

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

CHARLES A. SINK, PRESIDENT

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Third Concert

1948-1949

Complete Series 2984

Seventieth Annual
Choral Union Concert Series

THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

GEORGE SZELL, *Conductor*

SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 7, 1948, AT 7:00

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture to "The Flying Dutchman" WAGNER

Symphony in G major, No. 88 HAYDN

Adagio, allegro

Largo

Menuetto, trio

Finale: allegro con spirito

"La Valse," Choreographic Poem RAVEL

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 1 in B-flat major, Op. 38 ("Spring") SCHUMANN

Andante un poco maestoso, allegro molto vivace

Larghetto

Scherzo: molto vivace; Trio I: molto più vivace; Trio II

Allegro animato e grazioso

NOTE: The University Musical Society has presented the Cleveland Orchestra on previous occasions as follows: Mar. 28, 1935; Nov. 9, 1937; Nov. 7, 1938; Nov. 9, 1941; Nov. 8, 1942; Artur Rodzinski, conductor; Nov. 7, 1943, Erich Leinsdorf, conductor; Nov. 12, 1944, George Szell, guest conductor; Nov. 11, 1945, Erich Leinsdorf, conductor; Nov. 10, 1946; and Nov. 9, 1947, George Szell, conductor.

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

PROGRAM NOTES

By GEORGE H. L. SMITH

Overture to "The Flying Dutchman" RICHARD WAGNER

It was during Wagner's stay at Riga (1837-39) that he came across the legend of the Flying Dutchman in a tale of Heine. Probably he was already familiar with the story of the Dutch sea captain who had sworn to round the Cape of Good Hope, and had been condemned by the Devil to an eternal voyage in a phantom ship that was often seen by imaginative mariners on nights of wind and high seas. But it was not long after reading Heine's account that he actually experienced the malignant power of the sea—the stuff of which the legend was made. In the summer of 1839 he set out for Paris by way of London. Escaping from his creditors in Riga, he slipped across the Russian border to Pillau without passport and took passage for himself, his wife, and their huge Newfoundland dog, Robber, on the *Thetis*. The *Thetis* was a small English cargo vessel, quite without accommodations for passengers. Terrific storms delayed her in the Baltic, and she was forced to seek refuge along the Norwegian coast.

"The passage through the Norwegian fjords," Wagner wrote in *Mein Leben*, "made a wondrous impression on my fancy. A feeling of indescribable content came over me when the enormous granite walls echoed the hail of the crew as they cast anchor and furled the sails. The sharp rhythm of this call clung to me like an omen of good cheer, and shaped itself presently into the theme of the seamen's song in my *Fliegender Holländer*. The idea of this opera was even at that time ever present in my mind, and it now took on a definite poetic and musical color under the influence of my recent impressions.

The overture is a direct descendant of the dramatic overtures of Beethoven and was intended by Wagner to summarize the action of the opera. It opens with the music of the storm, later to be heard in the first act. The motive of the horns and bassoons, sounded through the menacing fifths of the strings, is typical of the Dutchman and his diabolic curse. Senta's ballad in the second act furnishes the material for the calm, lyric middle section. There is a return to the stormy music as the Dutchman drives on through the tempest. Senta's music—also signifying redemption by love—is developed. The sailors' chorus from the third act appears. There is a triumphant treatment of the theme of redemption just before that wonderful final page with which Wagner, in a later revision, raised the whole overture to an exceptionally high expressive plane.

Symphony in G major, No. 88 JOSEPH HAYDN

This Symphony in G major has called forth the highest praise from all the commentators. It is doubtful if Haydn ever surpassed it in essential beauty of themes and economy and perfection of workmanship. The slow introduction sets the mood for the witty development of the two sunny themes of the first movement. Tovey, calling the serious song of the second movement "a glorious theme," remembers the legend of Brahms playing it with "wallowing enthusiasm" and the ejaculation, "I want my Ninth Symphony to be like this!" Writing enchantingly of this superlative music, he calls the trio of the high-spirited minuet "one of Haydn's finest pieces of rustic dance music," and the theme of the bustling rondo that concludes the symphony the most "exquisitely bred kitten" that Haydn ever produced.

The scoring is for one flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, tympani, and the usual strings.

"La Valse," Choreographic Poem MAURICE RAVEL

Ravel completed his *La Valse, Poème Choréographique*, in 1920, and played it in an arrangement for two pianos with Alfredo Casella in Vienna in November of that year. The first performance of the full score was at a Lamoureux concert in Paris on December 12, 1920.

Alfredo Casella said that Ravel, sketching *La Valse* during the first World War, entertained indefinite ideas of a dance production of his *poème choréographique*. Whatever these ideas may have been, they came to nothing, and no other "purpose" has been suggested for this music. If the score is based upon measures that might have flowed from the pen of one of the Strausses, it is of an intent that that family would never have considered—an intent which Ravel indicates neither in his tempo indication, "Movement of a Viennese Waltz," nor in the description which is printed on the score:

"At first the scene is dimmed by a kind of swirling mist, through which one discerns, vaguely and intermittently, the waltzing couples. Little by little the vapors disperse, the illumination grows brighter, revealing an immense ballroom filled with dancers; the blaze of the chandeliers comes to full splendor. An Imperial Court about 1855."

