

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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Fourth Concert

1933-1934

Complete Series 2159

Fifty-fifth Annual
Choral Union Concert Series

CINCINNATI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

EUGENE GOOSSENS, *Conductor*

TUESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 5, 1933, AT 8:15
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture to "Beatrice and Benedict" BERLIOZ

Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90 BRAHMS

 I. Allegro con brio

 II. Andante

 III. Poco allegretto

 IV. Allegro

INTERMISSION

"La Peri" DUKAS

Roumanian Rhapsody No. 1 ENESCO

*The Steinway Piano and the Skinner Organ are the official concert
instruments of the University Musical Society*

A R S L O N G A V I T A B R E V I S

PROGRAM NOTES

Overture to the Opera "Beatrice and Benedict" BERLIOZ

Over a hundred years have passed since the genius of the young French composer, Hector Berlioz, began to be felt as a force running counter to the classicism of the early decades of the nineteenth century. Endowed with an imagination and an adventurous spirit, he avoided the usual disciplinary studies in his early training and flung himself headlong into the writing of music which should be less formal and more personal than the expression his contemporaries were employing. He explored the possibilities of increasing the descriptive and delineative capacities of the orchestra, and succeeded in making himself the first authority on instrumentation in his generation. His restless spirit thought out new subjects for musical delineation, and although his craftsmanship in composition and creative genius were not of first rank, the combination of his persistence of treating new subject matter in new ways, and his practical knowledge of instruments, made it impossible for composers of his day to ignore him and his works.

He left the musical world a heritage of seven compositions in the overture form, and, by so doing, took his place among the other great writers of overtures—Beethoven, Cherubini, Weber, and Mendels-

sohn. Some of these overtures were entirely independent of any connection with stage compositions, and others were actual preludes to operas. The overture on tonight's program is one of the latter type and portrays the mood of the delectable comic opera, "Beatrice and Benedict," which was composed in the years 1861-62 for the opening of the new theater at Baden-Baden and performed there for the first time. It presents a thoroughly charming and piquant tone picture in the colorings of comedy and is a strong contrast to the imposing and dramatic overture to "Benvenuto Cellini" and the tragic overture to "King Lear." The plot of the opera, "Beatrice and Benedict," is drawn from Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing" and Berlioz has treated it in a light and colorful vein. The melodic materials of the overture are taken from the opera itself, and are woven into the usual overture plan which begins with an introduction and is followed by the main body of the overture in a fast tempo. Clarity of statement, piquancy of idea, and brilliancy of scoring characterize this, the last of the seven overtures of Berlioz.

Symphony No. 3, F major, Op. 90 BRAHMS

Allegro con brio; Andante; Poco allegretto; Allegro

In many instances to be the subject of prophecy is to be severely handicapped, and undoubtedly for many years Johannes Brahms was hampered, so far as appreciation of him was concerned, by the glowing terms in which Robert Schumann proclaimed his advent. Nevertheless, as in the case of Chopin, whose genius Schumann also immediately recognized, time has proven the truth of the sweeping assertions of one of the few justified prophets of his day.

Brahms' power was the result of a long period of assimilation and proving, as has been the case in many other instances, and while progressive in his point of view, he was not swept off his feet by the surge of the incoming dramatic tide, but remained comparatively unaffected by movements that but circled about him while they engulfed others. He was responsive to the subtle suggestions of romanticism, but his love for the symmetry of classicism made it possible for him to preserve poise and dignity. That this dignity was neither rigid

nor cold is shown by his songs, which are considered as perfect revelations of genuine emotion as have been cast in that form. His symphonies bear witness to his scholarship and power of sustained effort, no less than his chamber music, while his songs reveal tender aspects.

The F-major symphony was written at Wiesbaden in the years 1882-83. At its first performance, under Hans Richter (Vienna, December 2, 1893), it was received with enthusiasm, and musical cognoscenti and the critics—the two are not always synonymous—agreed that it was his greatest work. It has been compared to Beethoven's "Eroica" symphony. The story of "Hero and Leander," and the atmosphere of a "forest idyll" were suggested by Joachim and Clara Schumann respectively, as its meaning. The suggestion of the latter, that the first movement represented "the splendor of awakening day streaming through the trees," has found many a response since it was put forth—and may this evening.

