

1965

Eighty-seventh Season

1966

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Charles A. Sink, President

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Fifth Program

Eighty-seventh Annual Choral Union Series

Complete Series 3491

The Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra

KIRIL KONDRASHIN, *Conductor*

Soloist

MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH, *Cellist*

MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 15, 1965, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90 BRAHMS

Allegro con brio
Andante
Poco allegro
Allegro

Variations on a Rococo Theme for Cello
and Orchestra, Op. 33 TCHAIKOVSKY

MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH

INTERMISSION

Don Quixote—Fantastic Variations on a Theme of
Knightly Character, Op. 35, for Cello and Orchestra . . . STRAUSS

MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH

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

PAUL AFFELDER

Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90 JOHANNES BRAHMS

Brahms was forty-three before he completed his First Symphony, the composition of which had occupied him off and on for more than fourteen years. The second Symphony followed only a year later, but there was a lapse of six years between the Second and Third, which was not finished until 1883.

The Third Symphony had its first performance on December 2, 1883, at a concert of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Hans Richter conducting. Though Wagner had died that year, the fierce Wagner-Brahms feud had not subsided in the least. Some of the more fanatical members of the Wagner cult attended the première of Brahms' Third Symphony and tried to ruin the performance by hissing loudly between the movements. The conflict of the two factions almost brought about a duel between a Brahmin and a Wagnerite. But the enthusiastic ovation accorded the new work was more than sufficient to drown out the hisses.

There is a close connection between the musical content of the Third Symphony and the circumstances of its second performance. Some thirty years earlier, Brahms met the Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim and the two became fast friends. The two young men formed a sort of two-member club that included practically everything but a secret handshake. Joachim, who was two years older than Brahms, had already established himself in the musical world, and he was able to give his colleague some valuable advice concerning publishers and the business of giving concerts. In return, Brahms taught Joachim to smoke. When their activities kept them apart the two musicians corresponded under romantic pseudonyms and sent each other counterpoint exercises for correction.

Joachim had adopted a motto consisting of the notes F-A-E; they stood for "frei aber einsam"—"free but lonely." Not to be outdone, Brahms took a motto of his own, changing Joachim's E to an F, so that his read "frei aber froh"—"free but happy." According to a count made by Robert Haven Schauflier, this F-A-F motto appears in no less than eleven of Brahms' compositions. Chief among these is the Third Symphony, where the motto has been altered to F-A-flat-F. In that form it appears at the very opening of the first movement and is heard a number of times throughout the score.

About two years before the appearance of the symphony, Brahms and Joachim had become estranged over some of the latter's marital difficulties. Some authorities believe that Brahms gave considerable prominence to this motto as a means of communicating to his old friend in music what he could not say in words. As a further attempt at reconciliation, the composer wrote to Joachim, asking if he would conduct the symphony for the first time in Berlin. When he accepted, Brahms was overjoyed.

Variations on a Rococo Theme for

Cello and Orchestra, Op. 33 PIOTR ILYITCH TCHAIKOVSKY

Tchaikovsky composed his Variations on a Rococo Theme in December of 1876, the same winter that also saw the completion of two of his better-known masterpieces, *Francesca da Rimini* and *Marche Slave*. The Variations did not receive a public performance until June 8, 1879, when they were played at a concert of the Deutsche Musikverein in Wiesbaden. The soloist was Tchaikovsky's friend Wilhelm Karl Friedrich Fitzenhagen, professor of cello at the Moscow Conservatory, first cellist of the orchestra of the Imperial Russian Musical Society, and a member of the quartet which gave the first performance of Tchaikovsky's String Quartet No. 2 in F major. After the première of the variations, Fitzenhagen, to whom the work is dedicated, wrote to Tchaikovsky telling of the great success the piece had enjoyed. One member of the Wiesbaden audience seems to have been particularly pleased with the variations, remarking afterwards, "This is indeed music!" His name was Franz Liszt.

The adjective "rococo," as applied to these variations, is an architectural term signifying an ornate style popular during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the original Italian, however, the word means "old-fashioned," and it was in this sense that Tchaikovsky intended it to be taken. The entire work has an antique air about it; both the theme and variations are treated in a style that is at once more simple and more ornate than one is accustomed to hear from the pen of this composer. Even the orchestration is conservative; besides the solo cello,

the scoring calls only for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns, plus the usual complement of strings. This is a smaller orchestra than Beethoven used for his First Symphony.

After several introductory measures, the theme is announced by the solo cello, following which it is subjected to seven variations, each of which is separated from its neighbors by a short refrain, or motto. The work has a brilliant closing section.

Don Quixote (Introduction, Theme with Variations, and Finale)

Fantastic Variations on a Theme of Knightly Character,

Op. 35, for Cello and Orchestra RICHARD STRAUSS

The eminent English critic Ernest Newman once referred to *Don Quixote* in these words: "For wit, humor, pathos and humanism there is nothing like it in the whole library of music. Certainly to anyone who knows Strauss' music, the story of Cervantes is henceforth inconceivable without it. The story itself, indeed, has not half the humor and the profound sadness which is infused into it by Strauss."

With his customary lavishness the composer asked for a rather large orchestra in *Don Quixote*. It consists of the following instruments: two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, six horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tenor tuba, bass tuba, kettledrums, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, wind machine, glockenspiel, harp, and a sizable complement of strings.

