

1960

Eighty-second Season

1961

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Charles A. Sink, President

Gail W. Rector, Executive Director

Lester McCoy, Conductor

Tenth Concert

Eighty-second Annual Choral Union Series

Complete Series 3315

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

WALTER SUSSKIND, *Conductor*

Guest Artist:

ILONA KOMBRINK, *Soprano*

WEDNESDAY EVENING, MARCH 15, 1961, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture, "The Consecration of the House," Op. 124 . . . BEETHOVEN

Poème de l'amour et de la mer, Op. 19 . . . CHAUSSON
ILONA KOMBRINK

Symphonic Ode . . . JOHN WEINZWEIG

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 2 in D minor, Op. 70 . . . DVOŘÁK
Allegro maestoso
Poco adagio
Scherzo: vivace; pro meno mosso
Finale: allegro

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

Overture, "The Consecration of the House,"

Op. 124 LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

The story of this overture casts a few sidelights on Beethoven's "Journey to Parnassus." It begins, really, with the *Ruins of Athens*, a festival play by Kotzebue commissioned for the opening of a theatre at Budapest in 1812. Beethoven contributed incidental pieces, including a light overture—"a little recreation piece" he called it in retrospect. At that time opera was almost outside his line of vision. As Paul Baker sagely observed, "Beethoven was not a simple but a critical observer . . . he weighed and measured when he was expected merely to accept and illustrate"; and it was the heroic figure, rather than some individual, dramatically torn between temperament and circumstance, which captured his musical imagination. This heroic figure, since Beethoven's genius tended increasingly to abstraction, became in his latest works a statement of faith; and the evolution may be traced through a succession of overtures—music in which dramatic themes have been released from the compulsion of events "on stage," and even the symphonic treatment of opposing themes can be dispensed with.

Die Weihe des Hauses brings this process to a climax. The overture was composed as part of an adaptation of the *Ruins of Athens* for the ceremonial opening of the Josephstadter Theatre in 1822. Its resemblance to the Ninth Symphony is at once apparent: both works provide "the end and crown" of a life's work in contrasting forms; they appeared on the same program at the symphony's premiere.

Several features of this "exceptionally solemn and spiritual piece of music" gain added interest down the perspective of years. Trombones are used in the majestic introduction but, characteristically, are then discarded. For Beethoven they belonged to the department of special effects. At once serious and festive, the overture makes its ringing declaration in the key of C—a matter of importance for this composer who felt acutely about keys and their relations (for him C major and C minor were more closely allied than the theorists would have us believe). When woodwinds declare the slow-pacing melody which later swells into a veritable anthem, we are attending a kind of ritual: Beethoven is aware of the strength which he not only possesses but is able to impart to others. One last point deserves mention. The composer several times referred to this work as the "Overture in Handel's Style." He must have realized that the motif on which the whole of the Allegro is built derives from five notes corresponding to those of the words 'is the king of . . .' in the phrase, 'He is the King of Glory,' in the chorus, 'Lift up your heads,' in Handel's Messiah.

Poème de l'amour et de la mer, Op. 19 ERNEST CHAUSSON

Ernest Chausson (1855–99) was a healthy, wealthy, happily married man who won the genuine affection of those he most admired; yet his creative life was cast in the minor mood. A yearning for the unattainable, and eloquent sighs for the passing of love, mark the best of his music and dictate his choice of poems for songs. In vain have critics and biographers sought for evidence of secret sorrows or unending regrets. The composer, commenting on his own melancholy, was inclined to lay the blame—if such were needed—on early readings of Balzac and Stendhal. "In the situation in which I had the good fortune to be" (he wrote) "books full of wit and finesse can be very dangerous. In a clearly defined situation the straightest, the least cautious and the least clever way of life is actually the cleverest and the safest." These words of wisdom are reflected in his music which for the most part seeks to define an intuition or sentiment with perfect clarity.

