



*International
Presentations of
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Warsaw Sinfonia

YEHUDI MENUHIN

Conductor and Violinist

TUESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 3, 1987, AT 8:00
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Concerto No. 1 in A minor for Violin and Orchestra, BWV 1041 BACH
Allegro ma non troppo
Andante
Allegro assai

YEHUDI MENUHIN, *Violinist*

Siegfried Idyll WAGNER

Overture to *La Scala di Seta* ROSSINI
Andantino, Allegro

INTERMISSION

Concerto for Strings (1948) GRAŻNYA BACEWICZ
Allegro
Andante
Vivo

Symphony No. 4 in A major, Op. 90 ("Italian") MENDELSSOHN
Allegro vivace
Andante con moto
Con moto moderato
Saltarello: presto

Mr. Menuhin records for EMI/Angel, His Master's Voice, and Electrola.

PROGRAM NOTES

Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor, BWV 1041 JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (b. Mar. 21, 1685; d. July 28, 1750)

Bach's study of the violin in his youth accounts for his intimate knowledge of the fundamental nature of the instrument and his appropriate idiomatic writing for it.

The A-minor Concerto, scored for violin solo and orchestra, follows the Italian pattern of a concerto, namely, two fast outer movements surrounding an inner slow movement. In both *Allegro* movements, ritornello passages for the orchestra alternate with sections for the violin which comments upon and develops the musical material in greater depth. The first *Allegro* movement, in 2/4 time, opens vigorously with a two-section theme in A minor, which is based largely on the opening ritornello. The lyrical *Andante*, in 4/4 time, is in the parallel major key of C and consists of an ostinato bass which provides the underlying substructure for the melodic lines of the violin solo. The *Allegro assai* movement, in 9/8 time, returns to the key of A minor, thus unifying the piece by both tempo and key. It begins with the main theme in an extended fugal passage for the orchestra which reappears in truncated form at various points throughout the movement. The solo line is derived from this material and, later in the movement, burgeons out into a more elaborate, running figuration.

Siegfried Idyll RICHARD WAGNER (b. May 22, 1813; d. Feb. 13, 1883)

Siegfried Idyll, a tender and lyrical work rather like a morning serenade, was first performed on Christmas morning in 1870 at Wagner's villa in Lucerne. It was a surprise present for his wife, Cosima, intended as a celebration of the birth of their son, Siegfried. His son was an epoch-making event for Wagner, and the Idyll, in rolling phrases, thanks Cosima for having dedicated her life to him and presenting him with the heir for whom he had longed. In writing to his friend, Frau Wille, Wagner expressed in words his sentiments behind this composition: "She (Cosima) has defied every disapprobation and has taken upon herself every condemnation. (A reference to Cosima's divorce from Hans von Bülow.) She has borne me a wonderfully beautiful boy, whom I boldly call Siegfried; he is now growing, together with my work; he gives me a new long life, which has at last attained a meaning. Thus we get along without the world, from which we have wholly withdrawn."

With thirteen musicians imported from Zurich and secretly rehearsed, Wagner performed the Idyll on the staircase leading up to Cosima's bed chamber at precisely 7:30 on Christmas morning. Since the musicians had quietly tuned their instruments earlier in the kitchen, Cosima was totally surprised by the strangely familiar lyrical strains of music which ascended into her room that morning.

Unlike Wagner's other works, the Idyll is scored for small orchestra. In it, one hears familiar melodies, namely various themes from *Siegfried*, the music drama, interwoven into new patterns with the folk song *Schlafe mein Kind, schlafe ein* ("Go to sleep, my child").

Overture to *La Scala di Seta* GIOACCHINO ROSSINI (b. Feb. 29, 1792; d. Nov. 13, 1868)

Born in Pesaro, Italy, Rossini came to enjoy unprecedented prestige, wealth, artistic influence, and popular acclaim for his contributions to the field of opera, in both *buffa* and *seria* styles. Hence, his career nearly eclipsed the fame of Italian composers Cimarosa and Paisiello, and he occupied the center of Italian opera until the advent of Giuseppe Verdi. In addition to composing for the opera, Rossini also composed cantatas and other vocal works, chamber music, and orchestral works.

