

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1960-61

*Fifth Concert*

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader: Dr. JOHN FAIRBAIRN

Conductor: SIDNEY NEWMAN

Solo Violin :

MILES BASTER

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
THURSDAY, 19th JANUARY, 1961

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

## PROGRAMME

### 1. OVERTURE in C (Op. 101)

Mendelssohn  
(1809-1847)

The opus number is misleading, for this is a work of Mendelssohn's youth, composed in the autumn of 1826 (a year after the Octet and about the same time as the justly more famous Overture to 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'). It was performed in Berlin in November at a concert wherein Mendelssohn was soloist in Beethoven's Choral Fantasia. Years later he offered the work (MS) to the Philharmonic Society, London, and it was not published till some years after his death.

The nickname 'Trumpet Overture' seems to have been acquired fairly early on in its career, but the trumpeting is mostly confined to the simple heraldic utterance of the opening, resumed in the emergence of the recapitulation and the last phrase of the movement. In general the work exhibits an interesting mixture (perhaps not so convincing a blend as elsewhere) of classical and romantic idiom—the classical ingredients having a rather mingled flavour of Schubert-cum-Mozart, whilst the murmuring diatonic chords which hang in suspense in slow modulation seem already to look to the far off Hebrides.

### 2. VIOLIN CONCERTO in D major (Op. 77)

Allegro non troppo

Adagio

Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace—poco più presto

Brahms  
(1833-1897)

Brahms' violin concerto, dedicated to Joachim, was completed in 1878, the year after his Second Symphony. Fully twenty years separate it from his previous essay in concerto form, the D minor Pianoforte Concerto. It is, I feel, quite beyond my capacity to present any adequate idea of this glorious work in a short programme note. One may point to such features as the gloriously easeful arpeggio design of the opening theme (akin to that of the Second Symphony) or the fantasy-cadenza style of approach with which the violin enters upon its task, or the gloriously sustained paragraph of thirty bars of wind ensemble which unfolds the Adagio, or the exuberant trills with which the woodwind eventually cap the triumphant assertions of the Hungarian rondo-theme of the finale. But, however much one extends this selective process, one has not begun to get to the heart of this rich personality. I recommend my readers to turn to Tovey, and gladly lay aside my pen to take up my baton.

## INTERVAL

### 3. SYMPHONY in $\text{C}$ major (No. 9)

Schubert  
(1797-1828)

Andante leading to Allegro

Andante con moto

Scherzo : Allegro vivace

Finale : Allegro vivace

The Symphony was written in the year of Schubert's death, 1828, but it was not performed until Schumann rescued the manuscript from dusty oblivion in Vienna ten years later and took it to Leipzig, where Mendelssohn introduced it to the public for the first time. Since then it has securely held its place as one of the great masterpieces, a work sublime alike in inspiration and in grandeur of design. The noble introduction to the first movement, the profoundly moving tragedy of the slow movement, and the vitality and exaltation of the coda of the exuberant last movement are probably the most memorable moments of a work which provides one of the great experiences of a musical lifetime.

Already in the Octet of 1824 Schubert had prefaced an extended sturdy Allegro with a profoundly moving slow introduction which not only contains within it the rhythmical germination of the ensuing Allegro but also, with some transformation, is extensively integrated in the recapitulatory process of the Allegro movement. Here the prefacing Andante is much more extended and liberal in design, but in a somewhat similar way there emerges from this broad melody the rhythmic motive of the great Allegro ; and of the melody itself not only does one of its most telling phrases re-emerge, reiterated with wonderful effect upon the trombones, after the second subject, and clinched by the triumphant G major acclamation of "What I say three times is true", but its first simple utterance finds a glorious apotheosis at the conclusion of the *più moto* coda, demanding for itself some slight broadening of the now impetuous tempo to maintain its inherent grandeur. Tovey's essay reminds us how Schubert's revision of the basic rhythmical motive of the Allegro throughout his already completed score made a uniquely distinctive idea out of an initial tonic-dominant utterance which had a stark directness akin to Mozart's hammered Credo (in his great unfinished C minor Mass). But perhaps more important than the inescapable bold utterance of the strings in the first moments of the Allegro is the only too easily neglected rejoinder of wood-wind and horns which gives the true melodic significance of the whole paragraph.

S.T.M.N.