



*International
Presentations of
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

CLAUDIO ABBADO

Conductor

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

P R O G R A M

Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21 BEETHOVEN
Adagio molto, allegro con brio
Andante cantabile con moto
Menuetto: allegro molto e vivace
Adagio, allegro molto e vivace

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 55 ("Eroica") BEETHOVEN
Allegro con brio
Marcia funebre: adagio assai
Scherzo: allegro vivace
Finale: allegro molto

*Angel, Arabesque, CBS, Desto, Deutsche Grammophon, London, Pathe, Philips, Seraphim,
Vanguard, and Vox/Turnabout Records.*

Cameras and recording devices are not allowed in the auditorium.

PROGRAM NOTES

Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21 LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(b. Dec. 15 or 16, 1770; d. Mar. 26, 1827)

Beethoven's First Symphony was finished early in 1800 and first performed at the National Court Theatre in Vienna on April 12, 1800, in a concert given by the composer for his own benefit. The symphony received a poor performance, partly because the orchestra members disliked the conductor, Paul Wranitzky. A correspondent for the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* wrote that the symphony "contains much art, and the ideas are abundant and original, but the wind instruments are used far too much, so that the music is more for a band of wind instruments than an orchestra."

This symphony is the work of a thirty-year-old Beethoven who was still greatly influenced by the works of Haydn and Mozart. Indeed, the reviewer's criticism was well-founded: the prominence of woodwinds is a typical trait of Beethoven's developing style.

The *Adagio molto* belongs to the tradition of eighteenth century symphonic construction as elaborated by Haydn: a slow introduction with an element of suspense. Yet the style of Beethoven's introduction is new; in method and manner it breaks new ground and explores where neither Haydn nor Mozart had ventured so boldly. In the first bar of his First Symphony the young Beethoven shows the revolutionary quality of his mind. He does not start with the common chord of his chosen key, the main key of the first and fourth movements and the focal center of the whole symphony, but with a dischord that leads away from that key center. The introduction, which is brief, leads to the first C-major theme, and with that the *Allegro con brio* begins. Both its main themes are lively and there is a feeling throughout the whole movement of intense, youthful energy.

The direction at the beginning of the *Andante* says that the music is melodious and singable (*cantabile*) and that it must flow (*con moto*). This gives a hint as to the character of the slow movement. There is strong emotion here, but it is not heavy. The music never dwells long on any one topic. The melodies exist in a warm atmosphere and move on gently and freely.

Beethoven, who had the examples of both Haydn and Mozart before him in discovering new ways to write minuets, directed that this one should be played at a speed which at once makes the idea of a minuet unthinkable. These flashing periods allow no time for niceties of posture in a ballroom. The trio between the two appearances of the minuet is a lively conversation between winds and strings.

Six introductory bars suffice to establish the necessary air of suspense which is suddenly released when the first tune of the *Allegro* rushes upwards to the key which, as in the first movement, has been withheld until the last feasible moment. This final movement is in the acceptable form for first, and sometimes last, movements. It is a simple, clear scheme, consisting of two main themes with attendants; the whole being recapitulated with changes in the relationship of the themes after the middle section, where the original material has been displayed and its fullest significance revealed. Beethoven ends the movement, and with it the symphony, by a coda in which wit and humor abound.

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 55 ("Eroica") BEETHOVEN

The "Eroica" is said to have been Beethoven's own favorite among his nine symphonies and was originally dedicated to Napoleon. The idea of writing a symphony in Napoleon's honor came to Beethoven as early as 1798, when Napoleon was known less as a soldier than as a public figure who championed freedom and would restore his country to prosperity and order. Initially, Beethoven placed the name "Buonaparte" at the top of the score's cover-page with his own name at the bottom. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to the composer, Napoleon had metamorphosed into a tyrant and was conferred the title "Emperor." On hearing this, Beethoven was outraged: "After all, then, he is nothing but an ordinary mortal! He will trample all the rights of men underfoot, to indulge his ambition, and become a greater tyrant than anyone!" With these words, he tore up the title page of his Symphony's score. He is said not to have mentioned again the connection between Napoleon and his Symphony until the Emperor's death in 1821. Upon hearing the news, the composer said, "I have already composed the proper music for that catastrophe," referring to the Funeral March that comprises the second movement of the "Eroica."

