

1965

Eighty-seventh Season

1966

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Charles A. Sink, President

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First Concert

Eighty-seventh Annual Choral Union Series

Complete Series 3480

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

JEAN MARTINON, *Music Director and Conductor*

Soloist:

JOHN BROWNING, *Pianist*

SATURDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 9, 1965, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

Overture to *Il Matrimonio segreto* CIMAROSA

Symphony No. 4 in A major ("Italian") Op. 90 MENDELSSOHN

Allegro vivace
Andante con moto
Saltarello: presto

INTERMISSION

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 38 BARBER

Allegro appassionata
Canzona: moderato
Allegro molto

JOHN BROWNING

Suite from the Ballet *L'Oiseau feu (The Firebird)* STRAVINSKY

Introduction: The Firebird and Her Dance
Dance of the Princesses
Infernal Dance of Kastchei
Berceuse
Finale

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

PROGRAM NOTES

Overture to *Il Matrimonio segreto* DOMENICO CIMAROSA

Cimarosa was one of the most prolific of Italian opera composers during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. For a period of time (1787–1791) he served as chamber composer to Catherine II of Russia and composed two operas for production in St. Petersburg in addition to a quantity of instrumental and vocal works. He also succeeded Salieri as Kapellmeister at the Austrian court under Leopold II. It was while he was in the service of Leopold that he composed *The Secret Marriage (Il Matrimonio segreto)*, his only opera to maintain a place in the active operatic repertory. This lively example of Italian buffo was very successful from the first performance at the Burg Theater in Vienna, February 7, 1792. The libretto, by Giovanni Bertati, was based on a comedy by George Colman and David Garrick, *The Clandestine Marriage*, which was produced at Drury Lane, London, in 1766.

The music of the overture, in D major, 2-2 time, moves at a rapid pace and follows the plan of the sonata allegro form.

Symphony No. 4, A major ("Italian"), Op. 90 FELIX MENDELSSOHN

During Mendelssohn's Italian journey of 1830 and 1831, he worked on two symphonies, the "Scotch" and the "Italian," in addition to several other compositions. From Rome he wrote to his sister Fanny: "I have once more begun to compose with fresh vigor, and the Italian symphony makes rapid progress! it will be the gayest piece I have yet composed, especially the last movement. I have not yet decided on the *adagio*, and think I shall reserve it for Naples. The Scotch symphony alone is not yet quite to my liking. . . ."

The "Italian," however, was not completed in Italy. It was finally finished at Berlin in March 1833. Writing to Pastor Bauer from Berlin on April 6, 1833, he says: "My work, about which I had recently many doubts, is finished; and now, when I look it over, I find that quite contrary to my expectations, it satisfies myself. I believe it has become a good composition; but, be that as it may, at all events I feel that it shows progress, and that is the main point. So long as I feel this to be the case, I can enjoy life and be happy. . . ."

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 38 SAMUEL BARBER

The Piano Concerto of Samuel Barber was commissioned by the publishing firm of G. Schirmer, Inc., New York, on the occasion of the company's one hundredth anniversary. The first performance of the work was given on September 24, 1962, during the opening week of the dedication ceremonies of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts at Philharmonic Hall, New York. Erich Leinsdorf conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the soloist was John Browning.

Barber's style is a blending of certain contemporary characteristics with the more traditional musical materials: Barber's path is a moderate one. Nathan Broder has described his work as a type of new romanticism which is rare these days.

The three movements of the Concerto illustrate this style in its brilliant, virtuoso element as well as in the expressive, cantabile quality. The first movement, *allegro appassionato*, is based on the traditional sonata-allegro form, however, with the difference that the piano, not the orchestra, opens the work. The thematic material combines the fast rhythmic figure with

its dominating augmented fourth interval and the more lyrical melodic line. A brilliant cadenza follows the development section. The key is E minor.

The second movement, the *Canzone*, is a song with its emphasis on the expressive lyrical quality for both piano and orchestra. The orchestration is delicate. The key is C sharp minor.

The third movement, *allegro molto*, is in a fast moving 5-8 rhythm written according to a rondo plan. The first and principal section is based on an ostinato figure introduced by the piano solo. The first contrasting section transfers the ostinato figure to the orchestra while the piano is given a more flowing line. After returning to the principal thematic material, a second contrasting section follows. Here, there is vigorous interplay between the solo instrument and the orchestra; the virtuoso elements are brought to the fore. The opening material returns once again and provides for a driving motion to a brilliant ending.

In 1935 Barber won the Rome Prize, and he was also awarded the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1935 and 1936. He long entertained the desire to be able to devote all his time to composition, and he is one of the few composers whose published works and recordings have made such an ambition possible.

