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School of Music University of Washington

University of Washington
THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

S99
1992
12-9

THE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY

Peter Erös, *conductor*

12/9

8:00 PM
DECEMBER 9, 1992
MEANY THEATER

DAT #12,006

CASS #12,006 A

PROGRAM

DAT
1D2 CARMEN, Selections from Suites 1 and 2 ..... 19'50 ..... Georges Bizet (1838-1875)
for Orchestra

1D3 DOUBLE CONCERTO FOR CLARINET, ... 17'09 ..... Max Bruch (1838-1920)
VIOLA AND ORCHESTRA, Op. 88

William McColl, *clarinet*
Eric Shumsky, *viola*

CASSETTE SIDE A ↑
SIDE B ↓

INTERMISSION

1D4 SYMPHONY #5 IN C MINOR, Op. 67 ..... 29'03 ..... Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Georges Bizet returned to his home in Paris in September 1860. Nearly 22, he had been in Italy, studying with other young musicians, painters, sculptors and architects at the French Academy in Rome. Three years earlier he had won the French equivalent of a Fulbright, the coveted *Prix de Rome*, which allowed for five years of government-subsidized study. The death of his mother, however, signaled an end to his student days abroad, and he returned to be with his family.

Recognition of his talents as a composer was slow. He took whatever jobs that came along in order to support himself. Foremost among his works in the ensuing years are the operas *Les Pecheurs de Perles* (1863), *La Jolie Fille de Perth* (1867), and *Djamileh* (1872). His "big break" came later on October 1, 1872, with incidental music to Alphonse Daudet's tragedy, *L'Arlesienne*. While the production played for only fifteen performances, the music was a hit. From its twenty-seven numbers, he made a suite of four contrasting movements, played for the first time on November 10, 1872, by conductor Jules Etienne Pasdeloup (1819-1887) at his *Concerts populaires*. Following Bizet's death in June 1875, his American-born friend and colleague, Ernest Guiraud (1837-1892) selected and re-orchestrated four more pieces into a second suite. The two *L'Arlesienne Suites* have been in the standard concert repertoire ever since. (Six of the eight movements were played by the UW Symphony Orchestra last season.)

Following the success of the *L'Arlesienne Suite*, Bizet began work on *Carmen* during the winter of 1872-73. The libretto was by Henri Meilhac (1831-1897) and Ludovic Halevy (1834-1908), based on a tale by Prosper Merimee (1803-1870). Bizet took great pains to write into the music the personalities of the characters and the realism of their struggles between good and evil.

The score was completed by March 1874 and orchestrated later that summer. Rehearsals, which Bizet attended, began at l'Opera-Comique on September 1. Finally on March 3, 1875, the first of fifty performances that year opened. While there were nay-sayers (the ambassador from Spain judged it "immoral"), Carmen was a success. Three months later, in Bougival where the Bizets had repaired for the summer, Georges suffered a heart attack after swimming in the River Seine. He died two days later.

Les Toreadors, Prelude to Act I, bursts onto stage with all the boisterousness of a bull fight. Chords by the trumpets and trombones provide segue into the cocky march of the toreadors, sung first by the strings. After a pause, the Fate theme is heard surging through a boiling string tremolo. **Aragonaise**, Prelude to Act IV, is a splendid example of Bizet's imaginative adaptation of Spanish rhythms and melodic styles. This jota, or dance from Aragon (hence Aragonaise) is in quick triple time, featuring the oboe accompanied by guitar-like pizzicato strings and tambourine. **Intermezzo**, Prelude to Act III, opens with the silky transparency of harp and solo flute, warmed in the sunshine of sustained strings. **Les Dragons d'Alcala**, Prelude to Act II, features the bassoons against pizzicato strings and snare drum, antiphonal writing for strings and woodwinds, then a charming duet for clarinet and bassoon. **Marche des Contrebandiers**, or Smugglers' March, is heard as the curtain rises on Act III, a wild place in the mountains. As if on tip toe, pizzicato strings accompany a low solo flute. The few smugglers awaken and warn each other

to "be careful, be alert, and don't make mistakes!" **La Garde Montante**, or Chorus of Street Kids in Act I, begins with off-stage trumpet heralding the changing of the guard. As the relief guard comes into view, led by fifes and bugle, a crowd of children accompanies them singing about how wonderful it would be to be a dashing soldier. **Danse Boheme** opens Act II. We find gypsy women in a tavern dancing to the accompaniment of guitar and tambourine. With gathering momentum and energy, the dizzying spectacle climbs to a spectacular conclusion.

