

signum
CLASSICS

Philharmonia

Swan Lake
Tchaikovsky

Santtu-Matias
Rouvali



Piotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky

(1840–1893)

Swan Lake Excerpts (1875–77)

Philharmonia Orchestra
Santtu-Matias Rouvali Conductor

www.signumrecords.com

ACT I

A magnificent park before a palace.

1 **No. 2, Valse** 7.29

No. 4, Pas de trois

2 I. Intrada 2.31

3 II. Andante sostenuto 2.48

4 III. Allegro semplice 1.14

5 **No. 8, Dance of the goblets:**
Tempo di polacca 3.57

6 **No. 10, Scene:** Moderato 2.57

ACT II

*A lakeside clearing in a forest by the
ruins of a chapel.*

A moonlit night.

7 **No. 13, Dance of the cygnets:**
IV. Allegro moderato 1.29

ACT III

A Ball at the Castle.

8 **No. 18, Scene:** Allegro 1.42

No. 19, Pas de six

9 III. Moderato – IV. Allegro 2.15

10 **No. 19b, Pas de deux:**
I. Introduction 4.17

11 **No. 21, Spanish Dance:** Allegro
non troppo (Tempo di bolero) 2.47

12 **No. 22, Neapolitan Dance:**
Allegro moderato – Andantino 2.24

ACT IV

By the Lake.

13 **No. 29, Finale:** Andante – allegro
agitato – Moderato e maestoso 7.12

Total Timings

43.04

Liner Notes, Texts & Biographies

Swan Lake (excerpts)

Valse

Pas de trois

Dance of the goblets

Scene (moderato)

Dance of the cygnets

Scene (allegro)

Pas de six

Pas de deux

Spanish Dance

Neapolitan Dance

Finale

It is a sad irony that a composer sensitive to criticism, and highly self-critical, should in a number of his works arouse the distaste of both his contemporaries and his audiences, and yet go on to be hugely beloved posthumously. This is particularly poignant in the case of Tchaikovsky's ballet, *Swan Lake*, the first version of which was not particularly successful, but which was revised to great acclaim shortly after Tchaikovsky's death.

Ballets are notoriously difficult to get right: even if the music is sublime, so much is riding on the quality of the choreography and the dancing.

The importance of the production in this regard cannot be underestimated; the famous riot at the première of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* was not solely a response to the score. The first production of *Swan Lake* took place on 4 March 1877 at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, and, although it ran for a number of performances – and did not provoke any rioting – the work's reception was lukewarm. Much of the responsibility for this lies with the choreographer, Julius Reisinger, who, without precedent to help him along, was not sufficiently imaginative to produce more than a series of rather wooden vignettes.

However, the run was long enough to stay in the memory of the formidable choreographer Marius Petipa, director of the Russian Imperial Ballet. In collaboration with his assistant choreographer Lev Ivanov and Tchaikovsky's brother, Modest, it was decided that a fitting tribute to the composer, who had died so suddenly in November 1893, would be to stage a revised version of Act II of *Swan Lake*. This was performed on 1 March 1894 – and was a resounding success. Spurred on by this unexpected triumph, the whole ballet was revised, to be performed at the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg on 27 January 1895. It was this version that cemented *Swan Lake*'s status as a staple of the ballet repertoire.

The origins of Tchaikovsky's score are more mysterious. There is no mention of any author or literary inspiration in the printed libretto of 1877, and no record of how exactly Tchaikovsky came to work with Reisberger, although we do know

that the work was commissioned by the theatrical establishment in Moscow. The scenario, in which a swan queen yields to the love of a prince, seems to have been almost entirely Tchaikovsky's own, based on a tale he had made up for the amusement of his nieces and nephews, and possibly influenced by the popular novella, *Undine*. Although there was some input from the librettists Vladimir Begichev and Vasily Geltser, that the overall concept came from Tchaikovsky himself demonstrates an unprecedented level of creative control from the composer. In the years following the work's première, the score was rather manhandled, an experience from which Tchaikovsky seems to have learnt; with later ballet scores he would work more closely with ballet-masters and dramatists.