Suite from the Ballet, *The Firebird* IGOR STRAVINSKY

There is a close correlation between the music of Stravinsky's *Firebird* and the story of the ballet. The story, which is concerned with the green-taloned ogre, Kastcheï, who captures maidens and turns to stone the gentlemen who seek to rescue them, is taken from Russian legend:

" . . . A young Prince, Ivan Tsarevich, wanders into Kastcheï's magic garden at night in pursuit of the Firebird, whom he finds fluttering round a tree bearing golden apples. He captures it and exacts a feather as forfeit before agreeing to let it go. He then meets a group of thirteen maidens and falls in love with one of them, a beautiful Tsarevna, only to find that she is under the spell of Kastcheï. When dawn comes and the princesses have to return to Kastcheï's palace, he breaks open the gates to follow them and is about to suffer the usual penalty of petrification, when he remembers the magic feather. He waves it; and at his summons the Firebird reappears and reveals to him the secret of Kastcheï's immortality. Kastcheï's soul is stored in an egg-like casket. The Firebird, after saving Ivan from the clutches of Kastcheï, sets the evil group to dancing—*The Infernal Dance*. Exhausted by the furious dances they are lulled to sleep by the Firebird's *Berceuse*. Ivan opens the casket and smashes the vital egg without a moment's hesitation, and the ogre immediately expires. Forthwith, his enchantments dissolve, all his captives are freed, and Ivan and Tsarevna are betrothed with due solemnity."

There are magical elements in the story and, of course, there are the human beings. Of the magical elements there is a representative of the good, the Firebird, and the embodiment of evil, Kastcheï. The human element is represented by diatonic music (that is, music that, for the most part, confines itself to a given key); and the magical element is represented by chromatic music (the use of sharped and flatted notes along with the notes of the given key).

For the human element Stravinsky used Russian folk songs which are diatonic. For the supernatural element in *The Firebird* Stravinsky devised an unusual, though not entirely original, arrangement of notes. He first divided the octave in the middle. (In the key of C, for example, this would give the note F-sharp or G-flat.) The interval which results from such a division of the octave is the augmented fourth, or the diminished fifth; in medieval times the use of this interval was forbidden and it was given the designation *diabolus in musica* (the devil in music), a very fitting title when it is associated with Stravinsky's evil Kastcheï. Within the framework of this interval Stravinsky constructed his somewhat chromatic melodic material; the character of the musical treatment differentiates Kastcheï's evil from the Firebird's beneficence.

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

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

In Hill Auditorium

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

"CARMEN" (Bizet)—N.Y. City Opera Co. . . Saturday, November 20

Tickets: \$5.00—\$4.00—\$3.50—\$2.50—\$1.50

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YEHUDI MENUHIN, *Violinist* Friday, October 15
 CZECH PHILHARMONIC Friday, October 29
 VÁCLAV NEUMANN, *Conductor*
 POZNAN CHOIR, from Poland Tuesday, November 2
 MOSCOW PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Monday, November 15
 KIRIL KONDRASHIN, *Conductor*
 MSTITSLAV ROSTROPOVICH, *Cello soloist*
 "Barber of Seville" (Rossini)—N.Y. CITY OPERA CO. Sunday, November 21
 GRAND BALLET CLASSIQUE DE FRANCE Tuesday, November 23
 PHYLLIS CURTIN, *Soprano* Thursday, January 20
 MONTE CARLO NATIONAL ORCHESTRA Saturday, February 26
 PAUL PARAY, *Conductor*
 MICHEL BLOCK, *Piano Soloist*
 NATIONAL BALLET, from Washington, D.C. (2:30) Sunday, March 27

EXTRA SERIES

CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA Wednesday, October 20
 GEORGE SZELL, *Conductor*
 MOSCOW PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Tuesday, November 16
 EVGENI SVETLANOV, *Conductor*
 IGOR OISTRAKH, *Violin Soloist*
 "Pagliacci" and "Cavalleria Rusticana"—
 N. Y. CITY OPERA CO. (2:30) Sunday, November 21
 RUMANIAN FOLK BALLET Wednesday, February 16
 RUDOLF SERKIN, *Pianist* Monday, March 7
 MESSIAH (Handel) Friday, December 3
 Saturday, December 4
 (2:30) Sunday, December 5

University Choral Union; Members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra;
and soloists. Lester McCoy, Conductor

Messiah Tickets: \$2.50—\$2.00—\$1.50—\$1.00

in Rackham Auditorium

CHAMBER DANCE FESTIVAL

ALBA/REYES SPANISH DANCE COMPANY Friday, October 22
 PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY Saturday, October 23
 KOREN DANCERS ("The Little Angels") (2:30) Sunday, October 24

Series Tickets: \$7.00—\$5.00—\$4.00
 Single Concerts: \$4.00—\$3.00—\$2.00

For tickets and information, address
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