

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

LORIN MAAZEL, Music Director-Designate

# MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS Conductor

VLADIMIR FELTSMAN, Pianist

Wednesday Evening, April 27, 1988, at 8:00 Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor, Michigan

#### PROGRAM

#### INTERMISSION

Concerto No. 3 in D minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 30 . . RACHMANINOFF

Allegro ma non tanto Intermezzo: adagio Finale: alla breve

#### VLADIMIR FELTSMAN

In the spirit of honoring the past and ensuring the future, these families and individuals have demonstrated their support by underwriting the artist fees and major production costs of this 95th Annual May Festival. Representing both long-time Ann Arbor arts patrons and a new generation of leadership in the cultural life of this community, these donors are committed to maintaining the Musical Society's tradition of excellence through their public-spirited generosity. We gratefully recognize the following:

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#### **PROGRAM NOTES**

by Dr. Frederick Dorian in collaboration with Dr. Judith Meibach

Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 ("Pastoral") ... Ludwig van Beethoven

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn, Germany, on December 16, 1770, and died in Vienna, Austria, on March 26, 1827. The Pastoral Symphony, which is dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz and Count Razumovsky, dates from 1808 and was first performed on December 22 of that year, with the composer conducting. It is scored for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, timpani, and strings.

"What happiness I shall feel in wandering among groves and woods, and among trees and plants and rocks! No man on earth can love the country as I do!" With these words that he wrote to his friend Therese von Malfatti, Beethoven clearly stated the lifelong enchantment of nature that afforded him spiritual renewal and tranquillity. In one of his diaries, the therapeutic or redemptive function of nature assumes religious dimension: "On the Bare Mountain, End of September. Almighty! In the forest, I am transfigured. Happy everything in the forest. Every

tree speaks through Thee. My Lord, what magnificence!"

Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony strikes a departure from his earlier orchestral compositions. For the first time on any of his symphonic scores, Beethoven employs programmatic elements to express the profundity of his relationship with nature. He was, of course, well acquainted with many programmatic scores written before and during his own time. No doubt he had listened to *The Four Seasons* of Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741), which, in turn, portrays spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The work convincingly imitates the chirping of birds, the crash of thunder, and even the barking of dogs. Nor is it unreasonable to assume that Beethoven was familiar with the Sinfonia a 10 by Ignaz Holzbauer (1711-1783), a noted composer of the Mannheim school. The finale of this work, subtitled "La tempesta del mare," paints the seascape with realistic force.

The generation preceding Beethoven was especially receptive to program music — the celebration of nature was its keynote. *Gemälde der Nature* (Tone painting of nature), a five-movement orchestral work by the learned composer Justin Heinrich Knecht (1752-1817), clearly anticipated Beethoven's *Pastoral* in terms of its blueprint as well as the printed program

that he provided for the score.

Georg Joseph Vogler (1749-1814), the teacher of Weber and Meyerbeer, wrote a pastorale for organ, describing in its first section the merry life of shepherds. The similarity between the programmatic continuity of this work and the third, fourth, and fifth movements of Beethoven's *Pastoral* is arresting, and points to his acquaintance with Vogler's composition. In both works, a thunderstorm interrupts a pastoral scene; after the tempest passes, music of rejoicing ensues.

Although most of these programmatic scores somewhat naively attempted to reproduce rustic sounds in music, Beethoven's indebtedness to such antecedents cannot be questioned. These devices served as raw material that he transformed into abstract and spiritual ideas transcending the imitation of the sounds of nature. In the scores *The Seasons* and *The Creation* by his teacher Haydn, Beethoven had an ideal model of a masterful treatment of programmatic subject matter. In the Sixth Symphony he combined a delightful representation of thematic

material with a consummate depth of expression.

