

1962

Eighty-fourth Season

1963

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Charles A. Sink, President

Gail W. Rector, Executive Director

Lester McCoy, Conductor

Ninth Concert

Eighty-fourth Annual Choral Union Series

Complete Series 3382

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra

WALTER SUSSKIND, *Conductor*

Guest Artist: ANNIE FISCHER, *Pianist*

TUESDAY EVENING, MARCH 12, 1963, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Overture to "Leonore," No. 3 BEETHOVEN

Triptych MERCURE

Concerto No. 3 for Piano and Orchestra BARTÓK

Allegretto
Adagio religioso
Allegro vivace

ANNIE FISCHER, *Pianist*

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 4 in G major, Op. 88 DVOŘÁK

Allegro con brio
Adagio
Allegretto grazioso; molto vivace
Allegro ma non troppo

The University Musical Society has presented the Toronto Symphony Orchestra on three previous occasions: February 10, 1954; February 22, 1956, and March 15, 1961.

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

Overture to "Leonore," No. 3 LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*, or "Wedded Love," has been called a companion piece to the "Eroica" Symphony, but the comparison might better have been made with its third overture, since in it the dramatic content of the play—with its crisis—is summarized in musical terms. The Lady Leonore, under whose name the work was first produced in Vienna, had been the subject of operas by Cherubini and Méhul, but it remained for Beethoven to raise her story to epic heights. With secondary incidents this was the tale: determined to rescue her husband Florestan from a political prison, where he is threatened with death, Leonore applies for work at the gaol, helps to dig a grave for him, and at last saves his life.

The music may properly be listened to as a tone poem. The first figure, a long held G followed by a descending scale, foreshadows Florestan's aria, which later sounds in its proper key of A-flat (memories of a loving wife and a vain fight for truth). The *Allegro* serves to build up excitement until suddenly a trumpet sounds from a distant watch tower. Rescuing forces have arrived, just in time to avert a sacrificial death of Leonore. Afterwards a beautiful slow melody expresses gratitude and relief as Florestan and his wife embrace.

Triptych PIERRE MERCURE

Since 1952 Pierre Mercure has prepared musical programs for the CBC's French TV network. Few Canadians have been so well initiated into the composer's craft. After studies in Montreal with Claude Champagne, M. Mercure went on to Paris, to Nadia Boulenger and to Luigi Dallapiccola, whose originality as a modern composer is matched by a scholarly zeal in preparing older masterworks for present day performance.

"In 1957," writes Pierre Mercure, "a fellowship of the Royal Society of Canada enabled me to return to Paris and devote all my time to composing. It was during this time that I received a commission from the Vancouver International Festival to write Triptych, and it was premiered in July, 1959, by the Vancouver Festival Orchestra, conducted by Walter Susskind.

"Triptych is in three parts. The first movement is a slow and peaceful introduction. The second is a fast and rhythmic *Allegro*. The last movement is the same as the first, but played backwards.

"This three-part form, and the resemblance between the two outside movements suggested to me the title, Triptych, usually applied to a painting framed by two side panels related to each other.

"It is scored for large symphony orchestras, and is an abstract work, of a remote tonal nature, using the sound possibilities of the various sections of the orchestra."

Concerto No. 3 for Piano and Orchestra BÉLA BARTÓK

During the summer of 1945, Béla Bartók, his lifework still incomplete, was striving to finish at least one of two large-scale compositions. He was sixty-four years of age, in every sense an alien in America, and, against a background of enduring pain, his fiery creative spirit challenged the encroachment of mortal illness. First there was to be a viola concerto for William Primrose, then a piano concerto—number three in the series. Only the latter came near completion; this, perhaps, because he feared for his wife's future. The work is dedicated to her. In its tremendous sweep and directness of musical statement it dares the world to underestimate or forget his genius, or to neglect his family.

