

## МУЗИКОЗНАВСТВО

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**THE WORKS OF JEAN SIBELIUS IN THE SYMPHONY CONCERTS  
IN KYIV (1902–1906)**

*The article is based on reviews of the Kyiv Newspapers and deals with the first performances of Sibelius' music in concerts of the Kiev branch of the Russian Musical Society. These were such works as "The Swan of Tuonela", the Suite "King Christian II" and "Saga". The interpreters of Sibelius' works in Kyiv were two outstanding conductors: Alexander Vinogradsky – the head of the Kyiv branch and Finnish composer and conductor Robert Kajanus who was invited to Kyiv to conduct the summer symphony concerts.*

Key words: *Sibelius, Vinogradsky, Kajanus, symphony concerts, conductor, Kyiv.*

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**Твори Яна Сібеліуса у київських симфонічних концертах (1902–1906).**

*Базуючись на матеріалах київських газет, автор відтворює панораму перших виконань музики Сібеліуса у концертах Київського відділення Російського музичного товариства. Звучали "Туонельський лебідь", сюїта "Король Христіан II" та "Сага". Інтерпретаторами творів Сібеліуса в Києві стали два видатних диригенти: голова Київського Відділення РМТ Олександр Виноградський та фінський композитор і диригент Роберт Каянус, запрошений до Києва керувати літніми симфонічними концертами.*

Ключевые слова: *Сібеліус, Виноградський, Каянус, симфонічні концерти, диригент, Київ.*

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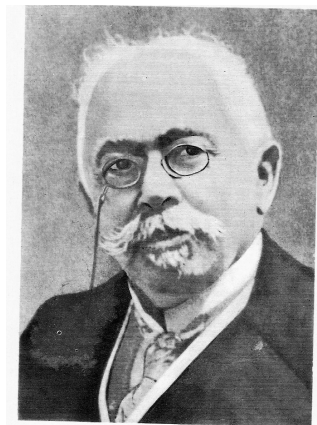
**Произведения Яна Сибелиуса в симфонических концертах Киева (1902–1906).**

*В статье, базирующейся на материалах киевских газет, автор воспроизводит панораму первых исполнений музыки Сибелиуса в концертах Киевского отделения Русского музыкального общества. Звучали "Туонельский лебедь", сюита "Король Христиан II" и "Сага". Интерпретаторами произведений Сибелиуса в Киеве стали два выдающихся дирижера: глава Киевского отделения Александр Виноградский и финский композитор и дирижер Роберт Каянус, приглашенный в Киев руководить летними симфоническими концертами.*

Ключевые слова: *Сибелиус, Виноградский, Каянус, симфонические концерты, дирижер, Киев.*

The first performance of Jean Sibelius in Kyiv was held on the March 29th, 1902<sup>1</sup> in the Extraordinary Assembly of the Kyiv branch of the Russian Musical Society (RMS) running by Alexander Vinogradsky.

By that time Kyiv became a major musical center of the Russian Empire. The performances of the City Opera House (founded in 1868), the systematic symphonic and quartet assemblies, academic events of the Music School (founded in 1867) and numerous private schools, touring performances of Russian and foreign musicians – this is an incomplete list of the main sources of artistic impressions of the Kievites. The activity of musical life and its high level are largely owed to the talented leadership of Alexander Vinogradsky, the head of the Kiev branch of the Russian Musical Society (1888–1912) and permanent conductor of its symphony concerts<sup>2</sup>.



Диригент О. Виноградський.

Due to Vinogradsky the number of the concerts increased, and their popularity was evidenced by the fact that many of the concerts had to be repeated because the theatre where they were held could not accommodate everyone.

Vinogradsky performed all the symphonies, overtures and "Mass" (Beethoven), "Manfred" (Schumann), "Requiem" (Cherubini), "Episode from the an Artist's Life" (Berlioz), "The Flood" (Saint-Saens). The ardent advocate of Tchaikovsky's oeuvre, Vinogradsky performed his works nearly every event. Symphonies I, III, IV, VI, "Manfred", "Francesca da Rimini", "1812", Suite No. 3, Violin Concerto, Variations on a Rococo Theme, and "Elegy" were first heard in Kiev conducted by Vinogradsky.

In the concerts of Vinogradsky there was the music of different epochs and schools. He said that "does not consider as necessary to send his likings only in favor of certain a priori principles <...>; but as a performer <...> he admires all good music, no matter what age, school and the direction it does belong"<sup>3</sup>.

