

## Joseph Joachim Raff

(b. Lachen near Zurich, 27 May 1822 - d. Frankfurt/Main, 24 June 1882)

### Symphony No. 4, op. 167

Amongst the pieces Joachim Raff composed in 1871 are three major orchestral works including the *First Violin Concerto* (in B minor), Opus 161, the *Italian Suite* (in E minor), WoO 35, and the *Fourth Symphony* (in G minor), Opus 167. Composed in the Spring and Summer of 1871, the G minor Symphony dates from the period following the end of the Franco-Prussian war. Raff and his wife were extremely concerned for the outcome, and by the time the symphony would have been completed news about the war's successful conclusion probably had not yet reached them. Although on the surface it might be convenient, then, to say that the opening movement's darkness reflects something of the stress of the times, it is hard to reconcile any extra-musical or programmatic elements with this work which, on the surface, is one of Raff's most "traditional" outings. Unlike the two symphonies which flank it, Raff provides no explicit or implicit clues. The movements have no titles, the choice of keys for the movements are deceptively unremarkable. Indeed, the scope of the piece is much shorter than either *Im Walde* or *Lenore* even as its rhetoric is no less complex, its internal architecture is direct and unambiguous, its orchestra considerably smaller, too. One might make the comparison with Beethoven, whose own delightful fourth symphony falls between his monumental *Eroica* and his dramatic-heroic *Fifth Symphony*. But as is almost always the case with Raff, the external markings of tradition or convention are purely matters of convenience, points of departure. Raff's ears were quite incapable of hearing music constrained by hide bound convention, and his pieces often bring together in the most inevitable way all manner of disparate elements. Raff achieves unity through pronounced diversity, a thing that tended to set him apart from, as well as to put him into direct conflict with, the established virtues and expectations of his day. In his day Raff's unwillingness to tow the stylistic line was seen as uncomfortably heterodox. That view persisted until the end of the last century, but now the conundrum of his maintaining the external trappings of convention whilst simultaneously defying the traditions of his time makes his music sound remarkably fresh.

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In my comments to the MpH edition of the *Frühlingsklänge* symphony I noted that although there are apparent programmatic elements in many of the symphonies, the real distinctions between them have to do with their alternating sizes and general methods. The enormous *An Das Vaterland* symphony (#1) was followed by the much shorter second symphony. This was in turn followed by the much larger *Im Walde* (#3) which was similarly followed by the much shorter fourth symphony. The remaining works, by and large, follow a similar pattern.

The programmatic content of the symphonies, except for *Lenore* and *Im Walde*, is more generic than literal. Aside from Raff's use of "source material" in the *First Symphony*, itself a

product of the highly political atmosphere during the period of its composition, the symphonies' titles and movement titles are more suggestive than anything else. The movement headings, from purely a compositional point of view, have no real tangible impact on the fundamental structural or architectural elements of the music other than to suggest something of their emotive nature. At its most extreme, the original title for the *Sixth Symphony*, almost certainly an afterthought, makes clever use of alliteration and rhyming which could not have been happenstance: *Gelebt, Gestrebt, Gelitten, Gestritten, Gestorben - Umworben*. This title translated into English hardly conveys the same sense: *Lived, Struggled, Suffered, Fought, Died, Glorified*. The doggerel like sloganeering of the German title certainly has little to do with the actual content of the piece other than to belabor the obvious transition from the opening gritty grim D minor, through the middle movement funeral march to the glamorously giddy D major of its finale. The *Fourth Symphony* approaches its minor to major progression similarly, but without so much as a scintilla of extra-musical baggage.

The G minor symphony proved to be one of Raff's most successful pieces and was received with considerable acclaim from the outset. It was given its première at a concert of the Royal Court Orchestra in Wiesbaden on Thursday, 8 February 1872 conducted by Wilhelm Jahns. Later that year, on 25 October, the symphony was performed in a museum concert in Frankfurt am Main under the direction of Karl Müller. A week later, on 31 October, Raff himself conducted a performance in Leipzig at a Gewandhaus concert. The violin virtuoso and composer Henri Vieuxtemps reported having a great success with a performance of the work he gave in Belgium, so much so that he urged Raff to make the journey there following enthusiastic requests for subsequent performances. Although he was unable to make that trip, when Vieuxtemps subsequently gave a performance of *Im Walde*, response to it was such that its composer was sent a wreath of gold grape leaves and gold plated grapes as a token of esteem.