Rossini's one act *opera buffa*, *La Scala di Seta* ("The Silken Ladder"), was written when the composer was twenty-one years of age. It received its first performance in Venice in 1812. After a Lisbon, Portugal, performance in 1825, the opera disappeared until after World War II.

The opening *Andantino* demonstrates Rossini's extraordinary inventiveness in the use of wind instruments. This is followed by a sparkling *Allegro* in a marchlike style.

Concerto for Strings (1948) GRAŻYNA BACEWICZ
(b. Feb. 5, 1909; d. Jan. 17, 1969)

Polish composer and violinist Grażyna Bacewicz was born in Lodz, where she began her musical studies in violin, piano, and composition at a private conservatory. She then attended the Warsaw Conservatory where she studied violin with Jarzebski, piano with Turczynski, and composition with Sikorski. In 1932 she graduated with diplomas in violin and composition. Her pursuit of further musical study took her to Paris, where she received instruction in violin from Carl Flesch and studied composition with Nadia Boulanger. She achieved success in the fields of both violin and composition, her compositions winning prizes in Paris and Warsaw in the mid-1930s. In 1935 she was awarded the first-class distinction in the first Wieniawski Competition held in Warsaw. She toured throughout Europe as a concert violinist both before and after World War II, often performing her own works. Bacewicz abandoned her career as a violinist during the 1950s, in order to devote her full attention to composition.

The Concerto for Strings stems from a period in Bacewicz's compositional style which is permeated by neo-classical counterpoint and forms. Many consider this work to be one of her finest in this genre. It is a work marked by its vitality, freshness of invention, originality of instrumental interplay, distinctive subjects, and colorful and incisive harmonies.

Symphony No. 4 in A major, Op. 90 ("Italian") FELIX MENDELSSOHN
(b. Feb. 3, 1809; d. Nov. 4, 1847)

Mendelssohn was not quite twenty-one when he made a tour of Europe and fell completely under the magic spell of the warmth and color of Italy. On February 22, 1831, in a letter from Rome to his sister Fanny, Mendelssohn wrote: "... The Italian Symphony is making great progress. It will be the most mature thing I have ever done. The last movement, *Presto*, will be the gayest. For the slow movement I have not yet found anything exactly right ..."

The "Italian" Symphony was commissioned by the Philharmonic Society of London, along with a number of other smaller works. Actual composition began in 1830 when Mendelssohn was surrounded by the sights and sounds of Rome and Naples, and it was completed in 1833 in Berlin. It received its first performance in London on May 13, 1833, although it remained unpublished until after Mendelssohn's death.

The first movement, *Allegro vivace*, bursts forth in a spontaneous flow of melody characteristic of many of Mendelssohn's works. In this forceful, free, and beautifully contrived movement one hears, as a part of the development section, an ingenious *fugato* in the strings which persists from almost the beginning to the close.

The *Andante con moto* is somewhat solemn in character, suggesting a slow religious procession. It is dark in orchestral color, composed in a minor key, and a marchlike quality is provided by the bass line of the music. A contrasting section follows, and then the opening section is repeated.

The third movement, *Con moto moderato*, flows with lyricism. Melodically and rhythmically, it is one of the most pleasing examples of Mendelssohn's symphonic writing. The minuet is formed from a long and flowing melody, and the quiet horn passage in the trio casts an enchanting pastoral spell.

The *Saltarello* is based on the spirited and lively street dances common to Italy at this time. It begins with a *saltarello*, a typical Italian peasant dance which is vigorous and energetic. Following is the frantic rhythm of the *tarantelle*, a dance of a wild and exciting character, which, according to ancient tradition, was supposed to drive out the venom of the tarantula's bite. Finally, the *saltarello* returns and the movement closes.

Mendelssohn, having played portions of the symphony on the piano for friends, remarked: "That is a fragment of Italy. Don't you see the moon shining and the pretty girls dancing?"

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†First term began January 1, 1987.

