



DUKAS

Symphony in C

The Sorcerer's Apprentice

La péri



RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra

Jean-Luc Tingaud

Paul Abraham Dukas (1865-1935)

Symphony in C major • The Sorcerer's Apprentice • La péri

The son of a banker, Paul Dukas studied privately before his musical gifts made it clear that he might pursue a career in music. He entered the Paris Conservatoire as an auditor in 1881, in the class of Théodore Dubois and, on his father's insistence, studying the piano with Georges-Amadée Mathias, according to his own later account an unsatisfactory pupil in both cases. In 1883 he entered the composition class of Bizet's friend Ernest Guiraud, with whom he studied counterpoint and fugue, taking first prize in fugue in the preliminary round for the Prix de Rome, in the final stage of which he came second in 1888, narrowly defeated by Camille Erlanger, a pupil of Delibes, after repeated scrutiny of the votes. The following year he was rewarded at a further attempt by only three of the nine votes, his candidature opposed by Gounod but supported by Saint-Saëns. He then left the Conservatoire for military service, before embarking on an early career as a critic and orchestrator. He was a friend of Debussy, whom he had first met in 1885 and who dedicated to him in 1893 *La Damoiselle élue*, although thereafter circumstances led to a less close relationship, with a marked if temporary estrangement when Debussy left his wife Lily for Emma Bardac. Dukas had an acute critical sense which led him to destroy many of his own compositions, but he remained an important figure in French musical life and a highly respected teacher. He is popularly known for his symphonic scherzo after Goethe, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, choreographed as a ballet in 1916 in Petrograd by Fokine, and illustrated in Walt Disney's film *Fantasia*, which brought the piece wider popularity, while serving to revive the then waning fortunes of Mickey Mouse.

L'apprenti sorcier: scherzo d'après une ballade de Goethe (The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Scherzo after a ballad of Goethe) was first performed on 18th May 1897, conducted by Dukas at a concert of the Société Nationale, and almost at once entered international repertoire. Goethe's poem *Der Zauberlehrling* dates from 1797, the so-called *Balladenjahr*. The old witch-master has at last

left his apprentice alone, allowing the boy to try his own powers with the spells he has heard from his master. His first action is to bid the spirits fill the bath for him and he orders the broom-stick to help, which it promptly does, soon filling the bath and other receptacles with water from the river. Problems arise when the boy finds he has forgotten the words to stop the broom-stick, which glares at him and continues to fill the house with water. He attacks the broom-stick with a hatchet, cutting it in half, but this makes two to bring yet more water. Matters are put to rights when the old witch-master returns and immediately tells the spirits to obey only him, their old master. The scherzo, meticulously scored, has themes associated with water, the broom-stick, the apprentice and his master.

La péri (The Peri), a *poème dansé*, was written in 1911 and 1912, choreographed by the Russian dancer Ivan Clustine, ballet-master at the Paris Opéra, before joining Pavlova's company in 1914. The work was dedicated to Natalia Trouhanova, who danced the first performance in 1912, a dancer influenced by the free dance style of Isadora Duncan. A *Fanfare*, scored for three trumpets, four horns, three trombones and tuba, precedes the *poème* itself, magically scored to depict a particularly French world of mystery and imagination. The music, with principal themes identified with Iskender and with the Peri, follows the scenario, included with the published score:

"It happened that, as his youth came to an end, the Magi having observed that his star was growing pale, Iskender travelled through Iran, seeking the Flower of Immortality. The sun dwelt three times in its twelve houses without him finding it, until he came finally to the ends of the Earth, to the point where it joined the sea and the clouds. And there, on the steps that lead to the court of Ormuzd, a Peri lay, sleeping in her jewelled robe. A star shone above her head, her lute rested on her bosom and in her hand the Flower shone. And it was a lotus like the emerald, undulating like the sea in the morning sun.

Iskender leant noiselessly over the Sleeper, and, without waking her, stole the Flower, which suddenly became, in his fingers, like the noonday sun on the forests of Ghilan. But the Peri, opening her eyes, clapped her hands together and cried out, for she could not now mount again to the light of Ormuzd. Meanwhile Iskender, looking at her, admired her face that surpassed in delight even that of Gurdaferrid. And he desired her in his heart, so that the Peri knew the King's thought, for in the hand of Iskender the lotus grew purple and became like the face of desire. Thus the servant of the Pure knew that this flower of Life was not destined for him, and she leapt forward to take it back, as light as a bee, while the Invincible Lord drew the Lotus away from her, divided between his thirst for immortality and the delight of his eyes. But the Peri danced the dance of the Peri, always coming nearer, until her face touched Iskender's, and finally he gave it to her, without regret. Then the lotus seemed of snow and of gold like the height of Elbourz in the evening sun. The form of the Peri seemed to melt into the light from the calyx and soon nothing could be seen except a hand, lifting up the flower of flame that vanished into the sky above. Iskender saw her disappear, and understanding that this signified his coming end, he felt the shadow encircle him."