In the programs of his concerts were not only the famous authors (both left and living), but a wide range of participants of the contemporary musical process, including Emil Sauer, Karl Goldmark, Christian Sinding, Johan Svendsen, Giovanni Sgambati, Sigismund Stoyovsky, Johan Halvorsen, Andy Vincent and many others.

The critique reviews at his concerts are very rapturous. Here is the review of the very first performance of Vinogradsky in Kiev (21.10.1889): "It's safe to say that we have not had such an orchestral performance <...> which succeeded in the described concert, due to the talented conducting of the Kapellmeister of the symphony assemblies. <...> Each period and every detail found for themselves not only a thorough external finishing, but also a relief aesthetic sense. All the program is known by our bandmaster by heart: sheet music was lying on the conductor's stand apparently only for a form"<sup>4</sup>. Or from other reviews: "A lot of life, fire, a variety of shades in his performance <...> he is able to electrify the orchestra so much, that it is completely at the mercy of the conductor"<sup>5</sup>. Vinogradsky repeatedly toured in Europe (Paris, Antwerp, Vienna, Berlin), he was also invited to St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, Kharkov.

The premiere work of Sibelius in Kyiv was "The Swan of Tuonela". The Kyiv musicians were familiar with the work of Sibelius namely on the performances in St. Petersburg and Berlin<sup>6</sup>, the reviews in the "Russian musical newspaper" (RMN) and the publications in the same RMN illuminating musical life of Helsingfors (Helsinki), and just Sibelius was the main character of them. However for the general Kyiv's audience his music was new.

As it was practiced in Kyiv, the concert was widely announced by local newspapers. In one of them the critic introduced the Finnish school of composition to the future audience, having named Järnefelt (in transcription of the newspaper it was as Gernefelt), Kajanus and Sibelius; he recalled the outstanding success of two symphony concerts of Finnish music at the Paris World Exhibition (1900), called Sibelius as "the head of the Finnish composers" and unveiled the program of "The Swan of Tuonela"<sup>7</sup>. The "Kiev newspaper" reprinted the review of the "Russian musical newspaper" on the poem of Sibelius, having highlighted the arising parallels with the "Island of the Dead" of Arnold Böcklin: "The same dead expanse of the water, barely rippling, <...> the same chilly and sad glimpses of life"<sup>8</sup>.

The special status of the Extraordinary Assembly of the symphony, where "The Swan of Tuonela" was performed, was highlighted by another two circumstances: 1) it was the benefit of the orchestra, 2) all the works included in the program were performed in Kiev for the first time. In addition to the poem of Sibelius, it was the Symphony "Rome" (J. Bizet), "Easter Festival" by N. Rimsky-Korsakov, Suite from "The Nutcracker" (P. Tchaikovsky), Arioso from the opera of Vas. Kalinnikov "1812", aria from the opera "Manru" I. Paderevsky and musical picture "In the twilight" (N. Laduhin). The greatest success fell to the lot of Sibelius and Tchaikovsky.

The most competent critic of Kiev Czeczott<sup>9</sup> called the Sibelius' work as "the highlight of the program". "The play had an outstanding success, was artistically performed <...> and repeated by general requirement"<sup>10</sup>. In his characterization of this "musical legend" (as it was called by the critic) Czeczott based on the features of emotional sounding of the natural landscape of Finland. "Extensive misty horizons, filled with gray granite, with countless lakes and dimly lit forests, positioning a spectator to the deep thought; gloomy painting of the northern landscape imposes to them the sign of severity and bleak beauty. <...> Such a kind of music poem as "The Swan of Tuonela" could originate only in Finland, a morose country, attuned to the melancholic contemplation, not alien to mysticism. The author's techniques harmonize with his task and mood; singing the swan, triumphantly floating on the waters surrounding the legendary "realm of the dead" in the Finnish mythology, Sibelius removed from his brass band all the vivid and bright elements of the upper registers (pipes, flutes and clarinets), having highlighted the alto oboe as a solo instrument (the singing swan) and formed of the group of string the whole phalanx of mournful voices, dividing them into 13, sometimes into 14 parties. Extremely characteristic and new are the reverberation of the bass drum, emphasizing by the ominous rumble only a few episodes of the score"<sup>11</sup>. Having noted the quasi-strophic structure of the Swan's "song" and its intonational connection with the theme of the Holy Grail in Wagner's "Parsifal", Czeczott concludes: "Sibelius' music legend has enormous power of inculcation:

it conveys the poetic melancholy of the Finnish world view and the nature better than the most trusty descriptions that treat this subject more or less specifically"<sup>12</sup>.

