International Presentations of Music & Dance

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Los Angeles Philharmonic

CARLO MARIA GIULINI
Music Director and Conductor

SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 23, 1980, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Symphony No. 94 in G major ("Surprise") . . . . . . HAYDN
Adagio, vivace
Andante (theme and four variations)
Menuetto: allegro
Allegro

Quiet City, for Trumpet, English Horn, and String Orchestra . . COPLAND
THOMAS STEVENS, *Trumpet* ROBERT COWART, *English Horn*

Overture to *La Forza del destino* . . . . VERDI

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73 . . . . BRAHMS
Allegro non troppo
Adagio non troppo
Allegretto grazioso, quasi andantino
Allegro con spirito

RCA, Deutsche Grammophon, London, and Columbia Records.

This evening's concert by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, its third in Ann Arbor, is presented in cooperation with Michigan Bell, with partial funding by the Bell System under its "American Orchestras on Tour" program.

PROGRAM NOTES

by ORRIN HOWARD

Symphony No. 94 in G major ("Surprise") . . . . JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)

In observing that some 29 of Haydn's 104 symphonies have a name affixed to them, one is moved to paraphrase Shakespeare by saying that "a Haydn symphony by no name at all would sound as sweet." Whether aptly or gratuitously titled, the named works stand completely on their own very remarkable merit, needing no extra-musical suggestion to enhance, define, justify or distinguish them.

Perhaps the least well-considered title is the one, "Surprise," appended by English audiences to the Symphony No. 94 simply because of the single loud chord occurring at the end of the quiet second sentence of the *Andante* movement; after all, dynamic contrast was a thoroughly established musical element long before Haydn closed a soft string passage with a loud, full orchestra (including timpani) exclamation point. A more appropriate name for the work, if one were really needed, is that adopted by German audiences: *mit dem Paukenschlag*—with the drum stroke.

For his part, Haydn was not inclined to quarrel with the naming of his work, since the entire Symphony, and particularly the second movement, was the large success he wanted it to be. But in London in 1791, Haydn worked long and hard to present a new Symphony that would please. His fame, although by then well established, had not come easily. Haydn had been no pioneer, certainly no revolutionary. Having been born eighteen years before J. S. Bach died, he grew up at a time of bewildering musical transition. As a young man, he produced many kinds of concerted works, some even called symphonies, although in the 1750s, the nomenclature of musical forms was so hazy that any piece for three or more instruments could be called a symphony. By 1761, when he began his life-long association with the Esterházy family, the symphony was advancing to an identifiable state in terms of number and types of movements, orchestral make-up, thematic contrast, etc. In the 1770s, Haydn experienced an attack of *sturm und drang* (storm and stress) that had him making musical fists instead of the usual caressing motions. However, by the time he was fifty, in the early 1780s, he had completely freed himself of stylistic ambiguity, and with complete technical security produced works that were not only models of Classical form, but contained those elements of grace, humor, restrained sentiment and dignity which uniquely defined an era.

Along with Haydn's musical maturity came widespread celebrity. Lionized in such foreign capitals as Paris and London, the Austrian master toured and triumphed in each of these cities, writing for them new compositions in which his genius was revealed in its ever increasing range and ripeness. So it was that in 1791 he was in London for the first time, turning out splendid pieces for the concerts organized by the violinist/impresario Johann Peter Salomon; thus the last dozen of Haydn's symphonies—numbers 93 through 104—even though a few have particular names affixed to them, are known in total either as the *London* or *Salomon* symphonies.

The present Symphony, like all of the Salomon set except No. 95, begins with a slow, atmospheric introduction. It is a brief, patrician prelude having a passing grey cloud to darken the horizon with sudden contrast. (A surprise? not yet.) The movement proper has a varied cast of characters. The charming and slightly whimsical first theme begins mischievously outside the home key (surprise? not yet) but very soon slides obediently into it; the second theme is a lilting waltz tune pure and simple; and the third is a warm and ingratiating melody containing distinctive downward leaps. The remainder of the movement unfolds with the distinctly unsurprising sureness that characterized Haydn's craft.

The *Andante* theme of the second movement, of nursery tune simplicity, is presented by the strings softly, repeated by them, even more softly, and then punctuated by The Chord (Surprise!). The four ensuing variations on the theme are so seemingly simple they require no description. After knowing this music for such a long time, it has only now occurred to me how strongly it prefigures Beethoven—particularly the variation second movement of his Fifth Symphony. One cannot, however, fail to mention the amazing coda, where the simple theme in winds takes on a wonderfully romantic hue through the provocative and misty harmonies in the strings. (A lovely surprise!)

