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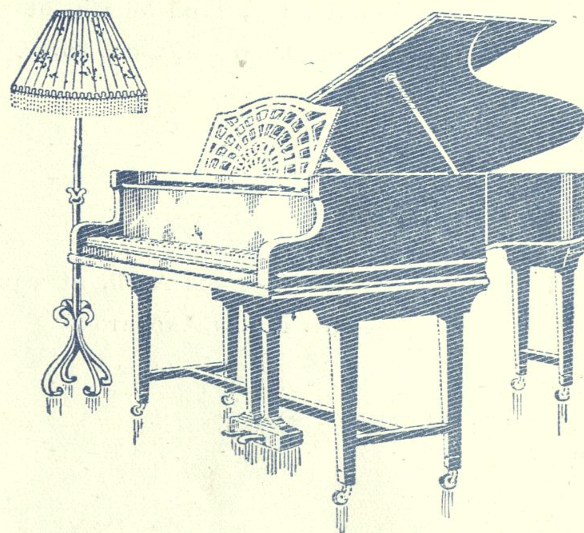

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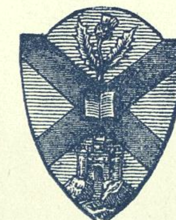

FOURTH CONCERT

SATURDAY, 22nd MARCH 1919

PROGRAMME

WITH NOTES BY D. F. T.

PRICE ONE SHILLING

University of Edinburgh.

REID ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

THIRD SEASON

FOURTH CONCERT

IN

THE M'EWAN HALL,

ON

SATURDAY, 22ND MARCH 1919

at Three o'clock

Solo Pianist and Conductor

PROFESSOR DONALD FRANCIS TOVEY

Concert under the direction of
PATERSON, SONS & CO. LTD., 27 George Street, Edinburgh

PROGRAMME

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1. Pathetic Symphony, Op. 74 - - - *Tschaikowsky*

2. Concerto in D minor for Clavier and Strings - - *Bach*

Pianoforte—Professor Tovey.

3. Sinfonia Eroica, Op. 55 - - - - - - *Beethoven*

Steinway Concert Grand Pianoforte.

NOTES BY D. F. T.

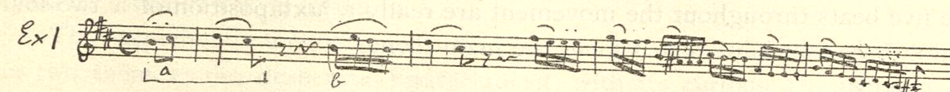
I. PATHETIC SYMPHONY, Op. 74 - - - *Tschaikowsky*

Adagio: *leading to* Allegro non troppo (*alternating with* Andante *and other changes of tempo*).
Allegro con grazia.
Allegro molto vivace.
Finale. Adagio lamentoso.

It is not for merely sentimental or biographical reasons that Tschaikowsky's sixth and last Symphony has become the most famous of all his works. Nowhere else has he concentrated so great a variety of music within so effective a scheme: and the slow finale, with its complete simplicity of despair, is a stroke of genius which solves all the artistic problems that have proved most baffling to symphonic writers since Beethoven. The whole work carries conviction without the slightest sense of effort; and its most celebrated features, such as the Second Subject of the first movement, are thrown into their right relief by developments far more powerful, terse, and highly organised than Tschaikowsky has achieved in any other work. The extreme squareness and simplicity of the phrasing throughout the whole symphony is almost a source of power in itself: like many other paradoxes in Russian and French music, it indicates the deep impression made by Schumann on artists of widely different temperaments. Anything less like Schumann in emotional tone it would be impossible to conceive: and, as for orchestration, the Handel of the Crystal Palace Handel Festival is not more remote from Tschaikowsky: but there is no doubt about the Schumann element in form and style. Schumann, of course, has different things to say, and has more leisure to say them; consequently he speaks mainly in epigrams, and shows more relish in making them witty. The Russian has no use for epigrams; but the square-cut style which suits them—the cult of antithesis, of the heroic couplet, of verse in which the sense never runs across from line to line, of sentences which have nothing to gain by grouping into big paragraphs—such things suit Tschaikowsky's methods, and are compatible with a dramatic power to which even his operas (successful though they were) did not rise. All Tschaikowsky's music is dramatic; and the Pathetic Symphony is the most dramatic of all his works. Little or nothing is to be gained by investigating it from a biographical point of view: there are no obscurities in the music either as musical forms or as emotional contrasts; and there is not the slightest difficulty in understanding why Tschaikowsky attached special importance to the work.

