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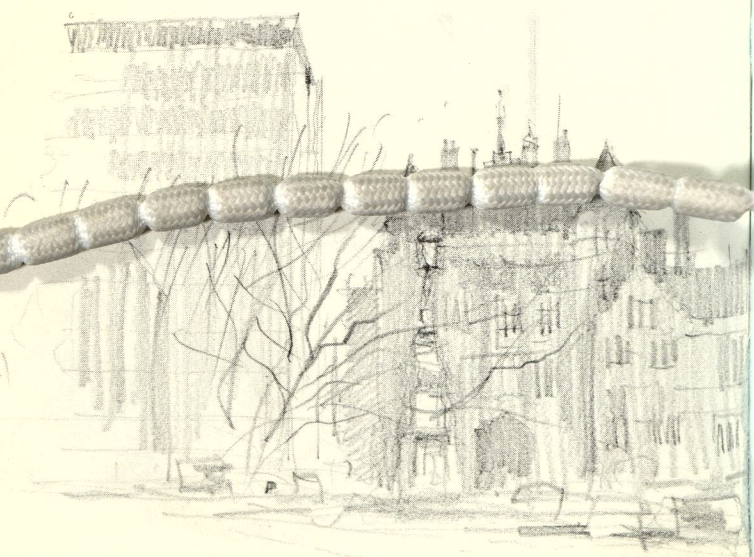
Concerts

1970-71

The Reid Orchestra
Miles Baster, leader

KENNETH LEIGHTON
JOHN FAIRBAIRN

Thursday 22 October
Reid School of Music



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In 1939, when he wrote the *Concerto for double string orchestra*, Tippett was much interested in the polyphonic music of the seventeenth century, and also, like Vaughan Williams, in folk-song. The complex rhythms, the modal melody of the Adagio, and the folk-song in the coda of the finale all have the elements and characteristics of that period. For much of the time the two orchestras are playing quite independently of each other, as for example in the opening, where the first orchestra has a unison theme, followed half-a-bar later by the second orchestra with another theme of a contrasted rhythm, also in unison. While the general rhythm of the movement is *alla breve*, there are a number of unequal divisions of the bar, and many syncopations, giving a restless but stimulating urge to the music.

The slow movement might be described as a song in ternary form, first played by a solo violin, and on the return by a solo cello accompanied now by a figure suggesting the opening of the first movement. The melody has all the flavour of the seventeenth century, being not only modal in construction, but containing piquant "false relations" in the harmony. The fugal second theme, with its chromaticism and contrapuntal interweaving of the parts is the very antithesis of the first theme.

The rondo finale has many exciting rhythmic features. The principal theme is a mixture of 3/4 and 6/8, the first subsidiary theme, initially stated by the cellos of both orchestras, and repeated by the violins, has irregular bar-lines, and the second subsidiary theme, marked *scherzando* has much syncopation. In the coda two rhythms, 2/4 and 6/8 are used simultaneously, the former for the song melody of the first orchestra, very reminiscent of the opening of the Adagio, and the latter for the incessant surging rhythm of the second orchestra. J.F.

Piano concerto no. 3 was commissioned by the Feeney Trust, and received the first performances at Wolverhampton and Birmingham on March 11th and 12th of this year, conducted by Louis Frémaux. It is dedicated to the City of Birmingham Orchestra. The concerto was composed during the spring and summer of 1969, and as its subtitle suggests, tries to express something of the warmth and beauty of that summer, which seemed so extraordinary to one who had not lived in the south of England for many years.

On the whole the music is more relaxed, more lyrical, and certainly more tonal than that of the previous two piano concertos, and there is also much less emphasis on counterpoint, and more on vertical sonorities. Indeed the mainspring of all the music is basically a single chord (D E G# C#) and a great deal of the music is in the sunny key of D major.

As in the previous two piano concertos, the soloist plays 'with' rather than 'against' the orchestra, but at the same time the piano has more of a leading rôle than before, and presents most of the melodic material.

