

DVORAK 1841-1904

Symphony No. 7 in D minor

*Allegro maestoso*

*Poco Adagio*

*Scherzo. Vivace*

*Finale. Allegro*

Dvorak spent the months of December 1884 to March 1885 writing the Symphony in D minor opus 70, his second in this key. It received its first performance in London at a concert of the London Philharmonic Society on 22nd March that same year under the direction of the composer. The work owes much of its inspiration to Brahms 3rd Symphony, not only in its broad heroic scale and the inner density of the writing, for Dvorak was consciously striving to equal the achievement of his friend and advisor. Written at a time when Dvorak was being tempted by international success to use a more international, i.e. at that time German, idiom it is perhaps the least nationalistic of his works in this genre. Only in the Finale does his real Czech spirit emerge triumphantly shrugging off the alien muse to reveal his true symphonic nationality. A.M.

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*Next concert: Thursday 10 January*

THE EDINBURGH QUARTET

MOZART Quartet in D major (K.575)

SEIBER Quartetto Lirico

SMETANA Quartet in E minor

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# EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CONCERTS

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1973-74

THE REID ORCHESTRA  
Miles Baster *leader*

MICHAEL TILMOUTH  
*conductor*

COLIN KINGSLEY  
*piano*

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 31 January 1974

## STRAVINSKY 1882-1971

### Concerto in D for string orchestra

*Vivace*

*Arioso*

*Rondo (Allegro)*

All the works in the concert tonight were written in Stravinsky's so-called neo-classical period which began about 1920 and reached its culmination with *The Rake's Progress* in 1951. The Concerto in D (1946) belongs to the richly productive later years of this phase; small in scale compared with its neighbours, the *Symphony in C* and the ballet *Orpheus*, it is their equal in its fastidious craftsmanship and exhibits the clarity of texture, lucidity of argument, and sense of order typical of all Stravinsky's mature work. The Concerto was written in response to a request from Paul Sacher for a work to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Basle Chamber Orchestra. In all three movements the interval of a semitone conditions melodic, harmonic, and even tonal events such as the appearance in D flat of the *Moderato* episode in the first movement.

In spite of this preoccupation with so dissonant an interval the predominant impression the Concerto leaves is one of amiability and charm. Perhaps it was the incessant busyness of the Rondo which led Jerome Robbins to use the music for his ballet *The Cage* in which, recalling the habits of those species of insects whose females devour their mates after coupling, two intruding males, their amorous dalliances with an innocent novice done, are set upon, castrated and killed by a horde of mature and militant matriarchs. Stravinsky's reaction to this interpretation appears not to be recorded.

### Capriccio for piano and orchestra

*Presto*

*Andante rapsodico*

*Allegro capriccioso ma tempo giusto*

The Capriccio (1928-29) was the outcome of Stravinsky's desire to write a new concerto for his own use and to create a work as immediately attractive as his recent Chaikovsky-based ballet, 'The Fairy's Kiss', but using original material. The ebullient finale was conceived first and, as might be expected, several passages bear a strong resemblance to the ballet. But these are not the only points of reference to his own earlier work: once the alternating strains of the introduction have been despatched, the

main theme of the first movement, with its insistence on a reiterated minor third, G-B flat, inevitably recalls a similar figure in *Oedipus Rex*, and the melismatic style of the slow movement reminds us of the corresponding movement of the Piano Sonata. The piano dominates the texture throughout and embodies typically Stravinskian elements of keyboard style such as cimbalom-like repeated notes and much octave displacement in melodic lines, but the inclusion of a *concertino* group of strings in the score gives the Capriccio a character quite different from any conventional concerto.

## INTERVAL

### The Fairy's Kiss

Dedicated to the memory of Chaikovsky, 'The Fairy's Kiss' (1928) was the outcome of an admiration for the older composer which Stravinsky had felt since his childhood days. The scenario was adapted from Hans Andersen's *The Ice Maiden* and the ballet was to be performed in the spirit of Chaikovsky's own great ballets. Later in life Stravinsky could not remember with precision on which music of Chaikovsky the work was based, but this may be taken as a symptom of his complete assimilation of the earlier master's work. Apart from the songs and piano pieces employed—few in their entirety—turns of phrase from better known works such as the symphonies contribute to the spirit of Chaikovsky that seems to inhabit the whole ballet. Yet everything in it is transmuted and transformed and seen through the eyes of Stravinsky, whose ability to 'take possession of things that attracted him and make them wholly his own' was remarked upon by Ramuz. There is no better example of this process than the score of *The Fairy's Kiss*.

Scenario (from the revised score of 1950)

Scene 1. Prologue: the Lullaby in the Storm.

A mother, lulling her child, struggles through the storm. The Fairy's attendant sprites appear and pursue her. They separate her from the infant and carry him off. The Fairy herself appears. She approaches the child and enfolds him with her tenderness. Then she kisses him on the forehead and goes away. Now he is alone. Country folk, passing, find him, search vainly for his mother and, deeply distressed, take him with them.

Scene 2. A Village Fête (eighteen years later).

A peasant dance is in progress, with musicians on the stage. Among the dancers are a young man (the child of Scene 1) and his fiancée. The musicians and the crowd disperse and, his fiancée going away with them, the young man remains alone. The Fairy approaches him in the guise of a gipsy woman. She takes his hand and tells his fortune; then she dances and, ever increasingly, subjects him to her will. She talks of his romance and promises him great happiness. Captivated by her words, he begs her to lead him to his fiancée.

Scene 3. At the Mill.

The Fairy appears, wearing a wedding veil. The young man takes her for his bride. He goes towards her, enraptured, and addresses her in terms of warmest passion. Suddenly the Fairy throws off her veil. Dumbfounded, the young man realises his mistake. He tries to free himself, but in vain; he is defenceless before the supernatural power of the Fairy. His resistance overcome, she holds him in her power. Now she will bear him away to a land beyond time and place, where she will again kiss him, this time on the sole of the foot.

Scene 4. Epilogue: Berceuse of the Eternal Dwellings.

The Fairy's attendant sprites group themselves in slow movements of great tranquillity before a wide decor representing the infinite space of the heavens. The Fairy and the young man appear on a ridge. She kisses him to the sound of her lullaby.  
M.T.

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*Next concert: Thursday 14 February*

REID MEMORIAL CONCERT

THE REID ORCHESTRA

MICHAEL TILMOUTH *conductor*

DENNIS MATTHEWS *piano*

EARL OF KELLY Overture, The Maid of the Mill

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major

MOZART Symphony No. 39 in E flat major

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1973-74

Reid Memorial Concert

THE REID ORCHESTRA  
*Miles Baster leader*

MICHAEL TILMOUTH  
*conductor*

DENNIS MATTHEWS  
*piano*

DAVID NICHOLSON  
*flute*

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 14 February 1974