Beethoven began to sketch the *Pastoral* at least as early as 1803, at a time when he was still at work on his Third Symphony (the *Eroica*). One of his sketchbooks conveys his thoughts on the comtemplated *Pastoral*: "Sinfonia characteristica, or a recollection of country life . . . All painting in instrumental music, if pushed too far, is a failure . . . Sinfonia pastorella. Anyone who has an idea of country life can make out for himself the intentions of the author without many titles — people will not require titles to recognize the general intention to be more a matter of feeling than of painting in sounds . . . *Pastoral* Symphony: no picture but something in which the emotions are expressed which are aroused in men by the pleasure of the country or, in which some feelings of country life are set forth."

### Awakening of Joyful Feelings Upon Arrival in the Country

On the opening score page of the *Pastoral* Beethoven wrote: "More than an expression of feeling than painting" — a guidepost that directed him throughout the entire composition.

Allegro ma non troppo sets the pace for the musical impressions of the landscape. With violins leading, strings intone the main theme (F major, 2/4) of the classical sonata movement. The second theme, in which the cellos assume prominence, unfolds in C major, the key of the dominant. Both melodies are generally lighter in weight and more playful in character than many subjects of his other eight symphonies. The harmonic schemes of the exposition and the oncoming development sustain the happy mood. Also in keeping with the joyful setting are the prevalence of major keys and the light treatment of the orchestration.

Trills of the violins, triplets in the clarinets, the drone bass of the strings, and countless other passages point to musical transcriptions of the chirping of birds, the monotonous shrills

of crickets, and the sounds of other creatures that inhabit forest and field. The serene recapitulation of this thematic material eventually leads to the poetic coda.

#### Scene by the Brook

Anton Schindler, Beethoven's amanuensis and biographer, recollects a long walk that he took with the master (entirely deaf by this time) on a sunny day in April 1823. In the wooded region between Heiligenstadt and Grinzing, close to Vienna, Beethoven seated himself on the turf and leaned against an elm. He asked Schindler if there were any goldhammers to be heard in the trees above, adding, ". . . this is where I wrote the 'Scene by the Brook,' and the goldhammers up there, the quails, nightingales, and cuckoos round about, composed with me."

The second movement, also in sonata form (andante molto), takes place at the green banks of the brook whose murmuring, initially in eighth notes of the lower strings, continues throughout, changing to sixteenth notes. The rippling of the brook creates a background above which various motives suggest the delights of the summer season. Violins sing the first theme (B-flat) to the swaying 12/8 patterns of second violins, violas, and two muted cellos. The bassoons announce a somewhat wistful second theme, later taken up by other instruments. In the brief development, replete with modulations, the murmur of the water — formerly given to the lower strings — now is assigned to clarinets and bassoons in octaves. Arpeggios of the flute — the motive of the goldhammer — pierce the texture.

A quail, a nightingale, and a cuckoo populate the coda of "Scene by the Brook" with a trio of woodwinds representing their calls. The flute plays the two-tone motive of the nightingale with its long-drawn trill at the end. The oboe whistles the dotted call of the quail. The clarinet

imitates the cuckoo with a resolute major third.

#### Merry Gathering of Country Folk

The third movement turns to the human beings who inhabit the landscape. From a delicate and contemplative mood, the music carries us to one of boisterous merriment. In this scherzo, Beethoven sets into motion jovial rural scenes, true to the coarse vitality of the peasants. Like the pictures of country life painted by Breughel, the sixteenth-century Flemish artist, the

peasant scenes drawn by Beethoven abound with a multitude of delightful details.

In the "Merry Gathering of Country Folk," dance rhythms prevail throughout. The movement leaps forward with two frolicsome themes brightly contrasted in the keys of F and D major. The motion increases as more farmers arrive for the round dance. Later in the movement, Beethoven pokes fun at the crude music-making in the village square. The band musicians do their best, but their performance is not quite up to par. At one place the melody gets lost, leaving only the accompaniment. The oboist enters haphazardly, one quarter behind the beat. Never mind; the fiddling and blowing continue. The three-quarter steps of the scherzo change to 2/4 (as they frequently did in dance suites of the past). Bad weather approaches and the good time comes to a sudden halt.

