

## 青少年管弦樂隊指南，作品三十四

布列頓 (1913–1976)

### 浦賽爾主題變奏曲與賦格曲

對任何想認識西方交響樂團的人，浦羅歌菲夫的《彼得與狼》與布列頓的《青少年管弦樂隊指南》，都是最好的入門，兩位作曲家也的確為如此實用性質譜寫。以布列頓來說，此曲是他在 1945 年接受英國教育部委託，為紀錄片《管弦樂隊的樂器》所譜寫的作品。既然要寓教於「樂」，他引英國偉大前輩浦賽爾 (1659-1695) 的《摩爾人的復仇》戲劇配樂中的迴旋曲作變奏主題，在樂團總奏後先介紹木管、銅管、弦樂與敲擊四大樂器分類，之後按木管樂（第一變奏長笛與短笛；第二變奏雙簧管；第三變奏單簧管；第四變奏巴松管）、弦樂（第五變奏小提琴；第六變奏中提琴；第七變奏大提琴；第八變奏低音大提琴；第九變奏豎琴）、銅管樂（第十變奏圓號；第十一變奏小號；第十二變奏長號與大號）與敲擊樂（第十三變奏），大致由高音至低音的順序，為其中要角打造專屬變奏，最後再以鬼斧神工的賦格曲交織所有樂器，回到開頭主題作結。

布列頓從小就是音樂神童，風格銳利個性鮮明，更一路發展成深刻內省的曠世巨擘。只要他願意，他隨時可以寫出迷人旋律，但布列頓更在意思索與表達，不標新立異也絕不墨守成規。在此曲他既回顧傳統，闡述各樂器的原本定位（比方說圓號與小號向來與皇室和狩獵相關，他就譜出與其形象搭配的音樂），也揮灑不羈玩心。他像是這些樂器的多年老友，熟悉其脾性又懂得讚揚其優點，但捉到機會，也忍不住揶揄一番，誇張其性格特色。當然，這一切都出自於愛，而他也知道如何讓自己好看——布列頓在賦格曲施展的種種管弦配器招數，加上刺激過癮的節奏與動態調度，或許只有「帥氣」二字方能形容。畢竟，無論樂器有多好，仍需演奏家與作曲家讓它們煥發光彩。布列頓再次讓我們理解這點，也使《青少年管弦樂隊指南》不只有教育功能，更成為諸多指揮名家的心頭好，音樂會裡的熱門金曲。

## D 小調第三鋼琴協奏曲，作品三十

拉赫曼尼諾夫 (1873–1943)

不過快的快板

間奏曲：慢板

終曲：二二拍子

「這是我的艾菲爾鐵塔；這是我的拉赫曼尼諾夫第三；這是我的聖母哀子像。」（出自電影《鐵甲奇俠》）。不只在《閃亮的風采》裡成為主角的人生轉捩點，《鐵甲奇俠》也以它作為著名藝術經典的代表——的確，豐美壯麗又展現燦爛超技的拉赫曼尼諾夫《第三鋼琴協奏曲》，足以和世上任何偉大傑作相提並論，更因電影而家傳戶曉，成為流行文化的一部分。

這首看似火花四射的絢爛之作，創作背景卻頗令人玩味。1909 年的拉赫曼尼諾夫早已走出其《第一交響曲》首演失敗的陰影，以膾炙人口的《第二鋼琴協奏曲》（1901 年）贏得熱烈讚賞與葛令卡大獎肯定。他結婚成家也暢快出遊，雖然 1905 年俄國革命的浪潮曾讓他徬徨不安，但整體而言，拉赫曼尼諾夫仍愉快享受陰霾後的陽光。隨著《第二交響曲》再獲葛令卡大獎、作品編號二十九的交響詩《死之島》大受好評和俄國皇家音樂學會副主席的任命，他真正登上了傑出作曲家之位，成為輿論和學界中最出色的才子。也就在這段黃金歲月，拉赫曼尼諾夫將他巨人的手掌叩向新世界的大門，《第三鋼琴協奏曲》也就順應而生。

此曲表面上是為美國登台首演而作，醞釀期卻可追溯至 1907 年。拉赫曼尼諾夫泉湧的樂想和「如工人做苦力般」地寫作，終使他一股作氣完成。第一樂章第一主題宛如東正教聖詠，悠然歌唱長達一分鐘，還巧妙用盡一個八度內的十二個音。第二主題更加浪漫深情，是誠摯且娓娓道來的心靈獨白。這兩段旋律在此曲將不斷變化，循環出現於其後樂章的主題、副題、插句和管弦樂段，使全曲環環相扣、一以貫之，也讓鋼琴家得以設計深刻詮釋，自反覆再現的樂想中回溯、呼應或評論先前陳述。以奏鳴曲式寫作的第一樂章，中段以極具爆發力的發展和華彩樂段聞名，最後又輕巧收尾留下雋永詩意。作曲家寫了兩版華彩樂段，一長大厚重，一短捷輕快，二者殊途同歸，讓演奏者自行選擇發揮。

