1859) meant that he paid more attention to the theatre. In 1885, his friend, the highly influential flute professor of the Paris Conservatory, Paul Taffanel (1844 - 1908) commissioned him to write a piece of chamber music for winds. This resulted in his successful 'Petite Symphonie pour instruments à vent'. It's instrumentation of a wind octet with added flute part in honour of Taffanel mirrors that of Mozart's wind serenades.

This complete miniature symphony is elegant, delicate and sweet. The first movement comprises a slow introduction alla Haydn and an Allegretto in sonata form. The second movement particularly features the flute. The scherzo that follows is based on a hunting theme. The lively finale closes the symphony.

Musicians:

Flute: Andy Sim • **Oboes:** Fong Chong Suan, Chin Chee Kin • **Clarinets:** Desmond Chow, Cheong Mun Hoe • **Bassoons:** Roland Tay, Lim Woan Rong • **Horns:** Han Chin Kwong, Akanok Khorcharoen

Darius MILHAUD (French, 1892-1974)

Dixtuor 'Little Symphony No 5', Opus 75

Darius Milhaud (pronounced "me-oh") is one of the most prolific French composers with more than 400 published works.

Milhaud was born in 1892 in southern France, studied violin and later composition at the Paris Conservatoire. In 1916, he accompanied diplomat-poet Paul Claudel, as secretary, to Brazil, where he was strongly influenced by Latin American popular music. He returned to Paris in 1918 and was a member of *Les Six*, a group of diverse French composers that included Francis Poulenc.



He composed a series of six "little" symphonies between 1917 to 1923. These were revolutionary in that they were scored for a handful of soloists and concisely written in three brief movements lasting no more than seven minutes long.

No. 5 was written in 1922 in Warsaw and dedicated to Marya Freund who, together with Poulenc, was Milhaud's traveling companion when they visited Poland in that same year. This is a *dixtuor* - music for ten wind instruments, the French equivalent of a detcet. Milhaud extends the range as well as the colours of the traditional double wind quintet (consisting of a pair of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns) to include the piccolo (higher register of the flute), the cor anglais (lower register of the oboe) and the bass clarinet (lower register of the clarinet).

The first movement, *Rude* (which in French means "rugged" rather than "discourteous") chatters freely, yet with a subtle eerie note. The second, *Lent*, features a variety of somewhat meandering soliloquies from various instrumentalists. The third, *Violent*, brings the piece to a chirpy and sprightly conclusion.

Musicians:

Flute/Piccolo: Darence Leng **Flute:** Andy Sim • **Oboe:** Fong Chong Suan **Cor Anglais:** Chin Chee Kin • **Clarinet:** Lim Lip Hua **Bass Clarinet:** Daniel Yiau • **Bassoons:** Roland Tay, Lim Woan Rong • **Horns:** Akanok Khorcharoen, Marcus Ng Zhong Qing

Siegfried FINK (German, b. 1928)

Toccata for six percussionists

Fink studied percussion and composition at the University of Music in Weimar, then East Germany. He founded and headed the percussion studio at the University of Music in Würzburg, West Germany, from 1965 until his retirement in 1993. Fink has appeared on numerous recordings as performer, composer and conductor. He has published over 140 compositions, numerous arrangements, method books and essays. For many years, he was a percussion consultant for the World Youth Orchestra of the *Jeunesses Musicales Mondiales*. Fink received the Federal Republic of Germany's highest honor for his lifetime achievements in percussion education, the order of the "Bundesverdienstkreuz am Bande." He was also honoured by the State Academy of Music in Sofia, Bulgaria with the title Doctor Honoris Causa.



The *Toccata* was written as homage to the Mexican composer Carlos Chavez, and his famous *Toccata for percussion instruments*. Some rhythmic figures inspired by Mexican folklore

are to be found in the present work as in its predecessor, and the instrumentation is limited intentionally to the instruments used in the *Toccata*.

