

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

CHARLES A. SINK, PRESIDENT

HARDIN VAN DEURSEN, CONDUCTOR

Third Concert

1946-1947

Complete Series 2934

Sixty-Eighth Annual
Choral Union Concert Series

THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

GEORGE SZELL, *Conductor*

SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 10, AT 7:00
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

"Výšehrad," Symphonic Poem No. 1,
from the cycle, "My Country" SMETANA

Three Sea Interludes from the opera,
"Peter Grimes," Op. 33 BRITTEN
Dawn
Sunday Morning
Storm

"Don Juan," Tone Poem (after Lenau), Op. 20 STRAUSS

INTERMISSION

Symphony in C major, No. 7 SCHUBERT
Andante; allegro ma non troppo
Andante con moto
Scherzo: allegro vivace; trio
Finale: allegro vivace

NOTE.—The Cleveland Orchestra has been heard in the Choral Union Series on previous occasions as follows: March 28, 1935; November 9, 1937; November 7, 1938; November 9, 1941; November 8, 1942, Artur Rodzinski, conductor; November 7, 1943, Erich Leinsdorf, conductor; November 12, 1944, George Szell, guest conductor; and Nov. 11, 1945, Erich Leinsdorf, conductor.

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

By George H. L. Smith

"Výšehrad," Symphonic Poem No. 1 from the Cycle,

"My Country" BEDRICH SMETANA

Born March 2, 1824, in Leitomischl, Bohemia; died May 12, 1884, in Prague

Smetana wrote a cycle of six symphonic poems under the general title of *Má Vlast* between 1874 and 1879. *Výšehrad*, first of the series, was completed in 1874 and performed for the first time in January, 1875 at a Philharmonic concert in Prague, Ludwig Slansky, conductor.

Výšehrad is scored for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba, tympani, cymbals, two harps, and strings. The entire cycle is dedicated to the city of Prague.

Výšehrad, the subject of the opening symphonic poem of Smetana's cycle, *My Country*, is an ancient citadel on the bank of the River Moldau in Prague. As early as the eighth century, it was the stronghold of the storied Princess Libussa.

Smetana thus described the subject matter of his poem on the fly leaf of the score:

"At sight of the famed fortress Výšehrad, the poet recalls the sounds of Lumir's *varyto* in the past. Výšehrad rises up before his eyes in its former glory, crowned with gold-decked shrines and the edifices of the Premyslide princes and kings, rich in warlike renown.

"The brave knights assemble in the castle courts, to the sound of cymbals and trumpets, for the festal tourney; here are drawn up beneath the reflected rays of the sun rows of warriors in rich, glittering armour, ready for victorious contests; Výšehrad trembles with splendid hymns of praise and the jubilations of the knights, glad in their victory.

"Whilst contemplating the past glory of the sublime dwelling of princes, the poet sees also its downfall. Unchained passion overthrows the mighty towers in bitter strife, lays waste the glorious sanctuaries and proud princely halls. Instead of inspiring songs and jubilant hymns, Výšehrad is become dumb, a deserted monument of past glory; from its ruins resounds the echo of the long-silent song of the singer-prince Lumir through the mournful stillness!"

Three Sea Interludes from the Opera, "Peter Grimes,"

Op. 33 BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Born November 22, 1913, Lowestoft, Suffolk, England

Benjamin Britten was commissioned to compose the opera, *Peter Grimes*, by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation in 1941. He completed his score in February, 1945, and dedicated it "to the memory of Natalie Koussevitzky." The libretto by Montagu Slater is based on the narrative poem, *The Borough*, by George Crabbe (1754-1832), completed in 1810.

The first performance of *Peter Grimes* took place at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London on June 7, 1945. Orchestral Interludes from the opera were first heard in concert performance at the Cheltenham Festival on June 13, 1945, when the composer conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Music of *Peter Grimes* was heard for the first time in the United States when Serge Koussevitzky performed the Passacaglia and Four Sea Interludes at a Boston Symphony concert in Boston on March 1, 1945.

Mr. Britten has described the origin of *Peter Grimes* in the Introduction to a booklet on the opera: "For most of my life I have lived closely in touch with the sea. My parent's house in Lowestoft directly faced the sea, and my life as a child was coloured by the fierce storms that sometimes drove ships on to our coast and ate away whole stretches of the neighbouring cliffs. In writing 'Peter Grimes', I wanted to express my awareness of the perpetual struggle of men and women whose livelihood depends on the sea — difficult though it is to treat such a universal subject in theatrical form."

There are six interludes in the opera; the first of these, "Dawn," connects the prologue and the first act. The music introduces the scene on the village street at the quay. Fishermen are preparing for their morning's work, folding and cleaning nets, baiting lines, and mending sails in the cold, gray morning light.

The interlude entitled "Sunday Morning" serves as the introduction to the first scene of Act II — again the village street, but on a brilliant Sunday morning with church bells ringing.

