

Jean Sibelius: Florestan

■ While at school and at the music institute, Sibelius wrote a number of minor pieces (that remained without an opus number) for a variety of occasions to entertain friends and relatives. The most significant piano work among these youthful compositions must be *Florestan*, a four-movement work that Sibelius wrote at the age of 23 in 1889. He dedicated it to his friend, author and pianist Adolf Paul (1863–1943), who later wrote a play entitled *Kuningas Kristian II* (King Christian II) for which Sibelius wrote incidental music in 1898.

In his book *Profiler* (Profiles, 1937), Adolf Paul describes the genesis of *Florestan*. Sibelius was ill over Easter and lay in bed at his lodgings in Kaivopuisto in Helsinki. Having returned from the country after Easter, Paul presented him with an armload of yellow Marechal-Niel roses. "The following day, his brother Christian came to the music institute for his cello lesson. He brought with him a few rolled-up sheets of music with his brother's compliments to thank me for the roses: a small four-part prose poem, a composition in words and music, one of the most delicate and beautiful things Sibelius ever wrote – a tale of spring awakening in the human heart, its sufferings and joys."

Florestan is today usually described as a suite for piano, but the composer himself provided no sub-title. In the context of the history of music, the title clearly alludes to Florestan and Eusebius, the characters in Schumann's music representing different aspects of the composer's persona, and of course also to E. T. A. Hoffmann, who was an important source of inspiration for Schumann and whose novels were also familiar to Sibelius and Paul. Florestan was passionate, ardent and restless, while Eusebius was sentimental, calm and meditative. The main key of Sibelius's *Florestan* is G minor, the same as in Schumann's *Kreisleriana*, which Sibelius had recently heard performed in concert by his friend Busoni. The format is also compatible with Schumann's extensive piano works: a suite that forms a coherent entity. The movements should be played without a break, as Sibelius clearly indicated, and the music of the first movement reappears in the last. The influence of Grieg is more apparent than usual in the Nordic lyricism and nature tones of the music.

Each of the four movements has a descriptive title provided by the composer, originally in Swedish. They are an interesting testimony to Sibelius's sources of inspiration and his fertile imagination, his communion with nature, his sensitivity and the conveying of all this through music. *Florestan* is perhaps not yet the work of a composer in full command of his faculties, but it is the product of a passionate artist whose original idiom and unrestrained freshness are apparent in the improvisational approach of this piece. Interestingly, the subject is closely related to that of the symphonic poem *Skogsrået* (The Wood-Nymph), written five years later.

Sibelius's original descriptive texts with translations:

- I. *Florestan går ut i skogen. Han är nedstämd och olycklig. Det doftar af vildmossa och våt bark.*
Florestan goes out into the forest. He is dejected and unhappy. Scents of wild moss and wet tree bark are in the air.
- II. *Florestan kommer till en fors, hvars vågryggar, under det han betraktar dem, förvandlas till vattennymfer. Det doftar av neckrosor.*
Florestan comes to a cataract whose foaming waters under his eyes into water-nymphs. Scents of water lilies.
- III. *En af vattennymferna har våta, svarta ögon och guldgult hår. Florestan förälskar sig i henne.*
One of the water-nymphs has wet, black eyes and golden yellow hair. Florestan falls in love with her.
- IV. *Florestan försöker locka henne till sig, men hon försvinner. Nedstämd och olycklig återvänder Florestan genom skogen.*
Florestan tries to entice her to him, but she disappears. Dejected and unhappy, Florestan returns through the forest.

Eero Heinonen

English translation by Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

Till Adolf Paul — Dedicated to Adolf Paul

Florestan

Suite för piano — Suite for piano

*Florestan går ut i skogen. Han är nedstämd och olycklig.
Det doftar av vildmossa och våt bark.*

JEAN SIBELIUS (1889)

Moderato

The musical score for "Florestan" by Jean Sibelius is presented in five staves. The first staff (Treble and Bass) starts with a dolcissimo dynamic. The second staff (Treble and Bass) begins at measure 5. The third staff (Treble and Bass) begins at measure 9. The fourth staff (Treble and Bass) begins at measure 13. The fifth staff (Treble and Bass) begins at measure 17. Various dynamics and performance instructions like fz (fortissimo) and pp (pianississimo) are indicated throughout the score.

