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THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



Photo by Bill Ray

# Vladimir Horowitz

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 8, 1978, AT 4:00

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

The Opening Concert of the 100th Choral Union Series

P R O G R A M

Polonaise-Fantaisie, Op. 61 . . . . . FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

Chopin left the world a legacy of eleven Polonaises, seven of which he endorsed for publication. The remaining four were published posthumously and are of small merit. The seventh, and the last published during his lifetime, is the Polonaise-Fantaisie, an unique flowering of Chopin's individuality.

It is significant that this work has been the longest of the group in meeting popular appreciation, a circumstance perhaps due to the special demands it makes upon the interpreter. For the Chopin of the Polonaise-Fantaisie is not the same as the author of earlier heroic and resplendent pages. It was inevitable that, with his intense subjectivity, his identification as man and artist with the spirit of his native land, he should first have turned to this ancestral dance form as the supreme vehicle for the patriotic and tragic emotions which possessed him and his hapless countrymen after the disaster of the Polish insurrection of 1830. Equally inevitable was the evolution of the artist and tone poet who in his later days found oppressive the confines of the form which had once been his strength and the prop and guide of his inspiration.

Today we listen to this Polonaise-Fantaisie, which is much more fantasy than Polonaise, without alarm, although, it is to be hoped, with growing realization of the originality and imaginative flight of the music. Nor is it officious to hear in the eagle cry and the sweeping arpeggios of the introduction the voice of the bard who smites the lyre to sing of heroes and imperishable deeds. Then come the premonitory measures which lead to the announcement of the Polonaise idea and the exile's song carried forward upon its rhythm. What is the analyst to say of other themes which appear and pursue each other and vanish again like phantasms, sleep-chasings which can neither be captured nor dispersed by the troubled dreamer. Then comes the prayer before the battle, the last communion; and there is little that is simpler or more unearthly in all romantic music than the echo, the summons of the opening, sounding from afar—and the cry repeated—and the music of preparation and suspense, till the Polonaise theme rises again from its ghostly past, frantically to fling forth its challenge, finally to subside, to the muffled rolling of drums.

Nocturne in F minor, Op. 55 . . . . . FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

The Nocturne opens with a melody of a vaguely melancholy and pensive beauty. There is a more agitated contrasting passage. The tranquil ending, with the arpeggiations which turn into the major key, represents one of those occasional pages when Chopin finds peace within himself.

Mazurka in B minor, Op. 33, No. 4 . . . . . FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

This Mazurka should not be considered primarily as "dance music," but, rather, as an example of Chopin's most poetic evocation, reflecting, as it does, the nostalgia felt by the composer, in exile in Paris, for his beloved Poland. The Mazurka may be considered a poem of extraordinary imagination and feeling.

Sonata in B-flat minor, Op. 35 . . . . . FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

- Grave: doppio movimento
- Scherzo
- March funèbre
- Presto

In a former day—the B-flat minor Sonata made its appearance in 1840—there was consternation and questioning as to the accuracy of the title of "sonata" applied to all this romantic music. Schumann said that the four movements were like wild children, rebellious members of a family. We know that the Funeral March, which far outsped the rest of the familiar work in its appeal to audiences the world over, was written in advance of the other movements. But the first movement follows the sonata idea clearly, if not in the most classic or expert manner, and with thematic integration. The scherzo is none the less a scherzo for its imaginative tone painting. Following the defiance and tumult of the opening movement, it is certainly a battle piece—the fury of the charge, the fated cavalcade filing off to the strife, and all that.

The dramatic sequence of the Funeral March is obvious. It replaces the classic slow movement. The enigma, of course, is the fantastic finale—all in flying unisons, to be played, according to the composer's behest, as swiftly as possible, with both pedals and no expression. This piece could certainly be one of the preludes, an entity in itself. Chopin laconically evaded explanation of the passage, in which some commentators have found the vision of dead leaves whirling over the graves of Poland's heroes, by saying that it represented the mourners gossiping after the funeral! Like Brahms, he knew how to snub officious people.

The question of "sonata form" need hardly detain us. Call it a series of dramatic tone pictures—the reverberation of tragedy, orisons and knightly resolves; the vision of the battlefield; the sable cortege, the eerie finale. A sonata? Not necessarily. Let us reduce it to the lowest terms: the music of a genius.

#### INTERMISSION

Moment Musical in B minor, Op. 16, No. 3 . . . . . SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

Moment Musical in E-flat minor, Op. 16, No. 2 . . . . . SERGEI RACHMANINOFF  
(played without interruption)

The Moment Musical in B minor is very somber, very expressive, and very tragic in its content.

Rachmaninoff, himself, told Vladimir Horowitz that the E-flat minor Moment Musical was one of his piano compositions which he liked most, even more so when he later revised it. It is the revised version that Mr. Horowitz plays today. It is very eloquent, romantic, and nearly impressionistic in its content.

Consolation . . . . . FRANZ LISZT

This work is one of the loveliest, most lyrical, most melodic of Liszt's short pieces.

Mephisto Waltz . . . . . FRANZ LISZT

While Liszt composed the Mephisto Waltz for orchestra, he also composed a version for the piano. Ferruccio Busoni made his own transcription of the Mephisto Waltz for the piano, relying, primarily, on Liszt's orchestral material. Mr. Horowitz has chosen from Busoni the materials which, in his judgment, are most important, musically, and has combined them with Liszt's original transcription.

The Mephisto Waltz is based on an episode from Lenau's *Faust*, and the familiar story is set forth . . . quoted from Ernest Hutcheson's "The Literature of the Piano":

"Mephistopheles, in hunter's garb, arrives with Faust at a village tavern where a gay crowd is dancing. Faust is inflamed at the sight of a dark-eyed beauty but does not dare approach—he who had not feared to make a compact with the infernal powers.

"Mephistopheles, bored with the stupid music and the rustic propriety of the waltz, seizes a violin and maliciously provokes the company to a mad whirl of excitement. The emboldened Faust pairs up with his inamorata. Still dancing, they cross the garden and disappear into the neighboring forest while the tones of the magic violin grow ever fainter to them. Plunged in amorous delight, they listen to a nightingale singing from the fragrant woods."

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“Since my first concert in Ann Arbor in 1928, I have enjoyed playing here. It is a pleasure for me to return again during my 50th Anniversary Golden Jubilee year. The warm response of your public, and particularly the students, is a joy to me. I congratulate the University Musical Society on its 100th year of providing great performances for your community.”

—VLADIMIR HOROWITZ

*Today's recital marks Mr. Horowitz's fourteenth performance from this stage.  
His Ann Arbor debut program in 1928 is reproduced below.*

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY  
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VICTOR KOLAR, *Conducting*  
VLADIMIR HOROWITZ, *Pianist*

Monday Evening, November 12, 1928, at 8:15 p. m.

PROGRAM

OVERTURE, "THE SECRET OF SUZANNE" .....*Wolf-Ferrari*

SYMPHONY No. 4, In F Minor, Opus 36.....*Tchaikovsky*

- I. Andante sostenuto; Moderato con anima.
- II. Andantino in modo di canzona.
- III. Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato; Allegro
- IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco.

*Intermission*

CONCERTO FOR PIANOFORTE, No. 3, D Minor, Opus 30.....*Rachmaninoff*

- I. Allegro ma non tanto
- II. Intermezzo, Adagio.
- III. Finale

VLADIMIR HOROWITZ

*Mr. Horowitz uses the Steinway Piano and records for the Victor Duo-Art*

The Mason & Hamlin is the official piano of the Detroit Symphony Society.  
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A R S L O N G A V I T A B R E V I S