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SIXTY-SIXTH SEASON

1946-1947
# Boston Symphony Orchestra

[Sixty-sixth Season, 1946–1947]

Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor

## Personnel

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### Violas

- BERNARD, A.
- HUMPHREY, G.
- KORNSAND, E.
- ARTIÈRES, L.
- LIPSON, J.
- GERHARDT, S.

### Violoncellos

- BEDETTI, J.
- ZICHERA, A.
- DROEGHMANS, H.
- ZIMBLER, J.
- ZEISE, K.
- PARRONCHI, B.

### Basses

- GREENBERG, H.
- DUFRESNE, G.
- PORTNOI, H.
- GIRARD, H.
- FREEMAN, H.
- BARWICKI, J.

### Flutes

- LAURENT, G.
- PAPPOUTSAKIS, J.
- KAPLAN, P.

### Oboes

- HOLMES, J.
- DEVERGIE, J.
- LUFTSCHER, J.

### Piccolo

- MOLEUX, G.
- PAGE, W.
- MADSSEN, G.

### English Horn

- SPEYER, L.

### Horns

- VALENIER, W.
- MACDONALD, W.
- MEER, H.
- COWDEN, H.
- MC CONATHY, O.

### Trumpets

- MAGER, G.
- LAFOSS, M.
- VOISIN, R. L.
- VOISIN, R.
- HERFORTH, H.

### Tuba

- ADAM, E.

### Harps

- ZICHERA, B.
- CAUGHEY, E.

### Piano

- FOSS, L.

### Librarian

- STERNBURG, S.
- SMITH, C.
- ARCIERI, E.
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SIXTY-SIXTH SEASON, 1946–1947
CONCERT BULLETIN OF THE

Boston Symphony Orchestra

SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY, Conductor

Richard Burgin, Associate Conductor

with historical and descriptive notes by

John N. Burk

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FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS

The exhibition of flower arrangements which occupies the gallery this week is connected with the Judging School and sponsored by the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. The awards have been made by members of the Judging School and are in three classes: 1) line arrangement; 2) mass arrangement; 3) table arrangement.

OUR TUESDAY BROADCASTS

This season the radio sponsorship of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and its Saturday evening broadcasts have been discontinued. The loss of our sponsor is, needless to say, a serious financial setback. But the announcement of a new series of Tuesday evening broadcasts has been generally welcomed.

The Orchestra’s concerts will be heard on a national network of the American Broadcasting Company, on a sustaining basis, on Tuesdays from 9:30 to 10:30 E. S. T. This has been made possible by a transference of the shorter evening series in Symphony Hall from Mondays to Tuesdays, a similar change in the Cambridge series from Wednesdays to Tuesdays, and the broadcast of concerts on tour from Providence, New Haven, Pittsburgh, Detroit, New London, and Hartford. Tuesday evening Pop concerts, Esplanade concerts, and Berkshire Festival concerts will result in a season of forty broadcasts.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra will thus continue to serve its innumerable and widespread audience of the air waves. Many from this audience have expressed their satisfaction that symphonic music, heretofore concentrated
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The Boston Symphony Orchestra was the first major orchestra to be heard on the air. The Saturday concerts were broadcast from January 23, 1926, to the end of the season (WBZ). There were broadcasts by the National Broadcasting Company in the season of 1935-1936 of Saturday evening winter and Pop concerts, and, in 1936-1937, of a series of Thursday evening and occasional Friday afternoon concerts. There were likewise Pops and Esplanade broadcasts in 1938 by the Yankee Network. On December 26, 1942, the Boston Symphony Orchestra again went on the air on a sustaining basis by the Blue Network (the first part of each Saturday evening program). Beginning December 25, 1943, these concerts were sponsored by the Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company of Milwaukee. For the season 1945-1946 the hour was changed to include the second portion of the program. The sponsorship ended with the Berkshire Festival concert of August 10, 1946.

THE BOOK FAIR

The Boston Book Fair will be held at Symphony Hall on October 14, 15, 16, and 17. As in the past, there will be two sessions each day. The afternoon session will commence at 3:00 and the evening session will begin at 8:15. Doors will open at 1:30 and 7:00.

A new feature will be "The Street of Books." The "Street" will consist of simulated store windows representing the Cooperating Bookstores. In each window will be a display, planned and arranged by the bookstore concerned.

As before, there will be a display of the Thousand Best Books, wherein patrons will be able to browse through

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the best books that have been published in the last year. In addition, there will be exhibits of Cook Books, Music Books, Sports Books, Books of Hobbies, and many other interesting and informative displays.

Among the authors who will speak this year at the Book Fair will be Elliott Roosevelt, Russell Janney, James Montgomery Flagg, Odell and Willard Sheppard, Dr. Gordon Seagrave, Captain Ellis M. Zacharias, Monro Leaf, H. Allen Smith and many others.

Thursday afternoon will be devoted to the Children. There will be two sessions, one for younger children and the other for the teen-agers. Various juvenile authors and entertainers have been selected for this afternoon, and in addition, a 20 minute film, “Sinbad, the Coastguard Dog,” will be shown.

Thursday night will be Sports night, Neal O’Hara, the Traveler columnist, as chairman. Also on this program will be Sarah Palfrey, tennis champion, and Ed Zern, author of “To Hell with Hunting.” There will be a short mystery drama, a “Whodunit” in the flesh. The audience will see a “crime” committed and then will hear the solutions.

