

1967

Eighty-ninth Season

1968

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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Third Concert

Eighty-ninth Annual Choral Union Series

Complete Series 3588

Forty-fourth program in the Sesquicentennial Year of The University of Michigan

Vienna Symphony Orchestra

WOLFGANG SAWALLISCH, *Conductor*

THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 19, 1967, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

Symphony No. 6 in C major SCHUBERT

Adagio, allegretto
Andante
Scherzo
Allegro moderato

Concerto à ballo ALFRED UHL

(Dedicated to The Vienna Symphony Orchestra and Wolfgang Sawallisch)

Giusto, con delicatezza
Viva, molto allegro e leggero
Sostenuto
Presto

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 BEETHOVEN

Allegro con brio
Andante con moto
Scherzo: allegro
Finale: allegro

Vienna Symphony Orchestra: Epic, Vox, Westminster, Deutsche Grammophon, Lyric, Philips, Period, Everest, Richmond, Bach Guild Records

Wolfgang Sawallisch: Angel, Epic, and Philips Records

PROGRAM NOTES

Symphony No. 6 in C major FRANZ SCHUBERT

A certain type of academic criticism has never ceased to call attention to the constructive weakness of Schubert's instrumental works, and to his lack of musical education that resulted in stiff, inelastic forms, extended repetitions, short development sections, and a lack of contrapuntal treatment of material. What this kind of criticism fails to recognize is that every major work Schubert left us is, in a sense, an early work. He died at the age of 31, having produced in the incredibly short creative period of eighteen years over one thousand works. Who knows what perfection he might have achieved had he lived to his full artistic maturity.

It is no defense of his weaknesses to note that in Schubert there are no artful concealments of art, no artistic artifices to cover his failures. With all the natural faults of youthful expression, where is there to be found such honest statement, such exuberance and irresistible gaiety of spirit; where in art are there so many effects discovered with so few means detected? With disconcerting naïveté, how gently but firmly this artless art of his defies the probe.

This work is known as Schubert's "Little" C-major Symphony to distinguish it from the far larger work in the same key known as the "Great" C-major Symphony, which was written ten years later.

The Sixth Symphony was composed in 1818 for a society of amateur musicians that may have performed it then. The first public performance, however, was given in Vienna in 1828.

The first movement opens with a solemn *Adagio*, the dramatic chords of which lead to the ensuing cheerful *Allegretto* that offers a flowing melody so typical of Schubert.

The lovely theme of the *Andante* is developed in a set of free variations, some of which are quite dramatic.

Following Beethoven's lead, Schubert calls his third movement *Scherzo*, which rhythmically and harmonically also is reminiscent of Beethoven.

The finale, marked *Allegro moderato*, is a joyous *rondo*, showing the influence of Rossini, also one of Schubert's idols.

Concerto à ballo ALFRED UHL

Alfred Uhl, born in 1909 in Vienna, is one of the leading Austrian composers of our time. Since 1945 he has taught composition at the State Musical Academy in Vienna. In 1960 he was awarded the first Austrian state prize (merit prize), in 1961 the music prize of the City of Vienna and since 1963 he has been a member of the Austrian Senate of Arts.

His works, which include all kinds of music, tend in every way to transparency, mobility, clarity, and humor. Among the interpreters of his orchestral works are such prominent names as Clemens Krauss, Wilhelm Furtwaengler, Hans Knappertsbusch, Sergiu Celibidache, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Heinz Wallberg, and others.

His most representative works are the oratorio *Gilgamesh* (Summerian epic); the lively cantata for soli, choir, and orchestra on poems by Wilhelm Busch, Christian Morgenstern, and Joachim Ringelnatz, *He, who is lonely, is well off* (*Wer einsam ist, der hat es gut*); and the opera *The Mysterious Mr. X* (book by Theo Lingen).

The *Concerto à ballo* is his latest work. It was composed in 1966 and is dedicated to the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and its conductor Wolfgang Sawallisch "in sincere admiration and with all the best wishes for their 1967 world tournée."

The melodious and dancing tunes of the *Concerto à ballo* are the characteristic features of the composition. This work in four sections is not based on a definite program, however; the musical assertion is always primary. Certainly, it will always be possible to associate the music with some kinds or forms of dances, but, in this respect, it is the imagination of the listener which has to interpret and to decide.

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 . . . LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Those who believe that a great piece of music is simply profoundly felt emotion poured out under the immediate impact of events or experience that generate that emotion have been persistent in their attempts to read specific meaning into this work. Beethoven's noble music has been constantly dragged from its Empyrean heights to dwell in the world of the commonplace, by imposing upon it an extramusical content.

All of this is, of course, an insult to the very spirit of music. Such imaginings tie it down to finite things, and music should not be thus bound. What poverty of mind and little understanding of the psychical processes by which a significant piece of music comes into being is revealed by such attempts to make the most evasive and ephemeral of all the arts finite and specific. "Music," writes Ernest Newman, "is simply air in motion, and though the sound symbols written down by the composer at a particular time may have taken the form and color they did because of some volcanic experience of his in the outer world, or some psychological change within himself at that or some earlier time, it is always dangerous to try to read into the notes an expression of that experience."

The first movement of the Fifth Symphony is dominated by a rhythmic four-note figure that probably has a wider recognition than any other theme or technical device in the whole world of music. "Thus Fate knocks at the door" is the significance Beethoven himself is quoted as having placed on this opening *motto* which establishes within the first bar a mood of despair and oppression. It forms the core of the first subject of the movement and the two first bars of the more lyrical second subject. This second subject arrives early in the movement, introduced by the horns, with the new melody taken by the violins.

Relief from struggle comes with the second movement, where the predominant mood is consolation and meditation. As in the first movement, the mood is established with amazing technical economy within the first few bars. The cellos sing a lovely melody, which forms the principal theme of the movement. The second theme follows in the same mood but with more assurance.

In the third movement of the symphony, marked *Allegro (Scherzo)*, after the solemn introduction of a broad melody in the basses, a relentless march-like theme reminiscent of the "Fate" motif is given out by the horns and taken up by the full orchestra. After an extended development, there follows one of the most exciting passages in this or any symphony. A soft tapping on the drums creates an air of expectancy, and the whole orchestra seems poised for a great moment. Then the strings enter dramatically with a faint suggestion of the *Scherzo* theme, and are joined directly by the full orchestra, which rises with increasing intensity to blaze out into a triumphal march.

This march passes directly into the broad melody of the *Finale*. Two more distinctive themes follow in rapid succession, one a lilting measure in triplets, the other lively and vigorous. After a development passage, there occurs another of the musical surprises that make the Fifth Symphony remarkable. The rhythmic *Scherzo* makes a brief final appearance, followed by the passing in review of all the themes of the movement. The tempo is increased, a final snatch of the triumphant march is heard, and the symphony is brought to a conclusion with a succession of resounding chords.

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