

Horst Walter Stein (born 2 May 1928 in Elberfeld, Germany; died 27 July 2008 in Vandœuvres, Switzerland) was a German conductor.

Stein's father was a mechanic. At school in Frankfurt, he studied piano, oboe, and singing. Later, he continued studies at the university in Cologne, including lessons in composition with Busoni's disciple Philipp Jarnach. From 1947 to 1951, he was a répétiteur in Wuppertal.

In 1955, at the invitation of Erich Kleiber Stein conducted at the opening of the restored Berlin State Opera (Unter den Linden), and subsequently worked there as a Staatskapellmeister. From 1961 to 1963, he worked under the leadership of Rolf Liebermann as deputy chief conductor at the Hamburg State Opera. From 1963 to 1970, Stein served as chief conductor and director of opera at the Mannheim National Theatre. Stein held a regular post at the Vienna State Opera from 1969 to 1971, where he conducted 500 performances. He returned to the Hamburg State Opera as General Music Director from 1972 to 1977.

In 1952, Stein began work as a conducting assistant at the Bayreuth Festival to such conductors as Joseph Keilberth, Hans Knappertsbusch, Clemens Krauss and Herbert von Karajan. From 1969 to 1986, he conducted 76 performances there, including the 1983 Bayreuth centenary production of Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, although Gramophone magazine gives the number between those years as 138.

He held principal conducting positions with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, l'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande in Geneva, the Basel Symphony Orchestra and the NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo. He was especially associated with the music of Max Reger and recorded several Reger works, besides many works of the German Romantic period. He spent much time training young conductors.

