

James ♦ DePreist

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Tragic Lovers

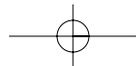
Oregon Symphony

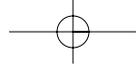
WAGNER
BERLIOZ
TCHAIKOVSKY

TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
ROMEO AND JULIET



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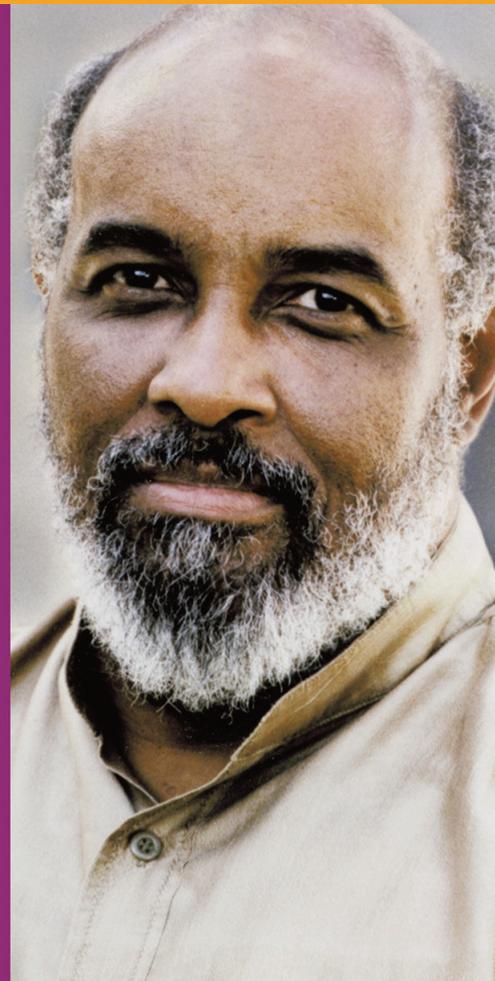
JAMES DEPREIST
OREGON SYMPHONY

Tragic Lovers



- 1 RICHARD WAGNER: Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde (17:14)
- 2 HECTOR BERLIOZ: Love Scene from Romeo et Juliette, Op. 17 (15:59)
- 3 PIOTR TCHAIKOVSKY: Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture (21:10)

Total Playing Time: 54:22



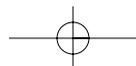
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THROUGH THE GRETCHEN BROOKS RECORDING
FUND FOR THE OREGON SYMPHONY



JAMES DEPREIST
OREGON SYMPHONY
Tragic
Lovers

- 1. Richard Wagner:
Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde* (17:14)
- 2. Hector Berlioz:
Romeo et Juliette, Op. 17 — Scène d'amour (15:59)
(Love Scene from Romeo and Juliet)
- 3. Piotr Tchaikovsky:
Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture (21:10)

James DePreist, conductor
Oregon Symphony

Total Playing Time: 54:22

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Executive Producers: *Amelia S. Haygood, Carol Rosenberger*
Recording Producer: *Adam Stern (Tchaikovsky), Michael Fine (Wagner, Berlioz)*
Engineer: *John Eargle*
Associate Engineer: *Andrés Villalta (Wagner, Berlioz)*

DePreist Photo: *Wendy Leher*
Creative Direction: *Harry Pack, Tri Arts and Associates*
Graphics: *Mark Evans*

Editing: *Adam Stern (Tchaikovsky), Michael Fine (Wagner, Berlioz)*
Production Assistant: *Tamra Saylor Fine (Wagner, Berlioz)*

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

The title “Tragic Lovers” gives an accurate description of the two principals in Richard Wagner’s great opera “Tristan und Isolde.” The *Prelude and Liebestod* from this work summarizes the fate of these two lovers who find the ultimate fulfillment of their love in death.

Premiered in Munich in 1865, *Tristan und Isolde* remains today one of the greatest love stories ever set for the stage. Wagner, who wrote both text and music, molded the various medieval legends of Tristan and Isolde into a powerful musical drama, eloquent with passion, far more complex than its ancient original sources.

