

Ernest Ansermet

Born: November 11, 1883 – Vevey, Switzerland

Died: February 20, 1969 – Geneva, Switzerland

The Swiss conductor, Ernest Ansermet, came from a musical family; he successively studied the clarinet, violin and brass instruments, which he used in fanfares; later he wrote military marches for the Swiss army which he did not consider important. Besides Music, he studied Mathematics in Lausanne and graduated with a Diploma in 1903; until 1906 he taught at the Lausanne Grammar School, then he decided to continue his studies at the Sorbonne and, at the same time, to attend courses at the Paris Conservatory. After his return to Lausanne, he taught Mathematics for one more year before devoting himself entirely to music.

Ernest Ansermet received the publicly advertised post of director of the Spa concerts in Montreux. Through his friend Charles Ramuz he got to know Igor Stravinsky, who was then living in Clarens. Thus, he experienced the creation of *Le Sacré du Printemps*, *Petrouchka*, *L'Histoire du Soldat*, *Bajka* and *Svadebka* at close hand. His encounter with Sergey P. Diaghilev in Geneva was decisive; in December 1915 he conducted the *Orchestre des Ballets Russes* for the first time at a gala for the Red Cross in a first performance of *Soleil de nuit*, a choreography by Leonid Massine to music by Nikolai A. Rimsky-Korsakov. In 1916 he went on the first tour of America with the *Ballets Russes*. He premiered many works composed by I. Stravinsky: In 1918 he conducted the first performance of *L'Histoire du Soldat*, in 1920 *The Song of the Nightingale* and *Pulcinella*, in 1922 *Bajka* and in 1923 *Svadebka* also *Capriccio for piano* (1929) and his *Mass* (1948).

Besides the works of I. Stravinsky, Ernest Ansermet also conducted first performances of works of many other composers: *Parade* by Eric Satie (1917), *Le tricorne* by Manuel de Falla (1919), *Chout* by Sergey S. Prokofiev (1923). Living in Geneva from 1915, he conducted three orchestras at the same time, the *Ballets Russes*, the *Orchestre Romand* (O.R., founded by him in 1918) and the *Argentine National Orchestra* in Buenos Aires, which was also founded by him. For ten years, he spent the winter in Geneva and the summer in Argentina. All major orchestras issued him an invitation, but he rejected most with the aim of establishing a living musical tradition in Switzerland. In 1940, *L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande* was founded (with support from Swiss Radio), which was closely linked with his name. He conducted the orchestra until 1967.

Ernest Ansermet was a particular advocate of the Swiss composers Arthur Honegger and Frank Martin. He conducted the first performances of the following works of A. Honegger: *Horace victorieux* (1921), *Chant de joie* (1923), *Rugby* (1928) and *Pacific 231* (1923), which was dedicated to him, and of the following works of Frank Martin: *Symphonie* (1938), *In terra pax* (1945), *Der Sturm* (1956), *Le mystère de la Nativité* (1959), *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* (1963) and *Les Quatre Éléments*, which were dedicated to him. Also important were the first performances of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946) and *Cantata misericordium* (1963).

Georges Bizet

Symphony in C

Jeux d'enfants (Petite Suite)

La Jolie Fille De Perth Suite



Ernest Ansermet conducting
L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande



GEORGES BIZET

Born: October 25, 1838. Paris, France

Died: June 3, 1875. Bougival, France

Georges Bizet's life was short and full of difficulties, a fact that seems at odds with the enduring success of his final work, *Carmen*. Bizet was born into a musical family, where he received a good early training that led to his entrance into the Paris Conservatory at the age of nine. Bizet did well in his studies, developing his skills as a pianist (he impressed Franz Liszt with his playing) and as a composer. At the age of seventeen he composed his *Symphony in C*, a meticulous and effervescent work that was never heard until 1935. His studies at the conservatory were capped in 1858 with his receipt of the *Prix de Rome*, which allowed Bizet three years of financial support to concentrate on composition.

Bizet's years in Rome were not very productive, and resulted in few works -- only four of which survive. One, his opera *Don Procopio*, was not produced until 1906. Upon his return to Paris he turned down a teaching position at the conservatory, wishing instead to concentrate on his writing. He found moderate success in 1863 with his opera *Les pêcheurs de perles*, but his next work, *La jolie fille de Perth*, saw only eighteen performances.

Bizet's final years were marked by more problems: ill health and forced service during the Franco-Prussian war took their toll on the composer. In 1875, he completed a work that should have been his great triumph and the beginning of an illustrious career, his opera *Carmen*. In this opera, Bizet shows both a sure dramatic hand and mastery of the musical demands of the genre. The story of *Carmen*, however, proved too much for the Parisian audience (especially in a theater designed to appeal to families). Set in Spain and dealing with the exotic culture of the Gypsies, the story presented Bizet with the opportunity to create a rich musical score full of foreign flavor then in vogue. But the plot's exploration of sexual desire, moral ambiguity and a brutal murder insured a brief and controversial run. Bitterly dejected by this supreme blow, Bizet's health deteriorated quickly, and less than three months later he died of a heart attack. Ironically, only five years later the work returned to the Parisian stage after a series of successes in Vienna, Brussels, London and New York. It has, from that time on, remained one of the best loved of all nineteenth century operas.

Georges Bizet Symphony in C

Jeux d'enfants (Petite Suite) La Jolie Fille De Perth Suite

Ernest Ansermet conducting L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande

Symphony In C

1 1st Movement Allegro Vivo 7:27

2 2nd Movement Andante. Adagio 8:16

3 3rd Movement Allegro Vivace 4:24

4 4th Movement Finale. Allegro Vivace 6:49

Jeux D'Enfants

5 Marche 2:14

6 Berceuse 2:26

7 Impromptu 1:01

8 Duo 3:23

9 Galop 1:46

La Jolie Fille De Perth - Scenes Bohemiennes

10 Prélude 6:06

11 Marche 3:08

12 Danse Bohemienne 3:02

Recorded by Decca Oct 8-Nov 25, 1960 at Victoria Hall, Geneva

Produced by James Walker • Engineer Roy Wallace



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www.highdeftapetransfers.com