

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

CHARLES A. SINK, PRESIDENT

THOR JOHNSON, GUEST CONDUCTOR

LESTER MCCOY, ASSOCIATE CONDUCTOR

Tenth Concert

1947-1948

Complete Series 2974

Sixty-ninth Annual
Choral Union Concert Series

CINCINNATI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

THOR JOHNSON, *Conductor*

THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 18, 1948, AT 7:00
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Concerto Grosso in D minor VIVALDI
(Freely transcribed by Vittorio Giannini)

Allegro (non troppo), adagio, allegro energico
Largo
Allegro

Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98 BRAHMS

Allegro non troppo
Andante moderato
Allegro giocoso
Allegro energico e passionato

INTERMISSION

Suite Provençale MILHAUD

Animato Moderato
Molto moderato Vivace
Moderato Lento
Vivace Vivace

The White Peacock GRIFFES

Symphonic Poem, "The Pines of Rome" RESPIGHI

The Pines of the Villa Borghese
The Pines near a Catacomb
The Pines of the Janiculum
The Pines of the Appian Way

The Baldwin is the official piano of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

NOTE.—The University Musical Society has presented the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra on previous occasions as follows: March 24, 1903, Frank van der Stucken, conductor; February 17, 1915, Ernst Kunwald, conductor; and December 5, 1933, Eugene Goossens, conductor.

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

PROGRAM NOTES

Concerto Grosso in D minor VIVALDI (1675-1741) (Freely transcribed by Vittorio Giannini)

Vivaldi lived and worked during a period of transition. It is worth noting that he was a priest by calling—known on account of the color of his hair as the “Red-Priest.” An obscure ailment excused him from his priestly duties and thus enabled him to devote the greater part of his time to the creation of music. His output was prodigious. He composed approximately forty operas and oratorios, all of them long forgotten, and numerous instrumental works including the violin concertos and concerto grossos on which his fame rests. The great bulk of his work appears to be unedited.

Many of Vivaldi's works carry titles which, as historians point out, are expressive rather than descriptive. “L'estro armonico” (Harmonious Inspiration) for example, is the title of a group of twelve works of which the Concerto Grosso in D minor, to be played at this concert, is No. 11. This is the famous Vivaldi concerto grosso and has been transcribed many times. The transcription by Vittorio Giannini, the American composer, has been described by him as a “free arrangement for full orchestra rather than as a re-orchestration.” This concerto was originally written for two violin solos, violoncello obbligato, strings, and continuo, according to the specifications of the Etienne Royer edition, 1710. It follows the conventional pattern of three movements, the first and last fast, with a contrasting middle slow movement, here in 12-8 siciliano time. The opening movement in due course leads into a lively fugue. The last is a typical energetic finale.

Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98 . . . JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Each one of Brahms' four symphonies stands fourth as a highly individualized composition. The Gothic grandeur of the First, the idyllic serenity of the Second, the epic lyricism of the Third, all presage the elegiac unity of Brahms' Fourth Symphony. Though the symphony is not tragic, and though Brahms was too great an artist not to afford the relief of contrast, the prevailing color is gray, the dominant spirit is that of resignation.

The symphony was composed in the summers of 1884 and 1885 at Murzzuschlag in Styria, and given its first performance at Meiningen, October 25, 1885. It was a subject of anxiety to Brahms, who was over fifty when he began it. “I am not at all eager to write a bad number Four,” he wrote to Clara Schumann, and that loyal friend, after reading the completed score replied, “Surely it must go down with the audience even if they neither understand nor are able to follow the passacaglia form.”

Brahms' qualms were not altogether unfounded, for early performances of the Fourth Symphony brought forth a flood of criticism, and even worse, polite applause. There were some daring departures in the work, and Hugo Wolf even found fault with the use of E minor as a key for the symphony.

The Fourth's appeal grew steadily, however, and Brahms lived to see it acclaimed. Six months before his death he attended a performance of the symphony in Vienna and was given a vociferous ovation which he took standing in the artists' box. This was the last public performance he attended.

The symphony's most unorthodox proceedings occur in the last movement, the giant passacaglia referred to by Clara Schumann. The use of this ancient dance form, which in this case consists of an eight-bar theme and thirty-two variations, comes as no surprise after a study of the score. As a matter of fact, Brahms leads the listener to it almost imperceptibly from the symphony's simple, halting beginning.

The first three movements, *Allegro non troppo*, *Andante moderato*, and *Allegro giocoso* contain the germs of and almost foretell the intricate doings that follow. The last movement is conceded by musicians to be one of the great pieces of symphonic writing, a fact which need not overwhelm the layman at all, for Clara Schumann said of it, “One need not be a musician, thank Heaven, to come under the spell.”

