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Saturday 24 August 1985 at 7.30pm

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
Fritz Siegal concertmaster

Lorin Maazel conductor

Strauss Don Juan, Op. 20

William Schuman Symphony No. 7

Interval

Dvořák Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95
‘From the New World’
'The first-night Met audience gave its own virtuoso performance, by sustaining a steady obbligato of open, unstifled coughing for over five hours. (Each passing hour was signalled by electronic beeping from unmuted wrist-watches.) Seldom did two consecutive bars go by undisturbed by coughers, answering one another from side to side of the theatre, now high, now low, like farm dogs in the hills on a moonlit night.'*

Please leave tonight's virtuoso performance to the musicians!

*From a review of Parsifal by Andrew Porter, reprinted by kind permission of The New Yorker.
RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)
Don Juan, Op. 20

Strauss’s tone-poems span nearly three decades, from 1887, when the first ideas for Macbeth formed in his mind, to 1915, when he put the finishing touches to the Alpine Symphony. Easily the most celebrated are Don Juan and Till Eulenspiegel, in which the young composer first showed actual genius rather than talent. Strauss was still in his early twenties when he wrote Don Juan, and the swashbuckling authority of his writing and virtuosity in handling the orchestra are surely astonishing. In fact, as Tovey put it, ‘the orchestration of Don Juan shows in every particular the ripest results of experience’, and though Strauss equalled it on many occasions, in some ways he never surpassed it. Formally, too, it is magnificent, for he marries musical and ‘representational’ objectives perfectly; in other words, the architecture of the piece and its programmatic scheme are in complete harmony.

Like Macbeth, it is basically a sonata design with two unrelated episodes inserted into the development. Its inspiration derives from Nikolaus Lenau, and not Da Ponte, Molière, or Byron. In 1885 Strauss had seen Paul Heyse’s play Don Juans Ende in Frankfurt. It made a great impression on him, and when he later came across Nikolaus Lenau’s verse play (his last work, published posthumously in 1851), his creative fires caught light. Lenau’s Don Juan was more than just a libertine, seeking a spiritual ideal as well as physical gratification. The eruptive opening of the tone-poem is the very essence of virility. Here Strauss throws out a long melodic thread consisting of numerous heroic elements which emerge to play independent roles later on. Then, against a radiant background, Donna Anna appears, and after the return of the main theme, the solo oboe gives us Donna Elvira. (Strauss, perhaps jokingly, described the timbre of the oboe as evidence that she was red-headed!). But the music soon signifies a desire for new conquests, and the development concerns itself with various aspects of the Don’s theme which are interwoven with those of his past conquests. The recapitulation has an irresistible dash and power, until the duel with Don Pedro, whose father Don Juan has killed, and on whose sword he finally impales himself. The abrupt contrast between the colour and abandon of the restatement and the dramatic, chilling coda is all the more effective for its masterly suddenness. In the words of Lenau’s hero: ‘Perhaps a thunderbolt from the heights which I contemplated struck fatally at my power of love, and suddenly my world became a desert and darkened. And perhaps not — the fuel is all consumed and the hearth is cold and dark’.

