

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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Second Concert

1957-1958

Complete Series 3218

Twelfth Annual
Extra Concert Series

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF THE
FLORENCE FESTIVAL

(Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino)

CARLO ZECCHI, *Conductor*

THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 24, 1957, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture to *La Scala di seta* ROSSINI

Symphony in D major CHERUBINI

Largo: allegro
Larghetto cantabile
Scherzo: allegro molto
Allegro assai

Sinfonia Americana FRANCO MANNINO

(Composed for the American tour and conducted by the composer)

INTERMISSION

Suite from *La Pisanella* PIZZETTI

Sul molo di Famagosta
La Danza dello sparviero
La Danza dell' amore e della morte profumata

Overture to *I Vespri siciliani* VERDI

Phillips—Cetra—Westminster Records

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

PROGRAM NOTES

Overture to *La Scala di seta* GIOACCHINO ROSSINI

La Scala di seta ("The Silken Stairway") was a one-act farce, based on the French farce of the same name. It was the sixth of Rossini's operas, written when a young man of twenty. The first performance was at the San Mose Theater, Venice, on May 9, 1812.

Rossini, who wrote some thirty-six operas in about nineteen years, had a great gift of melody, and his works represent the type of Italian opera in which the traditions of the eighteenth century were maintained almost intact.

The overture to *The Silken Stairway* is one of the best of Rossini's early works. The opera was not favorably received in Venice, although there were several performances. The audiences thought it too much like an opera of Cimarosa, and the Venetian taste did not care for the over-elaborate orchestral treatment. Venice, in fact, showed itself decidedly hostile to the young composer.

The overture is an *Allegro vivace*, and shows the genesis of the crescendo idea that Rossini was to make particularly his. He was later accused of stealing this idea from another composer.

Symphony in D major MARIA LUIGI CARLO ZENOBÌ CHERUBINI

Despite the suggestions of his sonorous name (usually rendered as Luigi) and his birth in Florence, the son of a harpsichord player in the Pergola Theatre, Cherubini is customarily considered a French composer.

In a lifetime that extended for eighty-two years, there was ample time for several careers, and Cherubini did not miss the opportunity. He was both a prodigy and a patriarch, with some notable church music to his credit by the age of sixteen, and a dozen operas scattered through the lifetime that followed. Mozart was but four years old when Cherubini was born, and he outlived such younger men as Beethoven (who had great reverence for him), Weber, and Schubert.

Although he wrote instrumental introductions of great merit for such operas as *Medee*, *Les Crux journées* (known also under its German title of *Der Wassertraeger*), and *Anacreon*, Cherubini undertook only a single symphony. This was prompted, in 1815, by a commission from the London Philharmonic Society. The work was heard at rare intervals thereafter, and had virtually been forgotten when a new edition came to the attention of Arturo Toscanini, who conducted its first American performance with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society on January 23, 1936.

When he undertook this work in 1815, Cherubini was in his mid-fifties, and hardly disposed to accept the "innovations" of Beethoven, who had long since added the trombone, piccolo, and elaborate percussion to the classical orchestra. Something of his temperament may be deduced from the fact that though he recognized the genius of Beethoven, he remarked, upon hearing the first performance of *Fidelio* in Vienna (1805), that he could not tell what key the overture was in from beginning to end (that "puzzler" is in C major).

As may be discerned from the slow introduction, Cherubini's concept of the symphony derived from Haydn rather than Beethoven. Woodwinds, horns, and trumpets are used to balance the strings. Thematically, he tends to use groups of motives in the Allegro, rather than strongly defined first or second ones. Provision is made for repetition of the first section, or for proceeding directly to the development. Bold harmonic contrasts characterize the latter phases of the movement, also a tying together of thought by allusion to the opening ideas.

