

DOUGLAS MOORE:
SYMPHONY IN A MAJOR

1. Andante con moto; Allegro giusto
2. Andante quieto semplice
3. Allegretto
4. Allegro con spirito

Japan Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra
William Strickland, conducting

DOUGLAS MOORE, according to an official biographical sketch, made his debut as a “composer and conductor with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra” in 1923— some thirty years after his birth in Cutchogue, N.Y. The statement of a simple fact, then—that his prestige as a composer has never been higher than it is in this particular year of 1960—is perhaps not nearly so much *remarkable* as it is encouraging for those dare-devil temperaments that —young or even not so terribly young—would, or have already undertaken a career in serious musical composition.

For Dr. Moore, whose first study of music took place at Brooklyn’s Hotchkiss School and was then progressed by the counsels of Horatio Parker, at Yale; Vincent D’Indy at Paris’s *Schola Cantorum*; Ernest Bloch in Cleveland and Nadia Boulanger in Paris, has been a persistently popular, steadily performed member of the composing fraternity for what comes down to a substantial majority of those years that have witnessed the development of American musical composition as an organized creative movement.

During these years, Douglas Moore—a member of the music faculty of Columbia University since 1926—has, of course, had ample occasion to observe the comings and goings of fads, important trends, not-so-important innovations—in short, the history of the modern musical movement. Through it all, he has stood both by and for musical “progress”; but, through it all, he has stood by and for the ideals of the persuasive, modest, thoroughly vital combination of post-romantically inclined Americana that is his trademark and reputation as a composer.

Two operas—*The Devil and Daniel Webster* and *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, the latter especially—have, through their enthusiastic reception by public and press, brought Dr. Moore to the front of the American creative scene in its developing preoccupation for an indigenous lyric theatre.

The vital admixture of musical humanism, enlightened conservatism and masterful craft that make *The Ballad of Baby Doe* a landmark in our discovery of the *nature* of our serious, lyric theatre, are abundant in Douglas Moore’s *Symphony in A Major*, which was composed in 1945. The symphony, a four movement work of modest length, is dedicated to the memory of Stephen Vincent Benet—whose work provided the literary substance for Dr. Moore’s *The Devil and Daniel Webster*.

The A Major Symphony is, in its course, warmed by stylistic reference to folk music that is refreshingly free of opportunism; animated by a jazz connotation that is free of nineteen-twenties chi-chi. The music is, at the same time, unharrassed by harmonic “vogue” or the attempt to let us in on what is—or, in 1945, was—the “latest thing.”

Workmanship, skill and the mastery of musical techniques pervade, however: As functional means to the expression of Dr. Moore’s musical sentiments.

JULIA PERRY:

STABAT MATER

Japan Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra

William Strickland, conducting

Makiko Asakura, *mezzo-soprano*

ASK a contemporary music enthusiast—one really in the know—for the names of five younger American composers of the fair sex, and the chances are he will hit upon the name of Julia Perry. Miss Perry, who studied voice, piano and composition at the Westminster Choir College, came to prominence as a result of a scholarship to the Berkshire Music Center in 1951, where she was a student of Luigi Dallapiccola. She later went to Florence to continue her studies with the Italian composer and proceeded thereafter to France to study with Nadia Boulanger. During her European stay, Miss Perry lectured for the United States Information Service and planned and conducted a series of concerts that were acclaimed by both public and press.

Miss Perry's *Stabat Mater*, composed in 1951 and dedicated to the composer's mother, was the piece that launched her career; it has since been widely performed in both Europe and the United States. Composed for contralto voice and string orchestra, after the Latin poem by Jacopone da Todi in a translation by the composer, *Stabat Mater*, according to its composer, "consists of three characters—Jesus, Mary and the spectator. In the first half of the drama the spectator stands apart regarding the awesome sight. In the second half, wishing to share the burden, he expresses his desire in the words "fac ne cruce custodire."

The *Stabat Mater* is divided into ten sections. The vocal conception, although dramatic onto quasi-operatic in conception, is grateful, properly lyrical and quite as stunning as the wide performance and legendary fame of the work itself.

Notes by William Flanagan

LIKE the renowned Leopold Stokowski, his predecessor at St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City, William Strickland's professional beginnings are rooted in the music of the church and especially the organ. His artistic growth has paralleled Stokowski's further in the manner in which he has devoted most of his mature musical life to the commissioning and performance of contemporary music. Strickland's work with the venerable New York Oratorio Society has brought him considerable recognition as a choral conductor, in addition to which he has served as founder-director of the NYA Little Orchestra, conductor of the Nashville Symphony and has "guested" extensively throughout Germany and Austria. At present he is appearing with several of the outstanding orchestras in the Far East.

IT is not difficult to find singers who are willing to present contemporary music as a part of their recitals. Their reason for doing this is frequently to perform music that is sufficiently unknown to the bulk of their audience, hence leaving themselves less open to unfavorable comparisons and criticism. In Makiko Asakura, however, we find a singer of great artistic, vocal and musical stature, who has devoted herself to the performance of today's vocal repertoire mainly because she enjoys it. A graduate of the former Tokyo School of Music, she was a student of Nobuko Hara, at that institution. Since her graduation, she has been an active recitalist and performer in the lyric theatre, having sung, among other works, the Japanese premieres of the Schoenberg String Quartet No. 2 with Soprano, Barber's *Dover Beach*, Malipiero's *Four Ancient Songs* and, in 1954, *The Rape of Lucretia* by Benjamin Britten. Since 1955, she has appeared with Japan's leading orchestras and several times as guest vocalist in a series of concerts entitled *Let's Listen to Contemporary Music* presented by the Rameau Chamber Music Society.

WITH a population slightly greater than that of New York City, Tokyo, Japan boasts of five major symphony orchestras as well as a number of lesser groups: amateur and institutional. The newest of these, the Japan Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, founded by its permanent conductor Akeo Watanabe and Shigeo Mizuno, Director of the Nihon Cultural Broadcasting System, Inc., has made substantial strides during its three years of existence in becoming one of the world's outstanding orchestras. The number of first performances already presented by this group is quite remarkable. In addition to its commission program for works by Japanese composers, the Japan Philharmonic has introduced to its public a steadily increasing number of works both foreign and Japanese, classical and contemporary.

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