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Marshall Artists Series Sherman Pitluck Presents the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of London

Vaclav Neumann

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MARSHALL ARTISTS SERIES

SHERMAN PITLUCK

presents

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA OF LONDON

PERSONAL PATRON: *Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth
the Queen Mother*

VACLAV NEUMANN, *Conductor*

KEITH-ALBEE THEATRE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, — 8:30 P.M. 1968

PROGRAM

SYMPHONIC REQUIEM	- - - - -	<i>Britten</i>
Lacrymosa		
Dies Irae		
Requiem Aeternam		
FIREBIRD	- - - - -	<i>Stravinsky</i>

INTERMISSION

SYMPHONY NO. 4, OP. 98	- - - - -	<i>Brahms</i>
Allegro non troppo		
Andante moderato		
Allegro giocoso		
Allegro energico e passionato		

Britten: SINFONIA DA REQUIEM, Opus 20

Benjamin Britten (born in 1913), one of England's most prominent living composers, is known in this country principally for his operas (E.G., BILLY BUDD, PETER GRIMES, and ALBERT HERRING). However, his first introduction to the American concert-going public, during his visit to the United States from 1939 to 1941, was principally as a composer of orchestral works. Several of these, among them the SINFONIA DA REQUIEM and a violin concerto, were written and received first performances during this period when the composer was residing at Amityville, Long Island.

Tonight's work, the SINFONIA DA REQUIEM, was given its world premiere on March 29, 1941, by Barbirolli and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. The composition is scored for full orchestra and consists of three movements which, according to the composer's notes, are to be played without pause. The work opens with LACRYMOSA, "... a slow marching lament in a persistent 6/8 rhythm with a strong tonal center on D," and moves without pause to a DIES IRAE, which is "... a form of Dance of Death with occasional moments of quiet marching rhythm." The work concludes with a section entitled REQUIEM AETERNAM.

Written in memory of the composer's parents, the work was commissioned by the Japanese government and was originally intended as a festive composition for the celebration of the twenty-six-hundredth anniversary of the Japanese dynasty. However, in November, 1941, partially for political reasons, it was rejected by Japan.

Stravinsky: Suite from L'OISEAU DE FEU

The Russian impresario, Serge Diaghilev, seeking new material for his 1910 season in Paris, commissioned a ballet from the young Russian composer, Igor Stravinsky. The result of this commission was Stravinsky's L'OISEAU DE FEU, the vehicle for the successful launching of the career of the Russian master. Its premiere was given in Paris by Diaghilev's BALLET RUSSE on June 25, 1910, one week after the composer's twenty-eighth birthday.

The work, in six sections, is based on various Russian fairy tales and follows the familiar formula of the "broken spell." Musically, it reflects Stravinsky's Russian heritage, particularly showing the influences of Rimsky-Korsakov and Moussorgsky. There are three versions of the orchestral suite. The first, dating from 1911, uses the complete orchestra of the original ballet score. There are two revisions of the orchestral suite, dated 1919 and 1945, the earlier of these using a reduced orchestra.

Brahms: SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN E MINOR, Opus 98

In the summer of 1884, Johannes Brahms, seeking a quiet place for composition and reflection, turned to a place which had many fond memories for him — the small village of Murzzuschlag in Styria, which he and his father had visited seventeen years previously. The recently concluded concert season had been a fruitful one for him and had featured the first performances of his new symphony, the third, in F minor. Amid visits from many of his friends — Clara Schumann, the critic Eduard Hanslick, the surgeon Theodor Billroth, and others — he turned to the composition of a new work, his fourth symphony. His time was well-spent and, by the end of the summer, Brahms had finished the first two movements of the new work. He returned to Murzzuschlag the following summer and completed it.

The new symphony did not have the immediate appeal of the preceding one; even his close friends, hearing the work for the first time that summer, expressed reservations about it to the composer. However, that Fall, after extended rehearsals with the Meiningen orchestra under von Bulow, the work was premiered (October 17, 1885) with the composer on the podium. While preparing the composition for performance, von Bulow became so enthusiastic about it that he made it one of the main attractions for his tour that year. Through his efforts and those of the violinist-conductor Joseph Joachim, the work entered the concert repertoire, where it stands today as one of the staples of every orchestra's concert season.

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