For art lovers there will be a showing of the 57th Annual American Exhibition of Water Colors and Drawings. This exhibit features several types of art such as Water Color, Gouache, Casein and Pen and Ink Washes. This exhibit is being furnished by the American Federation of Arts.

TUESDAY EVENING SERIES

The first of six concerts on Tuesday Evenings (at 8:30) by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky, will take place in Symphony Hall next Tuesday, October 8. The program will consist of Shostakovich — Symphony No. 9, Brahms — Symphony No. 3, and Strauss — “Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks.”
To a woman with an investment problem

There is no question about the ability of modern women to understand financial affairs quite as well as men. But the woman who manages her own investments faces a special problem in the constant advice that comes to her from well-meaning friends and relatives. As one woman wrote recently:

“This 'piecemeal' advice only confuses me. Some of it is contradictory. How can I be sure that my present securities are the best I could own? If they are good investments today, will they be just as good tomorrow? Where can I find reliable answers to all my questions?”

The fact is that a sound investment program cannot be built on haphazard advice. It should be based on a thorough study of the individual's resources and needs. The choice of investments should then be made by specialists who are guided by the findings of a balanced staff of experienced investment analysts.

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The woman who seeks investment advice is invited to consult Old Colony Trust Company for an explanation of the services we can render.
First Program

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, October 4, at 2:30 o'clock

SATURDAY EVENING, October 5, at 8:30 o'clock

SHOSTAKOVITCH . Symphony No. 9, Op. 70
  I. Allegro
  II. Moderato
  III. {Presto
  IV. {Largo
  V. {Allegretto
  (First performance in Boston)


INTERMISSION

BRAHMS . Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68
  I. Un poco sostenuto
  II. Andante sostenuto
  III. Un poco allegretto e grazioso
  IV. Adagio; allegro non troppo, ma con brio

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SYMPHONY NO. 9, Op. 70
By Dmitri Shostakovich

Born September 25, 1906, at St. Petersburg, Russia

Shostakovich completed his Ninth Symphony on August 30, 1945, at a Composers' Rest Home near Ivanovo. It was first performed in Leningrad by the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra on November 3. This was the opening concert of this orchestra's twenty-fifth season. Eugene Mravinsky conducted, and paired the new symphony with the Fifth by Tchaikovsky. The Ninth Symphony was repeated on the following night and has been elsewhere performed in Russia and broadcast by the Soviet Radio.

The first performance in America was at the opening Berkshire Festival concert by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, at Tanglewood, July 25, 1946.

The orchestra required is as follows: two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two trumpets, four horns, three trombones and tuba, timpani, triangle, bass drum, cymbals, military drum, tambourine, and strings.

Shostakovich composed his long awaited Ninth Symphony in the space of six weeks. He began it, therefore, after the war in Europe had ended, and completed it when the final victory in the East was the news of the moment. He played the symphony on the piano on September 3 to four listeners. One of these, by his own statement, was Robert Magidoff, correspondent of The New York Times; another
was Gregori Schneerson, correspondent of The Moscow News published in New York. This private performance was given in the study of Vladimir Vlasov, the director of the Moscow Philharmonic. Since D. Rabinovitch, reporting the first orchestral performance in The Moscow News, expressed his different impression as compared with the piano version, this critic was presumably the fourth.

The critics to whom the symphony was thus made known expected something different. The two symphonies previous, each lasting over an hour, were plainly concerned with the great cataclysm in which the Russian people were engaged. The composer had let it be known that these two were to be a part of a war trilogy, of which the third was to be a paean of victory. The symphony must therefore have been a complete surprise to those who first heard it. “It is the simplest piece the mature Shostakovich has ever written,” according to Mr. Magidoff, “also the gayest, most youthful, and most melodious. Practically everything Shostakovich has written in the last few years, especially during the war, borders on the tragic. The Ninth Symphony consists of five movements, and they all, except the fourth—a largo—are youthfully exuberant, possessed of a joyous abandon that seems ready to break out in uncontrollable torrents of sound...
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“Its spirit is probably best revealed in the concluding movement. Good-natured and gay, it rises in tempo until it ends in a burst of irrepressible merriment.

“When Shostakovich had finished playing, he rubbed his hands with satisfaction and said, completely without self-consciousness, ‘It is a merry little piece. Musicians will love to play it and critics will delight in blasting it.’”

Perhaps the composer looked for disapproval from the critics, who were certainly expecting the very opposite from what they were to hear. Sheer musical exuberance, unconnected with philosophical thought, unapplied to the destinies of a nation, may have taken the general Russian critical opinion, which has long been thinking and talking about new music as a faithful mirror of current national happenings and popular feelings. The composer himself has always accepted as natural this idea of musico-political oneness. His latest symphony, which did not come forth until after two discarded beginnings, may have led him to realize that the Muse does not always obey dictation from without or even the reasoned intentions of the composer himself.

Mr. Schneerson has described his impressions of the symphony as its composer had played it on the piano:

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"The opening bars of the First Movement (Allegro) transported us at once to a bright and pleasant world. There was joyous abandon, the warm pulsation of life and the exuberance of youth in those whimsical dance themes and rhythms.

"There was something about the classic purity of form, the dynamic development of the themes and the rich expressiveness emanating from a sheer pleasure in the interplay of sound images, that reminded us of Haydn. That was the first thought that occurred to all of us. Then came the unexpected twists in melody — the individuality in the harmony, abounding in sharp contrasts and combinations, and, finally, the ingeniousness and sheer virtuosity of the orchestration returned us to the present. And as the symphonic action developed, as the emotional tension heightened, the Haydn and Schubert associations grew gradually fainter until at last we came to the kernel of the music, to Shostakovich himself. Shostakovich — ever original, ever fresh, ever the clever, witty narrator, eager and sincere.

