

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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Eighth Concert

1945-1946

Complete Series 2920

Sixty-Seventh Annual
Choral Union Concert Series

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

DÉSIRÉ DEFAUW, *Conductor*

THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 31, 1946, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Concerto Grosso, No. 10, in D minor HANDEL

Ouverture

Allegro

Air—lento, allegro moderato

Allegro con fuoco

Suite from "Pelléas et Mélisande," Op. 80 FAURÉ

Quasi adagio

Mélisande at the Spinning Wheel

Sicilienne

Death of Mélisande

Tone Poem, "Thus Spake Zarathustra," Op. 30 STRAUSS

INTERMISSION

Symphony in D minor FRANCK

Lento, allegro non troppo

Allegretto

Allegro non troppo

NOTE.—The Chicago Symphony Orchestra appeared in the Choral Union Series seven times under the direction of Theodore Thomas; in thirty-one annual May Festivals; and in two Choral Union concerts—November 30, 1941, under Frederick Stock, conductor, and March 19, 1945, under Désiré Defauw, conductor.

(over)

The Steinway piano, furnished through the courtesy of Grinnell Brothers, is the official concert instrument of the University Musical Society

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

PROGRAM NOTES

Concerto Grosso for String Orchestra, No. 10, D Minor

. GEORGE FREDERIC HANDEL

Born February 25, 1685, at Halle; died April 14, 1759, at London.

The set of twelve concertos for strings was written by Handel in 1739, the period in which he produced the "Ode to Saint Cecilia" and "L'Allegro ed Il Penseroso." So rapidly did he set down the notes of these works that only one day was required for the composition of each. The tenth concerto for strings, in D minor, was completed October 30, 1739, but it and its companions were not published until April, 1740, when they were brought out by John Walsh.

In regard to the name of the composition by Handel which is interpreted on this occasion, it must be stated that the word "concerto" was not always employed in the day of Bach and Handel in the sense in which it is used by us. It meant then a combination of voices or of instruments, and in that sense it was used by Bach for the opening choruses of his cantatas "Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seines Namens," "Nimm was dein ist und gehe hin" and "Seihe zu, dass deine Gottesfurcht nicht Heuchlei sei." Such works as Handel's concerti grossi were written for a group of solo instruments—generally a first and second violin solo and a solo violoncello—which were known as the "concertino," the "concerto grosso," which comprised the main body of instrumentalists, and the "ripieno," which reinforced the general ensemble whenever that was necessary.

The D-minor concerto was arranged for modern performances by Gustav Kogel (1849-1921) and it is that version that is used on this occasion. The work contains the following movements: *Overture*, D minor, 4-4 time, leading into *Allegro*, D minor, 6-8 time (a fugal movement); Air, *Lento*, D minor, 3-2 time; *Allegro moderato* (*allegretto*), D major, 4-4 time (in the original publication this movement came last); and *Finale, Allegro con fuoco*, D minor, 3-4 time.

Suite from "Pelléas et Mélisande," Opus 80 GABRIEL FAURÉ

Born May 13, 1845 at Pamiers; died November 4, 1924 at Paris

This suite is drawn from incidental music written by Fauré for a production of the play of the same name by Maeterlinck, which was made for the famous actress, Mrs. Patrick Campbell. The suite contains three movements:

Quasi adagio, G major, 3-4 time. This is the prelude to the play.

"La Fileuse" (Mélisande at the Spinning Wheel") is the second entr'acte of the play. The stage directions for the opening scene of the third act of the drama are as follows: "A room in the castle. Pelléas and Mélisande are discovered. Mélisande is spinning with a distaff at the back of the room."

Molto adagio, D minor, 3-4 time. The music of this is connected with the final scene, in which Mélisande, the wife of Goland, dies in childbed. Fauré's suite, dedicated to the Princesse Edmond de Polignac, was published in 1898.

Tone Poem, "Thus Spake Zarathustra" Opus 30 . . . RICHARD STRAUSS

Born June 11, 1864, at Munich.

This tone poem, composed in 1896, was first heard in America at concerts of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Theodore Thomas, on February 5 and 6, 1897. Strauss based his composition upon the book "Thus Spake Zarathustra; A Book for All or None," written by Friedrich Nietzsche.