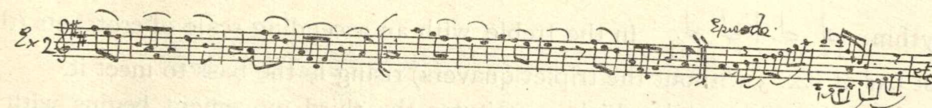
One of the most original features is the opening in a key which turns out not to be that of the piece, but a dark outlying region (the sub-dominant). Through ghost-like chords on double-basses a bassoon foreshadows the main theme. The key shifts from E minor to the real key of the Symphony, B minor; and the *allegro* begins with the First Subject. I have marked (as usual) with letters those groups of notes which are developed into other combinations—

No. 1—



Stated by violas, and counterstated by flutes, this theme soon reaches a climax; and a considerable number of lively subordinate themes follow in a long *crescendo* of square Schumannesque antithetic dialogue. The dialogue, though excited, is by no means tragic, but its climax, with the subsequent solemn dying-away, indicates the advent of something important; and when, after a pause, the Second Subject enters in a slow *tempo*, there is no doubt that its beauty has destiny behind it. My quotation gives the theme and the beginning of the dialogue which follows it—

No. 2—



After the dialogue reaches its climax the theme (Ex. 2) returns in full harmony, and is followed by an "envoy"—a strain with a "dying fall." Once more the theme returns on a clarinet, and dies away finally.

The Development opens with a crash, and works up the first theme (Ex. 1) in a stormy *fugato*; figure (*b*) settling down into a persistent figure of accompaniment to various new themes solemnly given forth by trumpets and trombones. The course of the music is easy to follow; and its finest feature, perhaps the finest passage Tschaikowsky ever wrote, is the return of the First Subject, worked up in a slow *crescendo* starting in the extremely remote key of B flat minor, and rising step by step until, in the tonic (B minor), the whole theme (Ex. 1) is given *fortissimo* in dialogue between strings and wind. The tragic passage which then follows is undoubtedly the climax of Tschaikowsky's artistic career, as well as of this work: and its natural reaction, the return (in the tonic major) of the Second Subject, is (perhaps even more than the despairing finale of the whole symphony) the feature that fully reveals the pathetic character of the music. The dialogue, of which Ex. 2 quoted the beginning, is here omitted, and the severely simple coda, consisting of a solemn cadence for trumpets and trombones over a *pizzicato* descending scale is a crowning beauty that greatly strengthens the pathos.

The second movement, an extremely simple kind of scherzo and trio, has this peculiar effect, that while it is in five-four time, which is an unsymmetrical rhythm, the bars themselves are grouped in the stiffest series of multiples of eight that have ever found room in a symphony. It is a delightful and child-like reaction from the drama of the first movement, and, except for a certain wistfulness in the tone of the trio (Ex. 4), with its obstinate pedal-point in the drums, it succesfully hides whatever cares it may have. My figures show how the five beats throughout the movement are really a juxtaposition of a two-four and a three-four bar. Ex. 3 gives the main theme—

No. 3—

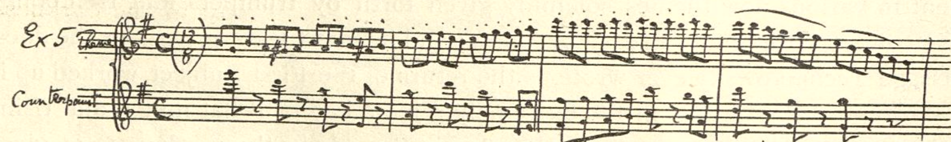
and Ex. 4 the trio—

No. 4—

There is a short and wittily simple *Coda* consisting of a descending scale in this rhythm 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥. | 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥. (1 2 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3) in the treble, with an ascending scale of crotchets (the first bar of Ex. 3 without the triplet quavers) rising in the bass to meet it.

