

A Kalmus Classic Edition

Jean

SIBELIUS

TEN PIECES

Opus 58

FOR PIANO SOLO

K 02261



PREFACE

Jean Sibelius was not a fervent composer of piano works, a fact that is well known and often mentioned. He professed no great interest in this instrument, admitting, in his own words, that he was a man of the orchestra. It is thus all the more surprising that besides the symphonies, symphonic poems, and variety of other genres represented in his oeuvre, one should also find so many piano works. They are generally short pieces that the Finnish composer grouped together into little collections. Sibelius gave these piano pieces the stamp of his own original style, whereby Impressionism tends to prevail over late Romanticism. The outstanding qualities of these formally well-balanced character pieces are transparency and an archaic simplicity, which is occasionally trimmed down to a two-part texture. They demand above all a subtle musical shaping, not technical proficiency.

These *Ten Piano Pieces* Op. 58 were composed in 1909, contemporaneously with Sibelius's only string quartet, *Voces intimae*, and between the third and fourth symphonies. Whereas the preceding piano collections *Bagatelles* Op. 34 and *Pensées lyriques* Op. 40 are characterized chiefly by their temperamental dance movements, in Opus 58 Sibelius relies more heavily on programmatic suggestion by giving the pieces titles like *The Shepherd* (No. 4), *In the Evening* (No. 5), *Fisherman's Song* (No. 8), and *Summer Song* (No. 10). The programmatic component does not mean, however, that Sibelius created rhapsodically free miniatures. A closer look will reveal that the closed formal structure holds sway. Nevertheless, the contemplative evening atmosphere of a piece like No. 5, for example, can turn out to be deceptive. The opening section veers out calmly, arriving at C-sharp major through an enharmonic modulation, which gives rise to an accelerated harmonic development. At the end, the sharp keys, with their chordal or monophonic material, remain more or less unreconciled with the framing key of F minor. *In the Evening* can be considered an ideal example of Jean Sibelius's frequently underestimated pianistic talent, his art of achieving a striking, unmistakable statement with succinct compositional means.

Whoever penetrates deeper into the piano collection Op. 58 will discover other amazing details. For example, the almost Baroque-sounding motoric rhythms, which are otherwise not so pronounced in Sibelius's piano works, or the homogeneously arranged keys of the last five pieces, which confer a suite-like character to the second half of Op. 58.

The *Ten Piano Pieces* Op. 58 were issued singly in the *Edition Breitkopf* (EB 3201–3210) in 1910 and are presented here for the first time in an album.

Frank Reinisch

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Zehn Klavierstücke

Jean Sibelius op. 58

1 Rêverie

Lente

p

dim. e rit.

a tempo

p

dolce

poco cresc.

poco f

dim.

p

*Red. dolce **

*Red. **

*Red. **

*Red. **