The work opens, at the fifth measure, with a trumpet call. At the nineteenth measure a great climax is attained; immediately following this there stands as a heading in the score: "Of Back-World's Men"—those who seek consolation in religion and to whom Zarathustra, himself once a dweller in the "back-world," had gone to teach the "beyond-man," or as George Bernard Shaw has it, the "superman."

The next is "Of the Great Yearning," with the theme in the cellos and bassoons; "Of Joys and Passions," its subject in oboes and violins; and the "Grave Song," in which the oboe sings a melody derived from the preceding subject, the cellos and basses giving out the "Yearning" motive.

There follows "Of Science." Here is introduced a fugal episode, based on the first theme and given out by the cellos and basses; "The Convalescent," its subject beginning in the violins and woodwind, and "The Dance Song," which begins with trill-like passages in the clarinets and flutes.

"The Song of the Night-Wanderer" is ushered in with a heavy stroke of the bell, and the subject is played in octaves by all the strings. The bell sounds twelve times, gradually dying away in a pianissimo.

The conclusion has puzzled many, inasmuch as it ends in two keys; the higher woodwind instruments and the violins playing in the key of B major, the basses in C. Strauss has not stated what is the innermost significance of this ending. Perhaps it suggests the discovery by Zarathustra that, after all, in spite of all his philosophy, life was as much a mystery to him as ever it had been.

Symphony in D Minor CÉSAR FRANCK

Born December 10, 1822 at Liège; died November 8, 1890 at Paris.

Franck's career is one of many ironies—during his lifetime he knew little of the fame which the world offered him after his death. One of the most notable representatives of French music in the eighteenth century, he lived in Paris, disdained by musicians unable to understand his music and ignored by officials who showered honors upon minor artists whose gifts were infinitesimal compared with Franck's. Even his death was shorn of interest—he was on his way to give a lesson when he was struck by the pole of an omnibus. He never recovered from this accident.

The production of the D-minor symphony, which is played on this occasion, is an effective example of the obstacles which beset the career of César Franck. The work had been completed in August, 1888, and Franck had been able to interest Jules Auguste Garçin, the conductor of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, in his music. After some rehearsals, in which the antagonism of the orchestra was clearly made manifest, the symphony was given its first performance at a Conservatoire concert, Paris, February 17, 1889.

In his biography of Franck, Vincent d'Indy gives some particulars concerning the first interpretation of the symphony.

"The performance," he writes, "was quite against the wish of most members of that famous orchestra, and was only pushed through, thanks to the benevolent obstinacy of the conductor, Jules Garçin. The subscribers could make neither head nor tail of it, and the musical authorities were much in the same position. I inquired of one of them—a professor at the Conservatoire and a kind of factotum on the committee—what he thought of the work. 'That a symphony?' he replied in contemptuous tones. 'But, my dear sir, who ever heard of writing for the cor anglais in a symphony? Just mention a single symphony by Haydn or Beethoven introducing the cor anglais. There, well, you see—your Franck's music may be whatever you please, but it will certainly never be a symphony!' This was the attitude of the Conservatoire in the year of grace 1889."

But since then the world has come to recognize the great inspiration of this symphony.

MAY FESTIVAL

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, May 2, 3, 4, 5

PERFORMERS

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA AT ALL CONCERTS

BIDU SAYAO Metropolitan Opera Soprano

ANNE BROWN . . . Negro "Porgy and Bess" Soprano

RUTH DIEHL Oratorio Soprano

ROSALIND NADELL . . Opera and Concert Contralto

JEAN WATSON . Canadian Opera and Radio Contralto

JUSSI BJOERLING Metropolitan Opera Tenor

WILLIAM HAIN Oratorio and Concert Tenor

SALVATORE BACCALONI . Metropolitan Opera Bass

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NATHAN MILSTEIN Renowned Russian Violinist

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THE FESTIVAL YOUTH CHORUS

HIGH SPOTS

Mozart "Requiem"; **American Folk Songs** (Youth Chorus); Selections from "Porgy and Bess" by **Anne Brown**; Prokofieff's **Alexander Nevsky**. Symphonies, other orchestral works, concertos, arias and songs, will be announced later.

TICKETS

(including tax)

Season Tickets: \$10.80—\$9.60—\$8.40. For purchasers who present Festival coupons from season Choral Union tickets, prices are reduced to \$7.20, \$6.00 and \$4.80 each.

Address orders with remittances to cover: Charles A. Sink, President, University Musical Society, Burton Memorial Tower.