

Music in Edinburgh

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**ONSUMERS'
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LACES OF
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articles by
Kenneth Leighton
Robert Crawford
Edward Harper
Peter Williams
Eveline Garden
Iain Clark
Conrad Wilson

AMSAY HEAD PRESS



MUSIC IN EDINBURGH

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Cover photograph: Michael Maurel and Catherine Wilson in Scottish Opera's new production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

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Scottish National Orchestra

Musical Director—**Alexander Gibson**

Leader—**Sam Bor**

The Scottish National Orchestra, which gave its inaugural concert in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, on October 13, 1950, now gives well over two hundred performances each year. These include children's concerts, Proms, appearances at the Edinburgh Festival, Opera performances with Scottish Opera, Serenade Concerts and visits to London and to Europe, in addition to the normal series of concerts during the winter season in major towns throughout Scotland.

Details of all the SNO's activities, information on booking, on programmes and on membership of The Friends of the SNO are available from the SNO offices.

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A CONSUMERS' GUIDE TO MUSIC IN EDINBURGH

concert halls and other places of

Housing the arts today forms a positive part of Britain's cultural policy. The old British tradition of making do with what we have, of attempting to work miracles on a shoestring, grows less satisfactory and less acceptable every year—especially now that people can see what has been achieved in Germany, Holland, Scandinavia and other countries which give the arts the premises they deserve, and where halls and theatres can be really inviting places to visit.

In Rotterdam the new Doelen Hall, with its comfortable auditorium, handsome promenades, restaurant and spacious backstage facilities, helped to double the size of the Rotterdam Philharmonic's audience practically overnight, and to improve the quality of the orchestra. In Scotland the MacRobert Centre at Stirling University looks like being, in a smaller way, a similar success—though certain aspects of this theatre leave something to be desired. Arbroath, Motherwell and Musselburgh

have also built new halls or theatres, and an Inverness project is underway, but plans for Edinburgh and Glasgow—where new premises are really needed—continue to hang fire.

Glasgow, though it contains the excellent little City Hall (one of the two best halls in Britain), has so far done nothing to give the Scottish National Orchestra the full-sized modern concert hall it has needed and deserved ever since the St Andrew's Hall was gutted in 1962. As for Edinburgh, a start on the promised opera house still seems a long way off; and to judge by information so far made available, there is no evidence that this will be a really *modern* or visionary theatre, able to cope with new music and new ideas as satisfactorily as with the classics. A medium-sized concert hall with a flexible platform is also badly needed in Edinburgh, along with improvements to existing premises listed in the following pages.

USHER HALL

Edinburgh's main concert hall, owned by Edinburgh Corporation. Built in 1914 from Usher Bequest—but only after years of delay and civic footdragging of a kind we are again experiencing in the case of the long-promised Edinburgh opera house.

SIZE: 2750 seats.

EVENTS: Weekly concerts by Scottish National Orchestra during winter season; occasional concerts by BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Edinburgh University Musical Society, Edinburgh Royal Choral Union, and various visiting orchestras. Used nightly during the Edinburgh Festival.

ACOUSTICS: Adequate but patchy. When hall is full the sound lacks resonance. It also tends to lack real clarity—viola lines, for instance, are sometimes inaudible, and the basses (unless they are those of the Berlin Philharmonic) tend to lack weight and depth. Sir Thomas Beecham complained that he found it hard to achieve a true fortissimo in the Usher Hall, and many other conductors have come to agree with him. There can be a disappointing absence of impact, though if an orchestra is big and powerful enough the sound can nevertheless be exciting. Best seats: upper tier, if you do not suffer from vertigo. Worst seats:

certain parts of the grand tier, and the back area. The organ gallery inevitably provides a false perspective, but can be fun to sit in.

ATMOSPHERE: Handsome, traditional hall which has been allowed by Edinburgh Corporation to deteriorate badly. For many years, heating has been primitive (either it is boiling or freezing), lighting poor, seats noisy, tatty and uncomfortable, backstage facilities dreary, décor drab. But a renovation programme, starting with the heating, is on the way, so judgment should be reserved. In spite of its shortcomings, the Usher Hall still has the feel of a great concert hall. The fact that its acoustics could so easily be improved—by adding resonators to the ceiling, a sounding board above the platform, and a frontal extension to the stage—is tantalising. Unfortunately the complacency of Edinburgh Corporation makes such improvements unlikely. As the City Architect's Department recently stated: "The acoustics of the Usher Hall are not particularly good; but they are not bad enough to warrant anything being done about them."

COMFORTS: None, none, none. No refreshment facilities in any of the corridors or foyers, a subject of some bewilderment to Festival visitors and generally deemed to be a regrettable

example of Edinburgh puritanism and/or laziness. The excuse usually given by the Corporation is that there is not enough space; but many continental halls, not to mention the Caird Hall in Dundee, seem to manage satisfactorily with a lot less.

