

1960

Eighty-second Season

1961

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Charles A. Sink, President

Gail W. Rector, Executive Director

Lester McCoy, Conductor

Third Concert

Fifteenth Annual Extra Series

Complete Series 3307

# The Robert Shaw Chorale and Orchestra

ROBERT SHAW, *Conductor*

THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 12, 1961, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

## P R O G R A M

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied . . . . . J. S. BACH  
(1685-1750)

MOTET for DOUBLE CHORUS, INSTRUMENTS, and ORGAN

The Sayings of the Saviour on the Cross . . . . . HAYDN  
(1732-1807)

Introduction  
"My God, why hast Thou forsaken me"  
"I thirst"  
"It is fulfilled"  
The Earthquake

SOLO QUARTET, CHORUS, and STRING ORCHESTRA

## INTERMISSION

Jephthah . . . . . CARISSIMI  
(1605-1674)

SOLOISTS, CHORUS, STRING ORCHESTRA, and ORGAN

A Ceremony of Carols . . . . . BENJAMIN BRITTEN  
(1913- )

- |                                   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Procession                     | 6. This Little Babe         |
| 2. Wolcum Yole!                   | 7. Interlude                |
| 3. There Is no Rose of Such Vertu | 8. In Freezing Winter Night |
| 4a. That Yongë Child              | 9. Spring Carol             |
| 4b. Balulalow                     | 10. Deo gracias             |
| 5. As Dew in Aprile               |                             |

SOLOISTS, CHORUS, and HARP

*RCA Victor Records*

*Steinway Piano*

NOTE.—The University Musical Society has presented the Shaw Chorale on four previous occasions since 1952.

*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

### Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied . . . JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Bach's motet "Sing unto the Lord a new song" should really be called a concerto for two choruses. Like an instrumental concerto, it has three movements, each with its own character and inventiveness in combining or contrasting the choral forces. The first and third movements are similar: each opens with a joyful antiphonal statement and culminates in an exuberant fugue. A sustained, chorale-like second movement connects them, like an arch between two rising pillars.

The two fugues are among the most wonderful which Bach wrote. Inspired by the affirmative and lively texts, the music seems literally to depict the "dance" of the spirit in the first movement, and the never-ending "breath" of life in the Finale. The two choirs are not only contrasted in the second movement: they sing completely different texts, one verses from Psalm 103, the other a commentary upon it by an unknown author.

Recent research assumes this motet to have been composed for the New Year service in 1727. Bach used in his choruses only a small number of boys and young men, and he performed his motets, whenever possible, with supporting instruments. The human voice was, to him, an unparalleled "instrument," and he gave to it melodies of great scope and length and inner musical logic. His music is compounded of complexity and simplicity, of unceasing motion and timeless rest, of unbounded faith in the Spirit, and determination that the Flesh praise and honor its Creator.

### The Sayings of the Saviour on the Cross . . . FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

One of the mysteries of the musical world is the current neglect of Haydn's beautiful *Seven Last Words*. It was greeted with acclaim in its first performance, and proved so popular a work that within ten years of its composition it was performed even in the United States, in 1793. Haydn wrote it first for instruments, then, later, because of the lasting impression it made on its hearers, and because many people wanted to perform it, he arranged it variously for string quartet, piano, and for chorus, solo quartet, and orchestra.

The impulse to add the choral parts was a natural one. The text is implicit in the music: some listeners had observed that they could hear in the instrumental version exactly the words which the music meant to express. Haydn found it possible to add voices without making any significant change in the instrumental parts.

The story of the inception of the work is a fascinating one. Haydn himself wrote about it, in 1801, as follows:

"About fifteen years ago I was requested by a canon of Cádiz to compose instrumental music on *The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross*. It was customary at the Cathedral of Cádiz to produce an oratorio every year during Lent, the effect of the performance being not a little enhanced by the following circumstances. The walls, windows, and pillars of the church were hung with black cloth, and only one large lamp hanging from the center of the roof broke the solemn obscurity. At midday the doors were closed and the ceremony began. After a short service the bishop ascended the pulpit, pronounced the first of the seven words (or sentences) and delivered a discourse thereon. This ended, he left the pulpit and prostrated himself before the altar. The pause was filled with music. The bishop then in like manner pronounced the second word, then the third, and so on, the orchestra following on the conclusion of each discourse. My composition was subject to these conditions, and it was no easy matter to compose seven adagios to last ten minutes each, and succeed one another without fatiguing the listeners; indeed, I found it quite impossible to confine myself within the appointed limits."\*

W. W. Norton

When Haydn made the choral arrangement, he had his friend Baron von Swieten prepare the German text; first a statement by the chorus of the "word," then a reflection

\* *Haydn, A Creative Life in Music* by Karl Geiringer

or meditation on the meaning of this message. For this performance, Mr. Shaw has made a new English translation, and has chosen to perform the orchestral introduction and movements IV, V, VI, and VIII.

The music throughout is incomparable Haydn. The dark, brooding nature of the introduction, with its nervous energy and then fateful pauses, its diminished chords, syncopations, and chromaticism, sets the stage for the momentous drama. These musical elements recur again and again in the music, and are intensified by fleeting moments of most unearthly peace, as the soprano solo in "It is fulfilled." The final chorus, not one of the "words," depicts the earthquake, with furious rumblings in the orchestra and cries from the chorus. The work ends on this note of despair and bitterness, with no promise of future happiness, no hint that on the third day will occur the miracle of Easter, the miracle of eternal life which Haydn celebrated so lovingly in other works.

