THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
of
The University of Michigan

Presents

The ANN ARBOR
May Festival

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

EUGENE ORMANDY, Music Director and Conductor
RICCARDO MUTI, Principal Guest Conductor
WILLIAM SMITH, Associate Conductor

EUGENE ORMANDY, Conducting

THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 27, 1978, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

*Don Juan, Op. 20

†* "La Mer" ("The Sea")
From Dawn 'til Noon on the Sea
Play of the Waves
Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea

INTERMISSION

*Symphony No. 1 in E minor, Op. 39

Andante ma non troppo; allegro energico
Andante ma non troppo lento
Scherzo
Finale: quasi una fantasia

* Available on Columbia Records
† Available on RCA Red Seal

First Concert     Eighty-fifth Annual May Festival     Complete Programs 4124

Strauss made his first sketches for Don Juan in the fall of 1887 and completed the work the following summer, about the time he turned twenty-four; he conducted the first performance himself on November 11, 1889, in Weimar, where Franz Liszt, the "inventor" of the tone poem, had introduced all but three of his own works in that form. Don Juan was the first of Strauss's tone poems to reach the public, and it was in this work that he announced himself as the composer destined to carry what Liszt had initiated to its highest level.

The legend of Don Juan Tenorio has fascinated writers from Molière to Bernard Shaw and beyond, by way of Lord Byron and Alfred de Musset, and has inspired at least a dozen operas in addition to Mozart's masterpiece. The version that intrigued the twenty-three-year-old Strauss was written by the Austro-Hungarian poet Nikolaus Lenau in 1844. Lenau produced one of the most sympathetic and probing portraits of the amatory conquistador, a portrayal whose subtlety and depth would naturally strike the imagination of Strauss, the future master of musical dramaturgy, more than the traditional characterizations of Don Juan as a mindless rakehell.

The exuberance and impetuousity of Don Juan himself, so vividly projected in the very opening of the Strauss work, are contrasted with episodes of tenderness and several "feminine" themes, all flashing by in what Richard Specht described (in his foreword to the score) as an "intoxicating carnival procession." But even the heroic theme given to the four horns in unison (and subsequently quoted by Strauss by way of self-glorification in Ein Heidenleben), for all its nobility, might be said to betray an element of futility, and the dissolute hero (or anti-hero) meets his end unceremoniously; there is no peroration.

"La Mer"—Three Symphonic Sketches .......................... Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

"You may not have known that I was destined for a sailor's life," Debussy wrote to André Messager from Burgundy in September 1903, "and it was only by chance that fate led me in another direction. Yet I have always felt a passionate love for the sea. You may say that the Burgundian hills are not exactly bathed by the ocean, and that my seascapes might be studio landscapes, but I have a store of memories beyond number, and, to my mind, these are worth more than the reality which often only deadens one's thought."

The letter to Messager was written on the same day as another letter, to the publisher Jacques Durand, in which Debussy first outlined "La Mer," describing the sea as "mysterious, alluring, menacing, complex, elemental." He wrote from the coastal town of Dieppe a year later: "I should have liked to finish 'La Mer' here, but I must complete the orchestration, which is as tumultuous and varied as the sea itself!" In yet another letter, also from Dieppe, he wrote of "my old friend the sea," complaining that "the sea is not respected enough. . . . It ought not to be permitted that bodies deformed by workaday life dip into it. . . . In the sea there should be only Sirens, and how do you suppose these estimable personages would consent to return to waters defiled by such low creatures?"

Despite these professions of familiarity and love, it would appear that the composer of "La Mer" actually had little more contact with the sea than the composer of "Ibéria" had with Spain: in the latter case, a three-hour visit to a border town to witness a bullfight; in the former, two Channel crossings and some seaside holidays. That Debussy's imagination could be fired by so little in the way of actual experience only serves to emphasize the intensity of his involvement with his subject—and the validity of what he wrote to Messager: for him the idea was always of far greater importance than mere reality.

