

The University Musical Society

of
The University of Michigan

Presents

Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra

BOHDAN WODICZKO, *Chief Conductor*

ROMAN JABLONSKI, *Cellist*

THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 17, 1974, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

"Don Juan," Tone Poem after Lenau, Op. 20 R. STRAUSS

Concerto in B minor for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 104 DVOŘÁK

Allegro
Adagio ma non troppo
Finale

ROMAN JABLONSKI

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 10, Op. 93 SHOSTAKOVICH

Moderato
Allegro vivo
Allegretto
Andante, allegro

PROGRAM NOTES

“Don Juan,” Tone Poem after Lenau, Op. 20 RICHARD STRAUSS

The tone poem by Strauss, first performed from manuscript under the direction of the composer at Weimar in 1889, was not based on the plot of most of the Don Juans of the stage, but on a poem by Nicolaus Lenau, of which the poet said:

“My Don Juan is no hot-blooded man eternally pursuing women. It is the longing in him to find a woman who is to him incarnate womanhood, and to enjoy in the one, all the women on earth, whom he cannot as individuals possess. Because he does not find her, although he reels from one to another, at last disgust seizes hold of him, and this disgust is the Devil that fetches him.”

The opening theme in the horns is stridently male and proclamative—a sort of sublimated cock-crow. The following theme in tender and tranquil mood introduces Zerlina, the dewy country lass of the Don’s first adventure. A later passage in the solo violin is said to represent Donna Anna, the lovely aristocrat who is the idealized love of Don Juan’s frenetic career. The sentimental, Lisztian oboe solo in this episode is, perhaps, a vision of this ideal love. The musical development runs a full emotional gamut from languor to passionate climax. The conclusion is typically Straussian. There is a climactic crash for full orchestra followed by a dramatic pause. Then with a faint trill in the strings and a soft roll in the tympani the Don comes to his bitter and disillusioned end.

Concerto in B minor for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 104 ANTONIN DVOŘÁK

From 1892 to 1895 Dvořák was living in New York, where he occupied the position of Director at the National Conservatory of Music. It was during this period that he wrote those works, notably the *New World* Symphony, which made use of American folk music. That he was homesick for his own country expressed itself in the slow movement of that symphony. The last year of his stay produced only one work—this concerto—in which his longing to be back in Czechoslovakia reached passionate intensity. There is no trace of American musical influence, only that mixture of Czech folk music and Dvořák’s own inspired melodic invention which has endeared his compositions to music-lovers throughout the world for nearly a century.

The concerto was begun on November 8, 1894, and composed movement by movement, the orchestration being completed at each stage. Thus the first movement was completed by December 12, the *adagio* only three days later, and the finale, which was started on New Year’s Day 1895, was ready by February 9. However, on his return to Bohemia, Dvořák rewrote the ending, with the exception of the final eight bars which brings the work to a triumphant conclusion, inserting the wonderfully poignant *adagio* section in which the cello pours its heart out and lapses into final silence.

In reply to a student who was discussing the subject of inspiration, Dvořák is quoted as saying:—“To have a lovely thought is not so remarkable. A thought comes of itself, and if it is fine and great, that is not our merit. But to carry out a thought well, and make something great of it, *that* is the most difficult thing. That is art.” The powerful sense of vitality which fills the opening pages of the concerto is sure proof of his genius. The “lovely thought” is there, sure enough, but how superbly and affectionately he treats it. That the opening statement, on two clarinets, is so

dynamically soft, and yet so compelling, is remarkable. The opening tutti paves the way for the soloist, who, in Casals' words "enters like a hero" with the same theme, resolute and dominant. Yet later, when the notes of the same theme are given longer values, and the whole is played by the cello over tremolos on the strings while the flute weaves a beautiful counter-melody, how expressive it has become. Dvořák's art was never more inspired than in this passage.

The second subject, which had been entrusted to the horn during the first orchestral tutti, is also tailor-made for the rich sound of the cello, and it is this theme which begins the recapitulation, after the soloist has led to it with a fiendishly difficult, but very exciting, climb in chromatic octaves.

One of Dvořák's personal reasons for re-writing the coda of the finale was the illness and subsequent death of his sister-in-law, Josefina Kounicova, with whom he had shared a warm friendship since their first meeting when he was a viola player in the Interim Theatre and she a young actress. The news of her illness reached him in the USA while he was writing the second movement of the Cello Concerto. At that time he paraphrased the middle section of his own song "Leave me alone" (from the Four Songs, Opus 82), giving it to the soloist in the central section of the *adagio*. Its poignant beauty underlined his longing for Bohemia which is expressed so eloquently throughout the movement. Upon his return he was given the news of Josefina's death, and in rewriting the coda of the finale he included a literal quotation from the first part of the same song, this time giving it to the solo violin.