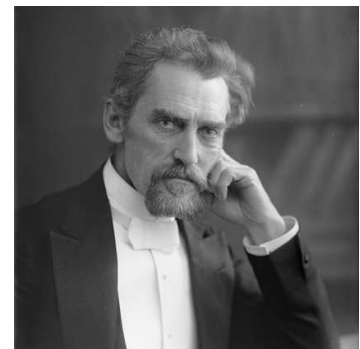
The poem of Sibelius loved by the Kievans did not go away from the repertoire of the Kiev orchestra<sup>13</sup>, and the interest in Finnish music culture received new impetus, due to Robert Kajanus invited to Kiev in the same 1902 to conduct the summer symphony concerts.



The outdoor concerts were a long tradition of Kiev. With the end of the winter season the orchestra (it was based on the Opera House orchestra) passed from the jurisdiction of the Russian Musical Society to the maintenance of the Kiev merchant club and moved to Merchants' Garden where from the beginning of May to the beginning (and sometimes up to the middle) of September every day (!) were given the concerts<sup>14</sup> (in case of inclement weather, they moved into the hall of the Merchants Assembly<sup>15</sup>). Admittedly, "among the summer pleasure gardens of Kyiv the Garden of the Merchants Assembly undeniably takes the first place <...> First of all, a wonderful location on the high bank of the Dnieper River, overlooking a magnificent, grandiose view of

the beyond the Dnieper spaces. Secondly. <...> the aesthetics of those pleasures that are offered to visitors (concerts and theatres). <...> The audience enjoys going to the Garden of the Merchants Assembly to breathe fresh air, admire the views and listen to the wonderful symphony orchestra"<sup>16</sup>. Even the vicissitudes of the weather, often interfering with the concerts ("involuntarily the musical reports about summer outdoor concerts are somewhat the meteorological records," the reviewers joked<sup>17</sup>) didn't deter the music lovers. The complaints (if any occurred) were explained by objective circumstances: the silence in the concerts sometimes was broken by the whistles of steamers from the Dnieper, the sounds of the hurdy-gurdy, inappropriately invading during the performance, and the noise of the crowd walking in the park.

Welcoming the invitation of Kajanus as the head of the Kiev summer season, the newspapers reported that the orchestra (total number 60) together with the Kievites included the artists from Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, Helsingfors, and imperial theaters of Moscow and St. Petersburg<sup>18</sup>. In the bow group there were highlighted such names as Holque, Seligmann, Cords, Föhström, and Veronesi (flute) and Boehm (French horn) of the wind players<sup>19</sup>.



The Kiev reviewers characterized Kajanus as a "serious musician", "sensible and thorough Kapellmeister". "The orchestra performance conducted by Mr. Kajanus is distinguished, firstly, by simplicity and rigor; secondly, by accuracy in the details; thirdly, by clarity and carefully deliberated nuances"<sup>20</sup>. It was noted "an enormous repertoire, which no conductor in Kiev have had before, an excellent teamwork of the orchestra, the performance (in the most cases perfect) of the best works of the composers of all nationalities, without any preference to one

over another, great soloists, interesting programs for all stages of music education of the audience"<sup>21</sup>.

Summing up the summer season, the reviewer of the "Kievskaya gazeta" ("The Kyiv newspaper") wrote: "Among all the bandmasters acted on the summer stage of our Merchant Assembly, above the others is the last one – Robert Kajanus. <...> In addition to the rich compositional abilities that put him together with the coryphaeus of the northern musicians, Mr. Kajanus has a great conductor's experience due to a 20-year leading the Helsingfors Philharmonic Society Orchestra. All his qualities were highly appreciated by Parisian audience, where he had been to during the last world's fair"<sup>22</sup>. We put Mr. Kajanus in merit his intention to promote Finnish music which begins to gain the place in the overall European musical literature. It's a pity if we lose Mr. Kajanus next summer"<sup>23</sup>.

