

1961

Eighty-third Season

1962

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Charles A. Sink, President

Gail W. Rector, Executive Director

Lester McCoy, Conductor

Second Concert

Sixteenth Annual Extra Series

Complete Series 3335

The Cleveland Orchestra

GEORGE SZELL, *Conductor*

THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 16, 1961, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Symphony No. 92 in G major ("Oxford") HAYDN

Adagio; allegro spiritoso

Adagio

Menuetto

Presto

Concert Music for String Orchestra and

Brass Instruments, Op. 50 HINDEMITH

Massig schnell, mit Kraft (moderately fast, with force)

Lebhaft; langsam; lebhaft (lively; slow; lively)

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73 BRAHMS

Allegro non troppo

Adagio non troppo

Allegretto grazioso, quasi andantino

Allegro con spirito

NOTE.—The University Musical Society has presented The Cleveland Orchestra on twenty previous occasions since 1935.

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

Symphony No. 92 in G major, "Oxford" JOSEPH HAYDN

It was in the summer of 1791, at the conclusion of Haydn's first series of concerts in London, that he was invited to go to Oxford University to receive the degree of *Mus. Doc.* Haydn was hardly enthusiastic, and it is probable that he would have refused if his friend Dr. Burney had not done everything possible to bring the honor upon him. There can be no doubt that he was much pleased by this recognition from a foreign University and in his letters he added the title *Doctor zu Oxford* to his signature.

The "Oxford" symphony begins with an introductory *Adagio*, 3-4, which foreshadows the spirited first theme of the *Allegro spiritoso*, also in triple rhythm. The second theme, quietly announced in the dominant key by the violins, serves for the opening of the vigorous development. The recapitulation is freshly varied.

The second movement is an *Adagio* in D major, 2-4. The melody, first given to the violins, is played successively by flute and oboe. A contrasting division in D minor contains both agitated and songful measures. The opening section is newly elaborated upon its return, and there is a peculiarly original coda in which the theme of the middle part is softly sung by oboes and flute unaccompanied.

The minuet and its charming trio are full of those unexpected personal touches which make nearly every movement of Haydn surprising.

The finale, *Presto*, 2-4, beginning with one of Haydn's most fascinating themes, follows its totally unexpected course neither in sonata nor rondo form, but in that original mixture of the two which is so characteristic of Dr. Haydn.

Concert Music for String Orchestra and

Brass Instruments, Op. 50 PAUL HINDEMITH

It is a work like this, with its total lack of dependence on programmatic, literary, or pictorial references, that puts a large audience squarely up against its fundamental problem: how to listen and what to listen for. With the music of the past, even if it is not familiar, we have sufficient contact in matters of style to be able to "follow" enjoyably at first hearing, however much there may remain to be discovered at a second and third. But with a composition like the *Konzertmusik*, although it is already more than a quarter of a century old, most of us are still struck at first with a complexity that seems to discourage, with a weight of sound that seems to overwhelm.

The solution, or at least an approach to it, may be simpler than we suspect. Once it is realized that no work of substance gives up all of its secrets immediately, and that only repeated and intimate acquaintance will make us truly "possess" it, then we may at first allow ourselves to be swept along by the sheer tonal and rhythmic experience of the music, its auditory surface, and its basic pulse. It is frankly impossible for the majority of listeners at once to comprehend each theme, each relationship, and each transformation.

Hindemith was 35 when he composed the *Konzertmusik*, with a vast production already behind him. It must have been an act of self-confidence that he could abandon the assigning of opus numbers after this, his fiftieth work. Always ready to discover and exploit new media of sound, he juxtaposes here two orchestral "teams": the string choir (in which first and second violins are always on the same line), and the brass choir. He finds material which is characteristic of either, yet capable of combination or metamorphosis. He opposes and joins his sections; he contrasts them, allows them independence, and fuses them in vast polyphonic murals.

As the music opens, we hear a virile theme for the brasses, surrounded, as it were, by a totally different subject for the strings. The brass choir then has a subject of its own, perhaps derived from the hammering string figure of the beginning; it may be a prophecy of a theme in the "Mathis der Maler" prelude to come four years later. After the brasses close in striking harmonies, the string choir develops its material from Example 1, without the contrasting "interference." Both sections now join in working out the substance of Example 2; the strings introduce another development of their earlier material before a rhetorical cadence, quite literally a "fall." At this point the motion changes to "very broad, but flowing throughout," and we hear from the strings the theme which the brasses had declaimed at the outset in a slightly altered rhythm.

The second movement again links the centuries in its vigorous fugue beginning; the theme is purely of string instrument character, and the brasses take part only in its "head." But then occurs a curious thing. The head of the fugue theme takes on an

alternate shape, as a fragment that reminds inescapably of the "Blues" and specifically of a phrase made world-famous by Gershwin.

There follows a brilliant melody for the strings; the "oom-pah" accompaniment from the brass is much more subtly handled than is customary in the band music which this section distantly resembles. Above the head of the fugue theme, hinted at by the horns, the violins offer a tender melody which will, however, soon regain vigor. The fugue returns, with dramatic pile-ups of brass sonorities and inventive developments of previous material. A lively coda is largely based on the rhythm of the "band" section and on the "Blues" fragment. The work comes to a powerful close, again solidly planted on the tonality of D-flat.

