

European Suite

Orchestral Suite composed by Christoph Schambach in 2021

Instrumentation: 2-2-2-2, 2-2-2-0, timpani, strings

Length: approx. 40 min.

1. Printemps européen

European Spring

7:12

2. Nordisk sang

Nordic Song

4:48

3. Tormenta de verano en Extremadura

Summer Storms in Extremadura

6:38

4. Festa di nozze in campagna

Wedding in the Countryside

4:32

5. Колискова пісня

Lullaby

4:53

6. Goblins, Fairies and Giants

Goblins, Fairies and Giants

6:44

7. De gave van kunst

The Gift of Art

5:17

Brief Conceptual Overview

European Suite by Christoph Schambach

The *European Suite* was written in 2021 and is a very current, passionate declaration of the composer's belief in Europe – especially in its people and in its diverse cultures that all belong together. The mutual joy, delight, and curiosity as well as the feeling of belonging together are expressed in the suite. Thus, the European idea neither refers to the European Union as a political system nor does it relate to specific nations. It is rather put into a regionally and culturally large, gestural "embrace" which does not depend on national borders. The idea is to include all people, for the joy of cultural richness and with the desire of a peaceful feeling of togetherness.

The different languages in which the titles of the movements are written represent this idea in a symbolic and exemplary way. Additionally, they leave the listeners a certain scope for their own associations and fantasies. The selection of regions and languages, whose incompleteness we are aware of, is representative of the rich diversity of Europe's cultural life – from the Atlantic to the Urals, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean.

*

The first movement *Printemps européen* (French: *European Spring*) is about the great idea of brotherhood of nations. Just like spring symbolises new beginnings, hope and confidence, France reminds us of the birth of democracy.

The second movement *Nordisk sang* (Danish/Norwegian: *Nordic Song*) exemplarily describes the beauty of each person's homeland which gives us roots and space to grow.

In the third movement *Tormenta de verano en Extremadura* (Spanish: *Summer Storms in Extremadura*), we experience scorching heat, a thunderstorm, the relieved breathing and blossoming of nature and the return of the blazing sun – the whole becoming and passing as the perpetual cycle of all things.

The fourth movement *Festa di nozze in campagna* (Italian: *Wedding in the Countryside*) represents the freedom to find one's happiness – wherever and in whatever way.

In the fifth movement *Колискова пісня* (Ukrainian: *Lullaby*), we accompany the gentle act of falling asleep with the eternal hope of awakening in peace – even though in the sixth movement *Goblins, Fairies and Giants*, we encounter all sorts of fantastic creatures that have been accompanying and inspiring us ever since as parts of myths, legends, and fairy tales. As different as people might be, they are yet alike in their needs, desires, and dreams. Thus, art is a multifaceted gift and a language which can be understood by everybody, that knows no differences, that benefits everybody and never divides or excludes. This is what the final movement *De gave van kunst* (Dutch: *The Gift of Art*) is all about.

And so, the composer makes us the gift of the *European Suite* in his own language, as his own contribution – out of joy and gratitude to belong to this community.

Compositional Concept

Keeping in mind that the repetition of all tones begins in the octave tone, whether upwards or downwards, it includes all existing tones, virtually contains them within itself – and hence symbolically stands for wholeness.

This octave can be heard in the very first tones of the *European Suite*, followed by the motif of “inner life” which takes place within this framework and seems to be safe and sound in this system of the great whole.

This main motif can be discovered again and again in the whole suite. It describes the feeling of secureness within a large, stable system. The main motif provides the framework and hence security. It can contain various things and offers them protection and belonging within a harmonious whole. The constantly varying octave play shows us the infinite variety it contains. And no matter which region or topic is dealt with, everybody is important, everybody is part of the whole, nobody is being excluded.

This confession is the leitmotif of the *European Suite*. Everything else remains to be discovered playfully by the listeners. The different movements can be understood as suggestions to give free rein to one’s own fantasy.

Christoph Schambach

Christoph Schambach’s music does not fit into the cliché of “new music”. The composer consciously wants to continue the great symphonic tradition that was established in Central Europe and whose most impressive works were released here.

Because of his lifelong occupation and intensive studies, Christoph Schambach has mastered the art of composition – a high art that adheres to strict rules and requires a high amount of knowledge and skill. Anyone who listens to his compositions soon recognises a signature and sound language all his own. Although composed in a traditionally proven way, his music is absolutely new – contemporary in the best sense – because the composer’s themes and motifs are inspired by the daily confrontation with the ardent questions of our time. In this way, he manages to offer the audience new, sophisticated writings in the field of classical, symphonic music. By using analogue sound techniques and a comprehensible tonal language, every listener can find a piece of home and their own identity.