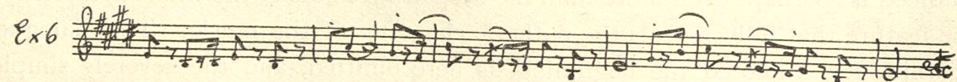
The gigantic march which constitutes the third movement begins with a quiet but busy theme, the triplet motion of which lasts almost incessantly until the final stage, where the Second Subject stiffens the whole orchestra into march-rhythm. In Ex. 5 I give, below the first theme, the counterpoint which accompanies its second statement—

No. 5—



The Second Subject (the main figure of which was already anticipated soon after the statement of Ex. 5) consists of a ten-bar tune beginning as follows—

No. 6—



and alternating with a second clause of eight bars which I need not quote.

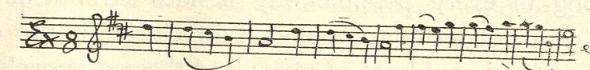
There is no development: the First Subject returns without any elaborate process; but its continuation becomes highly dramatic and is worked up to a tremendous climax crowned by the entry of Ex. 6 in G major as a rousing march for the full orchestra. The triumph is brilliant, but, perhaps in consequence of the way in which it was approached, not without a certain fierceness in its tone. At all events, it would, if translated into literature, not be the triumph of the real hero of the story. He might share in it at the time: but his heart will be in the mood of Tschaikowsky's finale.

This experiment, unique in form and unique in success, is carried through on two themes: the desperate First Subject, with its curious arrangement of crossing parts in the first four bars:—(the individual violin parts are quite unintelligible, but their combination gives a perfectly plain melody, as shewn here)—

No. 7—

and the consolatory Second Subject—

No. 8—



There is no development, but the Second Subject is worked up to a great climax, which leads, after some dramatic pauses, to the Recapitulation. In this the First Subject reaches a still greater climax, which dies down until a distant stroke of a gong (the most ominous sound in the orchestra, if discreetly used) brings back the Second Subject (Ex. 8), now in B minor and in a mood of utter despair. And so the music of the whole Symphony dies away in the darkness with which it began.

2. CONCERTO in D minor for Clavier and Strings - - - *Bach*

Pianoforte—PROFESSOR TOVEY.

Allegro.
Adagio.
Allegro.

The making of many of Bach's works is a wonderful history; but the making of this D minor Concerto is perhaps the most wonderful of all. Unfortunately the original composition is lost, and what we possess is one of Bach's adaptations of it. Evidently he was very fond of it (and no wonder),—for he adapted it to many occasions. A single glance at the solo passages will show that, like most of Bach's clavier concertos, the work was originally a violin concerto: in this case the greatest and most difficult violin concerto before the time of Beethoven. With the aid of Bach's two earlier extant key-board versions it is easy to restore the original text with complete certainty, even in the very bold and difficult unaccompanied passage at the climax of the first movement. A restored text of the work as a violin concerto is published, but unfortunately it was done in the Dark Ages as regards Bach-scholarship, and it is demonstrably wrong in every possible way besides several impossible ways. Meanwhile Bach's own wonderful arrangement for clavier is full of magnificent features which the original could not possess; and these may well outweigh the undeniable fact that the solo passages, though much easier to play on the keyboard than on a violin, have none of the points which passages really imagined for the keyboard would have, while they would vividly bring out all the qualities of a violin. This is especially the case with those passages in which one hand is kept repeating a single note, A, E, or D, while the other hand dovetails neighbouring notes around it. On the violin the notes A, E, and D are open strings with more resonance than the other notes, and a special effect is thus produced spontaneously. A pianist can produce something analagous, but he needs to know these facts before he can see the point of the passage. On a harpsichord with two manuals, or an organ, this type of passage can produce a special effect more automatically, and can, of course, produce it around any note,—not only around A, D, and E. (The magnificent harpsichords which Mr Dolmetsch now makes might even reveal the effects Bach had in mind to a large audience in a large hall: it is probable that the best-preserved ancient harpsichord, delightful though it still can be, is but a shadow of what it was in its youth, and Mr Dolmetsch's new harpsichords are probably finer than any instrument of Bach's time. I saw a spinet some months ago which had fully the sustaining power of a large pianoforte.) Against the disadvantage (such as it is)

