

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

CHARLES A. SINK, PRESIDENT

THOR JOHNSON, CONDUCTOR

Third Concert

1941-1942

Complete Series 2829

Sixty-third Annual
Choral Union Concert Series

CLEVELAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

ARTUR RODZINSKI, *Conductor*

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 9, 1941, AT 3:00
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture to "Euryanthe" VON WEBER

Symphony No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 82 SIBELIUS
Tempo molto moderato—Allegro moderato ma un poco stretto—Presto—Piu presto
Andante mosso quasi allegretto
Allegro molto—Un pochettino largamente

INTERMISSION

"Iberia," Impressions for Orchestra No. 2 DEBUSSY
Par les rues et par les chemins (In the streets and by the wayside)
Les parfums de la nuit (The fragrance of the night)
Le matin d'un jour de fête (The morning of a festival day)

"Scenario for Orchestra" on Themes from "Show Boat" KERN

NOTE: The Cleveland Symphony Orchestra has been heard in the Choral Union Series on previous occasions as follows: March 28, 1935; November 9, 1937; and November 7, 1938.

(Over)

The Steinway piano and the Skinner organ are the official concert instruments of the University Musical Society

ARS LONGA VITA BREVIS

PROGRAM NOTES

Overture to "Euryanthe" CARL MARIA VON WEBER
(Born December 18, 1786, in Eutin, Oldenburg; died June 5, 1826, in London)

After the success of "Der Freischütz," Weber began at once to look for another suitable libretto. The subject of "Euryanthe" was suggested by Heimina von Chezy, who had written the text of Schubert's ill-fated "Rosamunde." It is unfortunate that the failure of "Rosamunde" did not frighten Weber from agreeing to compose music to her impossible libretto. She had drawn it from a thirteenth-century French tale, "Histoire de Gerard de Nevers et de la belle et vertueuse Euryant de Savoye, sa mie," which Boccaccio had used in his "Decameron" (second day, ninth novel) and Shakespeare in his "Cymbeline."

Whatever the value of the libretto, and so practiced a playwright as Goethe called it "A bad subject with which nothing could be done," Weber lavished upon it a year and a half's work and some of his finest music. It is a tribute to his genius that the "grand heroic-romantic opera in three acts," for such he styled it, held the boards for more than twenty performances during its first season.

The composer's son, Max Maria von Weber, tells in his life of his father of an incongruous episode that took place before Weber's entrance into the orchestra pit at the first performance. A fat, uncouth woman with a shawl hanging about her ample figure, a bedraggled bonnet upon her head, ran from seat to seat. She had forgotten her ticket and was valiantly trying to find her place. There was laughter with curses intermingled. "Make room for me! I am the poetess!" she screamed. It was, indeed, *Helmina von Chezy*, author of the libretto. The laughter continued until it was drowned by the applause that welcomed the composer.

Weber wrote of the performance in a letter to his wife: "My reception, when I appeared in the orchestra, was the most enthusiastic and brilliant that one could imagine. There was no end to it. At last I gave the signal for the beginning. Stillness of death. The overture was applauded madly; there was a demand for a repetition; but I went ahead, so that the performance might not be too long drawn out." It lasted for four hours. The opera is now remembered almost solely for its overture.

Symphony No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 82 JEAN SIBELIUS
(Born December 8, 1865, in Tavastehus, Finland; living in Järvenpää.)

In 1914 the shadows of the World War were suddenly cast over Sibelius' activities. Royalties from his German publishers were suspended, and he found himself in a desperate financial condition. Composing was a relaxation and an escape into the world of the spirit from the turmoil of civilized Europe. Between August and early November he wrote no less than sixteen minor pieces, mostly for the piano—not without the hope of sustaining his dwindling income. But a new symphony was taking shape; a confused world was calling forth confused forms and sounds in the creating brain. Sibelius was wrestling with materials of gigantic dimensions to bring internal order out of outward chaos.

