

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

CHARLES A. SINK, PRESIDENT EARL V. MOORE, MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Fifth Concert

1927-1928

Complete Series 1639

FORTY-NINTH ANNUAL

Choral Union Concert Series

HILL AUDITORIUM
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

NEW YORK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

WALTER DAMROSCH, *Conducting*

JOHN ERSKINE, *Pianist*

Wednesday Evening, February 1, 1928, at 8:00

PROGRAM

SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN D.....*Brahms*
Allegro non troppo
Adagio non troppo
Allegretto grazioso quasi andantino
Allegro con spirito

"ST. FRANCIS PREACHING TO THE BIRDS".....*Liszt*

CONCERTO IN A MINOR FOR PIANO WITH
ORCHESTRA*Schumann*
Allegro affettuoso
Intermezzo: Andantino grazioso
Allegro vivace

MR. ERSKINE

"SPANISH RHAPSODY"*Chabrier*

*The Steinway is the Official Piano of the University Musical Society,
and of the New York Symphony Orchestra*

Management—George Engles, New York City

NOTE—Unless prevented by unavoidable reasons all concerts begin on time.
For obvious reasons concertgoers are respectfully requested to be seated when
concerts begin. Also for obvious reasons small children cannot be admitted to
concerts.

A R S L O N G A V I T A B R E V I S

SYMPHONY NO. 2, IN D MAJOR.....*Brahms*

Allegro non troppo; Adagio non troppo;
Allegretto grazioso quasi andantino;
Allegro con spirito.

Johannes Brahms was born May 7, 1833 at Hamburg; died April 3, 1879, at Vienna.

Of the four symphonies by Brahms, the second has been heard rather infrequently on these programs, the last performance of it having occurred in 1913. This apparent neglect is in no way due to its being a less important work, or to any prejudice against it, but rather to the more external problems of program making, and the list of symphonies in the repertoires of orchestras when on tour.

The D major Symphony was composed during the summer of 1877, i.e., within a year after the completion of the first, in C minor, which has been heard many times in Ann Arbor. The first performance of the orchestral score took place in Vienna, December 30, 1877, at a Philharmonic Concert; Hans Richter was the conductor. The Symphony was successful upon first hearing; the applause was so great at the conclusion of the third movement that Richter was forced to repeat it; the critics hailed the work as a masterpiece. The review written fifty years ago by Hanslick, critic of the Vienna *Neue Freie Presse*, contains brief comments on the character of the several moments. So succinctly did Hanslick express in words and phrases the true meaning of the conceptions Brahms wove into his tonal picture, that a perusal of his review may assist in the enjoyment of the work by those who are unfamiliar with its themes and rich orchestral texture.

"The character of this symphony may be described concisely as peaceful, tender but not effeminate, with a serenity, which on the one side is quickened to joyous humor and on the other is deepened to meditative seriousness. The first movement begins immediately with a mellow and dusky horn theme. It has something of the character of the serenade, and this impression is strengthened still further in the scherzo and the finale. The first movement, an *Allegro moderato* in 3-4 time, immerses us in a clear wave of melody, upon which we rest, swayed, refreshed, undisturbed by two slight Mendelssohn reminiscences which emerge before us. The last fifty measures of this movement expire in flashes of new melodic beauty. A broad singing *Adagio* in B major follows, which, as it appears to me, is more conspicuous for the skillful development of the themes than for the worth of the themes themselves. For this reason, undoubtedly, it makes a less profound impression upon the public than do the other movements. The *Scherzo* is twice interrupted by a *Presto* in 2-4, which flashes, spark-like, for a moment. The *finale* in D, 4-4, more vivacious, but always agreeable in its golden serenity, is widely removed from the stormy finales of the modern school. Mozartian blood flows in its veins.

"This symphony is a contrast rather than a companion to the first; motives, which, however, slumber there as flowers beneath the snow, or float as distant points of light beyond the clouds. It is true that the second symphony contains no movement of such noble pathos as the finale of the first. On the other hand, in its uniform coloring and its sunny clearness it is an advance upon the first, and one that is not to be underestimated."

“SAINT FRANCIS PREACHING TO THE BIRDS” *Liszt*

Franz Liszt was born at Raiding, Hungary October 22, 1811; died at Bayreuth, June 31, 1886.

Saint Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) is famous for the gentleness and sweetness of his character, and is known to have had a great love for animals. In a *Response a l'Apologie pour la Reformation* by Ferrand, we read: “Saint Francis, revolving in his mind the origin of all things, and filled with an abundant piety, bestowed the name of brother and sister on creatures how diminutive soever they might be; the reason of his doing this was, his knowing that all those creatures issued from the same principle with himself, that is, that they were all created by God.”

