

THE THIRTY-NINTH ANNUAL
MAY FESTIVAL

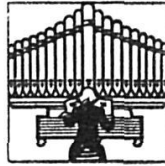
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

By

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THE THIRTY-NINTH ANNUAL MAY FESTIVAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN*

Because it is a subject in which I am greatly interested, I am glad to talk to you about the next May Festival, which will consist of six concerts and which will be given on May 18, 19, 20 and 21.

I shall preface my remarks with a brief account of past Festivals. In 1894, Dr. Albert A. Stanley, with the co-operation of his associates in the University Musical Society,† decided to give a music festival. This first festival consisted of three concerts, one on Friday evening, and two on Saturday. Music lovers from far and wide flocked to Ann Arbor and the event was a tremendous success. The second year four concerts were given, and later the number was increased to five and finally to six.

For the first ten years the Boston Festival Orchestra under Emil Mollenhauer participated, but since 1905, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Frederick Stock, has been in attendance. Dr. Stanley continued as Musical Director until his resignation in 1921, when he was succeeded by Dr. Earl V. Moore, his pupil and protégé.

The University Choral Union has existed since 1879, and has participated several times in each Festival. It has performed practically all of the major choral works, and in numerous instances has given American or even world première performances. For many years a large chorus of children has also been an interesting and attractive feature. Hundreds of opera stars, oratorio singers, and instrumentalists, as well as many of the great ensemble groups, have been heard either in the Choral Union or in the Festival series.

With such a background the annual problem of building a festival program which would eclipse, or at least equal, those of the past is difficult of solution. Year by year, however, through the splendid co-operation of all forces involved, and the loyalty of music lovers in general, the Festival continues with ever-widening scope until it has come to be looked upon as one of the country's leading cultural events.

The Festival of 1932 gives promise of a most attractive series of concerts, not only from the standpoint of the soloists and organizations that will be heard, but also from that of the brilliancy, variety, and general effectiveness of the musical offerings. Among the artists will be some of the most spectacular of recent stars, with a goodly sprinkling of former favorites. Five renowned conductors will lead the forces, and the choral works will include two American premières as well as compositions of

*A University of Michigan radio address given over station WJR on March 15, 1932, at 2 P.M.

†The University Musical Society, the parent association, was organized during the season of 1879-1880, and was incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan in 1881. Its principal objects were: to maintain a chorus (the Choral Union) and to give public choral and other concerts; to maintain a school of music; and an orchestra. In 1894 as the closing event in the season's Choral Union Concert Series, the First Annual May Festival was given. In 1929, by joint action of the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan and the Board of Directors of the University Musical Society, the School became an integral division of the University.

traditional worth. The arias and the orchestral selections will also provide variety both in respect to new numbers and established favorites.

Preparations for the Festival necessarily begin months in advance. The selection of the choral works must be made, and negotiations covering the use of orchestral scores and parts are often complicated. Particularly is this true when works are given in America for the first time. The choruses must be built up, and Dr. Moore must spend many long hours not only in rehearsals but in reading and studying the scores. Then there is the problem of selecting and negotiating for the services of the soloists who must always be chosen because of artistic qualifications and special aptitudes for the particular rôles in which they are to appear.

This year fortune has more than smiled upon our efforts and we believe that the Festival of 1932 will stand out as a sort of triumph in the long history of the University Musical Society. Celebrated artists and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with its distinguished conductors will be present. The Choral Union and the Children's Chorus have both entered into the spirit of their work and have made wonderful progress. The première performances have added zest to the rehearsals.

The list of notables includes:

Musical Director Earl V. Moore, who is recognized as one of America's outstanding choral conductors. His fine sense of music values and his sound interpretations have stamped him as a program builder of authority. Dr. Frederick Stock is generally conceded to be the dean of American conductors. He is always welcomed by Festival audiences who have come to love and admire him both as a friend and as a distinguished artist. Eric DeLamarter, Dr. Stock's able and efficient assistant, is also an important factor. Juva Higbee, Supervisor of Music in the Ann Arbor Public Schools, has won distinction in her chosen field. Gustav Holst comes to the Festival for the second time as a guest conductor. Distinguished as one of the leading contemporary conductor-composers, he was specially brought to Ann Arbor in 1923 for guest performances, but not until this year has it been possible for him to come again, for his services are in such continual demand in Great Britain that American tours are generally precluded.

