

1968

Ninetieth Season

1969

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Charles A. Sink, President

Gail W. Rector, Executive Director

Lester McCoy, Conductor

Second Concert

Ninetieth Annual Choral Union Series

Complete Series 3625

GARY GRAFFMAN

Pianist

MONDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 14, 1968, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

Sonata in G major (1784) (Hoboken XVI/40) HAYDN
Allegretto innocente
Presto

Sonata in F minor, Op. 57 ("Appassionata") BEETHOVEN
Allegro assai
Andante con moto
Allegro ma non troppo

Sonata in B minor LISZT

INTERMISSION

"Gaspard de la nuit" RAVEL
Ondine
Le Gibet
Scarbo

Etude in C-sharp minor, Op. 2, No. 1 Scriabin

"Islamey" (Oriental Fantasy) BALAKIREV

Steinway Piano

Columbia and RCA Victor Records

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

PROGRAM NOTES

Sonata in G major (1784) (Hoboken XVI/40) HAYDN

In the late 18th century, Charles Burney, musical scholar and intimate friend of Samuel Johnson, wrote in his *General History of Music* of Haydn's originality: "Ideas so new and so varied were not at first so universally admired in Germany as at present. The critics in the northern parts of the empire were up in arms. In 1772 a friend in Hamburg wrote me that 'the genius, fine ideas and fancy of Haydn, Ditters and Filtz, were praised, but their mixture of serious and comic was disliked, particularly as there is more of the latter than the former in their works' . . . Indeed, his compositions are in general so new to the player and hearer that they are equally unable, at first, to keep pace with his inspiration. But it may be laid down as an axiom in Music that 'whatever is *easy* is *old* . . . and, what is *new* is of course *difficult*, and not only scholars but professors have it to learn. The first exclamation of an embarrassed performer and a bewildered hearer is, that the Music is very *odd*, or very *comical*; but the queerness and comicality cease, when, by frequent repetition, the performer and hearer are at their ease.' There is a general cheerfulness and good humour in Haydn's allegros, which exhilarate (sic) every hearer." Although Haydn's music is no longer considered "very *odd*," the cheerfulness and good humor of this two-movement sonata are as exhilarating today as they were two hundred years ago.

Sonata in F minor, Op. 57 ("Appassionata") BEETHOVEN

Here is one of Beethoven's most famous compositions, and rightly so. According to the eminent Beethoven authority, Sir Donald Francis Tovey, "The title *Appassionata* was given by the publisher without waiting for Beethoven's consent. It is justified by the eminently tragic tone of the whole work. The first movement of a sonata tells a complete story which no later movement can falsify: hence Beethoven is under no compulsion to follow up even the most tragic movement by a tragic finale." Nevertheless, Sir Donald continues, the finale of the *Appassionata* is one of Beethoven's very few tragic finales: "The very beginning is in itself a final stroke of fate, after which there is not a moment's doubt that the tragic passion is rushing deathwards." Sir Donald compares the slow movement of this sonata to "a dream that must be shattered at the first hint of action; for it cannot move away from the harmonies of its theme. The conception is sublime and may be taken as the ultimate faith underlying the tragic emotion. At the opposite end of the emotional scale, the realization of what was feared, comes the entirely new theme of the *Presto* at the end of the finale."

Sonata in B minor LISZT

The increasing preoccupation of composers with poetic values, during the course of the 19th century, was mirrored by what might be called almost a "literary school" of composers. Berlioz and Schumann took the inspiration for many of their works from pieces of literature, usually romantic in character, and Liszt, more than anyone, used music primarily as a vehicle for the expression of literary and other nonmusical ideas. Although the B-minor Sonata is not specifically literary or pictorial in inspiration, it uses the same formal methods that Liszt employed in his symphonic poems to unify the many changes of tempo and mood that succeed one another between its slow beginning and its conclusion: the composer convincingly binds together the various elements of the music by using the technique of thematic transformation—the modification of a given set of notes to serve a wide range of expressive purposes. The rhetorical brilliance shared by the Sonata with almost all of Liszt's music is here, in contrast with some of his lesser pieces, always musical and never tawdry. The Sonata has a strong claim to be regarded as Liszt's masterpiece.

“Gaspard de la nuit” RAVEL

The suite “Gaspard de la nuit,” composed in 1909, is based on three strange and lugubrious poems of Aloysius Bertrand. “These three poems,” according to Alfred Cortot, “enrich the piano repertoire of our epoch with one of the most extraordinary examples of instrumental ingenuity which the industry of composers has ever produced.” The translation of these poems was made by Paul Goodman:

Ondine

“Listen—listen!—it’s I, Ondine, brushing these waterdrops against the sounding diamond-panes of your window gleaming in the moon’s wan rays; and see how, in watered silk, the lady of the castle from her balcony watches the lovely starry night and the lovely lake asleep.