The "singing" slow movement of Haydn (and Mozart) is implied here not only by the over-all designation, *larghetto cantabile*, but also by the specific *dolce assai* at the beginning. The bassoon, to which Cherubini was also partial in the first movement, enjoys favor here, and the sonata form relationships prevail, on a rather condensed scale.

In its original form of 1815, Cherubini titled this movement a menuetto. However, some twelve years later he revised this symphony for use as a quartet, at which time he changed the marking to *Allegro molto*. Cherubini's celebrated mastery of counterpoint is exhibited here in swift-moving inversions and imitations, within the framework of scherzo and trio. The woodwinds—flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon—are conspicuous in the trio.

For the *allegro assai* with which the work ends, Cherubini chose a rondo pattern, while making more than passing reference to an underlying rhythmic device (dotted long note, either eighth or quarter, preceding a shorter one, sixteenth or eighth). It is all fluid, animated rather than high spirited, and intensely well made.

IRVING KOLODIN and The New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society.

Sinfonia Americana MANNINO

This symphony's four tempos include quotations from the popular "Spiritual" and "Yankee" themes. These themes, however, do not in the slightest way influence the composition's formal essence, since the work is conceived in the traditional classical principles. The various American themes are inserted in this musical speech through the means of a definite expressive purpose, independent of any organizational ("programmatic") aptitude.

The COMPOSER

The following themes from American popular tunes have been quoted in the symphony:

TEMPO I	TEMPO III
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot	The Banks of the Sacramento
Yankee Doodle	Sweet Betsy from Pike
Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen	Sioux Indians
TEMPO II	TEMPO IV
Go Down, Moses	John Brown's Body

Suite from *La Pisanella* PIZZETTI

For *La Pisanella* by D'Annunzio, written in French and performed in Paris (Théâtre du Châtelet, 1913) Pizzetti composed the musical setting, from which he later drew an orchestral suite, the second, fourth and fifth movements being played today.

II. *On the Breakwater of the Port of Famagusta*. The port is crowded with sailors from the entire Mediterranean. There is a large heap of booty on the breakwater; and in the midst of it is found a young white woman, half-naked, of marvellous beauty. Sire Ughetto sees her and calls to her; she starts at his voice as at a love call. Sire Ughetto cuts her bonds.

IV. *Dance of the Hawk*. This is the musical setting of a story told by La Pisanella: Federico degli Alberighi, hopelessly in love with a woman who did not love him, had spent his heritage on her, being reduced to such poverty that he had nothing left but one hawk, the finest in the world; the lady in her cruelty planned to take that too from him, and she let the lord know that she would come to dance for him. Federico, having nothing else to offer her for supper, thought that the hawk would be a dish worthy of her, and had it killed and broiled. When at the end of the collation the lady asked Federico for the gift of the hawk, Federico, weeping, made his sad confession, showing in proof the remains of the hawk: the feet, the beak, the wings. Then "she burned, she danced to the miracle of love. Oh miracle of love! At the end she had the hawk on her wrist, alive and strong."

V. *Dance of Love and Perfumed Death*. Seven female Nubian slaves enter the throne room, with their arms full of purple roses. Slowly and silently they surround La Pisanella, push her into a corner of the hall, have her fall on a pile of cushions and smother her under the roses. La Pisanella dies calling to her distant lover.

Overture to *I Vespri Siciliani* GIUSEPPE VERDI

Like most true dramatic geniuses, Verdi was unable to breathe life into a libretto that did not move him. Puccini rose from his desk and burst into tears as Mimi died. In the midst of composition Wagner was unapproachable, in another world. Composers can set signboards to music but they do not like to do so.

Augustin Eugene Scribe maintained a sort of factory in Paris that turned out assembly-line operatic libretti at a great rate. It was a signal honor to be allowed to have one of the glittering new products of Scribe et Cie; and Verdi was so honored. He hated the libretto from the start. His infallible instinct for drama instantly revealed to him the artificiality of it, and besides, it was in French, a language he loathed. It is no wonder that *I Vespri Siciliani* has not been, generally speaking, one of his most cherished works. The overture, however, is one of the finest essays in the form—perhaps it is the finest of all.

