



JAN VAN DER ROOST

SIRAS

AND OTHER WORKS
FOR ORCHESTRA



Navona
Records

FINE MUSIC

SIRIUS

This bright overture was commissioned by De Nieuwe Veste in Breda (The Netherlands) for their annual project “Symphonic Xperience” whereby young music students and professional players together form an ad hoc orchestra. The “coaching” symphony orchestra is the Brabants Orkest and in May 2003 they premiered SIRIUS under the famous conductor Alexander Liebreich (Germany) in Breda. Afterwards, the piece was performed in various European countries as well as in the United States and Venezuela. After being recorded live several times, this is its first professional recording for release.

The title of this overture was chosen in view of the concept of the “Symphonic Xperience” project: Sirius is a star and all members of this project may become future “stars”! Even if they don’t, their youthful enthusiasm and their musical skills make them shine like stars anyway! The somewhat somber introduction symbolizes the dark sky, filled with twinkling lights and flashing stars in spots. A short, almost chaotic transition leads the orchestra to a dynamic and vivid allegro in which all

sections present themes and patterns in turns. Some influence by Shostacovich can be heard here, which was the wish of the commissioners (and also a great opportunity for the composer to display his admiration for this prolific, inspired, and important Russian composer). A short violin cadenza, accompanied by some atmospheric sounds, introduces a highly lyrical slow movement. A broad melody is developed through a few modulations and leads to a majestic orchestral tutti passage whereby (parts of) previous themes are placed in superposition over the central melody. At the request of the commissioning party, this slow movement as a whole contains a lot of “film music” (whatever that may mean!) influences. After this romantic resting moment, the piece recaptures its energy and dynamism in a shortened and slightly altered repeat of the allegro and after a big final climax the overture ends with a sonorous D major chord.

– *Jan Van der Roost*

SINFONIA PER ORCHESTRA

In 1989, this four movement symphony was commissioned by the Lemmensinstituut in Leuven where the composer studied between 1974 and 1979 and where he has taught since 1983. However it took a while before the world premiere would take place this happened in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Luxembourg conducted by Fred Harles in December 2003. That first performance was recorded live, but this is the first time it has seen professional release. The piece has a partly cyclical structure, whereby themes from the first movements reoccur in the final part. It is scored for a rather large orchestra. For example, the woodwind section is quite complete (and requires a saxophone player) and the set of percussion instruments is quite large as well.

The first movement is written in a free sonata form, starting after a mysterious introduction. The orchestration is colorful and diverse and features all instruments of the symphony orchestra, especially instruments like mallet percussion, celesta, piano, harp, etc. Some musical

elements, which will be used later on, are introduced, for example the triton (augmented fourth) interval that is omnipresent in this first part. A few aleatoric passages give a nice contrast with the foremost strictly notated rest of this technically demanding opening movement. In the second movement a well-known children's song appears, which was written in memoriam of the still born son of a dear friend of mine. The text by Pontanus (early 16th century) above the score expresses the dramatic feelings and emotions of such a tragic event, which he tried to reflect in this music: "De Tumulis. Nascitur hic obiitque simul, simul ipse sepultus. Vita obitusque simul, nomen at unde habeat?" This could be translated as follows: "Born and dead at the same time, buried right away. When life and death come so close together, can one give it a name?" Since that friend is an organist, he used a choral-like theme, played by the brass. After a lugubrious "funeral march," the children's song is introduced with an enchanting instrumentation – sounding like a music box or a children's mobile – but gradually other musical elements and heavy emotions take over, leading to a dramatic culmination point with the brass chorale being surrounded by aleatoric patterns and effects. This striking movement concludes in a rather resigned atmosphere, though polytonal harmonies create tension and add a bitter feeling – there is no real "rest"

after such a sad destiny. The Third part is a lively and energetic scherzo: various counterpoint techniques are used and repeated tones add a certain drive and pulsation. This is the shortest part of the Symphony: it's full of little surprises and it includes a double fugue. It can be described as the most "neutral" movement of the entire work—no exposed expression nor emotional content but a rather abstract piece of music. As said already, the fourth movement resumes musical elements and themes from previous movements. For example, the introductory augmented fourth interval from the beginning is reused in an eight part canon (= glissandi in the strings), combined with e.g. fragments from the children's song in authentic or altered versions. After another fugue and some orchestral outbursts and climaxes, the symphony ends as it started: in a more or less similar mysterious and serene atmosphere. Even if the final chord basically is C major, played by low strings and brass, there is no real "tonica feeling" because the high polytonal chords in the high strings. In other words, tonal and non-tonal elements are combined throughout this work.

– *Jan Van der Roost*

MANHATTAN PICTURES

In this colorful composition, I evoke the multi-cultural city life of Manhattan in four contrasting movements. It was written in 1986 and was commissioned by the Symphony Orchestra Jeunesses Musicales in Brussels, Belgium. In those days, the ensemble was conducted by Dirk Brossé – a close friend of mine, to whom this piece is dedicated, who also conducted its premiere performance in Brussels in the same year. A few years after its premiere, I produced a version of this work for large wind orchestra, which is currently being performed all over the world.

