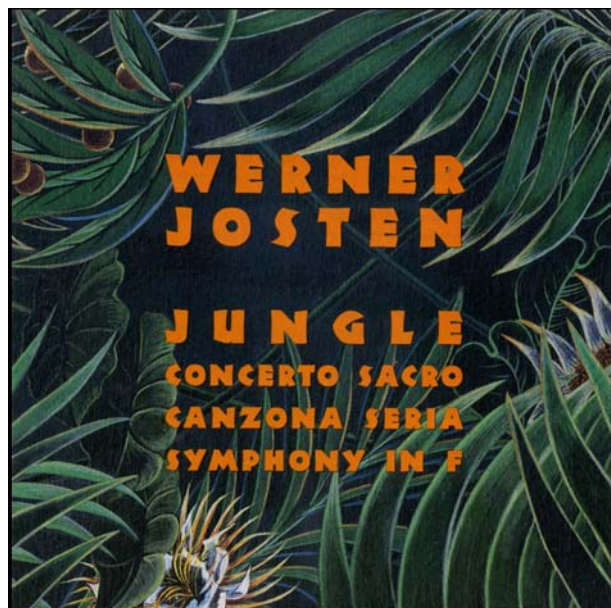


NWCR597

Werner Josten (1885-1963)

Jungle



1. *Jungle* (1928) (15:05)
 - Concerto Sacro* I-II (1925)* (31:50)
 2. I. The Annunciation; (8:55)
 3. The Miracle (9:23)
 4. II Lament; Sepulchre and Resurrection (13:25)
*David del Tredici, piano; American Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, conductor
 5. *Canzona Seria* (“A Hamlet Monologue”) (1957) .. (9:29)
Members of the American Symphony Orchestra:
(Paul Dunkel, flute; Arthur Krilov, oboe; David Shifrin, clarinet; William Scribner, bassoon and H. Rex Cooper, piano.) Supervised by Leopold Stokowski
- Symphony in F (1936) (15:30)
6. I. – Allegro; vivace. (5:26)
 7. II. – Andante (10:02)
Polish National Radio Orchestra,
William Strickland, conductor

Total playing time: 72:03

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Notes

Werner Josten (1885-1963) was born in Elberfeld, Germany. Despite an education in finance planned by his father, Josten’s interest in music prevailed. He received early training in harmony and counterpoint in Munich from Dr. Rudolf Siegel, a master pupil of Humperdinck, and studied with the famed founder of eurhythmics, Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, in Switzerland. He first conducted in Paris and before coming to America in 1920 he had been appointed assistant conductor of the Munich Opera House. Immediately upon arriving in the United States, Josten began concert appearances as composer-accompanist for some of the best-known singers of the day. From their first programming, his songs began to attract favorable attention from publishers as well as Olin Downes and Deems Taylor.

In 1923, Josten joined the faculty of Smith College, where he became professor of composition and where he was to remain for twenty-six years; it was there that he came fully into his own as a composer and musician. In the latter capacity, he founded the Baroque Festivals at Northampton producing and directing the first American stage performances of Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, and *Orfeo*, as well as Handel’s *Julius Caesar*, *Xerxes*, *Apollo e Dafne*, and *Rodelinda*. He conducted the Monteverdi *Combattimento* at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York under the auspices of the League of Composers. The productions attracted nationwide attention and leading metropolitan critics journeyed to Northampton and praised them in enthusiastic reviews.

Josten continued to compose a variety of vocal, instrumental and orchestral works, among them the ballets *Batouala* (1930-31), *Joseph and his Brethren* (1932), *Endymion* (1939); a string quartet, performed by, among others, the Pro Arte and

Gordon String quartets; and sonatas for solo piano, violin and piano, and cello and piano.

The symphonic poem, *Jungle* (1928) which opens this disc, seems a drastic departure from the musical ambience of his previous major works both of 1925, the *Concerto sacro* (also on this disc) and the *Ode for Saint Cecelia’s Day*.

Josten once remarked that he was influenced by the Bible, Greek mythology, Mediterranean culture, and primitive African life. On one hand, his compositions reflected a pre-occupation with the musical traditions of the baroque era, and on the other, as in *Jungle*, his fascination with the sensuous and exotic—the primitive mysticism of the African continent, then just beginning to stimulate paralleled interests in the fields of literature, art and anthropology.

The composer derived his inspiration for *Jungle* from a picture, the *Foret Exotique* of Henri Rousseau, now hanging in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. According to the composer, “the music tries to portray the emotions and sensations which assail a white man entering the jungle, with its lures, terrors, primitive love and ferocious death.” Scored for full orchestra of strings, woodwinds and strong percussive instruments, it also calls upon unusual ones, such as tam-tams, castanets, slap stick and, in what one reviewer called “the terrific climax,” a realistic lion’s roar.