What was it that made Bartók's music for so long difficult of access, his life that of a troubled pioneer? As a pure musician he has been likened to Mozart, so detached from all outward circumstances did his art seem. All his days a student of peasant music in Hungary, Bartók's destiny was probably decided by Dohnanyi, who suggested that he go to the Budapest Academy instead of to Vienna to study. The old Magyar music meant more to his developing mind than European classics. Instead of writing Western music, with harmonic and rhythmic colorations from folk tunes and dances, he employed medieval Church modes and a pentatonic scale system. What he did, during a lifetime

of experiment, was to impose the order and logic necessary for large scale musical works on this unfamiliar material. In the process of his own musical instincts all the intellectual processes of a modern man were in turn modified. Béla Bartók has given us something very much like a fresh musical language.

In the last piano concerto he has taken great care to avoid misunderstanding. That this was to be a final statement is witnessed by the Hungarian word *vége*, meaning the end, written on the last bar of his sketch copy. Nowhere else has it a place in his manuscripts. With, apparently, both wide acceptance and self-expression as motives, he offers a brilliant virtuoso concerto in conversational form, though the music does indeed go back into the mists of time for its substance.

The extraordinary vitality of the initial theme, with its springing, elastic rhythms, sets a style from which there is really no deviation. Although there are echoes throughout the work of certain recent composers, and the first movement develops with something of the roll and sweep of Rachmaninoff, gradually it becomes plain that Bartók is still essentially free of classical harmony, that his highly original use of counterpoint is purposely rhythmic and melodic in effect. This, together with the robustly primitive nature of his tunes, gives to the whole first movement a shimmer of the most intense brilliance.

The *Adagio religioso* introduces a Choral for the solo piano which, in its curious gathering insistence, provides an otherworldly background for what has been called the night music of birds and insects. It seems that in his younger days Bartók explored much of his native land, seeking early and late the germinal accents, the subtle variations in folklore which were to give its whole character to the body of his finished work. Sometimes he would stay out-of-doors most of the summer's night, fascinated by the sounds of nature. When Choral returns it is sung with added intensity by the woodwinds. The finale, a fiery *Rondo*, introduces some magnificent fugal writing, and the piano concludes with a display of incomparable power.

Symphony No. 4 in G major, Op. 88 ANTON DVOŘÁK

Like Tchaikovsky's Sixth this would seem to be a program symphony without a program. After some introductory measures which hint at what is to follow, we hear a simple, buoyant little flute tune. This is contrasted with a serious almost ecclesiastical theme. Presently we have the suggestion of rural sounds, village piety, and an impression of sunlight and celebration. Indeed, it is not hard to find pictures and a story in every bar. In its later appearance the opening theme is anything but pious and builds up to notes of brassy triumph, while developments of the little flute tune toward the end of the movement are altogether surprising.

The slow movement has been called a "tone poem of Czech village life described by a highly sensitive man." Again there is a hint of piety leading to expressions of warmest sentiment. Mr. Alec Robertson found "a touch of pain in the opening harmonies that become pronounced later on." He then discovers a village green, a festival, the local band, and a ceremony; but is puzzled by what is unquestionably a "pain-laden climax." Dr. Sourek, noticing an affinity between the opening and "In An Old Castle," third of the *Poetic Pictures*, Op. 8, devised a program complete with noble knights and ladies. Certainly the music is replete with contrasts and, at a certain point, dramatizes grief—with an outcry from the brass, followed by sympathetic strings. There seems to be a withdrawal, doubts expressed by three short descending notes on several instruments, then we are returned to a distinctly rural scene. This remarkable movement derives its material almost entirely from the opening phrases.

Faced with the light and lovely accents of the *Scherzo*, critical comment fails. Here is a sweet song with pathos forever at the edges of its sweetness, suggested, as in so many earlier works, by descending chromatic notes. The middle section, with its syncopations, is so near to heartbreak that one thinks of Tchaikovsky.