Jephthah . . . . . GIACOMO CARISSIMI

As choirmaster at the Church of S. Apollinare in Rome, Giacomo Carissimi was alive to all the influences which were changing music from the relative calm of the Renaissance to the vigorous drama of the Baroque period. Unfortunately much of his music has been lost, but of his four surviving oratorios, *Jephthah* is most certainly the masterpiece. Sharing many characteristics of style with seventeenth-century opera, Carissimi's oratorios aim at a vivid presentation of biblical events, employing soloists, commentary and action choruses, orchestra, and all the new dramatic forms, notably recitative and aria.

In *Jephthah*, Carissimi found a subject almost perfect for his form. Calling for two central characters (Jephthah and his daughter), and Historicus (narrators who recite the Biblical words), the story tells of triumphant war, of a father's love for his daughter, and his inconsolable grief when he learns that he must sacrifice her for his victory. The terse Biblical narrative found in Judges II, verses 29 through 38, is expanded in the battle and homecoming scenes. There are moments of great dramatic power: the chromatic "moaning" of the vanquished after the battle, the great song of victory, Jephthah's "alas" at the sight of his daughter, and the entire last aria and chorus. The ornamented melody of the maiden's cry, with its echo, and the rich descending lines of the chorus express heartfelt grief.

A Ceremony of Carols . . . . . BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Benjamin Britten is one of the most gifted of contemporary composers. His operas *Peter Grimes*, *Albert Herring*, and *Gloriana* (composed for the coronation of Elizabeth II), and his oratorios, songs, and folk-song arrangements all show his wonderful gift for writing melodies that are truly vocal. He is somehow able to combine a long singing line with modern harmonies and rhythms in a language which is always expressive, which constantly surprises the ear with fresh sounds.

A delightful collection of old English poems forms the text for *A Ceremony of Carols*. Songs of spring and winter, of love and philosophy tell the story of the birth of the Christ-child in a manner at once humorous, tender and forceful. Most of them are of unknown authorship; a few are written in a medieval style by later poets.

Britten's setting captures the antique flavor and charming innocence of the poems. He uses genuine plain-chant for his opening and closing chorus, and other carols are set with a conscious use of sixteenth-century musical idioms. In his skillful handling of imitation, ostinato and modes, Britten betrays his great knowledge of, and affinity to, the "golden age of English choral music."

The combination of harp and voices is time-honored and lovely, unaccountably neglected in recent years. The original version was for boys' voices, also characteristic of early religious music. This adaptation for mixed chorus was made by Julius Harrison, English composer and friend of Mr. Britten, with the approval of the composer.

1960 — UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY CONCERTS — 1961

# Chamber Music Festival

Three Concerts in Rackham Auditorium

## THE VIENNA OCTET

### Programs

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 8:30 P.M.

Divertimento in G . . . . . MICHAEL HAYDN  
Divertimento No. 10 in F, K. 247 . . . . . MOZART  
Septet in E-flat major, Op. 20 . . . . . BEETHOVEN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 8:30 P.M.

Octet . . . . . MARCEL POOT  
Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115 . . . . . BRAHMS  
Divertimento No. 15 in B-flat, K. 287 . . . . . MOZART

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2:30 P.M.

Allegro giusto from Octet . . . . . FRANZ TISCHHAUSER  
Divertimento No. 17 in D major, K. 334 . . . . . MOZART  
Octet in F major, Op. 166 . . . . . SCHUBERT

Season Tickets: \$4.00 and \$3.00

Single Concerts: \$2.00 and \$1.50

## BUDAPEST STRING QUARTET

SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2:30 P.M.

Special All-Beethoven Program in Rackham Auditorium

Tickets: \$2.00 and \$1.50 — on sale beginning February 10.

### in Hill Auditorium

WARSAW PHILHARMONIC . . . . . Wednesday, January 18

WITOLD ROWICKI, *Music Director*—WANDA WILKOMIRSKA, *Soloist*

*Program:* Overture to *The Bartered Bride* . . . . . SMETANA  
Violin Concerto No. 1 . . . . . SZYMANOWSKI  
Four Essays . . . . . BAIRD  
Symphony No. 1 in C minor . . . . . BRAHMS

HENRYK SZERYNG, *Violinist* . . . . . Tuesday, February 14

BRIAN SULLIVAN, *Tenor* . . . . . Tuesday, February 28

DALLAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA . . . . . Friday, March 10

PAUL KLETZKI, *Music Director*

TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA . . . . . Wednesday, March 15

WALTER SUSSKIND, *Music Director*

ZINO FRANCESCATTI, *Violinist* . . . . . Tuesday, March 21

CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA of AMSTERDAM . . . . . Sunday, April 23

## Sixty-eighth Annual May Festival

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA (6 concerts) . . . . . May 4, 5, 6, 7

Season Tickets: \$15.00, \$12.00, \$10.00, \$8.00

Single concert tickets on sale beginning March 15.

For tickets or information address:  
University Musical Society, Burton Memorial Tower.