

DRESDEN STAATSKAPELLE

ANDRÉ PREVIN
Conductor

Thursday Evening, April 23, 1992
Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor, Michigan

PROGRAM

- Don Juan, Op. 20 Strauss
Tod und Verklärung (Death and Transfiguration), Op. 24 Strauss

INTERMISSION

- Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92 Beethoven
Poco sostenuto; vivace
Allegretto
Scherzo: presto
Allegro con brio

The University Musical Society extends thanks to Mr. Jim Leonard, Manager, SKR Classical, for this evening's Philips Pre-concert Presentation.

The Dresden Staatskapelle appears by arrangement with Columbia Artists Management Inc., New York City.

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The box office in the outer lobby is open during intermission for tickets to upcoming Musical Society concerts.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

There was a time when the music of Richard Strauss was the center of great controversy. At the end of the nineteenth century, when the successors of Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt, and Richard Wagner were probing the possibilities of new musical means and were discovering new potentials of poetic expressiveness in music, Strauss was in the vanguard of the creative search. The tone poems *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, and *Ein Heldenleben* were composed before 1900, and the operas *Salomé* and *Elektra* appeared during the first decade of the twentieth century. Although Strauss later chose to follow a more moderate course, leaving the more telling innovations to composers such as Schoenberg and Stravinsky, he nevertheless created works in a variety of forms that have established him as one of the most significant composers of his time. Ironically, many of the works that were the subject of the most heated controversy have since come to be recognized as the masterpieces most representative of his genius.

Strauss had already declared himself an orchestral composer with the symphonic fantasy *Aus Italien* (1886) and the tone poem *Macbeth* (1886-8); it was *Don Juan*, however, that brought him international recognition for the first time. This was followed in the same year by the tone poem *Tod und Verklärung* (Death and Transfiguration). Both of these works showed ample evidence of his precocious ability in handling large forces to produce dazzling orchestral colors, as well as a startlingly individual style and a gift for memorable melody combined with harmonic mastery. Furthermore, the complete mastery of the form itself — the single-movement Romantic tone poem — in addition to all the aforementioned, helped to establish the young Strauss's reputation as a mature and confident artist and one of the foremost German composers of all time.

Don Juan, Op. 20

RICHARD STRAUSS

The premiere of *Don Juan* took place in Weimar on November 11, 1899, with the composer leading the Court Orchestra of that city; the performance was a

great success. In a letter to his father, the composer wrote: "It sounded wonderful... Nowhere have I made a mistake in the orchestration." Indeed, Strauss was called by the audience onto the stage five times, persisting until the work was played once more. Even the staunch Brahmsian Hans von Bülow called it "a most unheard-of success." A year later, after conducting the Berlin premiere, he wrote to the composer: "Your most grandiose *Don Juan* has taken me captive."

The figure of the philandering Don Juan Tenorio of Seville has been the inspiration for many artists since the sixteenth century for treatment in various mediums, from Tirso de Molina and Molière, through Mozart and Da Ponte with their operatic collaboration for *Don Giovanni*, to Byron, Balzac, and Bernard Shaw. For his inspiration, Strauss chose the dramatic poetic treatment of the Don Juan legend by the Austrian Nikolaus Lenau (1802-1850). In his retelling of the story, Lenau presents Don Juan as a man engaged in a romantic, idealistic quest. Of his main character, Lenau said: "My Don Juan is no hot-blooded man eternally pursuing women. It is the longing in him to find a woman who is to him the incarnate womanhood and to enjoy in one all the women on earth, whom he cannot as individuals possess. Because he does not find her, although he reels from one to another, at last disgust seizes hold of him, and this disgust is the Devil that fetches him." After countless disillusionments, at the end, the Don allows himself to be slain in a duel with the avenger of one of his amorous conquests.

Strauss never provided a synopsis of the action in his *Don Juan*, as the work is really a psychological study more than a narrative tale. Certain themes and motives, however, carrying programmatic connotations, may be discerned throughout the work. Don Juan is introduced at the outset by three different thematic elements that follow each other and keep recurring in the proceedings: the introductory upward flourish, representing his unquenchable ardor; a lyrical subject that symbolizes his eternal longing; and a heroic motive heard in the horns. Several of the protagonist's amorous exploits are represented in brief musical episodes, and a few of the women who succumb to the anti-hero's charms and seduction are represented by

lyrical themes, as in the extended solo passage for the oboe. Toward the middle, a new theme for the horns asserts Don Juan's masculinity. As all the themes are woven together with astonishing orchestral colors and complexity of contrapuntal texture, a climax is reached with a shattering dissonance, followed by an abrupt pause. A brief coda of stark orchestration signals Don Juan's last breaths on earth and reflects the closing line of Lenau's dramatic poem: "The fuel is consumed, the hearth cold and dark."

