

sextets and two piano quartets lead up to the piano quintet, which outstrips them all in range and assurance. Completed in Brahms' thirtieth year, it establishes the reputation of a master by its consistency; of subject matter within a movement, and of movements within the whole. The logic of the opening theme, for instance, is never so compelling as at its close, where it yields to a new strain with its particular changes of key. The slow movement is an ideal point of repose, between the play of dramatic elements which had preceded it and the intrepid scherzo which follows it, marching to its conclusion like a triumph over fear. On the scale of Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata, or Sonata Appassionata, this would have been enough. But the final triptych reminds us that a world without fear is not a real world. Romanticism was, for this composer, the romance of patriotism and a sense of unity with the German past in all its fulness; in this last movement it is the realities present to him that he celebrates, completing the total design according to his own vision. C.K.

Next concert: Thursday 1 March

THE REID ORCHESTRA
RODERICK BRYDON *conductor*
HELEN COCHRANE *contralto*

DVORAK Serenade opus 44
MAHLER Kindertotenlieder
COPLAND Old American Songs
RAVEL Ma Mère L'Oye

Printed by THE SUMMERHALL PRESS LIMITED
12a West Newington Place, Edinburgh 7

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EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

1972-73

THE REID ORCHESTRA
Miles Baster leader

RODERICK BRYDON
guest conductor

HELEN COCHRANE
contralto

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 1 March 1973

DVORAK 1841-1904

Serenade in D minor, op. 44.

Moderato quasi Marcia
Minuetto
Andante con moto
Allegro molto

The Serenade op. 44, which Dvorák composed very quickly in January 1878, is for the unusual combination of 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, double bassoon ad lib., 'cello and double bass. Its style is that of the much earlier divertimento or cassation, written for performance in the open air; it begins, similarly, with a March, recalled at the end, and has the light-heartedness and extroversion of the earlier type—though it has fewer movements and only one Minuet. Nonetheless, the music has the outstanding hallmarks of Dvorák's own idiom—especially in the rhapsodic cantilena which forms the slow third movement, in the Czech flavour of the Minuet and Trio, which juxtaposes the movement of the slow dance, the *sonsedska*, with the quick rhythm of the *furiant*, and in the overall thematic unity of the piece. R. McA.

MAHLER 1860-1911

Kindertotenlieder

During the last years of his life Mahler was increasingly drawn to the intensely introspective writings of the late Romantic poet Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866). The quality of solitariness in Rückert's poems evoked a very sympathetic response from the composer; the ten songs for voice and orchestra which Mahler produced are among his most personal and intimate creations. Their restrained expression and clarity of texture are even more telling when one realises that they were composed at the same time as some of his largest and richest symphonic scores. They were written between 1901 and 1904 (the year of the Sixth Symphony), and published in 1905 in two separate collections: *Sieben Lieder aus letzter Zeit* and *Kindertotenlieder*. Rückert's collection of over four hundred 'Kindertotenlieder'—'Songs on the death of infants'—from which Mahler selected only five, were a direct response to his own tragic experience. Mahler's conception of such songs in what were infinitely happier personal circumstances more than alarmed his wife Alma: 'I found this incomprehensible. I can understand setting such frightful words to music if one had no children, or had lost those one had. . . . What I cannot understand is bewailing the deaths of children, who were

in the best of health, hardly an hour after having kissed and fondled them. I exclaimed at the time, "For heaven's sake, don't tempt Providence!"' But Mahler did, and as with the Sixth Symphony, he anticipated his life in his music. Three years later his four-year-old daughter Maria died of diphtheria.

