

New York Symphony Orchestra

WALTER DAMROSCH, CONDUCTOR

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 9th, 1916

HEILIG THEATRE

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PROGRAM

PART I.

1. **Symphony No. 5 in E Minor** - - - - - **Tschaikowsky**
1. Andante. Allegro con anima.
2. Andante cantabile.
3. Valse.
4. Finale.

Few modern works equal this in popular esteem. The sombre hymn-like melody that opens the symphony is repeated in varying form in every one of the four movements. It is the characteristic note of the whole work; and it is utilized, first as a march with an irresistible tread, gloomy and inexorable; again in the second movement it breaks in upon the full and sustained beauty of the music's mood; the "valse melancolique" of the unusual third movement is haunted, at its conclusion, by the same foreboding utterance; and the last movement is dominated by a triumphal version, in the major mode, of this potent theme.

PART II.

2. **Symphonic Poem, "Death and Transfiguration"** - **Richard Strauss 1864**

In the necessitous little room, dimly lighted by only a candle-end, lies the sick man on his bed. But just now he has wrestled desperately with death. Now he has sunk exhausted into sleep, and thou hearest only the soft ticking of the clock on the wall of the room, whose awful silence gives a foreboding of the nearness of death. Over the sick man's pale features plays a sad smile. Dreams he on the boundary of life, of the golden time of childhood?

But death does not long grant sleep and dreams to his victim. Cruelly he shakes him awake, and the fight begins afresh. Will to live and power of death! What frightful wrestling! Neither bears off the victory, and all is silent once more!

Sunk back tired of battle, sleepless as in fever-frenzy the sick man now sees life pass before the inner eye, trait by trait and scene by scene. First the morning red of childhood, shining bright in pure innocence! Then the youth's saucier play, exerting and trying his strength, till he ripens to the man's fight, and now burns with hot lust after the higher prizes of life. The only high purpose that has led him through life was to shape all he saw transfigured into a still more transfigured form. Cold and sneering, the world sets barrier upon barrier in the way of his achievement. If he thinks himself near his goal, a "Halt!" thunders in his ear. "Make the barrier thy stirrup! Even higher and onward go!" And so he pushes forward, so he climbs, desists not from his sacred purpose. That which he has ever sought with his heart's deepest yearning he still seeks in his death-sweat. Seeks—alas! and find it never. Whether he comprehends it more clearly or that it grows upon him gradually, he can yet never exhaust it, cannot complete it in his spirit. Then clangs the last stroke of Death's iron hammer, breaks the earthly body in twain, covers the eye with the night of death.

But from the heavenly spaces sounds mightily to greet him that which he yearningly sought for here; deliverance from the world, transfiguration of the world.

3. **Bacchanale from "Tannhauser" (Paris Version)** - - - **Wagner**

This was not in the original score, but was introduced by Wagner for the Paris performance in 1861. Ernest Newman writes:

"As Wagner was in 1860 at the height of his powers as a musician, the new music is much richer and stronger than the rest of the opera. Two themes alone are new, of which one, the more important, is a veritable riot of primitive sensual strength. When one listens to this gorgeous music, with its wild passions, its exquisite languors, its sheer magic from which there is no escape for mind or body, one realizes the force of Nietzsche's description of Wagner as the master-Wizard, and of his perplexed cry, 'I hate Wagner's music, but I can no longer listen to any other.'"

4. **Excerpts from "Iphigenia in Aulis"** - - - - - **Walter Damrosch**

1. Entrance of the Maidens of Chalcis.
2. Achilles Racing the Chariot.
3. Melodram.
4. Iphigenia's Farewell.

(VIOLONCELLO SOLO, MR. JACQUES RENARD)

These excerpts are taken from the incidental music which Walter Damrosch wrote for Margaret Anglin's production of the drama of Euripides at the open-air Greek theatre of the University of California in the summer of 1915. Damrosch endeavored to reproduce the spirit of Greek tragedy by using freely the resources of modern musical art, and has not used the peculiar "modes" or scales in which the Greek music was written except where a ceremonial or ritual scene called for their suggestion of local color, of something strange and remote from us in the actions unfolding themselves before our eyes.

The story of Iphigenia is thus summarized: After two years of preparation for the Trojan War, the Greek fleet and army assembled at Aulis. Here King Agamemnon in hunting killed a stag sacred to Diana, and the goddess in return visited the army with pestilence and produced a calm which prevented the ships from leaving port. Calchas, the soothsayer, thereupon announced that the wrath of the virgin goddess could be appeased only by the sacrifice of a virgin, the daughter of the offender. Agamemnon reluctantly yielded his consent, and the maiden Iphigenia was sent for under pretense that she was to be married to Achilles. When she was about to be sacrificed on the altar, the goddess, relenting, snatched her away; and Iphigenia, enveloped in a cloud, was carried to Tauris, where Diana made her priestess of her temple.

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WALTER DAMROSCH, Conductor

JOSEF HOFMANN, Soloist

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