The University Musical Society

of

The University of Michigan

Presents

THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

PIERRE BOULEZ, *Conductor*

WEDNESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 8, 1971, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

"Jeux" (Games) . . . . . DEBUSSY

"The Miraculous Mandarin" . . . . . BARTÓK
(Complete Music of the Ballet-Pantomime)

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 97 ("Rhenish") . . . . SCHUMANN

Lebhaft
Scherzo: sehr mässig
Nicht schnell
Feierlich
Lebhaft

Columbia, Epic, and Angel Records

The Cleveland Orchestra has appeared here on twenty-three previous occasions since 1935.

PROGRAM NOTES

"Jeux" (Games) . . . . . CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Debussy composed *Jeux* in 1912, on an idea and scenario by the dancer Vaslav Nijinsky. It was produced on May 15, 1913, at the *Théâtre des Champs Elysées,* Paris, by the Ballets Russes of Sergei Diaghilev. The choreography was by Nijinsky, who also danced the role of the Young Man. *Jeux* is Debussy's most "modern" composition, the most advanced in method and style, the most prophetic of such future developments as the pointillism of Webern and the search for new sonorities by electronic means. The characteristic whole-tone scale of Debussy is here employed toward almost atonal ends. The gigantic orchestral apparatus is used with the utmost economy as well as imaginative subtlety. It is interesting to learn that the conductor of the present performances, Pierre Boulez, studied *Jeux* with special care when he was a student of Oliver Messiaen. For the sake of historical correctness, one must give the "argument" that was published at the time of the première, the synopsis of the action as conceived by Nijinsky and transformed into sound by Debussy.

"In a park, at twilight, a tennis-ball has gone astray. A young man and later two young girls are busy searching for it. The artificial illumination of the great electrical lamp-posts, which spreads about them a fantastical light, gives them the suggestion of youthful sports. They look one for the other, they lose themselves, they pursue, quarrel, sulk, without cause. The night is warm, the sky is suffused with gentle light; they embrace. But the spell is broken by another tennis-ball thrown by some malicious hand. Surprised and frightened, the youth and maidens disappear in the depths of the nocturnal park."

"The Miraculous Mandarin" . . . . . BÉLA BARTÓK

(Complete Music of the Ballet-Pantomime)

The music Bartók composed in the last five years of his life, after settling n the United States, exemplifies a conscious simplification of his style, a lightening of expressive tension, a step even toward the popular. In such works as the *Concerto for Orchestra* (1943) and the *Third Piano Concerto* (1945), there is symbolized that "middle course," that "just measure" which Bartók ascribed to the mature composer's will toward economy and simplicity. Yet the further we move historically backward, beyond the *Second Violin Concerto* of 1938 and the *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* of 1936, the harsher, the more unpromising does his music seem to become. With the *First Piano Concerto* of 1926 and the *Two Violin and Piano Sonatas* of 1921-22, we reach a degree of dissonance-tension rarely paralleled. It is only another step backward to the expressionistic violence of the present work, conceived shortly after the end of World War I.

The Miraculous Mandarin is an example, as the composer's biographer Emil Haraszti regards it, of "the tendency toward gory realism which permeated Central Europe in the early twenties." Haraszti feels that "Bartók's music redeems everything that is repulsive in the text with masterly skill. He experiences and translates the fundamental thought: that there is no death until our desires are satisfied. Perhaps in this work he speaks most directly from his heart and soul. In his musical language and mode of expression, his efforts at simplification and economy are striking. At times the broad flow of melody is almost homophonically conceived. There is no flavor of national characterstics in his themes; they are all of his own personal invention. The whole work consists of a single sublimating gradation: its supporting pillars carry the weight of the whole structure with basic stability."

The score contains the following description of the action:

"In a poor room, three thugs force a girl to entice men from the street, so they may be robbed. A shabby cavalier and a timid youth, who fall into the trap, are found penniless and are ejected. The third visitor is the mysterious mandarin. The girl seeks to dispel his fear-inspiring immobility with a dance, but when he anxiously embraces her she flees from him with a shudder. After a wild chase he captures her; the thugs rush from their hiding places, rob him, and attempt to smother him with pillows. But he rises and looks longingly after the girl. They pierce him with a rusty sword: he staggers, but his desire is stronger than his wounds; he lunges for the girl. They hang him [from the chandelier]; but he cannot die. Only when the body has been taken down and is embraced by the girl, do his wounds begin to bleed, and he dies."