The Symphony was originally published by Schuberth in 1872 (and subsequently by Verlag Ries & Erler of Berlin)

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A favorite device of Raff's is to use the delay of the resolution of the dominant to the tonic as a structural device. In the concerto literature, the soloist's cadenza frequently occurs just before the ending of the movement to which it is attached. Landing on the second inversion tonic triad, the cadenza heightens the ultimate cadential resolution when it is finally given. There are many instances where Raff plays with this delayed resolution but over a movement wide scope. A good example is found in the final movement of *Frühlingsklänge* where it is not until the recapitulation that one encounters an unambiguous root position tonic triad (even though the first real "dominant-tonic" resolution happens only with the arrival at the dominant key). The entire finale of the *2<sup>nd</sup> Violin Concerto* plays with the same restless "improper" tonic anticipation. From the opening pedal D, the present symphony, begins with exactly the same device.

Another favorite compositional device of Raff's is to begin quietly with thematic fragments, or with a fragmented thematic block which, through repetition, builds to a full opening statement. Here, we are given an eight bar phrase beginning and ending in the dominant whose characteristic rhythmic cast (in triple meter) will serve as a primary developmental element later on (dotted eighth, sixteenth, two quarters - half, quarter). This is duly repeated at the next higher octave. Although it lands mid-way on a G minor triad, the inner chromatic movement tends to weaken the sense of g being anything but momentary. When the repetition ends, it does indeed cadence in G minor, but on the first inversion of the tonic triad which is hardly a conventional resolution in the traditional harmonic sense. This now complete (...) sixteen measure phrase is repeated, but only procedurally. In this case, the two pairs of eight bar phrases, which are extensions of the original pair, are repeated. The first of these harmonizes the original first phrase by shifting between the Phrygian A flat and g, the second by cadencing in the dominant. The orchestral and dramatic fabric has become increasingly more intense.

Having landed on D major, indeed on a D dominant seventh, the expectation is that the first tutti of the piece will give us our theme in all its agitated and restless G minor fury. But, as Raff has succeeded in *not* giving us a real tonic G minor heretofore, he frustrates the resolution by moving to the submediant key, E flat major - and then quickly shifts its mode to E flat minor, then to *its* relative major, G flat, and finally (by an enharmonic shift to F sharp major which will function as the dominant) to B major, a totally unexpected key for a piece in G minor which hasn't up until now had the courtesy to give us an unambiguous statement IN G minor. Curiously, Raff has totally eschewed any form of Tristanesque chromaticism relying, rather, on rapid harmonic rhythm and the use common tone modulations (prefiguring Richard Strauss) or modal ambiguity to loosen the bonds of traditional functional harmony.

Although the arrival of B major is extremely bracing and refreshing to the ear, and even though the cheerful piping of high woodwinds over syncopated buzzing and clucking in the strings suggests that we have arrived at a new theme, the insistent F sharp in the basses reminds us that, like G minor at first, B is not really the new key. At one point, reverting to the quarter-half rhythm of the original theme, the F sharp dominant becomes an F sharp half diminished seventh which, when its root and seventh are lowered, becomes an F dominant ninth leading us to B flat major. The first legitimate, unambiguous tonic-dominant cadence of the piece lands us not in the tonic key, G minor, but in the relative major OF G minor.

The arrival of B flat major signals a complete change of pace other than its tempo which remains unchanged from the beginning. In place of rapidly shifting harmonic movement we now have relative harmonic calm. In place of agitated thematic and accompanimental figuration, Raff now applies his trademark device of polytemporalism. Ordinarily in homophonic environments conventional wisdom has it that the accompaniment assumes a secondary role with the primary focus on the melody. But Raff predictably does not adhere to convention, and the new section clearly demonstrates this. At first glance, the focus appears to be the long lined theme in the cellos notable for its heightened cantabile and its rhythmic cast in long values. But against this a more fully developed version of the earlier woodwind piping is placed in such a way as to guarantee that both elements will be clearly heard - this accompaniment, so to say, surrounds the cello theme. The result is a delicious conflict of

metrical "attitudes" in which can be heard, in the winds, the outline of a countersubject presented in the context of its rhythmic ostinato. Gradually, the music takes on an even more flowing and hymnal aspect, a dramatic answer to the turbulence of the opening. Quickly reaching a culminating point which might properly be described as highly romanticized Beethoven (and which also includes some trademark harmonic digression), the exposition fades away contentedly in B flat major.

