

Montgomery Philharmonic

Intersecting with the Community

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2015-2016 – A Celebration of the Montgomery Philharmonic’s 10th Anniversary Season

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About Jean Sibelius –

Symphony No. 7, Opus 105 (1924) – Jean Sibelius wrote his Seventh Symphony in such a way that it was completely original for the time. To write a symphony in one movement and one that was so short—only 22-1/2 minutes long—caused quite a stir in the classical music world. Up to this point, most symphonies had been four-movement works and their length had been increasing since the classical era. Bruckner and Mahler were writing symphonies that were well over an hour and a half long, so this very short, one-movement symphony was met with skepticism. Sibelius, in the end, wrote a brilliant work and said everything that he needed to say. The work was premiered on March 2, 1924 in Stockholm, Sweden, as *Fantasia sinfonica No. 1, a “symphonic fantasy.”* The symphony was published, though, as *Symphony No. 7 (in one movement)* by Hansen Music Publishing.

Sibelius began to experiment with fusing movements together as early as his Third Symphony. This process was well received so he used it again with the Fifth Symphony, fusing the third and fourth movements together again. He went back to the traditional four-movement symphony with his Sixth Symphony, but distilled his ideas into a four-movement work that was less than 30 minutes in length.

Sibelius started work on the Seventh Symphony in 1918. Sketches show that it was intended as a four-movement work but was later condensed to a three-movement work in G minor with a second movement, adagio, in C. In 1923, the symphony became a single movement in C major. Throughout the summer of 1923, there were several drafts of the symphony, but the ending was not finished. The beginning of 1924 found Sibelius distracted with a large cash prize from the Helsinki Foundation, several family birthdays, and the composition of several short piano works that had been commissioned. He finally finished the symphony in March 1924. It has been said that only Sibelius could write a work entirely in C (both major and minor) that had so much emotion. The entire work is glued together with the first trombone theme that comes back three times to remind the listener of a new section each time after its first introduction. The work has constantly shifting tempi, as well as contrasting articulation, dynamics, and textures that bring both the player and the listener to many emotional highs and lows, from musical whispers to a point that seems to scream at you.

Instrumentation – 2 flutes (both switch to piccolo in Adagio section), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (Bb), 2 bassoons, 4 horns (F), 2 trumpets (Bb), 3 trombones, timpani, and strings

Artifact –

[New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein Score and Parts –](#)

[Sibelius shortly before he wrote his final two symphonies –](#)


1. Symphony No. 7 in C, Op. 105: Vivace - Presto - Adagio - Largamente Molto - - Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra & Herbert von Karajan
2. Sibelius: Symphonies No. 1 & 7 - Lorin Maazel & Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
3. Bernstein Conducts Sibelius, Elgar & Britten - BBC Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein & Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
4. Sibelius: Symphonies No. 3 & 7 - London Symphony Orchestra & Sir Colin Davis

1. SIBELIUS SYMPHONY NO. 7 OP. 105 FULL SCORE
2. Sibelius: Symphonies Nos. 4-7; Der Schwan von Tuonela; Tapiola
3. Sibelius: Symphony No. 5 / Night Ride & Sunrise
4. Sibelius: A Composer's Life and the Awakening of Finland

YouTube Video Links –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfwLm1rW14Q>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYsBvIhsEtA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHHfvdAqv8>