



*International
Presentations of
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Orchestre National de Lyon

SERGE BAUDO
Music Director and Conductor

GÉRARD POULET, *Violinist*

TUESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 11, 1986, AT 8:00
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

- Overture to *Beatrice and Benedict* BERLIOZ
- Concerto No. 2 for Violin and Orchestra BARTÓK
Allegro non troppo
Andante tranquillo
Allegro molto

GÉRARD POULET

INTERMISSION

- Symphony No. 1 DUTILLEUX
Passacaglia
Scherzo: molto vivace
Andante
Finale con variazioni
- Bacchus et Ariane*, Ballet, Op. 43, Suite No. 2 ROUSSEL
Introduction: andante
Allegro, andante, andantino
Allegro deciso
Andante
Moderato e pesante
Bacchanale: allegro brillante

Harmonia Mundi Records

PROGRAM NOTES

by LEONARD BURKAT

Overture to *Beatrice and Benedict* HECTOR BERLIOZ (*b. Dec. 11, 1803; d. Mar. 8, 1869*)

The plays of Shakespeare have always had a strong attraction for musicians. Hector Berlioz wrote at least five works based on them and even entered into an unfortunate, unhappy marriage with an English Shakespearean actress about whom he knew little, confusing the person with the characters she played on the stage.

He first thought of writing an opera based on *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1833 and even made a few sketches for it, but then put them aside. In 1860 he finally managed to secure a commission for the opera from the Baden-Baden theater, set to work on it with as much concentration as his ill-health allowed, and completed it in February 1862. It was his last major work. He conducted the first performance at the Baden Theater on August 9, 1862, but it was not performed in France until 1890.

The libretto is in large part an abridgment of Shakespeare, translated by Berlioz. He decided to use the names of the two principal characters as the title because the word "Ado" was usually translated into French and German as "noise," and he did not want to give his critics so easy a target for ridicule. *Beatrice and Benedict* was never a theatrical success. The score has moments of great charm, but it is not strongly cohesive as drama, and the literal translation of the lovers' bantering dialogue often seems heavy and stodgy rather than light and quick. The Overture has survived as a kind of brief sampler of some of its best moments. Its sprightly main theme is from a duet of the lovers near the end of the opera. The slower second theme is from an aria for Beatrice.

Concerto No. 2 for Violin and Orchestra BÉLA BARTÓK (*b. Mar. 25, 1881; d. Dec. 26, 1945*)

After Béla Bartók completed his studies at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest in 1903, he was recognized as a fine pianist, but his ambitions as a composer made little progress until he hit on the idea of a big symphonic poem on a patriotic subject. Around 1905, he and the Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály began to collect and study the peasant music of their country, which until then had been considered unworthy of the notice of serious musicians. This research led to a new style of composition, using original materials of folklike character with a highly sophisticated technique of composition.

Bartók's Second Violin Concerto is a work of his maturity, written between August 1937 and December 31, 1938, and first published simply as a violin concerto, without a number. Since the rediscovery in 1958 of a violin concerto that he had written in 1908, this has been called the Second. The mid-1930s were difficult years for Bartók, who was living and working in Budapest. Although he feared the Nazis' moves closer and closer to his homeland, he was still able to compose several of his best mature scores, the Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta, the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, and the Violin Concerto.

Bartók wrote this Second Concerto for his friend, the Hungarian violinist Zoltán Székely, who was well-known in the United States as the first violinist of the Hungarian Quartet. During the turbulent year that preceded the outbreak of World War II, the composer traveled to Paris to go over the concerto with Székely, but he was unable to attend the première which took place in Amsterdam on April 23, 1939.

In 1940, Bartók came to live in the United States but he composed little or nothing here until 1943. The Violin Concerto was first performed in the United States on January 21, 1943, at a concert of the Cleveland Orchestra, whose concertmaster, Tossy Spivakovsky, was the soloist under Artur Rodzinski's direction. The composer heard the concerto for the first time when Spivakovsky and Rodzinski played it with the New York Philharmonic on October 14, 1943.

Bartók's original intention, when he started the concerto, was to write a big set of variations for violin and orchestra, but Székely wanted a work in three conventional movements. Bartók pleased both the soloist and himself by making the variation principle the main formal device of the concerto. The first movement, *Allegro non troppo*, combines a large number of Bartók's favorite musical ideas and techniques. There are elements of the classical sonata structures that are at the base of all the great earlier concertos, but they are varied and combined with a freedom that is typical of the Hungarian rhapsodic fantasy. The main theme, which the soloist plays out boldly after the orchestra's introductory strumming, is heard in many guises and is subjected to almost every imaginable kind of variation in the course of the movement.

Next is an *Andante tranquillo* slow movement, in which we first hear the soloist play a melody in folk style. It is then subjected to six variations, the last of which dissolves back into the original version of the theme. The finale, *Allegro molto*, is similar in structure to the first movement, and both of the principal themes here are actually variants of those in the first movement.

