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THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

SIR GEORG SOLTI
Music Director and Conductor

THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 14, 1983, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture, *The Magic Flute*, K. 620 MOZART
Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta BARTÓK
 Andante tranquillo
 Allegro
 Adagio
 Allegro molto

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95,
From the New World DVOŘÁK
 Adagio, allegro molto
 Largo
 Scherzo: molto vivace
 Allegro con fuoco

*London, Angel, Deutsche Grammophon, Columbia,
Quintessence, Mercury, and RCA Records.*

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PROGRAM NOTES

by ARRAND PARSONS

Overture, *The Magic Flute*, K. 620 WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

During the last months of his life, Mozart composed two operas, *The Magic Flute*, known as a *singspiel* because of the spoken dialogue, and *La clemenza di Tito* (*The Clemency of Titus*), an *opera seria* for the coronation of the Emperor Leopold II as King of Bohemia; he also composed several sacred choral works, including the unfinished Requiem. *The Magic Flute* was first performed in Vienna on September 30, 1791.

The Overture is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and trumpets; three trombones; the timpani and strings. An introduction opens with resounding chords played by the full orchestra. These chords, heard in Act II of the opera where they appear between the Priests' March and Sarastro's aria, "O Isis and Osiris," help to unify the Overture in that they return at several points in the score. The main portion of the piece is in the form of a sonata with two principal themes, a development, and a return; the principal theme is realized as a fugal exposition. The development section is fairly brief, and the restatement presents the themes in a somewhat varied manner.

Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta BÉLA BARTÓK (1881-1945)

Bartók composed the Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta on a commission from Paul Sacher in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Chamber Orchestra of Basel, Switzerland. The work was completed at Budapest in 1936 and was played for the first time by the Chamber Orchestra with Paul Sacher conducting on January 21, 1937. The composition is scored for two string orchestras separated by the celesta, harp, piano, and numerous percussion instruments, including kettledrums, bass drum, cymbals, side drum, gong, and xylophone. It is written in a most economical manner — the thematic material for the last three movements is derived from the highly chromatic fugue subject of the first movement, yet the movements are well contrasted.

Andante tranquillo. The first movement is a fugue based entirely on a very chromatic subject. The architectural shape Bartók has given to the movement is of special interest: beginning with the first *pianissimo* statement of the fugue subject in the violas, there is a gradual and continuous crescendo to a forceful climax on a high E flat conflicting with a low E natural to create a musically intensive moment. After the climax the fugue continues with a *diminuendo*, but now the subject is mirrored (ascending melodic intervals of the original melody now descend and, vice versa, descending intervals now ascend).

Allegro. This movement is based on a sonata form. The thematic material is freely derived from the fugue subject of the first movement. After the statement of the vigorous first theme a bridge passage, using imitative counterpoint, leads to a cadential point, punctuated by the kettledrums, and the statement of the second theme. The exposition is brought to a close with references, particularly in the piano, to the first theme. The development treats various elements of the theme. A prominent passage for the piano outlines, in a syncopated manner, the fugue theme. For the recapitulation, the themes of the exposition return in a somewhat varied form. A coda, making much use of the antiphonal resources of the two string orchestras, brings the movement to a vigorous close with the first theme.

Adagio. This movement is often described as a "nocturne," or as a "night piece." The first section, opening with the notes of the xylophone and timpani, presents a melody, freely imitated, in the violas and violins. The second section, *più andante*, presents a flowing and chromatic melodic line in the celesta, doubled in a very high octave register of the first violins. The third section is built up on a pedal tone, E flat, held throughout by the string basses. The violins, violas and cellos of the second orchestra play an ostinato figure; the celesta, harp, and piano provide a shimmering background of glissandi; the strings of the first orchestra are given a melody that gradually rises, chromatically, and increases the dynamic level to a *fortissimo* climax at the end of this section. The fourth section, beginning at the height of the climax, changes to 5-4 time and begins an *accelerando* that gradually reaches an *allegretto* tempo. The fifth section presents a canon between the high register of the violins and the low register of the cellos against a vibratory background of piano, harp, and celesta. The sixth and final section is a free recapitulation of the first section.

Allegro molto. The chromaticism of the previous movements is smoothed out into a Lydian scale on A of the principal theme of the finale. (The Lydian mode may be seen as a major scale with a sharpened fourth degree.) The movement is based on a rondo scheme. The first section is a small three-part form in itself, the middle part consisting of pizzicato passages for the strings. The first contrasting section presents a tightly written study in string sonority. The piano (now demanding four hands for performance) returns with the principal theme in the Lydian mode, and the orchestral strings take it up very briefly. The second contrasting section begins with a vigorous, march-like theme in the Aeolian mode and is carried to a first climax where the piano and string orchestras toss motives back and fourth. A second crescendo, based on a very regular rhythmic motive, beginning *pianissimo*, builds up to a forceful *fortissimo*, at the height of which the fugue subject of the first movement reappears in a canonic treatment and later in a vigorous antiphonal treatment between the

two string orchestras. There follows still another section in which a new theme, derived from the fugal subject, is presented to lead back to the statement of the principal Lydian theme which closes the movement.