Musicians:

Glockenspiel & Bongos: Ng Chen Yee • **Xylophone & Snare Drum:** Wei Wei • **Snare Drum & Suspended Cymbal:** Melvin Leong • **Tenor Drum, Maracas & Claves:** Dennis Sim • **Timpani & Small Gong:** Yeow Ching Shiong • **Bass Drum & Large Gong:** Angeline Wee

Richard STRAUSS (German, 1864-1949)

Serenade in E flat Major for 13 Winds, Opus 7

Richard Strauss was born in Munich in 1864, and like many great composers was clearly gifted from a very early age. His father Franz Strauss was one of the foremost horn players in his time. Richard's talents were also recognised and encouraged by none other than Hans von Bulow (the first husband of Liszt's daughter Cosima, who was later married to Wagner), Hector Berlioz and Johannes Brahms initially inspired Strauss before he moved in the direction of the more uninhibited romanticism of Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner. By his early twenties Strauss had composed a considerable amount of music, but it was with his first tone poem *Dan Juan* in 1889 that his career was to take an upward turn. Having written several tone poems to major acclaim, Strauss turned to writing operas, and then to conducting, his longest lasting post being with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra for 12 years. During this time his compositional output declined to near zero, but then in later life a last spurt of creativity resulted in a number of mature works seeming in part to return to a more classical form



Strauss wrote the *Wind Serenade op. 7* when he was only 17. This ten-minute single movement work is in traditional sonata form. The melodic and harmonic content of this piece already revealed the mature Strauss. Filled with soaring passion, dramaticism and lyricism, this serenade has remained firmly in the concert hall repertory.

Musicians:

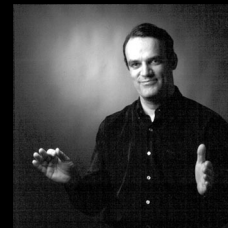
Flutes: Darence Leng, Andy Sim • **Oboes:** Fong Chong Suan, Chin Chee Kin • **Clarinets:** Lim Lip Hua, Cheong Mun Hoe • **Bassoons:** Roland Tay, Lim Woan Rong **Contrabassoon:** Roman Reznik • **Horns:** Akanok Khorcharoen, Marcus Ng Zhong Qing, Han Chin Kwong, Tia Siew Shan



Robert CASTEELS (Belgian, b.1958)

"A Day in the Life of a Garden"

for percussion, pre-recorded sounds and piano, right hand



Commissioned by the Garden City Fund Committee for its launch dinner on Dec 2003 in the Ballroom of the Istana, this work has the composer recording life sounds from gardens and parks in Singapore. Sounds of rain, thunder, birds, frogs and strolling nature lovers are intertwined with the music played by the instrumentalists.

The music begins with a description of the misty sunrise in a park. The music livens to depict park lovers enjoying their brisk morning walk. Rain starts to fall. Lush strings accompany a chorus of baritone and bass bull frogs in a flat until nature unleashes thunder and lightning. After the

storm, the walk resumes. The pace increases when joggers pass by. As they catch their breath, warm strings leads to a joyous assembly of birds arguing. Crickets enshrine the falling night as the sun sets.

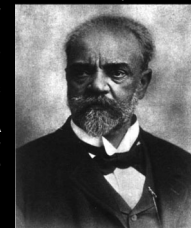
Musicians:

Percussion: Ng Chen Yee • **Piano:** Duan Jing Jing

Antonin DVOŘÁK (Czech, 1841-1904)

