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Wilfred Adler in a Guest Artist

Wilfred Adler

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OUACHITA BAPTIST COLLEGE

Division of Fine Arts

Guest Artist

WILFRED ADLER, Pianist

Monday   February 18, 1963   8:00 p.m.

Mitchell Hall

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Partita No. 5 ——————————————————————————— Bach
    Praeambulum
    Allemande
    Corrente
    Sarabande
    Minuetto
    Passepied
    Gigue

Fantasy No. 4 (K-475) ————————————————— Mozart

Ballade in G minor ————————————————— Chopin

Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs ———— Bartok

Sonetto 123 Del Petrarca ————————————— Liszt

Islamey (Oriental Fantasy) ————————— Balakirew

Program Notes

I. The Partita was a basic form. Originally it was used interchangeably with suite. In every era musical composition there are basic froms that encompass the needs of the creative composer to build in length. For Bach, a Partita was a composition of numerous movements, each of which bore direct resemblance to the rhythmic structure of the dance. Every Partita has one central compositional idea that is expressed in varied ways throughout the piece. To hear this central idea and follow its exposure is the exciting adventure of discovery in knowing a Partita.

II. The Fantasy contains 5 sections: Adagio, Allegro, Andantino, Piu Allegro and Tempo I. Again, Mozart shows his ability and love for opera, only this time through the medium of the piano. The dialogue is quite apparent.

III. The G minor Ballade is the first of four Ballades composed by Chopin. Frederick Niecks, the great biographer of Chopin, says that in the Ballades Chopin "attains the acme of his power as an artist." Here he becomes the master of form, beauty, and poetry.

IV. These improvisations come from a period when the peasant idiom of his native land had become part of the composer's bloodstream. Thus, while he uses authentic peasant tunes, they are no longer simply borrowed but taken naturally, as Handel might take an Italian melody and make it entirely his own. The treatment of the themes is rich and resourceful beyond imagination. Here the composer uses the original melody intact (No. 1); there he splices in little interludes (No. 2); converts the song into a virtual accompanied recitative (No. 3); breaks up the tunes into fragments in a whirlwind move-ment (Nos. 4, 5); or sets the whole piece in vibration by bitonal harmoniza-tion (No. 6). The seventh piece is quite contrapuntal.

V. This piece is from the group of compositions resulting from his journey through Italy. The Italian poet Petrarca gave the inspiration in this case.

VI. Mili Balakirev, who lived from 1837 to 1910, was the leader and inspirer of the group of Russian nationalist composers in the second half of the nine-teenth century which included Borodin, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Cui. The early works of Tchaikovsky were also affected by Balakirev's influence, though he later took up an independent position.

Perhaps his most famous compositions are two which are based on Oriental themes, the "Oriental Fantasia" Islamey and the symphonic poem Tamar. Rosa Newmarch, who first met Balakirev at St. Petersburg in 1901, says: "He did not belong to the tall, fair type of Great Russia. There was to my mind a touch of the oriental about him: Tartar, perhaps."

Pianistically Islamey is extremely brilliant. Balakirev, though a good pianist himself, would never play it in public. The influence of Liszt can certainly be observed in Islamey, both in the brilliant piano writing and in the construction; the work is a miniature symphonic poem based on a few simple themes which are treated with the utmost ingenuity.