Strange that the *Poem of Love and the Sea* is heard so seldom! It shares with the famous *Poème* for Violin and Orchestra a place among the stars of Impressionism, and may have provided a springboard for some other major works—notably the *Swan of Tuonela*. For a first performance at Brussels, Feb. 21, 1893, Chausson suggested that each song be given a subtitle. Boucher's poem he considered "hermetic," and "it is true that one must at least understand the general meaning which bears a Carrière-like imprint." Here is the outline:

- I. La Fleur des Eaux
Pressentiment—Rencontre—l'Adieu
Interlude
- II. La Mort de l'Amour
En mer—l'Oubli—Epilogue

On this occasion the composer provided a piano accompaniment for the singer, Desire Demest, omitting the orchestral interlude, which (he wrote) "I would be too much afraid to play." Chausson was not unlike Brahms in his relish of understatement. It would have been too obvious to ask just how one transfers the lonely eloquence of an English horn to a keyboard.

A full scale performance of the work, given at Paris some time later, fell victim to the animosity of critics who associated Chausson with Cesar Franck's circle. Unkindness verged upon sheer brutality in the case of the writer for *Figaro*, who apparently could not endure to the end, for he made no mention of "the last song, which Chausson had modestly entitled *Epilogue*. It is none other than the famous *Le Temps des Lilacs*, to-day the most frequently performed of all his songs."

Miss Ilona Kombrink, of Toronto, appeared previously in Ann Arbor under the auspices of the University Musical Society at the 1959 May Festival, as soloist in Handel's oratorio, Solomon.

Symphonic Ode JOHN WEINZWEIG

John Weinzweig's *Symphonic Ode* was commissioned under a Canada Council grant by the Saskatoon Symphony; which meant writing for saxophones instead of horns (John was happy about that, being a saxophone player himself). It meant scoring so that the first flute could play piccolo, and figuring on few violas and no English horn. In this form the work was first heard in Saskatoon, March 22, 1959, directed by the composer. Other performances under precisely these conditions seemed unlikely; besides, the *Symphonic Ode* had elements in it which favored a larger group. So changes were made in the score resulting in a transformation of orchestral sound.

Mr. Weinzweig describes the work as "an extended movement of compressed symphonic proportions. The generating material appears as a dialogue of short motives over a passacaglia bass that erupts suddenly into a tutti exclamation. The principal theme is then declared, in impassioned mood, by violins, propelled by an ostinato bass with brass interjections. This theme reappears twice again, once inverted and the other time played backward. In between is a complex of themes and moods expressing a variety of temperaments, carried by such devices as canon, fugal and concerto techniques." The basic structure turns out to be that of a rondo with variations on an original theme (note the fugal exposition of a waltz for brass instruments).

John Weinzweig was chairman of the International Conference of Composers in Stratford last summer where his *Wine of Peace* was a notable success at the closing orchestral concert. Other of his works are: *The Edge of the World*, an orchestral piece based on Eskimo themes and *To These Lands over Yonder*, a choral work. Mr. Weinzweig has recently been awarded commissions from the American Wind Symphony of Pittsburgh and the Canada Council.

Symphony No. 2 in D minor, Op. 70 ANTONIN DVOŘÁK

Dvořák wrote to a friend in the early spring of 1885, "Everywhere I go I can think of nothing else but my work, which must be such as to shake the world, and with God's help it will do so." He had been greatly encouraged by recent successes in England. When the Albert Hall Choral Society engaged him to conduct his *Stabat Mater*, twelve thousand people attended the concert. In the same year (1884) Dvořák was elected an honorary member of the London Philharmonic Society and commissioned to write a new symphony.

With this noble Symphony in D minor, Dvořák made his most serious bid for a place among the immortals. In it he acknowledges a debt to Brahms and Wagner without departing very far from the structure and spiritual content of Beethoven. The music is tragic rather than genial, and whatever nationalistic overtones are sounded, they are quickly absorbed into the universally descriptive character of the piece.

All works on tonight's program are being performed for the first time in this series of Ann Arbor concerts (1879-1961).

