

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1967-68

REID MEMORIAL CONCERT

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader: MILES BASTER

Conductor:

SIDNEY NEWMAN

Soloists:

MILES BASTER

MICHAEL LESTER-CRIBB

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 15th FEBRUARY, 1968

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

PROGRAMME

1. SYMPHONY No. 40 IN G MINOR (K.550) *Mozart*
Allegro molto
Andante
Minuet: Allegretto
Allegro assai

Mozart's last three great symphonies were composed in quick succession in the summer of 1788. The dates of their completion are shown in his autograph thematic catalogue—the E flat 26th June, the G minor, 25th July, the C major (Jupiter) 10th August—three as unlike symphonies as one can imagine coming from one source; unlike in ethos and mood, and unlike in their colouring and scoring. The G minor alone uses no trumpets and drums though this in no way diminishes the bitter strength of its power. Originally it was conceived without clarinets (which instruments, displacing oboes, give so distinctive a colouring to the E flat symphony) but later Mozart added clarinets to the wind ensemble, in some places adjusting the oboe parts to accommodate them, in others substituting clarinet for oboe.

The G minor symphony, as I have shown elsewhere, has a very close affinity with the great G minor string quintet composed a full year earlier—an affinity not only in emotion but also in much of the thematic content. Indeed the symphony may quite literally be said to begin from that point where the quintet eventually relaxed from the bitter pathos of G minor into the sunny ease of its major finale. For the opening theme of the symphony was first conceived (in a 6/8 rhythm) as a possible finale for the quintet—and it still carries that association in its opening scoring for string quintet. Remarkably this association even momentarily infected the development of the finale of the preceding E flat symphony where the opening theme of the quintet is suddenly (but quite convincingly) introduced with great prominence upon the wind, as though preoccupation with the next symphony were already so strong that it would not be held back.

2. CONCERTO FOR PIANOFORTE AND VIOLIN, IN G MAJOR (Op. 17)
Hummel (1778-1837)

Allegro con brio
Andante con variazioni
Rondo

Johann Nepomuk Hummel was born at Pozsony (Pressburg). His father was director of the Imperial School of Military Music and conductor at the theatre there, but in 1785 moved to Vienna where he became conductor at Shikaneder's theatre. For two years (1785-7) the boy was a pupil of Mozart, living in his house, and made his first appearance at one of Mozart's concerts in 1787. This

success led the father to take him on an extensive tour through Bohemia, Germany and Denmark, and then to Britain starting at Edinburgh and working south to London where young Hummel had further instruction from Clementi. He remained in London some four years, amongst his public appearances being one at a Salomon concert in May 1792 when he played a Mozart concerto. From London via Holland back to Vienna where he studied systematic composition under Albrechtsberger and enjoyed the advice of Haydn and Salieri. Following a tour to St. Petersburg in 1803 he was appointed Kapellmeister at Esterhaz (Haydn's former post). Dismissed in 1811 he was back in Vienna for a few years before he was appointed to the Stuttgart court and finally in 1818 to Weimar. There he continued till his death, but with frequent leave of absence for further tours, St. Petersburg again in 1822, and a second visit to Paris and London in 1829. (His sixth Pianoforte Concerto of 1814 he named as 'Les Adieux de Paris' and the Rondo Brillant, Op. 124 as 'Le Retour a Londres'). This double concerto was composed during his Esterhaz years and published in 1808, five years before the first of his seven pianoforte concertos (the C major Op. 34). Like this latter—and indeed like the Pianoforte Concertino (or 'Concerto facile') Op. 73, this beautiful melodious and happily contrived work shows Hummel steeped in the art of Mozart and Haydn, but none the less original and inventive. He has not yet the full stature that he attained in his later concertos, but he is not yet prone to that prolixity of virtuosity which sometimes carried him away in the later works, fine as they are in their basic elements.

In the modern repertoire double and triple concertos, and also symphonies concertantes, are represented by a handful or two of masterpieces, but from the 1770's (in Paris) to about 1830 or even later, double concertos whether for like or different instruments abounded as a very popular genre. Whistling's 1828 *Handbuch der musikalischen Literatur* lists scores of such works published, and many still survive only in manuscript. Mozart's Concertante for Violin and Viola (the glorious result of his experience during his Paris visit) and Beethoven's Triple Concerto are but two outstanding masterpieces in a vast collection. In treating his instruments so much in alternation and only to a lesser extent in simultaneous play, it has been said that Hummel based himself on the precedent of Mozart—but in fact it was the current practice.

It is believed that this is the first concert performance of the work in Britain—certainly in modern times. We are indebted, for the loan of the material, to Mlle. Susanne Lautenbacher who with Martin Galling and the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra under the conductorship of Alexander Paulmuller recorded a splendid performance of this work in 1966 for Vox. We adhere to the few judicious cuts in the original which they judged as desirable, including the omission of the 2nd and 6th of the original seven variations.

INTERVAL

3. (a) ATHOLL HOUSE (Plaintive Air) *General John Reid*
(1721-1807)
- (b) MARCH FOR THE 76th REGIMENT, LORD MACDONALD'S
HIGHLANDERS
4. SYMPHONY No. 103 IN E FLAT ('The "Drum Roll"') *Haydn*
(1732-1809)
- Adagio—Allegro con spirito
Andante
Menuetto
Allegro con spirito

This symphony received its first performance on 2nd March 1795 at the Kings Theatre, London, that is in the second season of Haydn's second visit to England. Salomon's own concerts of 1794 could not be continued in 1795 owing to war-time circumstances. Instead the musical forces of London continued to promote for the two spring and early summer seasons of 1795 and 1796, two splendid series of 'Professional Concerts' in the theatre using a galaxy of composers and performers.

When you have to distinguish one hundred and four symphonies from one another you can hardly avoid having recourse to nicknames, for which purpose you will lay your hands on almost anything that chances your way whether it emerges from the music or lurks as a printer's cypher in some corner of the title-page. But you must not imagine that Haydn's "Surprise" symphony is one great surprise. "The Clock" (like my own alarm) ticks only so long as it has a mind to. Similarly the opening drum roll here has served it's (or Haydn's) purpose when it has introduced the dark serious melody of the Adagio. Haydn's slow introductions serve as a foil to the gay vivacity of his main allegri, but such impertinent ridicule of solemnities as we find here is something rare even in Haydn.

The andante is a set of variations upon two alternating themes, the one in minor key, the other major. There is no knowing with Haydn's melodies which are folk-songs, but if with the second of these anyone finds himself singing "Far and high the cranes do fly" he cannot be blamed, though Haydn will prove him wrong, and celebrate the proof with no little ceremony.

Papageno knew a thing or two about locks. Some young ladies taught him that locked lips can tell no fibs. He thereupon demonstrated (for the benefit of all who are embarrassed at the dinner table) the true etiquette of maintaining an elegant (and melodious) conversation when your mouth is full, for which he is duly complimented by Haydn in this minuet. (And Haydn, remember, had survived a Lord Mayor's banquet in the Guild Hall!)

The finale is a thing of romance and splendour, and very much con spirito in eternum.

S.T.M.N.