



## Civic Orchestra of Tucson Program Notes for October 19 and 20, 2019

### LA VIE PARISIENNE – AN OVERTURE ON THEMES OF OFFENBACH

Jacques Offenbach was to become a master of French operettas (over 100!), albeit he may arguably be better known for his one and only grand opera, “Les Contes d’Hoffmann” (“The Tales of Hoffmann”). Unfinished at the time of his death (1880), “Hoffmann,” benefiting from other hands, was brought to its conclusion, and subsequently produced to overwhelming success at Opera-Comique in February 1881.

And what of his favorite genre and today’s offering, “La Vie Parisienne?” “La Vie” was just another in a long line of fabulously successful works. But as in French cooking, it is often the sauce that tells the story. In this case, the sauce is Antal Dorati, a name perhaps less familiar.

The arranger of this Frenchman’s tunes, Dorati was a highly respected and distinguished Hungarian-American conductor and composer who studied at the Franz Liszt Academy with his notable countrymen, Kodaly and Bartók. For the trivia buff, Dorati conducted the premiere of the Bartók Viola Concerto with the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra in 1949. William Primrose was soloist. COT will perform this same concerto in March with Tiezheng Shen in the solo spotlight.

As for Dorati, among many other distinguished accomplishments, he recorded the complete cycle of Joseph Haydn symphonies (all 104!) with the Philharmonia Hungarica.

And once again back to Offenbach, the medley of tunes arranged by Dorati is scored for pairs of woodwinds, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and percussion. Plus strings, of course.

### SCOTTISH FANTASY by Max Bruch (1838–1920)

Among the most beautiful notes ever written is the open G string that announces the arrival of the soloist for Bruch’s better known Violin Concerto in g minor, Opus 26. Perhaps the next most wonderful hundreds of notes occur in the Scottish Fantasy, Opus 46. Possibly an exaggeration, but in this author’s mind, the “Fantasy” is near the top of the ladder of musical gems.

Written by German composer Max Bruch in 1880, dedicated to and premiered by Pablo de Sarasate, the Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra (the harp plays a major role as well) is in four movements including an introduction. In order they are: quite slow and becoming more flowing; fast; slow and sustained; fast and lively.

The orchestration calls for paired woodwinds, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, several percussion, and, of course, harp and strings.

### THE WALK TO THE PARADISE GARDEN by Frederick Delius (1862–1934)

Rather an amazing background to a somewhat obscure English composer of German decent, *Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* allocates extensive space to Frederick Delius. However, Baker’s book skips quickly through the composer’s earlier years and picks up the story with the young man’s venturing to Salano, Florida, at the age of twenty-two, to work on an orange plantation owned by his father.

Further fact-finding and interest-seeking can be satisfied for the avid historian in a variety of sources, including *Baker's*.

For our purposes, "The Walk" is a gentle meandering journey through tranquil musical moments with harmonies that slip and slide without disturbing this peaceful reverie, sandwiched between the flurry of the Fantasy and the Italian tone poem that follows.

The work is scored for paired woodwinds plus English Horn, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, harp, and strings.

### **THE PINES OF ROME by Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936)**

The noted musicologist, professor, and critic Edward Downes suggests that "an Italian critic has claimed that Respighi's Rome was the decadent modern Rome of the sensualist and epicure d'Annunzio, rather than Classical Rome. However that may be, Respighi the orchestral painter commanded a palette of spectacular range and subtlety and on occasion, as in 'The Pines of the Appian Way' of overwhelming power."

Both may be true, but in the end Respighi remains highly influenced by his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, and other contemporary masters including the French impressionists and Richard Strauss. If in doubt, a listen to "Fountains of Rome" (1917) and "Roman Festivals" (1928) will convince the audiophile.

#### I. The Pine Trees of the Villa Borghese

Children are at play in the pine groves of the Villa Borghese; they dance round in circles, they play at soldiers, marching and fighting, they are wrought up by their own cries, cautioned by blaring automobile horns, and like swallows at evening, they come and go in swarms. Suddenly the scene changes, and...

#### II. The Pine Trees near a Catacomb

...we see the shades of the pine trees fringing the entrance to a catacomb. From the depth rises the sound of mournful psalm singing, floating through the air like a solemn hymn, and gradually and mysteriously dispersing.

#### III. The Pine Trees of the Janiculum

A quiver runs through the air: the pine trees of the Janiculum (the second tallest hill in Rome, though not one of the seven) stand distinctly outlined in the clear light of a full moon. A nightingale is singing.

#### IV. The Pine Trees of the Appian Way

Misty dawn on the Appian Way: solitary pine trees guarding the magic landscape; the muffled, ceaseless rhythm of unending footsteps. The poet has a fantastic vision of bygone glories: trumpets sound and, in the brilliance of the newly risen sun, a consular army bursts forth towards the Sacred Way mounting in triumph to the Capitol.

Taken from the orchestral score as published by  
BMG Ricordi Music Publishing, Milano, Italy

The Pines of Rome is orchestrated for 3 each woodwinds, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 4 trombones, tuba, 6 buccini (here substituted by trumpets and trombones), timpani, percussion, harp, celeste, piano, organ, and strings.