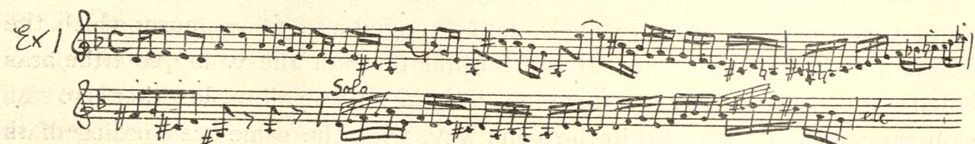
of these violin idioms we may set the wonderful new material Bach has given to the left hand of the clavier-player. In the three extant versions of the work we can see this new part (for it is nothing less) in all stages of its growth, beginning with a mere adaptation of the orchestral bass and ending in a rich contrapuntal fabric which it is impossible to conceive as other than an integral part of the whole conception.

So far, however, we are on comparatively technical ground; though I cannot admit that the imaginative treatment of instruments is a merely academic matter. But there is a more significant history to this work than its origin in a violin concerto. One day Bach had occasion to write a Church Cantata beginning with the text, "We must pass through much tribulation into the kingdom of God." Here was an opportunity for doing justice to his favourite and greatest concerto. He arranged the violin part of the first movement for the organ *an octave lower*. This gave it an unusual and impressive darkness of tone, which he threw into relief by adding to the orchestra three new parts for two oboes and a *taille* (or cor anglais). The cantata, then, begins thus with a great instrumental overture chosen and arranged as a fit representation of the heroic progress of the souls of the faithful through the valley of tribulation. Then comes one of the most stupendous *tours de force* in all musical history. The slow movement is arranged in the same way, with the same transposing of the solo part an octave lower and the same additional wind-parts; but all this is the mere accompaniment to a totally independent four-part chorus! If the result were confused or unnatural there would be little more to be said for it than for Raimondi's four complete simultaneous fugues in four different keys (which we have in the Reid Library), or for his three simultaneous oratorios, or for many other scholastic tomfooleries which may be played backwards and upside down without sounding noticeably more sensible than when played right-end foremost. But Bach's result is of the same Greek simplicity (for all its ornamentation) as his original: in fact, it is just as much an original inspiration as if no earlier or simpler version had existed. Some day I hope that the Reid Concerts may comprise a series of such works. The interest of an opportunity for comparing these different versions is not mainly or even really historical; it is æsthetic. It enables us to understand how different elements of the art are, so to speak, on different planes; and that the great artist, by keeping these planes distinct, preserves clearness and simplicity in his whole results, where lesser artists would produce confusion and pedantry.

Bach's concerto form is very lucid and easy to follow, so long as we are not misled by the popular fallacy which supposes that an artistic contrast becomes less real when it is made less violent. In the concerto styles from Mozart onwards the contrast between the solo and the orchestra is greater than that between any other members of any musical combination; but the more

level texture of Bach's music should not delude us into thinking that he knows of no contrast between solo and *tutti* at all. On the contrary, his whole concerto-style depends on it, just as the almost identical style of the vocal arias of the period depends on the power of the voice to arrest attention and to thrust the most elaborate instrumental accompaniment into the background. Hence the concerto, like the aria, naturally begins with a paragraph for the orchestra, giving the main themes on which the solo is to be developed. And perhaps the solo will take up these themes at once, or perhaps (as in the first movement of this concerto and in many other cases) it will begin with something quite new. My first quotation gives the opening paragraph (the shortest and most powerful of all Bach's ritornellos) together with the first notes of the solo. (I have given in small demisemiquavers the detail Bach has added to what we know to be his original version,—the addition is typical of the way in which he transforms violin-figures into a keyboard style)—

No. 1—



The plan of the movement is that of all such concertos: the solo passages become richer and bigger as the work proceeds, and from time to time the orchestra crowns a climax by breaking in with the ritornello, each time appearing in some different related key, as buttresses appear at suitable points as you walk round a cathedral.

