

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

CHARLES A. SINK, PRESIDENT

HARDIN VAN DEURSEN, CONDUCTOR

Extra Concert No. 5

1946-1947

Complete Series 2946

ALEC TEMPLETON

Pianist

FRIDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 21, 1947, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

- The King's Hunt JOHN BULL (Old English)
- Gigue JOHN BULL
- Le Petit poulet RAMEAU
- Prelude and Fugue in E major (Book II) BACH
- Chaconne BACH-BUSONI

- Nocturne in F major CHOPIN
- Toccata on a Northumbrian Tune HOLST
- La Terrasse des audiences au clair de lune } DEBUSSY
- Poisson d'or }
- Three Characteristic Etudes TEMPLETON

INTERMISSION

- Humoresque (Reharmonized) DVORAK-TEMPLETON
 - Zampa's No Grampa
 - Improvisation
 - Five Notes
 - Tea for Two or Two in One
 - Improvisation
 - Four in One
- } TEMPLETON

NOTE.—The University Musical Society has presented Alec Templeton on previous occasions as follows: February 26, 1942; February 25, 1943, and March 29, 1946.

Mr. Templeton uses the Steinway piano, which is the official concert instrument of the University Musical Society.

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

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

By ALEC TEMPLETON

The King's Hunt JOHN BULL (Old English)
Gigue JOHN BULL

The atmosphere of these all-too-rarely heard pieces is entirely typical of—John Bull! The merry tune, developed as a series of theme and variations, gives off the very flavor of old England. I seem to see John Bull himself, sitting down at the harpsichord to improvise a madrigal air. Since the work is very short, I repeat more often than is indicated.

Le Petit poulet RAMEAU

Here is a splendid example of program (or descriptive) music, as well as of humor in music, both launched in orthodox classical idiom. The interesting thing about the fun of the great classicists is that, no matter what they did, they never forgot *form*! This piece is written in two parts, like the early sonatas; and through it all, the little hen keeps on cackling — the only hen, to my knowledge, who cackles in sonata form! Perhaps she will lay an egg? Ah, in the parlance of today, that means something unsuccessful. But since this is a classic hen, such is not the case. It is an eminently successful egg!

Prelude and Fugue in E major (Book II) BACH

These wonderful works are far too rarely heard — I have never heard them except when the Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues are played in succession. Yet it would be hard to think of lovelier music! I have captioned it (with apologies to Browning), "Bach's at his clavichord, all's right with the world"! The Prelude sets a mood of happy serenity, preparing for the superb, prayerlike Fugue which, in its rapt piety, might serve as the *Dona Nobis* of a great Mass. Bach dedicated the *Well Tempered Clavichord* "To the Glory of God," and here we are admitted to the very heart of Bach, the essence of his religious fervor. When I have played this fugue, I feel as if I had said my prayers. Others must have felt the same, for in England it has been titled "The Saints in Glory." It is a wonderful fugue, both to play and to hear. From it one can study all there is to learn of the fugal form — and then one forgets study and simply enjoys it as sublime music. Particularly impressive is the gloriously simple ending. After all the intricate counterpoint, it closes on a plain air which, to me, suggests the words, "never, never be ashamed of love."

Chaconne BACH-BUSONI

I find it interesting to follow "pure" Bach with this masterly Bach arrangement. Certainly, Busoni ranks as the foremost of the Bach arrangers — perhaps these arrangements are his own best achievement. He manages to enrich Bach without diluting him! Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Chaconne, which was written as the

last movement of the Violin Partita in D minor. Busoni has worked organ richness into it, without "effects," without losing the violin line. Occasionally we hear the pure, "unpianisticated" violin, and the "arranged" parts take no liberties except to probe richnesses which the violin alone cannot reach. To me, this work is less an "arrangement" than a modern incarnation of Bach, representing all he *would* have written, had he had today's instrumental resources at his command. And it is marvelous to note how truly *modern* Bach was! His manuscripts frequently indicate held notes which he could not possibly achieve on the clavichord of his day. He must have foreseen the modern grand piano. Had he heard Busoni's arrangement of the Chaconne on a modern piano, I think he would have been entirely satisfied.

Nocturne in F major CHOPIN

I include this Nocturne in my program because I want to hear it again! It should be much better known, for it illustrates all the finest Chopin qualities. Full of warmth, of romantic yearning, and lyric loveliness, it is dramatic, too. The middle section suggests two people cowering together in a storm — and then the storm clears, and life is normal again.

Toccatà on a Northumbrian Tune GUSTAV HOLST

To my knowledge, this is Holst's only work for the piano. Like all his works, it reaches back to old folk airs. With his distinguished contemporary, Vaughan Williams, Holst was always keenly conscious of his British roots. Here he gives us an old folk theme, so like a jig that you want to dance to it — even as you play it! Its genuine folk-feeling stamps it as "genuine Holst."

La Terrasse des audiences au clair de lune }
 Poisson d'or CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Of all Debussy's vivid impressionism, these two works have always been the most striking to me. Moonlight and water! How strongly the Impressionists were influenced by out-of-doors nature, by rippling currents, by the sea! Debussy most of all was enthralled by them. Here you can actually see the shimmering moonbeams; you actually enter into the grand time the little fish is having, splashing about in his pool.

Three Characteristic Etudes TEMPLETON

These brief studies were a recent Christmas present to my dear wife. Although separate works, they need each other and belong together. The first, *Allegro energetico* (G minor) moves with a rapid pace, lustily yet quietly, and seems to call out to someone. The second, *Canzona* (C minor), moves more slowly, like a little song, and the interval of a second (or a secondary seventh) which voices the call in the first, is again suggested. The final *Presto* (G minor again) is a bright, brilliant *bravura*. I enjoy writing music for my wife!

LOTTE LEHMANN
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 26, 8:30

CHICAGO SYMPHONY
SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 7:00

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