Kajanus introduced the kievites another opus of Sibelius – the Suite from the music to the play "King Christian II" of A. Paul (the concert was held on May 13th, 1902)<sup>24</sup>. According to Boris Yanovsky, the Suite is "of great interest due to its originality, freshness and audacity. The most curious fragments of the Suite "King Christian II" are two last parts (Musette and Ballade). Zibelius<sup>25</sup> has a very good interpreter of his ideas in the person of Kajanus"<sup>26</sup>.

The Suite "King Christian II" entered to the repertoire of Vinogradsky, and was firstly performed by him on 10.01.1905 (two parts: Elegy and Musette were performed then)<sup>27</sup>. In his review Czeczott drew parallels between the Elegy and "The Swan of Tuonela": "Here and there we are encountering with a manifestation of feelings of melancholy <...>, but the grief [in Elegy] isn't so tragic and doesn't cause reflections on the "nirvana." <...> The denouement of the harmonious development of the work produces an extraordinarily soothing impression like a bright ray of consolation and hope"<sup>28</sup>. "Musette" liked as an onomatopoeia related to medieval bagpipe. "The sounding of the play is nice, elegant and fresh"<sup>29</sup>.

The "Sibeliana" of Vinogradsky was completed by "Saga" (the concert was held on 16.01.1906<sup>30</sup>), which received an enthusiastic reception by the audience. A. Kanevtsev, a critic, known for his conservatism, even was a little offended for the works of Tchaikovsky performed at the same concert, and explained the Sibelius' success that "Saga" "was written in the spirit of the latest trends of creativity"<sup>31</sup>. "In the play of Sibelius – he wrote – the flight of rich imagination, a variety of dense gloomy colors, and many new effects of the orchestration catches the eye. Individual episodes with more or less clear harmonic coloration are rare. In the most parts of the poem it can be observed the reigning of terrible chaos, some confusion of musical sounds to illustrate something like the Sabbath of all the dark forces accompanied by the raging elements. The play is written powerfully, in the modern spirit, responding partly to the modern moods. Heaven knows if it can leave a strong impression for a long time"<sup>32</sup>.

Kanevtsev's prejudice against the "latest trends", which he saw in the poem of Sibelius, is especially felt on the back of the appraisal, which was given by the "Russian musical newspaper" (the author is likely A. Ossovsky) to this "play full of life and imagination" the day before: "The play of that Finnic Korsakov – Sibelius –

amazed by its bold originality and orchestration impressionism. However the musical content is very interesting too. We don't know the programmatic value of this "Tale", but without any program the sounds are sweeping as the scenes composed into poetic images. The general character of this very solid poem developed from the folk songs is dark and ominously wild. The music comes to demonic frenzy, to shamanism. Something spontaneous, exuberant, swivel, the whole Horde of clumsy and mysterious polar demons, some orgiastic carnival of the evil and yearning souls, dizzying flurries to self-forgetfulness, then something plaintive, tearful and lonely, and again nightmarish dance of drunk, mammal-like devils. The orchestra becomes quite infernal not in the sense of thunder and noise, but in the sense of gloomy and sinister greyness and magic identity of the flavour"<sup>33</sup>.

After 1906 because of the conflict between the Kiev branch of the RMS and the City Council, the Kiev Department did not conduct symphonic events. Other societies were engaged with their organization, and the guest performers conducted the concerts. The works of Sibelius were absent in their programs. On April 17, 1912 Vinogradsky again conducted the Kiev orchestra and was greeted by "a loud ovation of the audience"<sup>34</sup>, but this concert was the last in his life. On October 3rd, 1912 he died.

The life of Sibelius' music in Kiev would be continued in Soviet times, but the prominent conductors Alexander Vinogradsky and Robert Kajanus will forever remain in the history of the "Kiev Sibeliana" as those who discovered for the Kievites the music of the great Finn and the first of his outstanding interpreters.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> All the dates are done according to the Julian calendar.

<sup>2</sup> Born and raised in Kiev, Alexander Vinogradsky (1855–1912) in 1876 graduated from the Law Faculty of the Kiev University, then studied at the Moscow Conservatory (Nikolai Rubinstein), the St. Petersburg Conservatory (composer Nikolai Solov'yov), and also took lessons from Mili Balakirev. In 1884–1886 he led the orchestra and College of Music in Saratov. It's his work to a large extent contributed to the reorganization of the Kiev music school into the conservatory, which opened in 1913.

<sup>3</sup> Russian musical newspaper. – 1894. – № 10. – P. 210.

<sup>4</sup> Kiyevlyanin (The Kievite), 1889, 26.10.

