

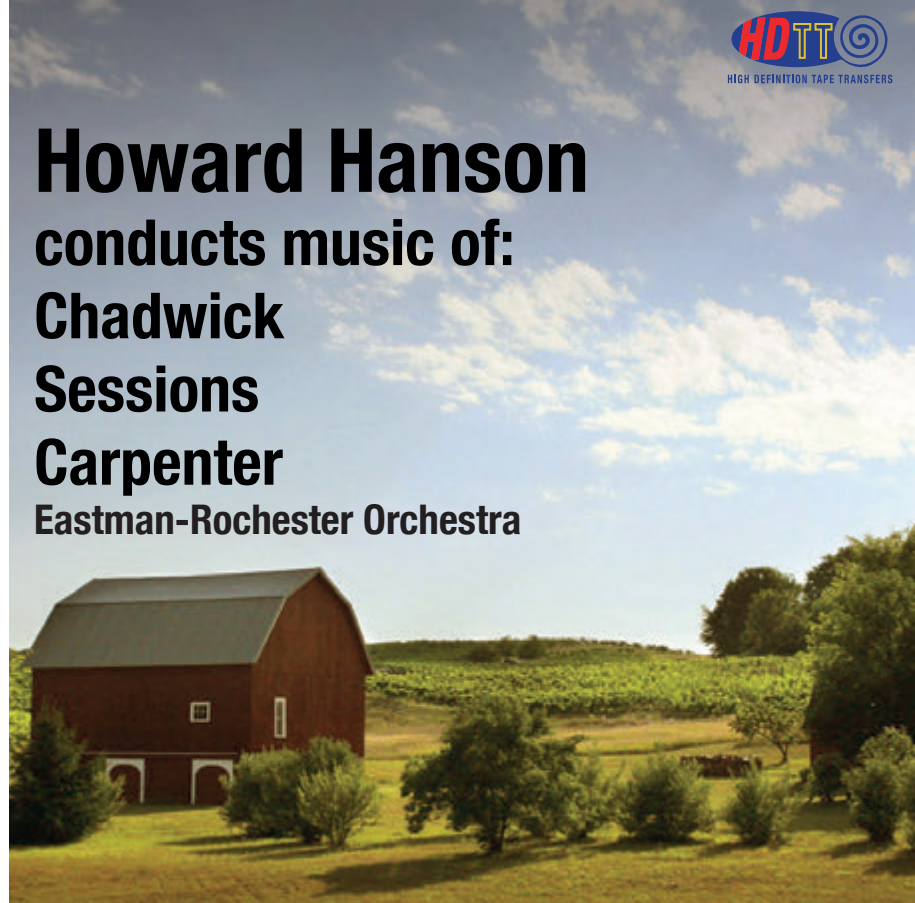
Howard Hanson was among the first twentieth century American composers to achieve widespread prominence. In contrast to the angular Stravinskian and Americana-influenced sounds that dominated American concert music prior to World War II, Hanson wrote in an unabashedly Romantic idiom influenced by his Nordic roots. Of particular importance to the composer was the music of Sibelius; however, he also acknowledged the influence of composers such as Palestrina and Bach.

After boyhood studies on the piano, Hanson studied music at the Institute of Musical Art in New York City and Northwestern University, where he earned a degree in 1916. In 1921, he became the first American to win the Prix de Rome, which provided him the opportunity to study with Ottorino Respighi, whose colorful orchestral language was clearly an influence on Hanson's own. Upon his return to the United States, Hanson was appointed head of the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester at the age of 28. Under the composer's guidance over the course of more than four decades, Eastman became one of the world's preeminent educational institutions. During his tenure there Hanson continued to compose prolifically; he also embarked on a career as a conductor, in which capacity he proved himself one of the great champions of American music. At Eastman, it has been calculated, he presented some 1,500 works by 700 composers. Hanson also commercially recorded a number of modern works in a series for the Mercury label in the 1950s, drawing much attention to otherwise neglected repertoire.



Hanson's most characteristic works are undoubtedly his seven symphonies. The first of these, the "Nordic" Symphony (1922), dates from the composer's studies in Rome. The Second Symphony ("Romantic"), remains Hanson's best-known work, a characteristic realization of the lush, lyric aesthetic with which he is closely associated. Further notable among Hanson's symphonies are the Symphony No. 4 (1943), awarded the Pulitzer Prize, and the Symphony No. 7 (1977), one of a series of works inspired by the poetry of Walt Whitman. Other important works in Hanson's catalogue include The Lament for Beowulf (1925) for chorus and orchestra; the opera Merry Mount (1933), well received at its premiere and in subsequent productions, but now rarely performed; and a variety of other chamber, vocal, and orches

Howard Hanson conducts music of: Chadwick Sessions Carpenter Eastman-Rochester Orchestra



Chadwick was a typical representative of the "New England School" of late Romantic American composers. His Symphonic Sketches was one of the few pieces that hung on and wasn't neglected as other works and composers of the New England School were. Although he wrote three large and academically respectable symphonies up to the year 1893, thereafter he wrote works that can be classed as lighter works in symphonic form. In addition to this half-hour long set of pictorial movements, he also composed a Sinfonietta and a Suite Symphonique.

The opening movement, "Jubilee," is in a well-realized and concise sonata-allegro form, a very up-tempo piece in which the composer obviously feels liberated because he decided not to call the whole work a "symphony." So he composes very loosely and naturally.

