

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1959-60

*Seventh Concert*

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader: DR. JOHN FAIRBAIRN

Conductor: SIDNEY NEWMAN

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
THURSDAY, 18th FEBRUARY, 1960  
AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

## PROGRAMME

1. OVERTURE: "Karelia" (Op. 10) *Sibelius*  
(1865-1958)

This overture and the suite (Op. 11) of the same name belong to the music written in 1893 for an historical pageant produced by the students of Viborg University. The familiar suite is rightly held in greater estimation, and it may surprise the listener to meet the theme of its Intermezzo in this different context. It is a vigorous and resplendent overture of an open processional character, and simple repetitive design—a forthright example of Sibelius' early style.

2. LEGEND: "The Swan of Tuonela" (Op. 22) *Sibelius*

"Tuonela, the realm of death—the Hades of Finnish mythology—is encompassed by a broad river of black and surging waters, upon which the Swan of Tuonela majestically sails and sings."

This masterpiece of poetic music—a legend depicted in orchestral colouring of the most impressive beauty, was originally conceived as the prelude to an opera based upon Runos 16-17 of the *Kalevala* to be entitled "The Building of the Boat," upon which Sibelius worked for a short while in 1893 before he abandoned the project.

3. SYMPHONY No. 6 (Op. 104) *Sibelius*  
Allegro molto moderato  
Allegretto moderato  
Poco vivace  
Allegro molto

The sixth symphony demands from the listener the capacity to move altogether away from the positive optimism and confident tonal assurance which emerges so strongly and with such splendence in the fifth symphony, to a realm in which the spirit and imagination are surrendered to an experience at once more mystical and more austere, which inevitably and essentially derives from the physical properties and tonal ambiguities of the Dorian Mode. For the symphony, though sometimes described as being in D minor, is committed in all its movements to a truly modal conception in what we may naively call "the white-note scale of D," i.e., a minor scale with a sharp sixth and flat seventh. The second movement, to give contrast of tonality, transposes the scale to G (minor), retaining the characteristic sharp sixth but now using a sharpened seventh, thus increasing the emphasis upon the irrational element

of this mode—the melodic tritone which obscures the diatonic definition of tonality which is basic to our traditional musical thought—by extending it to four whole tones in succession. Only towards the end of the last movement does a clearly defined D minor key emerge for a short but sufficient space to emphasise the finality of D against all inevitable ambiguity. For this inevitable ambiguity of the Dorian mode lies in the juxtaposition, with almost equal emphasis, of D minor (Dorian) and C major tonalities.

Thus, in the first movement, which opens in luminous modal polyphony of strings revealing the descending sequential line that permeates so many of the symphony's motifs, the main subject group of the allegro is a positive emphasis of C major, which at the last is so blazoned forth that the brief aftermath of quiet Dorian cadence is mysteriously unsettling. An equally unsettling and mystifying effect arises from the influence of the tritone producing a sequential descent of keys by whole tones.

The Allegro moderato—of such restrained tempo that Sibelius himself once referred to is as an Andantino—opens with an introduction whose motive persists throughout as an environment for a simple repetitive design of two alternating subjects, of which the first (essentially melodic) is treated by variation; but this formal scheme at length evaporates into an elusive realm of mysticism, briefly terminated by an articulate modal cadence.

The "daemonic" character of the Dorian clearly emerges in the scherzo, and with greater emotional disturbance in the main central body of the finale. But this last opens generously and serenely with a C major emphasis in its noble modal harmonies, and it is this which endows the final phase of the movement with its blended character of nobility, of inward glow, and yet of serene mysticism.

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### INTERVAL

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4. SUITE: "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" (Op. 60) *Richard Strauss*  
(1864-1949)

Overture to Act I (Jourdain)  
Minuet  
The Fencing-Master  
Entry and Dance of the Tailors  
Lully's Minuet  
Prelude to Act II (Intermezzo)

By 1911, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss had collaborated with magnificent success in creating two great operas, *Elektra* and *Der Rosenkavalier*. Hofmannsthal then adumbrated his

ideas for a small one-act opera with chamber orchestra—*Ariadne auf Naxos*. He had soon advanced to the brilliant and highly original conception of this as a design for the sequel to (or the second integral part of) a shortened version of Molière's comedy, "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme." Strauss's music for this original version therefore comprises incidental music for the play, and the opera itself—that glorious and masterly blend of opera seria and Commedia dell' Arte for which the boorish stupidity of Monsieur Jourdain was to be unwittingly responsible. Subsequently *Ariadne* was remodelled as a pan-operatic design divorced from the Molière play, which, restored to its original independence, received from Strauss the addition of a few more numbers of incidental music.

The suite derived from this incidental music comprises nine numbers, of which only a selection is offered on this occasion.

#### 5. DANCES FROM MAROSSZEK

*Kodály*  
(b. 1882)

Zoltan Kodály, like Béla Bartók, devoted himself in early life to a thorough-going study and collection of the folk-songs of his native land, Hungary. "Dances from Marosszek," which is based upon folk-dances collected in that district, is a comparatively early work, first written for pianoforte. The orchestration was made in 1930, several years later. The intensely deliberate theme of the opening recurs several times after intervening dances, now lively and gay, and now in quiet pastoral soliloquy, and ultimately with the characteristic abandon which all the world over is thought to be the hall mark of the true Hungarian.

S.T.M.N.