The first movement begins with a slow introduction, and at the very opening the piano sings the 'motto' theme in dotted rhythm. Although many subsequent tunes are variations of this theme, it does not re-appear in this first form until the final section of the third movement.

The *Allegro* which follows has two main themes; the first another gentle and *cantabile* melody, first heard simply on the piano in octaves, the second very lively and boisterous, first played by horns and timpani. The middle section of the movement consists of a single paragraph, in which both these themes are discussed, and this culminates in a cadenza-like passage for the piano, to which is added the first theme on strings. A final short reference to the second lively theme brings the movement to quite a swift close.

The slow melody of the *Pastoral* is very closely related to the 'motto' theme of the *Introduction*. Foreshadowed first in very high notes on the piano (D E C#) it finds its full shape in the tenor range of the piano, and later on cellos. The middle section is more agitated and dance-like, and leads to a passionate re-statement of the main melody, accompanied by bell-like chords. Finally there is an extended and delicate coda which rejoices in the warmth and stillness of a long hot summer afternoon.

The final Variations are played without a break, though the various sections are quite clear. (1) *allegro molto*—a very fast and rhythmical version of the motto theme. (2) A broader and more expressive dialogue between piano and orchestra, accompanied by measured chords, and culminating in a short cadenza for the soloist. (3) A series of continuous variations in which the piano is matched first with *pizzicato* strings, then with brass chords, and finally

with extended melodic lines on wood-wind and strings. (4) All this culminates in a more extended cadenza for piano. (5) A slow recapitulation of the 'motto' theme from the opening of the concerto. (6) A very fast coda in which the basic chord predominates. K.L.

The *Variations*, which are dedicated to Paul and Gertrud Hindemith, were commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society for their 150th Anniversary Concert, and first performed on 8th March 1963 at the Royal Festival Hall by The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by the composer.

The theme is the first paragraph, 36 bars in length, of the slow movement of the Cello Concerto composed in 1940, and played at a Reid Concert in February this year by Joan Dickson. Walton has distributed the solo part between the woodwind and strings but retains the original harmonies and most of the orchestration. The serial shape of the first phrase, only one note being omitted from the twelve-note series, provides Walton with scope to fix the tonal centres of the variations and in addition he has contrived to use as the last note of each of the variations and finale the notes of the phrase in strict succession. The variations contain not only great contrasts in tempo, but, like the music of Tippett, many syncopations, cross-accents, and asymmetrical grouping of notes.

Towards the end of variation seven, marked *Lento molto*, Walton quotes a phrase from Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*. It does not appear in the symphony, (to be performed in a few weeks) but occurs in the opera in the sixth tableau, the temptation of St Anthony. It is a curious melody, each three notes forming a triad repeated a major third lower six times. What is even more curious is that Walton should wait until variation seven to make a footnote in the score that he was quoting this melody. Half of it is already present in the last part of Hindemith's theme and heard in some of the variations before the complete quotation is made. Apparently Hindemith was unaware that he had used part of this melody from *Mathis der Maler*, composed in 1934, when writing the cello concerto six years later, and it was Walton who noticed the connection. J.F.

Michael Tippett

Concerto for double string orchestra

Allegro con brio
Adagio cantabile
Allegro molto

Kenneth Leighton

Piano concerto no. 3, *Concerto Estivo*, opus 57

Introduction and allegro
Pastoral
Final variations

Interval

William Walton

Variations on a theme by Hindemith

Next concert: Thursday 29 October

The Edinburgh Quartet
with
Marie Dare *double bass*
Philip Greene *clarinet*
Susan Hall *bassoon*
Richard Thomas *horn*

Schubert
Octet in F major, D803

Howard Ferguson
Octet

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University of
Edinburgh
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1970-71

THE REID ORCHESTRA

KENNETH LEIGHTON conductor

MILES BASTER violin

Thursday 5 November

Reid School of Music