#### Tempest, Storm

The third, fourth, and fifth movements proceed without pause. A thunderstorm bursts in the restless allegro (F minor, 4/4). Cellos and basses rumble — the wind whipping the rain. Thunder roars in the timpani. The piccolo shrieks nature's upheaval, and the full orchestra rages in terrifying unisons. Eventually, the storm dies down.

#### Shepherds' Hymn: Thankful Feelings After the Storm

Following a hopeful ascent of the flute, the finale, an allegretto (F major, 6/8) set in rondo form, is intoned. The entire string choir plays the shepherds' tune, first merely suggested by clarinet and horn. Happy memories from the first and second movements are woven into the texture of the allegretto until the "thanksgiving to nature" concludes with hymnic overtones.

The Wiener Zeitung of 17 December 1808 advertised the concert in which the Pastoral

received what one would call today its world première:

"On Thursday, 22 December, Ludwig van Beethoven will have the honor to give a musical Akademie in the R.I. Priv. Theater an der Wien. All the pieces are of his composition, entirely new, and not yet heard in public . . . First Part: 1, A Symphony, entitled: "A Recollection of Country Life," in F major. 2, Aria. 3, Hymn with Latin text, composed in the church style with chorus and solos. 4, Piano-forte Concerto played by himself.

"Second Part: 1, Grand Symphony in C minor. 2, Holy, with Latin text composed in the church style with chorus and solos. 3, Fantasia for Pianoforte alone. 4, Fantasia for the pianoforte which ends with the gradual entrance of the entire orchestra and the introduction of

choruses as a finale."

In the unheated theater on a bitter cold day, only a small crowd attended. Beethoven's Russian friend, Count Vielhorsky, sat in the stalls to listen to the long program that had been insufficiently rehearsed. Two years after Beethoven's death, a performance at the King's Theatre in London's Haymarket signaled the first of several attempts to perform the *Pastoral* with scenery and even action.

Rachmaninoff was born on his father's estate in Semyonovo, district of Novgorod, on April 1, 1873, and died in Beverly Hills, California, on March 28, 1943. His Third Piano Concerto was completed in 1909 and first performed in New York on November 28, 1909, with Walter Damrosch conducting and the composer as soloist. In addition to the solo piano, the work is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, snare drum, cymbals, bass drum, and strings.

Between 1936 and 1941, this great Russian composer and pianist played three of his concertante works in Pittsburgh with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra: the Second Piano Concerto, the Third Piano Concerto, and the Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini. In all of these performances deep earnestness was the keynote: there was no show; pyrotechnics and histrionics of any sort were absent. His playing ran the gamut of pianistic expression, conveying all the emotions inherent in his music, from melancholy to exultation. The interpretative style moved within extremes. Sometimes it was marked by literalness, closely following the script of the score. It was rhythmically sculptured, precise yet melodious, complying with the cantabile character of many of his themes. At other times, the performance was romantically free. And, on a few occasions, it was improvisational to the point of taking risks with the accompaniment.

The rare presence of a famous composer interpreting his own music always lends an added degree of motivation to the accompanying ensemble of performers, and so the members of the orchestra were inspired when playing with Rachmaninoff. At rehearsals they played with an

intensity usually attained only in performance.

As it happened, these rehearsals were not always free of complications, even with Fritz Reiner — whose sovereign but mini-sized baton movements usually delivered a perfect accompaniment — at the helm. On one occasion there was trouble: Rachmaninoff was playing in a highly improvisational manner, which perplexed the conductor. Irritated, the Napoleonic Reiner decided to leave the accompaniment for the evening's concert to Vladimir Bakaleinikoff, then associate conductor of the orchestra. As it turned out, this was all for the good. Rachmaninoff felt more comfortable with his compatriot, who was also a friend. At the concerts on 28 and 30 November 1941, Rachmaninoff brilliantly played his Variations on a Theme by Paganini and interpreted the piano concerto by Robert Schumann, the first time that he played this concerto in America.

