

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1964-65

*Fifth Concert*

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader: DR. JOHN FAIRBAIRN

Conductor: SIDNEY NEWMAN

Baritone: JULIAN SMITH

Pianists:

EDWARD HARPER

KATHLEEN JONES

NICHOLAS BARBER

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
THURSDAY, 21st JANUARY, 1965

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

## PROGRAMME

### 1. CONCERTO GROSSO IN B FLAT, Op. 3 No. 2

Handel  
(1685-1759)

Vivace  
Largo  
Allegro  
(Andante)  
(Tempo di Gavotta)

Handel's Opus 3 set of six concertos, published in 1734, have been known for a long time as the 'oboe concertos' in contradistinction to the twelve Concerti Grossi Op. 6 which are entirely for strings with continuo. No ascertainable date of composition can be placed upon the individual concertos of Op. 3, but they are early works and were probably all written sometime before 1720. Here the disposition between the concertino (solo) groups and the ripieno group varies from work to work and from movement to movement. In this concerto the first movement presents two soli violini the second movement (linked to the first by a brief passage of *Grave*) decorates the continuo with arpeggio and scalic patterns of two soli violoncelli with a pulsing string accompaniment above, all as a setting to a slow eloquent cantilena for solo oboe. The Allegro is a four-part fugue in which oboes and bassoon double the strings. The fourth movement (Andante) contrasts a wind concertino of oboes and bassoon with a string concertino of violins and violoncello; whilst the last movement in a moderate gavotte tempo contrasts wind concertino with string ripieno, with two succeeding variations—the first with mobile quaver bass, the second with triplet decoration running throughout on the violins.

### 2. CANTATA FOR BARITONE (No. 56)

J. S. Bach  
(1685-1750)

"Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen"  
(The Chorale is sung by the University Singers)

This cantata, so wonderfully rich both musically and spiritually, was composed for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity (for which precise year is not known). The ideas that inspired the librettist (possibly Bach himself?) and the composer spring from the Gospel for the day (Matthew IX, Verses 1-8) which tell of our Lord passing over the Sea of Galilee in a ship and then of the healing of the man sick of the palsy. The idea of a crutch becomes the Cross-staff, and for him who gladly bears his cross this becomes his pilgrim's staff (opening Aria). But life's pilgrimage is like a journey at sea tossed by the waves (Recitative). The pilgrim of faith has present vision of endless joy to be (Aria) and declares himself prepared and ready for that day when he shall reach his blessed haven of peace, (Recitative). The final verse of chorale (6th stanza of a hymn by Johann Franck of 1653, set to Johann Crüger's melody of 1649) welcomes Death that shall bring the soul safely into port.

### 3. CONCERTO FOR THREE CLAVIERS, No. 2 in C major

J. S. Bach

Allegro  
Adagio  
Allegro

Whilst the majority of Bach's clavier concertos were transcriptions of earlier (Cothen period) string concertos made in all likelihood for his concerts with the University *collegium musicum* at Leipzig (and this is true of at least two of the three concertos for two claviers), the two splendid concertos for three claviers appear to be original works for this medium. Whilst in general the three instruments are upon the same footing, the first clavier is assuredly *primus inter pares* when it comes to ornate passages and allocation of cadenza-like passages.

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## INTERVAL

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### 4. CONCERTO IN D FOR STRING ORCHESTRA

Stravinsky  
(b. 1882)

1. Vivace—Moderato—vivace
2. Arioso: Andantino
3. Rondo: Vivace

The concerto was composed in 1946 and dedicated to Paul Sacher and his Basle Chamber Orchestra (sometime after the first performances, and the publication in 1947 the composer made some revision of the final Rondo).

The first movement is in ternary form with a strongly contrasted expressive and subtly-rhythmed homophonic middle section in contrast to the robustly vivacious staccato of the main motive, and with a coda that brings the two ideas into closer perspective in immediate succession. The beautiful accompanied melody of the Arioso (in B flat) is disposed on violins and violoncelli together in a novel kind of entwined scoring. The most notable feature of the Rondo is the *moto perpetuo* of chattering semi-quavers running almost throughout. One of its earlier decisive forms constitutes the main Rondo motive, muttering round a legato melodic thread on violins or cellos, issuing in a gay spiccato tune and then in wide-spanned legato melody before resumption of the refrain leads to a bravely marching episode starring two solo violins and two violas.

### 5. VARIATIONS on a Theme of Frank Bridge

Britten  
(b. 1913)

The variations were composed in the summer of 1937 and received their first performance at the Salzburg festival that year, but their reputation was established by the performance of the Boyd Neel Orchestra at the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in London (1938).

*Introduction and Theme*: The brief introduction serves merely to emphasise the first chord of the theme toccata-wise. Without break there follows:—

The Theme (*allegretto poco lento*): Two phrases, the second a transposition of the first. Note the falling fifth, the immediate variation of the same, the little phrase that rises and falls on the first violin, the chromatic descent of the harmonies, the repetition of all these in the second half, and the chromatic cadence. The theme is repeated with variation in expressive detail. Notice the moment of arabesque that decorates the sinking chromatic harmonies.

*Adagio*: The lower strings give the substance in sustained harmonies punctuated by expressive phrases on the violins (*arabesque figure*).

*March*: Emphasises the fifth and fourth of the theme as also the chromatic cadence. The martial theme is played by the lower strings *martellato* beginning very quietly, whilst the violins add commentaries of fifings and “rubadubs” until they take up the theme *forte* to the tread of powerful chords. And then with fife and “rubadub” the march again fades into the distance.

*Romance* (in B flat): The theme lurks unsuspected in the seemingly innocent pizzicato bass to the waltz melody. This melody takes as its motto the short rising and falling phrase noted in the theme.

*Aria Italiana* (in A major): A very brilliant and witty caricature of an Italian operatic Aria such as might have been composed by Rossini. It is all there, trills, bravura, A's in alt. and that typical Italian coquetry of rubato to which the period was prone.

*Bourree Classique* (in D minor): So heavy a footfall can seldom have invaded the classical ballroom. I had always understood the term to signify a fast or galloping dance. But “*bourrer*” also means “to ram or thrash”, and this the music proceeds to do with no small relish.

*Wiener Waltz*: It is worth observing that Vienna is not so far from the Italian border as to discourage Arlecchino from paying a visit to the City of Wales. I for my part shall be the last to insult a walse by analysing it.

*Moto Perpetuo*, in virtue of its title, enjoys the privilege of *carte blanche*. Thus it flattens out the theme into a wavering tremolando (if indeed it is the theme, for flattened out figures are not easily identified) and chases the hard worked cadence figure into a chromatic slither.

*Funeral March* (in C minor): Opens with passionate ringing chords, with a persistent rhythm in the bass as of drums. To these is added the passionate lament of the first violins, firmly marching through the scale that bridges that falling fifth.

*Chant*: A very original piece of musical impressionism.

*Fugue and Finale* (*Allegro molto vivace*): At the outset attempts to hood-wink one into believing that a modernist can make a fugue of a *moto perpetuo* which never departs from unison if he is clever in deploying his instruments. But this is all preamble designed to set the pace. The subject is a much condensed epitome of the arabesque and coda figures. The 'cellos eventually set a quicker speed with an insistent declaration which is adopted generally, and then from a hushed pianissimo the opening motive scatters across all the instruments to provide a complex texture through which the eloquent phrases of the theme burn their way. A final more simple variation of great pathos ensures (*Lento e Solenne*).

S.T.M.N.