

1963

Eighty-fifth Season

1964

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Charles A. Sink, President

Gail W. Rector, Executive Director

Lester McCoy, Conductor

First Concert

Eighty-fifth Annual Choral Union Series

Complete Series 3393

New York Philharmonic

LEONARD BERNSTEIN, *Music Director*

WEDNESDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 11, 1963, at 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

- "Academic Festival" Overture, Op. 80* BRAHMS
- Symphony No. 3† WILLIAM SCHUMAN
 Part I: Passacaglia; fugue
 Part II: Chorale; toccata

INTERMISSION

- Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98† BRAHMS
 Allegro non troppo
 Andante moderato
 Allegro giocoso
 Allegro energico e passionato

The New York Philharmonic records exclusively for Columbia Records.

* Recorded by the New York Philharmonic and Bruno Walter

† Recorded by the New York Philharmonic and Leonard Bernstein

The University Musical Society has presented the New York Philharmonic on three previous occasions since 1939; the last occasion was February 17, 1955.

The Steinway is the official piano of the New York Philharmonic and the University Musical Society.

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

PROGRAM NOTES

By EDWARD DOWNES

"Academic Festival" Overture, Op. 80 JOHANNES BRAHMS

When the University of Breslau conferred the honorary degree Doctor of Philosophy on Brahms in March, 1879, the composer acknowledged the distinction—with a post card. A musician friend in Breslau, Bernhard Scholtz, however, tactfully drew Brahms' attention to the fact that the University expected him to express his gratitude in musical form. Brahms was willing enough, and so he wrote the "Academic Festival" Overture, which he completed the following year and conducted at Breslau in the presence of the Rector, the Senate, and the Philosophical Faculty on January 4, 1881.

The score is a high-spirited fantasy on traditional German students' songs. Brahms described it as a "jolly potpourri on students' songs, à la Suppé." When his friend Max Kalbeck asked him ironically whether he had also included the Freshman Song (*Fuchslied was kommt von der Höh?*), Brahms answered, "Yes, certainly." Kalbeck was a little startled and said that he could hardly imagine paying homage to the stiff Herr Rektor with such a song, to which Brahms retorted, "Such homage would be entirely superfluous." The Freshman Song which so startled Kalbeck is introduced about halfway through the Overture by two bassoons, the traditional jokers of the orchestra. The other student songs included are: *Wir hatten gebauet ein stätliches Haus*, *Der Landesvater*, and *Gaudeamus igitur*.

Symphony No. 3 WILLIAM SCHUMAN

"Now you must hate Roy Harris," Serge Koussevitzky reportedly advised Mr. Schuman after the successful Boston Symphony première of his Symphony No. 3 in October 1941. Koussevitzky intended nothing personal with his advice. He meant merely that the influence of Roy Harris, who had been one of Mr. Schuman's teachers, was still evident in this Symphony, and that Schuman's own individuality was now strong enough for him to give up any lingering dependence on this powerful musical personality.

It is not on record that Mr. Schuman succeeded in hating Roy Harris. But in later works he followed the essence of Koussevitzky's advice, allowing even wider scope for the expression of his own musical personality.

The Third Symphony does suggest the influence of Roy Harris in its unconventional form (two parts, each subdivided into two movements) and its free use of ancient scholastic devices such as passacaglia, fugue, and toccata.

"Passacaglia and Fugue" is the composer's designation of the first part. But this is far removed from the Baroque tradition of passacaglia and fugue as exemplified by Bach. In place of a relatively simple, eight-bar theme in the bass, Mr. Schuman uses an elaborate five-voice canon of thirty-five bars as his theme. The variations of his passacaglia are correspondingly complicated.

The brief fugue subject adapted from the main passacaglia theme is the basis of a new development, but on an entirely different principle of organization from traditional fugue. The movement culminates in a massive climax of the entire orchestra based on the passacaglia theme.

