

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1965-66

*First Concert*

**REID ORCHESTRA**

Leader: DR. JOHN FAIRBAIRN

Conductor: **SIDNEY NEWMAN**

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 21st OCTOBER, 1965

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

## PROGRAMME

### 1. ACADEMIC FESTIVAL OVERTURE, Op. 80

*Brahms*  
(1833-1897)

In 1876 the University of Cambridge proposed to confer the Honorary Degree of D.Mus. upon Brahms and Joachim. Brahms in accepting the invitation apparently did not realise that it was necessary for him to be present in person to receive the degree on the prescribed date in May, and in the event he neither came nor received the degree as did Joachim. The occasion nevertheless was marked by the first performance in England of Brahms' First Symphony (as yet in MS.) under Joachim's conductorship (in respect of which some readers may care to follow up the evidence I adduced some years ago in 'The Music Review' that the slow movement as then performed differed very considerably from the definitive version published a few months later).

In March 1879 the University of Breslau conferred on Brahms the honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Brahms composed this Festival Overture in acknowledgment thereof (not of course as an exercise for the degree) and it received its first performance at Breslau in January 1881 together with its very unlike twin, The Tragic Overture, which had been given its premiere in the previous month by the Vienna Philharmonic.

The work is a splendid blend of humour, high spirits, festivity and solemnity. A number of student songs have their role to play. Solemnity first appears with the melody *Wir haben gebaut ein stattliches Haus*, good humour finds its opportunity in *Was kommt dort von der Hohl'* for leading the bassoon out of the narrower path of academic virtue, whilst at the last full festivity is realised in solemn grandeur by *Gaudeamus igitur*.

### 2. SERENADE No. 1 in D, Op. 11

*Brahms*  
(1833-1897)

Allegro molto  
Scherzo: Allegro non troppo (D minor)  
Adagio non troppo (B flat major)  
Minuet I (G major) - Minuet II (G Minor) - Minuet I  
Scherzo: Allegro (D major)  
Rondo: Allegro

G. B. S., who blew his Cornopæan pretty stoutly about the walls of Brahms' Symphonies, nevertheless conceded that Brahms could write Serenade movements. But when confronted with this first of Brahms' orchestral works, a Serenade longer than many a large

scale symphony, some appear to be impatient that it is in fact a Serenade. There have been many different fashions affecting "Evening Music." Brahms follows a Viennese pattern of long ancestry in throwing in two Scherzi and a pair of Minuets. It is true that of the six movements only the Minuets, scored delicately as chamber music (for the work was designed originally as a nonet), could conceivably be played beneath a lady's balcony, and that the first Scherzo seems to have a serious prophetic eye upon the finale of the yet-to-be second symphony, and the second Scherzo a shrewd and twinkling eye fixed upon Beethoven's 2nd Symphony. It is true, moreover, that the Adagio is a full scale sonata movement of exceptional breadth, as indeed is the opening movement. But for all this, right from the onset the feeling of the work differs from that of a symphony. And if you fail to notice it in the opening drone with its sturdy horn melody, you deserve to be taken outside by the flute at the end of the movement for a gentle leg-pull.

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### INTERVAL

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### 3. SYMPHONY No. 5 (Op. 50)

*Carl Nielsen*  
(1865-1931)

I Tempo giusto - Adagio non troppo  
II Allegro - Presto - Andante un poco tranquillo - Allegro

Recognition within his own country, Denmark, of Nielsen's stature as a composer came only comparatively late in his life, and it is really only since the last war that his stature as a symphonist has come to be known and recognised at all widely in other lands. But if the celebration of his sixtieth birthday in 1925 was purely an occasion of national acclaim, the observance of his centenary has rightly commanded a more universal tribute.

It is not within the scope of a symphony orchestra with string sections of comparatively modest size and performing in a small hall to present all of his symphonies, and one remarks with pleasure that the Scottish National Orchestra which opened this season with Nielsen's vivacious and highly coloured 'Maskarade' overture will later this year present the Fourth Symphony ("The Inextinguishable", or as some prefer to translate it "The Unquenchable"). But having this spring put to the proof the feasibility of presenting this Fifth Symphony with the Reid Orchestra within the confines of this hall, and wishing to add further to our observation of this centenary, we deem it appropriate to repeat this great work in this succeeding season notwithstanding the notable performances that have been given by some great symphony orchestras in this city during the summer—not being unmindful of the satisfaction and

value that it is for us (orchestra and conductor) to have the opportunity, all too rare, of developing our experience of a great work in an early repeat performance.

The symphony was composed in 1921-22. It opens as though depicting a peaceful pastoral scene—the quiet beauty of landsspread wide beneath the sun, but upon this intrudes the inexorable march and clamour of human conflict—war, and the irrational passionate elements of man's nature. These battle, though with ultimate impotence against the heart of things, for it is the nobility, warmth and compassion of man that prevail. The second great movement, of strong formal design for all the variety and complexity it carries within its scheme, would seem to speak of man regenerated, the aspirations of head and heart moving to an ultimate grandeur, and of an optimism that shall prevail.

S.T.M.N.