

The University Musical Society



of The University of Michigan

Presents

Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra

ALAIN LOMBARD, *Music Director and Conductor*

JEAN-BERNARD POMMIER, *Pianist*

SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 15, 1975, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

"Pelléas et Mélisande" Suite, Op. 80 FAURÉ

Prélude
Fileuse
Sicilienne
Death of Mélisande

Concerto No. 2 in G minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 22 SAINT-SAËNS

Andante sostenuto
Allegro scherzando
Presto

JEAN-BERNARD POMMIER

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Symphonie fantastique, Op. 14 BERLIOZ

Reveries: Passions
A Ball
Scenes in the Country
March to the Scaffold
Dream of a Witches' Sabbath

Erato Records

PROGRAM NOTES

Pelléas et Mélisande Suite, Op. 80 GABRIEL FAURÉ

In 1898, Fauré, no longer a young man, was asked to compose incidental music for the English play production of *Pelléas et Mélisande* starring Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and he conducted the première performance in London. The Suite was extracted and first performed by the Lamoureux Orchestre de Paris in 1901. It consisted of three movements: *Prélude*, *Fileuse*, and the *Death of Mélisande*. Later, the *Sicilienne*, which has no dramatic connection with the play, was inserted after the *Fileuse*. The profound, melancholy sonorities are post-Wagnerian and indicative of Berlioz; the beauty and the sadness of love are vividly portrayed in an intimate chamber music fashion.

The tragedy, *Pelléas et Mélisande* by the poet, Maurice Maeterlinck, was the text which Debussy used for his opera. Subsequent incidental music was written by Sibelius, the one which we are hearing by Fauré, and a symphonic poem by Arnold Schoenberg.

Concerto No. 2 in G minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 22 CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

Saint-Saëns was at the same time an innovator and a conservative. An impeccable virtuoso on the piano and the organ, he became during his lifetime an incontestable master in the classical tradition, both in his compositions and as a performer.

The celebrated second concerto was composed in the very short time of seventeen days. Anton Rubinstein had arrived in Paris in April 1868 and was planning to conduct a concert at the Salle Pleyel three weeks later. He asked his friend Saint-Saëns if he could possibly have a new concerto ready. The concerto was written and given its first performance on May 13, 1868, with Saint-Saëns as the piano soloist.

The concerto begins in an unorthodox manner, not with an orchestral introduction but with an extended cadenza-like unaccompanied solo for the piano. The first movement, *Andante sostenuto*, turns out to be the slow movement of the concerto. The second movement is a light, entertaining *Allegro scherzando* which is cast in first-movement sonata form. The final *Presto* is a high-spirited old Italian dance—a *saltarello*, with a magnificent chorale incorporated toward the end. Saint-Saëns, the classicist, always included rich counterpoint and fugue, which formed the basis of his technique.

Symphonie fantastique, Op. 14 HECTOR BERLIOZ

"I have now come to the grand drama of my life," Berlioz announced at the beginning of his *Memoirs* for the year 1827. The drama at hand was the fiery young composer's passion for an Irish actress named Harriet Smithson, who eventually became his wife. She is the focus of his *Symphonie fantastique*, the milestone of his early career, as well as its sequel, *Lélio, or The Return to Life*. Together he called these works *Episode in the Life of an Artist*. At the time of the première, the lady to whom the work was a romantic tribute (as well as an insult, since she appears as one of the witches in the finale) knew nothing of its existence and was indifferent to its obscure creator. Only insofar as it represents the musical expression of Berlioz' daydreams may this brilliant work be considered autobiographical. A condensation of Berlioz' "program" for the symphony follows:

A young musician of unhealthily sensitive nature and endowed with vivid imagination has poisoned himself with opium in a paroxysm of lovesick despair. The narcotic dose he had taken was too weak to cause death, but it has thrown him into a long sleep accompanied by the most extraordinary visions. In this condition his sensations, his feelings and memories find utterance in his sick brain in the form of musical imagery. Even the beloved one takes the form of melody—*idée fixe*—ever returning and which he hears everywhere.

I. Reveries: Passions. Somber longings, depression and moments of joy are experienced before the beloved appears—*idée fixe* in flutes and violins—floods of passion, tenderness, fury, thoughts on religion.

