

The University Musical Society



Presents

Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra

GENNADY ROZHDESTVENSKY, *Conductor*

VIKTORIA POSTNIKOVA, *Pianist*

MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 24, 1975, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Symphony No. 3 ("Facetter") KARL-BIRGER BLOMDAHL
Largamente, tranquillo ma fluente
Prestissimo
Allegro molto, deciso e ritmico
Largamente

Concerto No. 3 in C major for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 26 PROKOFIEV
Andante, allegro
Andantino (theme and variations)
Allegro ma non troppo
VIKTORIA POSTNIKOVA

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64 TCHAIKOVSKY
Andante, allegro con anima
Andante cantabile con alcuna licenza
Valse: allegro moderato
Finale: allegro maestoso, allegro vivace

London, Angel, Nonesuch, and RCA Records.

PROGRAM NOTES

Symphony No. 3 ("Facetter") KARL-BIRGER BLOMDAHL (1916-1968)

Blomdahl was born in Växjö, Sweden, on October 19, 1916. His principal music study took place in Stockholm, privately with Hilding Rosenberg (counterpart, composition, orchestration) and with Tor Mann at the Royal High School of Music (conducting). His training was completed on the Continent. He first attracted interest in Sweden with several large-scale works in a neo-classic idiom. With his Third Symphony in 1950, he gained an international stature for the first time. Beginning with this symphony Blomdahl veered away from neo-classicism toward expressionism. The world of Schönberg, Berg, and particularly Webern opened up for him, as Bo Wallner noted, "the rich resources of the new expressionism with its immense possibilities of serial technique as a shaping force." From atonality, Blomdahl progressed to the twelve-tone row, and from the twelve-tone row to serialism. At the same time, he began exploring the artistic possibilities of concrete music and electronics.

"The basis of everything which Blomdahl has created," wrote Ingemar von Heijne, "is a striking rhythmic pulsation, overgrown with imaginative syncopated patterns. His rhythm is seldom neutral, sometimes it is playful, but mostly it is hard and driving. Equally striking is Blomdahl's ability to think architecturally and in large forms and a determination to set up broad bridges with long arches . . . In his scores there is seldom any luxuriance of tone color, the orchestral texture is first and foremost harsh, while laying open the nerve fibers of the music right into the angry climaxes."

Here is how Halsey Stevens described the symphony in *Notes*: "The opening is especially touching, with solo flute over a tympani roll, gradually drawing in all the winds to reach a great climax and recede before the violins and violas are called upon. These first fifty bars symbolize the form of the whole work, whose inner sections—*prestissimo*, the other *allegro molto deciso e ritmico*—generate a furious energy which is only slightly tempered by the quieter pages that connect them. The Symphony comes full circle and closes with the quiet music of the opening."

Concerto No. 3 in C major for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 26 SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)

Not many contemporary composers write music which has such an unmistakable identity as that of Prokofiev. What is particularly interesting is that Prokofiev's music, stylistically, changed little over the decades; the same qualities and mannerisms by which his later works are recognized can be found in many of his earlier productions. A saucy, infectious impudence is the attitude usually associated with his music. The mocking reeds, the mischievous leaps in the melody, the tart and often disjointed harmonies, the sudden fluctuation from the naïve and the simple to the unexpected and the complex—these are a few of the fingerprints that can be found in most of Prokofiev's works.

For many years, Prokofiev had been accumulating the themes he was to develop in this concerto: the principal theme of the second movement came to him in 1913, while an episode in the first movement dates from 1911. He began to work with concentration on the concerto in the summer of 1921, completing it on September 28. The composer's own analysis, as published in the score, follows:

"The first movement opens quietly with a short introduction. The theme is announced by an unaccompanied clarinet, and is continued by the violins for a few bars. Soon the tempo changes . . . which leads to the statement of the principal subject by the piano . . . A passage in chords for the piano alone leads to the more expressive second subject, heard in the oboe with a pizzicato accompaniment. This is taken up by the piano and developed at length . . . At the climax of this section,

the tempo reverts to Andante, and the orchestra gives out the first theme, *ff*. The piano joins in, and the theme is subjected to an impressively broad treatment. On resuming the Allegro, the chief theme and the second subject are developed with increased brilliance, and the movement ends with an exciting crescendo.

“The second movement consists of a theme with five variations. The theme is announced by the orchestra alone. In the first variation the piano treats the opening of the theme in quasi-sentimental fashion . . . The tempo changes to Allegro for the second and third variations . . . In variation four, the tempo is once again Andante, and the piano and orchestra discourse on the theme in a quiet and meditative fashion. Variation five is energetic (*Allegro giusto*). It leads without pause into a restatement of the theme by the orchestra, with delicate embroidery in the piano.

“The finale begins with a staccato theme for bassoons and pizzicato strings, which is interrupted by the blustering entry of the piano . . . Eventually, the piano takes up the first theme and develops it into a climax. With a reduction of tone and slackening of tempo, an alternate theme is introduced in the woodwinds. The piano replies with a theme that is more in keeping with the caustic humor of the work. The material is developed and there is a brilliant coda.”

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64 PETER ILYITCH TCHAIKOVSKY
(1840–1893)

The conjectures of a program for the Fifth Symphony have been legion. If there was one in the composer's mind he did not communicate it to any close friends. Tchaikovsky's style, which is highly dramatic and intensely personal, lends itself easily to the thought of a program whether or not the composer intended there to be one.

The Fifth Symphony contains a motif which appears in all four movements of the work. It is a theme of sadness and questioning and is first played by the clarinets. After the short *Andante* introduction the movement proper, *Allegro con anima* begins. The principal theme has a folksong origin, probably Polish. The clarinets and bassoon announce the theme, which is elaborately developed. The second theme is heard in the string section. The movement is in the regular sonata-form with a development and full reprise of the material of the exposition. The beginning of the recapitulation may be recognized by the main theme, played by the bassoon. There is a lengthy coda, ending the movement quietly.

The second movement is well-constructed and tightly-knit, yet there is a sense of enormous freedom in it. After a brief introduction in the lower strings, the beautiful chief melody of the movement is sung by the horn. The oboe then introduces a new theme which is in turn taken up by the violins and violas. Again, the haunting chief melody is heard in the cellos. There are several additional themes until the full orchestra thunders out the theme of the beginning of the work, which Philip Hale calls the “theme of bodement.” This is heard twice during the movement.

The third movement is a waltz, ingratiating and simple. Toward the very end of the waltz, as the sounds of gaiety fade away, the original “bodement” theme is heard, but this time as if in the distance.

The Finale, like the first movement, begins with an introduction. The theme is based upon the sad motto theme of the other three movements. The *Allegro vivace* begins with the principal theme in the strings and later the woodwinds enter with another theme which is afterward given to the violins. In the development of the second theme are heard allusions to the motto theme. The movement progresses ever faster to a stormy finish, with one final, reminiscent hearing of the “bodement” theme.

The Program Notes are by DAVID EWEN from *The World of Twentieth Century Music*.