Beneath all this shifting around a rhythmic transformation so elementary as to go by totally unnoticed succeeds in giving the movement complete unification. Utilizing a combination of augmentation and diminution, the initial rhythmic motive (dotted eighth, sixteenth, two quarters) becomes dotted quarter, eighth followed by two more eighths thus producing the piping B major woodwind figure. A further simplification of this variant, changing the dot to a rest and the remaining quarter to two eighths produces eighth-eighth, eighth rest, three eighths, the "accompanying" figure of the B flat major music. The dark and fulsome opening, the harmonically unexpected transition and the lyrical conclusion are all derived, essentially, from the same rhythmic figure. The economy of means creates an absolutely seamless flow from first to last that is all the more interesting because it is applied equally to primary and secondary thematic materials as well as to their so-called accompaniments. This tight internal control allows a wide range of expressive and materials to be joined together while at the same time creating the effect of smooth and utterly inevitable movement between ideas of widely varying content.

The next hundred measures are given over to an elaborate development of all of the abovementioned materials. Through each of the episodes of this development the initial dotted rhythm assumes a leading role - sometimes giving way to variants of the initial theme, at others to the intermediate idea, and at still others the lyrical B flat major material. But the effect is kaleidoscopic with no one element achieving any degree of dominance. The whole section is extremely restless, with constant simultaneous movement on several levels. The dotted motive is tossed about, the original string buzzing becomes restless sixteenth note movement, fugal episodes attempt to gather a good deal of forward movement. Throughout it all the harmonic centers keep changing rapidly which adds to the unsettled effect. Raff drops the 2-flat key signature during the entire section, a clear enough indicator that we are in a domain of tonal quicksand.

After a quickly achieved climax, the music disintegrates around a D dominant seventh which gives the impression that, at long last, G minor is about to be established clearly and for the first time. However, even as the 2-flat key signature is re-established briefly, the recapitulation refuses to admit an unambiguous home key. After the restatement of the original materials, the music shifts gears and heads for C major with another change in key signature. Just as the original landed not in G minor but in E-flat major, C major becomes C minor and then A-flat major in an identical if parallel passage to the music that was originally headed for B major. As before, the now parallel second inversion A-flat major moves down to the dominant D and when the real second theme is restated, we know at last that we are in G, finally and unequivocally. But it is G *major* just as the original passage was B-flat major, complete with yet another key signature shift.

The movement concludes with a traditionally developmental coda during which the heretofore signature minor to major modal direction is reversed. It is only at measure 430 (!) that G minor is finally established as the tonic key. Against descending woodwind lines and a G pedal point in the bassoons, timpani, cellos and basses, the upper strings move downwards with the accompanimental figuration of the secondary materials. Effectively a fractured stretto in which the various thematic and accompanimental figures appear together converging in contrary motion towards the tonic G minor triad which, when achieved, is hammered out insistently long enough to dispel all previous tonal doubts. Perhaps... The last fifteen measures gives us a final cadence that appears to be moving to C major, but ultimately comes to rest on and in G. When all is said and done it is G major however, the theorist's Piccardy third which wins the day at the very last moment.

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The eruptive, bubbling kaleidoscopic aspects of the first movement are transformed in the second movement into an instrumentally colorful, mercurially virtuoso and fleet footed E-flat major scherzo in duple meter whose scurrying alla breve motion has the flavor of a moto perpetuo toccata built out of a single motive (sol-do-si-do). Externally, the formal construction is a traditional scherzo and trio complete with internal repetitions (in the scherzo) so marked. Internally, the scherzo section encompasses, in a highly condensed manner, elements of sonata form. The first repeated section corresponds generally to an exposition complete with an arrival at the dominant. The second repeated section corresponds roughly to its development and recapitulation. The instrumentation for this movement is reduced by 2 horns - a practice Raff follows in other symphonies as well.