The orchestral description of the "Storm" links Scenes I and II of Act I. The storm has been gathering during the first scene, and it rises to full intensity in the interlude and the scene to follow, which takes place inside "The Boar." Wind and rain rage through the streets and beat upon the tavern door and windows.

“Don Juan,” Tone Poem (After Nicolaus Lenau),
Op. 20 RICHARD STRAUSS

Born June 11, 1864, in Munich

Don Juan was written in 1887 and 1888 at Munich. The first performance took place on November 11, 1889, in the Weimar Opera House, the composer conducting the Grand Ducal Court Orchestra. The American première was at a Boston Symphony concert, Artur Nikisch conducting, on October 31, 1891.

The score was published in 1890 with a dedication “to my dear friend Ludwig Thuille.” These instruments are used: three flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons and contra-bassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, tympani, cymbals, triangle, bells, harp and the usual strings.

Don Juan was the earliest of Strauss’ tone poems to make a general success. The twenty-five-year-old conductor of the Grand Ducal Court Orchestra at Weimar had already declared himself as a composer for orchestra with a “Symphony” — *Aus Italien* — and a “Tone Poem” — *Macbeth* — but in *Don Juan* he exhibited a musical bent that audiences of 1889 could hardly consider other than radical.

Whatever their intellectual reservations, however, Strauss’ hearers were soon swept off their feet by the dazzling orchestral virtuosity, the headlong musical flights of a new style so masterfully accomplished. Strauss was five times recalled after the first performance, and a repetition was demanded. “A most unheard-of success” was the honest verdict of the staunch Brahmsian, Hans von Bülow, who wrote to Strauss a year later, after conducting the Berlin première: “Your most grandiose *Don Juan* has taken me captive.” Hanslick alone upheld the fading banner of the Brahms camp against so dangerous an onslaught. He reported that the young anti-Brahmsian “had a great talent for false music, for the musically ugly,” and complained of the “tumult of dazzling color daubs.”

Symphony No. 7 in C major FRANZ SCHUBERT

Born January 31, 1797, in Lichtenthal, near Vienna; died November 17, 1828, in Vienna

Schubert wrote this symphony in 1828. Felix Mendelssohn conducted what was probably the first performance at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on March 21, 1839. The New York Philharmonic Society introduced the symphony to America on January 11, 1851.

The score requires flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets in pairs, three trombones, tympani and strings.

Schubert offered the score of this last Symphony in C to the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Vienna. The parts were copied and distributed to the players for trial in rehearsal, but the symphony was soon laid aside because the Society found it too long and too difficult. It is said that Schubert advised the substitution of his earlier Symphony in C — his Sixth. A month after the composer’s death — on December 14, 1828 — a Symphony in C was performed in Vienna. Whether this was the Sixth or the great, and unperformed, “C major” can only be conjectured, but the weight of scholarship inclines toward the earlier work. It is certain, at least, that Schubert never heard his ultimate score and that it remained unknown until Schumann found the manuscript among a pile of Schubert’s works in the possession of Franz’s brother Ferdinand Schubert in Vienna. Schumann dispatched a copied score to Mendelssohn in Leipzig, who performed it, probably for the first time, at the *Gewandhaus* on March 21, 1839. The work was enthusiastically received and there were three repetitions the following season, albeit with cuts.

Schubert composed in the mighty shadow of Beethoven and died when the revolutionary genius was only eighteen months in the grave. Beethoven was an overpowering influence, and there can be no doubting the impression he made upon Schubert. But in no way did he weaken the younger man’s individuality; there is no page in Schubert’s mature works that is not utterly original. The power of Schubert’s genius becomes almost terrifying when we think of him in his actual time, keeping pace with Beethoven, and capping the whole period of the classical symphony with a worthy and imposing masterpiece.

CONCERTS

Extra Concerts

SALVATORE BACCALONI, Basso Buffo
of the Metropolitan Opera—Thursday, December 5 at 8:30
Tickets (Inc. tax): \$1.50 — 1.00 — 80¢

MESSIAH—Two Concerts: Saturday, 8:30, and Sunday, 3:00,
December 14 and 15.
Tickets (Inc. tax): 70¢ — 60¢ — 40¢

Chamber Music Festival

BUDAPEST STRING QUARTET

January 24 and 25, Friday Evening, Saturday Afternoon and Evening
Lecture Hall—Rackham Building
Tickets (3 Concerts): \$3.60 — 3.00 — 1.80

Choral Union Series

Yehudi Menuhin, Violinist Tuesday, November 19
Icelandic Singers Monday, November 25
 Sigurdur Thordarson, Conductor
Boston Symphony Orchestra Monday, December 9
 Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor
Vladimir Horowitz, Pianist Friday, January 17
Detroit Symphony Orchestra Monday, February 17
 Karl Krueger, Conductor
Lotte Lehmann, Soprano Wednesday, February 26
Chicago Symphony Orchestra Sunday, March 16
 Désiré Defauw, Conductor

For tickets or for further information, please address: Charles A. Sink,
President, University Musical Society, Burton Memorial Tower.