The general mood of the finale, however, is a martial one, full of colour and generating virility and an agitated excitement.

—DENBY RICHARDS

Symphony No. 10, Op. 93 DIMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Introduced in Leningrad on December 17, 1953, this work was the first symphony Shostakovich had written in nearly ten years. Its American première was by the New York Philharmonic under Dmitri Mitropoulos, December 14, 1954; it subsequently received the New York Music Critics Circle Award.

Although the composer did not provide a specific program, he did explain that he hoped to make his music express the "thoughts and aspirations of our contemporaries" and, in particular, those in relation to the cause for peace.

The symphony begins with a slow introduction in which a six-note theme is prominent in low strings; this subject returns throughout the work. The pace quickens fifty measures later; a theme in the clarinets of a lyrical nature is introduced. An equally lyrical but more rhythmic passage for the flutes, also equally important to that of the clarinets, arises at this point. The brisk second movement is a brief scherzo; it is rhythmic and full of energy. The slow movement opens with a folksong-like melody in the strings in imitation; a solo horn is later answered by the strings in a new version of the opening six-note theme. There follows a nocturne of a poetic nature; a horn solo over strings, *pizzicato* predominates. The English horn then gives important treatment to the opening material of the movement. The Finale has a leisurely, meditative beginning; its oboe solo is of oriental character. This is followed by the main theme of martial melody. A brief recall of material from the scherzo and slow movements follows and, after final repetition of the six-note motive, the work rushes to its exciting conclusion.

INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS—1974-75

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE	Friday, Saturday, Sunday, October 18, 19 & 20
GREGG SMITH SINGERS	Tuesday, October 22
LEIPZIG GEWANDHAUS ORCHESTRA	Wednesday, October 23
ESTERHAZY STRING QUARTET	Thursday, October 24
PENNSYLVANIA BALLET	Saturday and Sunday, October 26 & 27
SLASK, FOLK COMPANY, FROM POLAND	Wednesday, October 30
JACQUES LOUSSIER TRIO, JAZZMEN "PLAY BACH"	Saturday, November 2
NATIONAL CHINESE OPERA THEATRE	Sunday, November 10
CLEVELAND STRING QUARTET	Wednesday, November 13
CARLOS MONTOYA, <i>Guitarist</i>	Tuesday, November 19
SOVIET GEORGIAN DANCERS AND TBILISI POLYPHONIC CHOIR	Sunday, November 24
JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET	Tuesday, December 3
HANDEL'S <i>Messiah</i>	Friday, Saturday, Sunday, December 6, 7 & 8
GUARNERI STRING QUARTET AND GARY GRAFFMAN, <i>Pianist</i>	Wednesday, January 8
MARCEL MARCEAU, <i>Pantomimist</i>	Friday, Saturday, Sunday, January 10, 11 & 12
DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	Saturday, January 11
SYNTAGMA MUSICUM FROM AMSTERDAM	Thursday, January 23
TOKYO STRING QUARTET	Sunday, February 2
AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	Sunday, February 9
MOSCOW CHAMBER ORCHESTRA	Tuesday, February 11
GOLDOVSKY GRAND OPERA THEATER	Thursday, February 13
JEAN-PIERRE RAMPAL, <i>Flutist</i> , AND ROBERT VEYRON-LA CROIX, <i>Keyboard</i>	Tuesday, February 18
HARKNESS BALLET	Thursday, February 20
CHHAU, MASKED DANCE OF BENGAL	Saturday, February 22
MOSCOW BALALAIKA ENSEMBLE AND LUDMILA ZYKINA	Monday, February 24
PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY	Wednesday, March 12
STRASBOURG PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA	Saturday, March 15
QAWWALI MUSIC FROM PAKISTAN	Sunday, March 16
VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY, <i>Pianist</i>	Wednesday, March 19
ARS ANTIQUA DE PARIS	Saturday, March 29
BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	Saturday, April 5
PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND	Wednesday, April 9
SPANISH RTV SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF MADRID	Friday, April 11
EMIL GILELS, <i>Pianist</i>	Sunday, April 13

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Burton Memorial Tower, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Phone 665-3717

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