Suite Provençale DARIUS MILHAUD (1892-)

Much of Milhaud's music is associated with southern France—with Provence. The present *Suite* was composed in the summer of 1936, and played at a concert of modern music in Venice. It was conducted by the composer. The *Suite* made the rounds of European capitals, and has also been played by many American orchestras. In it, noted the annotator of the Saint Louis programs, the composer utilized many “popular folk-airs of the Eighteenth Century. Some of them are by Campra, who was born in Aix-en-Provence, like me.” The *Suite* consists of eight very brief pieces.

1. *Animato*. The first begins briskly, on a straightforward folk-tune in the major. It is polytonal, being erected on a pedal-point.

2. *Molto moderato*. This is a march-like movement, quickening to *vivace*.
3. *Moderato*. Another lively dance-tune, interrupted briefly before the end by some slow measures.
4. *Vivace*. A vivacious dance in triple rhythm.
5. *Moderato*. The tune is announced by trumpets, after which the whole orchestra joins in.
6. *Vivace*. This one is staccato and dry, and in very vivacious tempo.
7. *Lento*. A brief, slow movement, with a plaintive theme which, after an introduction is sung by English horn, trombones, horns and strings.
8. *Vivace*. The largest movement of the *Suite* is the *Finale*. It is lively and brilliant throughout.

The White Peacock . . . CHARLES TOMLISON GRIFFES (1884–1920)

Charles T. Griffes was born at Elmira, New York on September 17, 1884 and died in New York City on April 8, 1920. He was an individual and resourceful composer, and although his early works show a marked German influence, his mature writings, after having passed through a tinting of French Impressionism, emerged freshly developed in a more personal idiom. At the time of his death, he had just begun to come into his own as a composer of recognized merit.

The *White Peacock* is a tone poem based on a poem of the same name by the too-little known Scotch poet, William Sharp. It is a feast of delicate sense impressions, frail hues, fragrance that vanishes at the moment of awareness, a study in white and pale blues. Rarely has a composer translated from word to tone with such perfection as Griffes. He has achieved a piece of music of pure impressionism, contrived to lure the listener to a land of day dreams.

Mysteriously the music begins, with a questioning call of the oboe—and an answer by the flute, as if invoking the spirits of the garden. Instantly the spell is cast, and the real world fades and “Here, as the breath, and the soul of this beauty, moveth in silence, and dreamlike, and slowly, *The White Peacock*.” Delicately suggestive is the spread chord with which the theme sweeps in, the slight thrusting movement of the dotted eighth note followed by the sixteenth, and the unhurried 5-4 meter picturing the strutting bird. The main motive is definitely reminiscent of the *Pavanne*, an ancient ceremonial dance said to have been named for the peacock. A languorous song is wafted by the flutes, perhaps from the gardens. The music glows, but always with subdued colors.

Symphonic Poem, “The Pines of Rome” . OTTORINO RESPIGHI (1879–1936)

The Symphonic poem, *The Pines of Rome*, was composed in 1924 and performed for the first time at the Augusteum in 1925. While in his preceding work, *The Fountains of Rome*, the composer sought to reproduce, by means of tone, an impression of nature, in *The Pines of Rome* he used nature as a point of departure in order to recall memories and visions. The century-old trees which dominate so characteristically the Roman landscape become testimony for the principal events in Roman life.

The Pines of Rome, which is in four connected sections (like *The Fountains of Rome*), is based upon this program, printed as preface to the score.

1. *The Pines of the Villa Borghese* (*Allegretto vivace*, 2-8). Children are at play in the pine-grove of the Villa Borghese, dancing the Italian equivalent of Ring Around A-Rosy, mimicking marching soldiers and battles, twittering and shrieking like swallows at evening, and they disappear. Suddenly the scene changes to—

2. *The Pines Near a Catacomb* (*Lento* 4-4, beginning with muted and divided strings and muted horns, *(p)*). We see the shadows of the pines which overhang the entrance to a catacomb. From the depths rises a chant which re-echos solemnly, sonorously, like a hymn, and is then mysteriously silenced.

3. *The Pines of the Janiculum* (*Lento* 4-4, piano cadenza, clarinet solo). There is a thrill in the air. The full moon reveals the profile of the pines of Gianicolo's Hill. A nightingale sings (represented by a gramophone record of a nightingale's song heard from the orchestra).

4. *The Pines of the Appian Way* (*Tempo di marcia*). Misty dawn on the Appian Way. The tragic country is guarded by solitary pines. Indistinctly, incessantly, the rhythm of innumerable steps. To the poet's phantasy appears a vision of past glories; trumpets blare, and the army of the consul advances brilliantly in the grandeur of newly risen sun toward the sacred way, mounting in triumph the Capitoline Hill.

