

1967

Eighty-ninth Season

1968

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Charles A. Sink, President

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Tenth Concert

Eighty-ninth Annual Choral Union Series

Complete Series 3613

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

SEIJI OZAWA, *Conductor*

THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 28, 1968, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

Prelude and Love-Death, from *Tristan and Isolde* WAGNER

Gli Uccelli ("The Birds") RESPIGHI

Preludio
La Colomba (The Dove)
La Gallina (The Hen)
L'Usignuolo (The Nightingale)
Il Cuccù (The Cuckoo)

INTERMISSION

"Don Quixote"—Fantastic Variations on a
Theme of Knightly Character, Op. 35 R. STRAUSS

Soloists: PETER SCHENKMAN, *Cellist*; GERARD KANTARJIAN, *Violinist*;
STANLEY SOLOMON, *Violist*

The Steinway piano 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 JOHN BECKWITH

Prelude and Love-Death, from *Tristan and Isolde* . . . RICHARD WAGNER
(1813–1883)

Tristan and Isolde was conceived by Wagner as an objectification of his platonic but intense love-affair with Mathilde Wesendonck — writer and intellectual, and, like others of his conquests, the wife of an ardent Wagnerian.

The Prelude, probably the most influential musical composition of modern times, epitomizes the restless chromatic harmony of the whole score . . . unprecedented harmonic groupings, with many appoggiaturas or displaced notes in the chords, constituted Wagner's most powerful new expressive tool. Second only to this device is the sensuous "sheen" of the scoring with its rushing string figures and its mellow, mysterious wind mixtures. The Prelude employs leitmotives associated in the drama with the love-potion and with the yearning for deliverance by death, felt by both the lovers; in the *Love-Death* these reappear, the second much developed, the first recalled as a brief cloud crossing the peaceful horizon just before the fall of the curtain.

Gli Ucelli (The Birds) OTTORINO RESPIGHI
(1879–1936)

Composers have always been fascinated by their feathered rivals, nature's own creative musicians, the birds. The opening Prelude quotes a festive, non-avian piece by the harpsichordist Bernardo Pasquini (1637–1710). This is employed as opening and closing theme, "framing" some free foreshadowings of the bird-calls to come. *The Dove*—with its "cooing" muted strings supporting a suave solo oboe line—is based on a piece by the lutenist Jacques Gallot (?–1685). *The Hen*, the best known of the source-works, occurs in Jean Philippe Rameau's second book of pieces for harpsichord, published about 1724. Rameau himself made orchestral and vocal adaptations of some of the other pieces in this same book. His hen is not so broadly slapstick a caricature as here. Respighi adds accents, comic interplay of colors, and a few bars of extension culminating in an unmistakable rooster-cry which effectively silences the heroine's clucking. *The Nightingale* derives from an anonymous English piece of the Elizabethan era. Harmonic links and some coloristic touches (the celeste, for example) are more impressionistic than historical in their associations. The same applies to such things as the parts for muted trumpet and harp in *The Cuckoo*. Here where one might have expected a comic approach vying with that of *The Hen*, the musical portrait is subdued and even a bit solemn. The source is again Pasquini, whose other theme used already in the Prelude recurs in a brief flourish to conclude the suite.

"Don Quixote"—Fantastic Variations on a
Theme of Knightly Character, Op. 35 RICHARD STRAUSS
(1864–1949)

This is probably the best-known of the many musical treatments of the great classic by Miguel de Cervantes, *The Life and Achievements of the Renowned Don Quixote de la Mancha* (1605). The Strauss *Don Quixote* is both a tone-poem and a double concerto. Strauss approached the Cervantes tales as a study in sheer story-telling, based on human character, rather than noting their social-criticism elements or their specifically Spanish cultural flavoring. Hence there is practically nothing about this music that denotes it as deliberately evocative of the 16th century on the one hand or of Spain on the other. Instead, at the forefront of the score's unique sonorous world are Don Quixote (the "Knight of the Rueful Countenance"), personified by a solo cello, and his worldly squire Sancho Panza, personified first of all by bass clarinet and tenor tuba but later always by a solo viola. Distinctive themes, as well as instrumental colors, are associated with the two characters, as clearly stated by Strauss in his score.

With *Don Quixote* Strauss for some reason did not spell out the program in detail in the orchestral score—a fact which led zealous commentators at the turn of the century to invent

connections and associations themselves, one such attempt running to 27 pages in its elaborateness. The composer's own notes did, however, appear later as a running literary accompaniment to his arrangement of the work for two pianos. The sub-titles of the theme and the ten variations are taken from this source, as are many of the following further details:

In the *Introduction*, the elderly hero's mind is gradually deranged by the romances he has been reading, and he resolves to turn knight-errant and revive the age of chivalry. The main motives of the whole work are swiftly sketched in here, and contrapuntally mixed in a vivid manner, rising to a dissonant climax illustrating (almost cruelly) the madness of the Don. At this point the themes of the Don and Sancho Panza are fully introduced and identified.

