



WIND BAND CLASSICS



Jan
VAN DER ROOST

Spartacus
Poème Montagnard
Sinfonietta 'Suite Sketches'

Philharmonic Winds OSAKAN

Jan Van der Roost

Jan Van der Roost (b. 1956)

Spartacus – Symphonic Tone Poem • Poème Montagnard • Sinfonietta ‘Suito Sketches’

Spartacus, a symphonic tone poem, carries the dedication *Omaggio a Ottorino Respighi*. Composed in 1988, this in places somewhat cinematic work pays humble homage to Respighi, a remarkable Italian master of orchestration. A similar and undeniable Roman inspiration which has characterised several of his major works, has been the unwritten scenario behind this piece. In fact Respighi turned out to be one of the most influential composers from the first decades of the twentieth century for many of his successors – including many film music composers. Years after his death in 1936 he still proves an inspiration for various types of composers. For me his imaginative and colourful music has always held a fascination, so it is no surprise that I wrote *Spartacus* especially for my composition portfolio for my diploma at the Antwerp Conservatoire. Unusually, it was not a commissioned piece, but I composed it “for myself”, so to speak, with the aim of adding a work for wind orchestra to that portfolio (alongside symphonic works, chamber music pieces, vocal music, et al.). Soon after its première in Holland (1989), it became quite successful internationally and it has been (and still is) played countless times by wind orchestras from all over the world.

The slightly oriental sounds of the opening passage of the work refer to the exotic origins of the numerous slaves who were brought to ancient Rome by their oppressors as a result of their conquests: many of them died as gladiators in arenas like the famous Colosseum in Rome. Spartacus became leader of the rebellion against the Romans in the last century BC. An almost stubborn pedal note “C” in the lower registers offers stability and determination, though the rest of the players seem to be involved in a rhythmic fight between the various sections. The quiet middle part of the piece could be seen as the “love story” between Spartacus and his (imaginary) beloved, while the final movement depicts the fight against the Romans. According to various sources, however, the dramatic fate of the rebel slaves was cruel: they were crucified alongside the Via Appia in 71 BC.

A dodecaphonic chord symbolizes this fact and when themes from the middle part are reprised, the eyes of Spartacus and his beloved meet for the last time, as if in a flashback, before perishing on the cross. A short but spectacular *vivo* concludes this symphonic tone poem, which contains some Respighi influences, but without direct quotation.

There is in a way a particular connection between *Poème Montagnard* and *Spartacus*, as the Orchestre d'Harmonie du Val d'Aoste (located in the French-speaking north-western part of Italy) was the first Italian wind orchestra ever to perform *Spartacus*. It has turned out to become one of their absolute favourites ever since. In 1997, Lino Blanchod, their conductor and the director of the Conservatoire of Aosta, commissioned a new work from me which was intended to serve as their “own choice work” for the World Music Contest in Kerkrade (The Netherlands), held that same year. As requested by the commissioning body, I paid homage to the main historical figure from that region, the fifteenth-century Catherine de Challant, who had a major influence on the area during her lifetime. This explains the obvious renaissance-influences in various places, most particularly in the renaissance dance – featuring, unusually, recorder quartet. The beginning section, however, depicts the wonderful natural scenery of the area: the Alps and especially the famous Mont Blanc are a dominant feature of the Val d'Aosta. A romantic slow passage on the other hand illustrates the love affairs of the noble Catherine de Challant and, after a short *fugato*, the piece concludes majestically with an *augmentation* of the renaissance dance theme. One more musical element characterizes this work: the notes B-A-C-H-D, derived from the conductor's name *BlAnCHoD*, recur at a number of points and in various registers: they are like a musical thread (or in French a *fil rouge*). I here mixed the German system of letter notation, in which the international B corresponds with B flat and H with B natural, in order to provide more diversity of pitches. Just as with *Spartacus*, this mountain poem is now played all

over the world by wind orchestras able to master this rather challenging but also colourful and expressive music.

In 2004 the professional Osaka Municipal Symphonic Band (Japan) commissioned a major piece on the occasion of their 80th anniversary. The wonderful city of Osaka – the second largest in Japan – is often called “capital of water” or “*suito*” in Japanese, so the subtitle of my *Sinfonietta* appropriately became *Suito Sketches*. The four movements all have their own character and atmosphere and they display the various qualities and possibilities of the modern wind orchestra. *The Landing* starts with a rather improvisational and aleatoric passage, featuring several woodwind instruments in soloist rôles. After that atmospheric and somewhat hesitant start, a solemn and noble theme appears in the middle and lower brass, reaching a climax towards a broad tutti passage and settling to a quieter atmosphere which refers to the opening passage. The *Sword Dance* is much more powerful and dynamic: hammering percussion rhythms and low bass notes create a solid and sometimes threatening sound, after which a barbarian dance breaks out. Through virtuoso and exciting patterns and rhythms, this spectacular dance pushes the entire orchestra towards an almost diabolical climax, concluded by a “*golpe fata*” ... In contrast with these more violent sounds, the third movement, *Nightfall by the River*, is calm and peaceful

and it offers some woodwind soloists a chance to show their lyrical qualities. In general the orchestration of this slow movement is refined and colourful and it alternates conventional as well as unusual instrumental combinations. The final movement, *Towards the Future*, is much brighter and more virtuosic, and apart from a whirling motif (presented by the woodwind), a chorale-like theme is introduced by the trombones, continued by the other brass instruments. Both elements being developed and combined with each other, thus creating a *grandioso* ending to this miniature symphony. *Sinfonietta* turned out to be a true challenge for all performers so it is basically reserved for the “better ensembles” within the international wind orchestra world.