Tod und Verklärung, Op. 24 (Death and Transfiguration)

RICHARD STRAUSS

This tone poem, *Tod und Verklärung*, received its premier performance on June 21, 1890, at the Eisenach Festival. After *Macbeth* and *Don Juan*, Strauss's third tone poem had special success with the composer's contemporaries, even if some objected to the boldness of the idea and its execution. The modernists and progressives of the time poured extravagant praise upon the work, while it was damned by the conservatives and reactionaries. At a performance by the Berlin Philharmonic, "the prima dona [sic] [conductor, Arthur] Nikisch mistreated the piece in such a way" that the composer was afraid of a fiasco; at the end, however, there was a thunderous ovation, and Strauss concluded in a letter to his father: "Seemingly, the work cannot be suppressed." Indeed, the work quickly achieved the utmost prominence among Strauss's symphonic works. Incidentally, these controversies, which occurred with practically every work of his, fueled the fire for Strauss's fame and notoriety, making him rich at the same time while he was still young.

The design of *Death and Transfiguration* is distantly related to sonata form, as it contains a slow introduction, a symphonic allegro, and an epilogue, all of these sharing themes that return cyclically. Two basic leitmotifs dominate in this work; one signifies death, the other, victory. While the subject is psychological, the music follows a realistic scenario. What follows is Strauss's own explanation of the content:

"It was six years ago that it occurred to me to present in the form of a tone poem the dying hours of a man who had striven towards the highest idealistic aims, maybe indeed,

those of an artist. The sick man lies in bed, asleep with heavy irregular breathing; friendly dreams conjure a smile on the features of the deeply suffering man; he wakes up; he is once more racked with horrible agonies: his limbs shake with fever. As the attack passes and the pains leave off, his thoughts wander through his past life. His childhood passes before him, the time of his youth with its strivings and passions, and then, as the pains already begin to return, there appears to him the fruit of his life's path, the conception, the ideal which he has sought to realize, to present artistically, but which he has not been able to complete, since it is not for man to be able to accomplish such things. The hour of death approaches, the soul leaves the body in order to find, gloriously achieved in everlasting space, those things which could not be fulfilled here below."

Close to 60 years later, according to his daughter-in-law, and shortly before his own death, Strauss told her: "Funny thing, Alice, dying is just the way I composed it in *Death and Transfiguration*."

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92 LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

I am Bacchus incarnate, to give humanity wine to drown its sorrow...He who divines the secret of my music is delivered from the misery that haunts the world.

— Beethoven

While Beethoven's Seventh Symphony has no subtitle or program, many musicians, musicologists, and critics have attempted to find an appellative or running story to this work. Composers Robert Schumann and Hector Berlioz both said that its music evoked "the spirit of a rustic wedding." Richard Wagner went so far as to call it "The Apotheosis of the Dance." This last view is the most popular one among those who have attempted to define the emotional content of this work. Evidently the great Isadora Duncan agreed with this perception; she danced to all but the first movement, and the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo presented a dance version of the entire work. French composer Vincent D'Indy, however, disagreed, saying, "Nothing less than a pastoral symphony! The rhythm of the piece has nothing of the dance

about it." As for the composer himself, if he had any extra-musical concepts in mind, he never divulged his intentions. All we know is that he was very pleased with this work and called it "a grand symphony in A, one of my best works."

Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 was written in 1812, at the time when the Napoleonic War was raging. (This fact has led some commentators to espouse the far-fetched theory that this event had some influence in the conceptual content of the work.) The Symphony was premiered in Vienna the following year. The occasion was a benefit concert for disabled Austrian and Bavarian soldiers who tried to cut off Napoleon's retreat, but were defeated at Hanau. Beethoven himself conducted the performance, "hardly, perhaps," says Grove, "to its advantage, considering the symbolical gestures described by [Ludwig] Spohr, since he was by then very deaf and heard what was going on around him with great difficulty." Spohr's account of the event is interesting:

"At this concert, I first saw Beethoven conduct. Often as I had heard of it, it surprised me extremely. He was accustomed to conveying the marks of expression by the most peculiar motions of his body. Thus at a *sforzando* he tore his arms, which were before crossed on his breast, violently apart. At a *piano* he crouched down, bending lower the softer the tone. At a *crescendo* he raised himself by degrees until at the *forte* he sprang up to his full height; and, without knowing it, would often at the time shout aloud."

Marked *Poco sostenuto*, the introduction to the first movement is of striking beauty, yet based simply on the major scale, setting the stage for a movement of tremendous force and energy. The main body of the movement is marked *Vivace* and is built upon a sonata form. The main theme is ushered in on the pitch of E, exchanged from one instrument to another 61 times before finally opening up to its full development. The movement concludes with an elaborate coda, in which fragments of the main theme are heard with its characteristic rhythm, steadily growing from a *pianissimo* to a powerful *fortissimo* at the close.