The slow movement is in a form which only Bach has brought to perfection, though many an earlier composer used it in a less concentrated way. We may call it the Modulating Ground Bass The orchestral ritornello consists of the bass of Ex. 2. Upon the last bar of this enters the dialogue between the solo and the upper strings, which I give in the other staves of the quotation—

No. 2—

The ritornello becomes a ground-bass to this dialogue throughout the movement, but it differs from an ordinary ground-bass in this, that its final cadence shifts to

a different key each time, and that before each recurrence a connecting link of three bars (modelled on bars 3-6 of Ex. 2) establishes yet another key for it to start from. At last, of course, it comes round to the tonic; the final cadence is expanded (in the Church Cantata there is a crowning stroke of genius in the chorus here), and the movement closes, as it began, with the bare ground-bass. Part of the unique grandeur and solemnity of this concerto lies in the fact that the slow movement is in the minor mode, and still darker than the other movements. In all Bach's other concertos and sonatas in the minor mode the slow movement is in a major key.

The finale, though in no obvious outward contrast to the rest of this powerful work, is distinctly brighter in tone. Bach has proved that he meant it to be so, by arranging it for organ with the same extra instruments, but without (as far as we can tell) the same transposition to a lower octave, as a prelude to a Cantata on the text "In the Lord have I put my trust" (*Ich habe meine Zuversicht*). Unfortunately only one page of this arrangement is extant, though we possess the Cantata itself.

I give the ritornello, numbering with Roman figures those clauses which the orchestra sometimes brings in separately. It is also necessary to quote the bass of clause I, because it is in "double counterpoint" with the treble; that is to say, in some of the later returns of the theme the treble becomes bass and the bass treble.

No. 3—

The solo is as full of remarkable violin passages as in the first movement, and the extant fragment of its arrangement as a Church Cantata prelude throws valuable light on the original form of the final cadenza. The design is on almost the same vast scale as the first movement, so that this movement, though not the longest movement in this concerto, is the most important of all Bach's instrumental finales; a fitting climax to this monumental work.

3. SINFONIA EROICA, Op. 55 - - - - *Beethoven*

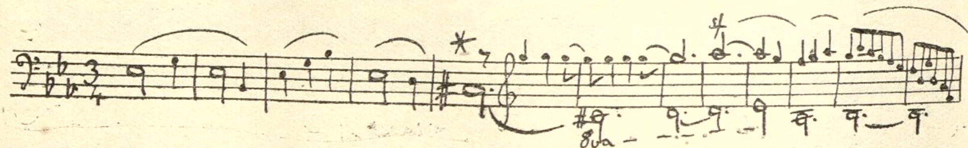
Allegro con brio.
MARCIA FUNEBRE. Adagio assai.
SCHERZO. Allegro vivace.
FINALE. Allegro molto.

Everyone knows the story of how Beethoven's admiration for Napoleon inspired this symphony, and how the news of Napoleon's coronation infuriated Beethoven almost to the point of destroying the finished work. The autograph score is in the musical archives of Vienna; and, in the title-page where Bonaparte's name once stood, a ragged hole attests the truth of the story.

Much comment has been wasted on the position of the Funeral March, and on the Scherzo and Finale which follow it. One very useful and practical treatise on composition actually cites the Eroica Symphony as an example of the way in which the sonata form loads the composer with inappropriate additions to his programme: an observation on which it is a fair comment that musical criticism does not gain in literary dignity by merely becoming unmusical. Beethoven does not think a symphony a reasonable vehicle for a chronological biography of Napoleon: he does think it the best possible way of expressing his feelings about heroes and hero-worship. Death must be faced by heroes and hero-worshippers, and if what heroes know about it is of any value to mankind they may as well tell us of their knowledge while they are alive. And the mere courage of battle is not enough; it is the stricken nations whose sorrow must be faced. Afterwards the world revives, ready to nourish more heroes for happier times.

I. *Allegro con brio.*—After two strong introductory chords the violoncellos state the principal theme. It is simply the notes of a common-chord swinging backwards and forwards in a quietly energetic rhythm. Then, as the violins enter with a palpitating high note, the harmony becomes clouded, soon, however, to resolve in sunshine. Whatever you may enjoy or miss in the Eroica Symphony, remember this cloud: it leads eventually to one of the most astonishing and subtle dramatic strokes in all music.

