

NJRO - Report of January 9, 2011

We greeted the new year with a good representation of all the orchestra sections. Having two hornists (Libby Schwartz and Paul Erickson) was a special treat. Cellos: Sibylle Wallace (welcome back!) and Ruth Lepp (missed you, Innes!). Viola: yours truly. Violins (I lost track of who was on first, what was on second, etc): Herb Steiner, Noriko Kubo, Luba Schnable, Dan Daniels, Barbara Bivin. We missed Bob Whiteley, our stalwart bassist (we hear he was celebrating his birthday). Woodwinds: Laura Papparatto, Doris Danielson and Kent Weisert on flutes; Steve Lepp and Alice Marcus on oboes. We missed Evan, who was travelling overseas on business. Maestro Culbertson led us on.

We read Schubert Symphony No. 3 and for a change of pace, we then read Jean Sibelius' *Pelleas and Melisande*, Op. 46, a suite in 8 movements, written as incidental music for a Swedish play. Paul Erickson read the horn solos with aplomb. We skipped the 7th movement (*Melisande at the Spinning Wheel*), probably due to lack of instruments. Wiki calls the 7th movement the most dramatic movement of the piece, which could stand alone as a symphonic finale in its own right. But I must tell you, the viola part consisted of a repeated F# and G over interminable measures (the whirring of the wheel?) and would have landed me in physical therapy for repeated motion injuries. But the drama called for a death scene finale, for which Sibelius wrote the 8th movement "Death of Melisande." It reminded me of Grieg's *Ase's Death from the Peer Gynt Suite*, where the composer savors the transition of a soul into the afterlife. Nobody does it like the Scandinavians (maybe it's those long winter nights.)

We concluded with Bizet's Symphony No. 1, which he wrote at age 17 as a student of Charles Gounod. It contains themes that I find reminiscent of his later works, like the opera *Carmen*.

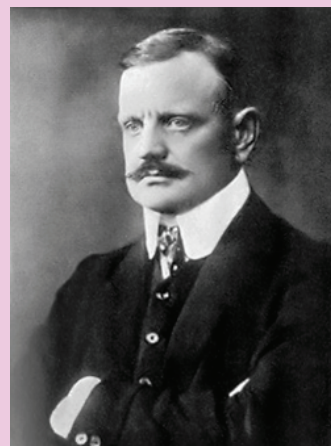
Due to a camera software malfunction, no photos this week, but here's a rogue's gallery of our composers dujour.



Georges Bizet 1838—1875



Franz Schubert 1797—1828



Jean Sibelius 1865—1957