"In a deep dell again," he wrote in September, 1914. "But I already begin to see dimly the mountain that I shall certainly ascend . . . God opens His door for a moment and His orchestra plays the Fifth Symphony."*

The first movement opens with a theme for French horn that forms the melodic basis of the entire movement. Wind instruments and drums continue the exposition. The strings, which are to remain in the background through much of the movement, enter with a characteristic whirring figure as the woodwind unfolds a new subject, derived by inversion from the main motive. A variant of this second subject is heard from the lugubrious and poignant voice of a single bassoon crying out under a seething and tremulous mass of strings. The tempo quickens; the 12-8 rhythm falls easily into a 3-4 scherzo tempo. (So enters the section referred to by Sibelius as the second movement. By its use of themes already stated, and its specific character of climax to what has gone before, it may better be termed a continuation and conclusion of the opening part, forming, with it, one first movement of heroic proportions). The main motive is now transformed into a lilting melody that dances through the orchestra in various guises. The music constantly quickens its pace to the final page where this motive, developed to molten intensity, is projected from the entire orchestra with the rapidity and propulsion of machine-gun fire.

The slow movement is a development of a single theme, heard at the outset from violas and cellos, *pizzicato*, against a sustained accompaniment of clarinets, bassoons, horns, and kettledrums. The music is serene, untroubled. The passing clash of minor seconds in the final pages serves but to intensify the gentle, pastoral mood. Flutes, oboes, and bassoons play a coda that might have been penned by a Schubert in his happiest mood.

* These quotations from Sibelius' diaries and letters may be found in Karl Ekman's authoritative volume, "Jean Sibelius: His Life and Personality."

Sibelius planned his symphonies to be cumulative. So the final movement gathers the threads of the entire work together in a swiftly moving figure for strings to which woodwinds are joined. The second theme, rising and falling in an even half-note rhythm, is given to horns. Woodwind and cellos in octaves play a new theme which appears as a counterpoint to the half-note melody. All three themes are developed; there is an episode in G-flat major, *misterioso*, which leads to the noble final pages where the swinging half-note theme returns in an orchestral tutti, resounding and gorgeous, that crowns and affirms the whole.

“Iberia,” Impressions for Orchestra No. 2 CLAUDE DEBUSSY

(Born August 22, 1862, at St. Germain; died March 27, 1918, at Paris)

In his set of biographical sketches, *Alla Breve*, Carl Engel says, “If ever genius gave wings to music and sent it soaring up to heights to which—agile pedestrian—it could not have risen otherwise, it was the liberating influence of Debussy. His hypersensitive ear was attuned to overhear the shy tremor of springtide in the woods, to record the primeval song of the wave, to note the chord progressions of the sunset mirrored in the lake, to catch the overtones that float above the perfumes of the night.”

To the Romans, Spain was known as Hispania. But to the Greeks it was Iberia, a name taken from the river Iberus, which is now the Ebro. And it is this land of suggestive color that Debussy was able to evoke in larger and more rapturous contours than those achieved by almost any of the numerous composers who have been intrigued by the glamour and pungency of Spanish rhythm and song.

In the first movement, *In the streets and by the wayside*, the animation and jollity of wayfarers mingle with the sound of the bells of horses and mules. The last two movements are played without pause. The sensuous nocturnal loveliness of the second, *The fragrance of the night*, gives way to the joyous march rhythms of the finale, *The morning of a fete day*, in which “bells and aubades announce the dawn and the world awakens to life.”

“Scenario for Orchestra” on Themes from “Show Boat” . . . JEROME KERN

(Born January 27, 1885, in New York; now living in Beverly Hills)

“Scenario for Orchestra” was written in July and August, 1941, in California. The scoring was completed in September.

The operetta “Show Boat,” from which the themes used in “Scenario for Orchestra” are drawn, was completed by Mr. Kern in 1929, and was first performed that year in New York City. The operetta was based on Edna Ferber’s novel of the same title. The lyrics were by Oscar Hammerstein.

