

The University Musical Society

of
The University of Michigan



Presents

MOSCOW STATE SYMPHONY

(U.S.S.R. State Symphony)

EVGENI SVETLANOV, *Music Director and Conductor*

THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 13, 1969, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

Symphony No. 1 in F major, Op. 10 SHOSTAKOVICH
Allegretto; allegro non troppo
Allegro
Lento; largo
Allegro molto

INTERMISSION

Symphony in Four Tableaux after the
Dramatic Poem of Byron *Manfred*, Op. 58 TCHAIKOVSKY
Lento lugubre
Vivace con spirito
Andante con moto
Allegro con fuoco

Melodiya—Angel Records

PROGRAM NOTES

by

PAUL AFFELDER

Symphony No. 1 in F major, Op. 10 DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Unlike the May Day and October Symphonies, as well as the Fifth, composed in 1937 for the Soviet Republic's twentieth anniversary, and the Seventh, inspired by the siege of Leningrad, Shostakovich's First Symphony is not avowedly an utterance of urgent political and social faith. Lawrence Gilman termed it "primarily an aesthetic expression rather than a tonal tract," pointing out that if the music is a vehicle of economic doctrine, "Shostakovich has kept the fact to himself." This Symphony was completed in 1925, ". . . the product," Shostakovich tells, "of my culminating studies at the Conservatory." He was, at that time, under the influence of Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazounoff, yet the work shows some departure from traditionalism. The harmony is acrid, more interesting, and the melodic line, angular. There is even a kettledrum solo. The work has maintained popularity since its première in 1926.

Symphony in Four Tableaux after the Dramatic Poem of

Byron *Manfred*, Op. 58 PIOTR ILYITCH TCHAIKOVSKY

Lord Byron wrote his dramatic poem *Manfred* in 1816–17. The first two acts were written during his travels in Switzerland, the third act in Venice. After its completion, the latter was extensively revised at the suggestion of Byron's publisher. To that publisher he wrote on February 15, 1817: "I forgot to mention to you that a kind of poem in dialogue (in blank verse) or drama, . . . begun last summer in Switzerland, is finished; it is in three acts, but of a very wild, metaphysical and inexplicable kind. Almost all the persons—but two or three—are spirits of the earth and air, or the waters; the scene is in the Alps; the hero a kind of magician, who is tormented by a species of remorse, the cause of which is left half unexplained. He wanders about invoking these spirits, which appear to him, and are of no use; he at last goes to the very abode of the Evil Principle, *in propria persona*, to evocate a ghost which appears and gives him an ambiguous and disagreeable answer; and in the third act he is found by his attendants dying in a tower where he had studied his art. You may perceive by this outline that I have no great opinion of this piece of phantasy."

Byron may have had a low opinion of his poem, but that opinion was not shared by others. Whereas he felt it was not at all suitable for representation on the stage, it was ultimately produced as a drama in 1834 and many times thereafter. It was for such a performance that Robert Schumann composed his Overture and Incidental Music to *Manfred* in 1848. *Manfred* has even been called "a sort of nineteenth century *Faust*." There are, in fact, a number of close spiritual relationships between these two figures, each of whom is willing to sell his soul to the Devil in exchange for certain supernatural powers.

We owe the existence of Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* to Mily Balakirev. This Russian composer, while turning out a certain number of commendable works of his own, was usually more concerned with prodding others into doing some of their best work. Thus, it was he who suggested to Tchaikovsky the subject and outline of *Romeo and Juliet*. In October 1882, Balakirev wrote to Tchaikovsky urging him to consider Byron's *Manfred* as the subject for a symphony. He confessed that he had presented the idea to Berlioz some fifteen years earlier but that the eminent Frenchman had turned it down on account of age and ill health. Balakirev outlined in detail the program for the symphony's four movements, incorporating into it one or two episodes of his own invention. He emphasized that, like Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, this new symphony must have an *idée fixe*—a constantly recurring motive—in the form of a theme representing Manfred, which should appear in all four movements.

Tchaikovsky did nothing about the suggestion for two and a half years. Then, again in 1885, Balakirev renewed his prodding. This time he even included an outline of the keys Tchaikovsky should use for each of the themes.

Finally, in April 1885, Tchaikovsky began work on *Manfred*. He labored throughout the summer on the new score, and in August he wrote to his benefactress, Nadezhda von Meck: "The composition of the *Manfred* symphony, a work highly tragic in character, is so difficult and complicated that at times I myself become a Manfred. All the same, I am consumed with the desire to finish it as soon as possible, and am straining every nerve; result—extreme exhaustion."

Basic work on the symphony was completed in September; but there were many corrections and details to be filled in, and these occupied Tchaikovsky until December 24, as a note on the score attests.

Manfred had its first performance in Moscow on March 23, 1886, under the direction of the German conductor, Max von Erdmannsdörfer. After the première, Tchaikovsky wrote to Mme von Meck: "I am quite satisfied; I am sure that it is my best symphonic work. The performance was excellent, but it seemed to me that the public were unintelligent and cold, although they gave me quite an ovation at the end."