The five songs are varied in attitude and mood, but are bound together into a cycle by the intimate quality of their orchestral sound, sparse, lyrical and contrapuntal in texture. The cycle begins equivocally: the sunrise after the death of the two children brings mourning, but also the gladness of light. Mahler's musical response is a simple strophic song of thin, mainly two-part texture, in which wind and harp sounds predominate. The second song brings the memory of gazing eyes which will now gaze down only as stars from the heavens. This has a much lush, warmer sound, created by softer vocal outlines and strong inner horn motives. The third song has perhaps the most individual and the most nostalgic sound-quality of the whole cycle: the figure of the mother brings with it the unbearable image of the dead child. A plaintive refrain, peculiarly Baroque in its instrumentation, alternates with the repetitive phrases of a sad *volkslied*. The following song enters the realm of fantasy: perhaps the children have only gone for a long walk. The self-delusion is underlined in the music by the alternation of minor and major modes and by the subdued joy of the sixths in the wind instruments. A much bigger orchestral sound conjures up the storm at the beginning of the last song: in such weather the children should never have been out. A sudden change of mood lulls the music from the tumult of a funeral dirge to the calm of a lullaby as the poet consoles himself: now they are safe, for God's own hand will guide them. R. McA.

INTERVAL

COPLAND b.1900

Old American Songs—First Set

The first set of Old American Songs was completed in 1950 and William Warfield gave the first performance in New York on 28 January, 1951.

1. *The Boatman's Dance*. Published in Boston in 1843 as an 'original banjo melody' by Old Dan D. Emmett, who later composed *Dixie*. From the Harris Collection of American Poetry and Plays in Brown University.

2. *The Dodger*. As sung by Mrs. Emma Dusenberry of Mena, Arkansas, who learned it in the 1880's. Supposedly used in the Cleveland-Blaine presidential campaign. Published by John A. and Alan Lomax in *Our Singing Country*.
3. *Long Time Ago*. Issued in 1837 by George Pope Morris, who adapted the words, and Charles Edward Horn, who arranged the music from an anonymous original 'black-face' tune. Also from the Harris Collection.
4. *Simple Gifts*. A favourite song of the Shaker sect, from the period 1837-1847. The melody and words were quoted by Edward D. Andrews in his book of Shaker rituals, songs and dances, entitled *The Gift To Be Simple*.
5. *I Bought Me A Cat*. A children's nonsense song. This version was sung to the composer by the American playwright Lynn Riggs, who learned it during his boyhood in Oklahoma.

RAVEL 1875-1937

Ma Mère L'Oye

Ravel's *Cinq pièces enfantines* were written as piano duets in 1908 and orchestrated in 1912. Each illustrates a fairy tale, the middle three being headed by quotations from the old French fairy tale writers.

The Sleeping Beauty's Pavan is utter simplicity: twenty bars of gently lilting music, falling at last to a demure full close.

Hop-o'-my-thumb is headed by a quotation from Perrault:

'He thought he would easily find his way home from the bread that he had scattered on the path; but to his surprise, he could not find a single crumb; some birds had come and eaten it all up.'

The pathetic wandering of the lost child is portrayed by a slowly meandering stream of quavers; later, the birds appear in violin harmonics.

Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas:

'She undressed and entered her bath. At once the pagodas and pagodinas began to sing and play their instruments: some had archlutes made from a nutshell; some viols made from an almond shell; for they had to match the instruments to their size.' (Mme d'Aulnoy: *Serpentin Vert*)

In the original version of this piece, the jingling pentatonic *chinoiserie* of the tiny instruments confines the *primo* player entirely to the black keys.

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The Conversation of Beauty and the Beast is headed by a quotation from Mme Leprince de Beaumont. Beauty is a tender waltz, at first on clarinet; the beast is a contrabassoon. When she at last agrees to marry the beast, in spite of his ugly appearance and tone quality, he is transformed into a handsome prince with an obvious orchestral effect.

The Fairy Garden. The sun rises, transforming this hymnlike evocation into a paean of childish rapture. R.M.

Next concert : Thursday 8 March

MUSIC BY SCHOENBERG

Instrumental Ensemble directed by

EDWARD HARPER

CAROLYN COXON *soprano*

ROBERT BATEMAN *baritone*

Das Buch der hängenden Gärten

Serenade