The opening movement is rather short and rhythmic: it depicts the skyline of New York with whimsical intervals, irregular meters and quickly alternating orchestral sections. In the second “picture,” a variety of musical entities accumulate into a colored sound curtain, on top of which the brass section presents a broad theme. Afterwards, the big orchestral crescendo that characterized the opening section of this movement becomes a decrescendo—this retrograde composition technique makes the sound become thinner and thinner, ending up with just a few instruments.

In contrast with the two vibrant previous movements, the third one is extremely quite. It particularly features the first flute, oboe, and clarinet in broad melodies. Again, the orchestration plays an essential role and following a majestic (almost cinematic) tutti, the serenity of the beginning reappears. Finally, the nervousness and the energy of the opening movements reoccur in an exciting apotheosis with rich, sometimes surprising harmonies and full-colored instrumentation. A few slightly jazzy reminiscences have been included in this piece, which – of course – is no surprise in a piece paying homage to a vibrant city like New York!

– Jan Van der Roost



St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra's rehearsal hall. The Beloselsky-Belozersky Palace.



Jan Van der Roost was born in Duffel, Belgium in 1956. He studied trombone, music history and musical education at the Lemmensinstituut in Leuven (Louvain) and continued his studies at the Royal Conservatoires of Ghent and Antwerp, where he qualified as a conductor and a composer.

Today, he teaches at the Lemmensinstituut in Leuven, Belgium and serves as special guest professor at the Shobi Institute of Music in Tokyo, guest professor at the

Nagoya University of Art and guest professor at Sensoku Gakuen in Kawasaki. Besides being a prolific composer, he is very much in demand as an adjudicator, lecturer, clinician and guest conductor. His increasing musical activities brought him to more than forty five different countries on four continents, and his compositions are being performed and recorded all over the world. In early 2001, a full album containing four of his works for chamber orchestra was released with EMI Classics, and

the Slovakian Radio Symphony Orchestra recorded three of his compositions, which were released in early 2003 by the German label Valve-Hearts. In early 2004, Phaedra Records released an all-Van der Roost album containing solo concertos for trumpet, guitar and horn. 2011 saw the release of three works by Van der Roost: *Concerto Doppio* (featuring Eddy Vanoosthuyse and Neshu Neshev on Clarinet) was released by the Sofia Soloists (Bulgaria) on Aliud Records, the Polish Radio Choir recorded his *Contemplations* for Choir and Organ on Phaedra Records, and his four-part *Chemical Suite* for trombone quartet was released on the Navona Records compilation SCULPTING THE AIR.

His list of works represents a wide variety of genres and styles, including two oratorios, a symphony and some smaller works for symphony orchestra, a guitar concerto (dedicated to Joaquin Rodrigo whom he met in person in Madrid in 1993), a concerto for trumpet and string orchestra (dedicated to and commissioned by the Norwegian virtuoso Ole Edvard Antonsen), a clarinet concerto, a double concerto for two clarinets and string orchestra (dedicated to Walter and Anne Boeykens), a cycle of lieder for baritone and chamber orchestra, works for string and chamber

orchestra, chamber music, numerous brass and wind orchestra compositions (including a three-movement symphony for large wind orchestra), choral music, and a variety of instrumental solos. Many of these compositions have been broadcast on radio and television in various countries, and most of them have been recorded on albums by renowned performers all over the world. Van der Roost exclusively composes commissioned works from performers living in such countries as Belgium, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, the United States, Japan, Spain, France, Singapore, Austria, Canada, Norway, Germany, Finland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Colombia, and Croatia

For more information on Van der Roost and his music visit
www.janvanderroost.com

Tracks 1-5 recorded July 4-6, 2012 at Studio 1 House of Radio,
St. Petersburg in St. Petersburg, Russia

Session Producer Dirk Fischer

Session Engineers Dirk Fischer, Thilo Schaller

Session Assistant Engineer Danil Zosin

Tracks 6-9 recorded September 9, 1990 at
Studio 4 in Brussels, Belgium

Session Engineer Walter De Niel

Session Producer Nora Nijs

Musical Supervisor Willy Roskams

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1 SIRIUS **12:46**
St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra | Vladimir Lande, conductor

SINFONIA PER ORCHESTRA

St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra | Vladimir Lande, conductor

- 2 Lento misterioso – Allegro moderato** **8:53**
3 Funebre **6:56**
4 Allegro ritmico **4:11**
5 Lento – Allegro ritmico **9:04**

MANHATTAN PICTURES

Philharmonic Orchestra of the Belgian Radio | Fernand Terby, conductor

- 6 Allegro** **2:34**
7 Vivace **2:15**
8 Mesto **4:39**
9 Presto **2:51**