

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Charles A. Sink, President

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Fourth Concert

1954-1955

Complete Series 3142

Seventy-sixth Annual  
Choral Union Concert Series

THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA

GEORGE SZELL, *Conductor*

SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 7, 1954, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture to *The Bartered Bride* . . . . . SMETANA

Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 3 . . . . . HENRY COWELL

*La Mer (The Sea)*, Three Symphonic Sketches . . . . . DEBUSSY

From Dawn Till Noon on the Sea

Play of the Waves

Dialogue of Wind and Sea

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64 . . . . . TCHAIKOVSKY

Andante; allegro con anima

Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza

Valse: allegro moderato

Finale: andante maestoso; allegro vivace

NOTE.—The University Musical Society has presented the Cleveland Orchestra on 16 previous occasions since 1935, under the following conductors: Artur Rodzinski (5); Erich Leinsdorf (2); and George Szell (9).

*The Steinway is the official piano 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

### Overture to *The Bartered Bride* . . . . . BEDRICH SMETANA

Bedrich Smetana, the first great Czech composer to base his music on Czech national sources, wrote his comic opera, *The Bartered Bride*, to a Czech text of folk character. The story of the opera has been described thus by Rosa Newmarch:

"The opera opens with a scene at a village festival in Bohemia. The pretty peasant-girl, Marenka, is sad because her lover, Jenik, is a poor unknown orphan, and because the professional village matchmaker is arranging her marriage with the son of a rich peasant, Tobias Micha. Vasek is only the second son of Tobias, the eldest, a mere 'good-for-nothing,' having left home some years previously. Vasek is next door to a fool, and stutters very badly—a comic feature which Smetana uses with great discretion and humor. He meets Marenka and tries to make love to her, without realizing that she is his future bride. The girl, however, guesses his identity and leads him on, profiting by the occasion to tell him that the Marenka to whom he is going to be married has already a lover, and a shrewish temper that will drive him into his grave. Meanwhile, the matchmaker tries to persuade Jenik to sell his rights in his sweetheart 'to the son of Tobias.' When Jenik hears to whom he is to dispose of his bride, he does not hesitate to sign the document. The miserable Vasek, terrified at the prospect of marriage as depicted by Marenka, runs after the beautiful gypsy-dancer, Esmeralda. When he is found—dressed up in a bearskin—he refuses to sign the marriage contract. Marenka, who has heard of Jenik's mercenary conduct, is now rather disposed to marry Vasek out of pique. At this moment, however, her lover comes forward with the contract in which he sold her 'to the son of Tobias,' who, of course, proves to be none other than himself."

The remarkably high-spirited overture is based on five themes from the opera. The overture is noteworthy for the fugal treatment of the vivacious principal subject and the remarkable buoyancy of the subsidiary theme which is trumpeted forth by the full orchestra in true folk-vein at the outset, and then heard as a counter-subject to the fugal main subject. The second theme makes only a brief appearance when it is heard *pianissimo* in the oboes against repeated notes of the second violins. Developments and repetitions of this material round out this warm and joyous picture of Czech country life.

### Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 3 . . . . . HENRY COWELL

Writing his Hymns and Fuguing Tunes, Mr. Cowell has looked back into the musical customs of eighteenth century America. In the Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 2 he acknowledged his debt to the "fuguing tunes" of early New England, which began to be popular about the year 1720, when a style of singing "by note" instead of "by rote" was introduced, and there developed a fresh interest in the freedom and interplay of the voices as opposed to the earlier sedate four-part harmonies. The singing of hymns and songs in the Colonial churches had been extremely rudimentary, and was based upon customs imported from England or versions of English hymns crudely printed in the American coastal cities. The new style was cultivated by singing schools and singing teachers, and the movement received perhaps its greatest impetus from the work of an outstanding figure, William Billings (1746-1800), who published in Boston four collections of songs, most of which he composed himself, between 1770 and 1794. The "fuguing tune" had been imported from England, where it was common in the seventeenth century, and Billings played an important part both in its development in the New World and in the spread of the whole new interest in singing. Seeking to add variety to the familiar straightforward four-part harmony or "plain song," as it was then styled, he worked out schemes of successive entries of the voices, which gave a suggestion of canonic imitation, alternations of melody between the voices, and a general flexibility which added interest for singers as well as listeners. The result was far from counterpoint in the strict sense, but it was a definite advance, adding not only interest but greater expression to religious music of its day.

Mr. Cowell has told us that his Hymns and Fuguing Tunes are "not an imitation of the old hymns, but a development from them, the larger form imposing greater freedom with increased variety of rhythm and tempo, modal modulation, contrast of tonal color and more extended polyphony." Writing in particular of the No. 3, the composer continues:

"Like the Hymn that opens No. 2 of the series for strings, this Hymn is a sustained piece in the Dorian mode. The Fuguing Tune that follows, however, was borrowed from southern revival meetings rather than New England anthems; it adopts the dance rhythms that have been taken over by the big singing gatherings in the south. . . . Syncopated tunes tumble over and through each other in a kind of merry polyphonic scramble; they are pentatonic, like so much of the traditional music of British origin

in our southern mountains, and the general effect is, I hope, one of jolly good nature and enthusiasm.

"The tunes are of course my own, but both tunes and treatment were suggested by the music of the singing schools. I have tried to develop them in ways suitable to the modern orchestra without abandoning their essential character."

