

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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Sixth Concert

1950-1951

Complete Series 3041

Seventy-second Annual
Choral Union Concert Series

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
of London, England

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, *Conductor*

SUNDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 3, 1950, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

- Overture, "La Scala di Seta" ROSSINI
- Suite, "The Faithful Shepherd" HANDEL-BEECHAM
Introduction and Fugue Minuet
Adagio Pastoral
Gavotte Finale
Bourree
- Symphony No. 38 in D major, K. 504 ("Prague") MOZART
Adagio; allegro
Andante
Finale: presto

INTERMISSION

- Concerto for Violin and Orchestra DELIUS
Soloist: DAVID McCALLUM
- "The Last Sleep of the Virgin" MASSENET
- "Dance of the Seven Veils" from *Salome*, Op. 54 STRAUSS

Baldwin Piano Columbia and Victor Records

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

PROGRAM NOTES

Overture, "La Scala di Seta" ROSSINI

Only one of Rossini's thirty-eight operas survives in the repertoire of today—*The Barber of Seville*. Of the remainder, some seven or eight are vaguely remembered with respect and occasionally revived for brief seasons. The Overture to "La Scala di Seta" has now enjoyed some twenty years of full recognition. The opera seems to have been a failure. In view of the total disappearance of the work it is not easy to trace the reason for this; at all events the Overture is wholly delightful and is even in many ways one of Rossini's finest achievements. Although, like most of his work, light hearted and even perhaps superficial, this Overture shows Rossini's style to have developed such refinement and exquisite taste that the work must be set in a totally different category from the normal operatic "Sinfonia" of the period from which it sprang. The writing for the orchestra is virtuoso and requires masterly performance. The oboe part in particular borders at times on the "concertante." The music conforms in design to Rossini's customary procedure, there being a short introduction, followed by an *allegro* in abbreviated sonata form. There are, however, two irregularities—the first a brilliant violin descending passage before the opening *andante*; the second, a brief modulating development, which is the more charming for its unexpected intrusion.

Suite, "The Faithful Shepherd" HANDEL—BEECHAM

Sir Thomas Beecham published his Suite from Handel's opera "The Faithful Shepherd" in 1941 adding to the score the following note: "‘Il Pastor Fido’ or ‘The Faithful Shepherd’ was the second opera composed by Handel after his arrival in England. The first performance was given at Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket in 1712. The original version of ‘The Faithful Shepherd’ was exceedingly simple; most of the accompaniment was evidently left to the discretion of the harpsichord player, except for the violin melodies in unison with the voice and occasional counter-melodies for a solo cello."

The movements of the present Suite are drawn from both the original and the revised version of the production which under the circumstances contains an unusual number of suitable dance measures. Naturally the instrumentation has been completed and brought up to date, extracting the maximum variety of color suggested by the music, but consistent with the impeccable taste for which Sir Thomas is justly famous.

Symphony No. 38 in D major, K. 504 ("Prague") MOZART

In the autumn of 1786 Mozart received an invitation to visit the city of Prague on the strength of the immense success there of his most recent opera, *The Marriage of Figaro*. The almost overwhelming reception with which he was welcomed in Prague was therefore the more appreciated, and it was for this city that he composed the opera *Don Giovanni* the following year.

Sandwiched as it is between the two great operas, *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, the "Prague" Symphony naturally contains many elements of Mozart's operatic style. The Introduction, the longest by far that Mozart ever wrote, has tremendously dramatic, even tragic, qualities which anticipate the Overture to *Don Giovanni*. The first subject of the *Allegro* moreover, although itself suggestive of the corresponding section of the same work, also looks still further ahead to the fugato subject of the *Zauberflöte* Overture, not only in the style of its staccato repeated notes, but in the elaborate contrapuntal treatment which it undergoes. The unusual length of the exposition is due not only to the large number of vigorous transitional motifs but to the fact that although the necessary modulation has been effected, the opening theme, feeling that the ground has been insufficiently prepared for the second subject, instead reappears itself in full in the new key. The result of this prolongation, however, is to add enormously to the effect of the sublime second subject when it is finally introduced. It would scarcely be going too far to describe this melody as the most beautiful Mozart ever wrote and it is noteworthy that, conscious as he must have been of its value, Mozart never refers to it in the development, but reserves its pathos for a single re-appearance during the reprise where it makes an even more moving impression. As is usual with Mozart there is no coda, and the movement ends triumphantly with a soaring return of the legato opening phrase from the principal subject.

If the first movement was on an enormous scale, the Andante is only slightly less so. The main theme is itself in two sharply contrasted sections both of which contribute equally to the construction of the movement. These sections are easily recognizable since they follow each other directly during the opening bars, the first a suavely elegant melody, the second a staccato motif treated either canonically or for full strings in unison.