These instruments are used: three flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contra-bassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, tympani, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, castanets, crotales, tam-tam, glockenspiel, two harps, and strings.

Symphony No. 1 in B-flat major, Op. 38 ("Spring") . ROBERT SCHUMANN

The "Spring" Symphony is one of those happy inspirations that seem to slip into the world in complete form, unexpected and almost unsought. Schumann sketched it in the space of four days, working in fierce absorption. It was his first large orchestral work, the ripe fruit of a blissful period in his life.

Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck had been married just four months before, after four bitter years in which Clara's father had forbidden the wedding. In the attractive little house at No. 5 Inselstrasse in Leipzig, where they took up their abode after being quietly married in the suburban church at Schönefeld, Robert found so rich a flood of inspiration that he could barely keep pace with it. The diary that the two had undertaken soon fell entirely to Clara. "It is not my turn to keep the diary this week," she wrote; "but when a husband is composing a symphony, he must be excused from other things . . . The symphony is nearly finished and, though I have not yet heard any of it, I am infinitely delighted that Robert has at last found the sphere for which his great imagination fits him." On January 25 she wrote: "Today, Monday, Robert has about finished his symphony: it has been composed mostly at night—my poor Robert has spent some sleepless nights over it. He calls it 'Spring Symphony' . . . A spring poem by _____ gave the first impulse to this creation."

The unnamed poet was Adolph Böttger. Schumann sent him, in 1842, a copy of the two opening bars of the symphony with the inscription, "Beginning of a symphony inspired by a poem of Adolph Böttger." The poem is of no particular interest except in its final couplet, which has often been quoted as a motto of the symphony: "*Im Thale blüht der Frühling auf!*"—"In the valley blooms the Spring!" The sketches were accomplished between January 23 and 26, and Schumann then wrote to his friend, Ferdinand Wenzel: "I have, during the last few days, finished a task (at least in sketches) which filled me with happiness and almost exhausted me. Think of it, a whole symphony—and, what is more, a Spring symphony; I, myself, can hardly believe that it is finished."

The score calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tympani, triangle, and strings.

CONCERTS

CINCINNATI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	Monday, November 15
THOR JOHNSON, <i>Conductor</i>	
EZIO PINZA, <i>Bass</i>	Thursday, November 18
CLIFFORD CURZON, <i>Pianist</i>	Saturday, November 27
RUDOLF SERKIN, <i>Pianist</i>	Friday, December 3
BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	Monday, December 6
SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY, <i>Conductor</i>	
GINETTE NEVEU, <i>Violinist</i>	Saturday, January 8
VLADIMIR HOROWITZ, <i>Pianist</i>	Friday, February 11
HEIFETZ, <i>Violinist</i>	Saturday, February 19
NATHAN MILSTEIN, <i>Violinist</i>	Friday, March 4
INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	Sunday, March 13
FABIEN SEVITZKY, <i>Conductor</i>	
CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	Sunday, March 27
FRITZ BUSCH, <i>Guest Conductor</i>	

Single Concerts (inc. tax): \$3.00—\$2.40—\$1.80—\$1.50.

Christmas Concerts

“MESSIAH” (Handel)—Saturday, December 11, at 8:30 P.M., and a repeat performance, Sunday, December 12, at 2:30 P.M.

DORIS DOREE, *Soprano*; NAN MERRIMAN, *Contralto*; FREDERICK JAGEL, *Tenor*; JOHN GURNEY, *Bass*; University Choral Union; Special “Messiah” Orchestra; MARY MCCALL STUBBINS, *Organist*; LESTER MCCOY, *Conductor*.

Tickets (inc. tax): 70 cents and 50 cents.

Chamber Music Festival

PAGANINI STRING QUARTET—Three concerts, January 14, 15, and 16, 1949.

HENRI TEMIANKA and GUSTAVE ROSSELS, *Violins*; ROBERT COURTE, *Viola*, and ADOLF FREZIN, *Violoncello*. Tickets (inc. tax): \$3.60 and \$2.40

Friday Evening at 8:30

Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 125, No. 1 SCHUBERT
Quartet in F major, Op. 59, No. 1 BEETHOVEN
Quartet in C major (Dissonance), K. 465 MOZART

Saturday Evening at 8:30

Quartet in G major, Op. 77, No. 1 HAYDN
Quartet No. 3 JACOBI
Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 127 BEETHOVEN

Sunday Afternoon at 2:30

Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 18, No. 6 BEETHOVEN
Quartet No. 7 MILHAUD
Quartet in D major FRANCK

For tickets or for further information, please address: Charles A. Sink, President, University Musical Society, Burton Memorial Tower.