WILLIAM SCHUMAN (born 1910)
Symphony No. 7

1 Largo assai –
2 Vigoroso –
3 Cantabile – Intensamente
4 Scherzando brio

William Schuman’s Seventh Symphony was commissioned jointly by the Serge Koussevitzky Foundation in the Library of Congress and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the orchestra, who gave its first performance under Charles Münch in October 1960. It is dedicated to the memory of Serge and Natalie Koussevitzky. Schuman himself feels a strong kinship between this Symphony and its two successors: the Eighth, begun in the summer of 1960 but not finished for another two years, and the Ninth, commemorating a wartime atrocity in Rome, the massacre of the Ardeatine Caves, which followed in 1968.
The Seventh Symphony, like most of Schuman’s, runs for just under half an hour, and is in four movements played without a break. The Largo assai is a brooding and powerful movement just over a hundred bars long; its chordal blocks underpin the angular melodic lines so typical of Schuman’s music. An important motif that emerges on solo trumpet after the opening rhetoric has subsided has an upward leap of a third, then a fifth, and is described by one commentator as ‘a harbinger of the affirmation to come later in the work’. The percussion remain silent throughout – but they are about the only people that do, for there is much sinewy writing for wind, brass and strings. A dialogue between two clarinets leads into the second movement, in which the trumpet motif plays a prominent part. The percussion are now unleashed and the music is nothing if not eventful rhythmically. The third movement is for strings alone: it is marked ‘Thoughtfully, deliberately, expressively’, and rises arch-like from a pensive and eloquent opening to a climax of some intensity before achieving a sense of tranquillity. This is soon shattered by the finale, a dance-like movement whose momentum is twice interrupted, firstly by a dialogue for trumpet and horn, and secondly by a lyrical string passage, before the dance gives way to a peroration which draws together some of the melodic threads heard at the opening.

At this time Harris’s symphonies were enjoying a great vogue, thanks in part to the advocacy of Serge Koussevitzky (who was also to champion Schuman). The example of Harris, his powerful sense of line, rhythmic momentum and, above all, his harmonic vocabulary, were not lost on Schuman; Harris helped him to find himself and develop his own individual musical language. Schuman’s classical sympathies surfaced in a series of ten symphonies and quartets, not all of which earned universal acclaim. Indeed after a broadcast by the Boston Symphony Orchestra of Schuman’s Second Symphony, one listener wrote to the composer: ‘Your Symphony made me lose faith in the power of aspirin tablets’. Subsequently the composer withdrew both his first two symphonies and an early piano concerto.

The breakthrough in his career came with the Third Symphony of 1941, a composition ‘alive, radiant and optimistic’, to quote Leonard Bernstein; and this, like Roy Harris’s Third Symphony, is his best-known work outside America. The Fifth Symphony, for strings (1943), was given here at the London ISCM Festival immediately after the war, and was soon followed by the powerful Sixth (1948). On first hearing, this strikes one as predominantly urban in its inspiration: it is music of the excitement generated in big cities, gleaming with brilliant light but interspersed with dark atmospheres, rather than of the open spaces such as one encounters in Copland and Harris. By the mid-1940s, Schuman had become a major force in American musical life: he was President of the Juilliard School (1945–62) and went on to become the first head of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (1962–9). There was a gap of some twelve years in his purely symphonic output around the 1950s, until the appearance of the Seventh Symphony. During these years, his commitments at Juilliard and other works, such as the Violin Concerto (1949) and the Fourth Quartet, consumed his energies. Schuman composed a Tenth Symphony in 1975 which was broadcast on Radio 3 two years ago.

(photograph by Clive Barda)

William Schuman was born in New York seventy-five years ago and so belongs to the same generation as Elliott Carter, Samuel Barber and Gian-Carlo Menotti. In his youth he was a keen jazz musician, even leading his own band (‘Billy Schuman and His Alamo Society Orchestra’), but in his mid-twenties, after leaving Columbia University, he enrolled in the Salzburg Mozarteum and studied composition with Roy Harris.

INTERVAL 20 minutes

A warning gong will sound five minutes before the end of the interval.
ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841–1904)
Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95 ‘From the New World’

1 Adagio – Allegro molto
2 Largo
3 Scherzo: Molto vivace
4 Allegro con fuoco

The ‘New World’ Symphony has puzzled many of Dvořák’s most fervent admirers. Constant Lambert called it ‘fabricated’, Sir Henry Hadow, one of his most ardent champions in the early years of the century, called it ‘opportunist’, and even so devoted a Dvořákian as Alec Robertson observed: ‘it is depressing to contemplate this work from the heights of the D minor and D major Symphonies’. But for all this, the ‘New World’ is a work of genius, though not in the same sense as the D minor Symphony. The public has a strange and almost unerring instinct in these matters: the ‘New World’ has less depth and formal perfection than its predecessors, yet there is about it an indestructible freshness and directness of appeal that enables it to withstand extensive exposure.