Halsey Stevens, Bartók's recent biographer, has remarked that this score "contains some of his most striking music—with a surpassing vitality, urgent and compelling." He points out that the characterization here is "razor-sharp," and intensity of organization has replaced the rhapsodic or improvisatory elements. The more vehement passages of the score "show a spiritual kinship to the *Allegro barbaro,* as well as to the earlier ballets of Stravinsky, in their almost primordial force. The music does not seek to shock through brute ferocity; its paroxysms are held within bounds, frequently by means of ostinatos. The rhythmic element is predominant, though somewhat less jagged than in *The Rite of Spring* which must have had a direct influence upon it."

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 97 ("Rhenish") . . ROBERT SCHUMANN

If one were asked to name a symphony of the last century which would combine in itself virtually all the aspects of genuine romantic thinking and feeling, Schumann's Third ("centrally located," 1850!) would be a likely candidate for the honor. True to the spirit of his time, the composer discovered his native country as a musical "subject." While fulfilling his duties as conductor in the Rhineland city of Düsseldorf, he fell under the spell of the great river and its surrounding countryside. He wished to write a piece that would "perhaps mirror here and there something of Rhenish life," that would portray the simplicity and joyfulness of the people who lived on its banks and in the picturesque cities of the valley. Yet he found his artistic sense torn between specific verbal references in the score to things and places and occasions (the Cologne Cathedral directly stimulated the Fourth Movement of the Symphony, as admitted) and his awareness that it was wisest not by words and explanations "to show one's heart to people. A general impression of an art work is more effective; the listener will not then institute any absurd comparisons."

The activities of "common people" as a subject could be blended on Schumann's palette with nature painting; "local color" became the symptom of a central romantic interest; nationalism. The composer's country, its legends and songs, its castles and vineyards, all this was somehow to be transmitted into a symphonic structure. Thence it was only a step to the element so dear to composers of the time—fantasy. Yearning for the unreal, bringing to life "what might have been," the dream of "once upon a time"—these offered to orchestral music a new "romance." The romantic spirit was full of imagination, not of reason; touched by mystery, not by logic. Its musical speech seemed always to be on the verge of song; and in a symphony like the "Rhenish" we almost hear the composer invite us to join him in looking joyfully upon a rural scene, to local festivity, a bend in the river, an ancient tower. It is clear that Schumann had to find for so loving a mural of Rhenish life his own musical structures, which would imply all he wished and yet constitute a valid symphonic design.

PARIS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, PAUL KUENTZ, *conductor,* two programs:
Mouret, Vivaldi, Bach, Telemann, Daniel-Lesur . . . Monday, January 17

Vivaldi: "The Seasons"; Handel: "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day"
(with The Festival Chorus, DONALD BRYANT, *conducting*) Wednesday, January 19

ANDRES SEGOVIA, *Guitarist* . . . . . Saturday, January 22

BERLIN PHILHARMONIC OCTET . . . . . Friday, January 28

Two Special Programs in Hill Auditorium

MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH, *Cellist* . . . . Saturday, January 15

Osipov Balalaika Orchestra and
Stars of the Bolshoi Opera . . . . . Tuesday, February 8

The ANN ARBOR *May Festival*

The Philadelphia Orchestra and The Festival Chorus of the University Choral Union
EUGENE ORMANDY and THOR JOHNSON, *conductors*

Thursday, May 4: Symphony No. 3, Harris; Kindertotenlieder, Mahler (DIETRICH FISCHER-DIESKAU, *baritone soloist*); Fantastic Symphony, Berlioz.

Friday, May 5: Prelude for Commencement, Wallace Berry; Vespers, K. 339, Mozart (NOELLE ROGERS, *soprano;* ELIZABETH MANNION, *contralto;* WALDIE ANDERSON, *tenor;* WILLIS PATTERSON, *bass*); Concerto in A minor, Schumann (SUSAN STARR, *pianist*).

Saturday, May 6: ALL-BRAHMS PROGRAM—Tragic Overture; Symphony No. 3 in F major; Violin Concerto in D major (MAYUMI FUJIKAWA, *soloist*).

Sunday, May 7 (aft.): Symphony No. 19 in A major, K. 201, Mozart; Stabat Mater, Szymanowski (NOELLE ROGERS, *soprano;* ELIZABETH MANNION, *contralto;* LESLIE GUINN, *baritone*); Piano Concerto No. 2, Weber (MALCOLM FRAGER, *soloist*).

Saturday, May 7 (eve.): Toccata, Adagio and Fugue, Bach; three arias, Rossini (MARILYN HORNE, *soprano*); Excerpts from "Die Götterdämmerung," Wagner (MARILYN HORNE).