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Bernstein

The New York Debut Concert, 1943

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XR

Young Aide Leads Philharmonic, Steps In When Bruno Walter Is Ill

A nation-wide radio audience and several thousand persons in Carnegie Hall were treated to a dramatic musical event yesterday afternoon when the 25-year-old assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra Leonard Bernstein, substituted on a few hours' notice for Bruno Walter, who had become ill, and led the orchestra through its entire program.

Enthusiastic applause greeted the performance of the youthful musician, who went through the ordeal with no signs of strain or nervousness. Artur Rodzinski, the orchestra's permanent conductor and musical director, who arrived at intermission time after motoring from his home in Stockbridge, Mass., declared the young man had "prodigious talent," adding that "we wish to give him every opportunity in the future."

Mr. Bernstein, appointed to his post at the beginning of the current season, was notified of Mr. Walter's illness in the morning by Bruno Zirato, assistant manager. Mr. Walter, who was said to be suffering from a stomach disorder, was to have been the guest conductor for the afternoon performance, broadcast over the Columbia network.

The young conductor, a native of Lawrence, Mass., and a Harvard graduate, had no opportunity for rehearsal before opening the program with Schumann's Overture to "Manfred." The program also included Rozsa's "Theme, Variations and Finale"; Strauss' "Don Quixote" and Wagner's Prelude to "Die Meistersinger."

Mr. Bernstein received hearty applause at the end of the Schumann overture, but was recalled four times when he concluded the Rozsa variations. The audience warmed increasingly to his performance during the remainder of the program and, at its end, was wildly demonstrative.

After the performance Mr. Bernstein disclosed that he had been told on Saturday evening that Mr. Walter was ill and that he "might" be called upon to take his place at Sunday's concert. The possibility seemed remote, and the young man went to a song recital. When he got home, however, he decided to look over the scores of the Philharmonic program "just in case."

"I stayed up until about 4:30 A. M., alternately dozing, sipping coffee and studying the scores," he said. "I fell into a sound sleep about 5:30 A. M. and awakened at 9 A. M. An hour later Mr. Zirato telephoned and said: "You're going to conduct."

"My first reaction was one of shock. I then became very excited over my unexpected debut and, I may add, not a little frightened. Knowing it would be impossible to assemble the orchestra for a rehearsal on a Sunday, I went over to Mr. Walter's home and went over the scores with him.

"I found Mr. Walter sitting up but wrapped in blankets and he obligingly showed me just how he did it."

Mr. Bernstein said he was too intent on his work to feel nervous during the performance.

By a happy coincidence, Mr. Bernstein's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Bernstein, had come from their home in Sharon, Mass., to visit their son and so they were able to attend the concert. Mr. Bernstein's 12-year-old brother, Burton, also was with his parents.

The New York Times, Monday November 15, 1943

bernstein

in the 1940s, volume 2: his debut

Pristine
XR

PASC 833

schumann
manfred overture

rózsa
theme, variations & finale

r. strauss
don quixote

joseph schuster cello
william lincer viola

philharmonic-symphony orchestra of new york
leonard bernstein conductor

live broadcast recording, carnegie hall, 1943



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BERNSTEIN'S 1943 DEBUT: SCHUMANN, RÓZSA, R. STRAUSS
BERNSTEIN, PHILHARMONIC-SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK

- 1 Radio Introduction 1 (3:18)
- 2 **SCHUMANN Manfred Overture, Op. 115** (12:07)

RÓZSA Theme, Variations and Finale, Op. 13a

- 3 Theme (0:31)
- 4 Variation 1 (1:40)
- 5 Variation 2 (1:09)
- 6 Variation 3 (1:08)
- 7 Variation 4 (2:56)
- 8 Variation 5 (1:05)
- 9 Variation 6 (2:28)
- 10 Variation 7 (1:10)
- 11 Variation 8 (1:28)
- 12 Finale (3:55)

- 13 Radio Introduction 2 (0:41)

R. STRAUSS Don Quixote, Op. 35

- 14 Introduction (5:48)
- 15 Theme (1:58)
- 16 Sancho Panza (2:32)
- 17 Variation 1 (1:31)
- 18 Variation 2 (3:41)
- 19 Variation 3 (3:50)
- 20 Variation 4 (1:47)
- 21 Variation 5 (3:44)
- 22 Variation 6 (1:07)
- 23 Variation 7 (0:48)
- 24 Variation 8 (1:33)
- 25 Variation 9 (1:01)
- 26 Variation 10 (4:05)
- 27 Finale (4:50)

Joseph Schuster *cello*
William Lincer *viola*

- 28 Radio Outro, News Headlines, Sign off (2:35)

Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York *Leonard Bernstein*

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XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Leonard Bernstein

Live CBS broadcast from
Carnegie Hall, New York City,
Sunday 14 November 1943

Introduced by Bernard Dudley

Total duration: 74:26

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