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95, *From the New World* ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK
(1841-1904)

Dvořák accepted an invitation to come to America in 1892 to become the director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. During the three years of his residence in this country he wrote three major works which bear the opus numbers 95 (the Symphony *From the New World*), 96 (the "American" Quartet), and 97 (the E-Flat Quintet). The *New World* was begun on January 10, 1893, and the first three movements were sketched in three weeks; the Symphony was finished in May. When the composer went with his family to Spillville, Iowa, for a part of the summer, the score was complete. The first performance of the Symphony was given on December 13, 1893, by the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Anton Seidl. The following year it was performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with Theodore Thomas conducting, on November 3, 1894.

The invitation to Dvořák to become director of the American Conservatory came from Mrs. Jeannette M. Thurber who had been a music teacher and was able to undertake a number of philanthropic activities because her husband was a prosperous New Yorker. She had tried unsuccessfully to present opera in English in New York and, after losing some million and a half dollars in two years, she founded the National Conservatory of Music in 1885. The Conservatory was a non-profit institution and had no restrictions as to race or creed, because Mrs. Thurber's chief concern was to develop an American School of composition. Dvořák was not eager to leave his homeland and he turned down Mrs. Thurber's first offer. She was persistent, and finally, with a salary of \$15,000, he arrived in New York on September 26, 1892.

American folk songs and spirituals do not actually appear in the thematic material of the Symphony *From the New World*. The great interest which Dvořák had in the folk music of America and his ability to assimilate the new idiom may account for the fact that certain qualities of American folk tunes have been discerned in the music. It has been pointed out that the third theme of the first movement resembles "Swing low, sweet chariot." Likewise the syncopation in the opening theme of the first movement may point to an influence of the Black spiritual generally. The sketches of the second movement were originally labeled "Legend"; it is evident that this grew out of an association with Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. Mrs. Thurber, eager to push the nationalist element in developing the American "school," provided Dvořák with an opera libretto based on *The Song of Hiawatha*, but it was not considered adequate. However, according to an article by John Clapham (*Musical Quarterly*, April, 1958), Dvořák made preliminary sketches for the opera. And, when the Symphony *From the New World* was about to be performed for the first time, Dvořák is supposed to have explained in an interview to the New York *Herald* that the second movement was "in reality a study, or sketch, for a longer work, either a cantata or opera which I propose writing and which will be based upon Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. . . . The scherzo of the symphony was suggested by the scene at the feast in *Hiawatha* where the Indians dance, and is also an essay which I made in the direction of imparting the local color of Indian character to music."

Mrs. Thurber herself has claimed some responsibility for the composition of the *New World* and she has described some of the circumstances which perhaps affected some expressive qualities. She wrote:

"On the whole, Dvořák seemed to be happy in his new surroundings, although he suffered much from homesickness, being intensely patriotic. He passed two of his summers in Iowa, at Spillville, because of the number of Bohemians living there. Anton Seidl was probably right in declaring that the intense pathos of the slow movement of the *New World* Symphony was inspired by nostalgia — by longing for home. It was at my suggestion that he composed this symphony. He used to be particularly homesick on steamer days when he read the shipping news in the *Herald*. Thoughts of home often moved him to tears. On one of these days I suggested that he write a symphony embodying his experiences and feelings in America — a suggestion which he promptly adopted."

There are four movements in the *New World* Symphony. A single theme, heard near the beginning, serves to unify the whole; this theme is called a "motto theme." It appears first in a straightforward manner, but in the course of the work it is changed somewhat to adapt itself to the particular mood of the moment. In the concluding coda of the last movement there is a kind of panoramic review of themes from the various movements.

The **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** is unanimously hailed as one of the great orchestras of the world. Theodore Thomas was its founder and first conductor in 1891, followed by Frederick Stock, Désiré Defauw, Artur Rodzinski, Rafael Kubelik, Fritz Reiner, Jean Martinon, and since 1969 Sir Georg Solti. The Orchestra first performed here in 1892, and from 1905 to 1935, during the Stock years, it was the resident orchestra of the May Festival. Throughout the century, its concerts in Ann Arbor number 196, including tonight's.

Born in Budapest in 1912, **Sir Georg Solti** studied piano, composition, and conducting with Bartók, Dohnányi, and Kodály. Now famous for his successes on orchestral and operatic podiums, the maestro was knighted by Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain in 1972 for his contributions to the musical arts. Prior to this evening's concert, his first time here with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, he conducted the London Symphony on this stage in 1964.

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