



*International
Presentations of
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Orpheus

FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 13, 1984, AT 8:30
RACKHAM AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Sinfonia in B-flat major, Op. 18, No. 2 J. C. BACH
Allegro assai
Andante
Presto

Concerto in B-flat major, K. 191, for Bassoon and Orchestra MOZART
Allegro
Andante ma adagio
Rondo: tempo di menuetto

FRANK MORELLI, *Bassoonist*

INTERMISSION

Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4 SCHOENBERG

Rumanian Folk Dances BARTÓK

Joc cu Bătă (Dance with Sticks)
Brâul (Waistband Dance)
Pe Loc (Stamping Dance)
Buciumeana (Hornpipe Dance)
Poarcă Românească (Rumanian Polka)
Măruntel aus Belenyea (Quick Dance)
Măruntel aus Nyagra (Quick Dance)

ProArte and Nonesuch Records

The Musical Society expresses thanks to Liberty Music Shop for its generosity in underwriting the printing costs of this concert program.

PROGRAM NOTES

by WILLIAM PURVIS, *French hornist of Orpheus*

Sinfonia in B-flat major, Op. 18, No. 2 JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH (1735-1782)

Johann Christian Bach, also known as the "Milanese Bach" and the "London Bach," was the youngest of Johann Sebastian Bach's four composer sons, and in the second half of the eighteenth century won the most esteem of them all. When his father died in 1750, the fifteen-year-old Johann moved from Leipzig to Berlin, where he came under the tutelage of his older brother Carl Phillip Emanuel. After several years of study he embarked upon a path that was to parallel that of Handel fifty years previous; from North Germany to Italy (where he shocked his Protestant German relatives by converting to Catholicism and then becoming organist of Milan Cathedral) and finally to London in 1762, arriving three years after Handel's death. He was immediately successful in London, owing no small debt to the new Queen (the wife of King George III), who was German.

Over the two-decade span of his life in London (until his death in 1782), J. C. Bach composed numerous works in a variety of forms and settings. His reputation has suffered from the general prejudice against music of the rococo style, and it is only in recent years that his works, along with those of other eighteenth century composers, are coming to be judged on their own terms rather than on those of succeeding generations. If his work does not show the experimental form and passion of his older brother Carl Phillip Emanuel, it is noteworthy for its urbanity, wit, superb craftsmanship, and acute sense of style, all of which exerted a profound influence on the development of the classical style, and on Mozart in particular.

The Opus 18 symphonies, composed between 1774 and 1777, were published by William Forster in London under the title: "Six Grand Overtures, three for a single and three for a double orchestra for Violins, Hautboys, Flutes, Clarinets, Horns, Tenor and Bass, composed by John Christian Bach, Music Master to Her Majesty and the Royal Family." These works, for the most part compilations of instrumental works from his operas (number two in B-flat for single orchestra is derived from the opera *Lucio Silla*), are representative of his finest symphonic writing. According to Fritz Stein: "Here his style of writing had developed into that beautifully polished and finished state of Rococo Art; it was characterized by delicious piquancy and lusciousness of melody and its slow movements reflect the combined qualities of Italian finesse and German depth of feeling."

Bassoon Concerto in B-flat major, K. 191 WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

Evidence suggests that Mozart composed at least four bassoon concertos — three of them in the key of B-flat. This key choice was probably conditioned by the fact that this is the instrument's lowest note, and also because the B natural immediately above was not on the instrument. At any rate, the K. 191 appears to be the first of the set and also the first wind concerto that Mozart wrote; it was finished on June 4, 1774. He had had little previous experience in writing concertos, only the Piano Concerto, K. 175, and the *Concertone* in C major for two violins, K. 190, are earlier, both written in 1773.

The two outer movements of K. 191 display to the full the soloist's agility. Mozart does not hesitate to take the instrument up to the top of its three-octave compass, and make it scurry around when he gets there. There are many touches of humor, not confined to isolated drops onto low notes. Who would expect, for instance, after the rather stately orchestra *tutti* at the beginning of the *Finale*, the bassoon to gallop away in triplets? The instrument's cantabile powers are heard to their best advantage in the slow movement, over the muted violins and violas. Here, Mozart keeps the soloist mostly in the upper register.

— MALCOLM RAYMENT

Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4 ARNOLD SCHOENBERG (1874-1951)

Although the depth of Arnold Schoenberg's influence on the music of this century is unarguable, only a handful of early works (including *Verklärte Nacht*, Op. 4) could be said to have gained a lasting place in the repertoire to this date. To sort out the extent to which this is a judgment of the composer and his works or the audience is an important question of our time, but certainly beyond the scope of these few lines. It is interesting to note how important it was to Schoenberg that he represented an organic outgrowth of his musical heritage. According to noted Schoenberg scholar Leonard Stein, "When asked in later years why he did not continue to write in the familiar — and by then near-popular — style of *Verklärte Nacht*, Schoenberg replied, 'I have not discontinued composing in the same style . . . I only do it better now than before; it is more concentrated, more mature.'"