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73 JOHANNES BRAHMS

From the very beginning of the first movement (*Allegro non troppo*, D major, 3/4), we sense that a solid wisdom animates the graceful flowing of this music. In his invaluable *Essays in Musical Analysis*, Donald Francis Tovey devotes more than three pages to this movement alone, demonstrating the ingenious progression and relationship of the themes; he shows us what a master lesson in composition Brahms has provided. But even without so thorough a study, we can recognize the mastery by the way in which the technique serves the music, never the other way round. If we fix in our minds the motive or "germ cell" played at the outset by the cellos and basses, we shall find it permeating the entire texture, animating several of the subjects, and forming a kind of motto idea for the movement. We shall allow ourselves to be swept along by the gorgeous "second theme" in F-sharp minor, first sung by cellos and violas. Those of us who know the "Horn Trio," Op. 40, will be struck by the many sonorities here which recall that glorious composition. How subtle are the syncopated chords in the woodwinds during the last reminders of the motto at the close!

The elusive character of the slow movement (*Adagio non troppo*, B major, 4/4) has often been remarked upon. The four principal themes seem to be stated by inference more than with emphasis; at moments, we hardly know whether to listen to the melodies themselves or to their counter-subjects, whether to pay greater attention to themes or to textures. As Tovey put it in 1902, "it is never the complexity of Brahms that makes him difficult for us; it is simply his originality. And this slow movement is intensely original."

We may be sure that the third movement (*Allegretto grazioso, quasi andantino*) is much simpler in sound and outward appearance than it actually is, and a much larger structure than one would suspect from casual acquaintance. One could describe it as a variant of the classical minuet or scherzo with two trios. The graceful oboe melody accompanied by pizzicato cellos finds itself suddenly transformed into a new subject, *Presto ma non assai*. To recognize the disguise at once is one of the pleasures enjoyed by the astute listener. This is not the only transformation, however; the opening theme is inverted and altered in yet more fanciful ways, with some declamatory statements in the composer's favorite Phrygian mode, and some sharply accented rhythms in the Hungarian manner. Nor is it far, at one point, to the atmosphere of Mendelssohn's scherzos with their elfin whispers and mysterious horn calls. And how Schubertian are the major-minor alternations that pervade the movement! The close, perhaps, partakes of a "second naiveté."

If there can be no question as to the intentional sorcery wrought upon the themes of the *Allegretto*, one may take the risk of claiming that the finale subject (*Allegro con spirito*, D major, *alla breve*) is a not too distant blood-relative of the motto from the first movement. Consciously or not, the composer may have wished to round out the symphony by returning to the basic shapes with which he had begun the work.

There are hints of this relationship also later in the movement, in a "quintessential" section marked *tranquillo*. Yet to the ear, the whole piece represents perhaps the most vivacious and brilliant finale in the whole output of Brahms; there is nothing since the symphonic finales of Haydn that matches the healthy vigor and irresistible impetus of this music. Syncopations and off-accented abound, and the contrast between the brilliant explosions of brasses and the quietly mysterious ruminations of winds and strings produces a unique sense of urgency. The composer's inventive and constructive skills are here at their highest; nothing, not even the wildly revolving scale passages, is arbitrary in choice and effect, and the most genuine vitality infuses the entire complex structure. When, at the end, it is the second theme which is declaimed by horns and trumpets and then virtually trilled by trumpets, horns, and winds, with the trombones blasting out the D major triad, it would be a dull hearer indeed who could fail to be rejuvenated by such triumphant exhilaration.

1961 — UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY CONCERTS — 1962

Rackham Auditorium

Chamber Music Festival

THE JUILLIARD QUARTET Friday, February 23, 8:30 P.M.
Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 103 HAYDN
Quartet No. 5 BARTÓK
Quartet in D minor, "Death and the Maiden," Op. posth. SCHUBERT

THE EGER PLAYERS Saturday, February 24, 8:30 P.M.
Horn Trio, Op. 40, in E-flat major BRAHMS
Variations on "Ich bin der Schneider Kakadu," Op. 121a BEETHOVEN
Elegy POULENC
Elegy for Mippy I LEONARD BERNSTEIN
Overture on Hebrew Themes, Op. 34 PROKOFIEFF-EGER

BEAUX ARTS TRIO Sunday, February 25, 2:30 P.M.
Trio in E-flat major, Op. 1, No. 1 BEETHOVEN
Trio in A minor RAVEL
Trio in C major, Op. 87 BRAHMS

Series Tickets: \$5.00 and \$4.00

Single Concerts: \$2.50 and \$2.00

Special Chamber Music Concert

RICHARD DYER-BENNET, *Classical Folk Singer*—Saturday, January 13, 8:30 P.M.

Tickets: \$2.50 and \$2.00

Hill Auditorium

All concerts begin at 8:30 unless otherwise indicated.

GALINA VISHNEVSKAYA, *Soprano* Tuesday, November 21
RUDOLF SERKIN, *Pianist* Monday, November 27
EMIL GILELS, *Pianist* Tuesday, February 13
BOSTON POPS TOUR ORCHESTRA 2:30, Sunday, February 18
MINNEAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 2:30, Sunday, March 4
LEONTYNE PRICE, *Soprano* Monday, March 12
AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE Saturday, March 24

Tickets: \$4.00—\$3.50—\$3.00—\$2.25—\$1.50

Annual Christmas Concerts

MESSIAH (Handel) 8:30, Saturday, December 2
2:30, Sunday, December 3

ILONA KOMBRINK, *soprano*

ARA BERBERIAN, *bass*

ELAINE BONAZZI, *contralto*

MARY MCCALL STUBBINS, *organist*

RICHARD MILLER, *tenor*

LESTER MCCOY, *conductor*

UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION AND UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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