



Presents

Spirit of the Land

Sibelius's glorious *Symphony No. 3* is not only one of the Finnish composer's finest, but also one of his most heartfelt and personal works. Completed in 1907 when Finland was still struggling for independence from Russian control, Sibelius filled it with the heart and soul of his homeland. Anyone who loves *Finlandia* or *Valse Triste* will adore this symphony. All three movements are filled with Sibelius's most lyrical and expressive inspiration.

Thirty years earlier, the Czech composer Smetana also wrote music that expresses his deep connection with his homeland. His cycle of six symphonic poems *Ma Vlast* ('My Fatherland') is filled with the spirit of Bohemia's folksongs and dances. Our concert features two movements from Smetana's masterpiece. The second poem, *Vltava* ('The Moldau'), describes the great river's journey through the Czech countryside, from its source, through peasant farmlands, mythological legends, treacherous rapids and its great span through the city of Prague. The third movement tells the story of the female warrior Šárka, a central figure in ancient Czech legend. After being betrayed by the princely knight Ctirad, Šárka ties herself to a tree as bait in order to deceive Ctirad into believing that she has been captured by the rebelling women. Once released, Šárka gives him and his men drugged mead and while they sleep, she sounds a hunting horn as a signal to the other women. The end of the poem describes the slaughter of the sleeping men by the warrior maidens.

We open this concert with the overture to Carl Maria von Weber's last opera, *Oberon*, which was first performed in London in 1826. This short overture remains one of Weber's most popular and colourful works, and the opera's story about spirits and magic are brought vividly to life by Weber's lively music.

So – colour, spectacle and richly soul-stirring expression are vibrantly on display in *Spirit of the Land*. Another enterprising and enticing Resonance Ensemble programme that's not to be missed.

3.00pm, Sunday 24 March

At The Piano (156 Armagh Street, Christchurch)

Bookings at Humanitix: <https://events.humanitix.com/> (No booking fee)