Serenade in d minor, Opus 44

Antonin Dvořák was born in Nelahozeves, Bohemia, in 1841, son of a butcher. Although his father intended him to learn the family trade, Dvořák showed early talent as a violinist. He was soon sent for music lessons and began his career as a performing violinist, sometimes playing under the composer Bedrich Smetana. As a young composer, he was highly influenced by the German composer Richard Wagner but when he won the Austrian State Stipendium in 1875, he was heard by Johannes Brahms – the arch enemy of Wagner, who went on to introduce the younger composer to his own publisher, Simrock. By the end of the 1870s, Dvořák's music began to show influences from Brahms' classicism. During this period, one could also hear the Czech nationalistic style such as from his *Slavonic Dances* (1878), which were to secure him worldwide fame. In 1892, Dvořák went to the USA as Director of the newly founded National Conservatory in New York where his most famous works, the 9th *Symphony 'From the New World'* and the 'American' *String Quartet*. He returned to Czechoslovakia in 1895 and taught at the Prague Conservatory, becoming its Director in 1901. He died three years later.



Dvořák's won international recognition during a prolific period in his life. The *Wind Serenade op. 44* was written in only two weeks, and during the rest of the year he wrote his famous *Slavonic Dances* (for piano duet), several other orchestral works, a set of five folk choruses, two songs, a *Capriccio* for violin and piano, and some minor piano works. He also found time to orchestrate the *Slavonic Dances* when they became wildly popular throughout Europe.

The new Serenade was very well received. The following year, Hermann Krüger wrote, "What fine artistic expression, what compelling melodies and touching harmonic progressions the composer has at his disposal". Brahms became a lifelong champion of the younger composer, and declared "A more lovely, refreshing impression of real, rich and charming creative talent you can't easily have... I think it must be a pleasure for the wind players!"

Musicians:

Oboes: Fong Chong Suan, Chin Chee Kin • **Clarinets:** Liang Jiayi, Desmond Chow • **Bassoons:** Roland Tay, Lim Woan Rong **Contrabassoon:** Roman Reznik • **Horns:** Tia Siew Shan, Akanok Khorcharoen, Marcus Ng Zhong Qing • **Cello:** Tan Wen- Bin • **Double Bass:** Phang Riyang

ROBERT CASTEELS

For the last twenty years **Robert Casteels** has led a distinguished professional life as composer, conductor and educator. He sees these activities very much as complimentary and mutually enriching.

After graduating from the Royal Music Conservatory of Brussels and 'The Guildhall School' in London, Robert was awarded for two years consecutively the prestigious 'Bruno Walter' scholarship at 'The Juilliard School' in New York.

Back in his native country, Robert joined the opera house, 'La Monnaie' in Brussels and the Belgian French Radio orchestra as staff conductor. Concurrently, he conducted a number of exciting chamber opera and music theater productions, for which he raised the funds independently. As Head of conducting studies at the Brussels Royal Conservatory, Robert founded the "Brussels Wind Ensemble" and the innovative 'Conservatory Opera Studio' aimed at bridging the gap between tertiary education and the real world. Robert has conducted ballets, operas and symphonies in Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Hong Kong, Hungary, Italy, Malaysia, Singapore, Spain, The Netherlands and the U.S.A.. Orchestras and festivals appreciate his sharp efficiency and accomplished musicianship. Original ideas for programmes are part of his enthusiasm to communicate and inspire the audience. His repertoire extends from 16th c. music all the way to the most avant garde music. Robert has conducted first performances in festivals such as 'Ars Musica', 'Berlin Poesie', 'Brisbane Biennale', 'Donaueschingen Neue Musik Tage', New York 'Focus' and 'Wien Modern'.

Robert is an accomplished composer in his own right. At first his compositional language was rooted in a post-weberian tradition. Since 1995 in South East Asia, Robert has composed a growing corpus of pluri-disciplinary works, that combine organically Chinese, European, Gamelan and Indian instruments with computer generated sounds and images. The youngest recipient ever and only the second musician, Robert was awarded in 2001 Belgium's highest cultural award, the 'Christoffel Plantin Prize' for his (quote) "extraordinary contribution to cross-cultural research". Among noteworthy commissions in the last two years are the NUS-Centre For The Arts for "Sonata Profana" for three orchestras, the World Association for Symphonic Bands Ensemble for "Hui Rao" with horns and percussion encircling the audience, the Asian Civilisations Museum for "Spirit of Wood" and the Garden City Fund for "A Day in a Life of a Garden" performed at the Istana.

