

The University Musical Society

of The University of Michigan

Presents

Menuhin Festival Orchestra of London

YEHUDI MENUHIN, *Conductor and Soloist*

ROBERT MASTERS, *Concertmaster*

WEDNESDAY EVENING, MARCH 10, 1971, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

Concerto No. 2 in E major BACH
Allegro
Adagio
Allegro assai

YEHUDI MENUHIN

Symphony No. 83 in G minor ("La Poule") HAYDN
Allegro spiritoso
Andante
Menuetto: allegretto
Finale: vivace

INTERMISSION

Concerto No. 5 in A major, K. 219, for Violin and Orchestra MOZART
Tempo aperto
Adagio
Tempo di menuetto

MR. MENUHIN

Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge, Op. 10 BENJAMIN BRITTEN
Introduction and Theme
Adagio
March
Romance
Aria italiana
Bourrée classique
Wiener Walzer
Moto perpetuo
Funeral March
Chant
Fugue and Finale

Angel Records

PROGRAM NOTES

Violin Concerto No. 2 in E major JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

This is one of the most cogent of all Bach's concerted instrumental works, and one of the most forward-looking in the way that short basic ideas are made to serve a multitude of structural and thematic functions. The three firm chords which start the piece are rarely absent from the texture of the movement, even when the most elaborate decoration is combined with them, and the other elements of the opening orchestral paragraph are all developed in terms of these chords. As benefits a movement of such concentration, the soloist rarely establishes genuine independence of the accompanying strings. He is very much *primus inter pares*, often merely decorating the thematic movement which is taking place in the orchestra. Even the most ordinary sequences in the solo violin are accompanied with rich contrapuntal writing, but the effect is suitably urgent rather than opaque. The movement falls clearly into three parts, with a slowing down at the second which makes the third, a repeat of the first, seem the most uncompromising and inevitable. The adagio is highly expressive, and full of rhythmic cunning, notably the way the opening ideas in the bass seem to cut across accents without actually doing so. The soloist enters almost reluctantly, holding a long single note which at last flowers into a melody of great beauty, its ornaments integral rather than unessential, its sequences and repetitions heightening the mood of rapt, slightly melancholy calm. The gay finale again establishes a theme which the soloist tries to ignore in favour of purely decorative figuration, and the movement becomes a study in the postponement of the main themes' restatement, rather in the manner of a piece of jazz.

Symphony No. 83 in G minor ("La Poule") JOSEPH HAYDN

In 1885-86 Haydn provided six symphonies for presentation at the Concerts de la loge Olympique in Paris: these were Nos. 82 to 87. No matter how absolute the music concerned might be in its character, Parisians were for long given to the attachment of titles to favoured concert pieces: Haydn's symphonies did not escape: e.g., of the Paris symphonies No. 82 was called "The Bear," No. 85 "The Queen" and the present work No. 83 in G has always been known as "The Hen." This appellation has generally been connected with the second subject of the symphony's first movement, where the oboe was said to make clucking sounds. Musicologists, however, have pointed to the resemblance of Haydn's melody in the second movement of symphony No. 83 to the theme of Rameau's harpsichord piece, *La Poule*.

Just as the later "London" symphonies reached a high water mark in Haydn's creative genius, so, in their way, did the "Paris" set. Each one is a masterpiece and it does appear that when Haydn received commissions outside his own country and beyond his immediate ambience, he applied himself profoundly to advancing his art; as if to say that he must show the rest of the world what manner of music he could make. The first movement is energetic, even by Haydn's racy standards; it is best described as blustery. The dramatic first subject is attacked immediately by combined strings and wind, the first fragment, or musical sentence, is made up of three irregular phrases, and repeats itself to modulate from minor in G, to major in the key of B flat. Square beat minims give way to a dotted rhythm and soon a persistent arpeggio figure appears. First violins descend from the heights of the arpeggio to introduce the movement's second subject, an innocent, small tune with appoggiatura ornaments; when this is repeated the oboe joins in and in due course provides the passage which some people regard as reminiscent of the hen-run. A short codetta in dotted rhythm ends the exposition of Haydn's themes and he begins their development with, first, a reference to the opening subject, and then an extended treatment of the second theme. This is followed by the arpeggio figures combined with more first-subject matter ending in an unresolved chord. Violins enter quietly with the first subject proper and lead the music back to the key of G minor at which point the recapitulation begins—with great noise and bustle. The boisterous closing section soon finds the happy major key and runs its course up to a characteristic Haydnesque pause and short coda.