"Chorale and Toccata" is the composer's title for the second half of his Symphony. After a subdued introduction by the violas and 'celli, a solo trumpet begins the "chorale" tune, which is closely related to the main theme of the first movement, but far indeed from a traditional chorale. The chorale leads directly into the brilliant toccata finale, which is dominated by a driving triplet rhythm.

A month after its Boston première, Koussevitzky brought the Schuman Symphony to New York, where it won the first annual award of the Music Critics Circle of New York for the best new American orchestral work performed there during the season 1941-1942.

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

A wonderful autumnal warmth and strength pervade this fourth and last symphony of Johannes Brahms. Yet Brahms was only fifty-two when he completed it—an age at which Haydn had not even begun to write his twenty-nine last and greatest symphonies! But Brahms matured late and his autumnal qualities developed relatively early: a

characteristic sobriety, almost severity, and a melancholy which is not the romantic *Weltschmerz* of the very young but that rare state in which sorrow and understanding are one—an exalted mood which found its apotheosis in his *Four Serious Songs*.

The Fourth Symphony was written during the summers of 1884 and 1885 in the tiny Alpine town of Müzzuschlag, which lay so high that its spring was late, autumn set in early, and the local fruit hardly had time to ripen before winter set in again. From this chilly realm he sent the completed first movement to one of his dearest and most musical friends, Elisabeth von Herzogenberg.

"Might I venture to send you a piece of mine," he asked, "and would you have time to take a look at it and tell me what you think? The trouble is that on the whole my pieces are nicer than myself and need less setting to rights! But the cherries never get ripe for eating in these parts, so don't be afraid if you don't like the taste. I'm not at all eager to write a bad Number Four."

Brahms, always severely self-critical, worried about his new symphony. His worry deepened when Elisabeth's answer did not come as quickly as he had hoped, and he wrote her husband with a typically gruff attempt at humor: "My latest attack was evidently a complete failure—and a symphony too! But I do beg that your dear lady will not abuse her talent for writing pretty letters by inventing any belated fibs for my benefit." Later a four-hand piano performance from the manuscript score of the entire symphony for half a dozen of Brahms' most trusted friends roused little enthusiasm. The composer's worry deepened still further.

Fortunately Hans von Bülow, to whom Brahms offered the first performance, was enthralled with the Symphony's "unparalleled energy." His conducting of the Meiningen Orchestra under Brahms' supervision was so superb, and the Symphony so successful, that it became the chief feature of the Orchestra's ensuing tour.

I. *Allegro non troppo*. The first movement opens with a vast undulating flow of melody in a vein of subdued melancholy. Its rocking motion is typical of Brahms, and his biographer, Karl Geiringer, points out that the construction of the whole theme from a single motive of two notes is especially characteristic of Brahms' late style. The whole opening is a succession of beguiling melodies with one vigorous, fanfare-like theme for contrast. Yet the first theme dominates the movement in various guises and, in pensively elongated form, it ushers in the reprise of the basic opening themes.

II. *Andante moderato*. A bare, unaccompanied melodic motive in the Phrygian mode stands sternly at the outset of this slow movement. But after three measures the sternness melts and the melody is harmonized in a soft E major with clarinets and pizzicato string in mellifluous thirds and sixths. It goes through a series of ingenious transformations of great warmth and sensuous appeal.

III. *Allegro giocoso*. This boisterous movement, with its delicate, sometimes humorous episodes, comes nearer the Beethoven tradition of the scherzo than the *allegretto* movements Brahms preferred for the third movements of his other symphonies.

IV. *Allegro energico e passionato*. The finale is a grandiose procession of variations. The eight chords at the start of the movement supply the basic harmonic structure, which is repeated thirty times and rounded off with a great coda, which is in itself a set of four free variations. The dispute, which once loomed so large, as to whether these variations constitute a chaconne or a passacaglia, is meaningless, since musical scholars and composers differ with each other and among themselves as to which name belongs to which form. The important thing is the power of this vast musical structure, the richness of Brahms' thought and feeling.