The trio moves to A flat major while the texture and shape of the music changes from one of toccata-like busyness to one of liedertafel tunefulness. Indeed, this central section with its simple rustic melody and sudden shift to C major midway through could easily be construed as a *Wiesbadener Slavonische Tanz* complete with yet another key signature change (only this time indicating C major, not the absence of a tonal center as in the first movement)! There are many passages in Raff where through the simple device of augmentation rhythmic values are doubled (i.e. quarters become halves, eighths become quarters, etc.) thus creating, effectively, halving the tempo. But as if to remind you that nothing has really changed, the scampering string figures of the scherzo are not entirely absent. They are merely reduced to an occasionally intruding single voice. Further along, when A flat major returns, this figuration gradually overrides the rest of the musical texture which, in the process of dissolution, fades to nothingness. Conveniently, this overlapping dissolution leads directly back to a literal repetition of the opening scherzo.

Although neither the scherzo nor the trio contains any extended tutti, at the conclusion of the scherzo's repetition Raff jumps immediately to a concise 19 measure coda. The pent up energy of the preceding music is allowed one concentrated outburst from the full orchestra before the movement comes to an abrupt but satisfying end. It is as if the questioning uncertainty of the first movement has been answered with its concise, pointed and sunny opposite. Raff is said to have been inspired by the patter of children playing in his house

when writing this music. They would had to have been very mature lederhosen clad children, however, if the trio is to be understood correctly!

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If the first movement's churning darkness was constantly pitted against music of an opposite character, the third movement establishes and then maintains a fundamentally dark character throughout. Although Raff appears to have imposed an air of sobriety on the proceedings, he also gives over one of the most sophisticated of his many affectionate musical parodies played with an absolutely straight face. Its outer darkness contains, paradoxically, an inner smile as if the polar forces of the first movement have now been reconciled into a knowing singularity. Raff constructs a marvelous set of eleven variations on a theme in C minor. The manner of its presentation, like the Chaconne of the Bach D minor Solo Violin Partita (BWV 1004) which Raff turned into an orchestral piece two years later, is similar in procedure to the *32 Variations in C minor* (WoO 80) of Beethoven, or the fourth movement of the yet to be written *4<sup>th</sup> Symphony* of Brahms save for the fact that unlike all of these works, the present implementation is all understatement and reserve. But there is an even more direct model for this piece in the second movement of the *Seventh Symphony* of Beethoven whose cross between variation form and rondo based on the simplest repetitive materials Raff both borrows and then enhances.

The chaconne-theme consists of a sixteen measure chord progression in triple meter in which, characteristically, an enigmatic melody is buried. Grouped in two measure phrases, the first measure consists of clearly articulated quarter note pulses (notated as eighth note, eighth rest), the second of a single pulse and a half note arrival. Harmonically, the homophonic chaconne theme-and-accompaniment-in-one moves from C minor to E flat major, and then back to C minor. Its detached, formal yet subtle air coupled to the restricted nature of its materials and the use of variation form is the most obvious pointer to the Beethoven Allegretto movement. Taken as a whole of course, therein lies the fundamental humor of the piece itself. A very telling detail in the handling of the orchestra results in one of those "pure Raffian moments" one comes to expect from this composer. Every fourth measure rather than land on a sustained half note, the strings who present the original form of the thematic material land on a quarter note. The left over third beat of the measure is taken by a solo clarinet like a distant echo. The first time, the cadence is on the G dominant of C minor. The clarinet's echo tone is the root G. The second time, the cadence is in the relative major E flat. The clarinet's echo tone is the fifth B flat. The third time, the cadence is back to the G dominant, and so the clarinet's echo tone is also back to G. The fourth time, however, when the initial chaconne statement cadences in the tonic C minor, a calmly lyrical if thoughtful bassoon answers the strings. And this time, rather than a lonely echo tone, the note is sustained and from it a beguiling and sinuous melody emerges, the first variation proper, as the entire sixteen measure harmonic-thematic sequence is repeated underneath it.