The composition begins with low and minatory mutterings in the strings (Largo, E minor, 4/4). The tonality changes to the parallel major and a flowing woodwind melody is introduced. A stormy section follows (Allegro agitato, E minor, 4/4). This is succeeded by a ravishingly beautiful tune (G major) in the violoncelli, a tune that forms the main thematic interest down to the furious coda.

CONCERTS

- YEHUDI MENUHIN, *Violinist* (C.U. Series) . . . Tuesday, October 29
Program: Sonata in G major, Op. 13 GRIEG
 Partita in D minor BACH
 Fantaisie, Op. 159 SCHUBERT
 Dryades et Pan, from "Mythes" SZYMANOWSKI
 I Palpiti PAGANINI
- THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA (C.U. Series) . . . Sunday, November 10
 GEORGE SZELL, *Conductor*
Program: Symphony No. 99 in E-flat major HAYDN
 Symphony No. 9 in D minor BRUCKNER
- RUDOLF SERKIN, *Pianist* (Extra) Friday, November 15
- WILLIAM WARFIELD, *Baritone* (C.U. Series) . . . Tuesday, November 26
Program: "Thanks be to Thee" from *Israel in Egypt* HANDEL
 "Good Fellows be merry" from *Peasant Cantata* BACH
 "Bois epais" from *Amadis de Gaule* LULLY
 "Why do the nations" from *Messiah* HANDEL
 Susses Begrabnis LOEWE
 Hochzeitlied LOEWE
 Wohin }
 Am Feierabend } SCHUBERT
 Ungeduld }
 "Infelice e tuo credevi" from *Ernani* VERDI
 Old American Songs Aff. AARON COPLAND
 City Called Heaven Aff. HALL JOHNSON
 Little David, Play on Your Harp Aff. HARRY BURLEIGH
 My Lord, What a Morning Aff. HARRY BURLEIGH
 Ride On, King Jesus Aff. HALL JOHNSON
- VIENNA CHOIR BOYS (2:30 P.M.) (Extra) . . . Sunday, January 12
- DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (C.U. Series) . . . Monday, February 17
 PAUL PARAY, *Conductor*
- OBERNKIRCHEN CHILDREN'S CHOIR (C.U. Series) . Tuesday, February 25
- CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (C.U. Series) . . . Sunday, March 2
 FRITZ REINER, *Conductor*
- MYRA HESS, *Pianist* (C.U. Series) Saturday, March 8
- MANTOVANI AND HIS NEW MUSIC (Extra) . . . Tuesday, March 11
- VIENNA ON PARADE (C.U. Series) Wednesday, April 2
 CAPT. JULIUS HERRMANN, *Conductor*

Single Concerts: \$3.50—\$3.00—\$2.50—\$2.00—\$1.50

Annual Christmas Concerts

- MESSIAH (HANDEL) December 7 and 8, 1957
 ADELE ADDISON, *Soprano* PAUL MATTHEN, *Bass*
 EUNICE ALBERTS, *Contralto* CHORAL UNION and ORCHESTRA
 HAROLD HAUGH, *Tenor* LESTER MCCOY, *Conductor*
Tickets: 75c and 50c (either concert). On sale beginning October 15.

Eighteenth Annual Chamber Music Festival

- BUDAPEST STRING QUARTET February 21, 22, 23, 1958
 JOSEPH ROISMAN, *First Violin* BORIS KROYT, *Viola*
 ALEXANDER SCHNEIDER, *Second Violin* MISCHA SCHNEIDER, *Violoncello*
 Assisted by ROBERT COURTE, *Viola*
Season Tickets: \$3.50 and \$2.50.
Single Concerts: \$1.75 and \$1.25

For tickets or information, address: UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY,
 Burton Memorial Tower.