

Ninetieth
Ann Arbor
May Festival
1983

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

RICCARDO MUTI, *Music Director*
EUGENE ORMANDY, *Conductor Laureate*
WILLIAM SMITH, *Associate Conductor*

RICCARDO MUTI, *Conducting*
GIDON KREMER, *Violinist*

THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 28, 1983, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture, *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, Op. 27 MENDELSSOHN

Concerto in D minor for Violin and Orchestra SCHUMANN

In Kräftigen, nicht zu schnellen tempo
Langsam
Lebhaft, doch nicht zu schnell

GIDON KREMER

INTERMISSION

*Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73 BRAHMS

Allegro non troppo
Adagio non troppo
Allegretto grazioso, quasi andantino
Allegro con spirito

(Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth)

*CBS Masterworks Records.

Our special 90th May Festival Souvenir Book is available for only two dollars in the main floor and first balcony lobbies. Its more than 60 pages contain complete program annotations and extensive artist biographies for all four concerts, plus a pictorial section devoted to the May Festival from its inception in 1894 . . . on sale during intermission and before and after each concert.

PROGRAM NOTES

by RICHARD FREED

Overture, *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, Op. 27 FELIX MENDELSSOHN
(1809-1847)

The euphonious English title of this work, inspired by Goethe's twin poems *Meeresstille* and *Glückliche Fahrt*, does not give an accurate indication of the programmatic burden. The title must strike anyone as a wish for, or description of, an untroubled sailing, but "Becalmed" is what is really meant here: the sea in question is not only free of storm but without wind at all. Since wind was the main source of nautical propulsion in the poet's time, the "calm" makes for anxiety rather than serenity, until at length a welcome breeze sends the voyagers on their way again. The two poems, short enough to be printed here in full, have been rendered in English as follows:

CALM SEA

Deep stillness presses upon the waters,
The sea lies motionless;
The captain sees with anxious eye
The polished plain surrounding him.
No wind from any direction!
A horrid, deathlike stillness!
Not a single wave plays
Upon the vast expanse.

PROSPEROUS VOYAGE

The mists are torn asunder,
The heavens are brightened,
And Aeolus loosens the anxious ties.
Winds now blow gently,
The captain bestirs himself.
Make haste! Make haste!
The waves now are parted,
The distance comes nearer;
Already I can see land!

Beethoven set these verses for chorus and orchestra in 1815, and in the same year Schubert made a song of *Meeresstille* alone. Mendelssohn's concert overture, in which he allowed the form to be dictated entirely by that of Goethe's poem, was composed in 1828, when he was just 19 years old, and was introduced in Berlin on April 18 of that year. Donald Francis Tovey, in his famous *Essays in Musical Analysis*, mentioned similarities between Mendelssohn's treatment of the first part and Beethoven's in his choral piece, but added that "there is very little chance of building up the vocal setting of the Prosperous Voyage into more than an appendix to the Calm Sea. The opportunity is far greater for a purely instrumental piece; and accordingly, as soon as Mendelssohn has broken into the profundities of the calm by a faint breath of zephyr in the flute, all the conditions are ready for a first-rate piece of broadly impressionistic music."

The deliverance of the becalmed seafarers is heralded by a quickening of tempo (the captain *does* bestir himself), and the land-sighting is confirmed in a slow and majestic coda replete with beating drums and ringing trumpets. After this jubilation, the work ends softly, with three chords which Tovey cited as "a poetic surprise of a high order."

While this lovely and effective work is surely one of Mendelssohn's most original conceptions and for some time enjoyed great popularity, it has all but disappeared from concert programs in our century. Until this month, first in Philadelphia and now in Ann Arbor, the Philadelphia Orchestra's only previous performances of the work were given on October 29 and 30 and November 2, 1976, then as now under the direction of Riccardo Muti. Listeners unfamiliar with the overture, though, may recognize one of its prominent themes (the "faint breath of zephyr in the flute" which initiates the "Prosperous Voyage" section) as the one quoted by Elgar in the penultimate section of his *Enigma Variations* to represent a friend embarking on a long sea voyage.

Concerto in D minor for Violin and Orchestra ROBERT SCHUMANN
(1810-1856)

In the fall of 1853, Schumann composed two works for violin and orchestra intended for the distinguished violinist Joseph Joachim. The single-movement Fantasy in C major, Op. 131, was promptly performed, but the full-scale concerto Schumann composed between September 27 and October 3 was not heard in Schumann's lifetime or Joachim's. Four days after he completed the concerto, Schumann sent the score to Joachim with a request for suggestions for improvement, and several changes were subsequently noted in Schumann's hand. Thoughts of introducing the work in Düsseldorf were abandoned, though, when Schumann stepped down as music director there later that fall, and within a few months his illness had advanced to a stage at which it required his confinement in the asylum in which he died a little more than two years later. In the decade or two following Schumann's death, Joachim was known to play the Concerto in private for friends with whom he discussed the score, but in his later years he became reluctant even to talk about the work. In a letter to his biographer Andreas Moser, dated August 5, 1898, Joachim broke his silence on the subject for the last time:

"You ask me for information about a Violin Concerto by Schumann, the manuscript of which is in my possession. I cannot speak of it without emotion, as it is a product of the last half-year before my dear master and friend became insane . . .

