



*International  
Presentations of  
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

## Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

CLAUDIO ABBADO

*Conductor*

WEDNESDAY EVENING, MARCH 4, 1987, AT 8:00  
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

### P R O G R A M

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat major, Op. 60 ..... BEETHOVEN  
Adagio, allegro vivace  
Adagio  
Allegro vivace  
Allegro ma non troppo

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

Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 ("Pastoral") ..... BEETHOVEN  
Allegro ma non troppo (Awakening of Cheerful Emotions  
on Arriving in the Country)  
Andante molto moto (Scene by the Brook)  
Allegro (Jolly Gathering of the Country Folk)  
Allegro (Thunderstorm)  
Allegretto (Shepherd's Song: Happy and Thankful  
Feelings After the Storm)

*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. 4 in B-flat major, Op. 60 . . . . . LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN  
(b. Dec. 15 or 16, 1770; d. Mar. 26, 1827)

Count Franz von Oppersdorf, an amateur musician with the reputation of maintaining an excellent orchestra, once had the great opportunity of performing Beethoven's Second Symphony while the composer was in attendance. In 1806, when Beethoven had occasion to visit Count von Oppersdorf's castle, the Count commissioned him to write a symphony and paid him in advance. Instead of a symphony, however, the Count received in 1808 a letter of apology from Beethoven stating that he had been forced, on account of circumstances, to sell his most recent symphony — known today as the Fifth Symphony — but he promised the Count that the symphony intended for him would be forthcoming shortly. The symphony finally presented to the Count, which bears a dedication to him, was the Fourth Symphony, composed in the summer months of 1806. Count von Oppersdorf was particularly irked by this turn of events, as this symphony had not only been performed already — it received its first performance in March of 1807 at the house of Prince Lobkowitz in Vienna — but it had also been met with a less than highly acclaimed reception. As one critic noted, the symphony contained a "wealth of ideas, bold originality and fullness of strength," but yet he went on to complain of the "neglect of noble simplicity" and the "excessive amassing of thoughts." As a result of this episode, the relationship between Beethoven and the Count terminated on unhappy terms.

The vast introduction to the first movement, *Adagio*, sets a mysterious atmosphere, somewhat dark in character. The lowering unison B-flat, *pianissimo* in the winds and *pizzicato* in the strings, quietly unrolls, revealing the unusual tonality of B-flat minor, the minor mode of the symphony's official key. As the music develops, modulations to remoter keys occur until the tone A, with dynamics intensifying, is reached, thus serving the leading-tone function to the key of B-flat major. The rapid pulse of the *Allegro vivace* is established by a rushing string figure which, following a wide-ranging first subject and a witty, somewhat imitative second subject with the woodwinds predominant, returns as the main subject of the development section. The development, containing modulations to both related and unrelated tonalities, suddenly shifts back to the tonic of B-flat. A drum roll wittily signals the transition to a regular recapitulation. The movement concludes with a brief coda which makes use, once again, of the string figure which served as the main theme of the development section.

The second movement, *Adagio*, is marked by a pervasive, steady, and unchanging pulse. The *cantabile* melody of the violins is of particular beauty, consummately lyrical. Beethoven combines the gently inflected turns of this theme with a harmonic texture of extraordinary intricacy and subtlety, while still providing forceful and dramatic climaxes. The second subject, played by the clarinet, is exceptionally tender and scored with a degree of finesse remarkable for a composer even of Beethoven's stature. The pulsing rhythmic figure, akin to a musical heartbeat, is heard from the solo bassoon and echoed by the cellos and basses; then, re-echoed by the tympani. From this pulsing arises the flute which leads us back to the ornamented return of the main melody.

The scherzo, *Allegro vivace*, presents the listener with jaunty rhythmic displacements and modulatory sequences, Beethoven leaving the tonic key almost immediately after its start as if to avoid a possible monotony of key. The entire scherzo is repeated before moving on to the trio. This section gracefully contrasts the woodwinds with the strings and continues a somewhat ambiguous treatment of tonality. The trio, as well, repeats in its entirety.

The finale, *Allegro ma non troppo*, is impeccably adroit in its construction and is spirited and playful in character. The first theme contains running sixteenth-note figures providing a feeling of perpetual motion. In contrast, the second theme acquires a dancelike quality, especially given its triplet accompaniment figures, before returning to the running sixteenth-note figure which persists until nearly the end of the movement. The entire finale captures the flavor of the finales of Haydn's last symphonies in its robustness and high spirits. It is, however, unmistakably pure Beethoven.

Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 ("Pastoral") . . . . . BEETHOVEN

It was often Beethoven's practice during the hot summer months to leave Vienna for the country, where he could take long walks and indulge his love of nature. The summer of 1808 found him in Heiligenstadt. Beethoven had failed in his quest to find a suitable opera text on which to work and instead devoted his efforts to the completion of his Sixth Symphony, the "Pastoral." This was accomplished, and the Symphony received its première on December 22, 1808, in Vienna.

Program music was certainly not a new idea in Beethoven's day. In fact, it is generally acknowledged that a symphony written as early as 1783, "A Musical Portrait of Nature" by Justin Heinrich Knecht, served as a suggestion to Beethoven. Indeed, Beethoven's biographer,



Alexander W. Thayer, said that "it was never so much the ambition of Beethoven to invent new forms of musical works, as to surpass contemporaries in the use of those already existing." The descriptive titles of the movements more than adequately prepare the listener for the mood of pastoral beauty which this Symphony describes; and yet, while the Sixth Symphony lacks that concentration of forces usually associated with Beethoven's symphonic treatment, it still utilizes the traditional symphonic forms.

The first movement, *Allegro ma non troppo* (Awakening of Cheerful Feelings on Arriving in the Country), is in sonata-allegro form, opening with a statement of the principal theme by the violins. The second theme is introduced by the cellos in the dominant key. The harmonic schemes of the exposition and development reflect a happy mood as major keys prevail. The trills of the violins, the triplets of the clarinets, and many other passages are easily identified as musical transcriptions of chirping birds, monotonous shrills of crickets, and other sounds of the country. An extensive, poetic coda completes the movement.

The second movement, *Andante molto moto* (Scene by the Brook), is also in sonata-allegro form. The descriptive subtitle is represented in the flowing motion of the accompaniment. The first theme is sung by the violins; the second is announced by the bassoons. The development, though brief, is followed by the return of the two themes. A quail (oboe), a nightingale (flute), and a cuckoo (clarinet) populate the famous coda.

The *Allegro* (Jolly Gathering of the Country Folk) third movement fulfills the role of the scherzo in the Symphony and suggests rural peasant scenes. Filled with joviality, dance rhythms prevail throughout. Late in the movement Beethoven pokes fun at the crude music-making in the village square. The band's performance is not quite up to par and at one point the melody gets lost completely and we are left with only the accompaniment. The oboe enters haphazardly and the fiddling continues. The merriment is suddenly interrupted by the rumble of distant thunder, and the fourth movement (Thunderstorm) is ushered in without pause. A restless *Allegro* suggests a downpour. The cellos and basses portray the wind as it whips the rain. Thunder roars in the timpani as the full orchestra rages in terrifying unisons. The storm subsides as the movement ends and moves without break into the finale.

With a hopeful ascent of the flute, the *Allegretto* (Shepherd's Song: Happy and Thankful Feelings after the Storm) begins. A seven-part rondo, the shepherd's tune is at first merely suggested by the clarinet and horn before being sung broadly by the entire string choir. Happy memories from earlier movements are interjected, leading to a concluding hymn of thanksgiving fraught with religious fervor.

## 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 Dessooff (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.

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