

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS
SEASON 1966-67

FIRST CONCERT

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader: MILES BASTER

Conductor: SIDNEY NEWMAN

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 20th OCTOBER, 1966

AT 7.30 p.m.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

PROGRAMME

1. SYMPHONY No. 5 IN B FLAT MAJOR

Schubert
(1797-1828)

Allegro
Andante con moto
Menuetto (Allegro molto)
Allegro vivace

A gap of several years separates Schubert's early contributions to instrumental music from his late extraordinary achievements in this field, with his growth to fullest maturity as a songwriter in between. His Fifth Symphony still belongs to the early period, concluded with his teens. Written in 1816 and first performed in Vienna shortly after, it had probably no further performance during the composer's life-time.

As in a youthful early portrait the mature features of a well-known face are visible in softer, less marked lines, so Schubert's characteristic turns of melody and harmony are noticeable on every page of this lovely work, the most concise and well-shaped of his early symphonies. It points, as all his instrumental music of that period does in a general way, to Haydn and Mozart as chief roots of style. One may find the form loosely knit and of an easygoing kind; but there is a sincerity of feeling and a spontaneous tunefulness in it in which one recognised Schubert in his most endearing aspect. The first movement and the finale, both in sonata form with quite symmetric recapitulations, have the same keynote of transparent brightness. The andante, a truly Schubertian lyrical meditation, keeps within a closely related range of emotion. A minuet of the faster type, obviously influenced by one of Mozart's in the same key - it stands in G minor - provides the only dramatic touch in a picture of a cloudless day in Spring.

H.G.

2. SUMMER EVENING

Kodály
(b. 1882)

Zoltan Kodaly, like his great compatriot, friend and collaborator Béla Bartók, is known to the world at large primarily as a composer, but both within Hungary and amongst musiologists and folklorists throughout the world the work of these two in musical scholarship, particularly in the collection and study of Hungarian national music and folk song, is recognised as of outstanding importance. As a composer Kodály is best known by his many fine choral works, foremost of which is the superb 'Psalmus Hungaricus' (1923), and by his chamber music. Of his three operas only 'Hary Janos' (1926) is known by repute, largely owing to the effective orchestral suite derived therefrom which the composer published separately. His purely orchestral output has not been large. The two fine works of the late thirties, 'Variations on a Hungarian Folksong' and 'Concerto for Orchestra', were preceded by two highly successful sets of orchestral dances ('Marosszek' and 'Galanta') which immediately won a sure place in the orchestral repertoire.

"Summer Evening" (Nyári este) was one of his first essays in orchestral composition. Completed in 1906 it was revised about twenty-five years later, and is published with dedication to Toscanani. Although more conservative in its formal presentation than any comparable work of Debussy, it is nevertheless essentially an impressionistic work in its aim and in many features of its orchestration, and the early style of the composer is preserved despite the later revision.

S.T.M.N.

INTERVAL

3. SYMPHONY No. 99 IN E FLAT

Haydn
(1732-1809)

Adagio - Vivace assai
Adagio
Minuet: Allegretto
Vivace.

The penalty for the rewarding experience of spreading one's attention as wide as possible over the immense domain of Haydn's symphonies is to find that, despite seventy-two performances covering forty-two of the Symphonies within the last twenty-five years, three of which were devoted to No. 99, it is nevertheless fourteen years since we last revelled in this supreme example from Haydn's great culminating series of twelve symphonies written for London.

Let us turn back to the excitement of its first performance at Mr. Salomon's Concert, Hanover Square Rooms on 10th February 1794. The 'Morning Chronicle' next day reported "The incomparable Haydn produced an Overture (i.e. this symphony) of which it is impossible to speak in common terms. It is one of the grandest efforts of art that we have ever witnessed. It abounds with ideas, as new in music as they are grand and impressive; it rouses and affects every emotion of the soul. It was received with rapturous applause." A week later

the symphony was repeated. "The first movement was encored: the effect of the wind instruments in the second movement was enchanting: the hautboy and flute were fully in tune, but the bassoon was in every respect more perfect and delightful than we ever remember to have heard a wind instrument before. In the minuets, the trio was particularly charming; but indeed the pleasure the whole gave was continual; and the genius of Haydn, astonishing, inexhaustible, and sublime, was the general theme."

Haydn had returned to Vienna in the summer of 1792 after his first London visit of 1791-2 at which he had to such enthusiastic acclaim produced the first six of his twelve London symphonies at Salomon's concerts. When he returned to London at the beginning of February 1794 he brought with him the symphony (No. 99) composed at Gumpendorf (a suburb of Vienna) and the apparently as yet only partly completed symphonies 100 and 101 which were finished in London. These three were the new symphonies of the Salomon concerts of 1794. By the following year the war with France prevented Salomon from bringing his accustomed array of international artists from abroad, and the splendid concerted enterprise of the Opera Concerts replaced his series. It was for these Opera Concerts that Haydn composed his last three symphonies.

Well might the critic write of "ideas as new in music as they are grand and impressive". For the first time Haydn writes for a truly full band using clarinets and a second flute. In the very first bars of the Adagio introduction the second clarinet immediately shows Haydn's appreciation of the virtues of this instrument, though one must remark that in his later symphonies he is either curiously reticent in or completely abstains from using clarinets. It may be that in Vienna imagination based upon the inspiration of Mozart's writing for the wind-ensemble (itself stemming from Mannheim opportunities and from the artistry of an Anton Stadler) was disappointed in the event by London clarinetists of a less mature standard; or it may be simply that Haydn never found these colours so stimulating an addition to his palette as Mozart instinctively found them.

Another remarkable feature of Haydn's orchestration here is his very frequent separation of violoncelli from basses, giving them a characteristic independent role, with many felicitous new effects of texture and colour. Again the boldness of key contrasts which is so startling a feature of his last works is here achieved with miraculous perfection, not simply in the inventive divergence of development in the outer great movements, but in the overall tonal design - the slow movement in the mediant major (G major), the trio to the Minuet linking by a third in the other direction to C major.

It is small wonder that the critic of 1794 was enraptured by the expressive wind-ensemble writing in the Adagio, but he might equally have written a panegyric on Haydn's masterfully delayed intrusion of his trumpets and drums, or on the texture of the closing passage and the thrummed full chords of the strings, or on the wit but no less the contrapuntal strength of the finale. He might in fact have written an essay on the whole nature and art of Haydn. Perhaps he did so in those few last words of his.

S.T.M.N.