The *first variation* itself sees one very slight alteration to the chaconne (other than the superimposition of the bassoon's cantilena) in the form of string pizzicato which eliminates the sustained phrase ending half note chord. In the *second variation*, a solo oboe takes over from the bassoon with a new countermelody played off against the chaconne which has now

lost its beat for beat articulations. Reduced at first to three voices, the combination of the complete change in articulation as well as the initial loss of the lowest voice creates a gentle but noticeable shift in texture. The oboe's solo is, however, more florid than the bassoon's was previously. Towards the end and against beat wise pulses from the violins, cellos and oboe, the violas play quietly off the beat. This well hidden two measure interior departure sets up the next variation.

The *third variation* plays two ideas off against each other and reverses the order of precedence whereby the chaconne now becomes prominent and the original countermelody principle is reduced to background figuration. There is another significant change as the chaconne is now taken up by all the winds, doubled in three octaves, with horns sustaining the G dominant pedal in the center, and bassoons and contrabasses adding an octave doubling to the original lowest voice. In the midst of this, in three octaves (1<sup>st</sup> violins, 2<sup>nd</sup> Violins and Violas, Cellos), the strings land on a repeating two measure long accompanimental countersubject: the first, upward moving arpeggios following the harmonic rhythm of the winds, but each arpeggio beginning on the second sixteenth of each beat (the first is always silent) - the second, an upwards then downward moving arpeggio played on all beats absent the first sixteenth. Even though the texture has thickened considerably, the whole is played very quietly and smoothly - the only real articulation coming by way of the empty first sixteenths of four of the six beats per two measure grouping. The upwards/downwards arpeggios are marked by a slight dynamic swelling. At the end, there is a significant crescendo leading directly to the next variation.

The *fourth variation* presents the full orchestra, forte, with the previous off the beat string arpeggios now becoming imitative double dotted punctuation. Against the back and forth dotted rhythm echo texture of the Violins and Violas and the Cellos and Basses, the winds (now joined by the four horns and the trumpets) play their chaconne variant always off the beat in sharply articulated chords. The timpani doubles the cellos and basses on the beat when its C and G fits the harmonic scheme. Raff does not use chromatic timpani. The resultant composite has a strongly archaic and pompous flavor.

As the rigid, formal fourth variation winds down, the *fifth variation* makes a knowing departure from what would have been the next literal chaconne statement. At first it does not appear to be an elaboration of the chaconne as much as it seems to be a premature coda to the movement or a transition to a new section. A closer examination ties it motivically to the bassoon and oboe countermelodies of the first and second variations. Here, for the first time, the harmonic movement becomes far more fluid. Where the chaconne's previous cast has been virtually homophonic, now all is warm, five part counterpoint. The music now surges with unexpected romantic passion. In the "twinkling of an ear" a bright, warm sun has emerged from behind cold, dark clouds. But as it resembles, procedurally, the shift to A major in the parallel passage in the Beethoven model (cf mm 102-138 there, et seq.) its climate is much warmer than Beethoven's pastorale episode. It is also one of those near surrealist displacements commonly found in Raff's music which, as it wasn't itself prepared, does not prepare for what follows. Beethoven keeps his theme intact. By placing it pizzicato in the cellos and basses a completely distracting, lyrical episode is built on top of it thus creating the appearance of a rondo-like alternate episode. Later in the movement he will

repeat this section but keeping only the rhythmic outline, not the theme. Raff will also come back to his fifth variation (in the guise of the eighth), but there he will attempt to resolve C minor to C major. In the present variation, he moves from a cadential C minor to tonal centers around the relative major, E flat. The result, from a formal perspective will obscure the straightforward variation form of the chaconne with elements of a rondo with sonata form elements overlaid on top of it as well.