By the end of the 1880s Dvořák’s conquest of England was complete and his fame had crossed the Atlantic. The sirens first beckoned in the spring of 1891. Mrs Janette Thurber, wife of a wealthy New York businessman, was anxious to lure him across the Atlantic to head her recently founded New York National Conservatory. At first he turned down the offer, but eventually Mrs Thurber’s tactics and her highly attractive terms won the day. Dvořák left for New York in the autumn of 1892 and remained there for three years, a period rich in masterpieces: the Cello Concerto, the F major Quartet, Op. 96, the much underrated String Quintet in E flat, Op. 97, and, of course, the ‘New World’ Symphony. No work of his met with more immediate success than this Symphony, and the ovation he received in New York at its first performance under Anton Seidl in December 1893 made him ‘feel like a crowned head acknowledging the plaudits of his subjects’. Dvořák was at some pains to stress that the Symphony did not include a single American folksong: ‘I wrote my own themes, embodying the peculiarities of Negro or Indian music, and using these themes as subjects, have developed them with all the resources of modern rhythms, harmony, counterpoint and orchestral colour’. Still it must be conceded that he had undoubted sympathy for the American Indians, even if he saw them through the rose-coloured spectacles of Longfellow, whose poetry he had devoured in translation in the 1860s. Minnehaha’s funeral inspired the Largo, and in writing the Scherzo he had the Indians’ Dance in Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast in mind. All the same, his knowledge of their music was hardly deep, and as far as Negro music was concerned, he placed much reliance on a young black student, Harry Burleigh, who sang many spirituals to him. The extent of his insight can be seen in the interview he gave to the New York Herald, where he went so far as to declare that he had found the music of the Negros and the American Indians very similar – and that both ‘bore a remarkable similarity to the national music of Scotland’!

So familiar is the ‘New World’ Symphony and so straightforward its structure that its contours scarcely need signposting. It is the most easily followed of Dvořák’s symphonies, and its clarity has undoubtedly contributed to its wide appeal. Both the outer movements are in sonata form, and the first movement is full of characteristic colour: no one can complain about the lack of freshness in the second group or a want of ingenuity in its presentation – Dvořák places it to striking effect. The slow movement is graced by a melody that is by any standards, including Dvořák’s own, of great beauty. Obviously indebted to the world of the Negro spiritual, its achievement and glory is that it
remains thoroughly Dvořákian at the same time. Its scoring for cor anglais (for it was not originally so intended) is said to have been prompted by the colouring and timbre of young Burleigh’s voice. In fact, inspiration runs high throughout this movement: the woodland section (bar 90 onwards) is wonderfully imaginative and not unworthy of the G major Symphony, while not even familiarity has dimmed the richness and majesty of the famous chords that frame the Largo. The E major tune in the trio section of the Scherzo, too, is as inspired and radiant as anything Dvořák composed.

The finale opens with a vivid and stirring idea and has tremendous momentum. At the very end Dvořák recalls themes from the other movements in a way that was fashionable at the time (no doubt the example of Bruckner, whom he much admired, may have weighed with him; and Franck’s Symphony in D minor was only a few years old). But much of the character of the ‘New World’ Symphony comes from the general impressions made by the music he heard there, and his nostalgia for the Czech countryside; for, as he himself said, he ‘would never have written a symphony like this had he not seen America’.