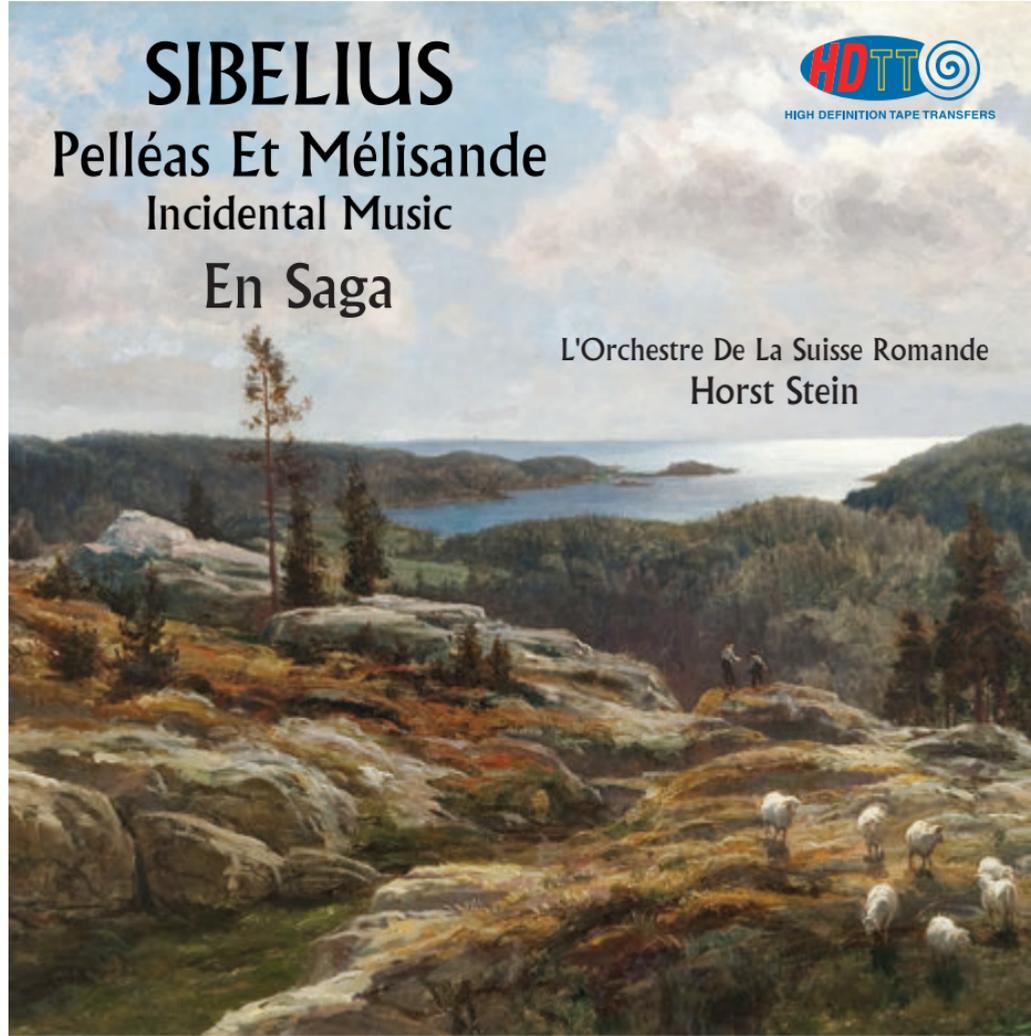
SIBELIUS

Pelléas Et Mélisande

Incidental Music

En Saga

L'Orchestre De La Suisse Romande
Horst Stein



Pelléas et Mélisande, which had its premiere in 1893, was neither the first play by Belgian-born Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) nor the most admired during his lifetime. Neither was it the only one reworked as an opera. But it produced musical interpretations by four celebrated composers within 12 years. After seeing the only Paris performance at the time, Claude Debussy fashioned his own libretto and within two years had completed his only opera in short score. Yet he held off scoring it until 1902, the year of its debut in the Opéra-Comique at Paris. In 1898, his senior colleague Gabriel Fauré was commissioned to write incidental music for a production of the play by Mrs. Patrick Campbell in English for London audiences. He hastily created 17 cues and asked his pupil Charles Koechlin to orchestrate them. Later on, however, Fauré scored three of them himself as a concert suite and added the Sicilienne ten years later. Next in line, Richard Strauss gave Arnold Schoenberg a copy of the play in 1902, which gave rise to a tone poem of Wagnerian length, chromatic diction, and orchestral density. The Vienna premiere in 1905 caused a near riot, but a 1911 revival validated Schoenberg's labyrinthine take on the text. The fourth famous composer to take on Pelléas et Mélisande was Sibelius, this time for a 1905 Helsinki production in Swedish that ran 15 performances, most of which he conducted. Sibelius had written his first theater score in 1898 and continued doing so until the end of his composing career in 1926 with music for 11 stage productions, including Hugo von Hofmannsthal's Salzburg version of Everyman and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Pelléas, though, was the first from which he extracted an orchestral suite. The nine movements do not follow Maeterlinck's sequence ("plot" is a moot word for so vaguely impressionistic a stage piece), but capture its timeless character next only to Debussy in his masterpiece.

En Saga is one of Sibelius' earliest orchestral works, and it brims with youthful energy. It is also a highly atmospheric work, clearly evocative of the composer's

beloved Finland -- its people, proud history, countryside and landscapes. The title (Swedish, rather than Finnish, meaning "A Fairy Tale") suggests it is a programmatic work, and indeed there does seem to be a musical "story" present; the composer, however, never identified any specific extra-musical inspiration.

Sibelius wrote the work at the suggestion of conductor Robert Kajanus, who wanted a composition that would have wide appeal; in completing it Sibelius drew on themes from an unperformed and unpublished octet for strings and winds he had written in Berlin. At its February 16, 1893, premiere in Helsinki (led by the composer), *En Saga* was not a success, suffering as it did from a lack of formal organization. Sibelius' 1902 revision, however -- coming, perhaps not insignificantly, directly after the composition of his *Symphony No. 2* -- overcame these difficulties, and is now regarded as one of his finest orchestral works.

The work begins mysteriously, the music seeming to awaken and gather momentum, as strings swirl and woodwinds bark and chirp. This gives rise to a lively rhythmic theme of characteristically Sibelian character; there is something both mournful and proud in the melody -- simple, yet striking. This theme is the first of three that, by development and interaction, become the de facto "characters" in this musical tale; they each struggle to maintain hold on the music as becomes more conflicted, eventually rising to a violent climax. Eventually, the musical conflict is resolved, and only the solo clarinet -- accompanied by gentle strings -- is left to witness the end.

Throughout *En Saga* Sibelius puts the woodwinds front and center, often using their dissonant punctuations to herald the beginning of a new section or idea. The color and character of these woodwind passages are perhaps the most identifiably Scandinavian musical feature of the score. While there are influences here of Rimsky-Korsakov and other Russian composers, *En Saga* must be regarded as one of the composer's most individual and satisfying early works. A typical performance lasts from about 17 to 20 minutes.

SIBELIUS

Pelléas Et Mélisande Incidental Music

En Saga

L'Orchestre De La Suisse Romande

Horst Stein

Pelléas Et Mélisande - Incidental Music, Op. 49

1 At The Castle-gate 2:50

2 Mélisande 4:03

3 At The Seashore 1:58

4 A Spring In The Park 2:01

5 The Three Blind Sisters 2:32

6 Pastorale 2:07

7 Mélisande At The Spinning Wheel 2:05

8 Entr'acte 2:33

9 The Death Of Mélisande 6:45

10 En Saga, Op.9 16:12

Total Time: 43:06

Recorded by Decca at Victoria Hall, Geneva, 11-14 June 1971



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