

NIELSEN Symphony No. 4 "The Inextinguishable"

1. Allegro
2. Poco allegretto
3. Poco adagio quasi andante
4. Allegro

BRITTEN Sinfonia da Requiem

5. Lacrymosa
6. Dies irae
7. Requiem aeternam

BARTÓK Miraculous Mandarin Suite

Track No. 8 Beginning—Curtain rises; First seduction game;
Second seduction game; Third seduction game—the Mandarin enters; Dance of the girl

Produced and Engineered by John Proffitt



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NIELSEN Symphony No. 4 "The Inextinguishable"

BRITTEN Sinfonia da Requiem

BARTÓK Miraculous Mandarin Suite

Texas Music Festival Orchestra
Daniel Hege conductor

(Recorded 21 June 2014 in the Moores Opera House, University of Houston)

24/96 High Resolution

5.0 Surround

2.0 Stereo



dts-HD
Master Audio

The **Immanuel and Helen Olshan Texas Music Festival (TMF)** was founded in 1990 to provide young orchestral musicians on the cusp of their professional careers with an intensive summer training program to develop their skills in orchestral, chamber music, and solo performance. Based at the University of Houston's Moores School of Music for four intensive weeks each June, the **Festival Orchestra** is TMF's showcase ensemble, presenting four programs under the direction of distinguished guest conductors and soloists. Each of the 90 Orchestral Fellows receives a full scholarship and receives instruction from a faculty composed of Houston's finest artist teachers from the Moores School and Shepherd School of Music, members of the Houston Symphony, Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet orchestras, and internationally-recognized artist teachers.

Daniel Hege is widely recognized as one of America's finest conductors, earning critical acclaim for his fresh interpretations of the standard repertoire and for his commitment to creative programming. He served for eleven seasons as the Music Director of the Syracuse Symphony and in June 2009, was appointed Music Director of the Wichita Symphony. In June 2001, he completed a five year tenure with the Baltimore Symphony where he held the titles of Assistant, Associate and Resident Conductor and led the orchestra in subscription, family and run-out concerts. Mr. Hege also served as Associate Conductor of the Kansas City Symphony, Assistant Conductor of the Pacific Symphony, Music Director of the Encore Chamber Orchestra in Chicago and Music Director of the Chicago Youth Symphony where he was twice honored by the League of American Orchestras for innovative programming.

Daniel Hege has guest conducted the Houston, Detroit, Seattle, Indianapolis, Oregon, Colorado, San Diego, Columbus and Phoenix symphonies; the Buffalo and Calgary Philharmonics; and led the orchestras at the Grand Teton and Aspen Music Festivals. International engagements include performances with the Singapore Symphony and the St. Petersburg Symphony at the Winter Nights Festival. In addition, Mr. Hege has worked with the Syracuse Opera with which he conducted productions of *Madame Butterfly*, *La Traviata*, *Tosca* and *Don Pasquale*.

Symphony No. 4, also known as "**The Inextinguishable**", was completed by Danish composer Carl Nielsen in 1916. Composed against the backdrop of the World War I, this symphony is among the most dramatic that Nielsen wrote, featuring at its final climax a "battle" between two sets of timpani.

The composer wanted his fourth symphony to be a manifesto for what he thought of as the fundamental life-force of music. Writing to his wife in 1914, Nielsen said, "I have an idea for a new composition, which has no program but will express what we understand by the spirit of life or manifestations of life, that is: everything that moves, that wants to live ... just life and motion, though varied—very varied—yet connected, and as if constantly on the move, in one big movement or stream. I must have a word or a short title to express this; that will be enough. I cannot quite explain what I want, but what I want is good."

Nielsen worked on the new symphony through 1916, and named it "The Inextinguishable" (Danish: *Det Uudslukkelige*). The name does not apply to the symphony itself, but rather to "that which is inextinguishable". In his notes for the symphony, Nielsen refers to "the elemental will to live". It became one of the most explicit revelations of what the composer thought as the self-sustaining, organically-generating power of symphonic music. "The Inextinguishable" opens with one of the most electrifying jolts of energy in symphonic history, and it continues without pause with the same propulsive dynamism for the next half-hour or so.

