

TAKAYNA/TARKINE

Friday 17 September, 7.30pm
Federation Concert Hall, Hobart

Johannes Fritsch conductor
Slava Grigoryan guitar
Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

DEBUSSY (arr BÜSSER) Printemps (15')

Très modéré

Modéré

WESTLAKE Antarctica – Suite for Guitar and Orchestra (23')

The Last Place on Earth

Wooden Ships

Penguin Ballet

The Ice Core – Cadenza – Finale

KODÁLY Dances of Galánta (15')

Lento – Andante maestoso –

Allegretto moderato – Andante maestoso –

Allegro con moto, grazioso – Andante maestoso –

Allegro –

Poco meno mosso –

Allegro vivace – Andante maestoso – Allegro molto vivace

Originally written in 1877 for orchestra and wordless women's chorus, *Printemps* by Claude Debussy (1862-1918) is heard in this performance in the only extant orchestral version, which was orchestrated by Henri Büsser (1872-1973) from a two-piano arrangement by Debussy (Debussy claimed the original went up in flames). Debussy closely supervised Büsser's orchestration resulting in a score with the composer's signature attention to instrumental colours, including expressive flute, oboe and cor anglais solos. The orchestra is reasonably large but the instruments are used more for colour and tone than volume. Debussy claimed that the opening movement evokes the first signs of life with the coming of spring while the second, shorter, movement suggests the joyous bursting forth of new life.

The origins of the second work in the concert, *Antarctica – Suite for Guitar and Orchestra* by Australian composer Nigel Westlake (born 1958), lie in the soundtrack for a 1991 IMAX documentary film *Antarctica*. Westlake's brief was 'to compose music that captured the awe-inspiring grandeur, beauty, desolation and harshness' of the White Continent. He had hoped to write a guitar-based score for the film but finally had to abandon the idea. Nevertheless, he returned to his original sketches for the soundtrack in 1992 when he received a commission from the ABC to compose a concerto for guitar and orchestra. Thus, the *Antarctica Suite* took shape. The vastness of Antarctica is evoked in the opening movement; the coming of explorers in the second; the grace and agility of penguins in the third; and the ongoing scientific presence in Antarctica in the fourth. Commissioned by the ABC to mark its 60th anniversary in 1992, the *Antarctica Suite* was composed for guitarist John Williams and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

Although Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967) was an avid collector of Eastern European folk music, the *Dances of Galánta* do not stem from his ethnomusicological field trips. Rather, the melodies come from an early 19th-century collection of folk music and thus are more in the tradition of Liszt and Brahms than Kodály's compatriot and fellow composer Béla Bartók. An orchestral showpiece, the *Dances of Galánta* were composed for the 80th anniversary of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, which was in 1933. Thus, first and foremost, they celebrate the great tapestry of sound that a symphony orchestra is able to weave: the variety of colours, shades of volume and intensity, and the spectrum of contrasts at all levels. Notable too are prominent solos for winds, the clarinet above all.

Robert Gibson, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, © 2021

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