Beginning with two quick and mighty staccato chords, the first movement proceeds directly to the subject which is heard somewhat tentatively but clearly in the cellos. A few minutes later it is repeated boldly and vigorously in octaves by the horns, clarinets, and flutes. About the straightforward, rather military theme Beethoven has built a structure of surging

sound. Occasionally the theme is heard in one or another of the many choirs of the orchestra, dominating the elaboration. After the introduction of the contrasting theme, divided between the woodwinds and violins, both motifs are developed superbly. Despite the powerful ideas projected throughout the orchestra and culminating in a succession of forceful tones, the simple utterance at the beginning of the basic portion of the movement prevails.

The significance of the music of the second movement is unmistakable. The slow rhythm can be only that of a funeral march, the first to appear in a symphony. The theme, although originally presented quietly and sadly, is sometimes expressed vehemently. Then from the oboe comes the sad and beautiful melody to answer the melancholy utterances of the bass. Later, another very lovely and important theme by the strings is introduced and the two subjects developed.

The swift vigor of the opening notes of the scherzo contrasts sharply with the dirge and is a relief to its solemnity. A murmuring in the strings played lightly but swiftly and energetically becomes a tumultuous sound. In the delightful trio a subject resembling a hunting call is announced by the horns and is answered soon by the whole orchestra. It is repeated wistfully by the horns and for a moment the other instruments respond with a suggestion of sadness. The unexpected joy of the opening part of the movement returns in the powerful climax.

The finale opens with a brilliant passage for all the strings, increasing in volume as it reaches the lower registers and ending in a succession of powerful chords by the full orchestra. The theme is announced, plucked simply by the strings; later it is combined with a new and brighter idea. The movement now elaborates upon the tonal and contrapuntal aspects of the two simple themes. A transitional period, during which are heard the themes of the previous movements, leads to the triumphant and overwhelming climax.

About the Artists

The **Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra** was founded 145 years ago when the "Personnel of the Imperial Court Theatre" gave their first concert on March 28, 1842, under the direction of Otto Nicolai. Prior to that time, the orchestras of Vienna were either amateur groups or private orchestras to the aristocracy. At first, concerts of the new group were intermittent, but in 1860 a regular season of eight concerts was launched, and in 1877 the Vienna Philharmonic's first tour took place — to neighboring Salzburg, the city which has since become the orchestra's second home. In 1898 Gustav Mahler became principal conductor of the orchestra, and two years later he led it on its first tour abroad — to the Paris Exposition of 1900. Since then, the Vienna Philharmonic has toured throughout the world, performing under the batons of such distinguished conductors as Richard Strauss, Paul Hindemith, Sir Georg Solti, Karl Boehm, Herbert von Karajan, Leonard Bernstein, and Lorin Maazel.

Claudio Abbado last led the Vienna Philharmonic on a tour of the United States in 1976, in honor of the American Bicentennial. This season he is leading the Vienna Philharmonic in a Beethoven Cycle, the American portion including six concerts in New York, one in Pasadena, California, and the two concerts in Ann Arbor. The Beethoven Cycle continues in Japan, with five concerts in Tokyo and one concert each in Osaka and Nagoya.

Since its inception, the Vienna Philharmonic has been in the forefront of the music world. It is the orchestra of the Vienna State Opera, of which Claudio Abbado is the newly-appointed director, and is annually in residence at the Salzburg Festival, in addition to extensive concert engagements in Vienna and around the world. It has had only three permanent conductors: Otto Dessoff (1860-1875), Hans Richter (1875-1898), and Gustav Mahler (1898-1901). Richard Wagner, Anton Bruckner, Arturo Toscanini, Bruno Walter, and Wilhelm Furtwängler have all guest-conducted.