Variation 1: Inspired by the beautiful Dulcinea of Toboso, knight and squire set out on their adventures. Some windmills revolving in the breeze conjure a vision of giants; the Don attacks them, and is rudely knocked down. *Variation 2:* An invading army, actually a flock of sheep, is challenged by the knight, who slaughters seven of the pitiful animals before being stoned by the shepherds and driven away. The bleating of the sheep is imaginatively depicted by muted brass, a naturalistic touch to which some early hearers took exception, but of which the composer wrote proudly in a letter to his mother: "It is very original, entirely new in color, and a really comic presentation of all sheeps' heads—who, however, have not understood, and have even laughed at it." *Variation 3:* Rather than a variation, this is an expansion of the two character-themes. That of Don Quixote is noble, stately of gesture; while that of Sancho Panza is inflected with earthy folk-like turns and mock fanfares. Their argument ranges over many topics—honor, glory, womanhood. Sancho's realistic attitude leads his master to a final angry outburst.

Variation 4: A procession of pilgrims is mistaken for bandits and attacked by Don Quixote. They trounce him and leave him battered. As he revives, the amused Sancho falls asleep, via "snoring" tuba and contrabassoon. *Variation 5:* The watchful Don enjoys a vision of his beloved Dulcinea, whose theme is quoted in the horn and then much elaborated in the solo cello. *Variation 6:* Three country wenches appear, exemplified in a rather off-centered folk dance in the oboes. Sancho suggests mischievously that one of them is Dulcinea. Don Quixote, however mad, can at least distinguish between this awkward rustic and his ideal beloved; he decides that some evil magician has transformed her, and vows vengeance for the foul deed.

Variation 7: Blindfolded, squire and knight sit on a wooden horse believing it is empowered to carry them through the air. Chromatic fluttertonguing flute lines, harp swoops, a drum roll, and the constant whooshing of a wind-machine (used here for the first time as an adjunct of the orchestral percussion section) all help out the imaginary sensations of flight. But the persistent low tremolo of double basses and timpani reveals that after all their vehicle has never left the ground. *Variation 8:* A small oarless boat on the bank of the river Ebro seems like a magic swan sent to speed the Don on an urgent errand of rescue. He and Sancho drift out into the middle of the river to barcarolle-like strains, whereupon their craft capsizes and they come abashed to shore, dripping heavy solo-pizzicato drips of water.

Variation 9: Don Quixote violently charges into a pair of monks (pictured in a duet of bassoons), who are peacefully passing by on mules. He takes them to be evil magicians who have abducted a princess. In the only victory Strauss allows him, the two are soundly routed. *Variation 10:* But now follows his greatest and most humiliating defeat at the hands of the Knight of the White Moon, in reality a neighbor who has disguised himself in order to put an end to the Don's illusions and mishaps. By agreement, his defeat of the Don means the latter must return home and give up the chivalrous life for a year—but, as it turns out, for good and all. As elements of the extended duel, Strauss utilizes a menacing drum-pulse and a quotation by the *cor anglais* of a bucolic motive from Rossini's *William Tell* Overture. *Finale:* A weary, but quietly resigned, version of the Don Quixote theme suggests his return to sanity, his backward glances at the futility of his chivalrous career, and his acceptance of "the remorseless reasonableness of death."

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS—1968-69

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In Hill Auditorium

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	Saturday, October 5
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GARY GRAFFMAN, <i>Pianist</i>	Monday, October 14
BAVARIAN ORCHESTRA OF MUNICH	Saturday, October 26
RAFAEL KUBELIK, <i>Conductor</i>	
BIRGIT NILSSON, <i>Soprano</i>	Thursday, November 14
YEHUDI MENUHIN, <i>Violinist</i> , and	
HEPHZIBAH MENUHIN, <i>Pianist</i>	(2:30) Sunday, November 24
GREGG SMITH SINGERS	(2:30) Sunday, January 12
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WILLEM VAN OTTERLOO, <i>Conductor</i>	
"CARMEN" (Goldovsky Opera Company)	(8:00) Saturday, February 15
RUDOLF SERKIN, <i>Pianist</i>	Wednesday, March 5
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EVGENI SVETLANOV, <i>Conductor</i>	

*Season Tickets: \$30.00—\$25.00—\$20.00—\$15.00—\$12.00

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MAZOWSZE DANCE COMPANY (from Poland)	Monday, November 18
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MELOS ENSEMBLE, from London	Thursday, November 7
JANET BAKER, English Mezzo-Soprano	Sunday, January 5
MUSIC FROM MARLBORO	Saturday, February 1
ISRAEL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA	Monday, February 10
COLOGNE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA	Saturday, February 22
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* Orders now accepted.

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THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY, Burton Tower,
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