MAY FESTIVAL

MAY 4, 5, 6, 7, 1961

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA AT ALL CONCERTS

PROGRAMS

THURSDAY, MAY 4, 8:30 P.M.

EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conductor*
BIRGIT NILSSON, *Soprano*

All-Wagner Program

Overture to *Die Meistersinger*
Elsa's Dream, from *Lohengrin*
Prelude to Act I, and Love-Death, from
Tristan and Isolde
Excerpts from *Die Götterdämmerung*:
Siegfried's Rhine Journey
Siegfried's Death and Funeral Music
Brunnhilde's Immolation
Closing Scene

BIRGIT NILSSON

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 8:30 P.M.

EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conductor*
ROBERT NOEHREN, *Organist*
JOHN BROWNING, *Pianist*

All-American Program

"Toccata Festiva" for Organ and
Orchestra BARBER
ROBERT NOEHREN
Symphony No. 7 PISTON
Concerto No. 2 in D minor, for Piano
and Orchestra MACDOWELL
Rhapsody in Blue GERSHWIN
JOHN BROWNING

FRIDAY, MAY 5, 8:30 P.M.

THOR JOHNSON, *Conductor*
UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION
and Boy Choir

Program

"JOAN OF ARC AT THE STAKE"

Dramatic oratorio—music by Arthur Honegger;
poem by Paul Claudel.

Joan of Arc VERA ZORINA
Brother Dominic HUGH NORTON

JANICE HARSANYI, *Soprano*
FRANCES GREER, *Soprano*
MARY MacKENZIE, *Mezzo-soprano*
DAVID LLOYD, *Tenor*
ARA BERBERIAN, *Bass*

Other speakers: Nancy Heusel,
Jerrold Sandler, and Marvin Diskin

SUNDAY, MAY 7, 2:30 P.M.

THOR JOHNSON, *Conductor*
UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION
JANICE HARSANYI, *Soprano*
MARY MacKENZIE, *Mezzo-soprano*
DAVID LLOYD, *Tenor*
WILLIAM WARFIELD, *Baritone*

Program

ELIJAH, a dramatic oratorio for
Chorus, Soloists, and Orchestra,
Op. 70 MENDELSSOHN
UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION and SOLOISTS

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2:30 P.M.

WILLIAM SMITH, *Conductor*
AARON COPLAND, *Guest Conductor*
ANSHEL BRUSLOW, *Violinist*
LORNE MUNROE, *Cellist*

Program

Overture to *Colas Breugnon* KABALEVSKY
Orchestral Variations COPLAND
Conducted by the composer
Concerto in A minor, Op. 102 BRAHMS
ANSHEL BRUSLOW and LORNE MUNROE
Suite, from *The Tender Land* COPLAND
Conducted by the composer
Suite No. 2 from the Ballet, *Daphnis*
and *Chloe* RAVEL

SUNDAY, MAY 7, 8:30 P.M.

EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conductor*
EUGENE ISTOMIN, *Pianist*

All-Rachmaninoff Program

Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14
Concerto No. 2 in C minor
Moderato
Adagio sostenuto
Allegro scherzando
EUGENE ISTOMIN
Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27
Largo; allegro moderato
Allegro molto
Adagio
Allegro vivace

Tickets: \$3.50—\$3.00—\$2.50—\$2.00—\$1.50

ZINO FRANCESCATTI, *Violinist* Tuesday, March 21

Program: Sonata No. 1 HANDEL
Andante and Allegro, from Sonata in C minor
(for violin alone) BACH
Sonata, Op. 94 *bis* PROKOFIEFF
Duo Concertante STRAVINSKY
"I Palpiti" PAGANINI

BUDAPEST QUARTET (Rackham Auditorium) 2:30 Sunday, March 26

CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA OF AMSTERDAM (Extra Series) Sunday, April 23

1961-1962 CHORAL UNION SERIES and EXTRA CONCERT SERIES—orders for season tickets accepted and filed in sequence beginning May 8, at which time the list of concerts will be available.

For tickets or information, address:
University Musical Society, Burton Memorial Tower.