Another Strauss custom was to omit any written program for his works. Nevertheless, he eventually did write some notes on the work and its relation to Cervantes' novel. Based on the composer's notes, here is a brief summary of what transpires:

Don Quixote is in the form of an introduction, a theme with ten rather free variations, and a finale, played without pause. The Introduction sets the stage for the story, giving us a vague and confused picture of the equally vague and confused mind of Don Quixote. The announcement of the Theme introduces us to the two principal characters—the Don, portrayed by the solo cello, and his faithful squire Sancho Panza, first heard in the bass clarinet and tenor tuba but thenceforth in the solo viola.

Variation I brings us the encounter with the windmills, in which the unfortunate Knight is knocked down by one of the revolving sails.

Variation II is *The Victorious Battle Against the Host of the Great Emperor Alifanfaron*. Seeing a huge cloud of dust in the road, the crazed Don thinks it is a hostile army. The bleating in the muted brasses tells us saner mortals that it is nothing more nor less than a flock of frightened sheep, which our gallant hero promptly puts to rout.

Variation III is a discussion on chivalry between the high-minded Knight and his less educated, if more realistic, squire.

Variation IV brings the Don into violent contact with a group of pilgrims, who interrupt their religious chant long enough to knock him senseless after his attack on them.

In Variation V Don Quixote keeps a night-long vigil, and is rewarded by a vision of his beloved "maiden in distress," the lovely Dulcinea.

Variation VI brings onto the scene a homely country wench, whom the jesting Sancho Panza insists is Dulcinea. Finally convinced, the Don believes she has been thus transformed by black magic, and swears vengeance.

Variation VII is the famous ride through the air. The Knight and his squire are blindfolded and placed astride a wooden horse which, they are told, will take them on a Pegasus-like ride through the air. The high woodwinds and the whirring of the wind machine give the aural impression of flight; but this is accompanied by a low tremolo, indicating that the riders have never left terra firma.

In Variation VIII the Don discovers a leaky old boat which has drifted ashore. Seeking to use it to carry them across the stream, where they will find new adventure, our hero and his friend are nearly drowned when the boat capsizes. Barely reaching the shore, they offer up a prayer of thanks.

Variation IX begins with an ecclesiastical duet for two bassoons, representing two unfortunate monks, who are soon put to flight by the charging Knight, attacking under the delusion that they are evil magicians.

The Don's wild adventures come to an abrupt halt in Variation X, when he is finally vanquished by a friend, posing as the Knight of the White Moon. By the conditions of the encounter, the Don must cease his chivalric exploits for a year.

The Finale is an eloquent and deeply moving musical picture of the dying Don Quixote. Having once again regained his senses, he atones for his apparent misdeeds, dictates his will, and quietly expires on the soft descending glissando of the solo cello.

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

All presentations are at 8:30 P.M. unless otherwise noted.

In Hill Auditorium

- MOSCOW PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** Tuesday, November 16
EVGENI SVETLANOV, Conductor
IGOR OISTRAKH, Violin Soloist
Program: Prelude to "Khovanstchina" (Moussorgsky-Shostakovich); Symphonic Dances, Op. 45 (Rachmaninoff); Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in E minor (Mendelssohn); and "La Mer" (Debussy).
- "Carmen" (Bizet)—N.Y. City Opera Co. Saturday, November 20
- "Pagliacci" and "Cavalleria Rusticana"—
 N. Y. CITY OPERA CO. (2:30) Sunday, November 21
- "Barber of Seville" (Rossini)—N.Y. CITY OPERA CO. Sunday, November 21
- GRAND BALLET CLASSIQUE DE FRANCE** Tuesday, November 23
Program includes: "Giselle" (complete)—Ballet pantomime in two acts.
- MESSIAH (Handel)** Friday, December 3
 Saturday, December 4
 (2:30) Sunday, December 5
- Soloists:* BENITA VALENTE, *Soprano* STANLEY KOLK, *Tenor*
 DORIS MAYES, *Mezzo-Soprano* MALCOLM SMITH, *Bass*
- PHYLLIS CURTIN, Soprano** Thursday, January 20
- RUMANIAN FOLK BALLET** Wednesday, February 16
- MONTE CARLO NATIONAL ORCHESTRA** Saturday, February 26
PAUL PARAY, Conductor
MICHEL BLOCK, Piano Soloist
- RUDOLF SERKIN, Pianist** Monday, March 7
- NATIONAL BALLET, from Washington, D.C.** (2:30) Sunday, March 27

In Rackham Auditorium

- HERMANN PREY, Baritone** Wednesday, February 2
Program: Twelve Songs from "Kerner-Lieder" (Schumann)
 Twelve Songs from "Mörike-Lieder" (Wolf)
- VIENNA OCTET** Tuesday, March 1
- I SOLISTI VENETI** Wednesday, March 16
- CHICAGO LITTLE SYMPHONY** Thursday, March 31

- CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL** February 18, 19, (2:30) 20
 New York Chamber Soloists, including ADELE ADDISON, *Soprano*; and
 CHARLES BRESSLER, *Tenor*.

Series Tickets: \$7.00—\$5.00—\$4.00
 Single Concerts: \$4.00—\$3.00—\$2.00

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 December 1.

For tickets and information, address
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