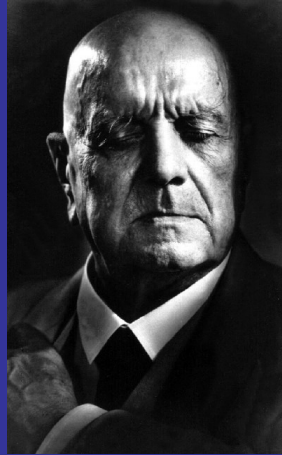


Marlow U3A Music Appreciation Group, Dec 2009

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)



Violin Concerto in D minor, Op.47

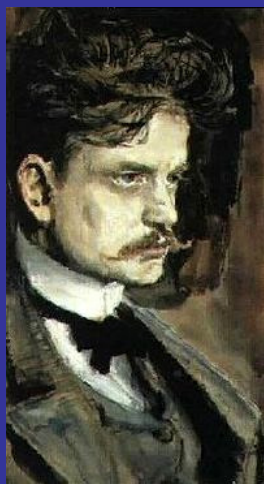
Overview

- Originally influenced by Tchaikovsky and Russian composers, but after Finland gained sovereignty his music became more nationalistic and very much a style of his own
- Composed many tone poems including *Karelia Suite*, which established his reputation in 1893, *En Saga*, *Tapiola*, *Swan of Tuonela* and *Finlandia* - a second national anthem
- He wrote seven symphonies and a violin concerto. He is among the foremost symphonists of the 20th century, with Vaughan Williams, Mahler, Shostakovich etc.
- Although Sibelius lived for 91 years, he stopped composing in 1926.

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op.47

- Completed and first performed in 1903 in Helsinki. It was a disaster, so it was withdrawn.
- It then underwent extensive revision before being premiered with the Berlin Philharmonic orchestra under the baton of Richard Strauss in 1905.
- This was also one of the Sibelius works taken up by Henry Wood at the Proms (1907)

Violin Concerto in D minor *First movement: Allegro moderato*



- The magical opening features the soloist drawing out a Slavic melody.
- It slowly unfolds and increases steadily in agitation.
- This is typical of Sibelius. He brings his own ideas and freedom to the sonata form.

Violin Concerto in D minor
Second movement: Adagio di molto

- ♪ After a short introduction, the melody in the second movement begins on the violin low and rises higher and higher against a melodic background of horn and bassoon and is full of warmth.

Violin Concerto in D minor
Third movement: Allegro, ma non troppo

- ♪ Sibelius finally allows sunlight to penetrate the shadows in the last movement
- ♪ Donald Tovey refers to this movement as “a polonaise for polar bears”
- ♪ This concerto is very difficult to play and is now included in every great violin soloist’s repertoire.