The University Musical Society

of

The University of Michigan

Presents

The ANN ARBOR *May Festival*

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

EUGENE ORMANDY, *Music Director and Conductor*
RICCARDO MUTI, *Principal Guest Conductor*
WILLIAM SMITH, *Associate Conductor*

EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conducting*

Soloists
ANTHONY GIGLIOTTI, *Clarinetist*
WILLIAM STOKKING, *Cellist*

FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 28, 1978, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

"Pacific 231," Mouvement symphonique . . . . . HONEGGER

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, Op. 21 . . . . . HINDEMITH

Ziemlich schnell
Ostinato schnell
Rühig
Heiter

ANTHONY GIGLIOTTI

Concerto in D minor for Cello and Orchestra . . . . . LALO

Prelude: lento; allegro maestoso
Intermezzo: andante con moto
Rondo: andante; allegro vivace

WILLIAM STOKKING

INTERMISSION

*Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98 . . . . . BRAHMS

Allegro ma non troppo
Andante moderato
Allegro giocoso
Allegro energico e passionato

* *Available on Columbia Records*

PROGRAM NOTES

by

RICHARD FREED

"Pacific 231" . . . . . ARTHUR HONEGGER (1892–1955)

Honegger, regarded as the most "serious" member of the *Groupe des six,* left such major works as five symphonies and the oratorios *King David* and *Joan of Arc at the Stake;* he seems likely to be best remembered, however, for the enchanting *Christmas Cantata* (one of his last works) and for the famous six-minute orchestral workout *Pacific 231,* whose title alludes to a certain type of locomotive.

As a boy, Honegger was especially fascinated by trains; whenever his family took a trip on one he insisted on getting to the station early enough to study the locomotive. Originally the piece was titled simply *Mouvement symphonique No. 1,* but when Serge Koussevitzky introduced it in Paris on May 8, 1924, it bore the more specific title, and Honegger offered the following explanation:

"I have always had a passion for locomotives. To me they are living beings, and I love them as others love women or horses. In *Pacific 231* I have aimed not to imitate the noise of an engine, but rather to express in terms of music a visual impression and a physical sensation. Starting from objective contemplation, the tranquil respiration of an engine at rest, followed by the strain of getting underway, the speed increases steadily and reaches lyrical ecstasy at 120 kilometers an hour, with three hundred tons hurtling through the night. As a subject, I have chosen an engine of the 'Pacific' type, number 231, used for heavy trains at high speed."

In his autobiography, *Je suis compositeur,* published in 1951, Honegger revealed that, although critics had "described in some splendid articles the driving-rods, the noise of the pistons, the screeching of the brakes, the hissing steam," he had not even thought of *Pacific 231* as a title until the work was finished and Koussevitzky's performance was scheduled. "Actually," he wrote, "I pursued a very unalloyed abstract idea. I wanted to give the feeling of a mathematical acceleration of rhythm, while the actual motion of the piece slowed down. In musical terms, I composed a huge, formal chorale, modeled on those of Johann Sebastian Bach."

On reflection, it will be seen that these statements are not as contradictory as they might appear: once he had finished the composition Honegger recognized it as a reflection of his old passion for locomotives and affixed the appropriate title. The title undoubtedly played a large part in the work's early success; as plain *Mouvement symphonique* it might well have been lost in the shuffle of the hundreds of evocatively titled works produced in the 1920s.

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, Op. 21 . . . . PAUL HINDEMITH (1895–1963)

Hindemith lived in the United States from 1940 to 1953, and during that period composed some of his most admired works. Among these are the Symphony in E-flat, the enormously popular *Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber,* the *Symphonia Serena,* the ballet *The Four Temperaments,* the *Requiem for Those We Love* (with Walt Whitman's *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* for its text), and concertos for cello, for horn, and for clarinet.

The Clarinet Concerto was composed at the request of Benny Goodman in the summer of 1947 and was first performed, with Mr. Goodman as soloist, in a student concert of The Philadelphia Orchestra on December 11, 1950, Eugene Ormandy conducting. On that occasion Hindemith was quoted as stating: "I have tried to give Benny a pleasant, and a very 'clarinetistic' piece, a piece that he would enjoy playing, and that would convey his mellow and meaningful virtuosity to the listener."

By way of maximizing the prominence of the solo instrument, Hindemith did not include clarinets in the orchestra. There are four movements instead of the customary three; their German markings may be translated as "Rather fast," "Fast," "Restful," and "Cheerful."

The opening, a colorful and assertive orchestral passage, contains two of the themes to be developed in the first movement; a third and yet a fourth are introduced by the clarinet when it makes its entrance. The concertante nature of the work is manifest in the juxtaposition of the solo instrument with the various orchestral winds—for example, the little duet for clarinet and flute and the passage for clarinet against the horns toward the end of the movement. When the clarinet seems about to begin the general discussion all over again, the full weight of the orchestra is brought in, in a somewhat impatient, if still good-natured, silencing gesture to end the movement.

The second movement is one of those breezy, deceptively glib little scherzos so typical of Hindemith throughout his creative life. Here the piccolo seems to be a co-soloist at first, but not for long. Little irruptions from the trumpets here, the woodwinds there, seem also to be starting discussions which never really get started, and the percussion comes into stronger and stronger focus as things proceed, and the movement ends with a quasi-jazz lick from the soloist, apparently cut off in mid-phrase. The strings have little to do in this movement, and what they do have is entirely pizzicato.

The slow movement, which actually has an undercurrent of agitation that belies the marking, is in the nature of an "urban pastoral" such as we associate with Copland and other American composers. In the second part of the movement, somewhat more animated, the concertante element returns, with various orchestral winds producing colors and rhythmic figures reminiscent of parts of the *Kleine Kammermusik.* The material of the opening section ends the movement peacefully and without restive undertones, with the clarinet in dialogue with two violins.