II. A Ball. The hero is at a ball but cannot be distracted by the gaiety. She appears in oboe and flute amidst the swirling dancers.

III. Scenes in the Country. The musician hears two shepherds calling their flocks—*ranz des vaches*. She appears again in basses, flute, and oboe.

IV. March to the Scaffold. He has a horrible dream—he has murdered his beloved. He is to be executed, is to be a spectator of his own execution. She appears again but her vision is obliterated by the fatal blow—a tremendous crash followed by trumpet flourishes and a series of rolled chords for timpani.

V. Dream of a Witches' Sabbath. He sees himself at a Witches' Sabbath, surrounded by spectres, sorcerers, and monsters gathered for his funeral. The *idée fixe* returns but it has lost its noble character; it has become a vulgar, trivial, and grotesque dance-tune. It is she who comes to attend the Witches' Sabbath. Friendly howls and shouts greet her arrival . . . she joins in the diabolic orgy . . . bells toll for the dead . . . a burlesque parody of the *Dies irae* . . . the witches' round dance. The round dance and the *Dies irae* are heard together.

ALAIN LOMBARD

Alain Lombard, Music Director for the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra, has within a short span of time achieved remarkable success on an international level. He has been a frequent guest conductor with such orchestras as the Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic and the London Symphony Orchestra. From 1967 to 1974 he was Music Director of the Greater Miami Philharmonic. He is also well known to American audiences from his many performances at the Metropolitan Opera.

JEAN-BERNARD POMMIER

Jean-Bernard Pommier, the renowned young French pianist, returns to the United States for a season highlighted by a major tour with the Strasbourg Philharmonic under the direction of Alain Lombard. In addition, he will be making appearances with the San Francisco Orchestra and Toronto Symphony, as well as returning to the Ravinia Summer Festival with the Chicago Symphony.

Mr. Pommier was born in France in 1944 and began his piano studies at the age of four. He entered the Conservatoire de Paris in 1958, graduating in 1961 with First Prize.

His performances at the Salzburg Festival in 1971 under the direction of Herbert von Karajan led to an immediate invitation to return for the 1972 Festival as well as appearances with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1973. Mr. Pommier was accorded a special honor by being asked to perform alongside the world's greatest musicians at the 1973 Casals Festival in Puerto Rico.

Rostropovich Returns!

SATURDAY, MARCH 22, IN HILL AUDITORIUM AT 8:30

with

The University Symphony Orchestra

"I wish with all my heart to do something for this country . . . this concert will be given for the continued well-being and success of the University Musical Society, and to establish a scholarship to be used by gifted and needy music students."

. . . MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH, on the occasion of his recent January recital in Ann Arbor.

Program: Glinka: Overture to Russlan and Ludmilla; Prokofieff: Classical Symphony in D major (Rostropovich conducting); Saint-Saens: Cello Concerto in A minor (Rostropovich soloist, Theo Alcantara conducting).

Tickets available at Burton Tower.

Main floor, \$8; first balcony, \$7; second balcony, \$6 and \$4.

\$25 includes a main floor seat and a reception ticket to "Meet the Artist" after the performance.

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- QAWWALI MUSIC FROM PAKISTAN Sunday, March 16
VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY, *Pianist* Wednesday, March 19
ARS ANTIQUA DE PARIS Saturday, March 29
BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Saturday, April 5
SEIJI OZAWA, *conductor*; AND THE FESTIVAL CHORUS
Beethoven: Overture, "Leonore" No. 3; Rush: The Cloud Messenger;
Ravel: Daphnis and Chloé
PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ Wednesday, April 9
SPANISH RTV SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Friday, April 11
ENRIQUE GARCIA ASENSIO, *conductor*; NARCISO YEPES, *guitarist*
ANGELES CHAMORRO, *soprano*; FRANCISCO ORTIZ, *tenor*
A program of music by Spanish composers: Guridi, Breton, Luna, Vives, Chapi, Rodrigo, de Falla
RUDOLF FIRKUSNY, *Pianist* (replacing Emil Gilels) Sunday, April 13
Mozart: Variations on a Minuet by Duport, K. 573; Schumann: Fantasy in C, Op. 17;
Janáček: On an overgrown Path (Part II); Chopin: Sonata in B minor, Op. 58

82ND ANN ARBOR MAY FESTIVAL

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