

Sinfonia antartica



Before Ralph Vaughan Williams would sanction the premiere of his “Sinfonia antartica,” he wanted to test drive it, so to speak, with a performance *in situ*, so he flew John Barbirolli and the Hallé Orchestra to McMurdo Station. Due to untimely scheduling conflicts with the facility’s researchers, the audience numbered only five men and two penguins, which the men cooked and ate during the interminable – for them – Intermezzo movement. The subsequent debut of the piece in 1953 was sufficiently well received, however its popularity skyrocketed after Vaughan Williams added the penguin-eating sequence to the score.