"The Second Movement (Moderato) introduces a new mood, one of warm and gentle lyricism faintly touched by wistful meditation.

"The Scherzo, built on the variational development of several dance melodies, by virtue of the brilliant dynamic exposition and intensity of feeling, is perhaps the culmination of the emotional content of the entire symphony. It is the music of radiant joy, an almost childlike abandon to happiness.

"The swift movement of the Scherzo is interrupted by a brief but extremely significant episode — Largo. This expressive dramatic recita-
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tive in the form of an agitated monologue on the past reminds us of some of the tragic passages in the First Movement of the Eighth Symphony. Here, it seems to me, was a key to an understanding of the single idea uniting the three parts of this symphonic trilogy. The Largo is the link that joins the separate parts in spite of stylistic differences of musical idiom and emotional content.

“The Finale scintillates with humor and inventiveness. Radiant in mood and simple in design, the theme passes through masterful elaboration until it reaches the whirlwind coda that completes the symphony. A brief upward scale . . . and the symphony is ended.”

Mr. Rabinovitch has confessed that the symphony took on for him a different character in the symphonic performance: “The symphony made a deep impression on all who heard it. As is usually the case with Shostakovich, the orchestral performance gave a somewhat different impression of the work as compared with the original piano performance. To begin with, the symphony is by no means as calm and serene as it was first thought to be. Its philosophical message sounds far more profound and dramatic, especially in the finale, and its link with the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies more intimate and direct. That the music carries some hint of emotions associated with the great Victory can scarcely be doubted. Nevertheless there is an imprint of tragedy in this intensely moving and at times soul-stirring music.”

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"At its first two performances," so Mr. Rabinovitch reports, "the last three movements were encored."

Interesting details about the circumstances of its composition are reported by Mr. Magidoff in his *Times* dispatch about the symphony:

"The classical associations which the symphony evokes are not accidental. Haydn played a definite part in the creation of the Ninth. Shostakovich must have felt a compelling necessity to be in communion with the classics during his work on the symphony, for, an excellent pianist, he kept playing them throughout the period of composition. There was a real festival of classical music in the rest home of the Soviet Composers Union near Ivanovo, where Shostakovich wrote the greater part of the Ninth. He and a fellow composer, Dmitri Kabalevsky, played Haydn every evening from 6 to 8 — sometimes as many as three of his symphonies. They also played Mozart and early works of Beethoven.

"Shostakovich seems to have had trouble with the first movement of the Ninth, completing it after six weeks, which was an unusually long time for him; but he found his stride in writing the second movement, which took him but one week. The third took eight days, while the fourth and fifth absorbed five days' work each. Aside from creative and psychological reasons, the slowness with which the allegro was written is accounted for to a large degree by the fact that Shostakovich was at the time busy with state examinations in the Moscow Conservatory, where he is Professor of Composition, while the moderato was created

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“One Soviet critic is of the opinion that the Ninth is the concluding part of a symphonic trilogy begun by the Seventh. Another insists that the Ninth is simply a bridge linking the tragic Eighth and a forthcoming ‘real’ Victory symphony. I asked Shostakovich about it and he admitted that the Ninth was written after three attempts, but he has not abandoned the idea of returning to the first two versions for later works. This is most unusual for Shostakovich, who never rewrites his pieces and rarely makes even the slightest alterations.

“The composer’s wife, Nina Vasilyevna, says Shostakovich never jots down preliminary sketches. ‘He always knows exactly what he wants and practically never touches his compositions after putting them down on paper.’ Examining the original score of the Ninth I found only two brief episodes crossed out and rewritten.”

The following analysis was made by Daniel Zhitomirsky, who lived with the composer and watched the growth of the score:

The Ninth opens with an Allegro of Haydn-like simplicity with a fair share of slyness and subtle irony. Shostakovich revives in its very essence that spirit of unrestrained and bubbling mirth which lived in classical Allegros up to Rossini’s overtures. The peculiar “classicism” of this music is ultra-modern. The first theme—as is often the case with early classics—glides effortlessly and imperceptibly not so much

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as an individual melody but rather as a kind of animated motion. Elements of buffoonery appear in the subordinate theme. A naïve and simple formula of accompaniment dashes in; a pert but not ungraceful song appears against this background. The headlong fascination of movement grows uninterruptedly in the elaboration. The composer cleverly handles various shades of the comedy aspect. One of these, embodied in a new variation of the familiar subordinate theme, is particularly expressive.

The second movement (Moderato) reveals the world of bright and romantic lyricism. The main theme is songful and is of romance-like nature (remotely reminding one of Katherine’s romances from “Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk”), and at the same time refined and whimsical in its outline. The texture of this piece is of captivating lucidity; it is a fine, almost incorporeal “pattern on glass” as if radiating peculiar chaste beauty.

The third movement is a precipitous scherzo (Presto). Its music rushes past one like a gust of wind with piercingly whistling upflights and downsweps. The theme of the scherzo, or rather the pattern of its first bars, is the embryo out of which uninterrupted movement grows and develops. The theme of the middle section of the scherzo, with its stressed theatrical pathos verging between serious romantic agitation and irony, is poignantly relieved and expressive.