Oscar Thompson, author of Debussy, Man and Artist, published in 1937, wrote with such insight and authority of "La Mer" that his words might well be an appendix to the score:

From Dawn to Noon on the Sea. "There is a mysterious, eerie quality in the undulations with which this sketch begins. In the music are at once an incantation and an awakening. The chief
subject . . . is declaimed by muted trumpet and English horn. Thereafter, as the light seems to
grow clearer and Nature more boisterous, the waves of this chimerical sea ride higher, throwing
their spume into the sunshine, with all manner of glint and refraction, exultant, tumultuous, but
not menacing or cruel. Toward the end, wind instruments intone a solemn and noble theme that
has been described as ‘the chorale of the depths.’ Above it continues the pitching of the waves;
there comes a momentary lull, then a last shake of the mane of these horses of the sea.”

Play of the Waves. “There are waves of every color and mood in a capricious sport of wind
and spray. In a contrastive sense this is the Scherzo of Debussy’s heretical symphony. . . . The
elements dance, they romp and race. . . . About all is an aura of the remote and the unreal. This
is a world of sheen fantasy . . . a mirage of sight and equally . . . of sound. On the sea’s vast stage
is presented a trancelike phantasmagoria so evanescent and fugitive that it leaves behind only the
vagueness of a dream.”

Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea. “A gustier and wilder sea. . . . There are two clear
recollections of the first movement, the first subject being whisked back in one of countless
necromantic transformations of fragments of song, and the chorale returning again for a climax
of glowing sonorities. . . . The brass peals forth in shining splendor. . . .”


As the opus number indicates, Sibelius busied himself with many other works before under­
taking a symphony for the first time. He was nearly thirty-four years old when he completed this
work in 1899, and it has been suggested that he had not yet found his own personal style as a
symphonist. Slavic influences are readily discerned in the First Symphony; it has been called
Tchaikovskian, and a resemblance of its first movement to that of Borodin’s First Symphony has
been noted. Cecil Gray, a respected English commentator on the music of Sibelius, purported to
find “the principal subjects . . . predominantly Slavonic in character, the subsidiary ones . . . often
distinctly Finnish,” and concluded that “the atmosphere of storm and conflict which pervades the
entire work . . . presents a symbolic picture of Finnish insurrection against Russian oppression.”
Sibelius’ Finnish biographer Karl Ekman, however, states that the First Symphony is basically
“a profound human document [of] the struggle of a soul full of conflict for its salvation.”

The first movement opens with a rhapsodically brooding clarinet solo against a soft drum-roll,
after which the strings enter vibrantly with the main theme, which is given a full-blown Romantic
working-out, with surging climaxes that do indeed recall Tchaikovsky. But the wind writing at
the beginning of the development section is as characteristically “Sibelian” as anything the com­
poser wrote later.

The second movement, which many have assumed to be based on a folk melody, is actually
original Sibelius in every phrase. The persevering theme, making its way through an accompani­
ment now undulating, now whirring, has evoked a dogged journey through the winter snow for
many listeners, while to Paul Rosenfeld it suggested “the pathos of brief, bland summers.” In
structure and mood, this movement is similar to the corresponding one in Tchaikovsky’s Fourth
Symphony, but, while the theme of the Tchaikovsky slow movement is plaintive from the outset
and so remains, until bathed in its own tears, the theme of Sibelius’ Andante is one of determina­
ition—if tempered with resignation.

The Scherzo is still more rugged and outdoorsy. In a striking reversal of roles, rhythmic
beats from the violins and violas set off the theme, which is actually played on the timpani; it is
then echoed in turn by the lower strings and the winds, then tossed back and forth between the
timpani, clarinets, and trombones. Altogether, this extremely vigorous Scherzo, with its nostalgic
Trio, is one of Sibelius’ most jovial and open-hearted pieces, its rough humor recalling the
beguiling gruffness of his early tone poem En Saga.

