

Four Sinfoniettas

1. Janacek. Sinfonietta.

Performed by: BBC Philharmonic Orchestra; Sir Charles Mackerras.

His last major work for orchestra. Completed in 1926. Originally called "Military Sinfonietta." "The opening 'Fanfares' are scored for 11 trumpets, two tenor tubas and two sets of timpani. Janacek's request for the brass players to stand, as the soloists had for the Pisek Park concert, is usually observed, but his preference for military band personnel is hardly practicable in today's concert hall!

Despite vast instrumental forces which, in addition to the above, include four flutes and piccolo, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, four French horns, bass tuba, cymbals, bells, harp and strings (plus a 12th trumpet for the blazing climax) the scoring is always transparent. The mature Janacek sound eschews any 'filling out' of orchestral texture – do not listen for lush, comforting string tone because you will not find it. Instead, the overall effect is rough-hewn, as if the music of the street and tavern has been dragged into the concert hall. Restless and with an obsessive use of *ostinato* (repetition), the score is constructed of short, fragmented phrases, performed repeatedly and passed from player to player and from section to section. Violins and violas are often required to play in the stratosphere while woodwind solos are by turn earthy and raucous. The unbuttoned brass has a field day throughout. If this description suggests a relentlessly acerbic tonal palette, then it is only half the story. Like all of Janacek's late scores, the Sinfonietta glows like burnished gold when it needs to and glitters hard as diamonds when it doesn't."

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| 1. Allegretto – Maestoso (Fanfares) | 2.19 |
| 2. Andante – Allegretto (The Castle) | 6.11 |
| 3. Moderato (The Queen's Monastery) | 5.35 |
| 4. Allegretto (The Street) | 3.10 |
| 5. Andante con moto (The Town Hall) | 7.51 |

2. Britten. Sinfonietta. Op 1. 1932.

Performed by: City of London Sinfonia; Richard Hickox.

"Originally scored for five winds and five strings: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, two violins, viola, cello and double bass. In February 1936, Britten revised the score for a small chamber orchestra with two horns and a small string section, which was only performed once during his lifetime.

The first movement is in sonata form. The writer, publisher and friend of Britten's Erwin Stein suggested that the work as a whole is modelled on the Chamber Symphony No1 of 1906 by Arnold Schoenberg.

In 1937, before Britten departed for America, his friend W H Auden inscribed his poem "It's Farewell to the Drawing-room's Civilised Cry" on the fly-leaf of a miniature score of the Sinfonietta. Britten was touched by the gesture.

1. Poco presto ed agitato
2. Variations, andante lento
3. Tarantella

3. Moeran. Sinfonietta.

Performed by: Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; David Lloyd Jones.

"The Sinfonietta, dedicated to Arthur Bliss, was composed largely in Radnorshire in 1944, both in the studio Moeran made in the house at Kington which had been his father's retirement home (until his death in 1943) and during walks over the surrounding Welsh hills. The Sinfonietta stands almost alone in Moeran's orchestral repertoire as a piece in which he quite deliberately attempted to forge new forms and develop new ideas, using comparatively lean orchestration to achieve a sense of clarity and space. By his own admission, Moeran was inspired, when composing this work, by the beauty of the Shropshire countryside that had also inspired the poet A. E. Houseman."

1. Allegro con brio	6.24
2. Tema con variazoni	
(a) Tema	0.50
(b) Var I	1.14
(c) Var II	1.26
(d) Var III	0.32
(e) Var IV	1.48
(f) Var V	0.35
(g) Var VI	3.25
3. Allegro risoluto	6.43

4. Malcolm Arnold. Sinfonietta No 1.

Performed by: English Chamber Orchestra; Sir Malcolm Arnold.

The Sinfonietta No 1, Op 48 was written in 1954 for one of the leading chamber orchestras at the time, the Boyd Neel Orchestra, and is scored for strings with just pairs of oboes and horns. In these smaller pieces, Arnold generally gives free rein to his wonderful melodic gifts, and is less concerned with dramatic conflict or with symphonic development. So the first movement is dominated by a gently and serenely-flowing tune, the second exploits the lyricism of the horn, while the finale even seems to have echoes of "bicycles made for two", in a hint near the end of the tune '*Daisy, Daisy*'.

1. Allegro comodo	3.39
2. Allegretto	3.58
3. Allegro con brio	2.41