Goeta Ljungberg will head the list of soloists. This artist reached New York from Sweden only a short time ago, unknown and unheralded. She made her *début* at the Metropolitan Opera House on January 20, and created a furor. Critics, concert goers, and the public in general "went wild" over her performance. Since then she has continued to create great enthusiasm. Through prompt and effective negotiations she was persuaded to remain in America for several weeks after the close of the Opera season in order to make her American festival *début* at Ann Arbor. She is referred to as "a daughter of the gods, divinely fair and tall."

Other newcomers will be Juliette Lippe and Ruth Rodgers, sopranos; Mina Hager, contralto; John Charles Thomas, baritone; and Gitta Gradova, pianist—all Americans. Miss Lippe has won great distinction at the Covent Garden Opera, in London. Miss Rodgers and Miss Hager have both made enviable reputations in the fields of oratorio and recital. John Charles Thomas is a leading member of the Chicago Civic Opera Association, and is a favorite wherever he goes. Miss Gradova is a virtuoso who has won the respect and admiration of a discriminating public.

Among former favorites who will again be heard are included the

names of Beniamino Gigli and Frederick Jagel, tenors, Nelson Eddy, baritone, Chase Baromeo, bass, and Palmer Christian, organist.

Mr. Gigli, since the passing away of the exceptionally gifted Caruso, has been very generally looked upon as the world's greatest tenor. At the Metropolitan he is always a favorite. At his previous Ann Arbor appearances, he made profound impressions. Frederick Jagel is another Metropolitan tenor whose triumphs have been many. Nelson Eddy has won the admiration of music lovers in many fields. Chase Baromeo, of the Chicago Civic Opera, is a graduate of the University of Michigan. During his college days he participated in many student musical activities. After the War he resumed his music studies in Italy and was soon engaged for leading rôles at the La Scala Opera House in Milan. Then he sang in the great opera houses of South America, and three years ago was called to Chicago where his successes have been many. Palmer Christian is one of the leading concert organists of America. His weekly recitals on the Frieze Memorial Organ in Hill Auditorium attract wide attention.

The general arrangement of the several programs* as tentatively announced is as follows:

First Concert, Wednesday Evening: The Creation by Haydn, with Miss Rodgers, Mr. Jagel, and Mr. Baromeo as soloists, will be given during the first half of the program. In the second half, Gitta Gradova, pianist, will make her Ann Arbor festival début in Rachmaninov's concerto, number two. Dr. Moore will conduct *The Creation*, which will be given in commemoration of the composer's bi-centennial anniversary, while Dr. Stock will conduct for Miss Gradova.

Second Concert, Thursday Evening: Goeta Ljungberg will make her American festival début by singing several operatic arias, with Dr. Stock conducting. Gustav Holst will conduct several of his own works including the American première of his *A Choral Fantasia*, and Dr. Moore will conduct Stravinsky's *Symphonic Psalms*.

Third Concert, Friday Afternoon: In this program Miss Higbee will lead the large chorus of children in *The Spider and the Fly* by Protheroe, and in selections from the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, while Eric DeLamarter will conduct the solo numbers by Miss Hager and several orchestral selections.

Fourth Concert, Friday Evening: Mr. Gigli will sing several of his favorite operatic arias, and Dr. Stock will present his group of players in a number of brilliant orchestral works.

Fifth Concert, Saturday Afternoon: John Charles Thomas will be the star soloist, while the orchestra again under Dr. Stock will play D'Indy's symphony, number two, and other attractive numbers.

Sixth Concert, Saturday Evening: The American première performance of Rimsky-Korsakoff's monumental opera, *The Legende of the Invisible City of Kitej*,† will be given by the chorus, the orchestra, and the following soloists: Juliette Lippe, Mina Hager, Frederick Jagel, Nelson Eddy, and Chase Baromeo. Dr. Moore will conduct.

This advance announcement of the Festival has attracted nation-wide

*The programs are in process of being built at this time and will be published shortly in complete form in a special May Festival Announcement, a copy of which will be mailed upon request.

†This opera is being specially translated into English from the Russian and French versions for this performance by Mrs. Michael Pargment.

attention and has brought forth favorable commendations from many distinguished musical authorities, a few of whom I quote in part, as follows:

Felix Borowski, of Chicago: "I think it a matter of national importance that you are to give the first interpretation in this country of Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Legende of the Invisible City of Kitej*. You are fortunate, too, to be able to announce the co-operation of Gustav Holst in the performance of the latter's *A Choral Fantasia*."

Walter Damrosch: "I have just read your preliminary announcement for the May Festival. As usual it promises to be one of the outstanding events in the middle west. The program, soloists and conductors give ample proof of the musical feast which awaits your audience."