The fourth movement (Largo) was conceived as a contrasting intermezzo between the scherzo and the finale. It consists almost entirely
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of a large bassoon solo of an improvisational character against the background of sustained chords. This is moment of deep concentrated-ness. It is important not only by itself but as a certain lyricophilosophical commentary to the whole work, stressing the precious human sources of all this light and unrestrained flow of music.

The finale (Allegretto) in its spirit is akin to the first movement but it has more of buffoonery than of spontaneous gaiety. There is in the main theme of the finale both the classical naïveté and extravaganza of variety-stage dance. The development of the finale overflows with vigor and abounds in brilliant comedy touches; a short Coda brings this merry theatrical “run” to top speed.

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Scriabin completed his "Poem of Ecstasy" in 1907. It was published in January, 1908, and first performed near the end of that year in St. Petersburg under the direction of Hugo Wahrlich. Shortly afterwards (December 10), Modest Altschuler, conducting the Russian Symphony Society in New York, gave the first American performance. The first performance in Boston was by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, October 22, 1910; there were repetitions on October 19, 1917, October 22, 1920, October 10, 1924, January 21, 1927, November 9, 1928, January 29, 1932, October 6, 1933, October 25, 1935, and January 27, 1939.

The poem is scored for wood winds in threes, with the addition of piccolo, English horn, bass clarinet and double-bassoon. The brass requires eight horns, five trumpets, three trombones and tuba. The percussion: timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tam-tam, bells, celesta; also two harps, and organ. The strings are much divided, and there are recurring passages for violin solo.

The contemporaries of Scriabin, including many of his sincere friends, found it easy to smile at the various professions of faith which he made from time to time, creeds which made up in ardor and solemn expostulation what they may have lacked in consistency.
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or thoroughness and clarity of thought. It has been pointed out that he chose from the Nietzschean philosophy no more than appealed to him in the concept of the Übermensch as a glorification of the ego. That the “socialism” of this individualist, who expected of life complete leisure for his dreamings, the luxury of ease and delight of the senses, constant financial patronage, got little further in practice than that he propped the heavy volume of Marx’s “Das Kapital” on his frail knees and turned the pages as he basked in the sunshine of a semi-tropical Italian garden. That, speaking darkly for years of a great “mystery” in tones, which he was planning, he thought intensively of India, but got no farther toward the Orient than purchasing a Sanskrit grammar and a sun helmet in London, and making inquiries at a travel agency.

Scriabin may have been no more than a dabbler in theosophy, or pantheism, or mysticism. The more important fact would seem to be that beyond affording him a vent for vaporous abstractions (which with many people are the beginning and end of religion), they bore fruit in music which has survived. No one can say to what extent his spiritual migrations may have inspired or conditioned the music. Scriabin has been set up as a pure classicist, for the reason that his

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works possess orthodox form, and the words attached to them have been called too abstract to bring him under the head of a composer of programme music. Yet it can be rightly questioned whether "The Divine Poem," or "The Poem of Ecstasy," or "Prometheus" can be listened to with requisite sympathy and understanding if the composer's creed of "esthetic ecstasy" were entirely disregarded.*

In 1903, Scriabin resigned from the Moscow Conservatory to give his life to his creative work. His remaining years were punctuated with numerous tours, in which his abilities as pianist did much towards engendering an acceptance of his musical creed in a somewhat reluctant world (these tours took him to the United States in December, 1906, along the Volga with Serge Koussevitzky in the summers of 1910 and 1911, to England in the spring of 1914). Scriabin nevertheless found time and leisure for composition, for the most part in Switzerland. He would spend winter months at the house of his father in Lausanne, and summer months (no less productive) at St. Beatenberg, also on the shores of Lake Geneva. There, in the summer of 1903, having just cast off the onerous burden of teaching,

* Scriabin once said to Leonid Sabaniev, according to the present testimony of his friend: "To be regarded merely as a musician would be the worst fate that could befall me. . . . It would be terrible to remain nothing more than a composer of sonatas and symphonies."
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he wrote his "Divine Poem," and in Switzerland also, in 1907, he completed "The Poem of Ecstasy."

Scriabin often worked out his more ambitious scores by degrees, carrying them about with him, playing them on the piano and expounding them to all who would listen. "The Poem of Ecstasy" was no exception. He began it, according to Gerald Abraham, in a little villa at Bogliasco, near Genoa, Italy, where he sought solitude for ten months from June, 1905, with Tatiana Schloezer, the artistic companion and lover with whom he then fled from the world's scrutiny, having shortly before left his wife. Their garden was luxuriant with "oranges, pines, and cacti"; the prospect of the Mediterranean was fine. The heat was intense, but the composer welcomed it, "sunning himself through even the hottest hours of the day, occasionally working, but more often surrendering himself to blissful indolence."

Wishing to bring the growing score to concrete sound, Scriabin had nothing but an upright piano, out of tune, which he had found in a near-by café.

Returning to Switzerland in February, 1906, Scriabin found himself without a publisher, Belaiev, his former benefactor, having died. Friends of his wife, including the conductor Savonov, once propa-

* "Masters of Russian Music," by M. D. Calvocoressi and Gerald Abraham. Mr. Abraham's chapter on Scriabin is largely derived from the first-hand accounts of Y. D. Engel and Leonid Sabaniev, hitherto unpublished in English.

