EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

in association with the

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

THE REID ORCHESTRA

Leader : Dr. John Fairbairn

E.U.M.S. CHOIR

with

THE UNIVERSITY SINGERS

and

CRANLEY SCHOOL CHOIR

Soloists :

Baritone : JOHN CAROL CASE

Tenor : JAMES MILLER

Conductor :

SIDNEY NEWMAN

USHER HALL

WEDNESDAY, 2nd MARCH, 1960

AT 7.30 P.M.

Programme Sixpence

PROGRAMME

1. TRAGIC OVERTURE (Op. 81) — *Brahms* (1833-1897

Allegro non troppo, *leading to*
Molto piu moderato, *leading to*
Tempo primo.

We find the truth of tragedy where the sublime holds truck with the common stuff of the world. The formal conventions of life are merged with the technically formal elements of dramatic art. So it is with this great overture. Both during the course of the work and at its conclusion themes of purely formal significance tie us to earth. But within this formal structure we are made to feel the force of cosmic events in the opening theme, the promise of some mysterious harmony of the universe in the passage that succeeds, and the consolation of the individual heart that the aspiring second theme reveals. We see also in the formal development section tragedy writ small, as though some gentle wretch were made the pathetic parody of the great, as the poor beggar fool in Boris Godounov.

2. SYMPHONY IN B MINOR ("Unfinished") — *Schubert* (1797-1828)

Allegro moderato
Andante con moto

Schubert scored these two movements at the end of October 1822 (not 1826 as inadvertantly noted in Tovey's *Essays*). The sketch in pianoforte score contains (beside these movement) the outline and a good deal of the substance of the third movement, the Scherzo up to the trio section, and a melodic line only of the first section (sixteen bars) of the latter. At that point Schubert abandoned the work, though his full score shows the first eight bars of the Scherzo in full orchestration. Various explanations have been suggested, though none so extravagant as the film of some years ago which with romantic disregard for all the evidence depicted Schubert tearing his score in two as a result of an unhappy love affair at Esterhaz.

The first performance was given in 1865 by Johann Herbeck who discovered the manuscript at the home of Schubert's friend Hüttenbrenner, who had himself made an arrangement for pianoforte duet in 1853.

3. FIVE MYSTICAL SONGS — *Vaughan Williams* (1872-1958)

(Poems by George Herbert)

For Baritone Solo, Chorus and Orchestra (1911)

(1) EASTER—"Rise heart ; thy Lord is risen."
(2) "I GOT ME FLOWERS TO STREW THE WAY."
(3) "LOVE BID ME WELCOME."
(4) THE CALL—"Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life."
(5) ANTIPHON—"Let all the world in every corner sing, My God and King."

INTERVAL

4. ORATORIO : "SANCTA CIVITAS" (The Holy City) — *Vaughan Williams*

Baritone : JOHN CAROL CASE
Tenor : JAMES MILLER

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY CHOIR

Semi-Chorus : THE UNIVERSITY SINGERS
Director : HERRICK BUNNEY

Distant Chorus : CRANLEY SCHOOL CHOIR
Conductor : PATRICIA LINES

The text of this oratorio, which was first performed in 1925, is taken from the Authorised Version of the Book of Revelation, with additions from Taverner's Bible and other sources. The composer has prefaced the score with a passage from Plato's "Phaedo." There Plato narrates the conversation of Socrates with his friends during his last hours, before he drank the hemlock. Socrates discusses the immortality of the soul and finally narrates

in a wonderful myth what he believes to happen to the soul after death, according as each has chosen the good and the beautiful on earth or not. He finishes this narration with these words :—

> "A man of sense ought not to say, nor will I be very confident, that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true. But I do say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily, that something of the kind is true. The venture is a glorious one, and he ought to comfort himself with words like these."

Very quietly and darkly moves the spirit of prophecy, until a voice is heard proclaiming, "I was in the spirit, and I heard a great voice of much people praising God . . ." Soon the barely audible Alleluias of this host rise tier upon tier until their song of praise is fully articulate. The vision seems about to fade altogether when the voice proclaims "I saw Heaven opened."

Of a sudden we see the armies which follow the King of Kings, for "in righteousness he doth make war." Against the splendour and power of the Heavenly Host the kings of the earth and their armies gather together, and are slain.

There follows the very eloquent and beautiful lament over "that great city Babylon, that mighty city ! for in one hour is thy judgment come."

And then from only the faintest murmur of sound the solo violin very, very quietly unfolds the vision of "a new heaven and a new earth," and we see "the holy city coming down from heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, having the Glory of God." At the last the choirs burst into a great paean of praise : "Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory . . ." and as this fades the voice of the Saviour is heard," Behold I come quickly, I am the bright and the morning star," to which the mumured prayer responds, "Amen, even so come Lord."

S. T. M. N.