

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1957—58

Second Concert

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader: DR. JOHN FAIRBAIRN
Conductor: SIDNEY NEWMAN

Solo Violoncello :
FLORENCE HOOTON

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC
THURSDAY, 31st OCTOBER, 1957

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

PROGRAMME

1. SYMPHONY NO. 19 IN E FLAT (K.132)

Mozart
(1756-1791)

Allegro
Andante
Menuetto
Allegro (Rondo)

Immediately upon his return from Italy to Salzburg in the last weeks of 1771 Mozart (who had composed symphonies whilst at Bologna and Milan) embarked on a series of symphonies which occupied him during much of the following spring and summer. Amongst these eight youthful symphonies (the composer was just sixteen years old) this in E flat is in many ways the most remarkable. The Andante is an exceptionally expressive movement imbued with a certain turbulent romanticism that is to show itself on some occasions in the works of the next year or so. If the alert strength of the Minuet suggests Haydn at his boldest, the quiet harmonic mystery of the Trio murmurs prophecies of Schubert. The finale has the formal simplicity of the French type of rondo, but within this formal frame it sets a copious store of episodes of the finest invention.

Mozart here employs four horns—inexplicably marking two of them as “Corni in Es, alti”. No one has ever heard of a high E flat crook, but perhaps he had seen some such curious notation used in Italy. Possibly he merely wished to spare the Salzburg first horn the psychological embarrassment of actually seeing a top C.
S.T.M.N.

2. CONCERTO FOR VIOLONCELLO AND ORCHESTRA

Kenneth Leighton
(b. 1929)

Allegro con moto
Scherzo and trio
Lentissimo sostenuto

The first performance of this work was given at the Cheltenham Festival of 1956 (the work having been completed in the previous year) by the Hallé Orchestra under Sir John Barbirolli, with Florence Hooton as soloist. This year it was played at the Promenade Concerts in London under the composer's own direction.

The work attempts to exploit the *lyrical* possibilities of the solo instrument by means of extended melodies based on key intervals. This is at once apparent at the start of the first movement. The 'cello enters in the second bar with a tune of which the opening,

rhythmic and intervallic shape becomes the central idea of the design. The orchestra takes this up in notes of shorter value, and leads to a more rhythmic and energetic section, in which the more athletic possibilities of the solo instrument are exploited. The excitement of this soon dies down, however, to make way for the second main subject—a slower tune of which the first four notes are thematically important and which is characterized by the leap of a major seventh. The extended development which follows contrasts and combines these two main subjects, culminating in an orchestral climax and a cadenza, part of which is accompanied. In the recapitulation that follows attention is claimed first by the rhythmic version of the first subject, but soon the tempo slackens into a final meditation on the “motto-theme”, ending quietly on a chord which prepares us for the tonality of the Scherzo.

This movement is gay and exuberant, and the soloist leads off with both the main themes. The brass also contribute a subsidiary idea shortly after the opening. The Trio (Moderato dolce) beginning with an oboe solo is, by contrast, of a lyrical nature. After this the material of the Scherzo is elaborated and brought to a big climax by the full orchestra.

The emotional climax of the work (as in the composer's Violin Concerto) comes in the slow final movement, which uses material related to that of the first movement. The opening leap of a minor ninth on the 'cello, immediately contradicted by the drop of a whole tone, in an important thematic element. Oboe, flute, then 'cello successively play the second subject, and there is an impassioned orchestral climax in the centre of the movement.

K.L.

INTERVAL

3. SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN E MINOR (Op. 98)

Brahms
(1833-1897)

Allegro non troppo
Andante moderato
Allegro giocoso
Allegro energico e passionato

On a previous occasion I wrote of this symphony that “to attempt to declare in a few lines the tragedy writ large, the compassion, the humour ‘grim and gay’ and the philosophy of this monumental work would be to attempt the impossible.” To this I will only add two further remarks.

In a note to his agent a few days before the first performance under the conductor in October, 1885, von Bulow wrote: “Just

back from rehearsal. No. 4 stupendous, quite original, quite new, individual and rock-like. Incomparable strength from start to finish." This is my precedent for being sparing of words.

But whilst the profound use of passacaglia (terse variation) form in the finale is no longer a stumbling-block to any, I have known more than one person puzzled by the diversity of scene and event—a certain digressive tendency, in the first movement. Those heraldic imaginings whose glint is as that of things that emerge from the profoundest depths of Rembrandt, are yet to shine forth revealed in all their splendour. And it is no less purposeful than the design of a great novel by Tolstoy or Dostoevsky which with fresh chapters plunges the reader into strange scenes and new events with a purpose which can only gradually be revealed.

S.T.M.N.