"The fact that it has not been published must convince you that it cannot be ranked with his many other glorious creations. A new Violin Concerto by Schumann — with what rejoicing it would have been greeted by all my colleagues! And yet my conscientious anxiety for the reputation of the beloved composer kept me from allowing this work to be printed, despite the great clamor for it on the part of numerous publishers. It must be acknowledged that a certain mental lassitude, a semblance of true intellectual energy, shows how he tried to force matters. Certain parts (how could it be otherwise!) give evidence of the composer's deep feeling, but these contrast with the work as a whole in a way that is all the more distressing."

That, apparently, was Joachim's last word on the subject. When he died in 1907, the score was left to the Prussian State Library in Berlin with the proviso that it should not be published until 100 years after Schumann's death. The matter had by then already been largely forgotten, and hardly anyone even seemed to know where the score had been deposited.

As it turned out, the world did not have to wait till 1956 to hear the Concerto. Jelly d'Aranyi, the famous Hungarian violinist for whom Ravel wrote his *Tzigane*, was Joachim's grandniece and lived in his household during his final years. Early in 1937 she announced that she had been visited by the spirit of her great-uncle and that of Schumann himself, both urging her to retrieve the score and make the work known. (This was not the first appearance of the supernatural in the life of the Concerto. The beginning of the theme of the work's slow movement is identical with that of a melody Schumann set down in February 1854, when he said the spirits of Schubert and Mendelssohn had wakened him from his sleep to give it to him. After Schumann's death Brahms used that theme as the basis for a set of variations for piano duet, his Op. 23.) In any event, Miss d'Aranyi enlisted the aid of Wilhelm Strecker, then head of B. Schott's Söhne, the famous publishing house in Mainz, who succeeded in persuading the Library to release the score for publication.

The first public performance of the Concerto was given by Georg Kulenkampff with the Berlin Philharmonic under Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt in a broadcast concert on November 26, 1937. Ten days later Yehudi Menuhin performed the work with piano accompaniment in Carnegie Hall, and on December 23 he gave the American orchestral première with Vladimir Golschmann and the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. Four weeks later, on January 21 and 22, 1938, the same soloist performed it with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conducting, the only performances of the Concerto by the Philadelphians until this month with Gidon Kremer, first in Philadelphia and now in Ann Arbor. Both Menuhin and Kulenkampff recorded the Concerto on 78s, and recently there has been a new wave of interest in the work, documented by new recordings, though the Concerto is still pretty much a stranger in the concert hall. The present performance, by one of today's outstanding violin virtuosos, should enable listeners to judge for themselves whether Joachim's initial judgment of the Concerto was too harsh, or whether he was justified in reversing that verdict 30 years after his death, as reported by his grandniece.

Orchestral parts for Schumann's Violin Concerto furnished by European-American Music, agent for Schott.

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73 JOHANNES BRAHMS
(1833-1897)

Brahms did not approach the idea of symphonic creation lightly, and certainly not hastily. As early as his 21st year, he made some starts in the direction of a symphony, but those early efforts were either abandoned or converted for use in his First Piano Concerto and other works. He was to a degree genuinely intimidated by the spectre of Beethoven, as indicated by his often-quoted remark on "how the likes of us feels to hear the tread of such a giant behind us," and he did not produce a completed symphony until 1876, when he was 43. Once the First was accomplished, though (and received with the greatest enthusiasm everywhere), Brahms was able to compose his Second Symphony quickly and confidently. He started work on it while completing the piano duet arrangement of the First, in the summer of 1877, and before the year ended it was not only completed but actually performed. The First had had a hard birth, and emerged rather defiantly triumphant; the Second flowed with cheerful spontaneity, and is the most lyrical and sunlit of all Brahms's symphonies. (Its character came as a surprise to the Viennese after the "monumental" style of its predecessor, as Brahms knew it would; during the rehearsal period he mischievously appeared wearing a black armband, "in deference to the sorrowful nature of my latest child.")

The radiant mood of the work is established at once by the three-note motif in the lower strings and the answering horn call which open the first movement. The second theme is one of Brahms's characteristic outpourings of warm, glowing contentment, related in both shape and spirit to the well-loved *Cradle Song* (Op. 49, No. 4) and the piano Waltz in A-flat (Op. 39, No. 15). The first theme is treated fugally in the development, and new motifs spun off by variations in the rhythm are hailed and dismissed by clipped utterances from the brass. The horns enjoy prominence throughout the movement, which ends, following a lovely horn solo in the coda, even more tenderly than it began.

