

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1960-61

*Third Concert*

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader : POSY LEVY

Conductor : JOHN FAIRBAIRN

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 1960

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

## PROGRAMME

### SIBELIUS.

(1865-1958)

#### 1. TONE POEM: "EN SAGA" (Op. 9)

Composed in 1892, this is the first of Sibelius' published orchestral works, and the first undoubted masterpiece. With "En Saga", as Mr. Cecil Gray writes, Finland "definitely entered the European musical concert and made her existence fact for the first time in the history of music!". It was the first of his works to make Sibelius' name known outside Finland, and together with the tone-poem of seven years later, the now rather hackneyed "Finlandia", established the composer's international reputation. Today we find the great Sibelius in the symphonies, the later symphonic poems such as "Tapiola" and the incidental music for the stage; and I doubt if it could be said today what was true some twenty or more years ago, that "En Saga" is one of his best known works.

If there is one thing we may expect of any saga it is the cumulative effect of repetition. The rosy-fingered dawn of Homer and the oft repeated ceremony of Odysseus and his companions rising from their meals or sitting down to their oars are everlasting joys. Furthermore, an outstanding feature of Finnish (and indeed Russian) folk-songs is the cumulative power they possess through constant repetition, as Glinka well knew, if we may judge from his treatment of the Finnish folk-song given to the magician in *Russlan and Ludmilla*. Sibelius spins his tale with the economy of but three main themes. But dynamics are the stuff of his musical thought in such a work as this, and these well-established themes echo through long vistas of crescendo and diminuendo, sustained prodigiously by an unceasing procession of pedal notes.

S.T.M.N.

#### 2. SYMPHONY No. 7 (Op. 105)

Sibelius conducted a concert of his own music in Stockholm on 24th March 1924, the programme being the 1st Symphony, the Violin Concerto and the first performance of "Fantasia Sinfonica" C major, Opus 105. Thus was introduced the work he later called the 7th Symphony. The composer evidently was in doubt about the correct title for this gigantic single movement and he discarded the word "Fantasia" as inappropriate for such a highly organized piece of music. This work shows many of the characteristics of the 5th and 6th Symphonies, with one large central theme and many small phrases, some occurring often and in varied form, others

taking little part in the design after their initial appearance. The main theme, which makes three complete entries, has a noble and impressive sound, played on each occasion by a solo trombone. The contrasts of speed, mood, key, etc. contained in the four movements of a normal symphony, are all present in this one movement, including a theme of dance-like rhythm akin to a Scherzo. However the listener is unaware of sudden changes of tempi as these are contrived in such a subtle way that the sections merge imperceptibly to form a logical whole.

J.F.

## INTERVAL

#### 3. SYMPHONY No. 5 IN E FLAT.

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 paean of overwhelming sonority.

S.T.M.N.