

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON: 1967-68

Second Concert

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader: MILES BASTER

Conductor: SIDNEY NEWMAN

Solo Violin:
FRANCIS MASON

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC
THURSDAY, 2nd NOVEMBER, 1967

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

1. SYMPHONY No. 3 in E flat (EROICA)

Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Allegro con brio

Marcia funebre: Adagio assai

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Finale: Allegro molto—Andante—Presto

If any apology is required for offering a performance of a work of so grand and massive a stature as this great symphony in a small hall and with a not very large orchestra, I would ask our patrons to reflect that these concerts and the rehearsals therefor are related to the studies in orchestral music pursued by the Professor of Music and by his students in the course of their training as musicians within the privileged and generous "seclusion" of the classroom. The scope of these studies, though determined to a considerable extent by the professional orchestral resources available for the rehearsal and performance of the works chosen, cannot be confined entirely to a repertoire of works deemed to be most effective within a small hall. The basic policy is to afford students of music the experience of studying a work *ad initio* through all stages of rehearsal to the final performance. In such a case as this we have, alas! to forego those desiderata of distance and mass which contribute so much to the full perspective of this symphony. Nevertheless, as we experienced previously, to offset such losses there is something to be gained from studying the heroic at close quarters.

It is common knowledge that the work was inspired by the composer's admiration for Napoleon, to whom on the autograph it was originally dedicated. But Beethoven could not forgive Bonaparte his proclamation of himself as Emperor and in disgust erased the dedication, and substituted that of Tribute to a Hero. With this tremendous work, vast in design and incomparably rich in variety of emotional experience, Beethoven gave an altogether new dimension to symphonic music—or rather conceived a new scale of dimensions far beyond anything hitherto preimagined. It

need not, indeed it should not be the axiomatic starting point for any listener that he acknowledges Beethoven as an incomparably great composer, but if he is brought ultimately to such a conclusion the experience of this symphony in fulfilling its title will form one argument towards that conviction.

INTERVAL

2. VIOLIN CONCERTO in D (Op. 61)

Beethoven

Allegro ma non troppo

Larghetto

Rondo: Allegro

The autograph was inscribed by the composer "Concerto par Clemenza pour Clement, primo violino e direttore al teatro a Vienne dal L. v. Bthvn, 1806". Franz Clement (1780-1842) for whom this great concerto was expressly composed and who gave the first performance on 23rd December, 1806, was a very fine violinist and a very considerable musician (able, it is recounted, to make a pianoforte score of Haydn's *Creation* from memory after hearing the work a few times, with no aid but the libretto!) He was himself the composer of some six concertos and of twenty-five concertinos for violin which apparently were of ephemeral interest. He had been in London as a boy prodigy in the early nineties, and on returning to Vienna had been appointed solo player to the Emperor and from 1802-1811 conductor at the Theater an der Wien. According to Czerny, Clement gave the first performance only two days after the concerto was completed. The grain of salt that must season this impressive utterance is provided by the autograph itself, which shows clearly that Clement contributed much to the detailed shaping of the solo line, and that the composer worked with close regard to his chosen artist. In the autograph the solo part appears on the three staves, the first being Beethoven's original sketch, the second Clement's suggestions

and variants, the third finally adopted being Beethoven's, incorporating much of Clement's suggestions but in part differing from both of the former.

The arrangement for pianoforte was made at the express request of Clementi (in April 1807) who had already found there was a market, at least in Britain, for keyboard transcriptions of some of Viotti's concertos. That version is based rather upon the solo line of Beethoven's original sketch. Beethoven provided it with a cadenza in which Timpani effectively participate. The pianoforte version was published first, in August 1808, the violin original not until March 1809.

As Boris Schwarz has convincingly shown (*Musical Quarterly* Vol. XLIV Oct. 1958) the style of writing for violin and the techniques involved derive from those of the great classical school of French violinist-composers—the concertos of Viotti and his pupil Rode and of Rudolph Kreutzer. But none of these impressive composer-performers attained the perfection of symphonic architecture in which Beethoven integrated these virtuoso characteristics.

It is one of the most spacious concertos in all musical literature, perhaps we may say the most spacious by reason of the over-all quietness and serenity of the work, the ample room it holds for melodic repetition, whether simple or varied, and the fact that moments of strength and tensity are resolved in breadth and a far-sighted ease of mind. The *Larghetto* in its simple extension of peaceful variation brings this divinely peaceful mood almost to the point of contemplative inactivity, but the link to the Rondo provides both a practical solution to this dream-like condition and at the same time enhances the very nature of the Rondo itself, that its most significant and telling moments are those when its constantly recurring theme falls into the rhythmic sway of its simple but infectious melody.

S. T. M. N.