

Rattle conducts Debussy Stravinsky & Sibelius



1. Debussy - *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* 2. Stravinsky - *Le Roi des Étoiles* 3. Sibelius - *Symphony No. 5 in E flat major* Susan Gritton - soprano Monica Bacelli - mezzo-soprano Nathalie Stutzmann - contralto Sophie Marceau – voice Berlin Radio Choir Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Sir Simon Rattle – conductor

Le Martyre de saint Sébastien, L 124 is a five-act musical mystery play on the subject of Saint Sebastian. It was produced in collaboration with Gabriele d'Annunzio (at that time living in France to escape his creditors) and designed as a vehicle for Ida Rubinstein. Debussy's contribution was a large-scale score of incidental music for orchestra and chorus, with solo vocal parts (for a soprano and two altos).

Igor Stravinsky's cantata *Le roi des étoiles* (The King of the Stars; Russian: Звездоликий, Zvezdoliki') was composed in 1911-12. It is set to a text by the Russian poet Konstantin Balmont and published in 1913 by P. Jurgenson. The original Russian title literally means "Star-face" or "The Star-Faced One". The work is more commonly known by the French title as translated by Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi.

The work is very rarely performed, primarily because it is written for an unusually large orchestra: quadruple woodwind, eight horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, tam-tam (the entire percussion section only plays in one measure), two harps, celesta, and heavily divided strings—plus six-part men's chorus, and because it lasts barely five minutes and encompasses just 54 measures. Claude Debussy, to whom the work is dedicated,

praised the work in a 1913 letter to the composer; though describing it as "extraordinary", he doubted that it would soon find an audience, given its complexities and its short duration.

Symphony No. 5 in E flat major, Op. 82 is a major work for orchestra in three movements by Jean Sibelius. Sibelius was commissioned to write this symphony by the Finnish government in honor of his 50th birthday, which had been declared a national holiday. The symphony was originally composed in 1915. It was revised first in 1916 and then again in 1919.

The original version was premiered by Sibelius himself with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra on his own 50th birthday, 8 December 1915.

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