

1 NYP 18-33, A Sibelius Sojourn

2 (THEME MUSIC & OPENING BILLBOARD)

3 AB: ...and THIS week:

4 (MUSIC: UP and UNDER)

5 AB: ...our broadcast is dedicated to the music of
6 Jean Sibelius, who lived from 1865 to 1957.

7 This is Alec Baldwin. I'm very happy to have
8 your company on this sojourn through several of
9 the composer's greatest works. We begin with
10 one of his most famous, Finlandia.

11 This piece was originally conceived as part of
12 a musical pageant that was to portray the
13 history of Finland. The music struck a
14 nationalist chord with the Finns in 1899. At
15 that time, Russia was tightening its grip on
16 its neighbors to the North, so Finlandia became
17 something of a battle cry for the Finnish
18 nation. Though Sibelius had received critical
19 attention with early works, such as Kullervo
20 and the Karelia Suite, it was Finlandia that
21 made his name a household one.

22 Here, now, is Finlandia by Jean Sibelius.
23 Zubin Mehta conducts...The New York Philharmonic.

24 (MUSIC)

25 AB: Finlandia. Music by Jean Sibelius. The New
26 York Philharmonic was conducted by Zubin Mehta.

27 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

28 AB: Sibelius thrived as a story-teller in music.
29 And his catalog is filled with several
30 sumptuous, colorful and imaginative tone poems.
31 The next music we feature is one of those:
32 Pohjola's [poy-olla] Daughter from 1906.

33 As with many of his programmatic works,
34 Sibelius took his inspiration for this piece
35 from the Finnish national epic, the Kalevala.
36 The dark, brooding opening represents the North
37 Country. Here, we meet a wizard and he is
38 gazing at the daughter of the moon-god,
39 Pohjola. She is perched at her spinning wheel
40 on top of a rainbow, and the wizard falls in
41 love with her. She agrees to come down to earth
42 if he can conjure a boat from her spindle. The
43 wizard makes a mighty effort, but fails.
44 Pohjola's daughter laughs at his folly and the
45 defected wizard disappears back into the gloom.

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47 AB: And now, we hear Pohjola's Daughter by Jean
48 Sibelius. Leonard Bernstein conducts...The New
49 York Philharmonic.

50 (PAUSE)

51 AB: Rejected and angry, the old wizard returns to
52 his sleigh and disappears into the Nordic
53 darkness. We just heard Pohjola's Daughter by
54 Jean Sibelius. The New York Philharmonic was
55 conducted by Leonard Bernstein.

56 You may have noticed the sound of the title
57 character's mocking laughter in the music. It
58 has been said that this motif inspired Bernard
59 Herrmann when he wrote the stabbing music for
60 the film, Psycho. Whether that's true or not,
61 it seems at least plausible, don't you think?

62 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

63 AB: Jean Sibelius was a fine, fine composer. But
64 what he REALLY wanted to be when he grew up was
65 a violinist. He wrote quote, "*I played my*
66 *violin for ten years, practically from morning*
67 *to night. I hated pen and ink. It was a very*
68 *painful awakening when I had to admit that I*
69 *had begun my training for the exacting career*
70 *of an eminent performer too late.*"

71 AB: Fortunately for us, Sibelius's deep love of the
72 violin yielded a magnificent concerto. With its
73 beautiful combination of ardent lyricism and
74 virtuosity, it is easy to understand why this
75 piece has remained an audience favorite for
76 well over a century.

77 (MUSIC)

78 AB: Originally completed in 1903, Sibelius made
79 considerable revisions to the concerto before
80 publishing it in 1905. Richard Strauss led the
81 Berlin Philharmonic in this revised edition
82 that same year...and it was the New York
83 Philharmonic that gave the piece its American
84 premiere with conductor Wassily Safanov [vah-
85 SEE-lee SAHF-ah-noff] and soloist Maud Powell
86 in November, 1906.

87 Here, now, from a 1963 recording is the Violin
88 Concerto in D, Op. 47 by Jean Sibelius. Zino
89 Francescatti is the soloist and Leonard
90 Bernstein conducts...The New York Philharmonic.

91 (MUSIC)

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94 AB: Zino Francescatti was the soloist there, in the
95 Sibelius violin concerto. The New York
96 Philharmonic was conducted by Leonard
97 Bernstein.

