

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1956-57

Second Concert

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader : DR. JOHN FAIRBAIRN

Conductor : SIDNEY NEWMAN

Solo Pianoforte

COLIN HORSLEY

THE MUSIC HALL, EDINBURGH

THURSDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 1956

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME : ONE SHILLING

PROGRAMME

1. OVERTURE : "PROMETHEUS"

Beethoven
(1770-1827)

The ballet called "The Men of Prometheus," for which Beethoven wrote the music, was produced at the Burg Theatre in 1801, and was such a success that a pianoforte score of the music was immediately published. It contains some of the most delightful of Beethoven's lighter work, and a revival of the whole in ballet form would be of more than historic interest. The well-known Overture has a short but solemn introduction to a lively and brilliantly scored movement, which familiarity cannot rob of its freshness.

M.G.

2. PIANOFORTE CONCERTO NO. 4 IN G MAJOR (Op. 58)

Beethoven

Allegro moderato
Andante con moto
Rondo : Vivace

There are apparently still those who imagine that, because this concerto opens with the pianoforte in quiet solitude, the usual orchestral tutti has therefore been dispensed with. For such folk the only consideration seems to be "Who begins? Pianoforte or orchestra?" Now the vast majority of concertos declare themselves to be such at the outset, however prolonged may be the orchestral tutti which prefaces the first appearance of the solo instrument. That declaration is made in the nature of the material used and the manner of its presentation. Only the personality of the solo instrument is for a while withheld. But, in his fourth and fifth concertos, Beethoven adopted two widely different methods of presenting the personality of the solo instrument at the very outset, as did Mozart on one occasion, and as Brahms did both in the B flat major Pianoforte Concerto and in the Double Concerto. The method here used by Beethoven is, and is likely to remain, unique. It belongs to the very essence

of the theme ; but it is also an immediate revelation of the degree of intimacy attained by this most intimate of concertos—an intimacy which is only enhanced by the stark opposition of the one and the many in the slow movement, and by the subtle but inescapable logic of the rondo finale, whose theme, entering always obliquely from the subdominant, was once quoted in *Punch* in some such words as : "To get there, sir, you didn't rightly ought to start from here at all." This theme has a droll touch of humour in its cadence, the identical joke which Mozart so vastly enjoyed in "The Hunt" quartet, though no doubt Beethoven would swear that he had it straight from his pianoforte !

3. OVERTURE : "THE CONSECRATION OF THE HOUSE" (Op. 124)

Beethoven

This spacious overture was written to inaugurate the new Josephstadter Theatre in Vienna in the autumn of 1822. And most spacious it is, not only in design but in its very spirit. From the first widely spaced chords which set the quiet solemn march upon its path, it is clear that we move in a world where simple things are to prove the profundity of their nature. No one could foretell the sequence of events that are so soon to bring us to the great conclusion of the matter, the exuberantly strong double fugue which is to plight its troth against the beat in the exercise of a strength that can stay the course beyond the race which it falls to most mortal fugues to run. The solemn march evokes a flourish of trumpet and drum beyond which one discerns a shadowy figure hurrying by (on the bassoons). At a more sober tempo a light fugato opens out to a trial of strength, only to yield to the unforgotten beauty of a quiet benediction from which, by steps at first tentative and then of ever-increasing assurance, the strings advance to proclaim the Herculean (and Handelian) labour of the day.

INTERVAL

4. SYMPHONY No. 5 IN E FLAT

Sibelius
(b. 1865)

Tempo molto moderato—Largamente—Allegro moderato
—Presto

Andante mosso, quasi allegretto

Allegro molto

First performed in 1915 at the national festival in celebration of the composer's fiftieth birthday, this symphony, the most easily accessible and popular of the seven, was subsequently twice rewritten. Whilst the outstanding character and lasting effect are of supreme happiness, already established with confident gaiety long before the end of the first movement, as assuredly as in any Beethoven Scherzo ; yet, despite the calm prospect of the opening, this broad plateau of delight is to be reached only by ways enshrouded in chromatic mists wherein every motif appears strangely pathetic, if not indeed lugubrious. The G major Andante is a movement of exquisite tenderness and sensibility, pervaded by one haunting rhythm. Amidst the restless gaiety of the Finale, jubilation bestrides the very bells, whose motif at the last is built up into a majestic pæan of overwhelming sonority.

S.T.M.N.