“Scenario for Orchestra” owes its origin to the desire of Artur Rodzinski to present this music in a symphonic version that would benefit by the full expressive possibilities of the modern orchestra. Mr. Kern undertook the task of preparing such a version of his music in July. The sketches were completed in August, and the instrumentation in early September. The score is dedicated “to Artur Rodzinski with the grateful regards of Jerome Kern,” and contains the following motto, taken from a world broadcast by Winston Churchill: “The British Empire and the United States . . . together . . . I do not view the process with any misgivings. No one can stop it. Like the Mississippi, it just keeps rolling along. Let it roll . . . inexorable, irresistible, to broader lands and better days.”

The work begins softly with a statement by divided cellos of the legato melody which Mr. Kern has labeled “The Mississippi River (Natchez) in the late 1880’s.” A solo English horn sings the plaintive song of the negroes on the levee, “Misery’s Done Come”; and “Ol’ Man River,” which may be said to be the principal theme, appears quietly from violas and bass clarinet in octaves. There is a crash from the whole orchestra, and the tempo changes to *allegro*. Staccato motives represent roustabouts loading the sternwheel steamboats on the levee and the negroes singing at their work. The melody, “Can’t Help Lovin’ That Man,” sounds from a muted trumpet, introduces a section marked “Tempo di Blues” in which four saxophones play in close harmony over *pizzicato* strings. These themes are put to various uses. There is an imitation of the “Cotton Blossom’s” calliope. Themes of Magnolia and Ravenal are heard, rising to a full statement of their love song, “Only Make Believe.” The waltz measures of Magnolia’s avowal sweep through the orchestra. The music follows Magnolia and Ravenal to Chicago. The song, “Why Do I Love You?” is heard. Ecclesiastical measures represent the life of Magnolia’s daughter Kim in her convent school in Chicago. There is a return to the music of the opening, and much use is made of “Ol’ Man River.” On the final page of the score Mr. Kern has written the words “He jes’ keeps rollin’ alon’.”

Choral Union Concerts

GIOVANNI MARTINELLI, *Tenor*, and
EZIO PINZA, *Bass* Tuesday, November 18

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA . . . (Afternoon) Sunday, November 30
FREDERICK STOCK, *Conductor*

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Wednesday, December 10
SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY, *Conductor*

ROBERT CASADESUS, *Pianist* Monday, January 19

MINNEAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Tuesday, February 3
DIMITRI MITROPOULOS, *Conductor*

JOSEPH SZIGETI, *Violinist* Thursday, February 19

VRONSKY and BABIN, *Pianists* Tuesday, March 3

A limited number of tickets for the season or for individual concerts are still available.

Annual "Messiah" Concert

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY announces the annual "Messiah" concert, Sunday afternoon, December 14, at 4:15, in Hill Auditorium.

SOLOISTS

MARIE WILKINS, *Soprano*

ERNEST MCCHESENEY, *Tenor*

EDWINA EUSTIS, *Contralto*

DOUGLAS BEATTIE, *Bass*

PALMER CHRISTIAN, *Organist*

UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION

THOR JOHNSON, *Conductor*

Reserved seat tickets, including tax: Main floor, 55 cents; balconies 28 cents.

Now on sale at the offices of the University Musical Society, Burton Memorial Tower.

Chamber Music Festival

The SECOND ANNUAL CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL, consisting of three concerts, will be given January 23 and 24, in Rackham Lecture Hall.

THE ROTH STRING QUARTET

FERI ROTH, *Violin*

JULIUS SHAIER, *Viola*

RACHMAEL WEINSTOCK, *Violin*

OLIVER EDEL, *Violoncello*

Series tickets, including tax, \$2.75 and \$2.20; single concerts, \$1.10.

Orders for tickets for any of these concerts should include self-addressed stamped envelope, and should be mailed to University Musical Society, Charles A. Sink, President, Burton Memorial Tower, Ann Arbor, Michigan.