The march-like *Allegretto*, again with a steady rhythm, provides a major contrast. Originally, Beethoven had intended this movement for the third "Rasumovsky" string quartet, but rightly expanded it for this sym-

phony. Following the development of several counter-melodies, the clarinet announces a new melody that dispels the somber mood preceding it. The opening theme returns as the movement concludes.

The third movement, a scherzo marked *Presto*, is a charming example of lightness and grace. The main theme is full of humor and receives buoyant development. In the Trio, *Assai meno presto*, the violins hold a high pitch against a pleasant melody said to be an old pilgrim chant of Southern Austria. The first part of the scherzo is repeated, as is the hymn, leading to the coda and joyful conclusion of the movement.

In the Finale, the symphony reaches its peak with an unceasing pulse and sense of ecstatic joy. Both the first and second themes are truly frenzied and contagious, forcefully driving to a remarkable coda of inimitable invention. It is an exuberant climax to a work of great power, beauty, and charm.

It is ironic that this joyful, sunny, and impetuous whirl of motion, which many after Wagner have called "The Apotheosis of the Dance," was written during one of the darkest and most difficult periods in the composer's life.

— Notes by Edgar Colón-Hernández

About the Artists

One of the oldest and most highly regarded orchestras in the world, the Dresden Staatskapelle (Dresden State Orchestra) boasts a tradition as proud as that of Dresden, one of the great cultural centers of Europe. As a symphonic orchestra and the orchestra of the Dresden State Opera, the Dresden Staatskapelle is internationally renowned for its excellent interpretations of both the standard and contemporary repertoire. The orchestra, which premiered many of the major works of Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss, has been led by such important conductors as Karajan, Böhm, Kempe, Reiner, Abbado, Ozawa, Temirkanov, and Rozhdestvensky. It has toured throughout Europe, the former Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States, where it made its debut in 1979. The Dresden Staatskapelle's extensive record catalogue includes works by Mozart, Beethoven, and

Strauss on the Angel, Philips, Denon, and Deutsche Grammophon labels, among others.

Founded in 1548 as an ensemble of court choristers, the Dresden Staatskapelle originally provided music for such functions as banquets, church services, court festivals, masked balls, weddings, and funeral processions. Its first authenticated concert tour occurred in 1575, with a visit to the Reichstag in Regensburg. In the seventeenth century, the conductorship and touring activities of Heinrich Schütz, the orchestra's fourth maestro, brought the orchestra fame throughout Europe. Under his baton, the orchestra also introduced the first German opera, Schütz's *Dafne*, beginning a long tradition of operatic premieres.

By the early eighteenth century, the orchestra was clearly the continent's foremost ensemble. Beethoven noted, "It is generally said that the orchestra in Dresden is the best in Europe," while Jean Jacques Rousseau considered the group to be "the most complete and best ordered ensemble" of the day. In the latter part of the century, the orchestra began presenting public concerts apart from those at court, and in 1858 — after previously unsuccessful efforts by Weber and Wagner — it introduced regular subscription concerts alongside charity performances and occasional performances by virtuosi. Later, under the baton of Ernst von Schuch, the orchestra enjoyed a close association with Richard Strauss, premiering nine of his operas, including *Salomé*, *Elektra*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *Feuersnot*.

As the orchestra of the Dresden State Opera, the Dresden Staatskapelle maintains the Dresden tradition of Weber, Wagner, and Strauss, also performing a varied repertoire including works by Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi, Puccini, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Berg, Orff, Prokofiev, and contemporary composers. Apart from performances with the Dresden State Opera, the orchestra's seasons include a full schedule of symphony and chamber music concerts, appearances at international music festivals, and a number of special concerts for schools.

The Dresden Staatskapelle made its Ann Arbor debut during the orchestra's first United States tour in 1979 and returned in 1983, both concerts conducted by Herbert Blomstedt; this evening marks its third Ann Arbor appearance.



André Previn is perhaps America's best known and most versatile musician. A conductor of the world's most esteemed orchestras, award-winning composer of orchestral, chamber, stage, and film scores, pianist in chamber music and jazz, a prolific recording artist, and author and television host, Mr. Previn is familiar to millions around the world.

In recent years, Mr. Previn has most often appeared as conductor of the world's most prestigious and most recorded orchestras. An annual guest of the Vienna Philharmonic both in Vienna and at its summer home, the Salzburg Festival, Mr. Previn this year became the Conductor Laureate of the London Symphony Orchestra, re-establishing his relationship with the orchestra of which he was principal conductor for ten years. Over the past 25 years, he has held the chief artistic posts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (1985-89), Pittsburgh Symphony (1976-84), Royal Philharmonic (music director: 1985-88; principal conductor: 1988-91), London Symphony (1969-79) and Houston Symphony (1967-70), and toured with several of them worldwide. As guest conductor, he has appeared on many occasions with other of the

world's finest symphony orchestras, including those of Berlin, Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia, to name but a few.