The Minuet third movement is a real Austrian peasant dance, but with a surprisingly subtle and dignified Trio, while the finale is 100-proof Haydn, in turn witty, brilliant and songful, and filled with those turns, twists and, yes, supremely logical surprises, that only Haydn's genius could supply.

Quiet City, for Trumpet, English Horn, and String Orchestra . AARON COPLAND (*b.* 1900)

It is a matter of no small consequence for the dean of American composers to have celebrated his 80th birthday, which is just what Aaron Copland did on November 14 last. Copland has been and continues to be not only an American, but a world, musical figure.

Copland's position at the very forefront of his country's musical life has been secured for many years and by many compositions, large and small, that have variously captured the imagination, enthusiasm and affection of a wide public. It is one of his small works that represents Copland on this program—that is, small in scope but not in consequence. In a gentle yet provocative way, *Quiet City* captures and freezes in time a moment of a specific bit of Americana—the inexpressible loneliness of a big city at night. The piece was devised by Copland in 1940 from materials he had written the year before as incidental music to a play by Irwin Shaw, titled *Quiet City*. Running for only two performances and then withdrawn, the play had as its chief protagonist a lonely Jewish boy who attempted to exorcise the demons isolation and loneliness by playing his trumpet. The incidental music was scored for a sparse (isolated?) chamber unit—a quartet of clarinet, saxophone, trumpet and piano. When he appropriated this music to make a concert version. Copland's instrumental concept changed, the resultant work being scored for trumpet, English horn and string orchestra. About the present score, Copland explained the following to Phillip Ramey, program editor of the New York Philharmonic:

"There wasn't much continuous music with the play, just short sections, so that the orchestral piece bears little resemblance to the incidental music, which I never published.

"The idea of contrasting trumpet with English horn was a *trouvaille,* a 'find,' giving, I think, a certain freshness and variety of instrumental color. A practical reason for the English horn was to let the trumpeter have a breathing space, so that he wasn't made to play continuously.

"There are not many *quiet* trumpet-solo works in the repertory, and I doubt whether there are many English horn solo-pieces of any sort. *Quiet City* is challenging music for the soloists, with a comparatively straightforward orchestral accompaniment."

Overture to *La Forza del destino* . . . . . . GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813–1901)

After the frustrations of launching his opera *Un Ballo in Maschera* in 1859, Verdi, exhausted, turned his back on the creativity that had for years consumed him. But, when a commission arrived from Russia for an opera for the Imperial Theatre at St. Petersburg, the composer, smelling the blood of the violent *La Forza* story, signed a contract and set off on his task with characteristic zeal. The opera was presented in St. Petersburg in November of 1862, and while not an unqualified success, performances in the world's musical capitals followed. Verdi, however, not satisfied, undertook revisions of the work and, with the libretto altered by Ghislanzoni (later to collaborate on *Aida*), a new *La Forza* was given its first La Scala production in 1869. The Overture as well as the body of the opera was changed, being extended and revised orchestrally.

The intensity of Verdi's melodramatics in *La Forza* is at least as apparent in the opera's seething orchestral introduction as in the whole of the work itself. The six opening brass exclamations create a heavy atmosphere of foreboding, and the agitated theme that follows fully enunciates the doom and gloom they portend. This motif, associated with the tragic destiny of the principals, dominates the Overture either as the main material or as a grim undercurrent to melodies related to the opera's characters. This latter treatment, when the 'destiny' motif casts its dark shadow on both the soaring and gentle lyric themes, is, if not subtle, still unfailingly effective and stimulating, so theatrical is Verdi even in his orchestral operatics.

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73 . . . . . JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

"Writing a symphony is no laughing matter," Brahms once said. And considering the more than twenty-year gestation period of and very difficult birth pangs attendant upon his first work in symphonic form, we can understand his sensitivity on the subject. But producing that first symphony (in C minor, first performed in November 1876) apparently eased the anxiety he endured as a Beethoven-classicist in the tumultuous, tradition-shattering age of Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner. By the summer of 1877, in the Austrian village of Pörtschach on the Worthersee where he was to spend two more very productive summers (1878 and '79), he was at work on his next symphony. And he was loose enough to find composing *this* symphony something of a laughing matter.