These three compositions, different in style and inspiration, are often played within the vast repertoire for wind orchestra which is available nowadays. In other words, they have become valued contributions to that repertoire, which of course pleases me very much. It was a great pleasure to conduct and to record them live in Osaka and I think this compilation of “live” recordings makes sense because all three works have their own personality and character, so illustrating various aspects of my compositional activities for this musical medium over the last decades.

Jan Van der Roost

Philharmonic Winds OSAKAN



The Philharmonic Winds OSAKAN was established in 1999 as an independent wind ensemble. In June 2006 the ensemble made its first appearance as Japan's first NPO professional wind ensemble. Since 2011 the Philharmonic Winds OSAKAN has performed at Jubel Hall, the municipal concert hall in Toyono. Since its foundation the ensemble has pursued new possibilities in wind music and has received good reviews for each of its performances, introducing new repertoire, with over forty in the OSAKAN Live Collection series and in the independently planned series *Eetokodori*. To mark its tenth anniversary in 2009, the Philharmonic Winds OSAKAN won acclaim at the 14th Congress of the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE) in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. The ensemble has collaborated with a number of distinguished conductors, including Heinz Friesen, David R. Gillingham, Glenn D. Price, Dennis L. Johnson, Mark Camphouse, John Boyd, Jan Van der Roost and Johan de Meij. From 2005 the former director of the Osaka Municipal Symphonic Band, Yoshihiro Kimura, has served as Musical Director with, from 2011, Orita Nobotta as Music Adviser and, from 2013, Jan Van der Roost as Principal Guest Conductor.

Jan Van der Roost



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, and serves as guest professor at the Nagoya University of Arts and guest professor at Senzoku Gakuen in Kawasaki. In 2013 he was appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Philharmonic Winds OSAKAN (Japan). Besides being a prolific composer, he is very much in demand as an adjudicator, lecturer, clinician and guest conductor. His increasing musical activities have taken him to more than 45 different countries on four continents, and his compositions are performed and recorded all over the world. In early 2001 a CD containing four of his works for chamber orchestra was released by EMI Classics, and the Slovakian Radio Symphony Orchestra recorded three of his compositions, which were released in early 2003 by the German label BT-Sound. 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 Vanoosthuyes and Neshu Neshev on clarinet) by the Sofia Soloists on Aliud Records; the Polish Radio Choir recorded his *Contemplations for Choir and Organ* for Phaedra Records; and his four-part *Chemical Suite for Trombone Quartet* was released by the American label Navona Records (Parma Records) on the compilation CD *Sculpting the Air*. On that same label a CD containing three of his orchestral works was

released in 2013, performed by the St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra, Vladimir Lande conducting. Van der Roost's 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 Joaquín 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 *Double Concerto for Two Clarinets and String Orchestra* (dedicated to Walter and Anne Boeykens), a cycle of *Lieder* for baritone and chamber orchestra, a *Concerto for Clarinet and Symphony Orchestra*, *Images for Alto Saxophone and Chamber Orchestra*, a *Singspiel, Once Upon A Time ...* for narrator, actors, children's choir and wind orchestra, works for strings or 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. Jan Van der Roost has composed works commissioned by performers from Belgium, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, the United States, Japan, Spain, France, Singapore, Austria, Canada, Norway, Germany, Finland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Colombia, Croatia and the United Kingdom.

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

Jan
VAN DER ROOST
(b. 1956)

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| 1 Spartacus – Symphonic
Tone Poem (1988) | 13:12 |
| 2 Poème Montagnard (1997)
Sinfonietta ‘Suito Sketches’
(2004) | 17:24
23:56 |
| 3 The Landing | 8:51 |
| 4 Sword Dance | 5:17 |
| 5 Nightfall by the River | 5:25 |
| 6 Towards the Future | 4:23 |

Philharmonic Winds
OSAKAN

Jan Van der Roost

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The prolific and internationally admired composer Jan Van der Roost is represented here by three compositions that are very different in style and inspiration. His much admired tone poem *Spartacus* is a homage to Ottorino Respighi, whose sense of colour and imagination have long fascinated Van der Roost. The expressive ‘mountain poem’ *Poème Montagnard* depicts the wonderful natural scenery of the Aosta Valley and the *Sinfonietta ‘Suito Sketches’* consists of four contrasting movements exploring the qualities and virtuosic possibilities of the modern wind orchestra. Based in Osaka Prefecture, Philharmonic Winds OSAKAN is Japan’s first professional wind ensemble.

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Playing
Time:
54:32