

Department of Music
University of Alberta



University Symphony Orchestra

**Malcolm Forsyth,
Conductor**

**Sunday, March 31, 1996
at 8:00 pm**

**Convocation Hall
Arts Building
University of Alberta**



Program

- Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*: Prelude (1862-1867) Richard Wagner
(1813-1883)
- Atayoskewin: Suite for Orchestra (1984) Malcolm Forsyth
(b. 1936)
- I. The Spirits
 - II. The Dream
 - III. The Dance

Intermission

- Symphony No. 3 in F, Op. 90 (1883) Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)
- I. Allegro con brio
 - II. Andante
 - III. Poco Allegretto
 - IV. Allegro

Program Notes

The Music Drama *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* first began to take shape in Wagner's mind in the mid 1840s. At the outset he conceived of it as being a comic opera. However, realizing that his dramatic forte was not as a satirist, he reworked his original libretto over the following decade. The end result was a story based upon the history of the German Meistersingers in which the action centres around a competition to become Meistersinger of Nürnberg.

Structurally, the opera is more closely associated with classicism than any of his other operas. However, it still retains the typical Wagnerian polyphony and "endless melody" that became a trademark of his late romantic style.

Atayoskewin, or "Sacred Legends" in the Cree language, was commissioned by Shell Canada Ltd, and is dedicated to the composer's father, Claude Forsyth, who died in August, 1984, shortly before its completion.

The Suite's three movements seek to evoke different aspects of the Canadian North. The first movement, "The Spirits", opens with a sparse texture of high-pitched instruments. Piano, harp and woodwinds blend a series of four notes in an icy, glinting motive, portraying the brilliant sunlight of Canada's frozen North. These four notes form the basis of all the material for the work. A flute solo calls

forth the spirits, and the tempo quickens into a dance-like mood.

The second movement, "The Dream", quotes the Fifth Symphony of Finnish composer Jean Sibelius, another artist concerned with depiction cold northern climes. The quotation appears in a setting of scale patterns softly played by the strings, against swelling and fading brass chords. A climax is attained with trombones singing a long line, and the dream then subsides to stillness.

"The Dance", a satire, concludes the Suite by evoking the wide-open sound of country fiddling. The whirling theme is interrupted by a short interlude for clarinet and harp with *col legno* string accompaniment. The piece ends boisterously.

Atayoskewin was awarded the first-ever JUNO as "Best Classical Composition" by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences in 1987.

For his entire life Brahms lived with the overwhelming public expectation that he was to continue the great symphonic legacy of Beethoven. This pressure was coupled with his concern that the public, who were accustomed to programmatic music such as Wagner's, would not accept his classical style. As a result it was not until the 1870s, when he was more than forty years old, that he began to compose his symphonies. At first he proceeded cautiously, opting to test his orchestration techniques on the *Variations on a Theme by Haydn* before completing his first symphony.

By the time he began writing his **Third Symphony** in 1883 he had firmly established himself in the genre. All of Brahms's symphonic works are based on classical forms. The first and fourth movements of this symphony are composed in sonata-allegro form and the two inner movements are in ABA song form. Despite Brahms's conservatism (a trait for which he was both praised and criticized) his music often contains many non-traditional aspects. For instance, though the key centre of the symphony is F major much of the music is written in minor keys, including the third movement, in C minor, and the final movement which is in F minor except at the end. Also, though his third movements were always conceived as scherzos or allegrettos, the *Poco Allegretto* of this symphony does not conform to the character that this type of movement traditionally evokes. Instead of light and lively music as would be expected the mood is dark and melancholy.

The Third Symphony was praised by the 19th century critic Hanslick as being the most perfect symphony ever written (an opinion which he still held after Brahms had written his fourth). It is indeed one of the great masterpieces of western music. The entire symphony is brilliantly tied together rhythmically, harmonically, motivically, and spiritually from beginning to end. As the concluding strains of the fourth movement settle towards the final pianissimo chord, the upper strings quietly reiterate their opening theme from the first movement creating a sense of completion. It is the only one of Brahms's symphonies to end quietly.

1995-1996 University Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

Adrian Dyck, concertmaster
Betsy Steed, assistant concertmaster
Mathias Silveira
Grant Sigurdson
Ryan Sigurdson
Mary Kagawa
Katherine Henshaw
Sam Zasadny
Helen Byron
Madelaine Lussier
Gautam Karnik

Violin II

John Radosh, principal
Jim Cockell
Kenneth Heise
Barry Mabillard
Laura Grantham
Kim Bertsch
Carol Sperling
Soh Yoo
Tim Huang

Viola

Miriam Lewis, principal
Moni Mathew
Heidi Klann
Marnie Ozipko
Meghan Schuler
Natasha Morrow

Violoncello

Paul Radosh, principal
Adèle Bossé
Kerri McGonigle
Olivia Walsh
Bonnie Pollock
Sarah Tungland
Krista Mury
Jennifer Tusz
Marc Dowdell
Sarah Snihurowych
Karina Bodo

Bass

Roberta Jenkins, principal
Robert Salomons

Flute

Dorothy Speers, principle
Susan Rostoker (piccolo)
Silvia Yee

Oboe

Alison Cassis, co-principal
Kathleen Murphy, co-principal

Bassoon

Darryl Hartshorne, principal
Susanne Hayman
Jacqueline Oppenorth

Contrabassoon

Jaqueline Oppenorth

Clarinet

Curtis Bain, principal
Suzanne Vuch

Horn

Gerald Onciul (Faculty)
Jonathan Ward
Gary Grønnestad
Jennifer Green

Trumpet

Steven Williams, principal
Kelly Mattheis
Andrea Emberly

Trombone

Corinne Kessel, principal
Laurie Shapka

Bass Trombone

Hannah Currah

Tuba

Krista Gilliland

Percussion

Greg Ferguson, principal
Tammy Morrison
Ross Mellors

Harp

Tracy Erdman

Piano

Catherine Donkin