Felix Mottl has orchestrated the piano piece of Liszt for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trumpets, three trombones, bass tuba, two harps, and strings. The theme is worked out first by horn, later by violoncellos, and finally by the full orchestra.

CONCERTO IN A MINOR FOR PIANO WITH

ORCHESTRA *Schumann*

Allegro affettuoso; Intermezzo: Andantino grazioso;
Allegro vivace.

Robert Schumann was born June 8, 1810, at Zwickau; died July 29, 1856, at Endenich, near Bonn.

Having taken its place as one of the accepted concertos for piano-forte, the following excerpts from the reviews of the English critics on the occasion of the first performance of the composition in London, May 14, 1856, with Mme. Schumann as the interpreter of the solo part, may prove illuminating, and indicative either of the insensitiveness of the “gentlemen of the press” to a new work of art, or of an unwillingness to accept new standards of expression: Dawson, the most noted of the critics of that day, described the concerto as “a labored and ambitious work” in which “many of the bravura passages are, indeed, utterly extravagant;” he softened the review, however, by dwelling on the praiseworthy efforts of Mme. Schumann to make her husband’s curious rhapsody pass for “music.” Another of the critical fraternity dismissed the work with the sentence: “We cannot fancy the concerto adopted by any other performers in London”:—A third review describes it as “a mere mechanical manufacture disfigured by caprices of detail.”

The use of the term “rhapsody” by Dawson was fortuitous, for the composition (which is the only concerto Schumann left in completed form) passed through several stages before it achieved the distinction of the title, Concerto. In the summer of 1841 Schumann wrote a “Phantasie in A minor” for piano and orchestra, under which title, as well as “Concert Allegro for Piano and Orchestra” the composer attempted to dispose of the work to various publishers. This single movement (later the first movement of the concerto) was heard at a semi-public rehearsal at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig. Other movements were added and the work brought to a first performance in Dresden in 1845; the names of the movements were not identical with those listed above.

Suffice it to say that the concerto exhibits the composer’s skill in the mellow treatment of classic design with romantic themes and colors; at the same time he provided an ample vehicle for pianistic abilities. The

work stands the most critical tests of analysis, and therefore may be reckoned as one of the masterpieces in its class; moreover, and more important to the larger group of interested listeners, the work appeals directly, through the sheer beauty of rhythmic, melodic and harmonic combinations that were quite "odd and eccentric" in 1846, but which are accepted as idiomatic in the concert hall today.

"SPANISH RHAPSODY" *Chabrier*

Alexis Emmanuel Chabrier was born at Auvergue, January 18, 1842; died at Paris, September 13, 1894.

Two Spanish dances serve the composer of this brilliant fantasy as thematic material: the Jota and the Malaguena. The former is a characteristic dance of the provinces of Northern Spain, and resembles the waltz, tho each geographical area has its own peculiar melodic and rhythmic scheme that accompanies this dance in each of the several localities. It is always in the triple rhythm, however. The Malaguena (or Fandango) is considered more seductive, as evidenced by the proscription of it by the Church in the 17th century as a "godless dance."

Spanish rhythms, vigorous, contrasting and brilliant, have lured other than native composers, and a brief survey of the successes achieved by "foreigners" with this material (Bizet—*Carmen*, Rimsky Korsakoff—*Spanish Caprice*, Moskowski—*Spanish Dances*, Debussy—*Iberia*, to name only a few) would suggest the inference that the enchantment lent by distance, together with a distinct national psychology tends to a keener perception of the artistic possibilities of Spanish rhythms and melodies, than is apparent among native composers, for whom proximity may breed a lack of respect. Da Falla, however, stands as contradictory evidence of the above contention; his *Dances from the Three Cornered Hat* place him in the front rank of the group just mentioned, and distinguished him as a Spanish composer of potentialities.

In this Rhapsody, Chabrier has treated the themes of the two dances in a rhapsodical manner, and while not avoiding the limitations of form, has "made his point" in his vivid use of orchestral colors, and the sharp contrasts of rhythms and melodies. The work is by no means "modern."

Coming Musical Events

Myra Hess, Piano, will give a recital in the **Extra Concert Series**, February 13.

Feodor Chaliapin, Bass, will give a recital in the **Choral Union Series**, February 23.

The **Second Semester of the University School of Music** will begin Monday, February 6. Degree courses, special courses, and courses for beginners and children are offered.