The core of the movement is found at the *sixth variation*. Precursory examples Raff's signature preference for simultaneous textural layers can be found explicitly in three primary locations in Beethoven's cycle of symphonies: measures 117-150 of the second movement of Symphony #3, measures 180-220 of the second movement of Symphony #7, and measures 218-271 of the first movement of Symphony #9. In these places, Beethoven takes his primary thematic materials and treats them in a characteristic manner whereby subject, which is treated in more formal fugal manner, is set against a countersubject which moves in proportionately smaller values: mixed quarters and eighths moving against constant running sixteenths. What was episodic in the earlier symphonies (and to a lesser extent also in the Gloria of the *Mass in C*) evolved into a major compositional device by the first movement of the Ninth Symphony (and parallel passages in the *Missa Solemnis*). Raff's implicit reference to Beethovenian procedures in this variation is the smile at the heart of the darkness. It is a quiet, knowing smile restricted solely to the strings which play *piano, un poco marcato*. After what effectively is a complete double fugue exposition there is a sudden crescendo in which the strings are joined by the rest of the orchestra, in pyramided entrances complete with fanfare tattoos from trumpets and timpani. All of this serves to announce the "*es war licht*" moment in the symphony - the arrival of the *seventh variation* (the *seventh day of creation*, perhaps, missing nothing but Haydn's chorus!).

The grandiose *seventh variation*, with high winds, trumpets and timpani proclaiming the chaconne, and high strings in measured sixteenth triplet octaves on the dominant tone, G, and the bassoons, violas, cellos and basses maintaining the running sixteenth note figuration of the previous variation stands to answer the fourth variation's pompous rigidity. Half way through the statement, however, Raff moves rather suddenly (à la Ravel at the end of *Bolero*) to E major, the first real harmonic release in the movement. The effect is magical, especially as Raff is careful not to stretch glory and grandeur too far. As in the earlier variation, the orchestra quickly recedes into the background leaving only the strings to complete the variation. Here, the inner voices (divided second violins and violas) carry the chaconne, with first violin sextuplet arpeggiated figuration, arco, and pizzicato cellos (with punctuating pizzicato basses) arpeggiating but in longer values. The totality of it is a clearly delineated three part texture in six voices. The variation works its way back to C major.

The *eighth variation* answers the fifth variation by presenting essentially the same music (with somewhat more elaborate accompanying figuration) but with the tonality firmly fixed in C major. If this were a sonata form movement, this would constitute that part of the recapitulation in which secondary materials resolve to the tonic major (assuming the piece, according to classical academic models, was in the minor mode).

The *ninth and tenth variations* comprise a pair in which the dialectical opposition of C minor and C major forms the focus of the music. Interestingly, Raff has his strings muted here, the first time in the symphony such "special effects" have been called for. Common to both variations is the use of sustained pedal tones. But emerging from within the midst of the ninth variation as part of the sustaining pedal is our dotted rhythm not from the fourth variation (which featured double dotting) but from the first movement. It is a very subtle touch indeed which points ahead to the opening of the fourth movement. The tenth variation attempts C major again, but modulates to E major, as in the seventh variation. Here, sostenuto pedal tones are combined with sustained measured high octave tremolandi in the first violins. The halting rhythm of the opening has been completely replaced with simple quarter note and half note chorale movement. E major, however, soon moves up to G, and with it the C minor fate of the movement becomes a certainty.

The *eleventh variation* also serves as the coda to the movement. In it, all the previous variation devices and alternate thematic materials are brought together in a series of short episodes somewhat analogous to the stretto of a fugue. There are two brief tutti arrivals, but these fade quickly away into gloomy darkness which ends with 2 bassoons, 2 horns, violas and timpani sounding the tonic C minor, pianissimo.

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Raff, ever ready with a wonderful musical quip, twists the entire Beethoven reference on its ear within the first eighteen measures of the finale. Beginning with a brief reference to the opening of the first movement, within six measures the music lands on sustained questioning diminished sevenths which are immediately taken over by an even more abbreviated but intentional misquote. The cellos sing out a phrase that is uncomfortably close to the famous recitative that opens the fourth movement of "*The Ninth*," one last friendly Beethovenian poke in the ear. But the joke is over even before it begins. It is enough to throw it out, then pull it back immediately. One could also speculate that this was Raff's way of both lampooning the omnipresent famous symphony with little more than a wink and a nod (especially as an inside joke for the orchestra's musicians) while also signaling that an heroic conclusion after the parodic darkness of the third movement will not necessarily follow! Indeed, after a few measures of questioning winds sitting on top of the precipitously sudden low open C string of the cellos, a single flute and oboe provide the sole transition into the last movement proper. Unlike the "monumental forces" of the slow movement, the simple two voice gathering of energy (based on nothing more than a modal modulation from minor to major) is its illogical but thoroughly appropriate punch.

