

Maslenitsa (2012)

Commissioned by the National Orchestra of Bordeaux Aquitaine and the Orchestra of Pau Pays de Béarn.

Premiered on February 9, 2012 at the Palais des Sports in Bordeaux (France), by the National Orchestra of Bordeaux Aquitaine conducted by Alexander Lazarev, and at the Palais Beaumont in Pau (France), by the Orchestra of Pau Pays de Béarn conducted by Fayçal Karoui.

Maslenitsa, the Trilogy's Finale, takes its inspiration from the traditional Russian feast celebrated a week before Great Lent in orthodoxy : Russia's carnival time. Its origin is double, both Christian and Pagan, and it is a celebration as winter draws to an end ; with blinis as solar symbols it is also the last opportunity to have fun before fasting in Lent. People organize masked balls and games and throw snowballs, and on the last day they burn the effigy of « Dame Maslenitsa », a doll cast onto a bonfire.

My score takes the form of a symphonic overture in three sections that follow on from each other : in the first, a whirlwind of seven festive themes unfurls before the dance quietens and opens onto the central part. It is like an orthodox chorale, a moment of contemplation over a single theme whose volume gradually increases. Then the feast reasserts itself in the third section, and the themes are superimposed with, in the end, the brass chorale that crowns the piece. There are no veritable thematic quotes, as I wanted to reinvent each theme in the spirit of Russian folk music. This is ancient Russia as dreamt by a Frenchman, a tableau mingling exuberant joy and suffering in homage to the country and music that I love so much.

Guillaume Connesson