

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

Department of Music

ARTS AND SCIENCE WEEK

ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

VLADIMIR GOLSCHMANN, *Conductor*



BREWER FIELD HOUSE

Wednesday and Thursday Evenings

December 6 and 7, 1950

8:15 P.M.

PROGRAM

SUITE FROM THE BALLET, "CEPHALE ET PROCRIS" *Grétry-Mottl*

SYMPHONY NO. 7 IN A MAJOR, OPUS 92 *Ludwig van Beethoven*

Poco Sostenuto, Vivace

Allegretto

Presto

Allegro con brio

INTERMISSION

OVERTURE—FANTASIA: "ROMEO AND JULIET" *Peter Ilich Tschaikowsky*

LA VALSE *Maurice Ravel*

PROGRAM NOTES

SUITE FROM THE BALLET, "CEPHALE ET PROCRIS" *Grétry-Mottl*

The Ballet "Céphale et Procris" by Andre Grétry (1741-1813) was first produced at the court at Versailles, as the climax to the exhausting series of festivities attendant upon the marriage of the Princess Marie Therese of Savoy with the Count of Artois on December 30, 1773.

The choice of Grétry, a young Belgian composer of thirty-two, hitherto unknown to the Parisian public except for his comic operas, to furnish the music for so important a court occasion was for him a signal honor; and the lack of enthusiasm which greeted the first performance was due in part to the general fatigue from an extended official celebration and in part to the poverty of the libretto. When the curtain was finally rung down, the Dauphin was heard to remark to the Duc de Richelieu: "At last our *divertissements* are at an end! Now we can begin to amuse ourselves."

The libretto concerns itself in a heavy-handed manner with a tale from Ovid about the infatuation of the Goddess Diana for Cephalus, her jealousy of his betrothed, Procris, her decree that Procris should die by her lover's hand, and the inevitable fulfillment of the decree.

SYMPHONY NO. 7 IN A MAJOR, OPUS 92 *Ludwig van Beethoven*

The first notes for the Allegretto of the Seventh Symphony appear in Beethoven's Sketchbooks as early as 1809, but the work was not completed until the summer of 1812. The first performance took place under the direction of the composer on December 8, 1813, in the large hall of the University of Vienna, at a concert organized by Mälzel for the benefit of Austrian and Bavarian soldiers wounded in the battle of Hanau. The work is dedicated to Count Meritz von Fries.

The qualities which give the impression of size and immensity in a musical work are fairly intangible; certain it is that this Symphony leaves that impression with the hearer. As Grove has pointed out, force alone is an insufficient explanation, for that quality is to be found more abundant-

ly in the Fifth Symphony; the Third has themes of greater breadth and dignity; the Fourth, greater passion. Probably it is the greater unity of the thematic material in the symphony as a whole which is responsible in large part for the effect achieved in this work. It was Riemann who first pointed out the derivation of most of the major musical ideas in the work from the gently rocking tune in the introduction, and it is worth noting that the key to the thematic material as a whole is to be found in the controversial repeated E's (61 of them, by count, echoed back and forth, with pauses, and groups of sixteen notes) at the end of the introduction. This rhythmic repetition of E is made to serve as a germinal motive to the whole work: indeed, Beethoven's melody is, from the point of view of the theorist, built on a suspension and ornamental resolution of that E. Small wonder that Beethoven labored over the end of his introduction.

The 'form' of the Seventh Symphony shows no startling departure; the Introduction and the repetition of the Trio to the Scherzo find a precedent in the Fourth Symphony. The famous Allegretto, which Beethoven in later life found conductors taking too fast, and for which he suggested "Allegretto, quasi andante" as a better marking, has been substituted for the usual slow movement. This movement, in particular, earned an immediate success, and after the fashion of the time was often included in performances of the Eighth Symphony, or particularly in France, was substituted for the slow movement of the Second Symphony. Audiences frequently fail to realize that his movement is a set of variations, worked out with the addition of a free counterpoint. (This added melody appears first in the violas and first 'cellos). The last movement, an incredibly energetic outburst of rhythmic compulsion, builds to the largest climax of the whole work over a long pedal, with the basses mulling over some fragments from the first movement.

OVERTURE—FANTASIA: "ROMEO AND JULIET" *Peter Ilich Tchaikowsky*

Tschaikowsky's Romeo and Juliet may bear little resemblance in feeling to the well known play of Shakespeare by the same name, but in its seventy-five years of life it has pleased innumerable concert-goers for whom its portentous opening, its unrestrainedly lush melodies, and its exciting build-up seem to hold a permanent attraction. Fortunately, Tschaikowsky has not attempted to follow the course of the drama, but, choosing three well-contrasted ideas,— the religious seriousness of Friar Lawrence, the warring strife of the Montagues and Capulets, and the amorous sentiments of the two lovers—all capable of general expression in music, he has worked out a solidly constructed and entertaining piece.

The suggestion to write a symphonic poem on the theme of Shakespeare's tragedy came from the Russian nationalist composer, Balakireff. During the months of composition Balakireff was in close contact with Tschaikowsky and made many suggestions and criticisms concerning the construction of the work. It was completed in 1868. At the first performance the public responded coolly to the work and only after the final revision of 1881 did it achieve public acclaim.

LA VALSE *Maurice Ravel*

La Valse, described by the composer as a "Choreographic Poem," was composed in 1919 and first performed under the direction of Camille Chevillard at a Lamoureux concert on December 12, 1920.

La Valse is accounted one of the most felicitous of Ravel's essays in style. The tempo indication is "In the movement of a Viennese Waltz,"

and the composer has put the following explanatory paragraph at the head of the score: "At first the scene is dimmed by a kind of swirling mist, through which one discerns, vaguely and intermittently the waltzing couples. Little by little the vapors disperse, the illumination grows brighter, revealing an immense ballroom filled with dancers; the blaze of the chandeliers comes to full splendour. An Imperial Court about 1855."

We have here a re-creation of the spirit of the Viennese waltz of the nineteenth century, enlivened by the poetic imagination and orchestral cunning of one of the most sensitive of twentieth century composers. The form of the work has been summed up by Alfredo Casella in this way:

"The poem is a sort of triptych:

"A. The Birth of the Waltz. The poem begins with dull rumors, as in *Rhinegold*, and from the chaos gradually takes form and development.

"B. The Waltz.

"C. The Apotheosis of the Waltz."

The beginning and end of the intermission will be indicated by brief dimming of the lights in the auditorium and lobby.

Smoking is permitted only in the lobby and sub-lobby. Your cooperation with the ushers in confining smoking to this area during the concert and intermission is requested.

Reserved seat tickets for each of the remaining concerts of the 1950-51 Series will go on sale at dates preceding each concert which will be announced in the local newspapers.

USHERS

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