Eight years after the completion of his second piano concerto, Rachmaninoff embarked on the composition of another score in this form. He worked on the third concerto in Europe prior to the start of a concert tour through America. The manuscript lay completed on his desk in the summer of 1909. Engaged to play the solo part at the upcoming première in New York, Rachmaninoff ran out of time to learn the difficult score at home. He reminisced about how he practiced his concerto on a mute piano in his cabin on the boat while crossing the Atlantic. By

the time the ship had docked at its Manhattan pier, he had memorized his music.

The Third Piano Concerto is artistically the most interesting of Rachmaninoff's four concertos for his instrument. It is rich in felicitous, romantically expressive themes, and is brilliantly effective from the pianistic point of view. It is the kind of music from which the public derives pleasure, because of its emotional appeal, its cunningly timed distribution of

contrasts, and its generally attractive tone play.

The concerto begins with an allegro ma non tanto (D minor, 4/4). In the third measure, the piano solo enters with a balladlike melody. Violas repeat the theme, which subsequently is varied. Next, the pianist plays a short cadenza, framed by the orchestra, which again carries the theme. The second subject is set as an extensive dialogue between piano and orchestra, with the solo eventually prevailing. The development focuses on patterns derived from the main theme (particularly from its rhythm). Sequences play a large part in the thematic workout. At its summit, piano and orchestra join in strong, emotional pronouncements. Once more, the music yields to a lyrical episode. A rich and pianistically interesting cadenza is heard prior to the mysteriously hushed end.

The middle movement, labeled intermezzo, is an *adagio* in 3/4, with variations based on a melancholy arabesque, played by the oboe solo. The strings take this motive up, *ben cantabile*, and thus begin the permutations of the plaintive theme. The entrance of the piano, *più mosso*, is unaccompanied. The dynamics gradually rise, and the mood changes from lyricism to maestoso. After various changes of tempo, the sorrowful main theme seems to make a formal return. But the piano breaks into this meditation with hammering octaves, the orchestra

joining in the sudden outburst. This passage bridges to the third movement.

The finale enters *alla breve*, in D minor, and refers in some of its material to the opening movement. This initial impetus stems from a chordal motion of the piano solo. An ensuing, forward-storming march on a syncopated motive eventually leads to a scherzando with light figuration in the piano part. The principal subject of the first movement makes its reappearance. Unexpectedly, the lyrical second subject (of the opening movement) passes by. These are memories of things past: tone-poetic flashbacks for which Rachmaninoff had an affection. A recapitulation of the *alla breve* is heard. A fiery march now inaugurates a festive tone which prevails to the end. The tonality has brightened to D major, and the brilliant treatment of the piano assures a triumphant curtain.

#### About the Artists

In its 92 years of existence, the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** has forged its world-class reputation under some of history's most distinguished conductors, including Otto Klemperer, Fritz Reiner, and William Steinberg, enhanced more recently under the baton of André Previn. In Ann Arbor, the orchestra has performed twenty concerts prior to this Festival, beginning in 1899 under Victor Herbert, through succeeding years under Emil Paur, Paul Paray, Steinberg, Previn, and during its recent May Festival residencies (1985 and 1986) under Sixten Ehrling, Alexander Gibson,

Zdeněk Mácal, Christoph Eschenbach, and Jean-Pierre Rampal.