No. 1—



Long afterwards, when the vast "second subject" has displayed its pro-

cession of themes, beginning with one which (though of cardinal importance) has escaped the notice of analysists,

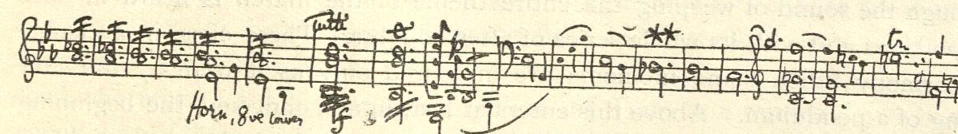
No. 2—

and when the still more vast development has twice introduced an entirely new lyric passage,

No. 3—

we are waiting on the threshold of the original key in breathless suspense for the return of the first theme. At last the suspense becomes too much for one of the horns who, while the echoes of the dominant chord are still whispering, softly gives out the tonic chord of the theme. The orchestra instantly awakens and settles down to recapitulate the opening. (Let us hope that the days are past when anyone could doubt the sanity of Beethoven's genius in that famous collision of shadowy harmonies; but even Bülow corrected the passage into exactly the sort of lopsided platitude that creeps into a classical text through the mediation of a "gloss.") Soon the theme reaches the little cloud that we noticed in the beginning. The cloud "resolves" in a new direction, and the sun comes out in one of the two possible keys whose only characteristic is that of complete contradiction to the tonic which has been regained after all that suspense!

No. 4—



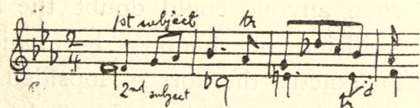
The other contradictory key follows, by way of restoring the balance; and then the main key proves strong enough to stand the shock, and the design finishes its normal course and expands freely in its huge peroration.

The other surprises and strokes of genius in this movement may safely be left to speak for themselves; with the exception of the last of all, which, together with the unobtrusive but cardinally important theme it concerns

(No. 2), has singularly contrived to escape the notice of all the best-known commentators, including even Weingartner. It need not escape the notice of any listener, for it is marked by a sudden and impressive lull at the very height of the final climax.

II. *Marcia Funebre.*—The great length of the funeral march results mainly from the size of its principal theme. This is a broad melody in two portions, each of which is given out by the strings and repeated (in the first case with a close in a new key) by the wind. This takes time; and, in addition, there is a series of afterthoughts which brings this main theme to a close on a scale almost large enough for a complete movement. Yet Beethoven's purpose is to work out the whole in rondo form; that is to say, a form in which the main theme recurs like a choral refrain alternating with at least two contrasted episodes. It is obvious that such a purpose can here be carried out only by a miracle of concentration and terseness; but such miracles are Beethoven's normal form of action, and this funeral march broadens in its flow as it develops. The first episode, in the major mode, has the position of a "trio," beginning in consolation and twice bursting into triumph. Then the light fails and the mournful main theme returns. Its energy cannot carry it even through its first phrase, and the second episode breaks in, a solemn double fugue which Weingartner has well called Æschylean.

No. 5—



This rises to a climax and ends with a solemn slow close into a fragment of the main theme, rising upwards in a sigh which is suddenly answered by a roar from the depths, and an upheaval fit for a setting of the *Dies Irae.* "Never" (says Weingartner) "has a fearful catastrophe been described with simpler means." The tumult subsides in the weeping of a *lacrimosa dies*, and through the sound of weeping the entire theme of the march is heard in both its portions and with its whole series of afterthoughts. These close in a change of harmony; then some moments are measured only as it were by the slow swing of a pendulum. Above this enters at last, in a distant key, the beginning of a new message of consolation, but it dies away and the movement concludes with a final utterance of the main theme, its rhythms and accents utterly broken with grief.

III. The Scherzo is the first in which Beethoven fully attained Haydn's desire to replace the minuet by something on a scale comparable to the rest of a great symphony. Its characteristics are unmistakable, and we need only mention the long-subdued whispering of the opening, blazing out so suddenly

into a *fortissimo;* the trio with its three horns whose classical imperfections of technique Beethoven has exploited to poetic ends which the perfectly equipped modern player has to rediscover by careful research; and the mysterious *coda* with its menacing drums.