Dance Poem, "La Peri" DUKAS

The Peri, in Persian mythology, is a descendant of a fallen spirit, who is excluded from Paradise until the time of her penance shall have come to an end. "La Peri" was composed in 1910 and was performed for the first time at the Châtelet, Paris, at the Concerts de Danse given by Mlle. Trouhanowa in April, 1912. It had been planned to present the work at one of the performances of the Russian Ballet at the Châtelet, in 1911, but the time for preparation was too short. The program of the Concert de Danse contained, in addition to the work by Dukas, d'Indy's "Istar," Ravel's "Valse Nobles et Sentimentales," and "La Tragedie de Salome" by Florent Schmitt. Each work was directed by the composer, and the orchestra was drawn from the forces of the Lamoureux organization. Mlle. Trouhanowa danced in all, and the part of Iskender in "La Peri" was mimed and danced by Bekefi.

On this occasion there appeared in the program book of the Concert de Danse the "Program" of "La Peri" which Dukas had attached to his score. The following translation is by Philip Hale:

It happened that at the end of his youthful days, since the Magi observed that his star was growing pale, Iskender went about Iran seeking the flower of immortality.

The sun sojourned thrice in its dozen dwellings without Iskender finding the flower. At last he

arrived at the end of the earth, where it is only one with sea and clouds.

And there, on the steps that lead to the hall of Ormuzd, the Peri was reclining, asleep in her jewelled robe. A star sparkled above her head; her lute rested on her breast; in her hand shone the flower.

It was a lotus like unto an emerald, swaying as the sea under the morning sun.

Iskender noiselessly leaned over the sleeper, and without awakening her snatched the flower, which suddenly became between his fingers like the noonday sun over the forests of Ghilan.

The Peri, opening her eyes, clapped the palms of her hands together and uttered a loud cry, for she could not now ascend towards the light of Ormuzd.

Iskender regarding her, wondered at her face, which surpassed in deliciousness even the face of Gurda-ferid.

In his heart he coveted her. So that the Peri knew the thought of the king, for in the right hand of Iskender the lotus grew purple and became as the face of longing.

Thus the servant of the Pure knew that this flower of life was not for him.

To recover it, she darted forward like a bee, while the invincible lord bore away from her the lotus, torn between his thirst for immortality and the delight for his eyes.

But the Peri danced the dance of the Peris; always approaching him until her face touched his face; and at the end he gave back the flower without regret.

Then the lotus was like unto snow and gold, as the summit of Elbourz at sunset.

The form of the Peri seemed to melt in the light coming from the calix, and soon nothing more was to be seen than a hand raising the flower of flame, which faded in the realm above.

Iskender saw her disappear. Knowing from this that his end drew near, he felt the darkness encompassing him."

Roumanian Rhapsody No. 1 ENESCO

Folk melodies full of lyric beauty and rhythmic variety have been drawn upon more by this contemporary composer for the thematic materials of the group of compositions each of which he has entitled

"Roumanian Rhapsody." Enesco is a violinist by profession, but has made a place for himself both as a composer and as a conductor in Europe and America.

COMING MUSICAL EVENTS

HILL AUDITORIUM

- December 10 Handel's "Messiah." The University Choral Union; The University Symphony Orchestra; Thelma von Eisenhauer, Soprano; Helen McClafin, Contralto; Arthur Hackett, Tenor; Carl Lindegren, Bass; Palmer Christian, Organist; Earl V. Moore, Conductor. (Parts I and II will be performed, and in order that the program may close on time, this concert will begin at 3:30.)
- December 13 Palmer Christian, University Organist, will give the program in the Twilight Organ Recital Series, at 4:15.
- December 14 Maria Olszewska, Contralto of the Metropolitan Opera Association, will be heard in the Choral Union Series, Thursday evening, December 14.