About the Artists

In April 1984 Yehudi Menuhin visited Poland at the invitation of the Polish Chamber Orchestra to perform as conductor and soloist. Having played and recorded with this internationally acclaimed ensemble on numerous occasions, he recognized the vast opportunities an expanded repertoire could bring. Thus, by adding a full complement of woodwind, brass, and percussion players to the 24 string instrumentalists, the Warsaw Sinfonia was created. The resulting concerts in Warsaw, conducted by Menuhin, met with overwhelming enthusiasm by critics and audiences. The success of the 40 young, versatile, virtuosic members in public concerts and on radio and television led to the establishment of the Warsaw Sinfonia as a permanent entity. So great was Sir Yehudi's interest in this remarkable new orchestra that before returning to England he signed a contract to be principal guest conductor.

Almost immediately the orchestra received its first concert proposals: a first North American tour with Menuhin as conductor and soloist (the present tour), and invitations to perform in Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Spain, Finland, Amsterdam, and at Menuhin's invitation, in his Gstaad Festival in Switzerland. Most recently the orchestra has been invited to participate under Mstislav Rostropovich in a Mediterranean musical cruise.

In addition to Menuhin, the Warsaw Sinfonia is performing with some of the world's greatest conductors, including Claudio Abbado, Charles Dutoit, and Jerry Maksymiuk, permanent conductor of the Polish Chamber Orchestra. Other outstanding conductors are scheduled to make their first appearances with the orchestra in the near future.

Though this evening marks the debut of the Warsaw Sinfonia in Ann Arbor, the Polish Chamber Orchestra under Jerry Maksymiuk gave a concert in April 1985 in the Chamber Arts Series.

While Yehudi Menuhin's name is synonymous with the violin, he is also regarded as one of the world's foremost conductors. He has guest conducted many leading orchestras, among them the New York Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, English Chamber Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, D.C. In addition to being the founder and principal guest conductor of the Warsaw Sinfonia, Menuhin is also president and associate conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Menuhin's enormous energy, enthusiasm, and keen interest in others inspired him to found the Yehudi Menuhin School at Stoke D'Abernon, Surrey, in 1963, opening new avenues of music and academic training to talented youngsters in need of guidance toward professional careers. He founded Switzerland's Gstaad Festival in 1956, which he still directs. For a number of years he was the guiding force behind two English festivals, those of Bath and Windsor. His summers also include visits as conductor and soloist with his Yehudi Menuhin School Orchestra in West Germany's Schleswig-Holstein Festival.

Yehudi Menuhin's prestige on the international scene is underscored by the many honors he has received, and there is hardly a country which has not bestowed upon him its highest official honors. Most recently, in December 1986 in Washington, D.C., he was a Kennedy Center Honors recipient in recognition of his significant lifelong contributions to American culture. His contributions to music and the humanities have also been recognized with fifteen honorary doctorates from leading universities the world over. His wide interests lead to membership in societies covering all fields of ecology to music therapy to new forms of energy such as solar heating, and electric cars.

Though Menuhin was born in New York (April 22, 1916), he moved as an infant with his parents to San Francisco where he grew up and studied violin with Louis Persinger, concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony. Today, retaining his American citizenship, he lives in London. Although he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II twenty years ago, he couldn't use the title until he was made an honorary citizen of Great Britain in May 1985. He is also an honorary citizen of Switzerland. Whatever his passport may say, Sir Yehudi is truly a citizen of the world.

Menuhin first performed in Ann Arbor in 1932, followed by eighteen subsequent appearances (including tonight's) at the invitation of the University Musical Society. He has given eleven recitals; performed and conducted with the Bath and Menuhin Festival Orchestras and the University Symphony Orchestra (a benefit concert); appeared in the May Festival with The Philadelphia Orchestra, and most recently conducted the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in February 1985.

University of Michigan No-Smoking Policy

In accordance with new regulations effective January 1, 1987, concerning smoking in the work place and public areas, *smoking is prohibited in Hill Auditorium*. This includes all lobbies, corridors, stairways, restrooms, backstage areas and, of course, the auditorium itself. Your cooperation in implementing this new policy is requested.

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