

The University Musical Society

of
The University of Michigan



Presents

The ANN ARBOR May Festival

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
EUGENE ORMANDY, *Music Director and Conductor*
WILLIAM SMITH, *Assistant Conductor*

EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conducting*

Soloist

ANDRÉ WATTS, *Pianist*

THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 29, 1976, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Symphony No. 7 in C major, Op. 105 (In one movement) SIBELIUS

Concerto No. 2 in D minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 23 MACDOWELL

Larghetto calmato
Presto giocoso
Largo; molto allegro

ANDRÉ WATTS

INTERMISSION

*"Rhapsody in Blue" GERSHWIN
MR. WATTS

*Tone Poem, "Death and Transfiguration," Op. 24 STRAUSS

The Philadelphia Orchestra records exclusively for RCA Red Seal
**Available on Columbia Records*

PROGRAM NOTES

by

RICHARD FREED and GLENN D. MCGEOCH

Symphony No. 7 in C major, Op. 105 JEAN SIBELIUS
(1865–1957)

The last of Sibelius' seven symphonies, which he completed on March 2, 1924, and conducted in Helsinki three weeks later, was the first notable example of a symphony in a single movement, a genre to which such composers as Roy Harris, Samuel Barber, Howard Hanson, and Allan Pettersson have since made significant contributions. As in most such works, the Sibelius Seventh may be broken down into various sections marked by changes in tempo and mood, though some analysts prefer to view the work as a giant rondo; several others have suggested that the proper category for this music is not the symphony but the symphonic poem, and it is worth noting that Sibelius himself originally thought of titling it simply *Fantasia sinjonica*.

The four discernible sections of the Seventh are: (1) a slow introduction in which several melodic figures appear but in which the harmonic activity is of greater interest, building to a peak of orchestral weight and tension which provides the perfect point of entry for a trombone motif which is to assume greater importance later in the work; (2) a more active, restless section, in which the trombone motif again appears at the climactic moment, and which then subsides into darker colors; (3) a scherzo; (4) a glorious finale dominated by the trombone motif, punctuated by glowing string passages and blazes of brass color, but ending—after the final statement of the indomitable trombone theme (which might be said to carry forward from the finale of the Fifth Symphony, but on a note of even greater exaltation as well as greater sobriety)—calmly, almost in the manner of a benediction.

Concerto No. 2 in D minor for Piano and Orchestra,
Op. 23 EDWARD MACDOWELL
(1861–1908)

Fifty years ago MacDowell was our most eminent composer when American music for the first time became a distinct reality on both sides of the Atlantic. Yet only the *Second Piano Concerto* seems to have won a permanent if not prominent place in today's repertory.

In spite of its debt to European nineteenth-century music, MacDowell's art was the sincere expression of a very sensitive and poetic nature attuned to the psychological temper of the American environment. He failed to become the leader of a new American school, because he lived at the end of a cultural period; artistic ideals formulated as the nineteenth century came to its close could not have retained permanent value; they merely protracted those of the past. MacDowell's originality was scarcely strong enough to surmount the influence of his German training. Twentieth-century composers could find nothing in his music to give them a new direction. It is little wonder that his successors, in the fruitless years that followed, were doomed to oblivion.

MacDowell wrote two piano concertos, the first in A minor, Op. 15 in 1884 and the second in D minor, Op. 23 in 1889–90, both comparatively early works showing evidence of his early training. Although the second Concerto is admittedly eclectic, with overtones of Grieg and Tchaikovsky in particular, the work has retained a sort of vernal freshness. It possesses everything characteristically Romantic—full-throated melodies; rich, tender lyricism; and dramatic, sweeping climaxes—all in the grand manner. Without any doubt it reveals the hand of a master craftsman in complete control of his medium, aware of all the expressive potentialities inherent in the instrument for which he writes. It remains a landmark in the cultural history of our country.

"Rhapsody in Blue" GEORGE GERSHWIN
(1898–1937)

It was on the afternoon of February 12, 1924, that jazz made a legitimate and professional debut. On that propitious date, so closely associated with the idea of emancipation, Paul Whiteman

snatched jazz from Tin Pan Alley to be presented formally at Aeolian Hall to a group of the social and musical elect, with dignity and charm. Whiteman had, in the words of Osgood, "made an honest woman of her." Whiteman called the affair "an experiment in modern music," and it made American musical history. It showed what jazz as a technique or a manner of treatment could do to the conventional melodies of Logan, MacDowell, and Friml, by infusing into them a rich inventiveness of rhythm and a saliency and vividness of orchestral color. But most important of all, it introduced George Gershwin as a serious composer with the *pièce de résistance*, "Rhapsody in Blue."

Until the creation of "Rhapsody in Blue," Gershwin had neither studied nor practiced composition in the symphonic manner. He had only his natural inventiveness and wit to call upon when Whiteman requested a special composition for his "experimental" concert. The request was made so casually that Gershwin didn't take it seriously until he saw the newspaper announcement that a new work by Mr. Gershwin would appear on the program. He set to work frantically and at the end of ten days the "Rhapsody in Blue" in a version for two pianos was completed.

Ferde Grofé then orchestrated it, and three weeks from its inception Whiteman had it in rehearsal. One week later it was presented in Aeolian Hall to an audience of eminent critics and distinguished musicians. The Rhapsody was acclaimed by an audience that was surprised and charmed by the novelty of cheerful Broadway tunes, nostalgic blues, and impertinent jazz syncopation, all woven together into one symphonic whole. There is no need to recount the speed with which the Rhapsody became universally popular, nor to defend or justify its place today in the symphonic repertory of the whole world. To engage in any analysis of its form or thematic material would be as impertinent as superfluous. An American audience does not have to be told how to appreciate a music that is so much a part of them.