The *Symphony in C major* was written in 1895-96 and published in 1908, dedicated to the composer and conductor Paul Vidal, who conducted the first performance. The first movement, in sonata-form, allows the first subject to appear almost at once. The contrasting A minor lilting secondary theme leads, in turn, to a further thematic element in F. The themes are to return in due recapitulation, before the final coda. The second movement, marked *Andante espressivo e sostenuto*, is in

E minor and is broadly in sonata-form, delicately scored. The mood changes at once with the start of the final rondo, which brings the whole work to a triumphant conclusion.

Keith Anderson

Conductor's Note

The composer Paul Dukas was a perfectionist for whom no detail was too small. He revised and modified many of his orchestrations, even after publication. To this day, there is no definitive edition of his orchestral works, and while preparing for this recording we noticed how much the existing editions diverge from one another on numerous key points of orchestration, tempo and even harmony. So as to produce a reading that reflected the composer's original intentions as closely as possible, we went back to the available manuscript sources. Editions Durand were kind enough to allow us access to a hitherto private source: the exceptionally revealing proofs for the first edition of *L'apprenti sorcier*, corrected by Dukas himself. The other manuscripts we consulted are held by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (rough drafts, first orchestral sketch and manuscript of the *Symphonie*) and by the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin (autograph orchestral scores of *L'apprenti sorcier* and *La péri*).

On this Naxos recording, therefore, we hope to give rigorously faithful performances of these long-matured and meticulously sculpted scores.

Jean-Luc Tingaud

RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra



Photo: Mark Stedman, Photocall Ireland

From its foundation in 1948 as the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra has been at the forefront of symphonic music in Ireland. Today, the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra plays a central rôle in classical music in Ireland through year-long programmes of live performances, schools and educational projects, broadcasts, recordings and new commissions. World-class conductors associated with the orchestra's early days were Jean Martinon, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, Edmond Appia, Milan Horvat, Sir John Barbirolli and Tibor Paul. Distinguished guest artists and composers with whom the orchestra has worked include Josef Szigeti, Isaac Stern, Henryk Szering, Ruggiero Ricci, Wilhelm Kempff, Julius Katchen, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Martha Argerich, Radu Lupu, Joan

Sutherland, Angela Gheorghiu, Dame Kiri te Kanawa, Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo, José Carreras, Mstislav Rostropovitch, Paul Tortelier, Sir James Galway, Constantin Silvestri, Charles Dutoit, Sir Charles Groves, Witold Lutoslawski, Olivier Messiaen, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Steve Reich, Arvo Pärt and Bill Whelan. The orchestra has been critically acclaimed for its recordings across labels including Naxos, Claves and RTÉ lyric fm. They include the *Composers of Ireland* series, a landmark recording project funded by RTÉ and The Arts Council making the orchestral music of major Irish composers commercially available, and recordings of selected orchestral works by Aloys Fleischmann, Frederick May and Seán Ó Riada.

Find out more: www.rte.ie/nso

Jean-Luc Tingaud



Photo: Jean-Baptiste Millot

Jean-Luc Tingaud was born in 1969 and studied with Manuel Rosenthal, himself a pupil of Maurice Ravel. Notable opera engagements include *Sapho*, *Pénélope*, *Le roi malgré lui* (Wexford Festival), *Roméo et Juliette* (Lisbon), *Werther* (Martina Franca), *La damnation de Faust* (Reims), *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Carmen* (Toulon), *Le siège de Corinthe* (Bad Wildbad Rossini Festival), *Faust* (Macerata), *The Turn of the Screw* (Lille), *Dialogues des carmélites* and *Madama Butterfly* (Pittsburgh), *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Prague), and *The Pearl Fishers* (English National Opera). Concert engagements include the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Orchestra of Opera North, Orchestra Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini, Orchestra of the Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa, Orchestra of the Teatro Massimo, Palermo,

the Warsaw and Kraków Philharmonic Orchestras, Orchestre National des Pays de la Loire, Orchestre National de Lyon, and the Orchestre National de Lorraine. His recordings include *Sapho* (Wexford), *Werther* (Martina Franca), *La voix humaine* (Compiègne), and *Le siège de Corinthe* (Bad Wildbad). A further recording for Naxos with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra of music by Bizet is in production.

Paul Dukas is famed for his brilliant, meticulously scored symphonic scherzo *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, first performed in 1897, which almost immediately entered the international repertoire. It was subsequently the focus of a ballet and later Walt Disney's film *Fantasia*. Magical scoring is also a feature of *La péri*, a *poème dansé* of great imaginative verve. The delightful, colourful *Symphony in C* was composed mid-way between these works. For this recording, manuscript sources for the three works were consulted, including the hitherto private proofs of the first edition of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, ensuring rigorously faithful performances.



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| 1 | L'apprenti sorcier (The Sorcerer's Apprentice) | 10:52 |
| 2 | La péri: Fanfare | 2:08 |
| 3 | La péri: Poème dansé | 17:55 |
| | Symphony in C major | 40:51 |
| 4 | I. Allegro non troppo vivace, ma con fuoco | 13:45 |
| 5 | II. Andante espressivo e sostenuto | 15:52 |
| 6 | III. Allegro spiritoso | 11:14 |

RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra
Jean-Luc Tingaud

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