第二樂章鋼琴主題寫於降 D 大調。這是拉赫曼尼諾夫最心愛的調性，總以它訴說內心話，尤其是鄉愁。他以塊狀大和弦推展出恢宏樂句，段段相連綿延不絕，極度考驗演奏者的能力，結尾前更出現以第一樂章第一主題為變奏的快速圓舞曲，彷彿過去美好在夢中相見。終樂章以軍樂號角意象開場，大戰果然隨之而來。中段又是一連串回顧，寓深思於超技，盡展作曲家對昔日的眷戀。最後他重回第三樂章開頭兩段主題，接以激烈搏鬥後又以凱旋收尾。然而那戰爭是什麼？是對時局的控訴，還是面對自己的心魔？對這部洋溢昂揚鬥志與巧妙靈思的巨作，演奏者與聽眾永遠可以有自己的想像。這是浪漫派傳統協奏曲最輝煌的頂冠之作，但它出色的絕不只有燦爛演奏技法，更有值得探索的情感世界。

## D 大調第二交響曲，作品七十三

布拉姆斯 (1833–1897)

不太快的快板

不太慢的慢板

優雅的稍快板（頗似小行板）

精神抖擻的快板

若把十九世紀初當成「浪漫時期」的開始，並以此比對之前的「古典時期」，我們可以發覺古典和浪漫之間，並沒有明確的分隔線，兩者的延續其實大於對立。從莫扎特的轉調手法一路到二十世紀初，除少數例外，這一百多年間的作品都可說在基本的和聲、曲式、節奏和聲響規範中創作。擁抱過去並非特例，甚至也不見得保守不前，布拉姆斯就是如此代表。他精研昔日經典且珍視傳統價值，又能以自身才華呼應時代趨勢。在他的作品中，我們可以同時見到早期與後期浪漫的特色，聽到精雕細琢又不失狂放的聲音。

但傳統雖可倚靠，也能形成壓力。在貝多芬的巨大身影下，從草稿到完稿，布拉姆斯前後竟花了二十一年方完成自己的《第一交響曲》，即使他已是少年老成，年紀輕輕就能譜出深刻內涵的作曲奇才。千斤重擔一旦解除，翌年 1877 年他就完成《第二交響曲》。這是他寫得最愜意愉快的作品之一，音樂煥發自在悠閒，以及遊歷山水的快活心得。不過布拉姆斯畢竟是布拉姆斯，即使輕鬆，樂曲仍有深刻感受和內省思索，情景交融兼具獨到創見，是千錘百鍊下的大師手筆。舉例而言，第一樂章自弦樂低音和圓號悠揚聲響開始，立即給予聽眾山林田野的美好感覺。但主題其實以三拍寫成，可說象徵繁華首都的維也納圓舞曲。城市鄉村彼此融合，確實創造出特殊迷人的感受。第二主題由大提琴歌唱出淡淡憂傷，筆法宛如舒伯特，又帶有民俗音樂的特質。兩個主題沒有真正的衝突，中段布拉姆斯仍能以高超技法開展以第一主題為本的發展，調度轉折渾然天成。主題再現段他在聲響效果上多所變化，尾奏又讓第一主題重現，成為詩意盎然的收筆。只是在那圓號盤旋繚繞的獨奏中，他譜下模稜兩可的泛音，留給聽眾猜謎解題。

第二樂章是全曲風格最特殊的一段。不同於前後的明朗自然，它是作曲家的深刻省思。布拉姆斯以精到對位技巧鋪陳想法，句句簡潔凝練，不時流露嚴峻神情與戲劇性的緊張激越，篇幅雖短卻意味深長。第三樂章回到愉悅心情，宛如慢速的蘭特勒舞曲或圓舞曲，中段有孟德爾遜式的幻想風，又接以匈牙利吉卜賽音樂的曲調，將抒情、感傷、幽默、民俗各種素材精湛組合，筆法甚為巧妙。第四樂章是布拉姆斯四首交響曲中最活潑快意的樂章之一，我們可以聽到奔放熱情，如同民間節慶的爆發張力，但支持樂曲的又是沉潛穩固的持續內勁。氣氛曖昧難言的中段像是神秘森林絮語，又可解讀為作曲家的幽微內心，筆法與旋律都被馬勒等後輩引用。不但能動能靜，快慢交織轉換自然，這個樂章還有老練的節奏設計，再度展現作曲家的深厚功力。

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## The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, Op. 34

Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)

### Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell

For anyone interested in learning more about Western symphony orchestras, Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and Benjamin Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* are the best starting points. Both works were indeed composed for this practical purpose. The British Ministry of Education commissioned Britten's composition in 1945 for the documentary film *Instruments of the Orchestra*. Since Britten's aim was to combine education with music, he took the theme for his set of variations from the *Rondeau* of the incidental music to the 1676 play *Abdelazer*, or *The Moor's Revenge* that the great English composer Henry Purcell (1659–1695) wrote at the end of his life. The music begins with a statement by the full ensemble before moving on to introduce the four families of the orchestra: the woodwinds, brass, strings and percussion. Each instrumental section then gets its own set of variations, with the pattern generally moving through each family from high to low register. The first variation starts with the woodwinds by featuring flutes and piccolos; the second features oboes, the third clarinets, and the fourth bassoons. Moving on to the strings, the fifth variation features violins. Violas take centre stage for the sixth variation. The seventh focuses on cellos, the eighth double basses, and the ninth the harp. The tenth through twelfth variations put the spotlight on the brass instruments, highlighting the horns, trumpets, and trombones and tuba, respectively. The thirteenth variation then showcases the percussion family. Finally, an extraordinary fugue brings all of the instruments back together again before the main theme is restated and closes the work.

Britten was a musical prodigy. He had a sharp style and a distinctive personality, and he eventually grew into an introspective and outstanding figure in classical music. Whenever he wished to, he could compose charming melodies at the drop of a hat, but he was more concerned with contemplation and expression. Though he was not regarded as an innovator, that does not mean that he was conventional. In *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, Britten looks back on tradition and includes clues pointing to the original historical use of each instrument. For example, the horn and the trumpet had long been associated with royalty and hunting, and he composed their music with that image in mind. Britten fully channels his unrestrained playfulness by making such associations. He treats the instruments as long-time friends, demonstrating his familiarity with the instruments' temperaments and praising their merits. At the same time, whenever the opportunity comes up, he cannot help but teasingly exaggerate their characteristics a little. Of course, the teasing is done out of love, and he knew how to make himself look good – one could only describe Britten's instrumentation for his fugues and his exciting rhythms and dynamics as “dashing”. After all, no matter how good an instrument is, one needs musicians and composers to bring out its potential. Britten hammers this point home with *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* – not only is it educational, but the work is also beloved by many renowned conductors and is widely played on concert stages.



## Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873 – 1943)

*Allegro ma non tanto*

*Intermezzo: Adagio*

*Finale: Alla breve*

For the life of the protagonist in the 1996 movie *Shine*, Sergei Rachmaninov's *Third Piano Concerto* symbolises a turning point. The work is also mentioned in the film *Iron Man* as an example of an ultimate classic: "This is my Eiffel Tower. This is my Rachmaninov's Third. My Pietà." Indeed, the *Third Piano Concerto* has come to be revered as a majestic and virtuoso tour de force, comparable to any other great masterpiece, and, as these examples from cinema show, has become part of popular culture.

The story behind the creation of this dazzling composition is an interesting one. By 1909, Rachmaninov had long since stepped out from under the shadow of his *First Symphony's* unsuccessful premiere in 1897. His celebrated *Second Piano Concerto* (1901) had earned an enthusiastic reception and was recognised with a Glinka Award. The composer had married and was travelling extensively. Although the stormy waves of the 1905 Russian Revolution had made him uneasy, Rachmaninov was on the whole enjoying the sun that came after the haze. He earned another Glinka Award for the *Second Symphony*. With the warm reception of his symphonic poem *Isle of the Dead*, Op. 29, and his appointment as Vice-President of the Imperial Russian Musical Society, he finally found himself among the great composers and became a central figure in both public and academic circles. It was during this golden period that the musical giant knocked on the doors to the new world, and the *Third Piano Concerto* was born.

It is often pointed out that the concerto was written for Rachmaninov's first performances in the United States in 1909, but work on the composition actually began in 1907. Overflowing with musical ideas and "working away like a slave", as he put it, he completed the score at fever pitch in September 1909. The opening statement of the first theme of the first movement, which sounds like a Russian Orthodox chant, lasts up to a minute in length and cleverly uses all twelve notes of the octave. The second theme, which suggests a monologue of the soul, is more romantic and intense. Variations of these two melodies recur in the themes, secondary themes, episodes, and orchestral passages of the subsequent movements, thus unifying the whole work. Such a treatment allows the pianist to offer insightful interpretations and to recall, echo, or comment on previous statements through these recurring musical conceits. In the middle of the first movement, we encounter a famously explosive development section and cadenza (music for the solo piano). Rachmaninov wrote two versions of this cadenza: one is longer, with heavier chords, while the other is shorter and lighter. They create two different journeys but ultimately lead to the same destination. The composer left the choice of which cadenza to play open to each performer's discretion. A brief coda closes the movement with a poetic invocation.