Tone Poem, "Death and Transfiguration," Op. 24 RICHARD STRAUSS

"Death and Transfiguration" was composed in 1889. The score was prefaced by a poem written by Strauss's friend, Alexander Ritter. As in the cases of other significant "program" pieces in musical literature, the music was written before the poem. The following is a paraphrase of the poem made by Mr. W. F. Apthorp:

In the necessitous little room, dimly lighted by only a candle-end, lies the sick man on his bed. But just now he has wrestled desperately with death. Now he has sunk exhausted into sleep, and thou hearest only the soft ticking of the clock on the wall of the room, whose awful silence gives a foreboding of the nearness of death. Over the sick man's pale features plays a sad smile. Dreams he, on the boundary of life, of the golden time of childhood?

But death does not long grant sleep and dreams to his victim. Cruelly he shakes him awake, and the fight begins afresh. Will to live and power of death! What frightful wrestling! Neither bears off the victory, and all is silent once more!

Sunk back, tired of battle, sleepless as in fever frenzy, the sick man now sees life pass before his inner eye, trait by trait and scene by scene. First the morning red of childhood, shining bright in pure innocence! Then the youth's saucier play exerting and trying his strength, till he ripens to the man's fight, and now burns with hot lust for the higher prizes of life. The one high purpose that has led him through life was to shape all he saw transfigured into a still more transfigured form. Cold and sneering, the world sets barrier upon barrier in the way of his achievement. If he thinks himself near his goal, a "Halt!" thunders in his ear. "Make the barrier thy stirrup! Ever higher and onward go!" And so he pushes forward, so he climbs, desists not from his sacred purpose. That which he has ever sought with his heart's deepest yearning he still seeks in his death sweat. Seeks—alas! and finds it never. Whether he comprehends it more clearly or that it grows upon him gradually, he can yet never exhaust it, cannot complete it in his spirit. Then clangs the last stroke of Death's iron hammer, breaks the earthly body in twain, covers the eye with the night of death.

But from the heavenly spaces sounds mightily to greet him that which he yearningly sought for here; deliverance from the world, transfiguration of the world.

INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS—1976-77

Choral Union Series / Hill Auditorium

ISRAEL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA/MEHTA	Thursday, September 16
SHERRILL MILNES, <i>Baritone</i>	Friday, October 8
MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA/MACKERRAS	Sunday, October 17
ORCHESTRE DE PARIS/BARENBOIM	Wednesday, October 27
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA/HAITINK	Sunday, November 14
PRAGUE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA	Saturday, January 15
JORGE BOLET, <i>Pianist</i>	Saturday, February 5
LENINGRAD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA/TEMIRKANOV	Thursday, February 10
CZECH PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA/NEUMANN	Thursday, March 3
DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA/CHORAL UNION/SOLOISTS	Sunday, March 20
Ceccato conducts Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis"	

Choice Series / Power Center

DORA STRATOU'S GREEK DANCES	Saturday & Sunday, October 23 & 24
SPANISH NATIONAL FOLK BALET	Monday, October 25
JULIAN BREAM, <i>Guitarist</i>	Sunday, October 31
VICTOR HERBERT'S <i>Naughty Marietta</i>	Friday & Saturday, November 12 & 13
TCHAIKOVSKY'S "NUTCRACKER" BALET The Pittsburgh Ballet	Thursday, Friday, Saturday, December 16, 17, 18
VERDI'S <i>La Traviata</i> —CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY	Sunday, January 9
ROYAL WINNIPEG BALET	Saturday & Sunday, January 29 & 30
DANZAS VENEZUELA	Wednesday, February 2
RAJKO—GYPSY ORCHESTRA AND DANCERS	Sunday, February 6
ALVIN AILEY DANCE THEATER	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, February 21, 22, 23
YUGOSLAV NATIONAL FOLK BALET	Thursday, March 24

Debut Recital Series / Rackham Auditorium

GEZA ANDA, <i>Pianist</i>	Sunday, November 7
ELLY AMELING, <i>Soprano</i>	Tuesday, November 16
MICHAEL PONTI, <i>Pianist</i>	Tuesday, January 25
JANOS STARKER, <i>Cellist</i>	Monday, March 14

Chamber Arts Series / Rackham Auditorium

GUARNERI STRING QUARTET	Saturday, October 9
First concert of the complete Beethoven cycle.	
BAROQUE MUSIC MASTERS	Wednesday, October 20
GUARNERI STRING QUARTET	Friday, November 5
AEOLIAN CHAMBER PLAYERS	Saturday, November 20
JEAN-PIERRE RAMPAL, <i>Flutist</i>	Friday, January 14
WARSAW QUINTET (piano and strings)	Thursday, February 3
GUARNERI STRING QUARTET	Sunday, February 20
FRANS BRUEGGEN, <i>Flute and Recorder</i>	Tuesday, March 22

"Finale Pair" of the Beethoven Cycle

GUARNERI STRING QUARTET	Saturday & Sunday, April 16 & 17
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Asian Series / Rackham Auditorium

MARTIAL ARTS OF KABUKI	Thursday, October 21
CHINESE ACROBATS	Saturday, November 6
YAMINI KRISHNAMURTI, SOUTH INDIAN DANCER	Monday, February 28
MASKED DANCE-DRAMA OF KOREA	Wednesday, March 16

New brochure available; series ticket orders now being accepted and filled in sequence.

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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