Robert counts among among his appointments, Dean of the Faculty of Performing Arts at LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts from 1998 to 2003, and Music Director of the Singapore National Youth Orchestra since 2002. In April 2004, Robert was appointed the first "Associate-in-Residence (Special Music Projects)" by the Centre for The Arts, National University of Singapore.

THE PHILHARMONIC WINDS

Since its formation in 2000, the Philharmonic Winds has endeavoured to present only meaningful, meticulously prepared concerts; scarce in quantity and unusual in content. The repertoire of previous concerts have included all-Singaporean compositions, the music of Percy Grainger, "Sounds of Japan", the genius of Mozart and Varèse, "All That Jazz", "Absoluut Dutch" with the music of Johan de Meij, as well as challenging master works by Paul Hindemith, Gustav Holst, Alfred Reed, Francis Poulenc and Giacomo Puccini's "Madama Butterfly".

Philharmonic Winds has enjoyed performing with soloists such as Canadian euphonium player Kevin Thompson, Chinese yang qing player Qu Jian Qing, Dutch baritone Maarten Koningsberger, Dutch cellist Roeland Dujine, Dutch trombonist Jürgen van Rijen and Japanese saxophonist Shin-ichiro Hikosaka.

Philharmonic Winds has premiered works by many Singaporean and locally based composers, including Robert Casteels, Zechariah Goh Toh Chai and Philip Tan.

The dedicated members of the wind orchestra, whose name "Philharmonic" means "devoted to music", came together because of a love of music. From undergraduates to working professionals, students and teachers, the members have had many years of experience performing with established groups. A quarter of our players are currently furthering their music education at tertiary level, six of whom are overseas.

With the objective of reaching out to the younger audiences by being more involved in their music development, the Philharmonic Youth Winds was initiated in early 2002 to provide young passionate musicians an opportunity to further their ensemble experience.

It is the aspiration of the Philharmonic Winds to become the finest wind orchestra in Singapore.

PROGRAMME

Charles Gounod
Petite Symphonie pour instruments à vent 19'00"
i. Adagio and Allegretto
ii. Andante Cantabile
iii. Scherzo
iv. Finale

Darius Milhaud
Dixtuor 'Little Symphony No 5', Opus 75 6'00"
i. Rude
ii. Lent
iii. Violent

Siegfried Fink
Toccata for six percussionists 8'00"
i. Introduction
ii. Recitative
iii. Rondo

Richard Strauss
Serenade in E flat Major, Opus 7 10'00"

Robert Casteels
"A Day in the Life of a Garden"
for percussion, pre-recorded sounds and piano, right hand 7'30"

Antonin Dvořák
Serenade for Winds in d minor, Opus 44 26'00"
i. Moderato quasi Marcia
ii. Menuetto
iii. Andante con moto
iv. Finale Allegro molto

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Philharmonic Winds would like to take this opportunity to express their deepest gratitude to the following individuals and organisations, without whom this concert performance would not have been possible:

National Arts Council, Singapore
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All individuals and organisations who have in one way or another contributed to the development of the Philharmonic Winds, and
All our friends, families and loved ones for their support and understanding.

UPCOMING CONCERTS

American Portrait

Join us for this exciting night of American wind music conducted by Leonard Tan.
Date: 15 August 2004 Time: 7.30pm Venue: Victoria Concert Hall

Guest Conductor Series: An Evening with Timothy Reynish

Do not miss this much-anticipated concert with celebrated British conductor Timothy Reynish.
Date: 20 December 2004 Time: 8.00pm Venue: Esplanade Concert Hall

For more details, visit our website at: www.philharmonicwinds.org

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The Philharmonic Winds

Sunday, 25 April 2004, 7.30 p.m.

Esplanade Recital Studio