If the Symphony may be regarded as a spiritual journey, the Finale is its yield, a grand
summing-up. None of the themes from the earlier movements is introduced here (though some are
hinted at), but this movement seems to weigh the emotional turbulence and contrasts of its
predecessors and emerge “bloody but unbowed,” fully confirming Ekman’s description of the work.
The theme itself is a Romantic one—not hymnlike, but songful—but one that neither Tchaikovsky
nor Borodin nor anyone else would have shaped in quite the same way as it appears here. The
harp, fairly prominent in all four movements, is used here with particular effectiveness, vaguely
suggesting some sort of bardic presence.
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EUGENE ORMANDY, Music Director and Conductor
RICCARDO MUTI, Principal Guest Conductor
WILLIAM SMITH, Associate Conductor
BORIS SOKOLOFF, Manager
JOSEPH SANTARLASCI, Assistant Manager

Violins
Harry Gorodetzer
Lloyd Smith
Joseph Druian
Bert Phillips
Deborah Reeder
Christopher Rex
Richard Harlow
Gloria Johns
William Saputelli
Marcel Farago

Norman Carol
William de Pasquale
William Smith
David Arben
Morris Shulik
Owen Lasuk
David Grunschlag
Frank E. Saam
Frank Costanzo
Barbara Sorlien
Herbert Light
Charles Rex
Ernest L. Goldstein
Luis Biava
Larry Grika
Cathleen Dalschaert
Herold Klein
Julia Janson
Irvin Rosen
Robert de Pasquale
Armand Di Camillo
Joseph Lanza
Irving Ludwig
Jerome Wigler
Virginia Halfmann
Arnold Grossi
George Dreuyus
Louis Lanza
Stephane Dalschaert
Isadore Schwartz
Booker Rowe
Davyd Booth
Jonathan Beiler

Violas
Joseph de Pasquale
James Fawcett
Leonard Mogill
Sidney Curtiss
Gaetano Molieri
Irving Segall
Leonard Bogdanoff
Charles Griffin
Wolfgang Granat
Donald R. Clause
Albert Filosa
Renard Edwards

Violoncellos
William Stokking
George Harpham

Trumpets
Harry Gorodetzer
Lloyd Smith
Joseph Druian
Bert Phillips
Deborah Reeder
Christopher Rex
Richard Harlow
Gloria Johns
William Saputelli
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Jerome Wigler
Virginia Halfmann
Arnold Grossi
George Dreuyus
Louis Lanza
Stephane Dalschaert
Isadore Schwartz
Booker Rowe
Davyd Booth
Jonathan Beiler

Trombones
Roger M. Scott
Michael Shahan
Neil Courtney
Ferdinand Maresh
Carl Torello
Samuel Gorodetzer
Emilio Gravagno
Curtis Burris
Henry G. Scott

Norman Carol
William de Pasquale
William Smith
David Arben
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Jonathan Beiler

Clarinet
Anthony M. Gigliotti
Donald Montanaro
Raoul Quezce
Ronald Reuben

William de Pasquale
William Smith
David Arben
Morris Shulik
Owen Lasuk
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George Dreuyus
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Davyd Booth
Jonathan Beiler

Bassoon
Bernard Garfield
John Shamilian
Adelchi Louis Angelucci
Robert J. Feufer

William de Pasquale
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Tuba
Paul Krzywicki

William de Pasquale
William Smith
David Arben
Morris Shulik
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Batterie
Gerald Carlyss
Michael Bookspan

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Irving Ludwig
Jerome Wigler
Virginia Halfmann
Arnold Grossi
George Dreuyus
Louis Lanza
Stephane Dalschaert
Isadore Schwartz
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Davyd Booth
Jonathan Beiler

Celesta, Piano
and Organ
William Smith
Marcel Farago

Robert S. Harper
M. Dee Stewart

William de Pasquale
William Smith
David Arben
Morris Shulik
Owen Lasuk
David Grunschlag
Frank E. Saam
Frank Costanzo
Barbara Sorlien
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Jerome Wigler
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Arnold Grossi
George Dreuyus
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Jonathan Beiler

Piccolo

Irvin Rosen
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Armand Di Camillo
Joseph Lanza
Irving Ludwig
Jerome Wigler
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Arnold Grossi
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Davyd Booth
Jonathan Beiler

Jesse C. Taynton
Clint Nieweg

William de Pasquale
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David Arben
Morris Shulik
Owen Lasuk
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