FREEMASONS' HALL

Edinburgh's main recital hall, handily placed in George Street.

SIZE: 600 seats.

EVENTS: Recitals and chamber concerts, mainly during the Edinburgh Festival. The morning programmes in the Freemasons' Hall by performers ranging from Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten to way-out experimental groups have always been a very special feature of Festival activities. But concerts are also given from time to time during the rest of the year—principally by the New Town concert society, which brings performers of international calibre to Edinburgh.

ACOUSTICS: Highly resonant. Quite pleasant for string quartets and so forth, but rather boomy for piano. Best seats: front stalls. Worst seats: back stalls.

ATMOSPHERE: Pillared, marble auditorium, complete with elaborate (but

musically inadequate) organ console. Subterranean passages for Masonic rites, and a large basement room used by the Edinburgh Festival as a press office.

COMFORTS: New Town Concerts enterprisingly run their own wine bar. Otherwise none, except for press facilities at Festival time.

LEITH TOWN HALL

SIZE: 1442 seats.

EVENTS: Chamber concerts and, recitals, mainly during Edinburgh Festival; amateur opera productions.

ACOUSTICS: Woolly, unexciting, little impact. Best seats: front stalls. Worst seats: back stalls.

ATMOSPHERE: Reasonably pleasant, conventional hall. Built to something resembling a German Gewandhaus pattern (that is, a long rectangle with a flat floor and a single shallow balcony extending round three sides of the auditorium) but without the usual acoustical assets of such a shape. Inflexible stage, with too many draperies.

COMFORTS: No refreshment facilities, though enterprising concert promoters have been known to rig up their own coffee urn in the entrance hall.

MUSIC HALL

Built in 1843, linked to the Assembly Rooms in George Street, and owned by Edinburgh Corporation. If the Usher Hall were accidentally burned down, this would probably have to serve as Edinburgh's main concert hall—a solemn thought.

SIZE: 1178 seats.

EVENTS: Recitals and chamber concert promoted by the Edinburgh Festival Guild at monthly intervals throughout the winter. During the Edinburgh Festival itself, the hall forms part of the Festival Club and serves as a restaurant.

ACOUSTICS: Barely adequate, decidedly unflattering.

ATMOSPHERE: Somewhat chilly; old-fashioned; noisy air-conditioning; recently redecorated, but with minimal improvement to the hall's appearance.

COMFORTS: Makeshift seating; but coffee sometimes served in neighbouring Assembly Rooms.

KING'S THEATRE

Edinburgh's interim opera house, formerly owned by Howard & Wyndham, now the property of Edinburgh Corporation. Handsome traditional theatre, but vile backstage facilities, scant wing-space.

SIZE: 1650 seats.

ACOUSTICS: Good, clear and warm, but can be overloaded by operas requiring large orchestras.

ATMOSPHERE: A charming, intimate Mozart house, which can be satisfactory also for nineteenth-century and modern operas if the productions have been specially geared for that stage. Foreign productions appearing at the Edinburgh Festival tend to look cramped, and sometimes fail to function satisfactorily. Plans to replace the King's Theatre with a proper opera house on the Castle Terrace site are still in progress. Meanwhile an orchestra pit is to be sunk and other improvements made, which suggests—let us hope—that Edinburgh Corporation may decide after all to abandon their decision to demolish the King's Theatre after the new house has been opened. Certainly it is worth retaining; indeed, as a Festival City and cultural centre, Edinburgh will continue to have plenty of uses for the King's, especially if Clive Perry remains Edinburgh's theatrical overlord.

COMFORTS: Bars (understaffed). No food, but several good restaurants nearby.

ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE

Edinburgh's main playhouse, owned by Edinburgh Corporation. Home of the city's civic theatre company, directed by Clive Perry, who encourages opera performances and concerts to be given there on nights when the theatre would otherwise be dark. With improved backstage facilities, the Lyceum will form part of the proposed Castle Terrace complex, which will ultimately link the theatre and the Usher Hall with the new opera house.

SIZE: 1200 seats.

EVENTS: Apart from plays, there are seasons of Scottish Opera in July (also sometimes December) and occasional concerts promoted by Masterconcerts of Glasgow—the latter inexplicably discouraged by the Scottish Arts Council but musically important: this year they have included a Handel programme in the sort

of surroundings for which Handel composed his music, and the first Edinburgh appearance of the remarkable Fires of London with a programme devised, composed and conducted by Peter Maxwell Davies.

