



International  
Presentations of  
Music & Dance

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# May Festival

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

RICCARDO MUTI, *Music Director*  
EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conductor Laureate*  
WILLIAM SMITH, *Associate Conductor*

EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conducting*  
GYORGY SANDOR, *Pianist*

SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 2, 1981, AT 8:30  
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

## PROGRAM

\*Symphony No. 3 . . . . . HARRIS  
(in one movement)  
Concerto No. 3 for Piano and Orchestra . . . . . BARTÓK  
Allegretto  
Adagio religioso  
Allegro vivace

GYORGY SANDOR

## INTERMISSION

\*Concerto for Orchestra . . . . . BARTÓK  
Andante non troppo, allegro vivace  
Allegro scherzando  
Elegy: andante non troppo  
Intermezzo interrotto: allegretto  
Finale: presto

*Angel, \*RCA Red Seal, Telarc, and \*Columbia Records.*

### Homage to Béla Bartók

*In this year designated "Bartók Year" by the United Nations, we join the rest of the musical world in paying tribute to the great composer, pianist, and teacher who was born 100 years ago, March 25, 1881, in Nagyszentmiklos, Hungary, and died September 26, 1945, in New York City. In this final concert of the Festival are two of Bartók's late works—his most famous symphonic piece, the Concerto for Orchestra (1943), and his last work, the Third Piano Concerto.*



## PROGRAM NOTES

by RICHARD FREED

Symphony No. 3 . . . . . ROY HARRIS  
(1898-1979)

In common with Copland and Schuman, Harris was among the important American composers who were encouraged by Serge Koussevitzky during his 25-year tenure as conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Koussevitzky gave the premières of Harris's first three symphonies and recorded Nos. 1 and 3. One of the reviews of the première of the Third Symphony (February 24, 1939) was written for the magazine *Modern Music* by a 20-year-old Harvard undergraduate named Leonard Bernstein, who found the work "mature in every sense, beautifully proportioned, eloquent, restrained and affecting."

Harris himself is on record as stating that "the moods which seem particularly American to me are the noisy ribaldry, the sadness, a groping earnestness which amounts to suppliance toward those deepest spiritual yearnings within ourselves," and these are the qualities that are reflected—concisely, unself-consciously, and with magical evocativeness—in the Third Symphony, which is not only outstanding among Harris's own cycle of symphonies, but a classic in the category of the one-movement symphony.

Like nearly all one-movement symphonies and concertos, this one is divisible into contrasting sections whose demarcations are fairly clear. The composer provided the following outline of the structure on the occasion of the Boston première:

(1) *Tragic*—low string sonorities. (2) *Lyric*—strings, horns, woodwinds. (3) *Pastoral*—woodwinds with a polytonal string background. (4) *Fugue*—*Dramatic*, brass and percussion dominating. (5) *Dramatic*—*Tragic*.

While the final section, like the first, is labeled "Tragic," that term must not be understood narrowly. There is a sense of tragedy here that is as peculiarly American as that of Sophocles is understood to be peculiarly Greek, and there is, flowing from it, a similar feeling of exaltation, which in this case sets the seal on the whole noble work as an incontrovertibly affirmative utterance.

It only remains to note Eugene Ormandy's close association with the music of Roy Harris over the last five decades. In his last season as conductor of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Ormandy commissioned, introduced and recorded Harris's "American Overture" *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*. With The Philadelphia Orchestra, Mr. Ormandy gave the world première of Harris's Ninth Symphony in 1963 and has programmed the Third frequently. On the Orchestra's historic visit to China in 1976, Mr. Ormandy conducted this work as the first American symphony ever performed in that country.

Concerto No. 3 for Piano and Orchestra . . . . . BÉLA BARTÓK  
(1881-1945)

In the last two years of his life, Bartók undertook three major works: the Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin commissioned by Yehudi Menuhin, the Viola Concerto commissioned by William Primrose (completed and orchestrated by Tibor Serly), and the Third Piano Concerto, the last work Bartók lived to complete. (Only the last 17 measures had to be deciphered and orchestrated by Serly.) The première of the Third Piano Concerto was given on February 8, 1946, by Gyorgy Sandor with The Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy; later that month the première recording of the Concerto was made by the same performers, who are reunited in the present concert to perform the work together for the first time since then.

Halsey Stevens, in his valuable book on Bartók, offered what is still the most cogent and concise analysis of the work:

"The textural simplicity of the first movement is enhanced by the unusual writing for the piano, which is treated much of the time by a single-line melodic instrument. Right and left hands more often than not have identical parts in single notes, or move in parallel thirds and octaves. Even in passages written somewhat more thickly, the elements of duplication and parallelism are almost continuously present; and at the recapitulation, where the first theme is fitted with a counterpoint (in the same rhythm), both lines are doubled so that there is still no independence of hands. The same principle carries over to the orchestration as well, it being almost totally devoid of polyphony, with frequent doubling. The scoring is modest in other ways: the trumpets are used in hardly a dozen of the movement's 187 bars, the trombone in but two.