“Each wave is a spirit swimming on the streaming, each current a path snaking to my palace, and my palace is built of liquid, deep in the lake, in the triangle of fire, of earth, and of air.

“Listen—listen—my father is whipping the creaking water with a green alder-branch, and my sisters’ arms are stroking the foam of the fresh isles of weeds, of lilies, of flags; mocking the toppled hairy willow who’s fishing with a line.”

Having murmured her song, she begged me take her ring upon my finger, to be the spouse of an Ondine, and to go to her palace with her, to be the king of lakes.

And when I told her that I loved a mortal, sulky and spiteful, she wept a tear or two; she laughed out loud and sped away in showers that trickled white long down my windows blue.

Le Gibet

“What’s stirring round this gibbet?”—*Faust*

Ach, what I hear—could it be the night-blast yelping, or the hanged man heaving a sigh on the gallows’ fork? Could it be a fly a-hunting, blowing round these deaf ears his fanfare of tallyhos? Or else a spider weaving half of yard of muslin as an ascot for this strangled neck? It’s the bell tolling at the city-walls, below the horizon; and the corpse of a hanged man, red in the setting sun.

Scarbo

“He looked under the bed, up the chimney,
in the closet:—no one. He couldn’t
understand where he had come in, where he had
gotten away.” —Hoffman, *Night Tales*

Oh, how many times I’ve heard and seen him, Scarbo, when shines the midnight moon in heaven like a silver dollar on an azure banner sown with bees of gold!

How many times I’ve heard his laughter buzzing in the darkness of my nook, and his fingernail scratching the silk curtains on the bed!

How many times I’ve seen him coming down from the ceiling, spinning on one foot, and rolling round the room like a bobbin dropped by a witch!

And then I thought he’d gone? The dwarf grew huge between the moon and me, like the steeple of a Gothic church, tossing a golden bell on his pointed hat!

But soon his body paled, transparent as candle-wax; face whitened like the wax of the candle-end,—and suddenly snuffed out.

Etude in C-sharp minor, Op. 2, No. 1 SCRIBIN

This simple and lovely *étude*, one of Scriabin’s earliest works, was written while he was still a student at the Moscow Conservatory, and immediately demonstrates the great hold which the Polish composer Chopin exercised over the young Russian. Although original in melody, everything is clearly seen through Chopin’s mind.

“Islamey” (Oriental Fantasy) BALAKIREV

This work of legerdemain is composed of variations on two themes of Oriental character: the first is in a frenzied rhythm which recalls a dance of whirling dervishes, while the second is a languorous reverie. The two themes alternate, evolve in constantly changing color and rhythm, until the poem comes to a close in a dazzling kaleidoscope of sonorities.

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS—1968-1969

GARY GRAFFMAN began the study of piano at the age of three, and made his debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra at eighteen. He had studied ten years at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music with the late Mme Isabelle Vengerova. In 1949 Mr. Graffman won the renowned Leventritt Award in music competition. He has since toured six continents and has performed with all the major symphonies of the world. Tonight, on his fortieth birthday, he performs in Ann Arbor for the third time. He previously appeared in the Summer Concert Series of 1965, and in the 1966 May Festival.

Rackham Auditorium

I MADRIGALISTI DI VENEZIA Sunday, October 20, 8:30

Program

Music of the Venetian School—Madrigals and instrumental works by Monteverdi, Legrenzi, Cavalli, Bruni, and Gabrieli

Hill Auditorium

THE ROMANIAN FOLK BALLET from Bucharest will be presented Thursday, October 24, in the second program in the Dance Series,—company of one hundred dancers, singers, and musicians with their native instruments.

BAVARIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF MUNICH, Saturday, October 26

Program: Symphony No. 104 in D major HAYDN
Double Concerto for Two String Orchestras,
Piano, and Timpani MARTINU
Symphony in D minor FRANCK

THE UDAY SHANKAR COMPANY of dancers and musicians from India will be presented Tuesday, October 29 (replacing the Mazowsze Dance Company previously scheduled for November 18).

Annual MESSIAH Performances

In Hill Auditorium—December 6, 7, 8 (2:30)

UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION, INTERLOCHEN ARTS ACADEMY ORCHESTRA, SUSAN BELLING, *Soprano*; ELIZABETH MANNION, *Contralto*; HENRY NASON, *Tenor*; DAVID CLATWORTHY, *Bass*; LESTER MCCOY, *Conductor*

Tickets: \$3.00—\$2.00—\$1.50—\$1.00

Programs begin at 8:30 P.M. unless otherwise indicated.

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY, Burton Tower
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Hours: 9:00 to 4:30, Monday through Friday; Saturday 9:00 to 12:00
(Also 1½ hours before performance at auditorium Box Office)