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gandist of his music, had turned away from him. In Moscow, the heaping of scandal upon eccentricity led to wild rumors. It was whispered that he was going to build a globular temple in India, that he was plotting the end of the world; in short, that he was mad. Scriabin heard of a conductor in New York named Modest Altschuler who had an orchestra and was receptive to new Russian music. The composer wrote to him and at once received an urgent invitation that he should come to America with his orchestral scores, prepared to give recitals and appear in his concerto. Scriabin did so, and gave recitals in New York, Chicago, and Detroit, listened to his "Divine Poem," as presented by Altschuler. When Tatiana Fedorovna joined him in the following month (January, 1907), Savonov, then conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, resolutely closed those concerts to him and his music. The "social hypocrisy of the Americans," in the words of Y. D. Engel, was so aroused that Scriabin and Tatiana had to flee the country in haste, and just managed to reach Paris in March in a quite penniless condition.

At this point the fortunes of Scriabin turned in his favor. Diaghilev presently organized a Festival of Russian music in Paris at which (in May) Nikisch conducted his Second Symphony and Josef Hofmann played some of his piano pieces. A number of Russian musicians were congregated there, and Scriabin exhibited the still uncompleted

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"Poème de l’Extase" to them, first reading the explanatory poem, and then playing it on the piano, Tatiana aiding him in passages where two hands could not negotiate the voices. The audience consisted of Rimsky-Korsakov and his family, Glazounov, Rachmaninoff, Morozova (Scriabin’s generous benefactor), Josef Hofmann and others.

Scriabin’s piano music, which he also played, was generally approved by this gathering; the “Poème de l’Extase” generally condemned. Rimsky-Korsakov, so his son has reported, found in Scriabin “an unhealthy eroticism,” and remarked, “He’s half out of his mind already.” The members of the board of the Belaiev publishing firm who were present showed their broadmindedness by offering to publish the score when completed. They were as good as their word, and even awarded it the second “Glinka Prize,” the first going to Rachmaninoff’s Symphony in E minor.

Scriabin was visited in Beatenberg, Switzerland, that summer by Altschuler, who made suggestions as to its instrumentation and pressed Scriabin to complete it in time for the coming season in New York. The final revision and copying was made at Lausanne in three weeks of almost ceaseless work by both Scriabin and Tatiana. Even so, it was not ready for performance in New York that season. The Belaiev firm published it in January 1908. It was first performed in St. Petersburg late in the same year, by Hugo Wahrlich, and introduced in New York by Altschuler on December 10, 1908.

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It was in the spring of 1908 that Serge Koussevitzky visited Scriabin at Lausanne. In his new friend Scriabin was to find a publisher, an adviser, and a zealous conductor combined. Scriabin returned to Moscow, where objections to his personal life were soon drowned out as a mania for his music arose. Early in 1909 "The Poem of Ecstasy" and other works were performed by the Russian Musical Society under Emil Cooper, at the Russian Symphony Concerts in St. Petersburg under Felix Blumenfeld. It was also performed at the Koussevitzky concerts in Moscow and on tour in 1910 with attendant sensations. Engel has described the Blumenfeld concert, which was the first in order. "Practically every musician in Moscow was present at these rehearsals," says Engel, "many with Scriabin's scores. . . . It is difficult to describe the excitement which reigned. Perfect strangers who happened to get into conversation quarreled warmly or shook each other's hands in delight; sometimes there were even more unrestrained scenes of agitation and enthusiasm." Sabaniev provides a description of the composer himself as he first heard in full performance the music he had for years been worrying out in a piano version. "During the performance Scriabin was nervous; sometimes he would suddenly raise himself a little, make an involuntary movement of joy, then sit down again. His face was very young considering his real age . . . but he was as mercurial as a boy and there was

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something childlike in the expression of his mustached physiognomy. I noticed that while listening to his music, he sometimes lowered his face rather strangely, his eyes closed and his appearance expressed an almost physiological enjoyment; then he would open his eyes and look upwards as if wishing to fly; but in tense moments of the music he breathed violently and nervously, sometimes gripping his chair with both hands. I have seldom seen a composer’s face and figure so mobile while listening to his own music; it was as if he could not constrain himself to conceal the profound experiences he derived from it.”

“The Poem of Ecstasy” is planned, as Mr. Hall points out, in the composer’s favorite scheme of a prologue (andante, lento), containing the two leading motives, a section in the sonata form proper (the exposition at allegro volando, the development at allegro, the recapitulation at allegro volando). Finally, the coda, allegro molto.

“The basic idea of this the fourth chief orchestral work of Scriabin is the Ecstasy of untrammelled action, the Joy in Creative Activity. The Prologue contains the following two motives, which may be said to symbolise: (a) human striving after the ideal; (b) the Ego Theme gradually realizing itself. The Sonata-form proper starts with a subject, symbolic of the soaring flight of the spirit. The leading motives of the Prologue are almost immediately brought into conjunction with it.
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"The second subject, *lento*, is of a dual character, the higher theme on a violin solo being marked *'carezzando,'* and apparently typifying Human Love, whilst the lower theme is marked *serioso.* The third subject then enters, an imperious trumpet theme summoning the Will to rise up. The creative force appears in rising sequences of fourths, having a close affinity to the corresponding theme in 'Prometheus.' The themes grow in force and pass through moods of almost kaleidoscopic duration — at times spending dreamy moments of delicious charm and perfume, occasionally rising to climaxes of almost hilarious pleasure; at other moments experiencing violent stormy emotions and tragic cataclysms. In the development we pass through moments of great stress, and only achieve brief snatches of the happier mood. Defiant phrases cut right down across the calmer motives, the second of which appears in full as a prologue to the recapitulation section.