Symphony No. 1 HENRI DUTILLEUX
(b. Jan. 22, 1916)

Henri Dutilleux is a French composer whose compatriots characterize him as a Northerner: calm, quiet, and thoughtful, and also fiercely independent and brilliantly imaginative. He began his musical studies as a child, in Douai, and at sixteen went on to the Paris Conservatory. Six years later he won the greatest honor that France bestowed on its young creative artists, the Prix de Rome, but after two years in Italy, the Second World War sent him back to Paris where he eventually worked at the Opéra and the Radio and taught at the Ecole Normale and the Conservatory.

His works seem to be few in number for a career of such length and importance, but Dutilleux destroyed many of his early compositions; the later ones, from the years since the War, are of such seriousness of purpose, such weight and dimension as to make him one of the most important figures of his generation. He has been an independent artist and admired teacher, but not the founder of a school or a collector of disciples. It is clear, nevertheless, that Dutilleux's work is firmly based on French traditions. We can hear in it the rhythmic vigor of Roussel, the brilliantly imagined colors of Ravel, and the kind of formal ingenuity — the precious heritage of Berlioz and Debussy — that stresses the constant invention of the new, rather than the Germanic systematic development of the old.

He has said of his work that there is a careful avoidance of prefabricated scaffolding in it and a predilection for the spirit of variation, a penchant for a kind of sonority that might be called "the joy of sound." Symphonic compositions, he also said, must not lead to stilted rhetoric in studied, stiff, cramped structures. All these ideas are already evident in his First Symphony, even though it does not yet cast off references to traditional forms.

The Symphony was begun in 1949, completed in May 1951, and first performed on June 7, in Paris, by Roger Désormière and the Paris Orchestre National. The first American performance was given on January 8, 1953, by Charles Munch and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which soon after joined with the Koussevitzky Music Foundation to commission his Second Symphony. A large part of his later work was also the result of American commissions: one score for George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra, two for Mstislav Rostropovich and the National Symphony, one for the Juilliard Quartet, and one, a concerto, for Isaac Stern.

This Symphony finds its force and its motion in the principle of variation — which is, in effect, a constant state of development — rather than in the formal notion of exposition, development, and recall of ideas. Each of the four movements consists of variations and all are intimately related in such a way as to make the entire half-hour work fundamentally monothematic. The composer has remarked that "often, particularly in the first and last movements, small orchestral groups are detached from the large ensemble. These are then treated as soloists, set in contrast with the orchestral body." This orchestral effect is stressed in the Second Symphony, where the solo group is defined as a chamber orchestra of twelve musicians, separately scored and distinct from the full orchestra throughout the length of the work.

The first movement of the Symphony No. 1 is in a traditional form, but a variation form: a Passacaglia, in which a low-lying and slow-moving theme of four measures in triple meter is ever-present under or behind the varied orchestral colors, complex polyphonic textures, and tightening rhythms of the continuously developing variations. The Scherzo, *Molto vivace*, follows immediately, with a short introduction and then the piccolo's statement of the new perpetual-motion rhythm. Next is the slow movement, an *Intermezzo*, whose curving theme and references back to the Passacaglia are "sung almost continually [over] a rhythmic bass in constantly indeterminate balance." The Finale, a theme and six variations, closes the Symphony nobly and gently.

Bacchus et Ariane, Ballet, Op. 43, Suite No. 2 ALBERT ROUSSEL
(b. Apr. 5, 1869; d. Aug. 23, 1937)

Albert Roussel was born into a prosperous family of textile manufacturers in the north of France, was orphaned at eight, and by fifteen had made a firm decision about his future. He would not prepare himself for the life of an industrialist but would follow another course. He chose the sea and entered the Naval Academy. It was in 1892, on shipboard, that Roussel first thought of writing music. He tried his hand at a Fantasy for Violin and Piano and then at an opera, about which we know only that it was based on an American Indian legend. In 1893 he wrote two more works. By 1894, he was commanding officer of a torpedo boat that sailed on a mission to Southeast Asia. When he returned, he resigned his commission to study music and devoted the rest of his life to composition.

Roussel became one of the important and admired composers of his time. He was an independent who belonged to no school, but he was influenced by the ideas of both the impressionists and the neo-classicists. His music shows the vigor of a man of action, and several of his important works are based on Eastern subjects which first interested him in his navy days.