Aside from the earlier the issue of the delayed tonic as being a prominent structural device found in many places of Raff's pieces, one of the other characteristic behaviors of concerti tends to be that finales are often either much lighter in dramatic content or else are facile display pieces in which the soloist gets to show off without also having to contend with the burden of severe rhetoric. Curiously, Raff often adopts the concerto finale attitude in his symphonies, for example in Symphonies #2, #4, #6, #7, #8, and #9, and this outright rejection of what by 1870 was the standard issue blazing glory conclusion lead, in conjunction with the general perception of his relying on eclectic means, to misunderstanding in certain circles.

From the vantage point of more than a century since its composition we can approach the piece without any aesthetic conundrum, recognizing the originality of Raff's approach. Where the more normal symphonic trajectory would have been a direct upwards line culminating in the finale, Raff often treats the finale as the point of *resolution as relaxation*. While this tends to cool down the fire rather than to let it burn out of control, it also avoids rhetorical hyperventilation, and as such is wholly consistent with Raff's exacting control and structural discipline. A Raff symphony will frequently end in friendly fashion, not at the point of emotional exhaustion. This takes some adjusting to when heard in the context of the literature of the period - but it is yet another indicator of a strong, revisionist anti-romantic streak.

The final movement, Allegro - vivace, in many ways embodies the anti-romantic spirit. Its lean, neoclassic lines make the most out of fairly spare materials while also tying up various loose ends from the previous movement. Aside from the opening reference to the first movement, there is another somewhat similar passage just before the final peroration. Formally, the movement is cast in four sections whose totality cannot be said to be typical of either traditional sonata allegro form, or even the hybrid sonata rondo. Yet though Raff largely does away with the exposition-development-recapitulation model as well as the sonata rondo in which statements of a principal theme alternate with developmental episodes, there is an air of tight structure and dramatic thrust which keeps one's interest from first note to last.

The first of the four sections is built out of two ideas, the first a very catchy eight bar theme announced initially by a flute and an oboe. The second, also in the primary key of G major, is a robust bit of musical gymnastics whose materials and demeanor strongly resemble what would later become the Thüringian Suite in its outer movements. The first section appears to conclude in the dominant key, D major, with a section whose coda by extension attitude resembles, functionally, the fifth variation of the preceding slow movement. It ends with a much abbreviated pair of restatements of the initial G major theme now transposed.

The second section, now in C major, presents a different tune made up of three smaller phrases each quite different: a period deriving from horn and trumpet calls but played by low register clarinets and bassoons with rapidly moving string figuration, a plaintive quasi Mahlerian lament (but all of four measures in length), and perky concluding phrase in which the explicit F major placed over a G pedal resolving to G gives the music a characteristic color. This is repeated with fuller orchestration and in greater contrapuntal elaboration. The third repetition begins with orchestral development, a restatement of the first phrase of the C major theme, and a coda which serves both to elaborate the theme as well as to provide a transition to the next episode of the movement.

The third section corresponds to the development, but is a rather thorough fugal working out of thematic fragments from the various preceding themes. Curiously, Raff switches his key signature to A flat major, a tonal realization of numerous previous Phrygian implications. After building up a fair amount of energy, one might expect a formal recapitulation. But the only thing to be restated is the "Coda" theme of the first section, only now in G major, not in

D. Neither the first theme group, the Thüringan theme nor the C major secondary material is brought back at all. At least not directly.

The fourth section, having already begun with the first section's coda theme now follows it with one more reference to the first movement, in C minor, before engaging in three separate endings to the movement. The first of these takes fragments of the original G major, but casts it in articulated triplets. Along the way, the tempo speeds up as the orchestra accrues density and volume arriving at the second ending, *un poco più mosso*. Here a significant fragment of the C major theme is presented in augmentation as the orchestra plays with it in friendly fury. A second accelerando takes us to *ancora più mosso* for the third and ultimate conclusion, the neat and joyous resolution of the symphony.

