

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.

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).

The eminent Hungarian-born English conductor, Georg (actually György) Solti, studied piano and composition with Ernst von Dohnányi, Zoltan Kodaly, Béla Bartók and Leó Weiner at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, giving his first concert at the age of 12.

Georg Solti began working as assistant at the Budapest Opera in 1930 and was director of music there from 1934 to 1939. In the summers of 1936 and 1937 he was assistant to Arturo Toscanini at the Salzburg Festival, an encounter that left a deep impression on the young musician. After the outbreak of the Second World War, he emigrated to Zurich, resuming his career as a pianist. He won first prize at the Geneva International Competition in 1942.

Georg Solti's career really began after the end of World War II. For almost 25 years, he concentrated entirely on conducting operas. He was chief musical director of the Munich Opera from 1947 to 1951 and of the Frankfurt Opera from 1952 to 1961. Covent Garden excelled during his tenure as musical director (1961-1971). In 1951 he conducted for the first time in Salzburg (*Idomeneo* by Mozart). At the end of the 1950's he made his first recordings e.g. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* by Wagner with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1961 he was appointed as musical director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, but hardly ever worked in this position since the orchestra's management had appointed an assistant without asking him.

In 1969 Georg Solti took over as director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and his second career as a conductor of orchestral music began. He remained in this post until 1991. From 1972 to 1975 he was also director of the *Orchestre de Paris*. In 1973, Rolf Liebermann appointed him as musical adviser to the Paris Opera. From 1979 to 1983 he was director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1983, in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the death of Richard Wagner, he conducted *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in Bayreuth but without achieving his customary high standard. He excels principally in the German and Austrian post-Romantic repertoire and in contemporary Hungarian music (Béla Bartók, Kodaly). In 1992 he took over from Herbert von Karajan as artistic director of the Salzburg Easter Festival (until 1994). In 1995 he was artistic adviser to the festival that replaced the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival.

Georg Solti did a large number of first performances, including works by Gilbert Amy *D'un espace déployé* (1973), Boris Blacher *Requiem* (1959) and *Collage for Orchestra* (1968), David Del Tredici *Final Alice* (1976), Gottfried von Einem *Philadelphia Symphony* (1961), Hans Werner Henze *Heliogabalus Imperator* (1972), Rolf Liebermann *L'Ecole des femmes* (second version) (1957), Witold Lutoslawski *Symphony no. 3* (1983), George Rochberg *Symphony no. 5* (1986) and Iannis Xenakis *Noomena* (1976).

Schumann **LE CARNAVAL** L'Orchestre De La Suisse Romande **ANSERMET**

Gounod **FAUST**
Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden
SOLTI



Carnaval is a ballet based on the music of Robert Schumann's piano suite *Carnaval*, Op. 9, as orchestrated by Alexander Glazunov, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Anatoly Lyadov and Alexander Tcherepnin. It was choreographed by Michel Fokine to his own libretto, with costumes designed by Léon Bakst, and premiered in Pavlovsk on 5 March (old style, 20 February) 1910.

The leading dancers of the Imperial Ballet were engaged in the production: Tamara Karsavina (Columbine), Leonid Leontiev (Harlequin), Vera Fokina (Chiarina), Ludmila Schollar[ru] (Estrella), Bronislava Nijinska (Papillon), Vsevolod Meyerhold (Pierrot), Vasily Kiselev (Florestan), and Aleksandr Shiryayev[ru] (Eusebius).

The ballet became world-famous due to its production by Sergei Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* (Theater des Westens, Berlin, 20 May 1910), with new sets and costumes by Bakst, with Lydia Lopokova as Columbine and Vaslav Nijinsky as Harlequin.

Carnaval was created in three spontaneous rehearsals in 1910 for a charity performance in Pavlov Hall, St. Petersburg, to benefit the magazine *Satyricon*.

When Michel Fokine was approached by two young men involved in the publication (Mikhail Kornfeld, later to be its publisher, and the later-famous poet Potemkin) they gave him free rein, although they mentioned that the theme of the event was to be carnival. The choreographer immediately thought of Schumann's *Carnaval* suite for piano, which he had long admired.

