

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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Fourth Concert

1949-1950

Complete Series 3012

Seventy-first Annual
Choral Union Concert Series

THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

GEORGE SZELL, *Conductor*

SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 6, 1949, AT 7:00

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture to the Opera-Ballet, "Anacréon" CHERUBINI

Concerto for Orchestra BARTÓK

Introduzione
Presentando le coppie
Elegia
Intermezzo interrotto
Finale

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73 BRAHMS

Allegro non troppo
Adagio non troppo
Allegretto grazioso, quasi andantino
Allegro con spirito

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, Nov. 9, 1947, and Nov. 7, 1948, 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 Opera-Ballet, "Anacréon" LUIGI CHERUBINI

"Anacréon; ou, l'Amour fugitif," opera-ballet in two acts, libretto by Mendouze, was composed in 1803 and performed on October 4 of that year at the Paris Opéra.

Although Cherubini was born and obtained his education in Italy, he lived in Paris from his twenty-eighth year and wrote most of his mature operas and choral works there. The opera-ballet "Anacréon" belongs to his great period of operatic supremacy in the French capital. It had little success, however, mainly due to a ridiculous libretto on the noble subject of the most famous of the ancient Greek lyric poets. Anacréon was born at Teos, Asia Minor, about 563 B.C., and died at the ripe age of eighty-five, so says Pliny, from choking upon a grape seed.

The overture is largely based on material drawn from the opera. There is an introduction in slow tempo (*Largo assai*, D major, 2-2). The main body of the overture is an *Allegro* (D major, 4-4). The famous crescendo that follows the long-sustained pianissimo has been pointed out as an influence upon similar scintillant effects in the overtures of Rossini.

Concerto for Orchestra BÉLA BARTÓK

Bartók composed his Concerto for Orchestra, on a commission from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, during a period of convalescence from a serious illness—a fact that is reflected in his own characterization of the work, written for the program book of the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the time of the first performance: "The general mood of the work represents, apart from the jesting second movement, a gradual transition from the sternness of the first movement and the lugubrious death-song of the third to the life-assertion of the last."

He then proceeded to explain his title and the structure of his score:

"The title of this symphony-like orchestral work is explained by its tendency to treat the single instruments or instrument groups in a *concertante* or soloistic manner. The 'virtuoso' treatment appears, for instance, in the fugato sections of the development of the first movement (brass instruments), or in the *perpetuum mobile*-like passage of the principal theme in the last movement (strings), and, especially, in the second movement, in which pairs of instruments consecutively appear with brilliant passages.

"As for the structure of the work, the first and fifth movements are written in a more or less regular sonata form. The development of the first contains fugato sections for brass; the exposition in the finale is somewhat extended, and its development consists of a fugue built on the last theme of the exposition. Less traditional forms are found in the second and third movements. The main part of the second consists of a chain of independent short sections, by wind instruments consecutively introduced in five pairs (bassoons, oboes, clarinets, flutes, and muted trumpets). Thematically, the five sections have nothing in common. A kind of 'trio'—a short chorale for brass instruments and side-drum—follows, after which the five sections are recapitulated in a more elaborate instrumentation. The structure of the third movement likewise is chain-like; three themes appear successively. These constitute the core of the movement, which is enframed by a misty texture of rudimentary motifs. Most of the thematic material of this movement derives from the 'Introduction' to the first movement. The form of the fourth movement—*Intermezzo interrotto*—could be rendered by the letter symbols 'ABA—interruption—BA.'

The score calls for three flutes and piccolo, three oboes and English horn, three clarinets and bass clarinet, three bassoons and contra-bassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, tympani, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tam-tam, two harps, and strings. The first performance was given by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, conductor, on December 1, 1944.

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73 JOHANNES BRAHMS

Brahms sought for years to unlock the inner door of the symphonic form. It was only in 1876—at the age of forty-three—that he was ready to entrust his First Symphony to public performance, and so to the world. The decision was not lightly taken. For fourteen years the score had lain, uncompleted, in his portfolio. The première at Karlsruhe on November 4, 1876, was in truth a momentous occasion. At last the public could find out for itself if Schumann had prophesied truly that the young Brahms was to be the future guardian of the symphonic tradition.

If there was dissent in some quarters, it was not sufficient to weaken the growing self-confidence of the composer. Within a year, he was ready with a Second Symphony, a sunny, melifluous score, composed in a brief span of months rather than a broad arch of years. This time he sought no advice; there was nothing of the effort and struggle that had molded the tragic periods of the First Symphony. The Second sprang full-fashioned from a rich flood of inspiration.