<sup>5</sup> Kiyevskoye Slovo (The Kiev Word), 1891, 10.04.

<sup>6</sup> For example, one of the Kiev critics, to complete his note announcing the upcoming concert of Sibelius, wrote: "This is a highly original composer, whose works I have listened to a lot in Berlin" /Kiyevskaya Gazeta/ (The Kiev Newspaper), 1902, 20.03.

<sup>7</sup> "Tuonela is the realm of death, the underworld in Finnish mythology. That realm is surrounded by black waters of the wide river where the swan of Tuonela floats, and its song sounds bleak..". Kiyevlyanyn (The Kievite), 1902, 29.03, № 88 (unsigned).

<sup>8</sup> Kiyevskaya Gazeta (The Kiev Newspaper), 1902, 20.03.

<sup>9</sup> Victor A. Czeczott (1846–1917) is a music critic, pianist and composer. Among his teachers were A. Henselt, A. Villoing, and A. Serov. In 1883–1908 he lived in Kiev. He taught piano at the Institute for Noble Maidens, and the history of music at the Music School. He also was a reviewer of the newspapers "Kiyevlyanyn", "Zarya" ("The Dawn"), "Kiyevskaya Gazeta" ("Kiev newspaper"). In 1908 he went to St. Petersburg. In the concerts of the Kiev Branch there were performed his Symphony No. 2, the symphonic picture "The Steppe", and a string quartet. He is the author of the book "A twenty-fifth anniversary of the Kiev Russian Opera". – K., 1893.

<sup>10</sup> Kiyevskaya Gazeta (The Kiev Newspaper), 1902, 13.04.1902.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> In particular, it was performed by Vinogradsky on 01.26.1904 and, as noted, "impressed a lot". Kiyevskaya Gazeta (The Kiev Newspaper), 1904, 26.02.

<sup>14</sup> In 1902 they continued until August 31st.

<sup>15</sup> Today is the M. Lysenko Column Hall of the National Philharmonic of Ukraine. It was built in 1882.

<sup>16</sup> Kievlyanyn (The Kievite), 1901, 22.05.

<sup>17</sup> Kievlyanyn (The Kievite), 1900, 30.07.

<sup>18</sup> See "Russian Musical Newspaper", 1902, № 22-23, column 600.

<sup>19</sup> Kiyevskaya Gazeta (The Kiev Newspaper), 1902, 5.06.

<sup>20</sup> Kievlyanyn (The Kievite), 1902, 18.05. The author of the comment is Boris Yanovsky (1875–1933), a composer. Until 1910 he lived and worked in Kiev as a conductor, teacher and music critic.

<sup>21</sup> Kiyevskaya Gazeta (The Kiev Newspaper), 1902, 5.08.

<sup>22</sup> World Exhibition in Paris in 1900.

<sup>23</sup> Kievskaya Gazeta (The Kiev Newspaper), 1902, 31.08.

<sup>24</sup> It was also performed there the Symphony G Major (Haydn), the excerpts from "Parsifal" (Wagner), prelude to "The Flood" (Saint-Saens), and "Serenade" (Volkmann).

<sup>25</sup> Sometimes the name of the composer was transcribed so in the Russian editions.

<sup>26</sup> Kievlyanyn (The Kievite), 1902, 18.05.

<sup>27</sup> Sibelius' surroundings in this concert were as follows: Symphony "From the New World" (Dvořák), numbers from "Lohengrin", "Valkyrie" and "Miracle of Good Friday" (Wagner), overture to "Oberon" (Weber) and "Aeolian Harp" (Berlioz).

<sup>28</sup> Kievlyanyn (The Kievite), 1905, 14.01.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> There were also performed Suite No. 1 op. 43 (Tchaikovsky), Concerto For Three Pianos and Orchestra in D Minor and Aria for String Orchestra (Bach), Rigaudon (Rameau), the overture to "Genowefa" (Schumann).

<sup>31</sup> Kievlyanyn (The Kievite), 1906, 19.01. Alexander Kanevtsev (1870–1929) – a pianist, composer and critic. He graduated from the Kiev School of Music. He taught the musical and theoretical subjects at the Kiev music school.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Russian Musical Newspaper", 1905 № 50, column 1237. The comment to the concert held on December 3rd, 1905 of the St. Petersburg branch of IRMS. Leopold Auer was as a conductor.

<sup>34</sup> Kievlyanyn (The Kievite), 1912, 5.10.