

# Ann Arbor May Festival

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

## Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig

KURT MASUR

*Artistic Director and Conductor*

ARLEEN AUGÉR, *Soprano*

THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 30, 1987, AT 8:00  
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

*This Festival is dedicated to Gail W. Rector, the Musical Society's  
retiring director and president, in recognition of his thirty years  
of devoted service and invaluable contributions to the Ann Arbor community.*

### P R O G R A M

- Symphony No. 23 in D major, K. 181 ..... MOZART  
Allegro spiritoso  
Andantino grazioso  
Presto assai
- Motet, "Exsultate, jubilate," K. 165 ..... MOZART  
ARLEEN AUGÉR

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

- Symphony No. 4 in E-flat major ("Romantic") ..... BRUCKNER  
Bewegt, nicht zu schnell  
Andante, andante quasi allegretto  
Scherzo  
Finale: bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell

*The Musical Society expresses gratitude to Ford Motor Company Fund for underwriting costs of the  
May Festival house programs.*

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Symphony No. 23 in D major, K. 181 . . . . . WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (b. Jan. 27, 1756; d. Dec. 5, 1791)

Mozart wrote his first group of nine symphonies during the three years of his journey to Paris and London (1763-66), and he continued to work on them until 1768, incorporating the new impressions he had received on his travels. One of the most valuable was J. C. Bach's advice to write so that the orchestra could "sing."

His second group of symphonies was written during and in-between the three Italian journeys (1769-73). Again, he was much influenced by impressions received while abroad, and in this second group the earliest take up where the first group left off.

The Symphony in D, K. 181, dated Salzburg, 19 May 1773, is in three distinct movements, fast-slow-fast, which follow one another without a break. In this it resembles, at least superficially, the Italian overture, a resemblance underlined by its volatile and elusive thematic material which gives a quite theatrical impression with its strong dynamic contrasts and strange, crystal-clear runs. One wonders if the young Mozart had any particular lady singer in mind when he wrote the lovely oboe song in the *Andante grazioso*; it is a solo that would grace any recital. The work ends with a Rondo marked *Presto assai* and laid out rather in the manner of a concerto grosso. Darker moments, mainly in D minor, come in to cloud the mood before the music emerges into radiant clarity as the "symphony-overture" comes to an end.

### Motet, "Exsultate, jubilate," K. 165 . . . . . MOZART

By temperament, taste, and training, Mozart followed the rococo gallant manner of his great Italian predecessors, Alessandro Scarlatti, Caldara, Porpora, and others. Into his religious work he carried, as did they, the transparency and charm of the Italian operatic style. To the purist, works like the *Exsultate, jubilate* may indicate a lack of religious sincerity in Mozart, a degradation of ecclesiastical composition and a vulgar mixture of styles. A large part of the church music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was thus censured and condemned by nineteenth-century critics. Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, the masses and litanies, the motets of the Italians, as well as the religious works of Haydn and Mozart, were considered inappropriate and unliturgical. Absence of austerity was taken for lack of respect by those critics who in their incredible seriousness failed to sense the childlike piety, the humanity and directness of those works, or to realize that these composers were writing in the style and reflecting the taste of their period, for in such artists religious feelings and artistic impulse were one and the same thing. If music like Mozart's *Exsultate, jubilate*, Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, or Haydn's *Creation* are to be excluded from the church, then, as Einstein points out, so should the circular panels of Botticelli depicting the infant Christ surrounded by Florentine angels.

Although the *Exsultate, jubilate* has been a favorite vehicle for sopranos for some 200 years, it was not written for a female singer. Mozart composed the motet in Milan, ten days before his seventeenth birthday, for the castrato Venanzio Rauzzini, who had sung the role of Cecilio in the first performance of his opera *Lucio Silla* three weeks earlier. Well before the tradition of musical eunuchs came to an end, however, the work was taken up by female sopranos, and it may be regarded as an ancestor of such a piece as Reinhold Glière's Concerto for Soprano and Orchestra; a concerto is indeed what it is, in both structure and effect, even though Mozart gave his soloist words to sing instead of the *vocalise* assigned by Glière. The brief recitative separating the first and third movements is the only deviation from the conventional concerto format, and even that may be considered an introduction to the slow movement.

