

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1955-56

*Sixth Concert*

REID  
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

*Leader* : DR. JOHN FAIRBAIRN

*Conductor* : SIDNEY NEWMAN

*Solo Pianoforte*

ISO ELINSON

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
THURSDAY, 9th FEBRUARY, 1956  
AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

# PROGRAMME

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1. MARCH : "FOR LORD MACDONALD'S HIGHLANDERS"  
AIR : "ATHOLL HOUSE" *General John Reid*  
(b. 12th Feb., 1721 : d. 1807)

2. SYMPHONY No. 56 IN C *Haydn*  
Allegro di molto. (1732-1809)  
Adagio  
Menuet  
Finale : Prestissimo

This symphony, composed in 1774, is the finest of the festive C major symphonies of the sixties and early seventies. It looks back beyond the ceremonious *Maria Theresa* (No. 48) of 1772 and the somewhat similar C major symphony (No. 50) of 1773 (which rather pompously opens Adagio maestoso) to the finest Symphony No. 41, which we performed at these concerts a year or two ago. The affinity between the two may be remarked not only in the spirited opening Allegro movements in triple time, but in the mobile perpetuum finales with their rapid triplet motion in a quasi *buffa* style. The symphony is scored for Oboes, Bassoon (prominent only as a solo instrument in the F major Adagio with muted strings), Horns (using C alto horns), Trumpets, Drums and Strings. A continuo instrument may have been intended but is not essential.

3. PIANOFORTE CONCERTO in D minor (K. 466) *Mozart*  
Allegro.  
Romanze.  
Rondo: Allegro assai.

This concerto was completed by Mozart on 10th February, 1785, and entered by him in his thematic catalogue against that date, the entry following immediately after the last of the six Haydn quartets completed on 14th January. The concerto received its first performance at Mozart's subscription concert on the following day. Leopold, who had arrived from Salzburg in the small hours of the night to visit his son at Vienna, was himself present. In a letter to Nannerl written a day or two later, Leopold recounts how he had found the copyist hard at work when he arrived, and adds that Wolfgang hadn't an opportunity even to play the Rondo once through before the performance because he had to superintend the copying. A repeat performance was given on the 15th. "Your brother played the new great concerto in D magnificently" wrote Leopold.

It is not only in the inspiration of its themes that its greatness lies—those bitter hammered notes of iron destiny, those surging basses like boiling seas curbed by a rigid wall, the quiet tender motive that recoils from these strenuous

scenes, the lyric epilogue whose entwining counterpoints bring some soothing respite when that frenzy has been hushed, and the noble elegiac utterance of the protagonist at his first entry upon this troubled scene. For the movement is remarkable not only for its intensity and the quick reactions of its themes, but also for the grandeur of its periods. The pale glint of the trumpet tone in the last moments, like the high lights of metal striking through the deep gloom of a Rembrandt, suggest that here was a tale of heroic deeds.

The Romanze (in B flat major) transports us to a scene far different, a land of ease and hearts desire. The movement is in Rondo form, and as so frequently happens, the theme in itself is treated with ample repetition. It holds one surprise in store, for with the second episode we are plunged back into a scene of agitation not far remote from that of the previous movement. The manner in which the solo instrument coaxes and compels this seemingly untameable and galloping spirit of violence back to the quiet ways of the rondo theme is one of the most remarkable pieces of musical horsemanship that one could find anywhere.

The finale is a full-scale Rondo ; its theme, alert, and impetuous, enters straightway upon the assault and once again anger boils in a ferment in the tutti which it evokes. The re-entry of the solo brings a quiet theme that seems to plead an end to strife. Thereafter there is some measure of ease, and yet a forbidding F minor comes to spite the expected first episode and not till this has been mollified does there come that naive melody which contains the seeds of ultimate happiness. In the reprise (which omits the Rondo theme) this naive melody is compelled to undergo the discomfort of the minor key, but it is already tinged with the thought of eventual freedom, and when after the cadenza the solo launches the assault afresh, only to find that there is no enemy left to fight, that naive melody seizes its opportunity, and so quietly dawns the happiness of D major, welcomed at length with the full pageantry of triumph.

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## INTERVAL

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4. PIANOFORTE CONCERTO in C major (K. 503). *Mozart*  
Allegro maestoso.  
Andante  
Allegretto.

The size of this magnificent work is apparent at once in the majestic preface. The simple massive chords immediately arouse some expectation of a bold complexity to come, and also of the personal subtleties of the solo instrument which they so transcend. It is only a moment before the germ of that contrapuntal complexity becomes apparent in a figure of repeated notes whose bolder statement assumes something of the character of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. What one may call the periodic figures in Mozart's writing are of particular interest : those which clinch the statement of his ideas with an assertive finality serve to prepare the mind for the immediate presentation of something new, the importance of which can be foreshadowed. Both those which occur in this orchestral prologue are built on the rhythm mentioned, and in each case the theme that proceeds from the heavy lines they have drawn adopts the link of that same rhythm. The first of these has the precision of a tiny march. Another

type of periodic figure which quite naturally has a more effective finality, since it lacks the provocation of the assertive type, is that which is reflective, and it is such which terminates the orchestral preface.

It needs the repeated coaxing of the orchestra to bring the reticent personality of the solo instrument on to the stage, with a further moment of ease before the splendid thought with which all began can be restated. From this, complexity begins to spread out as before, terminated by yet another assertive figure built on that same rhythm, and again the melody that proceeds from it adopts a similar link. But now it is the soloist in a fresh lyrical vein. Perhaps we may think this the trend of the soloist's contribution, yet it is an excursion from the fundamental design of the structure. The individual still maintains an evasive poise away from the channel of those keys that form the inevitable chart of the argument. But when the long delayed theme comes, it is with the address of a personal gesture quite unlike the previous dramatic annunciations by the orchestra. Here now is the ease of understanding as the two persons exchange this new melody. But the orchestral expression will always be on the larger scale, and with the greater complexity. Again that insistent finality springs a further thought from the soloist. Yet no—for this is that tiny march grown lyrical. With this almost forgotten thought soloist and orchestra occupy themselves in a discussion of increasing complexity for some long while until the mind opens out afresh to the grandeur of that foremost thought of all. From now the structure stretches out in perspective in a known design, wherein the unaccompanied melody that formerly seemed evasive now appears as an essentially gentle gesture in bringing the delicate "second theme" into its predetermined channel.

The Andante is a reflective lyrical piece where all difference of personality is merged in the contemplation of a melody of exquisite sensitiveness.

The Finale is in Rondo form. Although the orchestra here propounds the main theme (incidentally derived from the ballet music of Idomeneo), yet in the course of its return its greater aptness to the solo medium becomes apparent, and indeed however important may be some of the details in the orchestra's contribution, the character of its personality remains very largely submerged throughout this movement to the exaltation of the solo instrument. Thus the scheme of the work as a whole might be said to be progressive, though there is something lost in the vanishing of that first cosmic idea before the more intimate and personal.

S. T. M. N.