Programme notes and profile © Robert Layton
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Michael Lankester
Associate Conductor

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Victor Romanul associate concertmaster
Huei-Sheng Kao assistant concertmaster
Brian Reagin assistant concertmaster
Ozzie DePaul
Richard Di Adamo
Stuart Discount
Donald Downs
Samuel H. Elkind
Wilbert Frisch
David Gillis
Edward F. Gugala
Charles Hardwick
Sara Gugala Hirtz
Eugene Phillips
Akiko Sakonju
Roy Sonne

Second Violins
Teresa Harth*
Constance Silipigni§
M. Kennedy Linge
Leslie McKie
John J. Corda
Stanley Dombrowski
Emma Jo Hill
Albert Hirtz
Lois Hunter
Stanley Klein
Morris Neiberg
Paul J. Ross
Peter Snitkovsky
Stephen Starkman

Penny Anderson
Cynthia Busch
Richard M. Holland
Lynne Ramsey Irvine
Samuel C. Kang
Raymond Marsh
Paul Silver
Stephanie Tretick

Cellos
Anne Martindale Williams*
Lauren Scott Mallory‡
Irvin Kauffman§
Salvatore Silipigni
Richard Busch
Genevieve Chaudhuri
Gail Czajkowski
Michael Lipman
Hampton Mallory
Charlotta Klein Ross
Georgia Sagen Woehr

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Robert H. Leininger§
Rovin Adelsstein
Anthony Bianco
Ronald Cantelmi
Robert Kesselman
James Krummenacher
Rodney Van Sickle
Arie Wenger

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Paul Fried†
Martin Lerner

Piccolo
Ethan M. Stang*

Oboes
Elden Gatwood*
James Gorton†
Colin Gatwood
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Harold Smoliar

Clarinets
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Thomas Thompson†
Bernard Cerilli
E flat Clarinet
Thomas Thompson

Bass Clarinet
Richard Page

Bassoons
Leonard Sharrow*
Nancy Goeres†
Mark Pancerev

Contra-bassoon
Carlton A. Jones

Horns
Howard L. Hillyer*
Martin Smith†
Peter Altabelli§
Richard Happe
Ronald Schneider
Kenneth Strack

Trumpets
Charles Hois*
Charles Lirette†
Jack G. McKie
Roger C. Sherman

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Carl Wilhelm†
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John Soroka*
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In 1986 the Shell/LSO Music Scholarship will enter its tenth year, and the number of young musicians encouraged since the start of the scheme will reach 1500.

Each year the competition features a particular section of the orchestra, either Woodwind, Strings, Brass or Percussion. In 1986 it will be the turn of Strings.

There will be five regional heats, and the area winners will then be invited to the National Final at the Barbican next summer.

During these Finals, all the players will receive top-class tuition. The overall winner will receive a £4,000 scholarship and the other finalists will also receive cash support.

Entry forms for the scholarship will be available in October from: The Administrator, Shell/LSO Music Scholarship, Barbican Centre, London EC2.
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In the UK, Mercury Communications is
operating its first satellite earth stations
providing international links and the
initial UK trunk network, using
optical fibre cable and microwave
technology, is in the process of
being completed.

In the Far East, the
Company's existing services
have been developed further
by the acquisition of the Hong
Kong Telephone Company; joint
projects are being undertaken with
the Chinese authorities and a new digital
telephone system has been installed in Macau.

All a far cry from those early days. Yet the
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Polystyrene and melamine sandwiches may not sound very appetising. But wait until you hear what happens when they’re used to make a loudspeaker cabinet.

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And all of heaven we have below."

Joseph Addison
Song for St. Cecilia's day

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one of the world's Great Enterprises
Here we see the 'Sienna Piano'. Its life has been, to say the least, eventful.

Built around 1798 it was a wedding present to a couple in Sienna.

The cabinet, with ornately carved walls 5 inches thick, was added later.

In 1867 Liszt found the tone "divine".

For many years it was allowed to grow old gracefully. Until, following VE Day, it fell into the hands of a Tel Aviv scrap dealer.

It marked the beginning of an unhappy period. In the following years the Sienna Piano served as, amongst other things, a beehive, a chicken incubator, and a meat storage cabinet.

Thankfully in 1950 it was rediscovered and restored to its former glory.

A number of recordings followed but, sad to say, the tone was now considered rather ordinary.

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