

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Charles A. Sink, President

Thor Johnson, Guest Conductor

Lester McCoy, Conductor

Tenth Concert

1956-1957

Complete Series 3208

Seventy-eighth Annual
Choral Union Concert Series

THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

GEORGE SZELL, *Conductor*

SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 10, 1957, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture to *La Gazza ladra* ROSSINI

Symphony No. 6 in F major ("Pastoral"), Op. 68 BEETHOVEN

Awakening of serene impressions on arriving in the country: Allegro ma non troppo

Scene by the brookside: Andante molto moto; Jolly gathering of country folk: Allegro in tempo d'allegro; Thunderstorm, Tempest: Allegro

Shepherd's Song: Gladsome and thankful feelings after the storm: Allegretto

INTERMISSION

"Music for Orchestra" RIEGGER

Prelude to *Irmelin* DELIUS

"Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks, After the Old-Fashioned Roguish Manner—in Rondo Form," Op. 28 STRAUSS

NOTE.—The University Musical Society has presented the Cleveland Orchestra on 18 previous occasions since 1935, under the following conductors: Artur Rodzinski (5); Erich Leinsdorf (2); and George Szell (11).

The Steinway is the official piano of the University Musical Society.

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

Historical and Analytical Notes

By GEORGE H. L. SMITH

Overture to *La Gazza ladra* GIOACCHINO ANTONIO ROSSINI

Rossini installed himself in Milan early in March, 1817. An opera from his pen was to be performed at La Scala at the end of April, and he was anxious to get the feeling of the town in order to make sure that his new work might not suffer the dismal fate of his two previous productions in Milan.

The choice of libretto fell upon *La Gazza ladra*, an adaptation of a French play which had been successful in Paris in 1815. The serio-comic story tells of a little servant girl who is condemned to death on circumstantial evidence for stealing a silver spoon that has been hidden by a pet magpie. No one but her father could establish her innocence, but he has deserted from the army, and she accepts her fate rather than expose him to arrest. The general anguish of the plot is considerably increased by her secret engagement to her mistress's son, and the fact that the magistrate who is responsible for her fate "is animated by intentions toward her that are strictly dishonorable." At the last moment the spoon is found in the magpie's nest and all ends happily.

Rossini seems to have succeeded in his attempt to gauge Milanese taste, for the première of the new opera was greeted with tumultuous enthusiasm, and Milan took Rossini to its heart at once.

Symphony No. 6 in F major, "Pastoral,"

Op. 68 LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Beethoven was passionately fond of nature. Walking in the woods and fields near Vienna, he was able to find an ideal refreshment and relaxation—an opportunity for the germination of his most complex musical thoughts. It was probably in the vicinity of his favorite Heiligenstadt—then real countryside—that he received the impressions that furnished the incentive for the "Pastoral" Symphony.