Of all cities, Brahms' home, Vienna, seems to have been the slowest to warm to his Fourth Symphony. Yet gradually it took hold. And at the last orchestral concert Brahms heard (on March 7, 1897) it caused a storm of enthusiasm. At the close of the first movement the applause persisted until Brahms came to the front of the box where he was sitting. He was a tragically different Brahms from the hearty, stocky figure they had known. He had suffered a terrible blow the year before, when his dearest friend, Clara Schumann, died. He never recovered from that shock. And a chill he caught aggravated a long-standing cancer of the liver which killed him.

The demonstrations were repeated after each movement of the Fourth Symphony and at the end there was an extraordinary scene. The applauding, shouting house stared at the figure standing in the box and seemed unable to let him go. "Tears ran down his cheeks," his biographer, Florence May, tells us, "as he stood there, shrunken in form, with his face lined and white hair hanging lank. And through the audience was a feeling as of a stifled sob, for each knew that they were saying farewell. Another outburst of applause and yet another; one more acknowledgement from the master; and Brahms and his Vienna had parted forever."

1963 — UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY PRESENTATIONS — 1964

All presentations are at 8:30 P.M. unless otherwise noted.

Choral Union Series

(Remaining Performances)

GYORGY SANDOR, <i>Pianist</i>	Tuesday, September 24
<i>Program:</i> Chorale-Prelude (Bach-Busoni); Vivace (Bach-Bartók); Sonata in E minor (Haydn); Sonata in B minor (Liszt); Three Mazurkas (Chopin); Andante spianato and Polonaise (Chopin); Etude in B-flat minor (Szymanowski); Etude No. 1 (Bartók); Pour les degrés chromatique (Debussy); Etude in D-sharp minor (Scriabin).	
JEROME HINES, <i>Bass</i>	Monday, October 7
BULGARIAN NATIONAL ENSEMBLE	Friday, October 18
THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA	Thursday, November 7
<i>Don Giovanni</i> (N.Y. CITY OPERA Co.)	Sunday, November 17
PHILHARMONIA HUNGARICA	Monday, January 20
TOSSY SPIVAKOVSKY, <i>Violin Soloist</i>	
MAZOWSZE DANCE COMPANY (from Poland)	Thursday, January 30
TERESA BERGANZA, <i>Coloratura mezzo-soprano</i>	Wednesday, February 26
CHICAGO OPERA BALLET	Friday, March 13

Extra Series

<i>Tosca</i> (GOLDOVSKY OPERA THEATER)	Thursday, October 10
BALLET FOLKLORICO OF MEXICO	Friday, November 1
<i>Madama Butterfly</i> (N.Y. CITY OPERA Co.)	(2:30) Sunday, November 17
VIENNA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	Thursday, February 20
ANNA MOFFO, <i>Soprano</i>	Friday, April 3

Chamber Arts Series

KIMIO ETO, <i>Kotoist</i> , with SUZUSHI HANAYAGI and assisting musicians	Sunday, October 13
MOSCOW CHAMBER ORCHESTRA	Wednesday, November 13
JULIAN BREAM CONSORT	Tuesday, November 26
SESTETTO ITALIANO LUCA MARENZIO	Tuesday, December 10
ZURICH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA	Saturday, January 25
KOREAN DANCERS AND MUSICIANS	Sunday, February 9
ORCHESTRA SAN PIETRO OF NAPLES	Thursday, March 19

Special Performance

<i>La Boheme</i> (N.Y. CITY OPERA Co.)	Saturday, November 16
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Annual Christmas Concerts

<i>Messiah</i> (Handel) (Two performances)	Saturday, December 7
	(2:30) Sunday, December 8

Chamber Dance Festival

MARINA SVETLOVA DANCE ENSEMBLE	Friday, October 25
SHANTA RAO and Dancers and Musicians (South India)	Saturday, October 26
HUNGARIAN BALLETS BIHARI—KOVACH and RABOVSKY with gypsy musicians	(2:30) Sunday, October 27

For tickets and information, address
UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY, Burton Tower