

The Silent Years: Three Rhapsodies for Piano and Orchestra

I. The Beloved Rogue

8:09

II. Blood and Sand

7:44

III. The Gold Rush

7:51

In composing *The Silent Years*, William Perry has selected three of his best-known film scores and given them a full concert orchestral treatment, with the solo piano celebrating the many unheralded accompanists who provided music during the silent era. Each film stars one of Hollywood's leading screen actors of the 1920s, and their colorful character themes are combined with luxuriant love music since each is in thrall with a beautiful lady who becomes the all-encompassing focus of his life, and in one instance, death.

Each story has a unique setting, and the music must quickly establish a sense of time and place. *The Beloved Rogue*, starring John Barrymore, is a

narrative of the late Middle Ages, and this is announced at the very beginning by the brass section playing fanfares in open fifths. The music for *Blood and Sand*, with Rudolph Valentino, reflects the torrid atmosphere of Andalucia, with a strong minor key opening foretelling a fateful destiny for those who choose to be bullfighters. *The Gold Rush* captures the spirit of the Klondike in 1897 with an orchestral anvil portraying the pickaxes of the prospectors. Throughout the Concerto, the solo piano explores the emotions of the leading characters and invariably introduces the love music.

I. The Beloved Rogue (1927) Directed by Alan Crosland

Opening Music (François Villon) • At the Gates of Paris – The Duke of Burgundy • King Louis XI All Fool's Day • Villon's Farewell to His Mother • Love Music • The King Gives His Blessing

This is the story of François Villon (John Barrymore), the swashbuckling fifteenth century scoundrel and poet who wrote "*Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?*" – "But where are the snows of yesteryear?"

The Duke of Burgundy (Lawson Butt) arrives at the gates of Paris intent on arranging a marriage between one of his henchmen and Charlotte de Vauxcelles (Marceline Day), ward of the king. Crafty and superstitious, Louis XI (Conrad Veidt) asks the advice of his Court Astrologer (Nigel de Brulier), who tells him to welcome the Duke.

Villon, favorite of the masses and reigning monarch of All Fool's Day, taunts Burgundy as he rides to the Palace and accuses him of seeking to control France. To appease his guest, the King exiles Villon from Paris and is persuaded to agree to the marriage. But Villon and Charlotte meet, run off together and find refuge in the home of his mother, where he is later found and sentenced to death.

Villon's life is spared when he takes advantage of Louis's superstition by telling him that he, Villon, is fated to die 24 hours before the King. As

a protected member of the Court he is now able to meet Charlotte and proclaim his love. Burgundy, determined to see his plans carried through, abducts Charlotte, and Villon is captured when he tries to rescue her. Disguised as a cripple, the King

leads the beggars of the Court of Miracles to the rescue and vanquishes Burgundy. Charlotte asks permission to marry Villon, and the King gives his blessing.

II. Blood and Sand Directed by Fred Niblo
Opening Music (The Moment of Truth) • Seville – The Market Place; Juan Gallardo Plumitas, the Bandit; Serenade to Carmen • Castanet Dance
The Seduction of Gallardo – Doña Sol • The Arena and Death of Gallardo

Based on the Blasco Ibañez novel, *Sangre y arena*, this is the story of Juan Gallardo (Rudolph Valentino), an awkward small-town lad who becomes Spain's most celebrated matador. His career begins when he finishes a bull that has gored a friend in a small village ring. Watching him from a hillside is the bandit and outlaw, Plumitas (Walter Long), who is drawn to Juan through a spiritual bond of their common destinies. He follows Juan's career from afar.

Juan's fame spreads in Seville, and after a victorious ride through the streets, he serenades his childhood sweetheart, Carmen (Lila Lee), who becomes his wife. They dance to the rhythm of

castanets at the wedding, but for her he then gives up the café life he loves, and the castanets sound no more to Juan's fiery *flamenco*.

Don Joselito (Charles Belcher), a philosopher who comments on the action throughout the film, predicts tragedy when Juan encounters the alluring and aristocratic Doña Sol (Nita Naldi). She draws him into a reckless affair which he is powerless to stop, and humiliates his wife.

Juan and Plumitas both face death in a climactic scene at a crowded arena – the outlaw Plumitas at the hands of the police and Juan, remorseful at having betrayed Carmen, as a willing victim of his dangerous profession. He dies in Carmen's arms.

III. The Gold Rush Directed by Charles Chaplin
Opening Music (Alaska, the Chilkoot Pass); Charlie The Tramp; In Search of Gold – Big Jim; The Storm; Thanksgiving Dinner; Monte Carlo Dance Hall; Georgia;
New Year's Eve and Dance of the Rolls; Discovery of Gold and Reunion with Georgia

A long procession of prospectors, including Charlie the tramp (Charlie Chaplin), makes its way through the Chilkoot Pass in Alaska in search of that illusory mountain of gold. One prospector, Big Jim (Mack Swain), who has staked a large claim, takes shelter in a cabin during a snowstorm where he

encounters a cold and hungry Charlie. With no food available, together they relish the joys of Thanksgiving dinner by boiling one of Charlie's boots. Charlie eats his portion with the elegance of a true gourmet.

When better weather arrives, Big Jim goes back

to his claim but is knocked on the head by an adversary and loses his memory. Lonely and penniless, Charlie makes his way to town and enters the Monte Carlo dance hall, where he instantly falls in love with the spirited Georgia (Georgia Hale). As a lark, she accepts his invitation to a New Year's Eve dinner. The table set and the meal cooking, Charlie dreams of Georgia and

performs the famous table-top dance of the rolls, but Georgia never comes.

Big Jim chances upon the dejected Charlie and enlists his help in rediscovering his claim. After a perilous escape from a teetering cabin, they come upon the gold. Charlie, now a multi-millionaire, finds Georgia again and wins her hand.