

early on (playing among other works Elgar's Violin Concerto at 16, with the composer conducting) and continued to concertize, making a world tour of 73 cities during his 19th year. At the end, however, he felt "tired, indifferent, and sad," and in 1936 began an 18-month sabbatical. Menuhin resumed playing in 1938, but never after with the sublime confidence of his preadolescent years.

During World War II he gave more than 500 concerts for Allied and American troops, but stirred a hornet's nest of controversy as the first major Jewish artist to perform in postwar Germany. Likewise, after the Six Day War in the Middle East, he was vilified for performing charity concerts in Arab countries. Increasingly he devoted himself to the training of young artists, both near London (which became his home in 1952) and at Gstaad, Switzerland. Also in 1952 he went to India, became a disciple of yoga, and a colleague of sitarist Ravi Shankar. He recorded with Shankar, as he did subsequently with jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli. In the middle 1950s Menuhin took up conducting, but was no better schooled than he had been as a child violinist -- and he was conspicuously less successful despite having made a steady stream of recordings beginning in 1958. At age 82 he was guest conducting the Warsaw Symphony on tour when he suffered a fatal heart attack in Berlin.

Menuhin was named Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur in 1948, to the British knighthood in 1965, and to a Lordship in 1993. For his work on behalf of peace worldwide, he was named ambassador of goodwill to UNESCO in 1992. His dedication to the "minds and hearts" of young musicians well may be remembered after his pre-adult celebrity has faded to black. Menuhin married twice, fathered four children, and played frequent recitals with sisters Hephzibah (1920-1981), starting in 1930, and years later with Yaltah (1922-2001), notably at the Bath Festival he founded and directed in the 1960s.

BERLIOZ

HAROLD IN ITALY



**YEHUDI
MENUHIN**
viola

conductor
COLIN DAVIS
PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA



Though the work was originally intended as a vehicle for the virtuoso violinist Nicolo Paganini to exhibit his considerable skill on the viola, Berlioz's Harold in Italy (1834) eventually became a four-movement symphony which Paganini, who wanted to be "playing all the time," eventually declined to perform. Somewhat akin to the *Symphonie fantastique* (1830) in its quasi-autobiographical cast and employment of a unifying *idée fixe*, Harold finds Berlioz imagining himself in the role of Byron's Harold for the purpose of recounting his own experiences in Italy.

The first movement, entitled "Harold in the Mountains," outlines a progression from melancholy into happiness and ultimately, into joy. The sobering fugato which opens the movement soon gives way to an uncertain melody in the woodwinds, which blossoms until the viola presents it in full as Harold's theme, the *idée fixe*. The movement continues its ascent into joy with an effervescent, unrelenting allegro which eases up only to allow the viola to restate the *idée fixe*, now fitted into another fugato, before the accelerating momentum brings the movement to an end.

Like Mendelssohn, Berlioz made the second movement of his "Italian" symphony a "Pilgrim's March." Essentially restricted to a strophic march structure, the movement is notable for its daring modulations, each marked by the tolling of two bells. The viola enters again in the middle section, lyrically presenting the *idée fixe* in the periphery of the passing march before taking on an accompanying role as the procession moves off into the distance.

The third movement, "Serenade of an Abruzzi Mountaineer," begins with an accurate replication of Italian bagpipes, or *piferari*. The rustic affect is made complete with the introduction of the serenade's main melody by the English horn. The viola restates the melody in conjunction with the *idée fixe*, and the

movement develops as Berlioz expounds upon the counterpoint between the two melodies. A somewhat resigned coda, comprising all three elements, ends the movement on a misleadingly peaceful tone.

"The Orgy of Brigands," as the finale is titled, opens with the viola revisiting several thematic ideas from prior movements before it is unceremoniously interrupted by the brash, rhythmic power of the orgy itself. Following this brass-fueled, slightly demented fury, the viola briefly returns with the "Pilgrim's March" and a final statement of Harold's theme as the composer's nostalgic reminiscence comes to a close.

The legendary violinist Yehudi Menuhin was the eldest child of Russian-born Hebrew scholars who met in Palestine, emigrated to New York City, and moved to San Francisco soon after their son's birth. After just three years of violin study, Yehudi made a legendary debut at age seven with the local symphony. His Carnegie Hall debut three years later, in the Beethoven Violin Concerto, garnered praise that likened him to Mozart as a prodigy, whereupon the family (which now included sisters Hephzibah and Yaltah) lived gypsy-like in hotels wherever Yehudi was engaged at enormous fees. But the child's talent was instinctive. As Fritz Kreisler was to remark later on, "Because the young Menuhin had anticipated so early and so much of what nature had given him, I foresaw that he would have great difficulties." And he did.

When an eminent elder colleague requested a scale after the boy had played Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* flawlessly, Menuhin wrote in his autobiography, *Unfinished Journey*, "I groped all over the fingerboard like a blind mouse.... I played the violin without being prepared for violin playing." He began recording

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- 1 Harold In The Mountains 16:20
- 2 March Of The Pilgrims Singing The Evening Hymn 9:05
- 3 Serenade Of A Mountaineer Of The Abruzzi To His Sweetheart 6:30
- 4 Orgy Of The Brigands 12:18

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Engineer - Neville Boyling

Producer - Victor Olof



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