The three subjects are repeated in full, followed by moods of the utmost charm, and pleasurable feelings becoming more and more ecstatic, even *scherzando,* at length reaching an *allegro molto* coda of the swiftest and lightest flight imaginable. The trumpet subject becomes broader, and assumes great majesty, until it finally unrolls itself in a rugged and diatonic epilogue of immense power and triumphant grandeur.

"The harmonic system of this work may be said to be on the borderline between the first period of the composer's harmonic technique and his final one. The newer harmony is not continuous, but is here used in conjunction or rather in alternation with the old. The coda
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is almost (not quite) old-fashioned in its broad diatonic style, being completely devoid of chromaticism. The composition serves as an excellent illustration of the manner in which Scriabin’s more advanced harmony sprang logically and evolved gradually from the older method.

“We have attempted a psychological explanation of the music — an almost unavoidable course, seeing that it is outlined in the composer’s French indications, and that he pursues the same methods, the very same moods, occasionally even the same melodic subject (cf. the trumpet theme with that in Prometheus), as he does in his other symphonic works. But Scriabin, notwithstanding all his explainers and annotators (blessed word!), is the champion of absolute music — music pure and simple — read what you like into it. As Schumann says, ‘Intelligence may err; but sensibility cannot.’

“We have then in this imposing symphonic creation a piece of wonderful beauty, full of rich themes, well developed and combined, with masterly counterpoint and modern harmony of a hue of which the like has not been heard before. It is musically logical, full of contrast, design, and colour. At times the texture is quite simple; at other moments of great complexity. Altogether it is a work of great originality and high poesy.”

Scriabin wrote a poem in Russian for this work, which was translated by Mrs. Lydia L. Pimenov-Noble for the Boston Symphony pro-
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gramme book of October 22, 1910. It tells of the Spirit's thirst for life, of his reaching for the fullest "bliss of love." Exhausted, he rises again, with a new "premonition," a new consciousness of the "divine force of his will." The Spirit descends once more to comprehend "the mystery of the depths of evil"; at last the height is attained:

"The Spirit comprehends himself
In the power of will
Alone, free.
Ever-creating,
All irradiating,
All vivifying.
Divinely playing,
In the multiplicity of forms.
He comprehends himself
In the thrill of life,
In the desire for blossoming,
In the love-struggle.
The Spirit playing,
The Spirit flitting,
With eternal aspiration
Creating ecstasy,
Surrenders to the bliss of love.
Amid the flowers of his creations
He lingers in freedom."

"The Spirit is at the height of being.
And he feels
The tide unending
Of the divine power,
Of free will.
He is all-daring,
What menaced —
Now is excitement,
What terrified
Is now delight;
And the bites of panthers and hyenas
have become
But a new caress,
A new pang,
And the sting of the serpent
But a burning kiss.
And the universe resounded
With a joyful cry,
'I am.'"
Bach, C. P. E. .. Concerto for Orchestra in D major
Bach, J. S. .. Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 3 and 4
Beethoven .. Symphonies, “2 and 8; Missa Solemnis
Berlioz .. Symphony, “Harold in Italy” (Primrose)
           Three Pieces, “Damnation of Faust”, Overture, “The Roman Carnival”
Brahms .. Symphonies Nos. 3, 4
          Violin Concerto (Heifetz)
Copland .. “El Salón México,” “Appalachian Spring”
Debussy .. “La Mer,” Sarabande
Fauré .. “Pelléas et Mélisande,” Suite
Foote .. Suite for Strings
Grieg .. “The Last Spring”
Handel .. Larghetto (Concerto No. 12), Air from “Semele”
          (Dorothy Maynor)
Harris .. Symphony No. 3
Haydn .. Symphonies Nos. 94 (“Surprise”); 102 (B-flat)
Liadov .. “The Enchanted Lake”
Liszt .. Mephisto Waltz
Mendelssohn .. Symphony No. 4 (“Italian”)
Moussorgsky .. “Pictures at an Exhibition”
           Prelude to “Khovanschchina”
Mozart .. Symphonies in A major (201); C major (338), Air of Pamina, from “The Magic Flute”
          (Dorothy Maynor)
Prokofieff .. Classical Symphony; Violin Concerto No. 2 (Heifetz);
          “Lieutenant Kijé,” Suite; “Love for Three Oranges,”
           Scherzo and March; “Peter and the Wolf”
Rachmaninoff .. Isle of the Dead”; “Vocalise”
Ravel .. “Daphnis and Chloé,” Suite No. 2 (new recording)
Rimsky-Korsakov .. “The Battle of Kerjennetz”; Dubinushka
Schubert .. “Unfinished” Symphony (new recording); “Rosamunde,” Ballet Music
Schumann .. Symphony No. 1 (“Spring”)
Sibelius .. Symphonies Nos. 2 and 5; “Pohjola’s Daughter”;
           “Tapiola”; “Maiden with Roses”
Strauss, J. .. Waltzes: “Voices of Spring,” “Vienna Blood”
Strauss, R. .. “Also Sprach Zarathustra”
           “Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks”
Stravinsky .. Capriccio (Sanromá); Song of the Volga Baraemen
           (arrangement)
Tchaikovsky .. Symphonies Nos. 4, 6; Waltz (from String Serenade);
           Overture “Romeo and Juliet”
Thompson .. “The Testament of Freedom”
Vivaldi .. Concerto Grosso in D minor
SYMPHONY IN G MINOR, NO. 1, Op. 68
By Johannes Brahms
Born at Hamburg, May 7, 1833; died at Vienna, April 3, 1897

The First Symphony of Brahms had its initial performance November 4, 1876, at Carlsruhe, Otto Dessoff conducting.

