The University Musical Society

The University of Michigan

of

Presents

London Symphony Orchestra

ANDRÉ PREVIN, Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser

Saturday Evening, September 21, 1974, at 8:30 Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor, Michigan

PROGRAM

Scapino Overture (194	0) .			•			٠	. '	WILLIAM Y	WALTON
Appalachian Spring (S Very slowly Sudden burst of uni Moderate (Duo for Quite fast (The Rev Still faster (Solo Da Very slowly (as at f Calm and flowing (S Moderate (Coda)	son strin the Brid ivalist an nce of th	egs le and H nd His I ne Bride	Ier In Flock)	tended)					COPLAND

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92 Ludwig van Beethoven

Poco sostenuto: vivace

Allegretto

Scherzo: presto

Finale: allegro con brio

The London Symphony Orchestra and Mr. Previn record for EMI, Decca, Angel and RCA Records.

PROGRAM NOTES

Scapino Overture WILLIAM WALTON

Though it was capable of considerable sophistication, the Commedia dell'Arte was in essence simple, a delightful and often heartless knockabout exposure of pretension and sentiment. Here were all the basic emotions, enacted by a team of masked characters, known to us at one remove as Harlequin and Columbine and so on, including the forebears and kinsfolk of our own Mr. Punch. Scapino was one of the gang, familiar in terms of Molière's play "Les Fouberies de Scapin"; he is the epitome of the nimble-witted rogue, and an ancestor in some sort of Figaro. Hence the nature of Sir William Walton's Comedy Overture of that name, originally written for the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and dedicated to its conductor, Dr. Frederick Stock. Revised in 1950, it was given its première in its new version by Furtwängler.

Scored for full orchestra, including an extensive percussion section, the music lives up to the promise of its title, and is cast in the composer's most brilliant and brittle scherzo style. Crackling with nervous energy, full of syncopation and flaring colour, it does not so much start as erupt like a firework. By contrast with the jerky, jagged opening motifs comes a smoother secondary tune for cor anglais and violas, but with a tonality as ambiguous as Scapin's ideas of honesty. It is the sort of idea that can assume many guises and appear in many different contexts without losing its identity. It can even sound wryly nostalgic when played by the cello solo later on, and it can sprout extensions like any respectable symphonic theme. The course of the comedy can be left to speak for itself, for into this eight minutes or so of music, Sir William Walton packed all his command of supercharged orchestral effect and ebullience.

NOEL GOODWIN

As early as 1931 the dancer Martha Graham heard Copland's "Piano Variations," and decided to use them for her ballet *Dithyramb*. Following this introduction to each other, both composer and choreographer wished to collaborate further, and the opportunity to do so came when Copland was commissioned by Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge for a new ballet. This duly appeared, under the title *Appalachian Spring*, on 30 October, 1944, when it was first performed in the Library of Congress, in Washington. It was originally scored for thirteen instruments, since there was only room for a small ensemble. The same conditions had applied to Stravinsky's *Apollo*, produced in similar circumstances fifteen years previously.

The action of the ballet, whose title is from a poem by Hart Crane, "is a pioneer celebration in spring around a newly built farmhouse in the Pennsylvania hills in the early part of the last century. The bride-to-be and her young farmer-husband enact

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Gift Program

The University Musical Society received last season \$35,000 in contributed funds, which came from some three hundred generous individuals, fifteen business firms, one foundation, and one bequest. These funds reduced the over-all deficit to \$11,454. It is clear that a broader base of giving is essential in order to absorb the deficits and to maintain the quality and scope of the concert presentations now offered. We do not want to raise ticket prices. From all those who can afford to give and who appreciate the performing arts as important to the quality of life in Ann Arbor and at The University of Michigan, special support is now requested.

Those individuals and businesses who have already made their 1974 gift (from January 1) are hereby gratefully noted. Also acknowledged is the collaboration of the University of Michigan's Development Office through which all gifts to the University Musical Society are processed, among them several designated gifts which come annually from members of the President's Club.

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the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, their new domestic partnership invites. An older neighbor suggests now and then the rocky confidence of experience. A revivalist and his followers remind the new householders of the strange and terrible aspects of human fate. At the end the couple are left quiet and strong in their new house."

The suite, which is one of Copland's chief and best-known contributions to American music, is condensed from the ballet, omitting those sections of primarily choreographic interest. The mood is simple and basic, extolling as it does the homely virtues; the movements are played without a break.

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92 Ludwig van Beethoven

With the Seventh Symphony Beethoven took the giant stride which led him towards the mighty Ninth. The work was completed in 1812. He was still fighting the battle against his deafness, vainly seeking cures, and refusing to give way to the terrible depressions which tried to engulf him. This symphony, at once heroic and tender, holds all these moods for those who wish to find them, but, even more important, the Seventh is a work of confidence in the joy and art of creation. A wholly objective, one hundred percent musical panorama.

From the opening bars Beethoven establishes his conviction that an Introduction is an important section in its own right—a massive germ which develops naturally into a movement of tremendous force and energy. Yet it is based on the simplest musical materials, notably the scale, which had been used by Beethoven with great effect only two years earlier in the "Emperor" piano concerto. When the Introduction has run its course, Beethoven characteristically ushers in the main theme of the movement with the minimum of fuss, and the maximum of anti-establishment humour. The note of E is taken up, exchanged from one instrument to another, and repeated sixty-one times before finally rushing off into the strength of the first theme.

After the meatiness of the first movement, Beethoven's sure understanding of contrast results in the famous march-like allegretto, which has the deceptive quality of seeming slower than it really is because of its position between the opening allegro and the fast moving scherzo which follows it. Originally this wonderful movement was intended for the third Rasumovsky String Quartet, but Beethoven's inner ear did not let him down when he placed it in the Seventh Symphony. The Scherzo itself, with the twice repeated Trio only a shade slower, prepares the way for the surge of power which gives the finale its unceasing pulse, and sense of ecstatic joy.

Wagner's famous description of this symphony as "the apotheosis of the dance" is understood if not taken too literally. Tovey, as usual, made the most telling comment when he wrote that "the symphony is so overwhelmingly convincing and so obviously untranslatable, that it has for many years been treated quite reasonably as a piece of music, instead of an excuse for discussing the French Revolution."

DENBY RICHARDS

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