As in his other great mature works, Wagner based his musical concept on the creation and manipulation of distinctive musical phrases, or motives, which he combined and developed with endless ingenuity and depth.

The *Prelude* to Act One of *Tristan und Isolde* introduces three of Wagner’s most memorable motives: a descending chromatic Tristan phrase, an ascending Isolde response, and a following motive often called the “Love Glance.” With these as his basis, Wagner constructs an orchestral prelude that builds to an intense, almost un-

bearably emotional and musical climax before subsiding into a resolution which leads to the curtain rise on Act One.

In this concert arrangement the *Prelude* moves seamlessly into the *Liebestod* (the music that concludes the opera), Isolde’s lament and exaltation over her lover’s dead body. Even though it lacks much of Isolde’s vocal line, Wagner’s orchestral version of the *Liebestod* feels complete. We are left with the opera’s and Wagner’s final message: the ultimate consummation of Tristan and Isolde’s love is only attained by their mutual deaths and final reunion in the endless night of eternity.

Berlioz composed *Romeo et Juliette* during a period in his career when he was so completely under the spell of the source material, particularly the love scene, that he was barely able to get his tumultuous inspirations onto paper.

The very first impetus for this music was an 1827 performance of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in Paris, a sudden and unexpected revelation to Berlioz which overwhelmed the twenty-four year old composer. Berlioz found in Shakespeare a kindred soul whose pas-

sion, freedom and flexibility of expression matched his own. For him Shakespeare became “the closest thing to a god that existed.”

Berlioz also became fixated on the attractive Irish actress, Harriet Smithson, who played Juliet. A long and, for a time, fruitless courtship which produced, together with lots of angst, the *Symphonie Fantastique*, eventually ended with their marriage. Later, Harriet became “a jealous untamable shrew” who took to the bottle as the marriage fell apart.

In spite of these difficulties, Berlioz’s fascination with the story of Romeo and Juliet continued. He finally began serious work on his *Romeo et Juliette* dramatic symphony five years after the failure of his marriage. He developed a vast work for orchestra, chorus and vocal soloists, encompassing the moods of the Shakespeare original.

In contrast to many of his other works *Romeo et Juliette* was an immediate success. Even the young Richard Wagner felt that it opened up a new visionary universe of music, a combination of “daring fantasy and strict precision.”

Although voices are frequently employed throughout the composition, the final work is basically a symphonic

suite in which much of the conflict, sentiment and passion are conveyed solely by the orchestra. So it is with the Love Music which seems to parallel, almost moment by moment, the passions and emotions of the two young lovers during a night of bliss.

Harry J. Pack

It was Tchaikovsky’s friend and mentor, Mily Balakirev, who first suggested the idea of Shakespeare’s tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* as the basis for a musical work to his young friend. Balakirev was even kind enough to outline the musical structure of the tone poem for his young, unstable admirer. Completed late in 1869, shortly after Tchaikovsky had enjoyed a tremendous success with his Symphony No. 1, “Winter Dreams” (whose difficult gestation caused the first of the composer’s many nervous breakdowns). *Romeo and Juliet* was not an overwhelming triumph at its St. Petersburg premiere. In one of those famous, self-pitying passages that would become so common in his correspondence, Tchaikovsky complained, “My overture had no success here, and was wholly ignored. During the evening no one spoke to me a word about it.”

The reason for the initial failure of what would become the composer’s first unqualified masterwork was made

painfully obvious with the release, not long ago, of the first recording of the Fantasy-Overture in its initial form. It is, in spite of a good deal of youthful enthusiasm and the occasional moment of genuine intensity, a boring, prolix, and ultimately lifeless work. It was, therefore, a rather far cry from the piece which emerged after two complete revisions, the first in 1870, when *Romeo and Juliet* would not only establish Tchaikovsky's reputation as the most gifted and original Russian composer of his time, but also make him famous throughout the musical world.

The structure of the final revised version of *Romeo and Juliet* echoes the major events of Shakespeare's play. A slow, dour theme for the lower woodwinds represents the kindly Friar Lawrence, meditating in his cell. An agitated second figure leads to a furious explosion in the entire orchestra, complete with flashing cymbals mimicking the clash of swords, which describes the senseless and unending feud between the Capulets and Montagues.

