

La Roue

Reconstructed and newly edited premiere music for orchestra for the silent film "La Roue" by Abel Gance (1923)

**Musical adaptation by Paul Fosse and Arthur Honegger (1923)
Reconstruction by Bernd Thewes (2017-2019)**

Duration: 430 Minutes

With music by (order of appearance)

Arthur Honegger, Jean Roger-Ducasse, Benjamin Godard, Monté Achille Chillemont, Pietro Mascagni, Georges Brun, Félix Fourdrain, Charles-Marie Widor, Camille Erlanger, Henri Woollett, Ferruccio Volpatti, Édouard Flament, Jean Sibelius, Gabriel Fauré, Jules Massenet, Fernand de La Tombelle, Georges Sporck, Édouard Trémisot, Florent Schmitt, Philipp Scharwenka, Vincent d'Indy, Camille Saint-Saëns, Gaston Schindler, Fernand Andrieu, Guy Ropartz, Lucien Niverd, Darius Milhaud, Philippe Gaubert, Prosper Gabriel-Marie, Alfred Bruneau, Gabriel Dupont, Hans Huber, Jules Mazellier, Jean Paul Martini, Charles Pons, Albéric Magnard, Ricardo Zandonai, Gustave Charpentier, Alfredo d'Ambrosio, Carlo Carlini, Claude Debussy, Henry Février, César Cui, André Wormser, Eugène Cools, Paul Dukas, Granville Bantock, Albert Roussel, Alexandre Georges, Camille Chevillard, Henri Duparc, Marcel Samuel-Rousseau, Georges Hüe, Julien Tiersot

Instrumentation:

Wood instruments	Brass instruments	Keys, Percussion, Others	Strings
3 Flutes (1st and 2nd also Piccolo) 3 Oboe (3rd also English Horn) 3 Clarinets in Bb (3rd also Bass Clarinet) 3 Bassoon (3rd also Bass Bassoon)	4 Horn 3 Trumpet (1st also Flugelhorn) 3 Trombone 1 Tuba	1 Timpani 3 Percussion: Triangle Tamburin Guiro Chimes Snare Drum Gran Cassa Tubular Bells 1 Harp	10.8.6.5.4

La Roue | F 1923 | D: Abel Gance | newly restored version 2017-19

Synopsis: The train driver Sisif rescues a little girl in a train accident and decides to take in the child and bring her up. As she grows older, Sisif falls in love with his foundling, but tries to hide his affection for her. Once he sees her swinging in the front garden, he finds no other way out of his surging delight than to draw the curtains. Later he goes blind, so that he can hardly work on the mountain railway and also threatens to derail a train twice out of desperation. A long time later, shortly before Sisif's death, the two are reunited and Sisif has the opportunity to enjoy the closeness of his foundling in his last days.

The film: As in many of Gance's other films, this one serves largely experimental purposes, especially in the way it is filmed. Camera changes at an increasingly rapid frequency and close-ups of Sisif's face are part of it and represented entirely new material in the film world of the time. The film was initially released on 32 rolls of film (almost 7 hours long) and premiered in December 1922 at the Gaumont Palace in Paris in four parts. The parts were entitled "Le rose du rail", "La tragédie de Sisif", "La course à l'abime" and "Symphonie blanche". For international marketing, Gance edited the film down to 12 reels in 1924. In 1928, a version of the film was made with a length of only 8 reels. In 2008, a restored version of the work with a length of 274 min was presented. A German-French cooperation project of the Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé, ZDF / ARTE, Deutschlandfunk Kultur and Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin worked on an extended reconstruction and restoration of the film from 2017 onwards under the editorship of Nina Goslar and Stefan Lang. Footage thought to be lost was tracked down in various archives, reconstructed and restored.