Schoenberg first came in contact with the poetry of Richard Dehmel through the 1896 collection of poems *Weib und Welt* (Woman and World) which included *Verklärte Nacht*. The recurrent themes of Dehmel's controversial poems, which include socialist concerns and erotic relationships, were shocking to nineteenth century Victorian sensibilities, but won deep admiration from the young Schoenberg for the wide range of their expression and depth of emotion. The poem *Verklärte Nacht*

“describes the conversation of a lover with a girl who is bearing a child by another man,” according to Stuckenschmidt. “It is a characteristic Dehmel subject, full of the expression of a new, anti-bourgeois morality, and carried along entirely by the idea of love which overcomes everything and sweeps all conventions aside.”

Completed in 1899 when the composer was 25, *Verklärte Nacht* owes its programmatic lineage to the tone poems of Liszt and Strauss, while its musical heritage stems from Brahms and Wagner.

Transfigured Night

Two people walk through the bare cold woods;
the moon runs along, they gaze at it.
The moon runs over tall oaks,
no cloudlet dulls the heavenly light
into which the black peaks reach.
A woman's voice speaks:

I bear a child, and not from you,
I walk in sin alongside you.
I sinned against myself mightily.
I believed no longer in good fortune
and still had mighty longing
for a full life, a mother's joy
and duty; then I grew shameless,
then horror-stricken. I let my sex
be taken by a stranger
and even blessed myself for it.
Now life has taken its revenge:
Now I met you, you.

She walks with clumsy gait.
She gazes upward; the moon runs along.
Her somber glance drowns in the light.
A man's voice speaks:

The child that you conceived
be to your soul no burden,
oh look, how clear the universe glitters!
There is a glory around All,
you drift with me on a cold sea,
but a peculiar warmth sparkles
from you in me, from me in you.
It will transfigure the strange child
you will bear it me, from me;
you brought the glory into me,
you made my self into a child.

He holds her around her strong hips,
Their breath kisses in the air.
Two people walk through high, light night.

Rumanian Folk Dances BÉLA BARTÓK (1881-1945)

By 1912, Bartók's fascination with folk song (and the Magyar folk song of his native Hungary in particular), coupled with the continual setbacks his career had suffered in Budapest, led him to devote almost all his efforts to folk song research. Gradually the focus of his study broadened to include, along with Magyar folk music, folk music of such ethnic groups as the Rumanians and Slovakians, and even took him to North Africa in 1913. This research was suddenly and traumatically interrupted with the outbreak of World War I in July of 1914 when Bartók was 33 years old. His possibilities for field research severely limited, he turned his attention once again to composition.

In 1917 the bittersweet "Rumanian Folk Dances" were transcribed by the composer from a suite of piano pieces titled "Rumanian Folk Dances from Hungary," which he had composed in 1915. In the title of these piano pieces is implied the painful geographic and ethnic upheavals of that time. Halsey Stevens has remarked that "there is bitter irony in the fact that not one of the Hungarian towns where Béla Bartók spent his youth is currently in Hungary," with most of that particular area falling to Rumania in the territorial ravaging of Hungary which followed World War I.

About the Artists

Orpheus is a conductorless chamber orchestra of 26 musicians, based in New York City, which annually performs 40 to 50 concerts worldwide. An Orpheus concert season includes three appearances in Carnegie Hall with renowned soloists, numerous concerts on the eastern seaboard, national tours, a monthly FM radio broadcast, and an international tour — this season to Portugal, Spain, Rumania, Yugoslavia, East Germany, and Sweden.

In its ten-year history, Orpheus has drawn an extraordinary response from both audiences and critics, whether performing in the cultural centers of the western world, such as Carnegie Hall or the Musikvereinsaal in Vienna, or in the far reaches of India or South America, or in groups as small as five or six or with the full ensemble of 26. The exuberance and vitality of their performances can perhaps be attributed to the fact that Orpheus members participate in all aspects of the music-making process. The group is completely self-governed: the members themselves, through elected committees, are responsible for programming, repertoire, rehearsal requirements, choice of concertmaster, and seating arrangements. Most important, they are directly responsible for all details of the interpretation of the music performed.

Orpheus has recorded the Mozart Sinfonia Concertante, K. 297b, for oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, and orchestra, the Ballet Music from *Idomeneo*, two Mozart piano concerti, K. 488 and K. 453, with Richard Goode, and a Stravinsky album including the Pulcinella Suite, the Dumbarton Oaks Concerto, and Eight Instrumental Miniatures.

Their concert this evening marks their fourth Ann Arbor appearance.

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UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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