

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

SEASON 1969-70

First Concert

REID ORCHESTRA

Leader: MILES BASTER

Conductor: SIDNEY NEWMAN

Solo Pianist: ALASDAIR GRAHAM

REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THURSDAY, 16th OCTOBER, 1969

AT 7.30 P.M.

PROGRAMME TWO SHILLINGS

Programme

1. SYMPHONY in D major (Haffner) K.385

Mozart
(1756-1791)

Allegro con spirito
Andante
Minuet
Presto

The earliest of the six symphonies which Mozart composed after settling in Vienna, this is also the shortest. The urgent request came from Mozart's father at Salzburg about 20th July, 1782, for a festive symphony required by Sigmund Haffner (son of the later Bürgermeister of Salzburg of the same name) for a celebration in his house marking his elevation to the rank of nobility. It was for this man's sister's wedding in 1776 that Mozart had composed the "Haffner Serenade" (K.250). The new Haffner music though designated a symphony was in fact originally somewhat akin to a serenade in that it had two Minuets and had a March (K.408, No. 2) associated with it (presumably as prelude to the festive occasion).

When this urgent commission reached Mozart he had just successfully launched his opera "Die Entführung," was busy arranging much of that opera for wind instruments to forestall the inevitable pirates who would rob him of that commercial advantage, and was also trying to bring things to a head in obtaining his father's consent to his marrying Constanze Weber.

On 27th July (one week after first acknowledging his father's request) Mozart sent him the first movement of the Symphony, explaining that he had also at the same time had to compose a wind serenade in a great hurry (i.e. the splendid C minor Serenade for wind octet K.388) and that he would send the other four movements on the 31st, and a March too if he can manage it. In the event he was not quite ready by that date, but sometime before 7th August he had sent them off, for on that day he sent the "short march" and in the course of his letter gave the instruction that "the first Allegro must be played with great fire, the last—as fast as possible."

But all that is only half the tale, for throughout this fortnight or so Mozart was concerned with controlling the repeat performances of his opera, and conducting a difficult correspondence with his father about his proposed marriage, which in fact took place on 4th August.

Such were the circumstances in which this magnificent symphony came into being. When the scores were returned to him in February, 1783, along with those of earlier Salzburg symphonies which he requested to have for his proposed subscription concert ("academy") Mozart was delighted to find what good stuff there was in a work which he had practically forgotten. He then augmented the scoring of the first and last movements by the addition of flutes and clarinets, cut out one of the two minuets, and as a four-movement symphony gave it its first Vienna performance at the opening of his "academy" on 23rd March (which included the two concertos K.415 and K.175) repeating the finale at the conclusion of the programme.

2. PIANOFORTE CONCERTO in C major (K.503)

Mozart
(1756-1791)

Allegro maestoso
Andante
Allegretto

This grand Jupiter-like concerto was completed on 4th December, 1786, just two days before the completion of the Prague Symphony. It was presumably designed like its predecessors for Mozart's own "academy" concerts in Vienna.

The size of this magnificent work is apparent at once in the majestic preface. The simple massive chords immediately arouse some expectation of a bold complexity to come, and also of the personal subtleties of the solo instrument which they so transcend. It is only a moment before the germ of that contrapuntal complexity becomes apparent in a figure of repeated notes whose bolder statement assumes something of the character of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. What one may call the periodic figures in Mozart's writing are of particular interest: those which clinch the statement of his ideas with an assertive finality serve to prepare the mind for the immediate presentation of something new, the importance of which can be foreshadowed. Both those which occur in this orchestral prologue are built on the rhythm mentioned, and in each case the theme that proceeds from the heavy lines they have drawn adopts the link of that same rhythm. The first of these has the precision of a tiny march. Another type of periodic figure which quite naturally has a more effective finality, since it lacks the provocation of the assertive type, is that which is reflective, and it is such which terminates the orchestral preface.

It needs the repeated coaxing of the orchestra to bring the personality of the solo instrument on to the stage, with a further moment of ease before the splendid thought with which all began can be restated. From this, complexity begins to spread out as before, terminated by yet another assertive figure built on that same rhythm, and again the melody that proceeds from it adopts a similar link. But now it is the soloist in a fresh lyrical vein, an excursion from the fundamental design of the structure. The individual still maintains an evasive poise away from the channel of those keys that form the inevitable chart of the argument. But when the long delayed theme comes, it is with the address of a personal gesture quite unlike the previous dramatic annunciations by the orchestra. Here now is the ease of understanding as the persons exchange this new melody. But the orchestral expression will always be on the larger scale, and with the greater complexity. Again that insistent finality springs a further thought from the soloist. Yet no—for this is that tiny march grown lyrical. With this almost forgotten thought, soloist and orchestra occupy themselves in a discussion of increasing complexity for some long while until the mind opens out afresh to the grandeur of that foremost thought of all. From now the structure stretches out in perspective in a known design, wherein the unaccompanied melody that formerly seemed evasive now appears as an essentially gentle gesture in bringing the delicate "second theme" into its predetermined channel.

The Andante is a reflective lyrical piece where all difference of personality is merged in the contemplation of a melody of exquisite sensitiveness.

The Finale is in Rondo form. Although the orchestra here propounds the main theme (incidentally derived from a Gavotte in the ballet music of *Idomeneo*), yet in the course of its return its greater aptness to the solo medium becomes apparent, and indeed however important may be some of

the details in the orchestra's contribution, the character of its personality remains very largely submerged throughout this movement to the exaltation of the solo instrument. But the most persuasive and memorable influence in this finale is that of the exquisite and lyrical central episode shared between oboe and other wind instruments with the soloist.

INTERVAL

3. SYMPHONY NO. 3 IN C

Sibelius
(1865-1957)

Allegro moderato
Andantino con moto quasi allegretto
Allegro

The third symphony (1907) is markedly more classical in feeling than its predecessors, more compact in structure and in its dimensions, more restrained and economic in its scoring. A brief programme note affords no scope either for an illuminative analytical study or for a proper consideration of the relationship of this to Sibelius' other symphonies. For these the reader may be referred to Cecil Gray's "Sibelius" (1931), Gerald Abraham in the symposium on Sibelius (in the "Music of the Masters" series published by Lindsay Drummond, Ltd.), and Tovey's "Essays in Musical Analysis" (Vol. II).

The formal clarity of the first movement is striking. None the less, despite the direct simplicity of the opening theme, the primary material proves to be a complex of several distinct melodic themes, and the secondary material, which begins with an extensive violoncello melody in B minor, proves in the course of the development to be very subtly related to the first theme. The vivacity and action of the movement springs, however, mainly from the rapid ostinato motive of the strings which streams as a *moto perpetuo* throughout the latter part of the exposition and throughout the whole development. At the conclusion there emerges a chorale-like theme of simple grandeur inspired by the first theme.

The middle movement (in G sharp minor) is occupied for the most part with the continuing restatement, in varied voicing and in different keys, of one unchanging melody, but before the final statement is reached this simple formal design momentarily and quite unexpectedly dissolves into a realm of scherzoso fantasy.

The last movement throws down in quick succession scattered scraps of vivacious melodic themes, with a certain reluctance to give full rein to the rhythmic impetus inherent in them, and throughout the first half of this scherzo-like finale the tempo is subject to an ebb and flow of energy. At length there emerges on the violas in chorus a march-like theme (already foreshadowed by the horns) which throughout the rest of the movement is built up in ever grander proportions to yield a peroration of truly noble breadth and power.

S.T.M.N.