The orchestra, which has grown from its original group of 64 to its present membership of 140, has always been known as one of the world's few orchestral collectives. All the administrative tasks of the group are performed by orchestral musicians elected to their posts by their colleagues. All decisions concerning repertoire and conductors (there is currently no resident conductor) are made by plebiscite, and all performance fees are divided evenly among the musicians.

Over the years, the Vienna Philharmonic's high standard of music-making and their special sound have inspired lavish praise from among the world's greatest artists. On the occasion of his reunion with the orchestra after World War II, conductor Bruno Walter elaborated: "This Philharmonic tone, which for me dates from 1897, is still the same today, even though not a single player from those days is still in the orchestra. What is it? One might call it tradition. Musical culture is expressed there in a particular form. Thus sounds Vienna."

Born in Milan, Italy, of a musical family, **Claudio Abbado** studied piano, composition, and conducting at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory, where he was a student of Carlo Maria Giulini, and later continued his studies with Hans Swarowsky at the Vienna Academy. Awarded the Koussevitzky Prize at Tanglewood and winner of the Mitropoulos conducting competition in New York, he rapidly established a distinguished international career. In 1965 he made his debut at the Salzburg Festival with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, the beginning of a close association which continues to this day. His many other concert engagements have included appearances with the Berlin Philharmonic, the Concertgebouw Orchestra, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, where he was principal guest conductor from 1982 to 1985. He is artistic adviser of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe (which will perform in Ann Arbor on April 3 under Lorin Maazel), and each year he commits time to work and tour with the European Community Youth Orchestra. He will also conduct young musicians from Eastern Europe in the newly-formed Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester, which he helped to establish.

Claudio Abbado is music director of the London Symphony Orchestra, and their long association has resulted in remarkable concert series and festivals, notably the Mahler, Vienna, and Twentieth Century Festival in 1985, for which he received the Gold Medal of the International Mahler Society. They have toured extensively together and regularly visit the major European festivals. In the United States, Abbado has conducted the orchestras of New York, Boston, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, D.C., in addition to his years with the Chicago Symphony.

Equally at home in the world's opera houses, Abbado made his debut at La Scala in 1960 and first opened the season there in 1967. He became principal conductor the following year, and music director in 1972. His appearances at La Scala and at London's Royal Opera House, Berlin's Deutsche Oper, New York's Metropolitan, and Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre have been acclaimed as outstanding events.

Although a regular visitor to Vienna, he made his first appearance at the Vienna Opera conducting *Simon Boccanegra* in 1984. The success of that production led to his official appointment in 1986 as music director of the Vienna State Opera, where he recently conducted both a revival of *Simon* and a new production of *Un Ballo in Maschera*. His final season as director at La Scala in the spring of 1986 was devoted to a festival of Debussy's works, which included a highly successful new production of *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Abbado received the Standard Opera Award for his *Boris Godunov* at Covent Garden and, after opening La Scala's winter season in 1984 with a new production of *Carmen*, he was awarded the Italian Gran' Croce in recognition of his contribution to music and the arts. Also, he has recently been made an Officier of the French Legion d'Honneur.

Abbado's recordings for Deutsche Grammophon, CBS, and London/Decca have been unanimously acclaimed and have won many of the world's top recording prizes. Two major operatic recordings were released in 1985: Verdi's *Don Carlos* in the original, all-French version, and Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims*, which has received several awards. His major symphonic recordings include the Mendelssohn Cycle with the London Symphony, the Mahler Cycle with both the Vienna Philharmonic and Chicago Symphony, the Beethoven Cycle which he is recording with the Vienna Philharmonic, and the Tchaikovsky Symphony Cycle with the Chicago Symphony. He also continues to record the complete Mozart Piano Concertos with his distinguished colleague Rudolf Serkin.

In Ann Arbor, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra has given three concerts: one in 1956 under André Cluytens, and two concerts in 1984 with Leonard Bernstein. Claudio Abbado is making his first visit to Ann Arbor.

The Vienna Philharmonic would like to thank Mercedes-Benz for its support of this United States tour.

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.

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Burton Memorial Tower, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1270

Telephone: (313) 764-2538