

piece, a clue to which may be found in the titles 'Dialogo' and 'Elegia'. These movements explore the cello's ability to lament while the scherzo and finale reveal fantastic qualities not usually associated with the instrument. The parodical march mocks both the style and the traditional instrumentation of that form. Considering all these elements, could Britten have composed a better link between his *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Op. 64) and the *War Requiem* (Op. 66)?

T.M.T.

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*Next Concert: Thursday 1 November*

THE REID ORCHESTRA  
KENNETH LEIGHTON *conductor*  
JOAN DICKSON *cello*

BARBER *Second Essay for Orchestra*  
WALTON *Cello Concerto*  
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 5*

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*15 pence*

EDINBURGH  
UNIVERSITY  
CONCERTS

1979-80

THE REID ORCHESTRA  
Miles Baster *leader*  
KENNETH LEIGHTON  
*conductor*

JOAN DICKSON  
*cello*

Reid Concert Hall, Thursday 1 November 1979

SAMUEL BARBER b. 1910

Essay for Orchestra No. 2, Op. 17

One of the most important figures in American twentieth-century music, Barber is usually labelled as a 'romantic', and there is some truth in this description in so far as his music has clear roots in the great European nineteenth-century tradition. There is, however, a distinctly 'new world' atmosphere in the freshness of his melodic writing and in the clean brilliance of his orchestration. Together with these qualities go an impeccable craftsmanship, a mastery of symphonic design, and an ability to invent polyphony of great depth and feeling. The first symphony is probably one of the finest large-scale works written by an American composer.

The Second Essay was premiered by Bruno Walter and the New York Philharmonic in 1942 and has three clear sections. The opening andante grows naturally and contrapuntally from a characteristically American theme (not without folk-song undertones) heard first on solo flute. The central allegro is a headlong sparkling fugue, polytonal, and of great skill and textural interest, which culminates in a brilliant climax. The final section, in the manner of a coda, introduces a chorale-like theme on strings harmonised simply but with great expression, and this is carried forward inevitably (and richly with references to the previous themes) to a conclusion of epic grandeur. In spite of its brevity the work has rightly been described as a 'large-scale listening experience'.

WALTON b. 1902

Cello Concerto

*Moderato*

*Allegro appassionato*

*Tema ad improvvisazioni*

Barber and Walton have much in common and not least in the remarkable consistency of their styles over the years. Though written as long ago as 1956, this concerto still remains Walton's most recent large-scale symphonic work and it has some natural resemblances to the earlier concertos for viola and violin. It also has some striking differences, and although its initial reception was somewhat lukewarm it has maintained its place in the repertoire and has been taken up by several of the leading cellists of the world.

On the whole the work is lyrical, restrained and, like the Elgar

concerto, elegiac, and the material of all three movements is closely related, being mainly concerned with the interplay of fourths and triads. The first movement opens with a characteristic melody, brooding and full of pent-up emotion, which is the mainspring of all the music. The movement is in fact one continuous 'cantabile' made up of seven paragraphs on the cello, each separated by two or three bars of orchestral accompaniment. The orchestration is beautifully calculated to the last detail and large forces are used with remarkable finesse even for Walton.

The second movement looks like a scherzo but is more than that, being the most substantial and richly argued of the three. The form is a disguised ABBA plus coda and there is a great wealth of thematic material. Here the composer solves with great brilliance the problem of a truly integrated conversation between cello and full orchestra.

The finale is in the form of theme and variations but in its title the composer rightly stresses its improvisatory character. The theme on solo cello is complex but beautifully fashioned and is followed by five distinct sections. The central section of the movement is supported by two cadenza-like variations for cello solo. The first ('Brioso') heralds the only brilliant *ff* section in the work, an orchestral outburst which is however short and soon leads to the second cadenza ('Rapsodicamente'). To conclude the work Walton harks back to the theme of the first movement.

INTERVAL

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS 1872-1958

Symphony No. 5 in D major

I *Preludio Moderato*

II *Scherzo Presto*

III *Romanza Lento*

IV *Passacaglia Moderato*

So much has been written about this, one of the greatest of British symphonies, that it would seem pointless to comment further. At the time of its first performance in June 1943 at a London promenade concert and under the direction of the composer it seemed to be a heaven-sent vision of peace, and although it was begun in 1938 and some of the music was first heard in a pageant about countryside preservation, there is no doubt that peace of the soul amid the conflicts of experience is what the music is basically about. But there is no single explanation of

such an uninterrupted outpouring of inspired music, which contains not only the composer's high peak of contemplative ecstasy, but also his simplest and most 'Arielesque' scherzo, and a muscular power and strength which binds so many elements into a completely perfect work of art. K.L.

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*Next Concert: Thursday 8 November*

DAPHNE GODSON *violin*  
AUDREY INNES *piano*

BEETHOVEN Sonata in A minor, Op. 23  
CHARLES IVES Sonata No. 2  
SIBELIUS 'Danse Champêtre', Op. 106, No. 1  
SIBELIUS Sonatina in E major, Op. 89  
BRAHMS Sonata in A major, Op. 100

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*15 pence*

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DAPHNE GODSON *violin*  
AUDREY INNES *piano*

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