The first performance by the Boston Symphony Orchestra was December 9, 1881. The most recent performances in the Friday–Saturday series were January 18–19, 1946, Sir Adrian Boult conducting.

The symphony is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contra-bassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings. The trombones are used only in the finale.

The known fact that Brahms made his first sketches for the symphony under the powerful impression of Beethoven's Ninth, which he had heard in Cologne for the first time in 1854, may have led his contemporaries to preconceive comparisons between the two. Walter Niemann, not without justice, finds a kinship between the First Symphony and Beethoven's Fifth through their common tonality of C minor, which, says Niemann, meant to Brahms "hard, pitiless struggle, daemonic, supernatural shapes, sinister defiance, steely energy, dramatic intensity of passion, darkly fantastic, grisly humor." He calls it "Brahms' Pathetic Symphony."
The dark and sinister side of the C minor Symphony seems to have taken an unwarranted hold on the general consciousness when it was new. For a long while controversy about its essential character waxed hot after every performance. W. F. Apthorp bespoke one faction when he wrote in 1878 of the First Symphony that it “sounds for the most part morbid, strained and unnatural; most of it even ugly.” Philip Hale, following this school of opinion, some years later indulged in a symbolic word picture, likening the symphony to a “dark forest” where “it seems that obscene, winged things listen and mock the lost.” But Philip Hale perforce greatly modified his dislike of the music of Brahms as with the passage of years its oppressive aspects were somehow found no longer to exist.

Instead of these not always helpful fantasies of earlier writers or a technical analysis of so familiar a subject, let us turn to the characteristic description by Lawrence Gilman, the musician who, when he touched upon the finer things in his art, could always be counted upon to impart his enthusiasm with apt imagery and quotation:

The momentous opening of the Symphony (the beginning of an introduction of thirty-seven measures, Un poco sostenuto, 6-8) is one of the great exordiums of music—a majestic upward sweep of the strings against the phrase in contrary motion for the wind, with the

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basses and timpani reiterating a somberly persistent C. The following Allegro is among the most powerful of Brahms' symphonic movements.

In the deeply probing slow movement we get the Brahms who is perhaps most to be treasured: the musical poet of long vistas and grave meditations. How richly individual in feeling and expression is the whole of this Andante sostenuto! No one but Brahms could have extracted the precise quality of emotion which issues from the simple and heartfelt theme for the strings, horns, and bassoon in the opening pages; and the lovely complement for the oboe is inimitable—a melodic invention of such enamouring beauty that it has lured an unchallengeably sober commentator into conferring upon it the attribute of "sublimity." Though perhaps "sublimity"—a shy bird, even on Olympus—is to be found not here, but elsewhere in this symphony.

The third movement (the Poco allegretto e grazioso which takes the place of the customary Scherzo) is beguiling in its own special loveliness; but the chief glory of the symphony is the Finale.

Here—if need be—is an appropriate resting-place for that diffident eagle among epithets, sublimity. Here there are space and air and light to tempt its wings. The wonderful C major song of the horn in the slow introduction of this movement (Più Andante, 4-4), heard through a vaporous tremolo of the muted strings above softly held trombone chords, persuaded William Foster Apthorp that the episode was suggested to Brahms by "the tones of the Alpine horn, as it awakens the echoes from mountain after mountain on some of
the high passes in the Bernese Oberland." This passage is interrupted by a foreshadowing of the majestic chorale-like phrase for the trombones and bassoons which later, when it returns at the climax of the movement, takes the breath with its startling grandeur. And then comes the chief theme of the Allegro — that spacious and heartening melody which sweeps us onward to the culminating moment in the Finale: the apocalyptic vision of the chorale in the coda, which may recall to some the exalted prophecy of Jean Paul: "There will come a time when it shall be light; and when man shall awaken from his lofty dreams, and find his dreams still there, and that nothing has gone save his sleep."

Not until he was forty-three did Brahms present his First Symphony to the world. His friends had long looked to him expectantly to carry on this particular glorious German tradition. As early as 1854 Schumann, who had staked his strongest prophecies on Brahms' future, wrote to Joachim: "But where is Johannes? Is he flying high, or only under the flowers? Is he not yet ready to let drums and trumpets sound? He should always keep in mind the beginning of the Beethoven symphonies: he should try to make something like them. The beginning is the main thing; if only one makes a beginning, then the end comes of itself." Schumann, that shrewd observer, knew that the brief beginnings of Brahms were apt to germinate, to expand, to lead him
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to great ends. Also, that Beethoven, symphonically speaking, would be his point of departure.

To write a symphony after Beethoven was "no laughing matter;" Brahms once wrote, and after sketching a first movement he admitted to Hermann Levi — "I shall never compose a symphony! You have no conception of how the likes of us feel when we hear the tramp of a giant like him behind us."