A new era began in 1984 when Lorin Maazel began his formal affiliation with the Pittsburgh Symphony as music consultant. Currently principal guest conductor and music advisor, Maazel will become the orchestra's music director in the 1988-89 season. After the orchestra confirmed its top-ranking status during European tours in 1978, 1982, and 1985, Maazel led the Pittsburgh Symphony to the Far East in the spring of 1987 for three weeks of engagements at the Osaka Festival as well as concerts in Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Beijing, China. The orchestra was named resident orchestra for the prestigious Edinburgh Festival in Scotland in August 1987, the first orchestra from the United States ever to be accorded that title. The ensemble also met with great success during extensive domestic touring underwritten from 1979 to 1983 by American Telephone and Telegraph as part of its "Bell System American Orchestras on Tour."

At home in Pittsburgh's elegant Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts, the Pittsburgh Symphony offers 24 weeks of subscription concerts annually between September and June. Additional series offerings include the Pops, Young People's, and Tiny Tots' concerts, as well as a series of free concerts for school-age youngsters as part of the orchestra's educational activities. During the summer, the orchestra spends four weeks at Great Woods Center for the Performing Arts in

Massachusetts.

The Pittsburgh Symphony enjoys an illustrious reputation for performances on records, radio, and television. Since its first commercial recording in 1941, the orchestra has made hundreds of critically acclaimed discs, with current recordings available on Angel, Philips, New World, and Telarc labels. As early as 1936, the orchestra was broadcast coast to coast, and since 1982 it has received national attention through its annual series of National Public Radio broadcasts. On television, the orchestra was seen nationally on the popular "Previn and the Pittsburgh" series over PBS during the late 1970s.

Michael Tilson Thomas, a musician born and trained in America, has an international career as conductor, pianist, and educator. He has been recently appointed principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, succeeding Claudio Abbado who leaves for Vienna to lead the Vienna State Opera at the end of the 1987-88 season. Thomas is also artistic advisor to the newly formed New World Symphony in Miami, an ensemble dedicated to training young professional musicians. In keeping with his long-standing affiliation with the Pittsburgh Symphony, the maestro serves as principal conductor and music director for the Great Woods Center for the Performing Arts.

As an active guest conductor in the United States and abroad, Michael Tilson Thomas has conducted the orchestras of Cleveland, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, and Pittsburgh, among others, and in Europe he leads the Orchestre National de France and the London Symphony on tour. He also led most of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's nationwide tour in 1984. Last year he directed a major Gershwin Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music marking the 50th anniversary of the composer's death. This was a particularly appropriate assignment for Thomas, because he learned

Gershwin's music from his father, who learned it directly from Gershwin.

The maestro's extensive work in opera began in 1979 with the American première of Berg's *Lulu* at the Santa Fe Opera. In following seasons, he conducted opera performances at the Orange Festival in France, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and the Hollywood Bowl. At Chicago's Lyric Opera he has conducted *La Bohème*, and at Great Woods he has directed concert versions of *Tosca* and *La Bohème*.

Now an exclusive CBS recording artist, Mr. Thomas' recordings have earned numerous Grammy nominations and international awards. His discography includes music of Charles Ives, Steve Reich, Gershwin, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Debussy, and Stravinsky, along with his pioneer-

ing work with the music of contemporary composers.

Michael Tilson Thomas was born in Los Ângeles in 1944. His grandparents, Boris and Bessie Thomashevsky, were founders of the Yiddish theater in America, and his parents followed careers in theater and the arts. He is a summa cum laude graduate of the University of California, where he studied conducting and composition. In 1969, he was appointed assistant conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and was made associate conductor the next season. He remained with the Boston Symphony until 1974, concurrently holding the title of music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic from 1971 to 1979. For six seasons he directed the nationally televised Young People's Concerts of the New York Philharmonic and served as principal guest conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic from 1981 to 1985.

These May Festival concerts mark his first Ann Arbor appearance.