The Boston Symphony with Serge Koussevitzky conducting gave *Jungle* its premiere performance on October 25, 1929. It also was presented by the Chicago Symphony under Frederick Stock on December 12, 1931. In both cities, the reviewers were enthusiastic.

According to the *New Grove’s Dictionary of American Music*, Stokowski conducted *Jungle* as the conclusion of the opening

concert of the 1932–33 season “in defiance of the Philharmonic Orchestra’s directors.”

The musical language espoused by Josten in the *Concerto sacro I-II* (1925) and in the works that followed reflect, on one hand, his preoccupation with the musical ideas of the Baroque era (a preoccupation shared with such colleagues as Bloch, Stravinsky, and Hindemith), and, on the other hand, his fascination with the sensuous and exotic in art and literature—Mediterranean and African alike. Thus, we find in Josten’s music a curious combination of solid formal constructive principle and contrapuntal technique together with relish for rich harmonic texture and a range of instrumental timbre and color. *Concerto sacro I-II* was, in the composer’s words, “originally conceived as one Concerto in four movements.” Like Paul Hindemith’s masterpiece of a decade later, *Mathis der Maler*, the Josten’s *Concerto sacro* was also inspired by the great Matthias Grünewald Isenheim Altar triptych at Colmar, Alsace. The Josten *Concerto sacro* is scored for strings, plus a piano obbligato that both reinforces the harmonic bass, somewhat after the manner of the baroque continuo, and also provides, from time to time, dramatic commentary at crucial points of the musical narrative.

Despite the neo-classic aspects of scoring the structure, the *Concerto sacro*, in its first two movements especially, is unabashedly programmatic. Just as Vivaldi in *The Four Seasons* depicts barking dogs and staggering drunks, so Josten has cello and viola by turns represent the ox and the ass in the stable at Bethlehem and a dozen bars later a fragment of plainchant by the piano gives us the *Questing Call of the Shepherds*.

If the two movements of the *Concerto sacro I* partake of the nature of musical narrative of the *Annunciation and Nativity*, the succeeding pair of movements comprising the *Concerto sacro II* are in the nature of set-pieces: a somber processional with ostinato piano bass (*Lament*) that passes into a poignant slow movement and radiant apotheosis (*Sepulchre and Resurrection*).

The composer outlines the episodes of *Concerto sacro I* as follows:

The *Annunciation*:

- Mary’s Dream
- Dialogue between Mary and the Angel
- O Sanctissima
- The Passion
- The Angel Proclaims Victory over Death

- Mary’s Ecstasy
- The Angel Departs
- Mary Sings Again to Sleep

The *Miracle*:

- Mary’s Fear and Anguish
- Voice of Comfort from Above
- Mary Remembers the Prophecy
- The Miracle is Preparing
- The Miracle is Wrought

Concerto Sacro II is divided into two sections: *Lament and Sepulchre and Resurrection*.

The *Concerto sacro* was played for the first time in 1929 at New York Town Hall by the Juilliard Orchestra under Albert Stoessel, and was subsequently published through a Juilliard Musical Foundation Publication Award. It was on the occasion of Leopold Stokowski’s Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the *Concerto sacro I* in 1933 that Lawrence Gilman’s program notes observed: “The religious sentiment expressed throughout, with its blend of mysticism and naiveté, is conveyed with rare subtlety and tact. The flame of devotional tenderness and exaltation burns with singular purity.”

After 1936 Josten composed almost exclusively for chamber ensembles, with only the exception of his Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra (1959) which was his last major work.

Canzona seria, subtitled “A Hamlet Monologue”, was originally conceived in 1940 for violas, cellos and basses, and was first performed two years later at the University of Rochester. In 1957, the work was rewritten for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and piano, and received its premiere in this form later that year in the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City with the Kreiselman Quintet, under the auspices of the National Association for American Composers and Conductors.

The Symphony in F was composed at Jaffrey, New Hampshire, in 1936 as the final work of Josten’s period of orchestral writing (1925-1936). The composer conducted it with the Boston Symphony that year at the invitation of Serge Koussevitzky. In 1938 it won Josten his second Juilliard Publication Award. Press notices spoke of the “vigorous music which strides along under rhythmic impetus” and noted that “the immediate effects of the symphony were tonic and refreshing.”

Production Notes

Jungle,
Canzona Seria

Producer: Leopold Stokowski.
Recorded in NYC, March, 1971 and engineered at Vanguard Records.
Publisher: *Jungle*, Associated Music Publishers (ASCAP);

Canzona Seria, Henri Elkan (ASCAP).

Concerto Sacro I-II

Producer: Leopold Stokowski.
Recorded by Robert E. Blake at the Ballroom of the Manhattan Towers Hotel, NYC, on June 9, 1965.
Published by Henri Elkan (ASCAP).

Symphony in F

Recorded by Polskie Nagrania, Poland, 1965.
Published by E.F. Kalmus (ASCAP)