The Ariadne of Greek legend was a personification of springtime rebirth. Abandoned by her husband, Theseus, she dies or falls into a deep sleep from which she is awakened by Dionysus (the Romans' Bacchus), who marries her. The ballet scenario alters the story considerably. The score of

the Second Suite, which is the entire Act II, has these indications of the danced events that it accompanies:

Introduction, *Andante*. Awakening of Ariadne. She looks around her, surprised. She rises, runs about seeking Theseus and his companions. She realizes that she has been abandoned. She climbs with difficulty to the top of the rock. She is about to throw herself into the stream. She falls into the arms of Bacchus, who has appeared from behind a boulder. Bacchus resumes, with the awakened Ariadne, the dance of her dream. Bacchus dances alone, *Allegro-andante-andantino*. The Dionysiac spell. A group marches past, *Allegro deciso*. A faun and a Bacchante present to Ariadne the golden cup, into which a cluster of grapes has been pressed. Dance of Ariadne, *Andante*. Dance of Ariadne and Bacchus, *Moderato e pesante*. Bacchanale, *Allegro brillante*.

Roussel composed *Bacchus et Ariane* between June and September 1930, and it was first performed on May 22, 1931, at the Paris Opéra. The first concert performance of this Suite was given on November 26, 1936, by the Orchestra of the Paris Philharmonic Society, under the direction of Charles Munch.

About the Artists

The **Orchestre National de Lyon**, under the leadership of Serge Baudo since its inception in 1969, has built a strong reputation as one of Europe's leading orchestras. The orchestra came into being when, in the late 1960s, French Minister of Culture André Malraux decided to restructure musical life in France. This decision led to the creation of the Orchestre de Paris in 1967, under Charles Munch and Serge Baudo, and two years later the city of Lyon would benefit from the first regional orchestra under this policy. Serge Baudo was invited to be its first director and permanent conductor. In addition to the regular subscription concerts in and around Lyon, the orchestra has toured in Spain and the Canary Islands, Germany, Austria, Greece, Rumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. It annually appears at music festivals, including those of Montpellier, Arles, Besançon, Aix-en-Provence, Orange, Strasbourg, Prague, Paris, Vienna, and Salzburg, and is a regular participant in the International Berlioz Festival which was founded by Serge Baudo. The orchestra's 1986-87 season includes a series of concerts in West Germany and Japan, plus fifty concerts in Lyon's Maurice Ravel Auditorium and another forty in the Rhône-Alps region. Now completing its first tour of North America — Ann Arbor is the last of ten cities, which have included New York, Washington, Quebec, and Ottawa, Baudo and the orchestra have treated audiences to a wealth of music by French composers, some rarely performed outside France.

In the recording field, the Orchestre National de Lyon has received the Grand Prix du Disque and the Gold Record, the latter an exceptional event since it is the first French symphony orchestra to receive that award. Among the orchestra's recorded works are Debussy's *Pelleas et Mélisande*, Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette*, Joseph Kosma's *Les Canuts*, an all-Ravel album, and its latest recording, Poulenc's *Stabat Mater*, released in January 1985. The orchestra has also made several recordings for French Radio's music network France Musique, and two specials for French Television's Channel One.

Serge Baudo, born in Marseilles in 1927, studied at the Paris Conservatory and made his conducting debut at the Concerts Lamoureux in 1950. In 1959 he became director of the Radio-Nice Orchestra, at the same time accepting responsibility for many productions of the Aix-en-Provence Festival with soloists such as Régine Crespin, Teresa Berganza, and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. He went on to conduct orchestras in leading opera houses of the world, including those in Milan, New York, Buenos Aires, Paris, London, Berlin, Vienna, Tokyo, Peking, and Shanghai. He has also guest-conducted major orchestras around the world, including those in London, Berlin, Vienna, Dresden, Leipzig, Amsterdam, Tokyo, Israel, Moscow, and Leningrad. By creating and developing the Berlioz Festival, Baudo honored the last wishes of Charles Munch, a devoted Berlioz interpreter, who died in Richmond during a U.S. tour with the Orchestre de Paris in 1968. Maestro Baudo continued to direct and conduct the Orchestre de Paris throughout the remainder of the tour.

In his years with the Orchestre National de Lyon, Serge Baudo has dedicated himself to presenting worldwide the works of French composers. He holds the distinction of being the first Western conductor to be invited to China and to return a second time with the Orchestre National de Lyon. Honors awarded to the maestro include the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur and Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters.

Gérard Poulet enjoys a double career as teacher and major international soloist. Born in 1938 in Bayonne, the son of conductor Gaston Poulet, he was accepted at the age of eleven by the College of Music in Paris, and one year later he gave his first concert. He has since concertized in Europe, the United States, the Soviet Union, and Japan. Influenced by Francescatti, Menuhin, Milstein, and particularly Henryk Szeryng, Poulet passes on his knowledge and experience to pupils in the Paris National Conservatory, where he is a professor. Each year Gérard Poulet's favorite charity, medical research for the deaf, benefits from the violinist's concerts and recordings; a recent recital for this cause, recorded by Pathe Marconi, included works by Mozart, Beethoven, Prokofiev, Debussy, and Ravel.

All participating artists this evening are appearing in Ann Arbor for the first time.

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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