It was Brahms' custom to devote his summers to composition in some quiet resort where the charms of nature, complemented by the pleasure of good company, would make up for the rigors of the inevitable *Konzertwinter*. The pleasant months of 1877 were spent at Portsach, and there can be little doubt that it was there on the Wörther See in Carinthia, that the Second Symphony came into being.

"I don't know whether I have a pretty symphony; I must inquire of skilled persons," he wrote to his friend Dr. Billroth in the September of 1877, as work on the symphony continued. Of course, Brahms' closest friends knew that a new symphony was in the air. Elisabeth von Herzogenberg could not control her impatience, but Brahms followed his usual custom of misleading his friends with regard to the character of a new work. She had teased him for spelling *Symphonie* with an "f." He wrote his answer on November 22, 1877, in bantering vein: "It is really no *Symphonie*, but merely a *Sinfonie*, and I shall have no need to play it to you beforehand. You merely sit down at the piano, put your little feet on the two pedals in turn, and strike the chord of F minor several times in succession, first in the treble, then in the bass *ff* and *pp*, and you will gradually gain a vivid impression of my latest."

He maintained this mood even to the eve of the first performance, when he wrote: "The orchestra here plays my symphony with crêpe bands on their sleeves because of its dirge-like effect. It is to be printed with a black edge, too."

The *moll-dur*, or "major-minor" character of Brahms' Second Symphony has often been remarked, and it is true that the peculiar quality of this music, now in the major, now in the minor mode, is neither serene nor troubled, but an ingenious mixture of the two. Even the predominantly sunny first movement (*Allegro non troppo*; 3-4), beginning so calmly in horns and woodwind, is not without its cloudy moments, its stormy proclamations. In this music serenity is won only through a mastery of destiny. This truth is reaffirmed in the slow movement (*Adagio non troppo*; 4-4), which juxtaposes a dark, brooding introspection with music of the purest and most ineffable beauty. Only in the songful third movement (*Allegretto grazioso*; 3-4), with its two trios based on rhythmic transformations of its main theme, does the pastoral mood at last become idyllic. The finale (*Allegro con spirito*; 2-2) is music of climax and culmination, music, superbly organized, that is exquisitely supple and confident of its own strength. Its linear melodies are Mozartean in their clarity, and it has been truly said that "the blood of Mozart flows through its veins."

CONCERTS

- ITALO TAJO, *Bass* Wednesday, November 16, 8:30
TOSSY SPIVAKOVSKY, *Violinist* Tuesday, November 22, 8:30
RISÉ STEVENS, *Mezzo-soprano* Monday, December 5, 8:30
CARROLL GLENN, *Violinist*
and EUGENE LIST, *Pianist* Friday, January 6, 8:30
CINCINNATI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Tuesday, January 17, 8:30
THOR JOHNSON, *Conductor*
MYRA HESS, *Pianist* Friday, February 17, 8:30
PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Thursday, February 23, 8:30
PAUL PARAY, *Guest Conductor*
CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Sunday, March 12, 7:00
FRITZ REINER, *Guest Conductor*
ZINO FRANCESCATTI, *Violinist* Monday, March 20, 8:30

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

Christmas Concerts

- “MESSIAH” (Handel)—Saturday, December 10, at 8:30 P.M., and a repeat performance, Sunday, December 11, at 2:30 P.M.
CHLOE OWEN, *Soprano*; ANNA KASKAS, *Contralto*; DAVID LLOYD, *Tenor*; OSCAR NATZKA, *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

- BUDAPEST STRING QUARTET—Three concerts, January 13, 14, and 15, 1950.
JOSEF ROISMAN, *First Violin*; JAC GORODETZKY, *Second Violin*; BORIS KROYT, *Viola*; and MISCHA SCHNEIDER, *Violoncello*.

Friday Evening, 8:30 P.M.

- Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 76, No. 4 HAYDN
Grand Fugue, Op. 133 BEETHOVEN
Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 67 BRAHMS

Saturday Evening, 8:30 P.M.

- Quartet in E-flat major, K. 428 MOZART
Quartet No. 3 PISTON
Quartet in F major, Op. 135 BEETHOVEN

Sunday Afternoon, 2:30 P.M.

- Quartet in F major, Op. 18, No. 1 BEETHOVEN
Quartet, Op. 22, No. 3 HINDEMITH
Quartet in D minor SCHUBERT

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