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The Art Of Leonid Kogan (2014) CD8: Lalo: Symphonie espagnole Tchaikovsky: Serenade melancolique

Lalo - Symphonie espagnole in d, Op.21 *1. I. Allegro non troppo (7:24) 2. II. Scherzando (4:07) 3. III. Intermezzo (5:46) 4. IV. Andante (6:16) 5. V. Rondo allegro (7:43) 6. Tchaikovsky - Serenade melancolique, Op.26 (9:14)*
Leonid Kogan(violin) Philharmonia Orchestra Kyril Kondrashin(conductor)

Lalo's Cello Concerto in D minor (1877) is an admired work; but internationally, the composer's reputation rests primarily on the charming Symphonie espagnole. Sarasate, who brought the work into being, was thirty at the time. He was a delicate player rather than a forceful one, intuitive more than intellectual, and he was an effortless, brilliant technician. A friend to many composers, he introduced important concertos by Bruch, Saint-Saëns, and Wieniawski, and he was himself a composer of pieces that still form an indispensable part of the bravura repertory for his instrument.

The first movement of the Symphonie espagnole has sternly forceful intentions as well as striking gestures of unmistakably Iberian coloration. The second movement is a scherzo with a middle section of considerable seriousness and fancy. The Andante opens with portentous proclamations by the brass, then finds its more authentic voice in the melancholy and impassioned song of the solo violin. The rondo makes a peppy, brilliant close. --- —Michael Steinberg, sfsymphony.org

Sad, dark, and reflective, this Serenade Melancolique, Op. 26 , is worthy of the name.

Tchaikovsky initially dedicated the work to Leopold Auer, but was so miffed when Auer refused to play his violin concerto that he retracted the dedication. Unfortunately for Tchaikovsky's hurt feelings, this change never occurred in the printed edition; it still remains dedicated "Monsieur L. Auer." Though it does exist for violin and orchestra, it was reduced for violin and piano by Tchaikovsky himself in 1876. ---amazon.com

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