*Exsultate, jubilate* — Exult, rejoice, O joyful souls, and with sweet song let the heavens resound, making answer, with me, to your song.

Recitative: *Fulget amica dies* — The lovely dawn glows bright, now clouds and storms have fled, and a sudden calm has arisen for the just. Everywhere dark night held sway before. But now, at last, rise up and rejoice, ye who are not feared, and content in the blessed dawn, with full hand make offerings of garlands and lilies.

*Tu virginum corona* — And Thou, O Crown of Virgins, Grant us peace, and assuage the passions that touch our hearts.

*Alleluja* — Alleluia.

Symphony No. 4 in E-flat major ("Romantic") . . . . . ANTON BRUCKNER  
(b. Sept. 4, 1824; d. Oct. 11, 1896)

Not until 1884, twenty years after the completion of his first symphony, was virtuoso organist, musical theoretician, and composer Anton Bruckner to find appreciation as a symphonist outside the narrow circle of his pupils and intimate friends. In that year, his Seventh Symphony was given its première in Linz, conducted by Arthur Nikisch, and the event was accorded such a magnificent reception that more performances of the work soon followed. Bruckner's tardy rise to fame was due to various circumstances which cast a rather tragic shadow on the life of this solitary composer. To begin, there was Vienna itself, his hometown since 1868 following the days of his somewhat provincial life as a teacher in several Austrian villages. In those days, a great public dichotomy existed: on one side were those who favored Wagner's highly Romantic and impassioned emotional approach and, on the other side, those who favored Brahms, who tended to be more devoted to a Classical conception of form in his symphonic writing. Though Vienna was firmly under the magical spell of Wagner, operatically speaking, it was Brahms who reigned supreme in terms of the symphony. In the midst of this public debate, Bruckner made no secret of his affiliation and admiration for Wagner. Point in fact, he became known as the "Wagner symphonist," which at that time in Vienna carried no uncertain perjorative connotations. Further, it was practically inevitable that fashionable Vienna had little use for such a strange and awkward character as Bruckner, whose personal appearance did not fit well into the worldly atmosphere of the Austrian capitol and which ultimately led to a lack of confidence in his musical abilities. Moreover, until the age of forty, Bruckner had concentrated mainly on composing masses and other sacred vocal works, and there was no indication that after 1864 he would explore other avenues of composition. Hence, the première of his First Symphony in 1868 was met with incredible prejudice and gross misunderstanding, and the other symphonies to follow pitifully did not fare much better.

Bruckner began sketches for the *Romantic* Symphony in January 1874 and completed the first version of the work in November. Never completely satisfied, however, he undertook a series of major revisions between the years 1878-80, including a completely new Scherzo and an almost entirely new Finale. The first version, edited by Robert Haas and never published in Bruckner's lifetime, is today referred to as the "original" version. It is the version heard in this performance. The score which reflects the revisions of 1878-80, referred to as the first "definitive" version, was first performed in Vienna in February 1881 by the Vienna Philharmonic under Hans Richter. During rehearsals for this performance, Richter happened upon a passage which puzzled him. Turning to Bruckner, who was present during the rehearsal, Richter asked, "What note is this?"; to which Bruckner responded, "Any note you please. Just as you like." This demonstrates Bruckner's willingness to please the whims of conductors who chose to perform his works, but more importantly, it is indicative of the insecurity he felt in his own ability to write symphonically. This is borne out by the fact that the *Romantic* Symphony underwent two more series of revisions between 1886 and 1889. Many of his symphonies suffered the same fate. This self-effacing aspect of Bruckner's personality may well have contributed to the practice of various conductors "editing" many of his symphonies prior to publication (including the *Romantic*), thus lending fuel to a controversy which to this day is not resolved as to which version of a particular symphony most aptly reflects Bruckner's intentions. The problem is most often resolved by a conductor's personal and artistic intuition as to which version will be performed. Of the *Romantic* Symphony's première, Richter would later remark: ". . . For the first time I conducted a Bruckner symphony . . . (he) was an old man then. His works were hardly performed anywhere. When the symphony was over Bruckner came to me. He was radiant with enthusiasm and happiness."