Max Bruch, German composer, was born into a middle class family. His mother Wilhelmine, soprano and teacher, provided him with his first music lessons. His father August, a lawyer by training, was Chief of Police of Cologne. The young Bruch's progress can be measured by his compositions. By age twelve he had completed a four-hand piano sonata, a string quartet composed for his mother's birthday, and an orchestra overture. His teacher, Ferdinand Hiller (1811-1885) noted in his diary on November 30, 1952, that he had heard a violin sonata and a string quintet of Bruch's (age 14) played at the Bruch home. His Opus 1, the greatest achievement of his teen years, was a setting of Goethe's Singspiel *Scherz, List und Rache* (*Joke, Cunning and Revenge*), given in private performance in May 1856 and published the following year.

It is a rare and wonderful thing when talent, recognition, encouragement, and means coincide for any young person such as Bruch. His life was rich with travel and work all over northern Europe and England. His music reached America during his lifetime with performances by the Handel & Haydn Society of Boston and by violin virtuoso Maud Powell who premiered his *Konzertstuck*, Op. 84 at the Norfolk (CT) Festival on June 8, 1911. Stylistically conservative, his musical politics aligned him with those disdaining the "anti-music" composers, such as Wagner, whose music was gaining momentum. Christopher Fifield, his biographer, writes, "...it is startling that his life of 82 years spanned the lives of so many diverse musical figures, and encompassed so many different significant events in the development of music. It began in 1838 before Wagner stormed the barricades of conventional harmony, and it ended in 1920 after Schoenberg had established serialism." Since his death he is remembered primarily for four works still in the concert repertoire: Violin Concerto #1 in G minor, Op. 26; Violin Concerto #2 in D minor, Op. 44; *Scottish Fantasy* for violin and orchestra, Op. 46; and the famous setting of *Kol Nidrei* for cello and orchestra, Op. 47.

The **Double Concerto for Clarinet and Viola** sprang from the last great creative period of Bruch's life. Plagued by a bladder illness since 1909, he decided to retire from all official duties, including composition. In September 1910, physicians in Hamburg treated his ailment to the extent that he was able to write to his friend Anna Zanders, "I have no complaints and work with a complete freshness and joy as of 30 years ago." (Fifield) His illness in remission, he composed four large works in 1911: *Romanze* for viola and orchestra, Op. 85; *Sechs Lieder* for mixed chorus, Op. 86; *Die Macht des Gesangs* (Schiller) for Baritone solo, chorus, orchestra, and organ, Op. 87; and the *Double Concerto*, Op. 88.

The first of three movements, **Andante con moto**, [E minor, 4/4] opens boldly with a pair of soliloquies *alla recitativo* before the clarinet settles into the first theme. The folk-like nature of the this expressive movement lies in Bruch's having quoted the first four bars of the Swedish folk tune *Vermelandvisan*. The clarinet and viola were two of Bruch's favorite instruments to write for (the others were violin, cello, and French horn), evidenced here by their compatibility and sheer pleasantness of their combined sound. The waltz-like second movement, **Allegro moderato** [G major, 3/4], begins with a short orchestral introduction. In ABA form, the B section arrives by way of pizzicato strings to support the soloists' long, placid phrases. The finale, **Allegro molto** [E major, 2/4] opens with fanfare and all flags flying. The instrumentation, that of a classic chamber orchestra in the first movement (flute, oboe, pairs of clarinets, bassoons and horns, timpani and strings) has increased with each successive movement. Now there are pairs of all woodwinds plus English horn, 4 French horns and 2 trumpets to fill out the brilliance. Finger-wiggling virtuosity abounds for viola and clarinet soli. The coda contains a surprise whisper echo of the main theme for the soli and orchestral flute. Four bars later, it's over with a flourish.

Symphony No. 5 in C minor received its first performance at the Theater an der Wien, Vienna on December 22, 1808, the composer conducting. This startling new work shared the program with two other premieres: Symphony No. 6 in F and the *Choral Fantasy* in C minor for piano, chorus and orchestra for which Beethoven improvised the extended opening solo. He played his own Piano Concerto No. 4, and, to round out the evening, included portions of the *Mass* in C together with the scene and aria *Ah! perfido*, Op. 65.