The following outline will provide a more schematic description of the fourth movement's structure. You will note how surprisingly little material the movement actually contains - much is achieved through the kind of devices we normally associate with Raff's Russian contemporaries, that is, development through elaborated repetition rather than by motivic extension. When the fugal development occurs midway through the movement, the sudden shift away from elaborative repetition makes for a satisfying contrast. It also serves to heighten the anticipation of recapitulation which, paradoxically, never really happens.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Movement structural blocking

Introduction (Allegro, G minor, 2/2)

1. First movement reference mm 1 - 9
2. (Beethoven 9<sup>th</sup> misquote) mm 10-17

Vivace - G major

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|-----|--|--|
| I.1 | Transition to theme 1                              | mm 18-24   |
| I.2 | Theme 1 - first statement                          | mm 25-31 (flute and oboe)                          |
| I.3 | Theme 1 - second statement                         | mm 32-40 (woodwinds)                               |
| I.4 | Theme 1 - third statement [A] <sup>1</sup>         | mm 41-53 (strings / Mahler)                        |
| I.5 | Theme 1 - fourth statement                         | mm 51-61 (woodwinds / strings)                     |
| I.6 | Theme 1 - fifth statement                          | mm 62-69 (tutti)                                   |
| I.7 | Theme 2 (Thuringan theme)                          | [B] <sup>2</sup> mm 70-105 (theme with extensions) |
| I.8 | Theme 3 ("Coda" theme) [C]                         | mm 106-137 (in D major)                            |
| I.9 | Theme 1 - sixth statement [D]<br>trills - G major) | mm 138-147 (flute and oboe over violin D           |

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<sup>1</sup> [A] here, and other letters enclosed in square brackets refer to rehearsal figures in the score.

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of discussion the starting and ending points of all thematic references begin on the first logical downbeat even as the entire movement is built on upbeat tags either by quarter or half measures.

- I.10 Theme 1 - seventh statement mm 147-154 tutti
- I.11 Transition to C major mm 155-169 reintroduction of flowing eighth note motion (i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> movement redux but smoothed out)
- II.1 Theme 4 - first statement 1<sup>st</sup> phrase mm 162-170 (now C major)
- II.2 Theme 4 - 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase mm 171-174
- II.3 Theme 4 - 3<sup>rd</sup> phrase mm 175-178
- II.4 Theme 4 - second statement 1<sup>st</sup> phrase (fuller, more elaborate orchestration) mm 179-186
- II.5 Theme 4 - 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase mm 187-190
- II.6 Theme 4 - 3<sup>rd</sup> phrase mm 191-194
- II.7 Theme 4 - developmental extension [E] mm 195-204
- II.8 Theme 4 - third statement 1<sup>st</sup> phrase mm 205-212
- II.9 Theme 4 - 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase as coda extension with harmonic displacements leading to A flat major mm 213-225
- III Fugal development based on Thüringan thematic fragments [F]-[G] mm 226-291
- IV.1 Coda 1 - Theme 3 ("Coda Theme") [H]-[I] now in G major (the only portion of I recapitulated) mm 292-323
- IV.2 Coda 2 - First movement reference, in C minor (3/2) mm 324-330
- IV.3 Coda 3 - (2/2, G major originating under high D pedal triplets) based on "triplitized" version of Theme 1 fragments (that is, continued development as opposed to straight recapitulation). mm 321-347
- IV.4 Coda 4 - Un poco più mosso [J] mm 348-363 (built over augmentation of Theme 4 fragments)
- IV.5 Coda 5 - Ancora più mosso [K] mm 364-400

The term Coda when used in reference to section IV serves the dual purpose of simulated recapitulation and coda to the movement and the symphony as a whole. While recapitulation by its nature will involve some degree of alteration in order to satisfy tonal requirements, the materials brought back are clearly recognizable as

such. In this case, once past "Coda 1" the remaining references to previous materials are so transformed as to completely defeat the notion of recapitulation. Indeed, it is commonplace for principal materials to undergo some degree of further development or stretto fragmentation. Raff, in this case, bypasses direct recapitulation by going directly to stretto and disintegration.

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Monsey, NY

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