As in both his second and third symphonies (and later in the seventh, eighth, and ninth symphonies), Bruckner opens the first movement of the *Romantic* Symphony with a tremolo in the full strings which forms a major chord over which the solo horn motives of the opening theme are announced. This theme is built upon the interval of an open fifth, with the horn echoed by the upper woodwinds. This is followed by a more flowing passage scored for the violins and flute and has a melodic contour which rises and falls, building to a climax briefly before suddenly breaking off. After the second theme with its gentle and delicate contrapuntal quality, the development section is introduced by a kettledrum roll and grows to a great climax before ebbing away to near silence. The recapitulation of the movement, cast in a free sonata form, reiterates the basic thematic material first heard in the exposition.

The second movement opens with a somber, melancholic quality. In this movement, Bruckner employs a favorite device of alternating two themes twice, building a climax out of the final return of the first theme. The first theme, presented by the cellos, is built primarily around an open fifth and accompanied by muted strings playing staccato. The second theme is presented by the violas, accompanied by the strings playing pizzicato. The feeling of a funeral march pervades the movement until the climax is reached; at this point, the melody acquires a victorious character.

The *Scherzo* movement has the character of hunting music, opening with horn calls which sound as if from a distance. The contrasting trio section, an ethereal Ländler, features the flutes and clarinet in flowing passages. It is interesting to note that Bruckner marked his manuscript at this point, "Dance tune during the hunters' meal."

The concluding movement begins in a manner characteristic of Bruckner, from a quiet ostinato of musical material over a dominant pedal point, creating much harmonic tension, and crescendoing until there is a virtual explosion of a stupendous, heroic unison theme for full orchestra. Reminiscences of the *Scherzo* trigger yet another powerful climax. The Symphony ends in an iridescent and majestic coda.

## About the Artists

For the first time in the long history of the Ann Arbor May Festival, a foreign orchestra provides the nucleus of this annual spring event. The **Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig** and Kurt Masur, however, are certainly not "foreigners" in our city; from 1974 to 1984 they have performed five concerts in this auditorium, all to resounding applause. Moreover, there is a century-old connection linking Leipzig with Ann Arbor: Albert A. Stanley, founder of the May Festival in 1894, received four years of musical training at Leipzig's famous Hochschule für Musik, as do, traditionally, most of the Gewandhaus Orchestra members. Currently, eighty-five percent of the orchestra's musicians, including Maestro Masur, have studied at the "Conservatorium" founded by Felix Mendelssohn in 1842. It is considered a civic honor to be invited to join the Gewandhaus Orchestra, and many members remain with the ensemble all through their careers, sometimes for as long as 30 or 40 years.

In 1781 this professional orchestra was baptized when it took up permanent residence in the Gewandhaus (cloth house), the imposing structure which was the home of Leipzig's prosperous linen merchants. Throughout the orchestra's 241-year history, an illustrious list of conductors, including Felix Mendelssohn, Richard Wagner, Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, Arthur Nikisch, Bruno Walter, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Otto Klemperer, Fritz Busch, Erich Kleiber, and Sir Thomas Beecham, have established and maintained a distinguished musical tradition, further enhanced and strengthened by Kurt Masur since his appointment as music director in 1970.