Swan Lake's lyrical lines are perfectly constructed to suggest the fluidity of balletic movement – so much so that even with limited choreography it is hard to imagine the work being



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anything other than a runaway success. The composer remained self-critical, however, admitting: 'I listened to the Delibes ballet *Sylvia*... what charm, what elegance, what wealth of melody, rhythm, and harmony. I was ashamed, for if I had known of this music then, I would not have written *Swan Lake*.' It is to be celebrated that no such obstacle

prevented the composition of *Swan Lake*, and Tchaikovsky's own words might equally well be applied to the ballet's ravishing melodies and colourful orchestration: '...what charm, what elegance, what wealth of melody, rhythm, and harmony...'

Programme note by Joanna Wyld

Philharmonia Orchestra

1st Violin

Zsolt-Tihamér Visontay
Sarah Oates
Rebecca Chan
Soong Choo
Adrián Varela
Lulu Fuller
Karin Tilch
Jeff Moore
Charlotte Reid
Grace Lee
Cindy Foster
Minsi Yang
Matthew Bain
Gavin Davies
Rachel Steadman
Jens Lynen

2nd Violin

Annabelle Meare
Fiona Cornall
Emily Davis
Samantha Reagan
Nuno Carapina
Paula Clifton-Everest
Susan Hedger
Jan Regulski
Sophie Cameron
Gideon Robinson
Emanuela Buta
Roma Tic
Anna O'Brien
Kirsty Mangan

Viola

Yukiko Ogura
William Bender
Nicholas Bootiman
Sylvain Séailles
Linda Kidwell

Carol Hultmark
Cheremie Hamilton-Miller
Ana Teresa de Braga e Alves
Rebecca Carrington
Ellen Blythe
Claire Newton
Toby Deller

Cello

Timothy Walden
Richard Birchall
Eric Villeminey
Yaroslava Trofymchuk
Anne Baker
Alexander Rolton
Deirdre Cooper
Tessa Seymour

Bass

Tim Gibbs
Gareth Sheppard

Alex Henery
Simon Oliver
Owen Nicolaou
Nathan Knight
Joseph Cowie
Jakub Cywinski

Flute

Thomas Hancox
Hannah Black

Piccolo

Keith Bragg

Oboe

Timothy Rundle
Jennifer Brittlebank

Cor Anglais

Jill Crowther

Clarinet

Carlos Ferreira
Laurent Ben Slimane
Jennifer McLaren

Bass Clarinet

Laurent Ben Slimane

Bassoon

Robin O'Neill
Shelly Organ

Horn

Nigel Black
Kira Doherty
James Pillai
Carsten Williams
Matthew Horn
Jonathan Maloney
Daniel Curzon

Trumpet

Jason Evans
Arthur Escriva
Will Morley

Coronet

Jason Evans
Robert Farley

Trombone

Byron Fulcher
Philip White

Bass Trombone

James Buckle

Tuba

Peter Smith

Timpani

Antoine Siguré

Percussion

Emmanuel Curt
Paul Stoneman
Peter Fry
Kevin Hathway

Harp

Heidi Krutzen
Stephanie Beck

Celeste

Alison Procter

Founded in 1945, the Philharmonia is a world-class symphony orchestra for the 21st century. Based in London at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, and with a thriving national and international touring schedule, the Philharmonia creates thrilling performances for a global audience.

Santtu-Matias Rouvali is the Orchestra's sixth Principal Conductor, following in the footsteps of Otto Klemperer, Riccardo Muti, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Christoph von Dohnányi and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

The Philharmonia is a registered charity that relies on funding from a wide range of sources to deliver its programme and is proud to be generously supported by Arts Council England. It performs

around 50 concerts a year at its Southbank Centre home. Under its key conductors, the Philharmonia has created a series of critically-acclaimed, visionary projects, distinctive for both their artistic scope and supporting live and digital content.

