

1384. The Swan

Backgrounds Of S. Radic

Le carnaval des animaux is a musical suite for chamber orchestra by the French composer Camille Saint-Saëns. The work without opus number has fourteen small movements and lasts 22-25 minutes. During his lifetime, the composer did not release it for publication; today it is one of his most famous works.

Camille Saint-Saëns composed the "Carnival of Animals", subtitled "Grande fantaisie zoologique", in January 1886 in a small Austrian village. Here, in just a few days, he processed early sketches of the Carnival, dating from a time when he was still a piano teacher (1861/1865). The opportunity to write the work now was a concert given annually by the then well-known cellist Charles Lebouc on Shrove Tuesday. On March 9, 1886, the Carnival of the Animals, with Camille Saint-Saëns and Louis Diémer as pianists, was premiered.

However, he did not want to publish the work for chamber orchestra after all, as he feared for his reputation. For apart from imitating all kinds of animal calls through the instruments in the pieces, he had also quoted several of his professional colleagues (Jacques Offenbach in "The Turtles" and Berlioz and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy in "The Elephant(s)"). Rossini is not spared either, as one of his arias appears parodied under the fossils. The composers were already dead at the time and could not have blamed him, but Saint-Saëns did not want to upset their admirers either. The work only appeared with his publisher Jacques Durand after his death.

The Swan (Le Cygne). A rare recording of James Last's version of Camille Saint-Saëns' composition "La cygne" (The Swan) with trumpet soloist Manfred Moch from 1966, La cygne is one of two tracks recorded for Classics Up To Date but not included on the final release. This is a bootleg recording, so the sound quality is very good compared to



of a James Last recording, but it's a fascinating piece of audio history from the James Last archive. The term "Bootleg Recording" refers to unauthorized sound recordings and recordings, most of which were made during concerts and which are distributed via illegally produced sound carriers. Often one speaks also synonymously of black pressing. The LP "Romantic Light Classics" by "HANS LAST ORCHESTRA" is one of the rarest and most sought-after collector's items: a "Japan version" of "Classics Up To Date" released by Polydor in Japan in 1967.

Le Cygne (The Swan), andantino grazioso, 6/4 time. Portrait of an animal: white water bird, an atmospheric picture. A magnificent swan glides along on a lake. In keeping with the size and beauty of the animal, the romance is played by the violoncello with piano accompaniment. This piece also became known as music to the dance solo "The Dying Swan". HANS LAST (later "James") transferred the melody to his trumpet soloist Manfred Moch and added some repetitions by the CHOR, which is played in octaves in my MIDI processing, otherwise it goes "under" when the trumpet begins. The 6/4 beat doesn't sound like a "double waltz", but like a beautiful Easy Listening 6/4 beat - I even found the criticized recording quality as very good! Vers.2 in Bb, Vers.1 in C as organ solo!



6/4-Beat, T=85

The musical score is arranged in a standard five-staff format. The top staff is for Bells (treble clef), followed by Strings (bass clef), Guitar (bass clef), Bass (bass clef), and Drums (drum clef). The time signature is 6/4. The tempo is marked as T=85. The score is divided into two main sections, Main 1 and Main 2, indicated by vertical arrows on the right side. The Drums part includes specific notations for 'HH-Sticked', 'Tamb.', and 'BD'.

Programming instruction

You will probably never see or hear a "6/4 beat" in a standard set! The rhythm basically consists of two 3/4 bars and only the way the melody is played reveals why the composer chose this form - namely: the phrases are very long. It's hard to tell there's a double-three combination playing here. The "beat" rhythm continues continuously and only the dotted bass lends the special kick to the whole thing (the point, however, is replaced by an eighth break). The strings carpet plays two inversions per bar and the guitar sounds with its 8/16th combination as a welcome loosening. In Main2 there is an additional Bells phrase, which could also be played by the guitar. The drums take over the guitar rhythm phrase with the HH-sticked (muffled, semi-open HiHat) - the lookup comes from the tambourine, so it is clear: it is an easy listening programming!