

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

CHARLES A. SINK, PRESIDENT

THOR JOHNSON, CONDUCTOR

HARDIN VAN DEURSEN, ACTING CONDUCTOR

Seventh Concert

1944-1945

Complete Series 2896

Sixty-Sixth Annual
Choral Union Concert Series

VLADIMIR HOROWITZ, *Pianist*

MONDAY EVENING, JANUARY 15, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

- Variations on the aria, "La Ricordanza," Op. 33 CZERNY
Sonata in C major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein") BEETHOVEN
 Allegro con brio
 Introduzione adagio molto
 Rondo allegretto moderato
*Sonata No. 7, Op. 83 (composed in 1942) PROKOFIEFF
 Allegro inquieto
 Andante caloroso
 Precipitato 7-8

INTERMISSION

- Two Études tableaux RACHMANINOFF
 C major, Op. 33
 E-flat major, Op. 39
Waltz in A minor, Op. 34, No. 2 } CHOPIN
Two Etudes }
 E major, Op. 10
 F major, Op. 10
*Excursions, Op. 20 SAMUEL BARBER
 Un poco allegro
 In slow blues tempo
 Allegro molto
Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 6 LISZT

* First performance in Ann Arbor.

NOTE: Vladimir Horowitz has been heard in the Choral Union Series on previous occasions as follows: Nov. 12, 1928; Jan. 31, 1930; Mar. 6, 1933; and Jan. 15, 1941.

Mr. Horowitz uses the Steinway piano.

A R S L O N G A V I T A B R E V I S

ANALYTICAL NOTES BY OLIN DOWNES

Sonata in C major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein") BEETHOVEN

Up to the time of the completion of this sonata in 1804 Beethoven had written nothing in that form of such grand design or so imaginatively conceived for the modern piano. Nor had he in any of his solo compositions for the keyed instrument brought such tidings of joy. The sonata has been called, not inappropriately, "the sonata of the dawn." It begins with an idea that only Beethoven would have projected, and in such a manner—the vibration with mysterious expectancy of the simple C major chord. This is answered by the flash of the five-note figure high above, and a whirl of excitement, a subsiding to a pause, and then the passage repeated, with different modulation, sudden and bold, and orchestral effect.

In a matter of twenty-one measures the one and only Beethoven has strode upon the scene. Thereafter brilliant figurations and new flashes of key color lead to the hymn-like second theme, in the unusual key relationship of E major. This theme is decorated with flowing triplets and other reinforcements. The material is developed with typical caprice and humor, with mischievous whispers and explosions of laughter, and a great crescendo which leads to the amplified repetition of the first part. The classic structure is meticulously observed, but it is all as spontaneous as an improvisation and fresh as the morning dew.

There are only two movements, the second having a short introduction, serene and very romantic, and harmonically anticipative of a later day. This introduction, a vast step forward from Beethoven's original idea, replaced a long middle movement in F major, taken out of the sonata and in due course separately published as the well-known "Andante favori." There is no comparison in depth and "innigkeit" between this piece and the prelude which now stands and introduces with such poetry and suspense the main melody of the finale. William Behrend tells us that this theme has been mentioned as a folk song of the Rhineland country, though he affords no verification of that statement. The folk character of the air is evident, with its simple line, and the waverings between major and minor, of which Beethoven makes much. It is repeated in octaves against the flowing accompaniment, and then brilliantly decorated with trills and rapid scales and staccati of the left hand. This central theme is offset by several episodes, one in major, two in minor, with vigorous octaves and triplet figures, and great chords that augment the power and energy of the movement. The pace quickens to a prestissimi, with all sort of scintillating effects which bring the end. There could well be a connection between the exceptionally pianistic quality of this music and the fact of its dedication to Count Ferdinand von Waldstein, one of the nearest and most understanding of Beethoven's friends, who in the days of the composer's youth in Bonn had given him his first grand piano.

Sonata No. 7, Opus 83 PROKOFIEFF

(First performance in Ann Arbor).

This Seventh Sonata of Prokofieff, one of the most recent of a number of compositions in big forms which have emanated from Russia in the midst of her gigantic struggle on the battlefield, bears the date 1939-42. In point of chronology and perceptible evolutions of style it follows immediately upon the heels of the Sixth Sonata, opus 82, by the same composer, finished in 1939, which Mr. Horowitz introduced in America three seasons ago. But there are fresh developments in the new work. It is more concentrated than the earlier sonata, being in three movements instead of four. These separate movements are strongly contrasted, yet they bear the impress of an underlying unity and emotional sequence. The expression is not merely *formal but subjective, and entirely free of the satirical note which has been a frequent characteristic of Prokofieff's creative past.* There is even, in the slow movement, a passage of tone painting in the "romantic" vein, with the harmonic reverberations so strikingly evocative of the clamor of tolling bells—an effect beloved of many Russian composers, but not conveyed in any instance that the writer recalls with the degree of technical resource and imagination shown by Prokofieff in these pages. And in the finale, with its unusual and persistent rhythm, and its joyous accumulation of strength, some might find a lightening of emotional horizons and the prescience of a better day.

