

The Rock Hill

Fine Arts Association
presents

Friday, October 21, 1983
Ballet Gran Folklorico de Mexico

* Friday, November 4, 1983
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
with John Browning, pianist
and
The York County Choral Society

Thursday, February 2, 1984
Andre' Watts

Thursday, March 8, 1984
Eugenia Zukerman Trio

All performances 8 p.m. Byrnes Auditorium
Winthrop College

Tuesday, April 3, 1984
Bonus Concert
Lee Irwin, silent film organist
Buster Keaton Film

THE FINE ARTS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS
THE CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
LEO DRIEHUYS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Leo Driehuys, Conducting
York County Choral Society, Chorus
Sandra Holloman, Soprano
John Browning, Piano

OVERTURE TO CORIOLANUS, Op. 62

BEETHOVEN

GLORIA

POULENC

- I. Gloria
- II. Laudamus Te
- III. Domine Deus (Soprano and Chorus)
- IV. Domine Fili Unigenite
- V. Domine Deus, Angus Dei (Soprano and Chorus)
- VI. Qui Sedes and Dexteram Patris

York County Choral Society
Sandra Holloman, Soprano

INTERMISSION

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 IN D MINOR, Op. 15

BRAHMS

- I. Maestoso
- II. Adagio
- III. Rondo: Allegro non troppo

John Browning, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

OVERTURE TO "CORIOLANUS," Opus 62
Composed in 1807

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Born in Bonn, Dec. 16, 1770
Died in Vienna, March 26, 1827

When written, this work carried the inscription "Overture to the Tragedy, Coriolan"; when published, it bore a dedication to M. de Collin as the author of the "Tragedy." When the tragedy had been written five years earlier, it was staged with music from Mozart's *Idomeneo*. It seems that Beethoven wrote his Overture thinking it would be party to a revival of the play. That was evidently not the case, however, and from the Overture's first performance it led a separate existence as a concert piece.

Beethoven had long expressed interest in the hero-character, Coriolanus. Undoubtedly he was familiar with the several versions about this Roman General: from Plutarch's *Lives*, through Shakespeare's extended tale, and finally to M. de Collin's treatment. Briefly, Coriolanus, a member of Rome's haughty patrician class, was hated by the lower classes, in spite of having conquered the enemy Volscians. Upon being banished from the city by the plebeian class, Coriolanus offered to lead the Volscians against Rome. He was stopped at the city gate by his mother and wife who convinced him to spare his native town; in a rage at his change of heart, the Volscians slew him.

The listener will read his own interpretations into Beethoven's music, but it might be agreed that the last three quiet notes are the last pulse-beats of the dying Coriolanus.

GLORIA

FRANCIS POULENC
(1899-1963)

Francis Poulenc grew up in a prosperous Parisian family. At age 8, already a promising pianist, he heard Debussy's *Dances* for harp and "awoke to music." At 11, he began to sing Schubert and at 14 was swept away by Stravinsky. His chief teacher, the pianist Vines, introduced Poulenc to Satie in 1916. It was not Satie's music so much as his extraordinary character and penetrating vision which affected the young composer. Following a brief service in the armed forces, Poulenc, as one of "The Six," came under the wing of Cocteau, "manager of genius, loyal and friend." In 1921, Milhaud introduced Poulenc to Koechlin, who, for the next three years, gave Poulenc his only lessons in counter point and composition.

Throughout Poulenc's compositional career his music was infused with candid aspects of his own unique personality. In *Conversations* (1954), biographer Henri Hell records the composer's unabashed love for Romantic music, his vast literary and artistic culture and curiosity, his conscientious concern for every sensuous detail. When Poulenc died, critic Claude Rostand, in trying to sum up provisionally the personality of his friend, wrote:

He always placed great value on being regarded as light, charming, frivolous, and flip. He liked "spicy" stories, and it was a point of honor to him never to appear serious.... But behind this spontaneity, this easy and ironic cutting up, was hidden much inner turmoil.... He was basically an anxious man, in life as in his vocation.