The second movement, "Noël," has a double meaning. It is a lullaby to mother and baby. Obviously the direct association is with Christmas, the Madonna, and Jesus. But it is also a tender portrait of Chadwick's own son Noël, born the same year he wrote it.

While the other movements are from the years 1895 and 1896, Chadwick wrote the scherzo movement, "Hobgoblin," in 1905. Chadwick takes a motive from Mendelssohn's music to A Midsummer Night's Dream associated with Puck (the "hobgoblin") and turns him into an all-American brat. The final movement, "A Vagrom Ballad," is based on a hobo song Chadwick heard while undertaking a commute to Springfield, MA, for a festival there.

A native of Brooklyn by birth (December 28, 1896), a New Englander by cultural background, and a citizen of the world by conviction, Roger Sessions has since the middle 1920's occupied a distinguished place in American cultural life as a composer, as teacher and as proponent for contemporary music. In many respects, his status in relation to the listening public parallels that of Bela Bartok- before the death of that Hungarian master sparked a full-scale recognition of his works by major orchestras and performing artists throughout the world. Sessions's music is respected by his colleagues in both the creative and performing fields. It has been widely discussed; but only with the fulfillment by Sessions in the middle 1950s of several major commissions has there begun to be anything remotely resembling widespread hearings for the general public. Like the Bartok string quartets, Sessions's music demands that its hearers bring into full play their perceptive faculties, both intellectual and intuitive, as part of the aesthetic experience as a whole. Sessions desks no easy successes and has steadfastly refused to write in any other kind of musical language but his own. The music for Andreyev's The Black Maskers was Sessions's first major orchestral work.

The music for The Black Maskers was dedicated by Sessions to Ernest Bloch, with whom he was associated as a pupil from 1919 to 1922 and as assistant at the Cleveland Institute of Music

from 1922 to 1925. In its original form the music for The Black Maskers was scored for small orchestra.

Composed in 1914 and revised in 1941, this set of six pieces for orchestra depict, in a tuneful and richly colorful American impressionist style, experiences and states of mind in a child's day. The work, probably patterned on the 1903 Sinfonia Domestica of Richard Strauss, was championed by Chicago Symphony conductor Frederick Stock, who conducted its premiere.

Each movement in the suite is accompanied by charming and humorous program notes written by the composer from the point of view of a baby (perhaps the composer's daughter Ginny). "En Voiture!" (All Aboard!) describes being bundled up "after my second breakfast" by an old nurse (open fifths and wind solos), and strapped into the baby carriage. The music becomes gradually airy and light like a sunny day, with an "all aboard" rhythm interspersed. The title of this movement suggests Carpenter's awareness of Debussy's Children's Corner. The second adventure is with "The Policeman," in a slightly over-important march tempo that breaks for some wisecracks: "Some sounds seem like smells. Some sights have echoes...for instance, The Policeman...round like a ball, taller than my father...I try to analyze his appeal...I suspect it is his eye, and the way he walks. He walks like Doom." Adventure No. 3 is "The Hurdy-Gurdy," which alternates between a hurdy-gurdy waltz in reduced orchestration evoking that instrument and a passage for full orchestra, with hints of traditional tunes and popular songs wafting through. "Suddenly, at the climax of our excitement, I feel the approach of a phenomenon that I remember. It is the Policeman. He has stopped the music. He has frightened away the dark man and lady with their music box...but far off again I hear the forbidden music. Delightful forbidden music!" Adventure No. 4 occurs at "The Lake"; it is the most French and harmonically lush of the six movements, "I feel the quiver of the little waves as they escape from the big ones and come rushing up over the sand," Carpenter's baby says. "Their fear is pretended...Waves and Sunbeams!...This is My Lake!" The fifth adventure concerns some "Dogs": "We pass on. Probably there is nothing more in the World. If there is, it is superfluous. There IS. It is Dogs!...not one of them -- all of them...they laugh, they fight, they flirt, they run...It is tremendous!" The last adventure is interior and is called "Dreams." Sounds from the day gradually quiet down, although impressions of the day's adventures continue to enter the child's reverie: "I lie very still. I am quite content...most of the time, my Mother and my Nurse have but one identity in my mind, but at night or when I close my eyes, I can easily tell them apart, for my Mother has the greater charm...how very large the world is. How many things there are!" Between a lullaby and Scheherazade-like textures, the music quietly closes.

Howard Hanson

conducts music of:
Chadwick - Sessions & Carpenter
Eastman-Rochester Orchestra

Symphonic Sketches

Composed By – George Whitefield Chadwick

1 Jubilee 8:28

2 Noël 8:46

3 Hobgoblin 5:51

4 A Vagrom Ballad 7:47

The Black Maskers (Orchestral Suite)

Composed By – Roger Sessions

5 Dance: Stridente-Sarcastico 4:10

6 Scene: Agitato Molto 7:30

7 Dirge: Larghissimo 5:00

8 Finale: Andante Moderato Un Pco Agitato 4:15

Adventures In A Perambulator

Composed By – John Alden Carpenter

9 En Voiture! 2:57

10 The Policeman 3:37

11 The Hurdy-Gurdy 3:44

12 The Lake 5:12

13 Dogs 3:43

14 Dreams 7:49

All tracks recorded by Mercury Records 1956 in the Eastman Theatre, Rochester, N.Y.
Engineer C. R. Fine Producer [Recording Director] – Wilma Cozart Producer Harold Lawrence



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