The Andante is one of the composer's finest movements. It has been variously written of as a rhapsody and a nocturne. In its deeply felt poetry this slow movement provides the greatest possible contrast with the spirit of the first movement and, further, despite the similarity of its theme to Rameau's *La Poule*, it could not be more remote from any connotation evoked by the title which the symphony acquired in consequence. It is interesting to note that Haydn chose the unexpected key of E-flat for this second movement; two years afterwards Mozart was to use the same first and second movement key relationship of G minor—E flat major for his own Symphony No. 40. The melody appears immediately on first violins, played very quietly. Each time it returns, Haydn weaves into it a new counter-tune and by this means, although the movement is of classic simplicity in form, he achieves the effect of a rhapsody. The minuet is characteristically Haydn's—robust and direct, with a trio section given over to specialist instruments. In the case of the trio honours are done by flute and first violin. The minuet proper is enlivened by some off-beat phrasing which gives a quasi-syncopated effect when performed with due accentuation.

In fast twelve-eight time, the Finale is an extended jig. The form is sonata; yet there is only one real subject and for "second subject" the composer modifies the one all-pervading tune. This music simply flows on and on; it is miraculously unpredictable, with an inspired freshness at every turn.

Concerto No. 5 in A major, K. 219, for Violin and Orchestra . . . MOZART

The A-major concerto was written when Mozart was nineteen years age, and is, according to Alfred Einstein, "unsurpassed for brilliance, tenderness, and wit."

Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge, Op. 10 . . . BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Britten heard a performance of Frank Bridge's orchestral suite *The Sea* at the Norwich Triennial Festival in 1924 (when he was ten) and was "knocked sideways" by it; three years later, after meeting Bridge at the next Norwich Festival, Britten started having composition lessons with him. Bridge died in 1941, and his music, never exactly popular, was largely forgotten until Britten himself began reviving interest in it by instigating performances at the Aldeburgh Festival and elsewhere. An early tribute was paid when Britten chose to base his *Variations* for string orchestra, Op. 10 on a theme from Bridge's *Idyll* No. 2 for string quartet, composed in 1906. The commission for the *Variations* came from Boyd Neel, who, in May 1937, was invited to take his orchestra to the Salzburg Festival in August that year and give the first performance of a new English work. Time was obviously very short but Britten responded readily to Neel's request, producing a complete sketch of the new piece within ten days and completing it a month later. The première of the *Variations* (which are inscribed "To F.B.—A tribute with affection and admiration") was given in Salzburg on 27th August, and immediately established it as one of the most brilliant and resourceful works in the repertoire of the string orchestra.

The work opens with a short but arresting introduction, which leads immediately into the first statement of the gentle, waltz-like Theme by four solo strings, lightly supported by the remainder; it is then played again, in slightly varied form, by the full string band. Variation 1, which follows immediately, is a short *Adagio*, in which references to the drooping intervals of the Theme can be detected in the rhapsodic interjections for the violins. This is followed by a rhythmic *March*, rising to a fierce climax and then dying away, and a shapely *Romance*, in which the Theme is heard in the pizzicato bass-line. Next come three brilliant parodies: a superb take-off of Rossini in the *Aria italiana* (accompanying instruments plucking *quasi chitarra*); a rather square *Bourrée classique* (with a big solo violin part in the "trio"); and a devilish *Wiener Walzer*—no doubt inserted for the benefit of the Salzburg audience. No. 7 is a virtuosio *Moto perpetuo*; No. 8 an impressive and sonorous *Funeral March* (observe the falling fifths of the Theme in the ostinato-like bass), and No. 9 a slow *Chant*, in which imaginative use is made of harmonies and sustained chords, supporting a chant on violas *divisi a 3*. The complex last movement begins as an energetic fugue on a subject in which the falling fifth is again prominent. At its climax the texture is spread out in eleven parts and the Theme is heard against it in octaves on the solo quartet. Other themes from works by Frank Bridge add to the richness of the final pages of the fugue, after which the work is concluded with a solemn coda, in whose last bars the quartet once more separates itself from the rest of the orchestra.