Vladimir Feltsman was born January 8, 1952 in Moscow, the son of Oskar Feltsman, one of the best-known composers of popular music in the Soviet Union. Trained at the Central Moscow Music School, Feltsman made his debut with the Moscow State Philharmonic Orchestra in 1962. He won first prize at the Concertina International Competition in Prague when he was only 15 and then

attended the Moscow State Conservatory. He was accorded a major honor four years later, when he won first prize at the Marguerite Long Competition in Paris. He then toured major cities in the Soviet Union, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Japan, and France. As music critic John Von Rhein observed: "The Soviet Cultural Commission no doubt thought they had a new Ashkenazy, Richter, and Gilels all rolled into one, and they paraded their rising star throughout the world."

In 1979, Feltsman and his wife, Anna, a biologist, applied for an emigration visa to Israel, Feltsman's primary motivation, in his words, to achieve "more artistic independence." This prompted Soviet authorities to remove all of his recordings from Soviet stores and broadcasting

stations. Major concert performances were canceled in and outside the Soviet Union.

In June of 1982, after failing to hear from the Soviet Cultural Affairs authorities regarding an invitation to Feltsman to perform in New York, producer Norman Gladney, in association with the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, produced a Feltsman concert, in absentia, at New York's Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center. Among the participants were Helen Hayes, Tony Randall, Gelsey Kirkland, and Misha Dichter. A dramatic highlight of that evening was the playing of a Feltsman tape while a spotlight focused on the concert grand — sans pianist. This event intensified support for Feltsman in America and throughout the Western world. Among his most prominent supporters was the then American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Arthur Hartman, and his wife, Donna, who frequently invited the pianist to play at Spaso House in Moscow. Another voice raised in behalf of Vladimir Feltsman was that of Congressman Jack Kemp of New York, who visited with Feltsman as early as 1979 and introduced the artist's story into the Congressional Record. Mr. Gladney subsequently arranged for CBS Masterworks to issue one of the Spaso House performances, the Chopin Preludes, for marketing worldwide.

Vladimir Feltsman, Anna, and their four-year-old son Daniel, arrived in New York at John F. Kennedy Airport on Tuesday, August 18, 1987, and immediately received an invitation from President and Mrs. Reagan to give his first American performance at The White House on September 27. An electrically charged debut at Carnegie Hall followed on November 11, and Feltsman now looks forward to a full concert schedule in the United States and abroad with such leading orchestras as the New York and Israel Philharmonics, The Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam. He also occupies a distinguished Chair at the State University of New

York at New Paltz.

Vladimir Feltsman is under the personal direction of Ronald A. Wilford and Laurence E. Tucker of Columbia Artists Management, Inc. New York; Gladney Communications Ltd., Press Representative.

Mr. Feltsman plays the Steinway piano available through Hammell Music, Inc.

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### Pittsburgh Symphony

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## LORIN MAAZEL, Music Director Designate

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The Pittsburgh Symphony string section utilizes revolving seating on a systematic basis. Players listed alphabetically change seats periodically.

The following musicians are performing with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra at Ann Arbor:

Christopher Wu, first violin Carolyn Edwards, second violin Barbara Bashor, flute Christy Thompson, clarinet Leonard Sharrow, bassoon

Carolyn Smith, horn Janice Hawes, horn Anita Miller, horn Karen Sloneker, trumpet James Armstrong, trombone Paul DeChancie, percussion Scott Sterling, percussion Barbara Allen, harp Lynne Aspnes, harp

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Klezmer Conservatory Band
Mazowsze, Polish Folk Company
Canadian Brass
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"New York Counterpoint," with RICHARD STOLTZMAN Wed. Feb. 22
Paul Taylor Dance Company
The Chieftains Wed. Mar. 22

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The University Musical Society wishes to thank Ford Motor Company Fund for its generosity in underwriting the printing costs of this house program.

The Musical Society also expresses gratitude to Ford Motor Company for providing a Lincoln Town Car for local transportation of visiting artists.

This concert is made possible in part by a grant through the Music Program of the National Endowment for the Arts in support of American performing artists.

Cameras and recording devices are not allowed in the auditorium.

Halls Cough Tablets, courtesy of Warner-Lambert Company, are available in the lobby.

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