"Tonally, the first movement, like most of the Concerto, is unambiguous. It opens and closes in E, fluctuating from the major to suggestions of Mixolydian and Lydian modes, but always firmly anchored to E and B. It is only with the entrance of the first violins in the 18th measure that the key shifts, in a series of dominant-tonic progressions that lead progressively to G, C, F and D-flat before they debouch in the secondary theme, or thematic complex. This, unlike the first, has several faces, but they are shown only briefly before the development sets in. Here the first theme becomes lyrical and straightforward, its rather nervous rhythms now smoothed out into a more flowing line. The second is touched upon for a few bars, and yields to a full-fledged recapitulation, in the course of which the strings attempt a fugato on the



first theme, with the successive entries becoming shorter and more closely spaced, the fourth presenting only the first four notes and then slipping over into a part of the second theme. . . . After the subsidiary section has been restated, the movement takes but a few bars to disappear, solo flute and solo piano providing the cadence.

"Despite its delicacy, the second movement embraces a good deal of contrast. The word *religioso* appears here for the first time in Bartók's music, but it must not be taken as indicating a religious intention. It simply describes the character of the first theme, whose phrases, in chorale style, alternate with very quiet cadential extensions in the strings. The shimmer of string trills in clusters provides a tremulous background for the night sounds of the Trio, scored with the utmost fragility for woodwinds and xylophone, muted trumpets and horns, the piano at first with brittle birdlike motives [said to reflect the actual birdsongs Bartók heard at Asheville, North Carolina, while composing this work], then the blurred 32nd-note runs which merge with the murmur of the string tremolos. In the final section, the chorale is given to the woodwinds, the piano accompanying with an invention-like two-part polyphony, at the cadential points interpolating short cadenzas. The last bars are given to the piano alone; it gives promise of closing in the key of C where it began, and the strings once more prolong the cadence, but at the last moment the piano turns mildly though unexpectedly to an E-major triad.

"The feel of the finale, a 3/8 *Allegro vivace*, is not unlike that of the first movements of the Concerto for Orchestra, though without its metrical irregularity. The characteristic rhythm of the first theme, an iamb followed by a trochee, recurs in rondo fashion, set off by fugal episodes in which, despite the conclusions of certain writers, there is no trace of compromise or concession. These passages may be lucid to the ear, but there is no lessening of Bartók's contrapuntal skill: the inversions, the close strettos, the mirrors and other canons, the free polyphony, show the composer in complete command of his faculties." (From *The Life and Music of Béla Bartók*, by Halsey Stevens. Copyright © 1953, 1964 by Oxford University Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission.)

## Concerto for Orchestra . . . . . BARTÓK

When Bartók came to America in 1940 he was in poor health, and a good deal of his energy was expended in futile quests for an academic position; he virtually abstained from creative effort until he received the commission for the Concerto for Orchestra from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, delivered to him by Serge Koussevitzky in May 1943 in the hospital to which he had been confined some three months earlier. The commission proved to be the best therapy, as indicated in a letter Bartók's wife wrote a few weeks later to Joseph Szigeti, who had been instrumental in arranging it: "One thing is certain: Béla's conviction that 'under no circumstances will I ever compose a new work again' is over."

A short time later Bartók was indeed well enough to leave the hospital, and he composed the Concerto quickly, beginning work on it at Saranac Lake in late August and completing the score on October 8. Koussevitzky conducted the première in Boston on December 1, 1944, and pronounced the work "the best orchestral piece of the last 25 years." Bartók subsequently added a 22-bar coda to the original finale, and the work established itself as an international repertory piece by the end of the decade.

The Concerto for Orchestra fulfills the implication of its title in that it does include sections that display the various choirs of the orchestra, but it might be regarded also as a symphony in five movements (as Bartók himself noted), organized symmetrically around a central slow movement which is separated from the outer ones by a pair of scherzos—the same structure Bartók had used for his Fourth String Quartet in 1928. For the Boston première, he wrote the following note, which he headed "Explanation to Concerto for Orchestra":

"The title of this symphony-like orchestral work is explained by its tendency to treat the single instruments or instrument groups in a *concertant* or soloistic manner. The 'virtuoso' treatment appears, for instance, in the fugato sections of the development of the first movement (brass instruments) or in the *perpetuum mobile*-like passages of the principal theme in the last movement (strings), and, especially, in the second movement.

"As for the structure of the work, the first and fifth movements are written in a more or less regular sonata form. The development of the first movement contains fugato sections for the brass; the exposition in the finale is somewhat extended, and its development consists of a fugue built on the last theme of the exposition.

"Less traditional forms are found in the second and third movement. The main part of the second movement consists of a chain of independent short sections, by wind instruments consecutively introduced in five pairs (bassoons, oboes, clarinets, flutes and muted trumpets). Thematically, the five sections have nothing in common and could be symbolized by the letters 'A, B, C, D, E.' A kind of 'trio'—a short chorale for brass instruments and side drum—follows, after which the five sections are recapitulated in a more elaborate instrumentation.

"The structure of the third movement likewise is chain-like; three themes appear successively. These constitute the core of the movement, which is enframed by a misty texture of rudimentary motives. Most of the thematic material of this movement derives from the 'Introduction' to the first movement. The form of the fourth movement—*Intermezzo interrotto*—could be rendered by the letter symbols 'A, B, A—interruption—B, A.'