*La Mer (The Sea)*, Three Symphonic Sketches . . . CLAUDE DEBUSSY

The sea was a life-long passion of Debussy. Its glint may be discerned in his work from the beginning to the end of his career. In *Sirènes*, the third of the *Nocturnes*, completed in 1899, it rolled its undulating masses into the forefront of his composing mind. "The sea and its innumerable rhythm," he wrote of *Sirènes*, suggesting an impressionist's vision; "then amid the billows silvered by the moon, the mysterious song of the sirens is heard; it laughs and passes."

Four years later, on September 12, 1903, he was writing to André Messager from Burgundy about more music inspired by the sea. "You will remark that the ocean does not exactly bathe the hills of Burgundy," he jested, but outlined his plan in detail: "I am working on three symphonic sketches entitled: (1) '*Mer belle aux Iles Sanguinaires*'; (2) '*Jeux de vagues*'; (3) '*Le vent fait danser la mer*'—under the general title of *La Mer*. You do not know, perhaps, that I was intended for a fine career of a sailor and that only the chances of life led me away from it. Nevertheless I have still a sincere passion for it."

Work upon *La Mer* continued in various places, but much of the score was accomplished in Paris, a convenient and neutral environment, because "the sight of the sea itself fascinated him to such a degree that it paralyzed his creative faculties." From Burgundy he had written: "I have an endless store of memories, and to my mind they are worth more than the reality, the beauty of which often deadens thought."

In *La Mer*, Debussy reveals a sturdier art than in his *Prélude à l'après midi d'un faune*, the *Nocturnes*, and other earlier works. Here the inspiration is more robust, the colors are stronger, the lines more definite. The work is symphonic in proportion and in design, although the treatment of the individual movements will hardly permit the use of so formal a term as "symphony" for the work as a whole.

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64 . . . PETER ILICH TCHAIKOVSKY

It is generally agreed that the Fifth Symphony is Tchaikovsky's most perfect contribution to the symphonic form. More highly organized than his other symphonies, it is better able to withstand the familiar criticism that it, like the others, is not a symphony at all, but a suite. This allegation may be refuted in various ways. The most convincing argument may be found in the unifying repetitions of the fateful "motto" heard at the beginning of the first movement and reappearing in each succeeding movement, often with a chilling imminence, but finally in triumph.

It is the treatment of this motive that has led to the belief that Tchaikovsky had some "program" in mind while composing the symphony. Nicolas Slonimsky, examining the composer's notebooks in the Tchaikovsky Museum at Klin found the following notes on the Fifth Symphony:

"Program of the First Movement of the Symphony: Introduction. Complete resignation before Fate, or, which is the same, before the inscrutable predestination of Providence. *Allegro* (I) Murmurs, doubts, complaints, reproaches against [three crosses in the original]. (II) Shall I throw myself in the embraces of faith??? [three question marks in the original]. [On the corner of the leaf] a wonderful program, if I could only carry it out."

Ernest Newman, writing before Mr. Slonimsky's discovery, contrived a convincing argument for the existence of such a program . . . "It is a curious fact that whereas the Sixth Symphony, admittedly based on a program, leaves us here and there with a sense that we are missing the connecting thread, the Fifth Symphony, though to the casual eye not at all programmatic, bears the strongest internal evidences of having been written to a program.

"The gloomy, mysterious opening theme suggests the leaden, deliberate tread of fate. The *Allegro*, after experimenting in many moods, ends mournfully and almost wearily. The beauty of the *Andante* is twice broken in upon by the first sombre theme. The third movement—the waltz—is never really gay; there is always the suggestion of impending fate in it; while at times the scale passages for the strings give it an eerie, ghostly character. At the end of this also there comes the heavy muffled tread of the veiled figure that is suggested by the emotional transformation of this theme, evidently in harmony with a change in the part it now plays in the curious drama. It is in the major instead of in the minor; it is no longer a symbol of weariness and foreboding, but bold, vigorous, emphatic, self-confident. What may be the precise significance of the beautiful theme from the second movement that reappears in the finale it is impossible to say; but it is quite clear that the transmutation which the first subject of the *Allegro* undergoes, just before the close of the symphony, is of the same psychological order as that of the 'fate' motive—a change from clouds to sunshine, from defeat to triumph."

# COMING CONCERTS

JORGE BOLET, *Pianist* . . . . . Monday, November 15

Program

Andante con variazioni . . . . .	HAYDN
Sonata in E-flat, Op. 81a . . . . .	BEETHOVEN
Sonata in B minor . . . . .	LISZT
Scherzo No. 1, B minor, Op. 20	} . . . . . CHOPIN
Scherzo No. 2, B-flat minor, Op. 31	
Scherzo No. 3, C-sharp minor, Op. 39	
Scherzo No. 4, E major, Op. 54	

LEONARD WARREN, *Baritone* . . . . . Sunday, November 21

Program

Aria di Floridante from <i>Floridante</i> . . . . .	HANDEL
Maledetto sia l'aspetto . . . . .	MONTEVERDI
Amarilli . . . . .	CACCINI
L'esperto nocchiero . . . . .	BUONONCINI
Les Berceaux . . . . .	FAURÉ
Chanson à boire . . . . .	RAVEL
Madrigal . . . . .	D'INDY
Agnus Dei . . . . .	BIZET
Ford's Monologue from <i>Falstaff</i> . . . . .	VERDI
Avant de quitter ces lieux, from <i>Faust</i> . . . . .	GOUNOD
"Largo el factotum" from <i>The Barber of Seville</i> . . . . .	ROSSINI
The Donkey . . . . .	HAGEMAN
There Is a Lady Sweet and Kind . . . . .	DELLO JOIO
When Lights Go Rolling . . . . .	IRELAND
Mister Jim . . . . .	MALOTTE

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For tickets or for further information, please address: Charles A. Sink,  
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