

The University Musical Society



of The University of Michigan

Presents

Los Angeles Philharmonic

ZUBIN MEHTA, *Music Director and Conductor*

SAMUEL MAYES, *Cellist*

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1975, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

Symphony No. 22 in E-flat, "The Philosopher" HAYDN
Adagio
Presto
Menuetto
Presto

Concerto in B minor for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 104 DVOŘÁK
Allegro
Adagio ma non troppo
Allegro moderato

SAMUEL MAYES

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Excerpts from *Götterdämmerung*—Dawn and Siegfried's
Rhine Journey; Siegfried's Funeral March WAGNER

Prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* WAGNER

London Records

PROGRAM NOTES

by

ORRIN HOWARD

Symphony No. 22 in E-flat ("The Philosopher") JOSEPH HAYDN
(1732–1809)

When Haydn died in 1809, the symphony, string quartet, and concerto, had evolved into structures of immense quantitative and expressive proportions. When, in 1761, he began his life-long association with the Esterházy family, the symphony had advanced to a recognizable condition in terms of thematic contrast, number of movements, orchestral make-up, and so forth.

At the end of his first decade with the Esterházy, Haydn had written over 40 symphonies, more than he was ever to produce in any similar time span. "The Philosopher," so named without a reason anyone has yet discovered, was composed in 1764.

At the opening, the winds intone a chorale tune of four-square character (but irregular length) and are supported by unison strings in incessant Bachian motion. As evidence of the fluid state of Haydn's stylistic approach, there is a contrasting theme of secular charm and determined formality. In what might pass for a sonata-form development section, the series of dissonances—seconds resolving to thirds—gives another look into the composer's recent Baroque past. For the remainder of the symphony, Haydn exercises some of his typically bright if not memorable early classical muscle, and sets aside any "Philosopher" credentials he might have exposed in the impressively august first movement.

Concerto in B minor for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 104 ANTONIN DVOŘÁK
(1841–1904)

Music historians are in general agreement in assigning Antonin Dvořák a high position on the classical composers' roster of greatness. The B-minor Concerto was composed at the end of Dvořák's three-year stay in New York as director of the National Conservatory of Music (1892–1895). The music, with its passionate ardor, rhapsodic and tender lyricism, and zesty rhythmic contours, is for all the world like an extended Slavonic Dance in full concerto clothing. One is impressed by the Concerto's range of expressiveness. The first movement's chief materials are a main theme whose strength and rhythmic urgency are apparent even in its initial quiet entry, and a *molto espressivo* second theme, heard first as a horn solo in the opening *tutti*, that is one of Dvořák's most splendid inspirations. Both themes undergo dramatic character changes, as when the *espressivo* melody, having gained great muscularity, usurps the main theme's lead position in the recapitulation.

The slow movement, opening in warm (Brahmsian) woodwind intimacy, is as rich in poetic melodiousness as the final movement is in vital energy.

The *finale* closes gradually, *diminuendo*, like a sigh—with reminiscences of the first and second movements—the solo dies down to *pianissimo*, then swells again and the last bars are taken up by the orchestra and the whole concludes in stormy mood.

Excerpts from *Götterdämmerung* (Twilight of the Gods): Dawn and
Siegfried's Rhine Journey; Siegfried's Funeral March . . . RICHARD WAGNER
(1813–1883)

Der Ring des Nibelungen (The Ring of the Nibelung), of which *Götterdämmerung* is the last of four immense music dramas, was presented for the first time, at Wagner's own theatre at Bayreuth. The "Rhine Journey" occurs between the prologue, in which Siegfried is sent off to heroic deeds by his beloved Brünnhilde, and the first act. After the farewell, the curtain comes down and the interlude depicting Siegfried's journey is played. The young warrior's horn call is sounded often, at times combined with other motifs from other portions of the "Ring," e.g., Brünnhilde's motif, the Fire Music, the motif of the Ring, etc. Toward the end of the excerpt, the mood darkens, prefiguring the tragic events about to be played out in the drama.

No episode in *Götterdämmerung* is more touching and eloquent than the one containing the funeral music for the slain hero Siegfried. Earlier, he is given a magic potion which causes him to forget his bride Brünnhilde, who, believing herself cruelly forsaken by Siegfried, reveals to his enemy Hagen that her husband is vulnerable to physical injury only in the back, which is unprotected because he would never retreat. Before the treacherous Hagen plunges a spear into Siegfried's back, he gives him an antidote to the original potion, so that before he dies, Siegfried remembers his beloved Brünnhilde. In the funeral music, the warrior's life is recalled, his heroic motifs now clothed in the robes of tragedy.

Prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (The Mastersingers of
Nuremberg) RICHARD WAGNER

Wagner first envisioned *Die Meistersinger* in 1845 as a comedic antidote to *Tannhäuser*. Starting in Wagner's mind as a parody of the song contest in *Tannhäuser*, the concept of *Meistersinger* attained considerable depth when the opera was actually in work (1862–67), becoming a comedy of surpassing grandeur. The Prelude begins with the pomp of the main Meistersingers' theme and other motifs associated with them, goes on to themes characterizing Walther and his love for Eva, and climaxes in a section which grandly combines two of the Meistersingers' themes with a part of Walther's "Prize Song."

SAMUEL MAYES, renowned American cellist, joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic as guest principal cellist for the 1974/75 winter season. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Mayes began studying the cello at the age of four, and was accepted by the Curtis Institute at age twelve. Joining the Philadelphia Orchestra six years later, he was named to the first chair by Eugene Ormandy in 1939. In 1948, the late Serge Koussevitzky urged Mayes to come to Boston as solo cellist with the Boston Symphony. During this period he performed as soloist with many of the country's leading orchestras. When Eugene Ormandy invited Mayes to return to the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1964, he accepted, remaining as principal cellist until his resignation in 1973. Mayes left the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the end of the 1974/75 season to join the faculty of the University of Michigan where he is currently Professor of Music-Cello.

ZUBIN MEHTA marks his fourteenth year this season as music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, an enormously progressive partnership for both orchestra and conductor. Born in Bombay, India, in 1936, Mehta began studying violin and piano at age seven. Since his conducting debut in Vienna in 1958, and several subsequent substitute engagements, he has held permanent appointments with three major orchestras—Montreal, Israel, and Los Angeles. Tonight's concert is Mehta's third appearance in Ann Arbor, the first in 1970 conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and again in 1972 with the Israel Philharmonic.