"The general mood of the work represents—apart from the jesting second movement—a gradual transition from the sternness of the first movement and the lugubrious death song of the third, to the life-assertion of the last one."



What the composer described as "sternness" in the first movement, with its prominent passages for brass, is modified by lyrical episodes. Themes in the first two movements have been cited by various Hungarian commentators as expressions of homesickness on Bartók's part, and this feeling is reinforced in the central *Elegia*, in which material from the first movement, as the composer noted, reappears in slightly altered form. The first of the two scherzos, which precedes the *Elegia*, is the most outright display-type movement in the sequence, a "Game of Pairs" (*Giucco delle coppie*) that was originally titled *Presentando le coppie* ("Presenting of the Couples") and reflects the folk tradition known as the "Sunday order of dances," each of the respective instrumental couples being assigned material related to specific Serbian, Dalmatian, or other dance forms.

The burlesque section of the fourth movement, the *Intermezzo interrotto*, has been the subject of numerous speculative interpretations. Some listeners felt it must have been a parody of the song about the girls at Maxim's in Lehár's operetta *The Merry Widow*, but what Bartók was actually parodying here, according to some of his confidants, was a theme from the first movement of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, which he heard on the radio during his hospital stay (or possibly later, while actually at work on the Concerto)—and in which Shostakovich may have been alluding to the Lehár tune. Aside from the question of this quotation or parody, Gyorgy Sandor is on record as having been told by Bartók that the fourth movement represents a lover's serenade interrupted by a gang of drunken revelers; this, at least, jibes with the movement's title, and it explains the reference to this movement as "the only programmatic" portion of the work in the composer's original draft of his program note for the première.

The final movement is said to be based entirely on bagpipe tunes Bartók collected on his field trips in Romania in the second decade of this century. Early in the movement is a brisk, unrepeatable tune that seems to echo the first of Grieg's Four Norwegian Dances; whether an actual reference to Grieg or a mere coincidence, it fits in seamlessly in the rumbustious and exuberant proceedings, the entire movement being dancelike, openhearted and close to the earth in feeling. The coda added after the première brings the work to a brilliant and resoundingly affirmative conclusion.

---

### About the Artists

To the extent that such a circumstance is possible, tonight's collaboration between **Eugene Ormandy and Gyorgy Sandor** performing Béla Bartók's music could be called "definitive." Mr. Ormandy was born in Budapest on November 18, 1899, and entered the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest at the age of five as a child prodigy violinist. At age nine, he became a pupil of the great violinist, Jenő Hubay, after whom he was named (Eugene translates as Jenő in Hungarian), and soon began making public appearances including several before the royal family of Austria-Hungary. At seventeen, he received his professor's diploma at the Royal Academy and was given degrees in violin, composition, and counterpoint. Between extensive concert tours, he taught in Budapest at the State Conservatory. In 1921, his long-cherished ambition was realized when he was invited to make a concert tour to the United States. To shorten a long and illustrious story: he performed and conducted in New York, became an American citizen in 1927, conducted his first concerts with the New York Philharmonic and The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1930, was Music Director of the Minneapolis Symphony between 1931 and 1936, and in 1936 was invited to return to Philadelphia, this time as Music Director and Conductor of the Orchestra. In 1937 Mr. Ormandy first traveled to Ann Arbor with The Philadelphia Orchestra for the May Festival, and he has been sharing his artistry annually with Festival patrons since then.

Mr. Sandor's close personal ties with his Hungarian countryman Bartók are well-known. He studied piano with Bartók at the Liszt Conservatory in Budapest, marking the beginning of a close friendship that lasted until the composer's death in 1945. Mr. Sandor first came to America from Budapest in 1938, and in the next decade began an impressive array of "firsts" in his performance of Bartók's piano music. As noted in this evening's program notes, it was Mr. Sandor, with Eugene Ormandy and The Philadelphia Orchestra, who gave the world première and made the first recording of the monumental Third Piano Concerto, an event that took place in 1946, shortly after the composer's death. In 1965, the pianist received the Grand Prix du Disque for his recording of the complete piano literature of Béla Bartók. In 1970, in honor of the 25th anniversary of Bartók's death, he performed all three of the Bartók piano concertos, proclaimed by the *New York Times* as "the most outstanding event of the season." Then came another world première—the transcription for piano of Bartók's Solo Violin Sonata. Still another "first" in 1976—the concert performance of the entire "Mikrokosmos" in a pair of concerts in New York's Town Hall.

Mr. Sandor is by no means an "exclusively Bartók" pianist—upon his arrival in America as a young man in 1938, he was heralded as Europe's spellbinding Liszt pianist; he is acknowledged as an unrivaled interpreter of Prokofiev and Kodály (with whom he studied composition in Budapest); and he includes, among others, the music of Rachmaninoff, Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, Dvořák, Bach, and Beethoven in his repertoire.

---

### UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Burton Memorial Tower, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109

Phones: 665-3717, 764-2538