

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1961-62

Fourth Concert

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader: Dr. JOHN FAIRBAIRN

Conductor: SIDNEY NEWMAN

Solo Viola:

BRIAN HAWKINS

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC
THURSDAY, 30th NOVEMBER, 1961
AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME: ONE SHILLING

PROGRAMME

1. OVERTURE: "CORIOLANUS" (Op. 62) *Beethoven*
(1770-1827)
2. PASTORAL SYMPHONY *Vaughan Williams*
(1870-1958)
Solo Soprano—JOYCE ARMSTRONG
Molto moderato
Lento moderato
Moderato pesante—Presto
Lento—Moderato maestoso

This symphony (the composer's third—for the choral 'Sea Symphony' has to be reckoned in the series) received its first performance under Sir Adrian Boult in January, 1922. When Sir Donald Tovey first introduced it at a Reid concert in 1927 it was partnered by the Beethoven Pastoral Symphony. As Tovey then observed, Beethoven's symphony is that of a town-dweller glad of a country holiday, whilst Vaughan Williams' is that of a man whom, but for his London Symphony, we could hardly expect to find anywhere but in the country. And it is an English countryside we contemplate here—that of the southern counties. Constant Lambert (in his excellent appreciation of the work in *Music Ho!*) writing of the foreigner's inability to understand this work, said: "It is clearly difficult to appreciate the mood or form without being temperamentally attuned to the good greys and greens, the quietly luxuriant detail, the unemphatic undulation of the English scene." There is in fact a wealth of interwoven musical lines, not sharply differentiated in character, but with just such a blending of clarity and obscurity as the eye discerns tracing the merging lines of hill and hedgerow—just such a fluctuation of musical colour as the passing light and shade that quietly sweep across an abiding landscape—just such moments when emotion swells and relapses into passive contemplation as all must have experienced on the idle hill of summer. Let us sit for a while without thought of time (who has not done so?) and absorb the essences of this land. It has been said by someone that this is a symphony of four slow movements, and indeed the third movement, despite its outburst of swaggering gaiety is too heavily encumbered with clogged boots and lumbering wheels to be a true scherzo—though fairies may flit as they please, as indeed they do, dissolving all in speedy fantasy. Much as the second movement is quietly arched by the natural tones of horn and trumpet in ample span, so also is the final scene enfolded in the song of a distant singer as sounds recede and vanish into silence.

INTERVAL

3. "DER SCHWANENDREHER"

Hindemith

Concerto for Viola and small orchestra,
based on old folk-songs.

(b. 1895)

1. Zwischen Berg und tiefen Tal.
2. Nun laube, Lindlein, laube.—Fugato : Der Gutzgauch auf dem Zaune sass.
3. Variations : Seid ihr nicht der Schwanendreher

This very attractive, unusual, and tuneful concerto was composed in 1935. The solo writing reflects all the technical virtuosity of the composer's own art as a viola player in his early life. The unusual colouring and piquancy of the work spring no less from the nature of the orchestra employed than from the composer's idiom and the folk song melodies—the only orchestral strings included are four 'celli and two or three basses; with exception of a single oboe the wood wind are double; the brass consists of three horns, one trumpet and one trombone; timpani and harp complete the picture.

Hindemith notes on the score the kind of mediaeval picture he means the listener to envisage—"A fiddler comes amongst a merry company and plays the music he has brought with him from his travels; songs both grave and gay, and a dance to end with. As a true musician he extends and ornaments his tunes, preludising and indulging in inventive fantasy as occasion and his imagination prompt." The folk songs are from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. The first, "Between mountain and deep valley" is first heard on the brass in the slow introductory movement to which the preludising soloist addresses attention, but also re-emerges both boldly and quietly upon several instruments in turn in the course of the sturdy fast movement which ensues.

The second movement opens and closes in a very peaceful and lyrical vein—a haunting pastorelle of viola and harp provides the setting for the chorale-like lines of the simple song "Now shed your leaves little Linden-tree," but the centre of the movement is a gloriously happy and sturdy fugato in which everyone gets the maximum delight out of 'the cuckoo who sat on a fence getting soaked in the rain.'

As for the bright tune of the final variations, who was a 'Schwanendreher' anyway? He apparently was the fellow who turned the spit roasting the swans, and the song is addressed to him.

4. SCHERZO CAPRICCIOSO, Op 66

Dvorák
(1841-1904)

The caprice of this refreshing and richly coloured Scherzo might be matched if the sun should take it into his head to walse between the tropics of Capricorn and Cancer with the express intention of refuting all predictable seasons. And I have no reason for supposing him to be less dexterous in the art of modulation than Schubert or Dvorák. No doubt you will find before the end of the game that you can afford to take a bet on the final key without necessarily possessing the qualifications of a Chaldean astronomer; whilst, if you are merely concerned to follow your sun—well, you are assured of perpetual summer. In truth this fine work, composed in 1883 (two years before the D minor Symphony), is one of Dvorák's happiest, most ingenious, and most spontaneous inventions. An orchestra may feel it to be rather more of a caprice than a joke to be asked to be dexterously brilliant in D flat major—but by the time anyone has said it he finds himself dancing in G major.

S.T.M.N.

NOTICE

The Annual Carol Party of the Edinburgh University Musical Society will be held in the McEwan Hall, on Thursday, 14th December, at 7.30 p.m. Doors open at 7. Patrons are asked to be present not later than 7.20. Programmes 2s. (Children 1s.) on sale at the door.