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Concert: Ithaca Military Band School

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Ernest S. Williams

Paul Lester

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CONCERT

given by the

Ithaca Military Band School

ERNEST S. WILLIAMS, Conductor

SOLOIST

PAUL LESTER

LITTLE THEATRE

WEDNESDAY EVENING

April Thirtieth, at Eight Fifteen
Rakoczy March from "The Damnation of Faust"  

Berlioz

The national air of Hungary was said to have been written by Michael Barna, a Gypsy court musician of Prince Franz Rakoczy, from whom the composition takes its name.

While in Buda-Pesth making arrangements for a performance of his opera, "The Damnation of Faust," Berlioz, realizing the great patriotism of the Hungarian people, decided to change his libretto to suit the situation, taking Faust to Hungary so that he might see the troops depart for the war, thus creating an excellent opportunity for the playing of the stirring "Rakoczy March," of his creation. Berlioz was amazed at the overpowering success of this plan.

Berlioz began the composition of "The Damnation of Faust" in 1845 and completed it the following year. The first performance took place in Paris, at the Opera Comique December 6, and was produced in New York City in February 1880.

Overture—Der Freischutz  

Weber

Der Freischutz, Weber's eighth opera, was begun in 1817 but was not completed until 1820, the overture, which presents the opera in miniature, having been written last.

The story of Der Freischutz is a long one, founded on an old folk tale, popular with huntsmen, that he who would sell his soul to Samiel the wild hunter, (the devil) could obtain magic bullets which would never fail to hit the desired mark. The hero of this opera makes the necessary vow in order to triumph in a marksmanship contest, and at the same time win his bride. There are tragic and anxious moments in the progress of the drama, but all ends happily.

The opera is now practically never performed and would hardly be known but for the overture, which is built up on the plan adopted later by Wagner in some of his overtures, namely, using passages from the opera as the basis of the overture. The music reflects the sylvan beauty of its forest scenes, the mystic supernatural element which invests the story with its tragedy, the terror at the thought of the power of the evil one, and the final triumph of love and virtue.

Two themes are particularly worthy of notice, a beautiful melody for the horns, which occur after the first nine bars, suggestive of the woodland scenes, and the haunting melody known as Agatha's Aria which occurs in the second section. This beautiful air, the prayer of Agatha, in which she supplicates heaven for the safety of her lover is one of the most celebrated in all music.

It is interesting to remember that it was composed over a hundred years ago, and received its first performance in Berlin, June 18, 1921.

Capriccio—Rose of The Catskills  

Williams

Trombone solo played by Paul Lester

This solo was originally written for cornet as a solo number for the composer's wife Katherine Rankin Williams. It was first played June 5, 1919, in Central Park, New York City, with the Seventh Regiment Band.
Weber's "Invitation To The Dance" was one of the first pieces which had as its source of inspiration a distinct program or picture in the mind of its composer. This is especially interesting when it is realized how far the pictorial side of music had been developed in modern compositions. A descriptive title giving the mood or episode which inspired the work is now common with almost all composers. Such descriptive titles had existed in a few instances before Weber's time but "The Invitation To The Dance" seems to mark the departure as fairly established.

This charming work opens with a simple phrase the actual invitation to dance, uttered by a mellow masculine voice. The reply in a soft soprano, charmingly feminine in its reticence and coyness, as if desiring a second invitation before uttering the desired "yes." The invitation is repeated, more urgently, followed by the assenting treble as the fair one rises to accept her partner's invitation. A delightful dialogue ensues in which the two voices can be easily traced. Suddenly the waltz begins in all its joyous youthfulness, picturing the elation and excitement of a brilliant ball. The music rises to a little climax of ecstasy, then suddenly a second theme appears, a dreamy, languorous, almost melancholy change. Through the music we hear again the masculine voice and the soft soprano responses. They are soon lost in the general murmur which in turn is drowned in the intoxicating music of the waltz itself, as the brilliant melody with which the work opens returns once more. Presently the dance ceases—the orchestra is silent, and we hear the introductory phrase, as the young man takes his partner to her seat, expressing his thanks for the pleasure of the dance.

Victor Herbert's charming compositions are fireside favorites. "Badinage" is a spirited number, very happily described in the title; good-natured bantering, one voice gaily answering the other. "Pan-Americana" was composed by Mr. Herbert for the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, where it was first played by the Pittsburgh Orchestra, under the direction of the composer. It is a musical illustration of the idea that inspired that project. The Pan-American idea appears in the work in the "Indian" character in the first, the "Down South" character in the second, and the "South American" (Spanish) character in the third part.

The Oriental Dance is a splendid example of character writing for which this composer is noted.

Michael William Balfe wrote thirty-one operas, the most popular being "The Bohemian Girl." It was first produced in London in 1843 and had an unprecedented run of one hundred performances. After its English success, it was soon translated into almost every language of Europe.

The libretto is derived from a ballet entitled "The Gypsy," one in which Fanny Ellsler, the famous dancer of that time, made one of her greatest successes. It has always been a favorite work replete with tuneful melodies, and its popularity is as great today as ever.
When gripping Grief the Heart doth wound,
And doleful Dumps the Mind oppress,
The Music, with her silver sound,
With speedy help doth lend redress.

—Shakespeare.

Yes, music is the prophet's art,
Among the gifts that God hath sent,
One of the most magnificent!

—Longfellow.