IV. The Finale is in a form which was unique when it appeared, and has remained unique ever since. This has given rise to a widespread notion that it is formless or incoherent. It is neither, and its life (which is its form) does not depend upon a label. The best way to understand it is not to think of the interesting earlier pianoforte *Variations and Fugue on a theme from Prometheus*, on which its material is based, but simply to identify its material under three headings, a Bass, a Tune, and a Fugue, and to look for these three objects in the following order. First, after a short but fiery introduction, the Bass is solemnly given by the strings, *pizzicato*, and echoed by the wind. Its first part happens to make a grotesque but presentable theme, and many a later composer has owed Beethoven a grudge for thus indelibly stamping his name on one of the most unavoidable basses a simple melody can have. But the second part is quite absurd as a "melody," and we can almost see Beethoven laughing at our mystified faces as it digs us in the ribs. However, the whole Bass proceeds to put on clothes, of a respectable enough contrapuntal cut; and, by the time we are almost ready to believe its pretensions, the Tune comes sailing over it in full radiance and we think no more of the Bass, though it faithfully performs its duty as such. The Vision of Dry Bones is accomplished.

No. 6—

So far Beethoven's design has been exactly that of his *Introduzione col Basso del Tema* in the *Prometheus* variations; but now instead of making variations he leads in a few argumentative steps to a new key and there proceeds to the Fugue. The subject of the Fugue comes from the Bass, and is worked up to a vigorous climax which suddenly breaks off into a rich double variation (*i.e.* a variation in which the repeats are themselves varied) of the Tune, in a remote key. In the second part of this variation the flute is very brilliant, and the orchestra repeats the part with rough energy, leading to a high-spirited episode in a dance-rhythm, with the first four notes of the Bass sturdily marking time throughout. After this the first part of the Tune reappears and soon leads to a resumption of the Fugue with new features (inversion of its subject; combination with part of the Tune in a new accentuation, etc.). The Fugue, which is here throughout in the main key, now comes to a grand climax ending with an anticipatory pause.

Then, like the opening of the gates of Paradise, the Tune enters slowly (*Poco Andante*) in a glorious double variation the richness of which has led some analysts to think that much of its material is gratuitously new. (The fact is that the slightness of the second part of the Tune is expressly designed to give legitimate scope for the utmost freedom in variations.) Then (as in the parallel finale to the pianoforte variations, though with incomparably more solemn pomp) there is a tremendous *fortissimo* variation with the Tune in the Bass. (It is worth noting that the original Bass finally disappeared with the last Fugue.)

After this all is *Coda,* and one of the most profound Codas even Beethoven ever wrote. With a passing hint at a new variation the music modulates with some passion through a distant key to a point where it suddenly melts into a mood we have not found before in the whole symphony. Without this mood the greatest of heroes is but a demigod with powers alien to humanity and therefore less than divine. It is the mood of that mysterious and true humour that is not far from tears; and here, just upon the close of his heroic symphony, Beethoven holds us for the last time in suspense until the orchestra blazes out in a larger version of the fiery introduction and brings the work to its triumphant end.

DAVID MACDONALD, 74 HANOVER ST., EDIN.

SKETCH PROGRAMMES

(Subject to additions and alterations)

FIFTH CONCERT—Saturday, 5th April, at 3 p.m.

Solo Vocalist—Miss Helen Anderton.

Symphony in G minor - - - - - - -	*Mozart*
Cantata for Alto, Organ, and Orchestra - - - - -	*Bach*
Symphony in C major - - - - - - -	*Schubert*

SIXTH CONCERT—Saturday, 10th May, at 3 p.m.

Solo Pianist—Miss Grierson.

Overture to "Coriolanus" - - - - - -	*Beethoven*
Concerto in A major - - - - - - -	*D. F. Tovey*
Pianoforte Solos - - - - - - -	*Chopin*
Fourth Symphony, in E minor - - - - - -	*Brahms*

SEVENTH CONCERT—Saturday, 24th May, at 3 p.m.

(Choral-Orchestral)

Solo Vocalist—Miss Helen Anderton.

The Kirkhope Choir.

Symphony in C major - - - - - - -	*Mozart*
Second Act of "Orfeo" - - - - - -	*Gluck*
"Songs of Farewell" - - - - - - -	*Parry*
Variations for Orchestra - - - - - - -	*Elgar*

Etc.