

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1963-64

Fourth Concert

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader: Dr. JOHN FAIRBAIRN

Conductor: SIDNEY NEWMAN

Oboe

MARGARET R. MONCRIEFF

Violin

EDNA ARTHUR

Flute

DAVID NICHOLSON

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC
THURSDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 1963

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

PROGRAMME

I. OVERTURE NO. 2 IN B MINOR, FOR FLUTE AND STRINGS. *J. S. Bach*
(1685-1750)

Overture: Grave—Allegro
Rondeau
Sarabande
Bourrée I and II
Polonaise (alternating with Double)
Minuet
Badinerie

Of Bach's four orchestral Overtures (or Suites), the first two were composed when he was capellmeister at Cöthen (1717-23), and the last two, which employ a larger force with trumpets and drums, after he had gone to Leipzig. Here the overture retains the full scheme of the Lully French-overture in resuming the slow introduction at the conclusion of the concerted Allegro—but with a difference. For here Bach transforms the four square solemnity of the preface into an epilogue in triple measure—a wonderful study in the art of freely inventive variation. The second movement, on the analogy of the Violin Partita in E, might well have been styled 'Gavotte en Rondeau'. The Sarabande maintains throughout a canon at the fifth between its melody and bass. The Polonaise of this period is a slow movement in triple measure with the neat precision of a minuet but with characteristic cadences upon the second beat. The Double (or variation) is here scored for flute and continuo alone. As for Badinerie we know the word better as *badinage*, or in simple English 'banter'. Never was Bach more thievishly humorous.

2. CONCERTO GROSSO IN G MINOR OP. 6, No. 6 *Handel*
(1685-1759)

Largo affettuoso
A tempo giusto
Musette: Larghetto
Allegro
Allegro

Handel's Opus 6 set of twelve concerti grossi was composed within a very few weeks in 1739. In contrast to the earlier set of six which included oboes, these splendidly varied and inventive works, each with its own very distinct character, are confined to the string orchestra—using the normal concertino group of two violins and 'cello to provide the contrast of mass and of personality with the larger ripieno group, which two groups in combination constitute the concerto grosso—the great concerted force. (It is interesting to note however that in some instances Handel did in another version, accommodate oboes in these works, as has only recently been shown by publication under the editorship of Professor Hans Redlich).

Only one of these five movements calls for any special comment. A Musette is in the first place a double-piped instrument—a charmingly intimate indoor instrument on which a tune is played over a drone. The

classical suite adopted the effect for certain movements such as a second (contrasting) Gavotte. But this is perhaps the most spacious movement ever derived from the conception of a Musette. It goes far beyond the evocative association of its first idea to produce effects of variation and contrast quite beyond the scope of the little instrument which prompted the basic motif.

3. CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND OBOE IN C MINOR *J. S. Bach*

Allegro
Adagio
Allegro

All of Bach's concertos for violin solo, or for violin in collaboration with others (such as the double violin concerto in D minor, and the Fourth Brandenburg Concerto in G with two flutes) exist only in transcriptions made by Bach himself for the clavier, and almost invariably the transcription changed the key of the original by lowering it a tone. (This does not necessarily mean that the work was then heard at a different pitch—for question arises as to the varying standards of pitch and particularly at what pitch the claviers were maintained for which Bach made the transcription). But the corpus of solo and double clavier concertos of Bach quite clearly includes, besides some demonstrably original works for the keyboard and these transcriptions of violin concertos which are extant also in their original scoring, a few works which from internal evidence can be recognised as transcriptions from originals for violin or another instrument. The double clavier concerto in C minor is precisely such a work. What was the original form? Internal evidence points to its having been a concerto not for two violins but for violin and oboe, and restoration to its original form is an easy matter except for the fact that there is some dispute about the original key. On the analogy of Bach's practice in the other fully attested transcriptions the original here might be thought to be D minor—and so one modern edition has it. But there are passages for the violin solo which indicate that the original here was C minor and that the transcription in this case involved no change of key.

INTERVAL

4. DIVERTIMENTO IN B FLAT FOR STRINGS AND HORNS (K.287) *Mozart*
(1756-1791)

Allegro
Theme with variations: Andante grazioso
Minuet
Adagio
Minuet
Andante—Allegro molto—Andante—Allegro molto

Mozart in his twenty-first year, for all his travels and his father's ambitions for him to secure an operatic or other post, was at home in Salzburg composing masses for the Salzburg establishment and a number of

divertimenti or cassations for this or that patron or event. ('Cassation' is virtually a synonym for divertimento—though literally it is thought to mean 'street music', being a French derivation from the German 'Gasse'.) Two of these divertimenti, both for strings and two horns (K.247 in F, of June 1776, and K.287 in B flat of Jan.-Feb. 1777) were written for Countess Antonia Lodron. A third was the well-known 'Haffner Serenade' in D. The one work which broke the pattern of these months was the remarkable Pianoforte Concerto in E flat composed expressly for the talented Mlle. Jeunehomme whom Mozart dubbed 'the Jenomy'.

By October 1777 Mozart was on his travels again, this time with his mother, seeking without success the prospect of a post at Munich and then at Augsburg before trying his fortune further afield at Mannheim and at Paris. Writing from Munich he tells his father of his playing to Count Salern and how he played, all from memory, the two divertimenti and the Serenade mentioned above. (As it was from memory he obviously did this on the pianoforte.) A few days later he is recounting a private music party (3.30-8 p.m.) he had held on 4th October to celebrate the name day of the landlord of the inn at which they were residing. At a few hours notice he had roped in the Munich violinist Dupreille who did not at all measure up to his expectations as a 'second'. But this time I think Mozart must himself have been playing fiddle—for the programme consisted of two Haydn quintets (probably Michael Haydn), three Mozart pianoforte concertos, his pianoforte trio (K.254) "and as a finale I played my last Cassation in B flat . . . I played as though I were the greatest violinist in Europe". Certainly it is a challenging (and often concerto-like) first fiddle part, and remember that Mozart's own fiddle technique is reflected in his own youthful concertos.

These charming and often brilliant movements call for no special comment except the frank admission that they are clearly conceived as chamber music (with a fairly virtuoso violino primo) rather than for orchestra. None the less if Mozart could play them on the pianoforte, a chamber orchestra may equally be allowed to enjoy itself trying to emulate the standards of that Sunday afternoon party. The theme of the final movement is based on the folk tune "D' Bäuerin hat d'Katz verlorn". Mozart enjoys himself by framing this kittenish catastrophe within an ironically mock-solemn dramatic recitative.

S. T. M. N.