The Philharmonia is orchestra-in-residence at venues and festivals across England: Bedford Corn Exchange, De Montfort Hall in Leicester, The Marlowe in Canterbury, Anvil Arts in Basingstoke, the Three Choirs Festival in the West of England, and Garsington Opera. At the heart of the Orchestra's residencies is an outreach and engagement programme that empowers people in every community to engage with, and participate in, orchestral music. Internationally, the Philharmonia is active across Europe, Asia and the USA.

The Philharmonia's reputation in part derives from its extraordinary recording legacy, which in the last 10 years has been built on by its pioneering work with digital technology. VR experiences featuring music by Sibelius, Mahler and Beethoven, placing the viewer at the heart of the orchestra, have been presented at Southbank Centre and internationally.

The Philharmonia's Principal International Partner is Wuliangye.



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Santtu-Matias Rouvali

In the 2019/20 season Santtu-Matias Rouvali continued as Chief Conductor of Gothenburg Symphony and as Principal Conductor Designate of the Philharmonia Orchestra, where he succeeds Esa-Pekka Salonen as Principal Conductor in 2021/22. Alongside these posts he retains his longstanding position as Chief Conductor with Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra, close to his home in Finland. His international profile continues to flourish. He debuted the season with the New York Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic and Royal Concertgebouw orchestras in wide-ranging repertoire. He conducted the New York premiere

of Bryce Dessner's *Wires*, and at the Concertgebouw he conducted the world premiere of *Ariadne* by Theo Verbey, as well as Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*. In Berlin he performed Ravel's Piano Concerto in G minor with Alice Sara Ott, alongside Sibelius's Symphony No. 1.

He has built a loyal following internationally after successful tour concerts last season with Gothenburg Symphony in Vienna, where he returned in December to conduct the Wiener Symphoniker and Nicola Benedetti. In 2019/20 he returned to several orchestras across Europe, including the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin.



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Rouvali's Gothenburg season opened with a programme featuring Leif Ove Andsnes, the orchestra's Artist in Residence for 2019/20. Following last season's successful tour of Germany and Austria with Alice Sara Ott and Martin Grubinger, Rouvali and Gothenburg Symphony were back on the road in February 2020 touring Japan. Together with violinist Fumiaki Miura and pianist Mari Kodama, they performed works by Shostakovich, Beethoven and Sibelius across eight major cities from Fukuoka to Tokyo. He also toured with the Philharmonia to the Canary Islands in January 2020, performing in Gran Canaria and Tenerife as part of the Canary Islands Festival. In London, highlights of his season with the Philharmonia include extracts from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5 and Sibelius's Symphony No. 5, alongside soloists Nikolai Lugansky, Behzod Abduraimov and Nemanja Radulović.

Adding another cornerstone to his tenure in Gothenburg, Rouvali is making his mark on the orchestra's impressive recording legacy. In January 2019 they released a celebrated first disc of an ambitious Sibelius cycle, pairing Symphony No. 1 with the early tone poem *En saga*. The album won the Gramophone Editor's Choice award, the Choc de Classica, a prize from the German Record Critics and the prestigious French Diapason d'Or 'Decouverte'.

With Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra and violinist Baiba Skride, Rouvali has recorded five concertos on the Orfeo label: Nielsen, Sibelius, Bernstein, Korngold and Rozsa. Alongside a busy symphonic conducting career, as Chief Conductor in Tampere he conducted Verdi's opera *La forza del destino*, and the world premiere of Olli Kortekangas's *Veljeni vartija (My Brother's Keeper)* with Tampere Opera in spring 2018.

Recorded in the Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, London on 3rd November 2019

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| Producer and Editor | Jennifer Howells |
| Recording Engineers | Mike Hatch, James Waterhouse, Tom Mungall, Tom Lewington |
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