The score: The original film music, which has not been performed since its premiere, served as the leitmotif for the restoration compilation, as its listing is the only authentic document of the premiere version of the film that has survived. This music was compiled by Arthur Honegger and his collaborator for this project, Paul Fosse. Fosse, at that time cinema bandmaster of the Gaumont Palace and an important film music great, composed and compiled the music for each silent film. Together with Arthur Honegger, Paul Fosse had not created his own film music for the premiere of the film, but arranged works by well-known French composers. Paul Fosse noted down and archived all his compiled works. These documents are probably the most comprehensive source of silent film music, today in the possession of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and made it possible to reconstruct the film music and thus the film. The musicologist Jürg Stenzl had already worked on the film music before this project, and as part of the project his French colleague Max James also assisted in the search for sources and original score material. The Mainz composer Bernd Thewes was then responsible for the overall composition of the premiere music as part of this film project. In a process lasting several years, the reconstruction of the film *La Roue* as a complete work was achieved. The music consists of 117 musical numbers by 56 composers. Arthur Honegger himself composed the overture and a further five sequences, of which, however, three pieces are lost. In total, five pieces are lost and had to be suitably replaced. The entire work was recorded by the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin. The world premiere of this reconstructed and restored version took place on 14 September 2019 as part of the Berliner Musikfest at the Konzerthaus Berlin. The premiere in France took place at the Lumière Film Festival in Lyon on 19 and 20 October 2019. The film was then broadcast on television on Arte on 29 October and 5 November 2019.

Abel Gance (1889-1981)

is one of the great pioneers of film, best known for his monumental Napoleon film, first shown in 1927, a milestone in film history in which the director experimented with novel editing techniques and camera movements as well as the parallel reproduction of several storylines on three screens. Abel Gance comes from Paris. He came into contact with the emerging French film industry in 1912 via a diversion via the theatre stage. He soon began to make his own films in which he was often simultaneously responsible for the screenplay, editing and directing and also took part as an actor. During World War I Gance was briefly deployed at the front, but in 1915 he was discharged from military service again for health reasons. In the next years he made about 20 movies in close succession. After a first major success with the melodrama "Mater dolorosa" from 1917, the pacifist film "J'accuse" brought him his international breakthrough in 1919. In the mid-1920s, Gance began work on a Napoleon project. Initially planned as a series of six films, Gance was only able to complete the first part, which, with an original running time of six hours, also went beyond conventional dimensions. Audience reception was divided and when his first sound film "La fin du monde", a lavishly produced and correspondingly expensive science fiction, failed at the box office in 1931, his career was seriously damaged. Although Gance was able to make a number of other films, some of which were quite successful, he was far less independent artistically and instead remained bound by the studios' guidelines. After 1945 Gance could only realise a few projects and worked again and again on new versions of his Napoleon film. Abel Gance died in Paris on 10 November 1981.

Paul Fosse (1884-1959)

was born on 20 March 1884 in Marseille into a family of musicians from the south of France. His father was already a composer, as were his brothers Vincent Joseph and Georges Vincent Emmanuel. From 1908 to 1911, there is evidence of Paul Fosse's first professional activity at the legendary Olympia in Paris. Afterwards, he was music director of the Gaumont film palace at the Place de Clichy from autumn 1911 to May 1928. With the end of the silent film era, he held a comparable post at the cinema of the Casino de Bécon (with 1,200 seats) in the Paris periphery. He then returned to the Gaumont company from 1929 to 1932 and worked in their Société cinématographique in the sound film department. From 1929 Paul Fosse lived in Château-Thierry on the Marne in the Aisne department. In the 1930s he was a répétiteur in Nice during the opera season, and also in Aix-les-Bains from 1936 to 1938. After the war, he taught piano at the Collège in his home town and retired in 1954. There he also conducted the local brass band Union musicale from 1929 until his retirement.

Paul Fosse also left behind an astonishingly extensive body of compositional work. His own catalogue of works comprises 216 opus numbers, and the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris has almost ninety printed works, including a whole series that he used as film scores (as well as works by members of his family) and, to a large extent, composed himself. It is striking that these mostly short "family compositions" were mainly used for lighter film genres, for example for a part of the almost 30 Chaplin films that were screened at the Gaumont Palace. This is also indicative of the fact that they were not used in such a demanding and monumental film as *La Roue* by Abel Gance, but were increasingly used for works from the "classical" concert and opera genres.

Of great importance for the history of film music at the time of silent films were his 18 years at the Gaumont Palace. For this cinema, which opened on 11 October 1911, he compiled the music for the majority of the films shown there largely from existing pieces of music and called these compilations Adaptations. This music was performed by an orchestra of about forty musicians, which he conducted. Since Fosse and - according to the writings - occasionally also his collaborators noted down each individual work in two voluminous volumes for each of the more than 1600 films of very different lengths, these music compilations are probably the most comprehensive surviving source for the music of the silent film era. Here we can see that the music played there had its own history. It also becomes apparent that the genre to which a film belonged was of great importance for Paul Fosse's choice of music. Paul Fosse's extremely extensive music library has been preserved and was given to the Bibliothèque nationale de France by his heirs. However, it is only in the last decade of our century that this overriding importance of Paul Fosse's legacy has been recognised by François Porcile and Giusy Pisano. Jérôme Fronty then presented the central importance of Paul Fosse within the history of film music for the first time.