Commissioned by the Koussevitsky Foundation in 1959, the *Gloria* was premiered in 1961 with the Boston Symphony under the baton of George Munch. Taking its text from the Ordinary of the Catholic Mass, the work is divided into six distinct sections, each possessing its own charming character and personality.

The *Gloria* begins with full orchestra heralding "Gloria in excelsis Deo." When the chorus enters, one is immediately aware of the composer's predilection for unorthodox syllabic textual treatment as well as his adherence to strict rhythmic definition. Following the second movement which recalls Rostand's observation of the "light...frivolous and flip" indigenous to Poulenc's style, the soprano enters in the third movement both defining the thematic material and offering a stark contrast to the previous movements. Movements four and five reflect the detail and character of two and four, respectively. It is the elegance of the concluding movement, replete in rich harmonies and dramatic textural punctuations, which attests to why the *Gloria* has become the most popular and most frequently performed of the composer's sacred works.

CONCERTO NO. 1 IN D MINOR FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA

Composed 1854-1858

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Born in Hamburg, May 7, 1833

Died in Vienna, April 13, 1897

This massive concerto started out in the mind of the 21-year-old Brahms as a symphony; and, since he had so many problems completing it, there is little wonder that he waited until his 43rd year to really write and publish a "First Symphony."

Later in his life, this work was in the form of a two-piano sonata, but even this revision did not satisfy the composer. Finally he told his friend Clara Schumann, wife of the composer Robert Schumann, that he had had a dream in which, "I had used my luckless symphony to make a piano concerto...and I was quite carried away." Henceforth, with the help of his teacher Julius Grimm he reshaped the first two movements of the work into their present form and added an entirely new third movement.

There is also little wonder that the work was hissed at its premier performance. The public wanted--and usually got--showy, flashy, and ingratiating technical displays in piano concertos. This work was not the expected symphony with a piano obligato part, but a solo and orchestra equal in importance. The craftsmanship was solid and the texture heavy and bulky. The piano part was bristling with difficulties that could only be overcome by the most practiced pianist. It was at least fortunate that Brahms, a consummate artist, was soloist at this premiere performance.

The concerto was slow coming into public favor, and only in 1873 in Leipzig, with Clara Schumann as soloist, did a slight thaw appear. In 1895 Brahms was at last privileged to witness a complete transformation in public reaction. At his appearance at the Gewandhaus, in which he conducted the work, the audience gave him every sign of complete approval.

Notes provided by the Charlotte Symphony

JOHN BROWNING
Pianist

John Browning belongs to that select group of American pianists who are equally successful at home and abroad. He regularly appears with all major United States symphony orchestras. Outside the United States, he is heard, on yearly foreign tours, in England, France, Canada, Germany, Scandinavia, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland. He has performed in Russia and has played in Japan, North Africa and South America.

In an era of pianistic specialists, he declines to confine his playing within any particular boundaries. His repertoire ranges from Bach and Mozart to Rachmaninoff and Stravinsky, and from Beethoven and Schumann to Ravel and Prokofiev. Because of Mr. Browning, the pianistic repertoire has been enriched by the Samuel Barber concerto which was written especially for him and has since become the most frequently performed concerto of the second part of the 20th century. "Twenty-Four Preludes" for solo piano by Richard Cumming, which now turn up regularly on the recital programs of many pianists, also was written for him.

Mr. Browning's recordings also attest to his versatility. The recordings include the five concertos by Prokofiev, the Tchaikovsky concerto, the Ravel left-hand concerto, the Barber concerto, the complete Chopin Etudes, and many solo works by Beethoven, Schumann, Moussorgsky, Debussy, Ravel, the Barber sonata and the Cumming "Preludes."

Mr. Browning is a frequent guest artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and he teaches special master classes at the Manhattan School of Music in New York.

During the 1982-83 season, Mr. Browning was seen on television in the "Mikhail Baryshnikov, the Dancer and the Dance" Special. Mr. Browning played The Barber concerto and spoke about the composer and the way the work was composed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Winthrop College

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The Charlotte Symphony Orchestra gratefully acknowledges financial support from the Arts and Science Council, the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, the State of North Carolina, the North Carolina Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

There will be a party for Sponsors and Patrons in McBryde Hall following the performance.