To study Brahms is to know that this hesitancy was not prompted by any craven fear of the hostile pens which were surely lying in wait for such an event as a symphony from the newly vaunted apostle of classicism. Brahms approached the symphony (and the concerto too) slowly and soberly; no composer was ever more scrupulous in the commitment of his musical thoughts to paper. He proceeded with elaborate examination of his technical equipment, with spiritual self-questioning, and with unbounded ambition. The result — after a period of fourteen years between the first sketch and the completed manuscript — was a score which, in proud and imposing independence, in advance upon all precedent, has absolutely no rival among the first-born symphonies, before or since.

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When it comes to what is called interpretation, he is still unsurpassed. . . . The air was tense with excitement.—WARREN STORKEY SMITH.
He is never less than an artist, a musician, an interpreter of poetry.—OLIN DOWNES.
His first attempt at a symphony, made at the age of twenty, was diverted in its aim, the first two movements eventually becoming the basis of his piano concerto No. 1, in D minor. He sketched another first movement at about the same time (1854), but it lay in his desk for years before he felt ready to take the momentous plunge. "For about fourteen years before the work appeared," writes D. Millar Craig,* "It was an open secret among Brahms' best friends that his first symphony was practically complete. Professor Lipsius of Leipzig University, who knew Brahms well and had often entertained him, told me that from 1862 onwards, Brahms almost literally carried the manuscript score about with him in his pocket, hesitating to have it made public. Joachim and Frau Schumann, among others, knew that the symphony was finished, or at all events practically finished, and urged Brahms over and over again to let it be heard. But not until 1876 could his diffidence about it be overcome."

It would be interesting to follow the progress of the sketches. We know from Madame Schumann that she found the opening, as originally submitted to her, a little bold and harsh, and that Brahms accordingly put in some softening touches. "It was at Munster am Stein," (1862) says Albert Dietrich, "that Brahms showed me the first move-

* British Broadcasting Corporation Orchestra programme notes.
ment of his symphony in C minor, which, however, only appeared much later, and with considerable alterations.”

At length (November 4, 1876), Brahms yielded his manuscript to Otto Dessoff for performance at Carlsruhe. He himself conducted it at Mannheim, a few days later, and shortly afterward at Vienna, Leipzig, and Breslau. Brahms may have chosen Carlsruhe in order that so crucial an event as the first performance of his first symphony might have the favorable setting of a small community, well sprinkled with friends, and long nurtured in the Brahms cause. “A little town,” he called it, “that holds a good friend, a good conductor, and a good orchestra.” Brahms’ private opinion of Dessoff, as we now know, was none too high. But Dessoff was valuable as a propagandist. He had sworn allegiance to the Brahms colors by resigning from his post as conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic because Brahms’ Serenade in A major was refused. A few years before Dessoff at Carlsruhe, there had been Hermann Levi, who had dutifully implanted Brahms in the public consciousness. Carlsruhe very likely felt honored by the distinction conferred upon
them — and in equal degree puzzled by the symphony itself. There was no abundance of enthusiasm at these early performances, although Carlsruhe, Mannheim and Breslau were markedly friendly. The symphony seemed formidable at the first hearing, and incomprehensible — even to those favored friends who had been allowed an advance acquaintance with the manuscript score, or a private reading as piano duet, such as Brahms and Ignatz Brüll gave at the home of Friedrich Ehrbar in Vienna. Even Florence May wrote of the “clashing dissonances of the first introduction.” Respect and admiration the symphony won everywhere. It was apprehended in advance that when the composer of the Deutsches Requiem at last fulfilled the prophecies of Schumann and gave forth a symphony, it would be a score to be reckoned with. No doubt the true grandeur of the music, now so patent to everyone as by no means formidable, would have been generally grasped far sooner, had not the Brahmsians and the neo-Germans immediately raised a cloud of dust and kept their futile controversy raging for years.

The First Symphony soon made the rounds of Germany, enjoying a particular success in Berlin, under Joachim (November 11, 1877). In March of the succeeding year it was also heard in Switzerland and Holland. The manuscript was carried to England by Joachim for a performance in Cambridge, and another in London in April, each much

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applauded. The first performance in Boston took place January 3, 1878, under Carl Zerrahn and the Harvard Musical Association. When the critics called it "morbid," "strained," "unnatural," "coldly elaborated," "depressing and unedifying," Zerrahn, who like others of his time knew the spirit of battle, at once announced a second performance for January 31. Sir George Henschel, an intrepid friend of Brahms, performed the C minor Symphony, with other works of the composer, in this orchestra's first year.

Still more ink has been expended on a similarity admitted even by Florence May between the expansive and joyous C major melody sung by the strings in the Finale, and the theme of the Hymn to Joy in Beethoven's Ninth. The enemy of course raised the cry of "plagiarism." But a close comparison of the two themes shows them quite different in contour. Each has a diatonic, Volkslied character, and each is introduced with a sudden radiant emergence. The true resemblance between the two composers might rather lie in this, that here, as patiently as anywhere, Brahms has caught Beethoven's faculty of soaring to great heights upon a theme so naively simple that, shorn of its associations, it would be about as significant as a subject for a musical primer. Beethoven often, and Brahms at his occasional best, could lift such a theme, by some strange power which entirely eludes analysis, to a degree of nobility and melodic beauty which gives it the unmistakable aspect of immortality.

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  I. Allegro vivace
  II. Andante con moto
  III. Con moto moderato
  IV. Saltarello: Presto

INTERMISSION

Bruckner. . . . . . . . . . . . Symphony No. 8 in C minor
  I. Allegro moderato
  II. Scherzo (Allegro — Andante — Allegro — Moderato)
  III. Adagio
  IV. Feierlich (nicht schnell)

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