Why so much? Casually glancing at a program of this magnitude, one could reach any number of conclusions. Looking closer, however, one can see a primary reason. Beethoven had no predictable source of income. What income he had came primarily from three sources: aristocratic patrons, commissions in exchange for dedications, and outright sale of his music to publishers. Breaking through the economic "glass ceiling" by arranging *public* performances of his music seemed to be a ripe, but difficult option. First, he had to get a hall. Theaters were available only around Christmas and Holy Week - the dead of winter or early spring. Then publicity had to be arranged, orchestra and chorus personnel contracted and rehearsed, tickets sold, etc., etc. He was well motivated for making a success of the evening because a lot was riding on it. As it turned out, the concert got mixed reviews. The theater was bitterly cold; Beethoven had had a spat with the original soprano for *Ah! perfido* and her replacement didn't sing well; the orchestra, with whom he was in dispute over matters with another concert, faltered and stopped playing in the *Choral Fantasy*. The financial outcome? No records survive. (Kerman & Tyson).

Movement one, **Allegro con brio** [C minor, 2/4], is perhaps the most familiar theme in all of Western music. "Fate knocking at the door," a statement formerly attributed to Beethoven, was actually first uttered by his student, Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838). Fateful as it is, the thunderous opening is full of harmonic ambiguity, waiting to arrive at C minor in the seventh bar. The angular, rhythmic first theme

is complemented by the second, announced *ff* by the French horn and continued by the strings and woodwinds. Contrasting as they are, the two themes grow from the same rhythmic motive. The second movement, **Andante con moto** [A-flat major, 3/8] is a rondo with variations. Unison violas and celli sing their lines with joyful warmth over pizzicato basses. The variations are enchanting in the wide range of their tonal colors. The **Scherzo: Allegro** [C minor, 3/4] is typical Beethoven: rapid tempo, darting modulations, and colorful orchestrations. Its opening theme outlines a C minor chord, heard first in the low strings. The fateful knock at the door is alluded to when French horns call out the second theme. The trio is an agitated fugato in C major. The recapitulation of the Scherzo brings with it some changes of orchestration. Most important, however, is the long decrescendo into the breathless, tension-packed bridge to the fourth movement, **Allegro maestoso** [C major, 4/4]. It's a triumphant gesture, a grand march, proclaimed *ff*. To achieve the sound, Beethoven filled out the orchestra by the adding a piccolo and three trombones. Since the Renaissance the trombone (sackbut) had been used in concert to double the vocal parts in choral pieces. With this work Beethoven introduced the trombone into the accepted instrumentation of the symphony orchestra.

UPCOMING 1992-93 CONCERTS:

To request disability accommodations, contact the Office of the ADA Coordinator at least ten days in advance of the event. 543-6450 (voice); 543-6452 (TDD); 685-3885 (FAX); access@u.washington.edu (E-mail).

December 10, **Keyboard Debut Series**. Brechemin Auditorium, 8:00 PM.

December 14, **Opera Scenes Workshop**. Meany Studio Theater, 8:00 PM.

January 12, **Randolph Hokanson, piano**, (Professor Emeritus) in *"An Evening of Bach"*. Meany Theater, 8:00 PM.

January 14, **Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet**, (Faculty. Artist Recital), Meany Theater, 8:00 PM.

January 23, **Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Qawwal**, (Visiting Artist in Ethnomusicology from Pakistan). Meany Theater, 8:00 PM.

January 24, **Mark Welger, oboe**. Brechemin Auditorium, 8:00 PM.

January 26, **University Symphony**, Meany Theater, 8:00 PM.

January 29, Concert: **Pacific Northwest Concert Band Festival**, featuring Steve Houghton, percussion, Meany Theater, 5:00 PM.

January 30, Concert: **Pacific Northwest Concert Band Festival**, featuring Steve Houghton, percussion, Meany Theater, 5:00 PM.

January 31, **Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet**, (Faculty Artist Recital), Brechemin Auditorium, 3:00 PM.

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Johan Louwersheimer, *assistant conductor*

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Kui He
Xiao-po Fei
Keh-Shu Shen
Thane Lewis
Jeff Yang
Louanne Bean

Violin II
Kyun Sun Chee
Dan Perry
Kjell Sleipness
Emi Oki
J. Robin Fulton
Deepti Babu

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Haiying Li
Jutta Claassen
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Megan Cleary
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Sabra Weber

Clarinet
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