The violence slowly subsides, and the English horn unveils the great hit tune of the Overture, a melody so memorable that Tin-Pan Alley could not resist the temp-

tation of turning it into the popular song of the 1940s and 50s, called "Our Love." After Romeo's song is answered by Juliet, in the form of a pulsing theme for muted, divided strings, the balcony scene unfolds in its full late-Romantic glory.

The feud music inevitably breaks through the lovers' reverie. The themes associated with Romeo and Juliet rise up for a final time, but are eventually crushed by an ominous rumble in the timpani, followed by a few hushed bars which represent the lovers' death. A tender apotheosis of the love theme serves as the gentle epilogue which brings the overture to a close.

The sinuous love music of this early Fantasy-Overture was probably the most memorable a Russian composer had yet produced. Tchaikovsky himself would match it on only one or two other occasions — the horn theme from the second movement of the fifth symphony is its principal rival — and it would not be until Sergei Prokofiev wrote a masterpiece bearing the same name seventy years later that the world would hear a finer treatment of the subject.

Jim Svejda

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Widely esteemed as one of America's finest conductors, **James DePreist** is Director of Conducting and Orchestral Studies at The Juilliard School and Laureate Music Director of the Oregon Symphony. He served as Permanent Conductor of the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra from 2005 until 2008.

As a guest conductor he has appeared with every major North American orchestra, and internationally he has conducted in Amsterdam, Berlin, Budapest, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Manchester, Melbourne, Munich, Prague, Rome, Rotterdam, Seoul, Stockholm, Stuttgart, Sydney, Tel Aviv, Tokyo and Vienna. He made his London debut with the London Symphony at the Barbican in April 2005.

James DePreist appears regularly at the Aspen Music Festival, with the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood, the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Mann Music Center, and the Juilliard orchestras at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall.

With more than 50 recordings to his credit, James DePreist has a substantial presence in the recording arena. His varied recorded repertoire includes a celebrated Shostakovich series with the Helsinki Philharmonic and 15 recordings with the Oregon Symphony which have helped establish that orchestra as one of America's finest.

Born in Philadelphia in 1936, he studied composition with Vincent Persichetti at the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music and earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Pennsylvania. In 1962, while on a State Department

tour in Bangkok, he contracted polio but recovered sufficiently to win a first prize in the Dimitri Mitropoulos International Conducting Competition. He was selected by Leonard Bernstein to be an assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic for the 1965-66 season. DePreist made his highly acclaimed European debut with the Rotterdam Philharmonic in 1969. In 1971 Antal Dorati chose him to become his Associate Conductor with the National Symphony in Washington, D.C.

James DePreist has been awarded 13 honorary doctorates and is the author of two books of poetry. He is an elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, and is a recipient of the Insignia of Commander of the Order of the Lion of Finland, the Medal of the City of Québec and is an Officer of the Order of Cultural Merit of Monaco. In 2005 the President of the United States presented James DePreist with the National Medal of Arts, the nation's highest honor for artistic excellence. He is the nephew of the legendary contralto Marian Anderson.

Since the **Oregon Symphony** was established more than 100 years ago, it has been recognized for its internationally acclaimed music directors, skilled performers, diverse programs and outstanding community services in education and regional touring. The Oregon Symphony now ranks among the largest orchestras in the nation and as one of the largest arts organizations in the Northwest, with an attendance of more than 225,000 people annually and 76 full-time musicians.