R.G.

THE MENUHIN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA OF LONDON

Personnel

ROBERT MASTERS, *Concertmaster*

Violin 1

Robert Masters
John Glickman
Nigel Murray
Marjorie Lavers
James Coles
John Holloway

Violin 2

David Stone
Lorraine du Val
Cyril Newton
Rosemary Ellison
Sheila Nelson
Sybil Glickman

Viola

Walter Gerhart
Anthony Harris
Andrew Nigel Sparrow
John Davis

Cello

Ross Pople
Eileen Lawrence
Roger Smith

Double Bass

John Gray
Michael Brittain

Flute

Patricia Lynden

Oboe

Michael Dobson
James Brown

Bassoon

Deirdre Grant
Stefan de Haan

Horn

John Burden
James Buck

Harpsichord continuo—John Gray

Orchestral Management—Mrs. Noel Masters

INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS-1971

MUNICH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Friday, March 12
HANS STADLMAIR, *Conductor*

PIERRE FOURNIER, *Cellist* Monday, March 15
Suite No. 6 in D major (Unaccompanied) J. S. BACH
Sonata Arpeggione in A minor SCHUBERT
Three Fantasiestücke, Op. 73 SCHUMANN
Elegy FAURÉ
Sonata in A major FRANCK

Tickets for Rostropovich (Choral Union Series) to be used for this replacement.

SIBERIAN DANCERS AND SINGERS OF OMSK . . . Saturday, March 27

Special Attraction

MERCE CUNNINGHAM AND DANCE COMPANY . Tuesday, April 13

in Hill Auditorium at 8:30 P.M.

Tickets: \$5.00—\$4.00—\$3.00

(Lecture-demonstration Monday, April 12. Tickets: \$1.00)

The ANN ARBOR *May Festival*

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA IN ALL CONCERTS

THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 8:30 P.M.

EUGENE ORMANDY, Conductor; LEONTYNE PRICE, Soprano—"Dove sono" from *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Mozart); "Ritorna Vincitor" from *Aida* (Verdi); Four Last Songs (Strauss); "Pace, pace" from *La Forza del Destino* (Verdi). Two Portraits (Bartók); Symphony No. 8 in B minor (Schubert); "Till Eulenspiegel" (Strauss).

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 8:30 P.M.

THOR JOHNSON, Conductor. "Sea Symphony" (Vaughan Williams) with THE UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION, MARALIN NISKA, Soprano; and DONALD BELL, Bass. BARBARA NISSMAN, Pianist, in Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini (Rachmaninoff).

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 8:30 P.M.

EUGENE ORMANDY, Conductor. All orchestral program: Sinfonietta (Janacek); "La Mer" (Debussy); and Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major (Prokofieff).

SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2:30 P.M.

THOR JOHNSON, Conductor. "Great" Mass in F-Minor (Bruckner), with THE UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION; MARALIN NISKA, Soprano; ELEANOR FELVER, Contralto; JOHN STEWART, Tenor; and DONALD BELL, Bass. CHRISTOPHER PARKENING, Guitarist, in "Fantasia para un Gentilhombre" (Rodrigo).

SUNDAY, MAY 2, 8:30 P.M.

EUGENE ORMANDY, Conductor. ANDRÉ WATTS, Pianist, in Concerto No. 2 in B-flat (Brahms). Toccata, Adagio and Fugue (Bach); "Enigma" Variations (Elgar).

Series Tickets: \$32.00, \$26.00, \$20.00, \$15.00, \$10.00

Single Concerts: \$7.00, \$6.50, \$6.00, \$5.00, \$3.50, \$2.50

Single tickets now on sale.

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