

Choral Union Series

Forty-seventh Season

First Concert

No. CCCCXXXII Complete Series

New York Symphony Orchestra

WALTER DAMROSCH, CONDUCTOR

GUY MAIER, *Pianist*

PALMER CHRISTIAN, *Organist*

Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor, Michigan

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1925, AT EIGHT O'CLOCK

PROGRAM

- I. Academic Festival Overture.....*Brahms*
- II. Symphony No. 3, in C minor.....*Saint-Saëns*
1. Adagio; Allegro moderato; Poco adagio
2. Allegro moderato; Maestoso; Allegro
- PALMER CHRISTIAN AT THE ORGAN
- III. Entrance of the Knights of the Grail from "Parsifal", Act I. *Wagner*
(Arranged by Walter Damrosch)
- IV. Concerto in E flat, for Piano with Orchestra.....*Liszt*
MR. MAIER
- V. a. Dance of the Old Ladies.....*Casella*
from "The Venetian Convent"
- b. Entrance of the Little Fauns.....*Pièrné*
from the Ballet "Cydalise"

STEINWAY PIANO

GEORGE ENGLÉS, *Manager*

I

The first part of the first movement is a *Lamentoso* in which the strings in a gentle murmur, or river of tears—somewhat like the first movement of Schubert's "*Unfinished Symphony*"—accompany the main theme which seems to express eloquently the grief of the composer at the death of his great friend. The thematic development gradually rises to tragic heights in a *crescendo* worked up with marvellous skill and deepest feeling. As this subsides, gentle *pizzicati* modulate toward the key of D-flat, and the second division of the first movement is intoned in sustained harmonies by the organ in a *poco adagio*, and to the accompaniment of this instrument of the church the strings in unison sing a tender prayer for the soul of the departed friend. This melody is repeated in unison octaves by solo clarinet, horn and trombone. This mood of gentle devotion is interrupted by the *pizzicato* of the 'cellos and basses on the subsidiary theme which first accompanied the main theme of the first division. Drooping harmonies in the wind instruments and organ lead back again to the prayer which now becomes more intense, more ecstatic, gradually assuming a form and a sequence of harmonies which Liszt himself loved to use in his religious compositions. It seems almost as if his ascetic face, framed by its aureole of white hair, had hovered over Saint-Saëns as he wrote the closing exquisite harmonies of this movement, ending in mysterious chords softly intoned by the organ as the strings ascend heavenward.

II

"The first part of the second movement corresponds to the classical *scherzo*, which, however, gains dramatic significance because the piano, which was Liszt's own instrument, and on which he reigned supreme, is deftly interwoven with the orchestra as one of its regular orchestral instruments. The movement is again C minor, and gradually leads over to the *Finale*, the theme of which is the same as that intoned by the strings at the beginning of the symphony, but which is now given in C major, like a chorus of angels accompanied by harp-like arpeggios from the piano. It seems as if it were a vision of the heavens opening and the entire hierarchy of the heavenly hosts standing upon the golden steps around the throne of God to welcome Liszt with outstretched hands as he enters. Hosannas and Hallelujahs resound from all sides. Antiphonal chantings, in which the *Gloria* is intoned by the organ and strings, are answered by the clash of cymbals and fanfares of trumpets, until the mighty fugue is developed with the main theme in a new rhythmic form, to be suddenly interrupted by a gentle but ecstatic melodic phrase rising as if on the wings of angels, and which is so absolutely in the character of Liszt's music that he himself might have written it, as well as the Gregorian counterpoint intoned by solemn trombones and trumpets. The *coda*, which begins with a long organ point on the dominant, is a veritable masterpiece of counterpoint, and in its jubilant character, its blazing harmonies and exalted religious emotion, closes fittingly a work which will always rank as one of the greatest masterpieces of this or any period."

Entrance of the Knights of the Grail, from "Parsifal," Act I. *Wagner*
Leipzig, 1813 Venice, 1883

This number is a concert arrangement by Walter Damrosch of the march which immediately follows the transformation in the first act, and which accompanies the solemn processional of the Knights of the Grail and their squires as they enter the sacred precincts of the Temple of the Grail on Mount Salvat.

Liszt Concerto in E flat for Piano with Orchestral Accompaniment

This "Triangle" concerto is a popular work with pianists and audiences everywhere. When it was first played by Liszt, the introduction of a triangle into an orchestral work caused

a sensation; and much invective was written against the concerto by well-known critics. Some cities refused even to listen to it, while others called it "The devil's handiwork". The triangle, introduced after the beautiful "Nocturne" portion, ushers in the playful and scintillating Scherzo. This in turn is followed by a finale of great brilliancy and fire.

Dance of the Old Ladies from "The Venetian Convent".....Casella
Turin, 1883

Alfredo Casella is one of the youngest of the modern Italian composers. At the age of thirteen, upon the advice of Martucci, he went to Paris and became the pupil of Diémer at the Conservatoire, where he won a first prize for piano playing in 1899. In composition he was a pupil of Fauré. In 1916 he became Sgambati's successor as professor of the piano at the Saint Cecilia Academy in Rome. He has recently (1925) been appointed conductor of the State Symphony Orchestra of New York, sharing the honors of the post with the Hungarian pianist and composer, Ernst von Dohnányi.

The Venetian Convent was composed in 1912-13 in the form of a ballet, and has been performed with success in France and Italy. The excerpt to be heard today, *The Dance of the Old Ladies*, is characterized by a keen and slightly satirical humor which manifests itself at once in the opening theme. This is enunciated by the oboe alone in a manner delightfully suggestive of that type of dear old lady who, while remaining incurably romantic, has become, alas! a trifle rheumatic. The *trio* of the dance is a deliciously modernized version of the old French air *Amaryllis*, commonly attributed to Louis XIII.

Entrance of the Little Fauns from "Cydalise".....Pierné
Metz, 1863

The ballet *Cydalise et le Chèvre-pied* (*Cydalise and the Satyr*) was completed in 1913, and was at once accepted for performance at the Paris Opéra, but its production was postponed on account of the war until January 15, 1923. Its plot, in a fantastic blending of myth and romance, introduces a satyr into the anachronistic setting of seventeenth century French court.

The excerpt to be heard on the present occasion is a quaint and spirited march which accompanies the entrance of a band of little fauns led by an old satyr, their tutor in the art of playing the Pandean pipes. The pattering of their cloven hoofs is suggested by chords in the violas and 'cellos, partly plucked and partly played with the back of the bow, while a shrill whole-tone passage for the piccolos (the Pandean pipes of the orchestra) alternates with a satyrically blatant theme in the Lydian mode, played by the muted trumpets.

COMING EVENTS

November 3, JOHN McCORMACK, tenor, will give a concert in the Choral Union Series. Tickets on sale at School of Music, \$3.00, \$2.50 and \$2.00.

November 14, ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK, will give a concert in the Extra Concert Series. Tickets on sale at School of Music, \$2.00, \$1.50 and \$1.00.

PALMER CHRISTIAN, University Organist, gives a recital each Wednesday afternoon at 4:15 o'clock in Hill Auditorium. The public with the exception of small children is invited.