Olin Downes, Music Editor of the New York Times: "Your Festival program is very interesting to me, particularly on account of the American première of the Rimsky-Korsakoff opera *The Legende of the Invisible City of Kitej* and the new work of Holst. I assume you have no objection to my publishing a résumé of the program next Sunday."

Louis Eckstein, President and General Director of the Ravinia Opera Company, Chicago: "The Ann Arbor May Festival is one of the outstanding events of its kind, because you have mastered the art of selecting the best and varying your programs to the point where there is nothing left to be desired."

Howard Hanson, Director, Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York: "In choice of music as well as artists, your Festival is easily one of the outstanding world affairs of its sort."

Ralph Lewando, Editor and Music Critic of the Pittsburgh Press: "It proves that Ann Arbor and adjacent communities are a civic-conscious, art-minded people, aware of the need and importance of music to the life of the people."

James Albert Riker, of the Musical Courier, New York: "Each year the Festival presents the height of perfection in programs, new works, choruses and soloists, and the coming Festival is no exception."

Charles L. Wagner, Impresario, New York: "I think this is probably the finest list of musical talent that I have ever seen announced for one Festival."

Joseph N. Weber, President of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada: "Your program is convincing that the Festival will be Michigan's greatest musical event."

Irving Weil, music critic of the New York Journal: "Inclusion in your programs of Strawinsky's *Symphonic Psalms* and Rimsky-Korsakoff's '*Legende of Kitej*' is especially noteworthy. May I also say that I am pleased to see English is not the musically despised language in Michigan that it is in New York."

Similar letters were received from many other distinguished authorities, including the following:

ADA BICKING, State Director of Music Education, Lansing

CHARLES N. BOYD, Director, Pittsburgh Musical Institute

S. R. BRIDGES, Southern Musical Bureau, Atlanta

DUDLEY BUCK, Chicago

HAROLD L. BUTLER, Dean of the College of Fine Arts, Syracuse University

ERNEST T. CAMERON, Executive Secretary, Michigan Education Association

ROSSETTER G. COLE, Chicago

JAMES FRANCIS COOKE, Editor of the Etude

JAMES E. DEVOE, Manager, Philharmonic Concert Company, Detroit

CHARLES C. DRAA, President, Los Angeles Opera and Fine Arts Club

PETER W. DYKEMA, Professor of Music Education, Columbia University

WM. ARMS FISHER, Past President, Music Teachers National Association, Boston

FLORENCE FRENCH, Editor, Musical Leader, Chicago

W. A. FRITSCHY, Impresario, Kansas City

DANIEL GREGORY MASON, Professor of Music, Columbia University

PHILIP HALE, Boston

HELEN M. KELLER, State Supervisor of Music, Columbus

MRS. EDGAR STILLMAN KELLEY, Past President, National Federation of Music Clubs

PIERRE V. R. KEY, Editor of Musical Digest, New York

A. WALTER KRAMER, Editor-in-Chief, Musical America

HARPER C. MAYBEE, Director of Music, Western State Teachers College

RUSSELL V. MORGAN, President of the Music Supervisors' National Association

WILLIAM W. NORTON, Flint Community Music Association

SELBY OPPENHEIMER, Impresario, San Francisco

RUTH HALLER OTTAWAY, President, National Federation of Music Clubs

Dean JAMES T. QUARLES, Director of Music, University of Missouri

GEORGE L. SMITH, Manager, Philharmonic Orchestra, Los Angeles

FREDERICK B. STIVEN, Director of Music, University of Illinois

ALBERT STOESSEL, Choral Conductor, New York

EDWIN J. STRINGHAM, Professor of Music, Columbia University

Dean DONALD M. SWARTOUT, Director of Music, University of Kansas

GLENN M. TINDALL, Manager of Hollywood Bowl

CHARLES E. WATT, Editor of Music News, Chicago

HERBERT WITHERSPOON, Artistic Director of the Chicago Civic Opera Company

PAUL J. WEAVER, Professor of Music, Cornell University

FRANCIS L. YORK, Detroit Institute of Musical Art

Such expressions from discriminating authorities encourage us in the belief that the next Festival will be superlative in every sense.

In conclusion, may I state that while the May Festival, like the Choral Union and other concert series, is offered primarily as a cultural and education feature for members of the University, attendance is by no means restricted, and the general public is privileged to attend on the same basis as University members. Season tickets admitting to the six concerts may be ordered by mail at the nominal prices of \$6.00, \$7.00, and \$8.00 each. Selections of seats are made in sequence of orders received. A booklet announcement giving sketches of the artists and works and general detailed information is in preparation and will be sent upon request. Please address the President of the School of Music, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