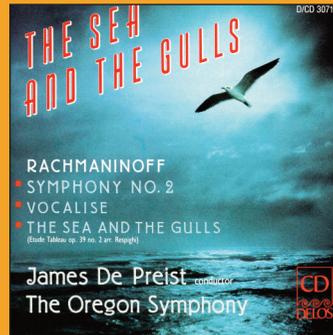
OTHER DELOS RECORDINGS FEATURING JAMES DEPREIST AND THE OREGON SYMPHONY



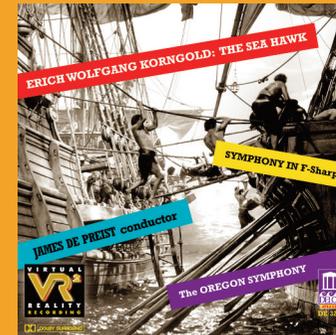
BRAVURA • RESPIGHI: Roman Festivals • STRAUSS: Don Juan • LUTOSLAWSKI: Concerto for Orchestra • Recording of Distinction, *Ovation* • DE 3070 (DDD)



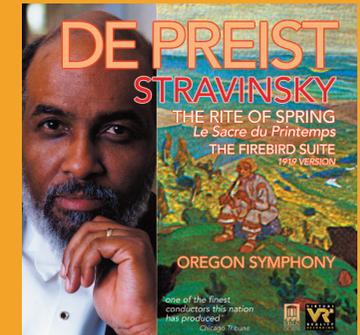
TCHAIKOVSKY: 1812 Overture • Hamlet • **The Tempest** • "... unquestionably the most successful modern recording." *Gramophone* • DE 3081 (DDD)



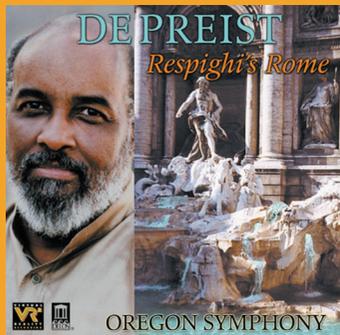
RACHMANINOFF: The Sea and the Gulls (Étude-Tableau Op. 39 No. 2, orch. Respighi) • **Symphony No. 2** • Vocalise • Recording of Distinction, *Ovation* • DE 3071 (DDD)



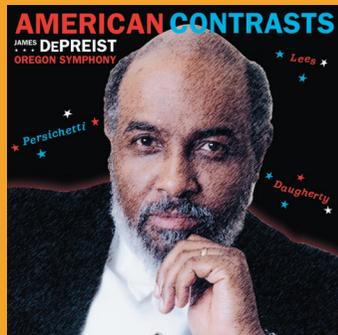
KORNGOLD: The Sea Hawk • **Symphony in F-Sharp** • DE 3234 (DDD)



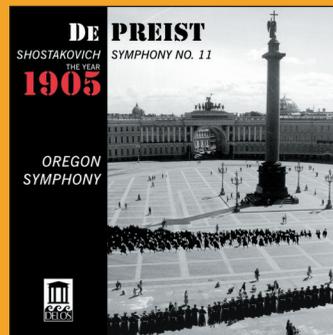
MUSIC of STRAVINSKY: The Rite of Spring • **The Firebird Suite (1919 version)** • DE 3278 (DDD)



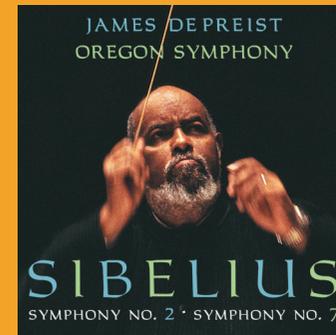
RESPIGHI'S ROME – Fountains of Rome • Pines of Rome • Roman Festivals • DE 3287 (DDD)



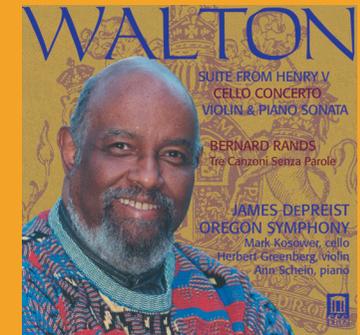
AMERICAN CONTRASTS – Benjamin Lees: Passacaglia for Orchestra • Vincent Persichetti: Symphony No. 4 • Michael Daugherty: Philadelphia Stories for Orchestra; Sundown on South Street; Hell's Angels • DE 3291 (DDD)



SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 11 The Year 1905 • DE 3329 (DDD)



SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 2 • **Symphony No. 7** • Recorded Live • DE 3334 (DDD)



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