The mood turns serious in the second movement, whose solemn first theme might have suggested to descriptive-minded listeners in the 1870s a scene of forest depths at twilight. With the

second theme, a hymnic quality begins to pervade the music, whose solemnity assumes a tranquil, rather than sombre, character.

The pastoral element by now so apparent in the Symphony is emphasized by the solo oboe in the third movement, which is not a scherzo, but an intermezzo of great charm and intimacy. The orchestra is reduced for this movement, whose unexpectedly animated middle section (*Presto ma non assai*) never becomes really boisterous but serves, by way of contrast, to heighten the serenity of the *Allegretto* that wraps around it. At the première this movement had to be repeated for the enthusiastic audience.

Following the energetic but somewhat mysterious opening of the final movement, its first theme is restated in an exhilarating orchestral outburst and then, the way cleared by the good-naturedly snarling and crackling winds, the broad second theme makes its entrance, aglow in lambent sunset colors. Brahms builds to the invigorating coda with subtle ingatherings of strength; it is a paean of sheer exuberance, in which the finale's lyrical second theme is transformed into a blazing fanfare which ends the Symphony on a note of Dionysiac exultation virtually unparalleled among Brahms's works.

About the Artists

Riccardo Muti is nearing the end of his third season as Music Director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His association with the Orchestra began in 1972 when he was invited by Eugene Ormandy to Philadelphia as a guest conductor. After five annual appearances, Mr. Muti became Principal Guest Conductor in 1977 and Music Director three years later, upon Mr. Ormandy's retirement as Music Director. Mr. Muti also serves as Conductor Laureate of the London Philharmonia, a position specially created for him by the Philharmonia players in recognition of his ten-year association with that orchestra.

From August 23 to September 12, 1982, Mr. Muti and The Philadelphia Orchestra appeared together for the first time in Europe to high critical and popular acclaim. They performed in the Lucerne and Edinburgh Festivals, the Flanders Festival in Brussels, the Mahler Festival in Berlin, the Proms in London, and in Vienna, Frankfurt, and Paris.

Mr. Muti maintains an enormously productive schedule in European opera houses and concert halls. His direction of a new production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at the Salzburg Festival last summer was the acknowledged hit of the Festival and will be repeated next summer. Other opera activities include new productions of Verdi's *Ernani* at La Scala and Verdi's *Rigoletto* at the Vienna State Opera, and numerous productions at the Teatro Comunale and Maggio Musicale in Florence where he served as Music Director for many years. He is a frequent guest conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam, and the Vienna Philharmonic, and has appeared with the Orchestre National de France, the London Philharmonia, and in the United States with the Boston and Chicago Symphony Orchestras.

Last summer Mr. Muti concluded a long term agreement to record exclusively for Angel/EMI. He and The Philadelphia Orchestra have embarked on an ambitious recording program on that label, of which several albums have already received international honors.

Maestro Muti first came to Ann Arbor in 1979 when he conducted the Orchestra in two May Festival concerts. His return with the Philadelphians this week is part of their first United States tour together; they are giving concerts in the Midwest cities of Bloomington, Chicago, Urbana, Ames, Minneapolis, Ann Arbor, Midland, Toledo, Columbus, Danville, and Nashville, in that order.

Gidon Kremer was born in 1947 to a highly musical family in Riga, Latvia, and began studying violin with his father and grandfather. At age seven he entered the Riga School of Music, and at sixteen won the First Prize of the Latvian Republic. During his eight years of apprenticeship to famed violinist David Oistrakh at the Moscow Conservatory, Mr. Kremer was a prize winner at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels, and won First Prize in the Fourth International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1970.

His career has since encompassed the entire world. He has played with virtually every major orchestra on today's concert scene, affording him the opportunity to work with most of the great conductors of the present day — Bernstein, von Karajan, Giulini, Jochum, Previn, Abbado, Levine, and Maazel, to mention only a few. He has participated in major international festivals including Salzburg, Prague, Dubrovnik, Berlin, London, Helsinki, Zurich, Moscow, and Tokyo.

Mr. Kremer has had an astonishingly active recording career, producing more than 25 albums for Philips, Deutsche Grammophon, Melodiya, Hungaroton, Eurodisc, Angel, and Vanguard. His recordings have garnered the Grand Prix du Disque and the Deutsche Schallplattenpreis, both coveted awards in the industry.

Mr. Kremer, who plays a Stradivarius, is making his Ann Arbor debut this evening. He will return in October to perform in the Choral Union Series with the English Chamber Orchestra.

This concert by The Philadelphia Orchestra has been underwritten, in part, by the Bell Telephone Company of Michigan in association with the Bell System's "American Orchestras on Tour" program.

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Burton Memorial Tower, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109

Phones: (313) 665-3717/764-2538