Berlioz wrote rapturously of this symphony, and d'Indy found wise and enthusiastic things to say of it, but no writer has championed it so persuasively as Donald Francis Tovey in his *Essays in Musical Analysis*. Professor Tovey notes that Beethoven's suggestion, "More an expression of feeling than painting" (which he calls "the first and the last word of common sense about program music"), has not "prevented the usual 'roaring cataract of nonsense' from descending upon this intensely musical work and swamping it in volumes of literature; sometimes praising Beethoven for his intelligent anticipation of the true functions of music as a purely illustrative art, but more often blaming him for leading music into so dangerous a bypath by sacrificing musical form to the demands of his external musical programme. The passage which has given most offence in this symphony is the representation of the cuckoo, the nightingale, and the quail at the end of the slow movement. That passage is a master-stroke of pure musical form. It differs from a dozen earlier examples in Beethoven's works (and about a hundred in Haydn's) only in one essential respect, that it is by far the ripest in style; and in one unessential respect, that persons who can tell the difference between the bird-calls of cuckoos, quails, and nightingales can recognize something rather like them here. But for this unessential detail the passage would never have been supposed to be abnormal at all. No treatise on musical form enters into enough detail to make its analysis of this passage distinguishable from its errors of observation. As for the thunderstorm, it is a monumental introduction, dramatically cutting short a very typical Beethoven scherzo, and leading equally dramatically into a serene and spacious rondo. The only unusual thing about it is that it is in a quick tempo, whereas most introductions are slow. The kind of objection that is raised against the thunderstorm is the assertion that 'the thunder comes first and the lightning afterwards'; as if anybody were quite sure that he had seen the first flash which preceded the first loud thunderclap. Authorities on scoring have remarked that the use of the piccolo in this movement does not show that instrument at its best, since sustained notes are not highly characteristic of it. In other words, a real thunderstorm would be an expensive and inefficient substitute for the piccolo. Beethoven, then, should have used the piccolo to imitate, not the whistling of the wind, which it does exceedingly well, but the more characteristic whistle of the railway guard. Let us be quite fair, then, and call it the bos'n's whistle, which might be in place in a storm; but then let us remember that this is not a storm at sea, but a thunderstorm that has interrupted something like a dance round the

maypole, and which, far from being a danger, gives rise to 'happy and thankful feelings' afterwards. In the whole symphony there is not a note of which the musical value would be altered if cuckoos and nightingales, and country folk, and thunder and lightning, and the howling and whistling of the wind, were things that had never been named by man, either in connexion with music or with anything else. Whether we have words for common objects and events of the countryside, or whether we have no words, there are feelings evoked by these objects in proportion to our intelligent susceptibility; and the great master of any language, whether that language be music, painting, sculpture, architecture, or speech, can invoke the deepest part of these feelings in his own terms. And his art will always remain pure as long as he holds to Beethoven's dictum; which may be philosophically re-translated 'more the expression of feelings than the illustration of things' . . ."

Music For Orchestra, Op. 50 WALLINGFORD RIEGGER

Mr. Riegger writes as follows about his *Music for Orchestra*: "The work embodies a fugue theme taken from 'Consummation,' one of my earlier works (1937), which I have since destroyed. Otherwise the material is new, beginning with a slow introduction (12-tone), which by degrees leads into an animated fugal section (non-12-tone). There are various digressions, including a passage for four solo 'cellos, a statement of the fugue theme in large chord blocks, some soft tone-clusters in the brass, a stretto and other contrapuntal devices."

Mr. Riegger has composed many works for orchestra and various chamber combinations. He has also written several ballet scores, music for solo voice and chorus, and teaching materials for violin and piano students. Much of this music has been published.

Prelude to *Irmelin* FREDERICK DELIUS

Delius wrote his first opera, *Irmelin*, to a fairy-tale text of his own devising during those early years in Paris when his music was just beginning to make its way. The opera was completed in 1892 and remains unknown even though a piano reduction of the score was prepared by no less a hand than Florent Schmitt. At the end of his life the composer turned once again to the poetic ideas that had inspired the opera. As an old man, crippled and blind, he dictated this prelude, along with many another new or revised score, to his youthful English amanuensis, Eric Fenby.

The prelude is a brief suggestive page that distills a mood of dreaming expectancy. The key is F sharp major, the tempo *Lento*, 4-4. The theme is quietly announced in imitation by flute and clarinet, oboe and clarinet, then violins and violas. The violas add a new figure which is continued by bass clarinet and bassoon. There is development and a return to the imitative scheme of the opening bars, now played by a solo violin and a solo viola. The bass clarinet reiterates the theme in a whisper, the last notes dying into silence.

"Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks, After the Old-Fashioned Roguish Manner—in Rondo Form," Op. 28 . . . RICHARD STRAUSS

Strauss was consistent in his reluctance to provide literary programs for his tone poems, preferring to let his descriptive music tell its story unaided. Occasionally, however, a conductor was fortunate enough to call forth a letter explaining the purpose of a particular work. Franz Wüllner, preparing this score for performance in Cologne, received such a letter from Strauss:

"It is impossible for me to furnish a program to 'Eulenspiegel'; were I to put into words the thoughts which its several incidents suggested to me, they would seldom suffice, and might even give rise to offence. Let me leave it, therefore, to my hearers to crack the hard nut which the rogue has prepared for them. By way of helping them to a better understanding, it seems sufficient to point out the two 'Eulenspiegel' motives, which, in the most manifold disguises, moods, and situations, pervade the whole up to the catastrophe, when, after he has been condemned to death, Till is strung up to the gibbet. For the rest, let them guess at the musical joke which a rogue has offered them."

Strauss noted three themes: the opening of the introduction; the horn motive of Till; and the portentous descending interval of the rogue's condemnation.

MAY FESTIVAL

MAY 2, 3, 4, 5, 1957

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA AT ALL CONCERTS

THURSDAY, MAY 2, 8:30 P.M.

All-Beethoven program. **Alexander Brailowsky**, pianist, in Concerto No. 3 in C minor. Overture to "Leonore," No. 3; and Symphony No. 8 in F major. **Eugene Ormandy**, Conductor.

FRIDAY, MAY 3, 8:30 P.M.

Verdi's "Aïda" (concert form), with **University Choral Union**; **Leontyne Price**, Soprano; **Martha Lipton**, Contralto; **Kurt Baum**, Tenor; **Robert McFerrin**, Baritone; **Nicola Moscona**, Bass. **Thor Johnson**, Conductor.

SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2:30 P.M.

Joseph Szigeti, Violinist—Concerto in D minor (Tartini); Portrait No. 1, Op. 5 (Bartók); and "La Folia" (Corelli). Overture, "La Scala di Seta" (Rossini); and Symphony No. 4 in A major (Mendelssohn). **William R. Smith**, Conducting.

Festival Youth Chorus in Fletcher's "Walrus and the Carpenter," **Geneva Nelson**, Conductor.

SATURDAY, MAY 4, 8:30 P.M.

Robert Merrill, Baritone, in operatic arias: "Adamastro, roi des vagues profondes" from "L'Africaine" (Meyerbeer); Farewell and Death of Roderigo, from "Don Carlo" (Verdi); "Deh vieni" from "Don Giovanni" (Mozart); "Nemico della patria" from "Andrea Chenier" (Giordano); and "Eri tu" from "Un Ballo in Maschera" (Verdi). Overture to "Die Meistersinger" (Wagner); Symphony No. 88 in G major (Haydn); Adagio for Strings (Barber); and "Russian Easter" Overture (Rimsky-Korsakoff). **Eugene Ormandy**, Conductor.

SUNDAY, MAY 5, 2:30 P.M.

Gina Bachauer, Pianist, in Concerto No. 2 (Brahms). **University Choral Union**; **Martha Lipton**, Contralto; and **Donald Gramm**, Bass; in Vaughan Williams' "Five Tudor Portraits." Concerto in A minor for Piccolo and Orchestra (Vivaldi), **John Krell**, soloist. **Thor Johnson**, Guest Conductor.

SUNDAY, MAY 5, 8:30 P.M.

Risë Stevens, Mezzo-soprano, in: "Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen" (Mahler); "Connais-tu le pays" from "Mignon" (Thomas); Air de Lia, from "L'Enfant prodigue" (Debussy); and "Amour, viens aider" from "Samson et Dalila" (Saint-Saëns). "Academic Festival" Overture (Brahms); Symphony No. 3 (Harris); Prelude to "Afternoon of a Faun" (Debussy); and La Valse (Ravel). **Eugene Ormandy**, Conductor.

SINGLE CONCERTS (on sale beginning March 11):

\$3.50—\$3.00—\$2.50—\$2.00—\$1.50

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