There is no Minuet and the symphony is often referred to on the continent as the Symphony in D "Without Minuet." Since, however, amongst Mozart's mature symphonies there are four in D, two with Minuets and two without, this well-meaning epithet seems less helpful than its intention. It was in fact by no means an inflexible rule with Mozart to include a Minuet in his symphonies, as a study of the six preceding works of the kind will show.

The present Symphony ends with a brilliant Finale which is surprisingly concise in comparison with the earlier movements. The initial theme, with its four-note figure so readily amenable to imitation, is the germ upon which the bulk of the movement is constructed. The music flows with great speed and energy, considerable fun being derived from the overwhelming contrast between the full tutti, resplendent with a strident timpani solo, and naively fragile ensemble passages played by a trio of flute and oboes.

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra DELIUS

Delius' work, more than that of almost any other composer, consists of tone-painting—the creation of an atmosphere through musical sound. The Violin Concerto was composed in 1916 and is generally regarded as the most successful since it makes so few concessions to the requirements of the title as to be little else than a true Delian rhapsodic work under a pseudonym.

Formally the Concerto is in three sections condensed so as to produce a single continuous movement. The opening Moderato is built on a large variety of themes but is dominated by the striking figure of the first subject announced already in the third bar by the solo violin. The softly swaying 6/4 slow movement is sandwiched between the two halves of this principal section and even makes a brief reappearance during the succeeding Allegretto. The violence of the tutti chords (marked *ffff*) which introduce this third section is most unexpected, but after a silent pause the soloist calmly embarks on the new movement with a gay semiquaver embroidery, while the theme itself is lightly stated by way of accompaniment. It is shortlived, however, and with a number of birdsong-like references to the opening figure of the work the music dies away into absolute calm.

"The Last Sleep of the Virgin" MASSENET

Massenet wrote three oratorios early in his career, "Marie Magdeleine," "Eve," and "La Vierge." They are admittedly of lesser interest than the great operas which followed them and on which Massenet's reputation securely rests. Nevertheless they contain certain passages of great beauty such as the Prelude to the fourth scene of "La Vierge." The scene is entitled "L'Assomption" and the excerpt ("Le Dernier sommeil de la Vierge") is a deeply moving piece for muted string orchestra based on a single extended melody given mainly to solo violin and solo cello in octaves.

"Dance of the Seven Veils" from *Salome*, Op. 54 STRAUSS

When Strauss' *Salome* appeared in 1905 it evoked a storm of abuse from every side. This was understandable since not only was there at that time a universal ban on the presentation of biblical scenes on the stage, but the opera is a direct and highly graphic setting of Oscar Wilde's extremely depraved and provocative drama. Nevertheless Strauss, whose genius throughout his life always rose to the grotesque, filled the score with some of his most inspired ideas, and with the passing of time and with it the removal of prejudice and narrow-mindedness, the work has come to be accepted as one of the finest of all Strauss' masterpieces.

The "Dance of the Seven Veils" was actually the last section of the opera to be completed. The dance is a symphonic structure made from the principal themes of the opera. After a savage quasioiential introduction the movement begins slowly, and stealthily works up through the music of Salome's love for Jokanaan, to the final frenzy when Salome, the last veil discarded, flings herself at Herod's feet.

CONCERTS

(All concerts begin at 8:30 p.m.)

ERICA MORINI, *Violinist* Thursday, January 11

PROGRAM:

Largo	VIVALDI-CORTI
Variations on a Theme of Corelli	TARTINI
Concerto No. 5 in A major, K. 219	MOZART
Sonata in F-sharp major, No. 2	WEINER
Ritmo di tango	CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO
Spanish Dance No. 1	SARASATE
Spanish Dance No. 8	SARASATE

DON COSSACK CHORUS Monday, January 15

SERGE JAROFF, *Conductor* (Extra Series)

HOROWITZ, *Pianist* Friday, January 19

CINCINNATI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Tuesday, February 20

THOR JOHNSON, *Conductor* (Extra Series)

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Sunday, March 4

RAFAEL KUBELIK, *Conductor*

HEIFETZ, *Violinist* Wednesday, March 14

Messiah

First Concert Saturday, December 9, 8:30 P.M.

Repeat Concert Sunday, December 10, 2:30 P.M.

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MISCHA SCHNEIDER, *Violoncello*

Season Tickets: \$3.60 and \$2.40

Single Concerts: \$1.80 and \$1.20

For tickets or for further information, please address: Charles A. Sink, President, University Musical Society, Burton Memorial Tower.

1951 MAY FESTIVAL. Orders for season tickets are being accepted and filed in sequence—Remaining unclaimed seats in Block A, \$12.00; Block B, \$10.80; Block C, \$9.60—at University Musical Society, Charles A. Sink, President, Burton Memorial Tower.