Jürg Stenzl (Vienna/Salzburg)

Artur Honegger (1892-1955)

Machine music, music hall, symphonic music, film and radio music, chamber music works for every conceivable instrumentation - the Swiss Arthur Honegger (1892 - 1955) is a master of compositional and stylistic diversity with a correspondingly extensive oeuvre of over 200 works. Yet Honegger by no means produced lightly and carefree, but was rather a disciplined worker who took a lot of time for the thorough elaboration of his pieces. Only a good handful of compositions made it into the concert repertoire, and it is probably no coincidence that these were mainly serious orchestral works that were particularly close to his personality.

Arthur Honegger was the son of Swiss parents who had run a prosperous trading house in Le Havre on the Atlantic coast of northern France since 1870. This affiliation to both French and German-speaking culture, inherent in his origins, is an essential characteristic of his oeuvre, which as a whole can be attributed neither to one side nor to the other. Honegger received his musical training mainly at the Paris Conservatoire, initially as a commuter from Le Havre, until he finally settled in Paris in 1915 after completing his Swiss military service. Honegger was soon able to make his mark as a composer here. The catchy slogan of the Groupe de Six around the composer Erik Satie and the poet and spokesman Jean Cocteau, to which Honegger also belonged, played a double-edged role. While on the one hand he was able to adapt their ideal of young, cheeky, fresh music, on the other hand he did not really feel he belonged to the heterogeneous grouping, especially because of his admiration for German music from Bach to Wagner, which was frowned upon there. Thus he remained loosely connected to the Groupe des Six and its ideas for a long time, but at the same time he went completely

different ways. A milestone in his creative work is the oratorio "Le roi David", first performed in 1921 and tailored to the needs of a popular musical theatre, which made him internationally famous and has become an indispensable part of the repertoire of today's choirs. Almost at the same time, he achieved similar success with the orchestral piece "Pacific 2.3.1.", which can be understood just as well as an acoustically startling description of a railway journey as an abstract study of musical forms of movement. It was above all with large-scale choral works on historical material and serious subjects that the composer won over a large audience. His connections to Switzerland, which he cultivated throughout his life, intensified in the 1940s. The large symphonic works composed during this period are among the most musically significant of his oeuvre. Honegger died in his Paris flat on 27 November 1955.

Bernd Thewes (*1957)

studied school music in Saarbrücken and musicology in Mainz. His oeuvre includes compositions for solo and orchestral ensembles, radiophonic projects, opera, sound installations and film music. He works with leading soloists of New Music such as Dirk Rothbrust, Dietmar Wiesner or Irmela Roelcke. For the ARTE silent film programme he realised several new compositions (for films by Hans Richter and Carl Th. Dreyer) as well as arrangements of historical film music, which have set a new international standard in the orchestration and arrangement of original historical music: Der Rosenkavalier by Richard Strauss (1926), Sprengbagger 1010 (1929) by Schönberg's student Walter Gronostay, Berlin - Sinfonie der Großstadt (1927) and Oktober (1928) by Edmund Meisel, and Der Student von Prag (1913) by Josef Weiss. With the reconstruction of the premiere music of the Abel Gance film La Roue (F 1923), Bernd Thewes has reconstructed the longest film music in silent film history: more than 7 hours of music, which received international acclaim in a German-French double premiere in Berlin and Lyon in 2019.

La Roue - 4ème Époque

LaRoue_4.01 DUPONT - Chant de la destinée
TC 01:00:00:00

sync. (timeline)

1

01:00:04:19 01:00:10:10 01:00:15:03 01:00:20:15

TXT:
"LA ROUE
Quatrième Époque"
(Lokomotive fährt
im Hintergrund)

LENDE -->
TXT:
"SYMPHONIE
BLANCHE"

TXT:
"Et quand
la lune
monta ..."

Sisif
auf dem
Felsen ...

Lent (grave et calme)
ca 50 bpm

ca 51 bpm

ca 46 bpm

Oboe 1.2.

English Horn

Clarinet 1.2.
in Bb

Bass Clarinet
in Bb

Bassoon 1.2.

Contrabassoon

Horn in F
1.2.
3.4.

Trumpet in C
1.2.
3.

Trombone
1.2.
3.

Tuba

Timpani

Harp

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass
1st half

Tutti div.