



Vincent D'INDY

Symphonie sur un Chant Montagnard Français

Vincent d'Indy (27 March 1851 – 2 December 1931) was a French composer and teacher. His influence as a teacher, in particular, was considerable. He was a co-founder of the *Schola Cantorum* de Paris and also taught at the Paris Conservatoire. His students included Albéric Magnard, Albert Roussel, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, and Erik Satie, as well as Cole Porter. D'Indy studied under composer César Franck, and was strongly influenced by Franck's admiration for German music. At a time when nationalist feelings were high in both countries (circa the Franco-Prussian War of 1871), this brought Franck into conflict with other musicians who wished to separate French music from German influence.

D'Indy's **Symphony on a French Mountain Air, Op. 25** (*Symphonie sur un Chant Montagnard Français*) is written in 1886. As indicated by the title, d'Indy took the principal theme from a folk song he heard at *Périer* overlooking the *Cévennes* mountains (hence the work's alternative name, *Symphonie cévenole*). Originally conceived as a *fantaisie* for piano and orchestra, the symphony is unusual in that it is scored for a prominent (but never dominant) piano part together with orchestra, and has acquired the label *sinfonia concertante* from some critics. It consists of three movements and lasts just under half an hour:

- *Assez lent - Modérément animé*
- *Assez modéré, mais sans lenteur*
- *Animé*

The symphony begins with an evocative melody played first by a cor anglais. The main themes of subsequent movements are based on this melody, and as the symphony progresses each subsequent variation becomes more and more like the original version. The work was dedicated to Marie-Léontine Bordes-Pène, who was the soloist at the premiere in Paris on March 20, 1887.