Writing about this piece himself, Nielsen explained what it meant to him, and what it was supposed to achieve:

"Music is Life. As soon as even a single note sounds in the air or through space, it is result of life and movement; that is why music (and the dance) are the more immediate expressions of the will to life. The symphony evokes the most primal sources of life and the wellspring of the life-feeling; that is, what lies behind all human, animal and plant life, as we perceive or live it."



Sinfonia da Requiem, op. 20, for orchestra was written by Benjamin Britten in 1940 at the age of 26. It was one of several works commissioned from different composers by the Japanese government to mark the 2,600 anniversary of the founding of the Japanese Empire (taken to be 11 February 660 BCE). The Japanese government rejected the *Sinfonia* for its use of Latin titles from the Catholic Requiem for its three movements and for its somber overall character.

In the autumn of 1940, Britten was summoned to the Japanese consulate, where he was read a long letter accusing him "of insulting a friendly power, of providing a Christian work where Christianity was apparently unacceptable, that the work was gloomy, and so on." Britten replied in writing, "in as dignified a manner as possible", that his supplying a Christian work was no surprise, as he was a Christian and came from a Christian nation. He denied the alleged glumness of the *Sinfonia* and any intent of an insult, and said that the delay in receiving the commissioning contract had eliminated the possibility of composing a celebratory work within the deadline. Britten submitted his letter to the British consulate, which approved it and forwarded it to Tokyo. According to the composer, this was the last that he heard of the matter. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, relations between Britain and Japan were severed and, although the piece was rejected, the Japanese did not request the return of the commissioning fee.

The *Sinfonia* is in three movements – *Lacrymosa*, *Dies Irae* and *Requiem Aeternam* – played without break. The headings of the three movements are taken from the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead, but the composition has no liturgical associations. Britten described the movements respectively as "a slow, marching lament", "a Dance of Death" and "the final resolution". All movements are centered in the key of D.

The *Sinfonia da Requiem* was premiered by John Barbirolli and the New York Philharmonic in Carnegie Hall on 29 March 1941.

The *Sinfonia* is Britten's largest purely orchestral work for the concert hall. It was his first major orchestral work that did not include a soloist and unlike many of Britten's works from this time, it has remained popular and continues to be programmed on orchestral concerts.

The Miraculous Mandarin, op. 19, is a one-act pantomime ballet composed by Béla Bartók between 1918–1924, and based on a 1917 story by the Hungarian playwright Menyhért Lengyel. As Lengyel recorded in his memoirs: "I wrote this pantomime story in 1916, without any express purpose, and it appeared in the New Year's Day [1917] edition of *Nyugat* [West]." As it turned out, Bartók read the story, immediately wrote some music reflecting its content and played it for Lengyel, who was thrilled. The two, who had not met before, became collaborators and fast friends. In the summer of 1918, Bartók wrote to his wife: "It will be hellish music. The prelude before the curtain goes up will be very short and sound like pandemonium... the audience will be introduced to the [thieves'] den at the height of the hurly-burly of the metropolis." Premiered 27 November 1926 in Cologne, Germany, Bartók's ballet caused a scandal and was subsequently banned by the authorities on moral grounds. The following is from a German music journal, reporting on the premiere: "Cologne, a city of churches, monasteries and chapels... has lived to see its first true [musical] scandal. Catcalls, whistling, stamping, and booing... which did not subside even after the composer's personal appearance, nor even after the safety curtain went down... The press, with the exception of the left, protests, the clergy of both denominations hold meetings, the mayor of the city intervenes dictatorially and bans the pantomime from the repertoire... Waves of moral outrage engulf the city..."

To get an idea of what the Cologne public reacted to, here is Bartók's own summary: "Just listen to how beautiful the story is. Three thugs force a beautiful young girl to seduce men and lure them into their den, where they will be robbed. The first turns out to be poor, the second likewise, but the third is a Chinese Mandarin, a good catch, as it turns out. The girl entertains him with her dance. The Mandarin's desire is aroused. His love flares up, but the girl recoils from him. The thugs attack the Mandarin, rob him, smother him with pillows, stab him with a sword, all in vain, because the Mandarin continues watching the girl with eyes full of yearning... the girl complies with the Mandarin's wish [i.e., for sexual intercourse], whereupon he drops dead."

Although the original ballet was more successful at its subsequent Prague premiere, *Miraculous Mandarin* was generally performed during the rest of Bartók's life in the form of a concert suite, which preserves about two-thirds of the original music and which is heard in this performance recording.