As pianist, Mr. Previn enjoys performing and recording chamber music and has maintained an active concert life at such festivals as Caramoor and the La Jolla Chamber Music Festival, where he performs with Emanuel Ax, Young Uck Kim, Yo-Yo Ma, Viktoria Mullova, and Itzhak Perlman, among others. With every orchestra of which he has been music director, he has initiated chamber music programs with the orchestral musicians, and in 1991, while on tour in Japan with the Vienna Philharmonic, he performed a chamber music concert with the orchestra's principals, the Musikverein Quartet. Recently, Mr. Previn has returned to one of his first loves — jazz — and has begun to record and perform again with jazz bass legend Ray Brown and guitarist Mundell Lowe.

As part of its Centennial celebration, Carnegie Hall commissioned André Previn to write a set of orchestral song settings with words by Toni Morrison for soprano Kathleen Battle. *Honey and Rue*, the result of their collaboration, was performed by Miss Battle, with André Previn conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's, in January 1992.

Mr. Previn moved as a child from his native Berlin to California, where he studied composition with Joseph Achron and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and conducting with Pierre Monteux. (It was also at this time that Mr. Previn began his musical and personal friendship with the great Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti, who imbued him with a lifelong interest in chamber music.) As a teenager, Mr. Previn began to work in the Hollywood film studios as conductor, arranger, and composer. Innumerable scores and four Academy Awards later, he began to concentrate his efforts on the symphonic world in conducting and composition. Among his compositions are a piano concerto, commissioned for and by Vladimir Ashkenazy (recorded with Mr. Previn and the Royal Philharmonic), which has also been recently played by André Watts and Horacio Gutiérrez; a cello concerto, written for Yo-Yo Ma; a song cycle, written for British mezzo-soprano Dame Janet Baker; and a music drama — *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* — on which he collaborated with playwright Tom Stoppard.

A prolific recording artist with all major labels in symphonic, chamber music, and jazz, Mr. Previn is especially well known for his interpretations of British and Russian symphonic repertoire, including cycles of Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich, and Prokofiev. Recent projects include Strauss symphonic tone poems with the Vienna Philharmonic, *Die Fledermaus* with Kiri Te Kanawa, and the nine Beethoven symphonies with the Royal Philharmonic.

In addition to this current tour with the Dresden Staatskapelle, André Previn's activities in the 1991-92 season include concerts in London with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, followed by a tour with that orchestra to Hong Kong and Japan, and guest conducting engagements with the Vienna Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and Los Angeles Philharmonic, among others. Some special projects included a Carnegie Hall Christmas holiday program in December 1991, followed by the world premiere of the Hall's Centennial commission, *Honey and Rue*, that he wrote with Toni Morrison. In November 1991, Doubleday released Mr. Previn's early memoir, *No Minor Chords — My Early Days in Hollywood*, chronicling Mr. Previn's years as composer, arranger and orchestrator, and music director at the MGM Studio.

André Previn has conducted eight concerts in Ann Arbor prior to the one this evening: two with the London Symphony (1973 and 1974), one with the Pittsburgh Symphony (1981), one with the Royal Philharmonic (1987), and four with the Los Angeles Philharmonic during the 1990 May Festival, one of those also featuring him as orchestral piano soloist.



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Volker Wittig, *Orchestra Supervisor*

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Michael Frenzel
Christian Uhlig
Gustav Sandner
Johannes Muck
Hans Fischer
Siegfried Büchel
Wilma Sattler
Volker Dietzsch
Reinhard Krauss
Johanna Mittag
Jörg Kettmann
Jörg Fassmann
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Cellos

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Joachim Bischof
Gerhard Pluskwik
Friedrich Milatz
Karl Eulitz
Linhardt Schneider
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Martin Jungnickel
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Andreas Wylezol
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Christian Rolle
Jürgen Schmidt
Helmut Branny
Christoph Bechstein
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Eckart Haupt
Cordula Bräuer
Siegfried Teubel

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Bernd Schober
Bernhard Mühlbach
Wolfgang Klier

Clarinets

Joachim Mäder
Dietmar Hedrich
Rolf Schindler
Gunther Scherel

Bassoons

Wolfgang Liebscher
Günter Klier
Bernhard Rose
Andreas Börtitz

Horns

Istvan Vincze
Erich Markwart
Andreas Langosch
Dieter Pansa
Holger Steinert
Eberhard Kaiser

Trumpets

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Peter Lohse
Bernd Hengst
Gord Graner

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Uwe Voigt
Guido Ulfig
Hans Hombsch

Tuba

Hans-Werner Liemen

Timpani/Percussion

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