Indeed, he must have had his friends mystified, bewildered, or both—as he sent cryptic messages from the idyllic countryside he loved. To his dear friend Elisabeth von Herzogenberg

he wrote: "It is really no symphony, but merely a *Sinfonie,* and I shall have no need to play it to you beforehand. You merely sit down at the piano, put your little feet on the two pedals in turn, and strike the chord of F minor several times in succession, first in the treble, then in the bass, *fortissimo* and *pianissimo,* and you will gradually gain a vivid impression of my 'latest.'" [He pulled "F minor" out of the air, for it has no place in the symphony's scheme.] His publisher Simrock received word that "the symphony is so melancholy you won't be able to stand it. Never did I write anything so sorrowful; the score must be published with a mourning border." To complete the mystification of his friends, he wrote to Dr. Billroth: "I do not know whether I have a pretty symphony; I must inquire of skilled persons."

Skilled and unskilled alike have tended to agree that Brahms made a very pretty symphony indeed. Not a sorrowful one, as the composer, with tongue-in-cheek, described it, but not completely pastoral or idyllic either, as common generalization has had it. Perhaps it has been the contrasting of the austere and epical nature of the First Symphony with the essentially tender lyricism of the Second that has obscured somewhat the latter's aura of bittersweet nostalgia and sense of resignation. Yet greyness and tragedy are there, most overtly in the *Adagio* second movement, whose main theme has a strange, mystic quality, and in whose pages a forbidding emptiness chills the scene, e.g., the passage where a desolate horn motif is answered by oboes. The other movements fit better the "pastoral" description, yet even the first movement, with its radiant horn opening leading into one of Brahms' warmest themes, has its moments of solemnity: when the trombones, heralded by drum rolls, briefly inject minor-keyed portentousness. And even the second theme, sung first by low strings, is an ardent, soulful melody in minor, though it quickly turns benignly to the expected major.

The third movement is the most consistently winsome and trouble-free part of the symphony. Not surprisingly, it had to be encored at its première performance by the Vienna Philharmonic under Hans Richter in Vienna, December 30, 1877. The charm of this *scherzo* section is matched only by the ingenuity with which Brahms transforms the main oboe theme in subsequent sections, one time altering the rhythm after having changed the pulse from three to two, another time turning the simple tune upside down, then toying with this latter version in the happiest kind of transformation. [In this matter of thematic transformation, Brahms was surely more a disciple of Liszt *et al.,* than of Beethoven.] The symphony's finale, a treasure house of Brahmsian invention, is the heart of the work. In turn intimate, rhapsodic, mysterious, tender and exuberant, the movement defies the "pastoral" description, unless we can picture a countryside with as many moods, culminating in one of breathless brilliancy, as Brahms passes before us here.

About the Artists

The **Los Angeles Philharmonic,** now in its 62nd season, is recognized as one of the world's great orchestras. The Orchestra's popularity has resulted in over 230 concerts per year: 80 winter subscription concerts; some 40 concerts throughout Southern California (with regular series in Orange County, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Palm Springs); more than 50 concerts for young audiences, many in their own schools; over 40 concerts in its outdoor summer home, the Hollywood Bowl; special concerts such as those devoted to contemporary music, and free concerts in the Black and Mexican-American communities; and national and international tours. Founded in 1919, the Orchestra had as its first conductor Walter Henry Rothwell, who led the fledgling Philharmonic through its early years, and remained as music director until his death in 1927. His successors have included Artur Rodzinski, Otto Klemperer, Alfred Wallenstein, Eduard van Beinum, and Zubin Mehta, who, at age 25, was named music director. During Mehta's subsequent 16 years of leadership, until his resignation in 1976 to lead the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic rose to its present standing among the leading orchestras of the world.

Carlo Maria Giulini, born in Italy in 1914, began his tenure as music director in October 1978. In his first two years he has taken the Philharmonic on four tours, including a European tour last May in which the Orchestra enjoyed probably the greatest artistic triumph in its 61-year history. Before coming to Los Angeles, Mr. Giulini frequently appeared as guest conductor with all the leading orchestras in Europe and the United States, and had a long and distinguished association with the Philharmonic Orchestra of London. He now devotes the greater part of his conducting year to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, reducing his guest conducting commitments to a few concerts in Europe each season. Maestro Giulini is the recipient of many honors, among them election to honorary membership in Vienna's Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in 1978, joining such illustrious historical figures as Beethoven and Brahms, Toscanini and Bruno Walter. He was also presented with the Gold Medal of the Bruckner Society.

This evening's concert marks Mr. Giulini's Ann Arbor debut appearance.