In the *Intermezzo: Adagio*, Rachmaninov has the piano shift its statement of the melody to D-flat major, his favourite key. Throughout his career, this was a key he used to express inner feelings, particularly of homesickness. He punctuates the phrases of the second movement with large block chords to create unbroken continuity. This is extremely challenging to perform. As if a dream of good things past, a quick waltz reappears – a variation of the first theme from the first movement – before the second movement closes. The third movement opens by evoking the horns used in military fanfares to lead soldiers into battle. The middle section again features a number of recalled moments – a signature of the composer’s longing for a beautiful past. Finally, the music returns to the two themes heard at the beginning of the third movement, and a fierce battle follows, ending in triumph. But what kind of battle is it? For Rachmaninov, was it a protest against the political situation in Russia at the time, or perhaps a fight against his own demons? Both musicians and listeners are free to use their imaginations to interpret the martial spirit in this piano masterpiece. The *Third Piano Concerto* holds a reputation as one of the crown jewels of the traditional romantic concerto and as one of the most technically challenging concertos to play. But its brilliance lies not only in its demonstrative technical virtuosity but also in the fascinating range of emotions that it explores.

## Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 73

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)

*Allegro non troppo*

*Adagio non troppo*

*Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino)*

*Allegro con spirito*

If we assume that the Romantic period began roughly at the start of the 19th century and compare it with the Classical period that came before, we find that there is no clear-cut line separating the two. The former is more a continuation of the latter than an opposing style. From Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's unusual harmonic choices in the 18th century to the start of the 20th century, a certain continuity in terms of overall musical standards can be found. Embracing the past is nothing out of the ordinary, nor should it be considered “non-progressive”, and Johannes Brahms exemplifies this assertion. He closely studied the classics and cherished traditional values, and he was able to respond to changing times on the merits of his own talents. The characteristics of both early and late Romanticism can be found in his works, along with finely crafted yet unrestrained sounds.

While traditions can be comforting, they can also create pressure. Under the immense shadow cast by Ludwig van Beethoven, Brahms took a total of twenty-one years to take his *First Symphony* from its first draft to the final version, even though he was already an experienced prodigy who was adept at creating substantive compositions. Once the burden of crafting his *First Symphony* was lifted, he finished the *Second Symphony* during the year following (1877). Brahms had one of the most enjoyable experiences among all of his works composing the *Second*. The music is sunny and carefree, conveying the joys of travelling through the countryside. But Brahms is Brahms. Although the *Second Symphony* is essentially a light-hearted work, this is a thoughtful and introspective composition that interweaves evocations of natural scenery with emotions and unique ideas. It is a work written by a seasoned master composer. For example, the first movement opens with the melodious sounds of the low strings and horns, immediately conveying the pleasant feelings stirred by nature's mountains, forests, and fields. However, the theme is played in 3/4 time, in the rhythm of a Viennese waltz, which can be said to symbolise the bustling capital. This fusion of city and countryside does indeed give off a particular charm. Brahms wrote the melancholic second theme, played by the cellos, in the style of Franz Schubert and imbued it with the characteristics of folk music. No real conflict exists between the two themes. The development section in the middle of the movement is skilfully based on the principal theme and leads naturally to the recapitulation, which is full of subtle dynamics and transitions. In the coda, Brahms repeats the first theme for a poetic finish. The ambiguous overtones suggested by the lingering horn solo are left for the audience to decipher.

The slow second movement could be described as the most stylish and unique of the whole symphony. Unlike the bright and natural movements that come before and after it, the second movement captures the composer's contemplative mood. Brahms carefully weaves his lines together to elaborate on his thoughts, writing passages that are concise and tightly constructed; occasionally, a grim mood emerges and there is dramatic tension, but these moments are brief and add depth. The *Allegretto grazioso* returns to a joyous spirit and resembles a slow *ländler* or waltz. The much faster middle section is reminiscent of Mendelssohn's fantasias and breaks out into a Hungarian Gypsy tune. This third movement skilfully combines lyrical and sentimental expression with humour and folk elements. The *Allegro con spirito* finale is one of the most exuberant and energetic movements in all four of Brahms' symphonies. It is passionate and unrestrained, exuding the explosive release of tension associated with a festive celebration. At the same time, the unyielding energy coming from within forms the backbone of the movement. The development section at the centre, with its obscure atmosphere, might evoke the murmurs of a mysterious forest but can also be interpreted as an expression of the composer's deeply hidden core. Brahms' style of writing and melodic language were adapted by such later composers as Gustav Mahler. Brahms' music contains both quiet and loud sonorities, as well as transitions that move seamlessly from slow to fast tempos, and it features a sophisticated approach to rhythm. All of these traits are a testament to the composer's solid technique.