The opening movement is in grim earnest. Its turbulent and tragical character is presaged by the tempo indication—"Allegro inquieto"—and the swirling unisons and savage march rhythms which constitute the first theme. The second theme—"dolente"—introduced after some quiet chords by a repeated E-flat echoing like a distant trumpet call, is more melodic and elegiac in character. Is it officiously interpretive to discover in this music the tonal reflex of the profound and terrible realities driven home in an artist's consciousness by the experiences of a merciless war? Prokofieff might readily disclaim any such connection. He has never been a man or an artist to wear his heart on his sleeve. He might instead state, with a measure of justified complacency, that he was only attempting to imbue his music with a high tension and dynamism through the employment of special juxtapositions of rhythms, intervals, and keys. Or, again, he might remark upon the modern ear's expanding conception of what is called melody. He could say that his melodic voices traversed tonal territories hitherto forbidden or restricted to the overlordship of sanctioned harmonic command; that, released from such thrall to traditional bases, he could draw a freer and more intensive melodic line than composers of other days. It is for the listener to decide whether this concept of melody and of harmonic relations is satisfactory and interesting to him. A glance at the printed page establishes beyond argument the composer's mastery of his means and the presence of a style which, while pianistically effective, is the very essence of stark and uncompromising purpose.

The second movement is more subjective, warmly melodic, and introspective in character than the tempestuous measures which have preceded. It opens with a nostalgic song which weaves through different voices of the harmony and, undergoing various extensions and modulations, swells to a climax almost orchestral in sonorities which employ much of the range of the piano, with the clashing bell effects to which reference has been made. These sounds, as the music subsides, seem to echo from far and near, and they give place to the return of the melody which opened the movement.

Of the final section of this sonata, which is in the nature of a toccata, it may be said that the progress is in the inverse direction to that ordinarily taken by the composer of the classic form. The concluding section of such a structure is often the most extended if not elaborate portion of the whole. The growth of the work here under discussion is precisely in the opposite order. Each movement, as regards both tonality and thematic material, is simpler than the preceding.

There may even be a psychological connotation in this process. The opening movement, despite its concision, is of the three the most variegated in its material and can easily be unsettling, at a first hearing, to the listener's sense of key. This is communicative of its mood of agitation and conflict. In the second movement, considerably simpler in outline, there is a corresponding clarification of basic tonalities. The finale is a movement virtually concentrated upon a single idea, a single tonality—that of B-flat—and a single, unflagging, inexorable rhythm. This rhythm is 7-8, with the irregular grouping of beats that the measure demands, and the movement is to all apparent intents and purposes an example of sheer momentum and unemotional design. But in this pure play of rhythm companioned by a degree of dissonance which gives a sharp additional thrust to its drive, is to be felt an inspiring affirmation of power. It is power that might turn the wheels and gears of a relentless oncoming tank, or, better, and nearer the context, a rhythm which could be the song of the machines repairing the devastations and refashioning the civilization of a liberated world.

Excursions, Op. 20 SAMUEL BARBER

Un poco allegro
In slow blues tempo
Allegro molto

(First performance in Ann Arbor).

Of these short pieces, popularly couched, with occasional glints of modernism, the composer has written as follows:

"These are 'Excursions,' in small, classical form, into regional American idioms. Their rhythmic characteristics, as well as their source in folk material and their scoring, reminiscent of local instruments, are easily recognized."

The Budapest Quartet

JOSEF ROISMANN,
First Violin

BORIS KROYT,
Viola

EDGAR ORTENBERG,
Second Violin

MISCHA SCHNEIDER,
Violoncello

IN THE FIFTH ANNUAL Chamber Music Festival

THREE CONCERTS—JANUARY 19 and 20

IN THE MAIN LECTURE HALL, RACKHAM BUILDING

PROGRAMS

Friday Evening at 8:30

Quartet in D major, K. 499	MOZART
Quartet	SAMUEL BARBER
Quartet in C-sharp minor, Op. 131	BEETHOVEN

Saturday Afternoon at 2:30

Quartet in G major, Op. 18, No. 2	BEETHOVEN
Quartet No. 7, Op. 96	ERNST KRENEK
Quartet in A minor, Op. 51, No. 2	BRAHMS

Saturday Evening at 8:30

Quartet in G minor, Op. 74, No. 3	HAYDN
Quartet in E-flat major	HINDEMITH
Quartet in C major, Op. 59, No. 3	BEETHOVEN

TICKETS now on sale at the offices of the University Musical Society, Burton Memorial Tower, at the following prices, tax included:

Series Tickets (3 concerts): \$3.00, \$2.40, and \$1.20.

Single Concerts: \$1.20 and 60 cents.

COMING EVENTS

DOROTHY MAYNOR, Soprano, February 3; WESTMINSTER CHOIR, February 11 (3:00 P.M.); and CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, March 19.

FIFTY-SECOND ANNUAL MAY FESTIVAL (six concerts): Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, May 3, 4, 5, and 6.