



VIOLIN

Beautiful Sibelius Encore Pieces for the Teacher and the Advanced Violin Students

Five Pieces in his Op. 81

by Ann Anderson

Performing for local groups as a soloist in an “after lunch/dinner” situation has marched me through such solo books as *Thirty-seven Violin Pieces You Like to Play*, *Violin Pieces the Whole World Plays*, Josef Gingold’s solo book and the Fritz Kreisler numerous volumes. I’m always looking for short encore works for myself and for my students. Listening to a CD of Joshua Bell *Presenting Joshua Bell* with Samuel Sanders, pianist, a London recording, I was immediately attracted to the *Mazurka*, Op. 81 No. 1 as a delightful, showy piece that would be attractive to my audiences. Checking into the Op. 81 pieces, I discovered four other, equally attractive solos. As Sibelius was training to be a concert violinist, his knowledge of the violin and the various techniques available to us are evident in these short pieces. Each composition has a variety of problems to overcome, but they are well worth the effort.

Mazurka, Op. 81 No. 1, d minor/D major, $\frac{3}{4}$ meter

This piece opens with a dramatic cadenza (accompanied) leading to a high A on the E string, which gets the audience’s attention immediately. This high A occurs several times throughout the piece with other large shifts. The salon style is very appealing. My favorite.

Rondino, Op. 81 No. 2, D major, $\frac{2}{4}$ meter

Allegretto grazioso—light and fluffy with fast running 16th notes in the accompaniment. This piece is the easiest to play of the five solos. Eight measures from the end gets the violinist up into fifth position, but other than that, first and third positions work well.

Valse, Op. 81 No. 3, D major, $\frac{3}{4}$ meter

Another opening cadenza in triplets with a dramatic flare. This is a gracious “Tchaikovsky” waltz-like solo. The melody has well-placed 32nd note appoggiaturas which give it a casual salon style. This piece is also quite easy to play.

Aubade, Op. 81 No. 4, D major, $\frac{6}{8}$ meter

Another dramatic opening, but this piece starts with arpeggios (seven

32^{nds} on the first eighth note for the piano, ending with a 4-note pizzicato chord on the violin) in the first seven measures. The first section is repeated in the second half of the piece but the violin now plays the melody with added double-stops as a counter-melody. *Aubade* is French for “dawn song,” a term applied to music intended for performance in the morning. It has become simply a generic title.

Menuetto, Op. 81 No. 5, d minor, $\frac{3}{4}$ meter

This final piece is by far the most complicated and virtuosic piece of the five solos. Dramatic runs, double-stops and 32nd turns/appoggiaturas make for a very dramatic concert piece. This is not a casual salon piece but a very dazzling solo, both for the violinist and the pianist.

At first I wasn’t sure of the availability of these pieces in the United States. I got my copies from the library—published by R. E. Westerlund, Helsinki, © Edition Fazer, Helsinki, 1967. However, an on-line search shows they are available published by Boosey & Hawkes Warner/Chappell and also by Masters Publications.

Teachers can’t help from giving some advice to their students/teachers... so here goes. As teachers, we’re always helping and advising our students to reach greater heights in their skills. However, oftentimes, we ignore ourselves and our playing gets a little “rusty.” I urge you to join a music club (group) and plan to prepare at least one performance, 20 minutes maybe, a year. After you have practiced and studied so many years, you owe it to yourself to polish up your talents. I hope you can find the Sibelius pieces and perform a couple, just for your own enjoyment and the pleasure of your audience.

Professor Ann Anderson teaches at the University of Minnesota Duluth and plays in the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra as the Associate Concertmaster Emeritus. She received the Distinguished Service Award, Clinic Presenter, Master Teacher Award, and Orchestra Educator of the Year from the MMEA. †