

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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Third Concert

1952-1953

Complete Series 3089

Seventy-fourth Annual
Choral Union Concert Series

DANISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA
of the State Radio

ERIK TUXEN, *Conductor*
Royal Patronage of King Frederik IX

THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 13, 1952, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture to *Euryanthe* WEBER
Symphony No. 5, Op. 50 (1922) CARL NIELSEN
Tempo giusto; adagio
Allegro; presto; andante un poco tranquillo; allegro

INTERMISSION

Symphonic Dances, Nos. 1, 2, 4, Op. 64 GRIEG
Suite from "The Firebird" STRAVINSKY
Introduction
The Firebird and Her Dance
Round of the Princesses
Infernal Dance of King Kastchei
Lullaby
Finale

RCA Victor Records

The Steinway is the official piano of the University Musical Society.

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

PROGRAM NOTES

By DAVID HALL

Overture to *Euryanthe* . . . CARL MARIA VON WEBER (1786-1826)

Weber's opera, *Euryanthe*, whose story-line stems from a medieval romance of conjugal fidelity put to a test, is remembered today only for its stunningly effective overture. Nearly 130 years have passed since this fiery and colorful piece was first heard, but it still retains its stirring vitality and lyrical freshness. Small wonder it is that conductors everywhere have come to depend on the three great Weber overtures as curtain-raisers.

Symphony No. 5, Op. 50 (1922) . . . CARL NIELSEN (1865-1931)

Denmark's Carl Nielsen ranks with Jean Sibelius of Finland not only as the greatest symphonist of the Northern countries, but as one of the few great symphonists of the past fifty years. That his six symphonies have only now begun to achieve a degree of world recognition comparable to that accorded the seven of Sibelius has been due to a combination of circumstances too complex to be explained here.

Nevertheless, the very core of Nielsen's musical creation is to be found in his six symphonies, the greatest of which are the Symphony No. 3 ("Espansiva") (1911), Symphony No. 4 ("The Inextinguishable") (1916) and the Fifth Symphony (1922). Side by side with these monumental works, Nielsen produced a whole sheaf of smaller works. This ingratiating and unassuming aspect of Nielsen's musical personality is very much to the fore throughout the three movements of his youthful Little Suite for Strings, Op. 1. The Prelude is brief, yet intensely expressive in its lyricism. The Intermezzo is in lilting waltz measure; while the Finale is by turns lyrical and gayly spirited.

In the Fourth Symphony, called "The Inextinguishable," we come face-to-face with Nielsen in his most rugged and monumental aspect. Stylistically this music has its roots in the great heritage of Bach and the Viennese Classic masters; in the sights, sounds, and song of Nielsen's own Denmark; and in Nielsen's own profound feeling for Nature and his deeply humanistic outlook on life. The end result of all this in terms of listening experience is that one senses something very new and "modern" about it. In short, Nielsen at the peak of his creative powers served as a bridge between the musical romanticism of the nineteenth century and the linear polyphony which characterizes the symphonic writing of our own day.

Nielsen's Fourth Symphony was in a sense an expression of defiance against the destructive forces let loose in World War I. In his Fifth Symphony, he seems to set forth the same message, but this time on a far broader canvas. While the element of conflict again reaches cosmic proportions in the first movement, the element of lyrical expression and of Nature poetry is present to a far more prominent and intense degree.

The music of the Fifth Symphony is cast in two tremendous movements. The first movement opens in a vein of idyllic tranquillity; but soon disturbing elements infiltrate the musical texture and the quietly insistent rhythm of a snare drum is heard. At once the music begins a new and foreboding course; but before this is carried to any conclusive point, the chief lyrical elements of the movement assert themselves. As this episode reaches its climax, a stern proclamation by the trombones heralds a bitter-end conflict, this time with the snare drum as the disrupting factor. At the very height of the furor, the snare drum is directed by the composer to improvise and in so doing, to make every possible effort to destroy the continuity of the orchestral texture, which

soon overwhelms him with a blaze of melodic glory. Out of all this emerges a singularly poignant epilogue for solo clarinet and strings; but at the very last, it is the sinister rhythm of the snare drum in the distance that has the last word.