The feature of this score is its use of a gramophone record, probably the first instance of the sort in symphonic music. The bird's song occurs at the end of the movement. It is introduced by the clarinet melody heard at the beginning of the section.

MAY FESTIVAL

APRIL 29, 30 and MAY 1, 2, 1948

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA AT ALL CONCERTS

BIDU SAYAO, Soprano
 VIRGINIA MacWATTERS, Soprano
 ANNE BOLLINGER, Soprano
 CLOE ELMO, Contralto
 NELL TANGEMAN, Contralto
 DAVID LLOYD, Tenor
 LEONARD WARREN, Baritone
 JAMES PEASE, Baritone
 MISCHA ELMAN, Violinist

WILLIAM KINCAID, Flutist
 LEON FLEISHER, Pianist
 EUGENE ORMANDY, Conductor
 ALEXANDER HILSBERG, Conductor
 THOR JOHNSON, Conductor
 MARGUERITE HOOD, Conductor
 PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
 UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION
 FESTIVAL YOUTH CHORUS

PROGRAMS

THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 8:30

Eugene Ormandy, *Conductor*
 Soloist: Bidu Sayao, *Soprano*

Toccata and Fugue in D minor BACH-ORMANDY
 "Non so piu" } from "Marriage of MOZART
 "Voi che sapete" } Figaro"
 King of Thule aria and "Jewel Song" from "Faust" GOUNOD
 Bidu SAYAO
 Symphony No. 3 in F major BRAHMS
 Nhapôpé (Negro Song) VILLA-LOBOS
 O Kinimba } Folk Songs of Brazil . AIT. BRAGA
 Engenho Novo } Miss SAYAO
 La Valse RAVEL

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 8:30

Alexander Hilsberg and Thor Johnson, *Conductors*
 University Choral Union

Soloists: William Kincaid, *Flutist*
 Virginia MacWatters, *Soprano*
 Nell Tangeman, *Contralto*
 David Lloyd, *Tenor*
 James Pease, *Baritone*
All-Mozart Program

Overture to "Don Giovanni"
 Concerto in G-major for Flute and Orchestra
 WILLIAM KINCAID, *Flutist*
 Great Mass in C minor, K. 427
 UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION AND SOLOISTS

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 2:30

Alexander Hilsberg and Marguerite Hood, *Conductors*
 Festival Youth Chorus
 Soloist: Mischa Elman, *Violinist*

Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue in C major BACH-WEINER
 Songs of the Americas (edited by Marguerite Hood and orchestrated by Eric DeLamarter)
 FESTIVAL YOUTH CHORUS
 Concerto in D major, for Violin and Orchestra BEETHOVEN
 MISCHA ELMAN
 Four Dances from "Gayne" KHACHATURIAN

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 8:30

Eugene Ormandy, *Conductor*
 Soloist: Leonard Warren, *Baritone*

Overture, "Der Freischutz" WEBER
 Iago's "Credo" from "Otello" VERDI
 "Prologue" from "Pagliacci" LEONCAVALLO
 LEONARD WARREN
 "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata" from "Rigoletto" VERDI
 "Pari siamo" from "Rigoletto" VERDI
 MR. WARREN
 Symphony No. 2 in D major SIBELIUS

SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2:30

Thor Johnson, *Conductor*
 University Choral Union
 Soloists: Anne Bollinger, *Soprano*
 David Lloyd, *Tenor*
 James Pease, *Baritone*
 Leon Fleisher, *Pianist*

All-Rachmaninoff Program
 "The Bells," for Orchestra, Chorus and Soloists
 Silver Sleigh Bells Loud Alarm Bells
 Mellow Wedding Bells Mournful Iron Bells
 UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION AND SOLOISTS
 Concerto No. 2 in C minor Op. 18
 LEON FLEISHER

SUNDAY, MAY 2, 8:30

Eugene Ormandy, *Conductor*
 Soloist: Cloe Elmo, *Contralto*

Symphony No. 101 (The Clock) HAYDN
 "Divinita Infernal" from "Alceste" GLUCK
 "O mio Fernando" from "Favorita" DONIZETTI
 CLOE ELMO
 "The Swan of Tuonela," Op. 22 SIBELIUS
 "Letter" Aria from "Werther" MASSENET
 "Condotta ell'era in ceppi" from "Il Trovatore" VERDI
 MISS ELMO
 Symphonic Poem "Feste Romana" RESPIGHI
 EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conductor*

Season tickets (6 concerts) now on sale. Address: Charles A. Sink, President, University Musical Society, Burton Memorial Tower.