UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1967-68

*First Concert*

# REID ORCHESTRA

Leader: MILES BASTER

Conductor : SIDNEY NEWMAN

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC
THURSDAY, 19th OCTOBER, 1967
AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

# *PROGRAMME*

1. Overture: 'Die Zauberharfe' (Rosamunde) *Schubert* (1797-1828)

Andante—Allegro vivace

This fine overture, so long mistakenly known and still familiarly known as the 'Rosamunde overture', was composed for the opera 'Die Zauberharfe' in 1820. The music Schubert wrote for the play 'Rosamunde' in 1823, of which the Entractes are rightly beloved of all, included its own overture which however later became known as 'Alphonso and Estrella.'

2. Symphony No. 4 in D Minor (Op. 120) *Schumann* (1810-1856)

Ziemlich langsam: Lebhaft
Romanze: Ziemlich langsam
Scherzo: Lebhaft
Langsam: Lebhaft Presto

Although it has been known since the date of its publication in 1853 as Schumann's Fourth Symphony, the D Minor was in fact his second symphony. It was first performed in 1841 under the title "Symphonic Fantasy." Twelve years later Schumann re-orchestrated and to a slight extent recomposed the work, imposing upon it a thicker texture in conformity with his later "safety first" method of handling the symphonic orchestra. The original score was not published until 1893. In this present performance we are adhering to the revised version that is generally to be heard.

The symphony divides into the normal scheme of four movements, but these are closely connected with one another through thematic relationships, and the whole is designed to be performed without any break between movements. The introduction reappears in A minor in the Romanze, and again in a major variant delicately adorned by solo violin; and this latter device prompts the mood and treatment of the sensitive trio of the forthright Scherzo. The opening motive of the main first movement, which persists throughout so much of it, reappears in the finale. More important still is the first of two new themes which are first heard in the course of the development—the one in a vein of triumphant pageantry, the other a quiet *cantabile* which also dons a festive mantle in the jubilation which terminates the movement. It is the first of these two themes which with solemn portent heralds the way to the finale where it is to prove all triumphant in a highly imaginative movement which also embraces quiet passages of glorious poetry.

S.T.M.N.

INTERVAL

3. Symphony No. 5 in F *Dvorak* (1841-1904)

Allegro, ma non troppo
Andante con moto
Andante con moto—Allegro scherzando
Allegro molto

Quite early in his career Dvorák showed a keen interest in the composition of chamber music and symphonic music. In both of these fields he showed himself to be an outstanding master, but not until he had completed a series of works that display both the inexperience and the promise of a struggling but talented musician. Little more than two years separated his third and his fifth symphonies, but it was during that period that Dvorák shed a style that derived a little too obviously from Wagner, and replaced it with one that may rightly be described as fully representative of himself. Thus this symphony. the finest composition that he had written up to that time, may be seen to be an important landmark in his development.

1875 was a significant year for Dvorák, for it also brought the news that his third and fourth symphonies together with a chamber music work had gained him the Austrian State Prize of 400 gulden. But even a success such as this did not prevent his newest symphony from remaining unperformed for another four years. The work was revised in 1887 and dedicated to Hans von Bülow, who in writing to Dvorák said: "A dedication from you—next to Brahms the most divinely gifted composer of the present time—is a higher decoration than any Grand Cross from the hands of any prince". When the symphony was published a year later, Simrock altered the opus number from 24 to 76, and having already published Dvorák's sixth and seventh symphonies as Nos. 1 and 2, added to the confusion by calling this one No. 3. It is probable that August Manns' performance of this work at the Crystal Palace on 7th April, 1888, was the first in its definitive form.

As in his sixth symphony (the D major), the composer opens this work in a disarmingly simple and innocent manner, in this case with an extended theme founded upon the notes of the tonic chord, but this ensures that the contrasts of mood and the drama that ensue later on will be all the more vivid and telling. It was as natural for Dvorák to take a single syncopated bar from the vigorous second theme and give it an entirely new meaning in the gracious theme for violins and oboe that follows, as it was for him to convert the opening notes of the Andante melody into a figure of accompaniment when the flute enters, or to effect a Moravian modulation (A minor to G major) within four bars of the beginning of the same movement. He disliked repeating himself, and in consequence we

notice numerous differences between the exposition and recapitulation of the first movement, and a greatly enriched texture when the main part of the Andante returns. The transition to the scherzo stems directly from the previous movement.

If the emotional temperature is comparatively restrained during the first three movements, this certainly cannot be said of the finale, the crown of this symphony. In an entirely unprecedented manner Dvorák relentlessly and repeatedly asserts the key of A minor, he beguiles us with a fascinating series of chromatic chords above which high octave Gs echo like bells, and only after fifty-four bars does he triumphantly proclaim that the key of the movement after all is F major. The plaintive second subject is also unorthodox in moving between the keys of D flat and G flat. The development that succeeds this is unquestionably the most powerful of any that Dvorák had written up to that time. In the coda the opening of the symphony is suggested with extraordinary subtlety, not by recalling the principal theme, but by means of a long-held pianissimo chord of F—although it is indeed true that the woodwind and horns follow this with a quotation of the original pendant to the theme, bars 9-11. A trombone is given a rhythmic transformation of the missing theme at the height of the final climax.

J.C.