To close, we have a Theme and Variations. The theme, preceded by solemn trumpets, is rather like the flute tune of Movement 1, but by no means identical. From now on the whole thing is social, public, even a bit pompous—the sort of musical expression (marked by a kind of roughness in which the horns should not take themselves too seriously) that Elgar carried to its natural limits. Note the village band with its thunder and reiteration. A singing melody in the lower strings, with rustic comments from the flute assures us that as part of all this clatter there are really quite nice refined voices and tender sentiments. Throughout, this work surely reveals the wonderfully endowed but essentially simple personality of its creator.

1962 — UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY PRESENTATIONS — 1963

HILL AUDITORIUM

BIRGIT NILSSON, *Soprano* Monday, March 18

Program: Divinités du Styx GLUCK

In dem Schatten meiner Locken	} HUGO WOLF
Anakreon's Grab		
Mignon—Kenst du das Land		
Ich hab in Penna einen Liebsten wohnen	} R. STRAUSS
Zueignung; Fruendliche Vision; Caecilie		
Saev, saev, susa; Demanten paa Marssnoen; Svarta rosor		
Og jeg vil ha mig en hjaertens kjaer	} GRIEG
Jeg elsker dig		
En svane		
Mot kvæld		BACKER-GROENDAHL
Intet aer som vaentans tider		PETERSON BERGER
Pace, pace (<i>La Forza del destino</i>)		VERDI
Vissi d'arte (<i>Tosca</i>)		PUCCINI

SAN FRANCISCO BALLETT Friday, March 22

Program: Variations GLAZOUNOV
 Caprice VON SUPPÉ
 Divertissement AUBER

Tickets: \$4.00—\$3.50—\$3.00—\$2.25—\$1.50

JULIAN BREAM, *Guitarist and Lutenist* (2:30) Sunday, March 31

(RACKHAM AUDITORIUM)

Program: Works for Lute by Francis Cutting, John Dowland, and William Byrd.
 Works for Guitar by Henry Purcell, Cimarosa, Bach, Villa-Lobos and Albeniz.

Tickets: \$2.50 and \$2.00

Ann Arbor May Festival

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA in six concerts May 9, 10, 11, 12

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 8:30. EUGENE ORMANDY, Conductor; E. POWER BIGGS, Organist. "Music for the Royal Fireworks" (Handel-Harty); Poulenc's Organ Concerto in G minor; Excerpts from "Lulu" (Berg); and "Organ" Symphony No. 3 in C minor (Saint-Saens).

FRIDAY, MAY 10, 8:30. THOR JOHNSON, Conductor; GRANT JOHANNESSEN, Pianist. UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION, "Te Deum" (Verdi); Variations for Piano and Orchestra (Riegger); "Still Are New Worlds" (Ross Lee Finney) EDWIN G. BURROWS, narrator; "Wanderer" Fantasia (Schubert-Liszt).

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2:30. WILLIAM SMITH, Conductor. Duet-Concertante for Clarinet and Bassoon (Strauss) Gigliotti and Garfield, soloists; Haydn Variations (Brahms); Fantastic Symphony (Berlioz).

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 8:30. EUGENE ORMANDY, Conductor; ISAAC STERN, Violinist. Mendelssohn and Prokofieff (No. 1) Concertos; Trumpet Voluntary (Purcell), Gilbert Johnson, soloist; and Brahms' Symphony No. 2.

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2:30. THOR JOHNSON, Conductor. UNIVERSITY CHORAL UNION, Haydn's "Creation." Soloists: ADELE ADDISON, Soprano; JOHN McCOLLUM, Tenor; DONALD BELL, Bass.

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 8:30. EUGENE ORMANDY, Conductor; RUDOLF AND PETER SERKIN, Pianists. Mozart Concerto No. 10 for Two Pianos; Beethoven Concerto No. 4; Mozart "Haffner" Symphony; Buxtehude's Passacaglia.

Series Tickets: \$20.00—\$16.00—\$13.00—\$10.00—\$8.00

Beginning March 15 any remaining tickets will be placed on sale for single concerts at \$4.00—\$3.50—\$3.00—\$2.25—\$1.50.

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