The second movement is complex in its organization and texture and kaleidoscopic in its richness and warmth of orchestral coloring. It is a hymn to the very joy of living after the bitter strife that went before. It signalizes, in the words of Washington critic, Alice Eversman, "the final victory of the incorruptibles and the unafraid."

Symphonic Dances Nos. 1, 2, and 4, Op. 64 . EDVARD GRIEG (1843-1907)

Of Grieg's slim list of works scored for full orchestra, these Symphonic Dances constitute his most elaborate effort in that medium. The earlier Norwegian Dances, Op. 35, were written for piano duet and were orchestrated by another hand.

Only occasionally did Grieg ever make direct use of Norwegian folksong material in his music. However, all four of the Symphonic Dances stem from folk themes: No. 1 is a halling dance from Valdres; No. 2 is also a halling; while the final dance of the series is built on a pair of folk melodies, *Såg du nokke kjaeringa mi* and a wedding song from Valdres.

Suite from *The Firebird* IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-)

As has been the case with his great painter-contemporary, Picasso, Stravinsky has evolved creatively through a considerable variety of styles; and while certain phases of Stravinsky's music seem to appeal only to the ultra-sophisticates, other phases, such as that represented by the "Firebird" and "Petrouchka" ballets exert a universal fascination on listeners everywhere. So it is, too, with Picasso's "Blue" and "Classic" period paintings and drawings.

The Firebird marked Stravinsky's first international success as composer and was set to paper at a time when he was still under the spell of his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakoff. However, in the fiercely exciting rhythms and dissonances of the "Dance of King Kastchei," the road to "Petrouchka" and to the great "Rite of Spring" appears plainly before us.

The story of "The Firebird" comes right out of Russian folk legend, and in the "Round of the Princesses" and the "Finale" makes use of actual folk melody. The ballet depicts the rescue by Prince Ivan Tsarevich of the maidens and heroes that have fallen into the clutches of the ogre, Kastchei the Deathless. With the help of the wondrous Firebird, Ivan learns the secret of Kastchei's life force; and by destroying this, frees all the captives of the ogre, and amid festive jubilation weds the loveliest of the twelve princesses that had heretofore been under Kastchei's spell.

CONCERTS

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

VLADIMIR HOROWITZ, <i>Pianist</i>	Wednesday, November 19
CLAUDIO ARRAU, <i>Pianist</i> (Extra Series)	Tuesday, November 25
BIDU SAYAO, <i>Soprano</i>	Monday, December 1
VIENNA CHOIR BOYS	Friday, January 16
MINNEAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	Thursday, February 12
ANTAL DORATI, <i>Conductor</i>	
HEIFETZ, <i>Violinist</i> (Extra Series)	Tuesday, February 17
GERSHWIN CONCERT ORCHESTRA	Monday, March 2
ARTUR RUBINSTEIN, <i>Pianist</i>	Thursday, March 12
BOSTON "POPS" ORCHESTRA (Extra Series)	Monday, March 23
ARTHUR FIEDLER, <i>Conductor</i>	
BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	Tuesday, May 19
CHARLES MUNCH, <i>Conductor</i>	

Single Concerts: \$2.50—\$2.00—\$1.50

(Boston Symphony only: \$3.00—\$2.50—\$2.00—\$1.50)

Messiah

First Concert: Saturday, December 6, 8:30 P.M.

Repeat Concert: Sunday, December 7, 2:30 P.M.

NANCY CARR, *Soprano*

DAVID LLOYD, *Tenor*

EUNICE ALBERTS, *Contralto*

JAMES PEASE, *Bass*

UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION AND ORCHESTRA

MARY McCALL STUBBINS, *Organist*

LESTER McCOY, *Conductor*

Tickets (either performance): 70 cents and 50 cents

Chamber Music Festival

Three concerts, February 20, 21, and 22, 1953.

BUDAPEST STRING QUARTET

JOSEF ROISMAN, *Violin*

BORIS KROYT, *Viola*

JAC GORODETZKY, *Violin*

MISCHA SCHNEIDER, *Violoncello*

Season Tickets: \$3.50 and \$2.50

Single Concerts: \$1.75 and \$1.25

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