On 14 September 1933, the ballet was revived in London by the *Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo* (staged by Woizikovsky) for Alexandra Danilova (appearing as Columbine).

The score has musical references to Frédéric Chopin and Niccolò Paganini, literary ones to the four *commedia dell'arte* characters Harlequin, Columbina, Pierrot and Pantalone, and stage directions written in after it was completed.

There are also autobiographical references to Ernestine von Fricken, with whom Schumann was in love when he was very young, to Clara Schumann, his wife, and in the final section of the music, entitled "*Marche des Davidsbundler contre les Philistines*", to the composer's advocacy of the "new" art, as against the conservation of the old. The *Davidsbundler* was an artistic society invented by Schumann as a foil to the conservative musical establishment].

Carnaval seems to have been the most delicate, most exquisite ballet Michel Fokine ever created, as well as the most difficult to pinpoint.

As was the case with many of his works, the roles depended to a large degree upon the talents of the original performers, and if one looks at just the steps (except for the one Harlequin solo) they are almost simplistic. It was the infusion of lightness, gaiety, coyness, and self-absorption, combined with an underlying sadness—all of which must be contributed by the dancers—that resulted in what most critics of the time regarded as a most effective adaptation of Schumann's music and characters.

Recent attempts to reconstruct the work in England, Sweden, and the United States have had varying degrees of success. This is because the roles must be created from within each individual performer, not from externally imposed steps or gestures. They require someone like Fokine himself to elicit this from the dancers – an almost impossible task.

Few literary figures can compete with Shakespeare in the arena of musical tribute. In fact, only one name comes very quickly to mind – Goethe. His great tragedy *Faust* has been re-told countless times on concert and opera stages for nearly two centuries. Gounod chose a play version by Michel Carré as the structural framework for his opera but included elements from the original Goethe to fully flesh out the libretto. The 1859 premiere had many supporters (Berlioz included) but also a few detractors. Some Germans (Wagner in particular), ever disdainful of French mistreatment of their cultural treasures, later singled out Gounod's *Faust* for some rather biting enmity. Not that the opera would fail utterly in Germany. To the contrary, it began to take hold there and elsewhere in the decade following the premiere and before long reached the prominent place we now know it for. Much credit for this goes to the 1869 revival in Paris that occasioned the addition of the ballet music in Act V. This suite, called by Saint-Saëns "a masterpiece of its kind," was almost not written. At least not by Gounod. Gounod was reluctant to take it on and considered letting Saint-Saëns compose it instead. The younger man tentatively agreed with the understanding that Gounod feel free to replace it with music of his own if he so desired. According to Saint-Saëns, "I never wrote a note, and never heard any more about it."

Schumann **LE CARNAVAL**
L'Orchestre De La Suisse Romande
ANSERMET

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| Schumann Carnaval | 10. Chiarina |
| 1. Pr  ambule | 11. Chopin |
| 2. Pierrot | 12. Estrella |
| 3. Arlequin | 13. Reconnaissance |
| 4. Valse Noble | 14. Pantalon Et Colombine |
| 5. Eusebius | 15. Valse Allemande |
| 6. Florestan | 16. Paganini |
| 7. Coquette | 17. Aveu |
| 8. Papillons | 18. Promenade |
| 9. A.S.C.H.S.C.H.A. | 19. Pause |
| | 20. Marche Des "Davidsb  ndler"
Contre Les Philistins. |

Gounod **FAUST**
Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden
SOLTI

- Gounod Faust
- Allegretto (Tempo Di Valse)
 - Adagio
 - Allegretto
 - Moderato Maestoso
 - Moderato Con Moto
 - Allegretto
 - Allegro Vivo

Tracks 1-20 Schumann Carnaval 26:39
Tracks 21-27 Gounod Faust Ballet Music 15:45
Total Time: 42:24

Schumann recorded by Decca Records May 1959 Victoria Hall, Geneva
Producer James Walker Engineer Roy Wallace
Gounod recorded by Decca Records January 1960 Kingsway Hall, London
Producer Ray Minshull Engineer Alan Reeve



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