Although the composer had stated repeatedly that he considered *Manfred* his best symphonic work, he grew in time to hate it. This was not an unusual attitude for him to take; he often felt an antipathy for creations which have turned out to be among his most popular works. At one time he entertained plans to revise *Manfred*, reworking the first movement into a symphonic poem and eliminating the other three movements, but these plans never materialized.

Manfred is frequently referred to as a symphonic poem, but the composer and his publisher always listed it as a symphony. Actually, it is a combination of both forms, though the four-movement structure, complete with scherzo and slow movement, puts it more clearly in the category of a symphony.

In composing *Manfred*, Tchaikovsky adhered very closely to Balakirev's programmatic outline, though he reversed the order of the second and third movements. On the score is printed the following program:

"I. Manfred wanders in the Alps. Tortured by the fatal anguish of doubt, racked by remorse and despair, his soul is a prey to sufferings without a name. Neither the occult sciences, whose mysteries he has probed to the bottom, and by means of which the gloomy powers of Hell are subject to him, nor anything in the world, can give him the forgetfulness for which alone he yearns. The memory of the fair Astarte, whom he has loved and lost, eats his heart. Nothing can dispel the curse which weighs on Manfred's soul; and without cessation, without truce, he is abandoned to the tortures of the most atrocious despair.

"II. The Fairy of the Alps appears to Manfred beneath the rainbow of the waterfall.

"III. Pastorale. Simple, free, and peaceful life of the mountaineers.

"IV. The underground palace of Arimanes. Manfred appears in the midst of the Bacchanal. Evocation of the ghost of Astarte. She foretells him the end of his earthly woes. Manfred's death."

The dynamic Manfred theme, which is to recur throughout the work, appears at the very opening of the first movement. In the middle section of this movement we hear the half-lyrical, half-dramatic theme of Astarte, which reappears in the finale. The spritely music of the waterfall constitutes the main portion of the Scherzo; the trio—or contrasting middle section—is concerned with the theme of the Fairy of the Alps, and is probably the most beautiful of all the passages in the symphony. The Pastorale also contains some very attractive, reposeful music, while the Bacchanal in the finale rises to orgiastic heights. After the prophecy of Astarte, the music reaches its fiercest intensity, as the organ, joining the orchestra for the first and only time, announces the death of Manfred. The work ends quietly.

Manfred is scored for three flutes, piccolo, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, tuba, kettledrums, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, tam-tam, glockenspiel, two harps and strings. Not surprisingly it is dedicated to Balakirev.

The current transcontinental tour of the Moscow State Symphony is under the exclusive direction of Hurok Concerts, Inc.

1969—INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS—1970

Choral Union Series

Hill Auditorium

- NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC 2:30, Sunday, September 21
SEIJI OZAWA, *Conducting*
ANDRÉ WATTS, *Pianist* (Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 3)
MISHA DICHTER, *Pianist* Monday, October 6
ORCHESTRA OF L'ACCADEMIA
DI SANTA CECILIA, Rome Thursday, October 23
FERNANDO PREVITALI, *Conducting*
ROYAL CHORAL SOCIETY AND PLAYERS Tuesday, November 4
OSIPOV BALALAIKA ORCHESTRA (with stars of the
Bolshoi Opera and Russian Dancers) Thursday, November 13
NHK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, JAPAN Tuesday, November 25
HIROYUKI IWAKI, *Conducting*
JOAN SUTHERLAND, *Soprano*, with
RICHARD BONYNGE, *Pianist* Friday, January 30
VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY, *Pianist* Monday, February 9
"BARBER OF SEVILLE" (Rossini)—
Canadian Opera Company Saturday, February 14
ANDRES SEGOVIA, *Classical Guitarist* Thursday, February 19

Season Tickets: \$35.00—\$30.00—\$25.00—\$20.00—\$15.00

Dance Series

Hill Auditorium

- NATIONAL BALLET OF CANADA Friday, October 17
*JOSÉ LIMON DANCE COMPANY Saturday, November 1
*NIKOLAIS DANCE COMPANY Wednesday, January 21
DANZAS VENEZUELA Tuesday, February 17
AMERICAN BALLET THEATER Tuesday, March 17

* For these two modern Dance Companies, Lecture-demonstrations will be scheduled and announced at a later date. Season ticket subscribers to the Dance Series will receive complimentary admission.

Season Tickets: \$17.50—\$15.00—\$12.50—\$10.00

Chamber Arts Series

Rackham Auditorium

- MADRIGAL, from Bucharest Sunday, October 12
MARIN CONSTANTIN, *Conductor*
PRAGUE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Monday, November 10
FRANCO GULLI, *Violinist*, and
ENRICA CAVALLO, *Pianist* (duo from Italy) Monday, November 17
NEW YORK PRO MUSICA Monday, January 12
MUSIC FROM MARLBORO Wednesday, January 28
JEAN-PIERRE RAMPAL, *Flute*, and
ROBERT VEYRON-LACROIX, *Keyboard* Thursday, February 5
PHAKAVALI DANCERS, from Bangkok Monday, March 2

Season Tickets: \$25.00—\$20.00—\$12.00

Orders for season tickets for all series accepted beginning Friday, March 14.

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