(8va) ——————

21

(8va) —————— — loco

25

29

34

38

43

*Florestan kommer till en fors, vars vågryggar, under det han
bevaktar dem, förvandlas till vattennymfer. Det doftar av neckrosor.*

Molto moderato

The musical score consists of six staves of piano music. Staff 1 (top) starts with a dynamic of *mp*. Staff 2 (second from top) has a dynamic of *Ped.*. Staff 3 (third from top) has a dynamic of *p*. Staff 4 (fourth from top) has a dynamic of *più vivo e pp*. Staff 5 (fifth from top) has a dynamic of *a tempo*. Staff 6 (bottom) has a dynamic of *f* and includes markings for *8va* (octave up) and *[loco]* (location).

1

A musical score for piano, featuring five staves of music. The top staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. It consists of six measures of sixteenth-note patterns. The second staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. It contains four measures of eighth-note chords. The third staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. It contains three measures of eighth-note chords. The fourth staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. It contains four measures of eighth-note chords. The fifth staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. It contains four measures of eighth-note chords. Measure numbers 8va, 8va loco, 8va loco, 8va loco, 91, and 94 are indicated above the staves.

*En av vattennymferna har våta, svarta ögon och
guldgult hår. Florestan förälskar sig i henne.*

Andante

The musical score consists of six staves of piano music. Staff 1 (measures 98-102) starts with a dynamic of *dolce*. Staff 2 (measures 103-107) shows a crescendo from *cresc.* to *ff*, followed by a decrescendo back to *p*. Staff 3 (measures 108-112) ends with a dynamic of *pp*. Staff 4 (measures 113-117) features slurs and a dynamic of *p*. Staff 5 (measures 118-122) shows a dynamic of *V*. Staff 6 (measures 123-127) ends with a dynamic of *p*.

A page of musical notation for piano, featuring five staves of music. The notation includes various dynamics such as *cresc.*, *ff*, *fz*, *p*, and *ff*. The music consists of six measures per staff, with the first measure of each staff being a repeat of the previous one. The first four staves are in common time, while the fifth staff is in 2/4 time. The key signature changes frequently, including major and minor keys with sharps and flats. Measure numbers 153 and 8^{va} are indicated at the bottom left. The notation is enclosed in a large brace on the left side.

158



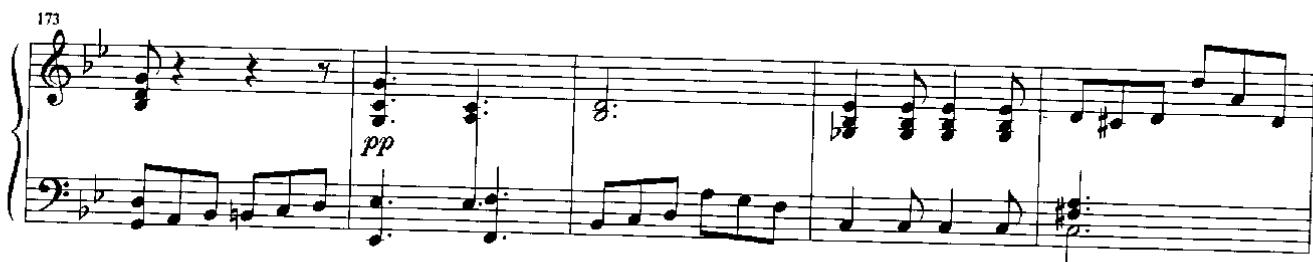
163



168



173



178



~~hon~~ försöker locka henne till sig, men hon försvinner.
~~hon~~ och olycklig återvänder Florestan genom skogen.

Tempo I

ppp

dolce

> > > >

Tempo I

220 8va

 (8va) 8va
 225

 (8va) loco
 230

 235

 240

 245

 249 dim. morendo V