As one of the world's outstanding conductors, **Kurt Masur** fits well into the lineage of conductors who preceded him. While most world-renowned, jet-age conductors spend anywhere from twelve to fifteen weeks with their orchestras, Mr. Masur spends six to seven months each year leading the Gewandhaus at home in the orchestra's concert hall, at the Leipzig Opera, at the weekly Bach cantata performances in St. Thomas Church, and on tour. The remainder of his time is spent conducting such prestigious European ensembles as the Berlin, Vienna, Czech, Leningrad, Stockholm, and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, the Dresden Staatskapelle, l'Orchestre de Paris, and London's Philharmonia Orchestra. In the United States he has led the Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and Dallas Symphonies, the Philadelphia and Cleveland Orchestras, and the New York Philharmonic. Maestro Masur participates in major music festivals worldwide, including those in Salzburg, Tanglewood, Ravinia, Prague, and Warsaw.

Kurt Masur made his American debut with the Cleveland Orchestra in 1974, the same year he made his initial United States tour with the Gewandhaus. Since then, they have appeared regularly in North America and have been featured in New York with a Beethoven Cycle at Carnegie Hall in 1985 and a Brahms Cycle at Avery Fisher Hall in 1986. During the current tour they are appearing at Carnegie Hall, in Pasadena and San Francisco, then continue their tour to the Far East.

American soprano **Arleen Augér** has been praised around the world for the luminous quality of her voice and her superb musicianship. In July of 1986 she was seen by millions of viewers in the television broadcast of the Royal Wedding of Prince Andrew and Miss Sarah Ferguson, in which she sang Mozart's *Exsultate, jubilate*. Like several of America's most distinguished singers, Miss Augér, who was born in Los Angeles, enjoyed her first major successes in Europe. Since her Vienna State Opera debut as Queen of the Night in a 1967 production of *The Magic Flute*, she has become a familiar figure in the world's most prestigious opera houses and concert halls, having collaborated with such conductors as Solti, Maazel, Böhm, Dorati, Abbado, Muti, Kubelik, Ozawa, Tennstedt, Bernstein, Shaw, Marriner, and Masur. She has participated in over forty European festivals and made ten world-wide recital tours. Her discography lists more than 120 recordings, including 40 albums of Bach cantatas and other sacred music with the renowned Bach specialist Helmuth Rilling.

In America, Miss Augér has sung with the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Minnesota Orchestras, and the Boston, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Dallas, and Saint Louis Symphonies; the Aspen, Caramoor, Casals, Mostly Mozart, and Grant Park festivals, as well as numerous Bach festivals. Since her New York recital debut at Alice Tully Hall in 1984, she has given annual recitals in New York and major cities throughout the United States, including a recital in Lincoln Center's "Great Performers" Series. She has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera and with the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, where she sang the title role of Handel's "Alcina," which she had previously performed in London and recorded for EMI.

Arleen Augér's recent recordings include the Brahms Requiem and Mozart's Requiem with Robert Shaw and the Atlanta Symphony (Telarc), arias of Bach and Handel with Gerard Schwarz and the Mostly Mozart Orchestra (Delos), Mahler's Symphony No. 2 with Simon Rattle and Janet Baker (EMI), and a Lieder recital with Irwin Gage (CBS).

Her 1986-87 season includes London engagements with Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and with Trevor Pinnock (Handel's "Solomon") at the BBC Proms; Mahler's Symphony No. 4 with the Toronto Symphony (Davis) and National Symphony (Rostropovich); works by Mozart and Pergolesi with the Cleveland Orchestra (Hogwood), and recitals in New York, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. This week brings her Ann Arbor debut with tonight's performance and tomorrow night's participation in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

*Gewandhaus Orchestra/Masur: Philips, Vanguard, Angel, and Vox/Turnabout Records.*

*Miss Augér: DG, Philips, CBS, RCA, EMI, Decca, Delos, Telarc, Harmonia Mundi, Eterna, and Eurodisc Records.*

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