98 Our Sibelius sojourn will continue shortly with
99 a movement from his incidental music to Pelleas
100 and Melisande. We'll then close things out
101 with the Symphony No. 2. I'm Alec Baldwin and
102 you're listening to the New York Philharmonic
103 This Week.

104 (PAUSE)

105 AB: Like many composers of his generation, Sibelius
106 was quite taken with Maurice Maeterlinck's 1892
107 play Pelléas and Mélisande. In 1905, Sibelius
108 composed overtures to each of the five acts
109 plus five other musical episodes. He later
110 rearranged the music ever-so-slightly into a
111 nine movement suite. We're going to hear the
112 second movement, which is named after the
113 play's heroine, Mélisande. Sir Thomas Beecham
114 conducts...The New York Philharmonic.

115 (MUSIC)

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118 AB: Recorded at Liederkrantz Hall on June 15, 1942,
119 that was the second movement from Pelleas and
120 Mélisande by Jean Sibelius. The New York
121 Philharmonic was conducted by Sir Thomas
122 Beecham.

123 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

124 AB: Though today regarded as one of the last great
125 symphonists, there was a time--and not so long
126 ago--that Sibelius was written off as being
127 everything from "vulgar"...to "self-
128 indulgent"...to, *"the worst composer in the*
129 *world."* Virgil Thomson--long-time critic for
130 the New York Herald Tribune--once wrote, *"I*
131 *realize that there are sincere Sibelius lovers*
132 *in the world, though I must say I've never met*
133 *one among educated professional musicians."* End
134 quote.

135 Now before we rush into making a judgment about
136 Mr. Thomson's remarks, we should note that his
137 was the prevailing sentiment with regard to
138 Sibelius for much of the 20th century. In
139 fact, Lorin Maazel was no different, as he
140 admitted to our producer, Mark Travis:

141 (ACTUALITY: webclip excerpt 04)

142 AB: Composed in 1901, the 2nd symphony adheres to
143 some 19th century norms, but it also marks a
144 bold stride forward in terms of its
145 concentrated development and freedom of form.
146 While there are hints of the modernistic
147 elements that would become signatures of his
148 later works, we can also hear the influence of
149 Beethoven and Tchaikovsky. In the case of the
150 latter, this serves as another reminder that
151 Finland was still a property of Imperial Russia
152 at the time.

153 Though the composer vehemently denied it, there
154 have been more than a handful of musicians and
155 scholars who have interpreted a patriotic
156 element in this score. One friend of the
157 composer described the piece as, *"an expression*
158 *of Finnish revolt against oppression and [our]*
159 *final triumph."*

160 AB: The Second Symphony was given its premiere in
161 Helsingfors on March 8, 1902. The composer
162 conducted that performance and the work was
163 well-received among the composer's countrymen.

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166 AB: Response was cooler when Theodore Thomas
167 introduced the symphony to America at one of
168 his Chicago concerts in 1904. And the reaction
169 was cooler still when Josef Stransky brought it
170 into the New York Philharmonic's repertoire
171 during the 1916-1917 season. But...the story has
172 a happy ending: the Second symphony is now one
173 of the composer's most popular works and
174 probably one of the most often-performed
175 symphonies of the 20th century.

176 (APPLAUSE)

177 AB: Here, then is the Symphony No. 2 in D-major,
178 Op. 43 by Jean Sibelius. Lorin Maazel
179 conducts...the New York Philharmonic.

180 (MUSIC: Sibelius 2nd)

181 (APPLAUSE)

182 VO: Symphony No. 2 in D-major by Jean Sibelius.
183 Lorin Maazel conducted the New York
184 Philharmonic...bringing this week's all-Sibelius
185 broadcast to a close.

186 (INSERT CLOSERS/CREDITS)

187

188 PROMO for NYP 18-34

189 AB: **Next time, on the New York Philharmonic This**
190 **Week:**

191 We honor the memory of the orchestra's dear
192 friend, Alexander Kaplan. This is Alec
193 Baldwin. Please join me for a special program
194 featuring several concert favorites, from
195 Vaughan-Williams and Ravel, to Debussy and
196 Rachmaninoff. It's Kaplan's Playlist...on the
197 New York Philharmonic This Week.

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