The final movement is traditional in that it is a rondo and that it is in an extrovert vein, replete with the sort of demands in which the virtuoso exults: a formidable display-piece, with a surprising reduction of intensity just before the coda which, by contrast, makes the end all the more exhilarating.

Concerto in D minor for Cello and Orchestra . . . . . EDOUARD LALO (1823–1892)

Victor Antoine Edouard Lalo was not an especially prolific composer, and is in fact remembered primarily for a single enormously popular work, the *Symphonie espagnole* for violin and orchestra. He was one of the most imaginative orchestrators of his time, and in his best works the piquant rhythms and unusually contoured melodies that identify his style are fairly irresistible.

In the Cello Concerto, by all odds one of the very best, we are reminded that, in addition to his brilliance in writing for the orchestra, Lalo was especially well suited to the concerto as a form and was especially happy writing for strings. (He played both the violin and the cello before he went to the Conservatoire in Paris at the age of sixteen, and subsequently played the viola in a string quartet for many years.) In particular, we are reminded that he had composed the *Symphonie espagnole* only three years before he produced the Cello Concerto, for, whether he drew on his family's Spanish background or simply sought (consciously or unconsciously) to repeat the success of the violin work through similar means, there is more than a fleeting suggestion of Spanish flavor in this Concerto, most notably in the second and third movements. The Cello Concerto was completed in 1876 and dedicated to Adolphe Fischer, the soloist in the first performance, given in Paris on December 9, 1877.

The first movement opens with a slow introduction in which a broad majestic theme is stated at the outset by the orchestra. Its character is rather stern, and terse irruptions from the orchestra alternate with a gentle recitative from the cello, which dominates the main portion of the movement. Lalo's veneration of Schumann is strongly reflected in this movement.

The second movement is a condensation of slow movement and scherzo, which is strongly reminiscent of the corresponding movement of the *Symphonie espagnole*.

In the final movement, Lalo provides both the cello and the orchestra with the most stunning opportunities for display. Particularly exhilarating are the horn calls and fanfares heard against the soaring line of the cello, while Lalo's use of the trumpets and drums to enhance the color of the piece command admiration for his imaginativeness and subtlety.

Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98 . . . . . JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

The period in which Brahms composed the last of his four symphonies was probably the happiest in his life: his three earlier symphonies, produced between 1876 and 1883, had been enormously successful; he was supremely confident in his creative powers; he enjoyed rich friendships, the adulation of the public, and the love of Hermine Spies, a mezzo-soprano half his age whom he called his "Johannes-Passion." In this happy state he produced what Donald Francis Tovey called "one of the rarest things in classical music, a symphony which ends tragically." Except for the third movement, the most exuberant of all Brahms's symphonic scherzos (though not so labeled), the entire Fourth is cast in a tragic mold, and it has been suggested that the work reflects one or more of the tragedies of Sophocles, which Brahms had been reading at the time. Brahms himself made no reference to Sophocles or, indeed, to the spirit of tragedy; in writing to a friend to report completion of the score he described the Fourth, with his characteristic humor, as "a few entr'actes and polkas I happened to have lying about."

In September 1885 Brahms offered a small group of friends an advance hearing of his new Symphony, in a two-piano reduction which he played with Ignaz Brüll. He was delighted with the work himself, and clearly disappointed to have it received in polite silence. The next day the critic Max Kalbeck (Brahms's close friend and biographer), who had been present, told the composer frankly that he felt the passacaglia finale unsuitable, and suggested that the last movement be replaced. Brahms simply pointed out that the final movement of Beethoven's *Eroica* is similar in its construction, and made no change; when he conducted the première in Meiningen a few weeks later (October 25) the ovation confirmed his judgment.

When Hans Richter conducted the Viennese première the following January, however, the public was cold to the new work, and the anti-Brahms faction among the critics enjoyed ripping it up in the press. It took the Viennese more than a decade to warm up to the Fourth, which was the work played at the conclusion of the emotion-filled concert (again under Richter) at which Brahms made his last public appearance, less than four weeks before his death. On that occasion a storm of applause followed each movement, capped by a long demonstration at the end.

It remains to be noted that, while Brahms did not make a "cyclic" use of his themes (as his French and Russian contemporaries did in their symphonies), there is a subtle thematic relationship between the respective movements which unobtrusively enhances the unity of the work and points toward the finale. The passacaglia theme itself is based on one found in Bach's cantata *Nach Dir, Herr, verlanget mich* (BWV 150), which might be said to have had as much to do as Sophocles in inspiring this work's unprecedented shape and its striking balance of power, lyricism and compassion—"entr'actes and polkas" to the contrary notwithstanding.

1978–1979 — INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS — 100TH YEAR

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Complete Beethoven sonata cycle
MAUREEN FORRESTER, *Contralto* . . . . . August 7

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NATHAN MILSTEIN, *Violinist* . . . . . November 5
ENGLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA/VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY, *Pianist* . November 10
ISAAC STERN, *Violinist* . . . . . December 7
MOSCOW PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA/KITAIENKO . . . . . February 3
NDR SYMPHONY OF HAMBURG/MACAL . . . . . February 28
NICOLAI GHIAUROV, *Basso* . . . . . March 17
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FRED WARING SHOW (in Hill Aud.) . . . . . November 9
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PLAY OF DANIEL . . . . . January 9
MOZART'S *Marriage of Figaro* . . . . . January 14
"PIRIN," BULGARIAN FOLK ENSEMBLE . . . . . January 16
PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY . . . . . January 26 & 27
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