

28th AUSTRALIAN LATVIAN FESTIVAL OF ARTS.

CONCERT OF LATVIAN MUSIC

Tuesday, 26th December 1978, 8.00 p.m., Adelaide Town Hall.

"Latvian Festival Orchestra"

Conductor: Josef Aronoff

I

Janis Medins

2nd Orchestral Suite from
the Ballet "Love's Triumph"

Dance of the Boyars
Ackups
The little Windmill

Jazeps Vitols

Folk Song Fantasia for
Violin and Orchestra, op. 42

Allegro non troppo
Molto moderato
Allegro

Violin solo - Laura Viksna

Bruno Skulte

A Ballad

II

Talivaldis Kenins

Piano Quartet

Moderato e espressivo
Largo sostenuto
Vivace e marcato

Robert Cooper (violin), Juris Ezergailis (Viola), Arturs
Ezergailis (cello), Mara Biezaite-Lashchuk (piano)

Jazeps Vitols

"Spriditis" overture,
op. 37

Janis Norvilis

The Daugava Lament

Cantata for choir, orchestra and solo voices.

Magda Veide (soprano), Genowefa Janmeija (soprano),
Emma Veikerte (alto), Dzintars Veide (baritone) and
Combined Adelaide Choirs.

Conductor: Kaspars Svenne

Janis Medins (1890 - 1966) was the most productive Latvian composer. Several of his larger scores have been written with a Mozartian speed, and he has composed in practically all musical forms. The works of J. Medins include four operas, two ballets, three orchestra suites, several symphonic poems, concertos, chamber music, works for the piano, about 250 solo songs, large-scale cantatas and a number of other compositions.

The suite presented is based on the colourful music of the 1st Latvian ballet, "Love's Triumph", composed in 1934.

Jazeps Vitols (1863 - 1948) is to this day the greatest Latvian musical personality. After thirty years of work at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he was professor of composition, and where, after the death of Rimsky-Korsakov, he took over many of his students, Vitols returned to an independent Latvia in 1918 and became the leader of Latvian musical life due to his unchallengeable authority. In 1944, when Soviet troops occupied Latvia, he chose exile and later died in Germany.

He has composed orchestral works and piano music, significantly widening the horizons of choir and vocal music and his works retain a great contemporary significance.

The Folk Song Fantasia was completed in 1908 and the notable violin solo parts of this work were often performed by the well-known Russian violinist J. Nelbadjan. The Fantasia is in three movements, the themes of which are based on traditional Latvian songs.

Bruno Skulte (1905 - 1976) studied at the Latvian Conservatory in Riga under the guidance of Vitols and Medins. In exile he was residing in New York and had a distinguished career as composer, organist and conductor. Skulte's compositions include symphonic works, an opera, string quartet, large-scale cantatas and about 100 vocal solos and choir works.

In "A Ballad" the composer draws on his emotional experiences whilst visiting the last resting place of fallen heroes and portrays a soldier's last emotions, death and wake.

Talivaldis Kenins (1919 -) studied from 1940 - 1944 in Latvia with Jazeps Vitols and from 1945 - 1950 at the Paris Conservatoire. In 1951 he went to Canada and since 1952 has been with the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. He became a full professor in 1973.

T. Kenins is the most prolific Latvian composer of his generation and his output includes five symphonies, concertos for piano and violin, chamber music and large-scale cantatas.

His Piano Quartet is based on traditional musical form, yet has contemporary overtones in harmonic expression. It was first performed at the Latvian Song Festival in New York in 1958.

Jazeps Vitols

"Spriditis" Overture

The Overture is from the musical score for a play. It was rearranged as an independent work in 1907 and awarded Glinka's Prize in 1911. A melancholy, haunting introduction portrays the play's hero Spriditis - an unloved orphan boy - in his grandmother's cabin. It develops to paint a musical picture of the many colourful characters in the hero's later adventures. The Overture ends with a bright theme for Spriditis' homecoming.

Janis Norvilis (1906 -) Graduated at the Conservatorium of Music in Riga, where he studied composition, piano and conducting. Norvilis feels great empathy with Latvian folk music, and folk dance rhythms often appear in his works. He has composed mostly vocal solos, choir works and cantatas and his choir works number several hundred.

The cantata presented combines traditional folk song tunes with excerpts from a song about the Latvian river Daugava, which is symbolically connected with the fate of the Latvian people. The personified River and Rocks on its shore lament the bygone days of ancient gods and ancestors.