ACOUSTICS: Like most theatres, somewhat dry; but acceptable and not unpleasant, so long as programmes are carefully chosen and performers carefully placed on the stage. To facilitate opera productions, Clive Perry has had an orchestra pit specially sunk, big enough to hold a medium-sized orchestra.

ATMOSPHERE: Pleasant, cosy, traditional theatre atmosphere. Some of Scottish Opera's more intimate productions look well there; concerts (if they have some sort of theatrical element, with emphasis perhaps on the human voice and wind instruments) also work well. Would be a fine place for, say, Walton's *Facade*, Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, Boulez's *Marteau sans Maitre*, Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale*, Mozart's wind serenades, and Handel's *Messiah*.

COMFORTS: Bar facilities (inadequately staffed); attractive coffee bar (with good Cona coffee).

REID CONCERT HALL

Lofty university hall, formerly known as the Reid School of Music.

SIZE: 310 seats.

EVENTS: University concerts by the Reid Orchestra; chamber concerts and recitals, also run by the university; occasional choral programmes, if intimately scaled (Easter St Matthew Passion by Edinburgh University Singers). A thriving, busy hall, often let out to independent concert promoters.

ACOUSTICS: Crude and unpredictable. The curious scale of the hall (far too high for its size) results in some unpleasant and unsatisfactory effects. Orchestral



LEITH TOWN HALL, although inconveniently situated, is frequently used during the Festival and for amateur opera productions.

music, especially if it involves brass instruments, sounds too loud and congested. Chamber music, on the other hand, tends to sound dim-toned, curiously lacking in body. Best seats: towards the rear.

ATMOSPHERE: Formerly too institutional, but in 1971 much improved, with black leather seats and restful green décor (very inadequate knee-room, however).

COMFORTS: None.

ST CECILIA'S HALL

Edinburgh's original concert hall, recently acquired and completely renovated by the university as a home for the magnificent Russell Collection of harpsichords and other old keyboard instruments. But it is more than a museum: as a concert hall where these instruments are put to practical use, it is one of the success stories of Edinburgh music today.

SIZE: 250 seats.

EVENTS: Chamber concerts and recitals, with special emphasis on the instruments of the Russell Collection. Martin Chamber Concerts, featuring leading performers, held on Sunday evenings at monthly intervals throughout the winter. Also used for university concerts, celebrity recitals, concerts organised by independent promoters, and the recently-founded June festival of "Bach at St Cecilia's Hall."

ACOUSTICS: Superb for harpsichord, clavichord music, etc., but otherwise curious. The oval shape of the auditorium results in some bizarre acoustical phenomena—if you stand in the centre and clap your hands, the sound ricochets like a bullet. Piano tone tends to sound muddy, and string quartets somewhat harsh. A handsome chamber organ, with gilt pipes, has been installed, but is tonally a little disappointing. Singers, on the other hand, sound well here, and so does a solo violin. Best seats: side, towards the rear.

ATMOSPHERE: The oval auditorium gives the hall a very special charm and intimacy. But sight-lines are poor; and though the side seats are comfortable, the rest are horribly hard. Heating can be overpowering. Attractive tapestries on the walls, along with some less attractive lollipop lights. Instruments wheeled in from adjoining museum.

COMFORTS: Beautiful "Laigh" room beneath the auditorium serves coffee and biscuits and, on special occasions, wine and buffet suppers. For facilities, the best hall in Edinburgh.

GEORGE SQUARE THEATRE

Modern auditorium; owned by Edinburgh University; forms part of controversial George Square rebuilding scheme.

SIZE: 554 seats.

EVENTS: University opera productions; concerts.

ACOUSTICS: Disagreeably dry. Just passable for operas, but unsuitable for concerts.

ATMOSPHERE: Acoustics apart, very pleasant. Smart, black leather seats;



THE USHER HALL. It is hoped the long-promised renovations will include acoustic improvements and civilised refreshment services.

clean, uncluttered décor; good sight-lines from central seats; side seats less satisfactory. Stage somewhat intractable, and lack of an orchestra pit poses problems for opera performances.

COMFORTS: Coffee bar in basement.

McEWAN HALL

Ceremonial hall, owned by Edinburgh University.

SIZE: Flexible.

EVENTS: Apart from university ceremonies, this familiar Edinburgh landmark in Bristo Street is used for carol concerts, organ recitals and other musical performances. In the early 1960s it was also the setting for the Edinburgh Festival's drama and literature conferences, culminating in the famous incident when a nude girl was trundled across the platform.

ACOUSTICS: Extravagantly resonant. Lent excitement to Sidney Newman's performances of *Carmina Burana* in the 1960s. Would be fine for Berlioz's *Requiem* (which has never been performed there) and other works suitable for these palatial, reverberant surroundings.

ATMOSPHERE: Old-fashioned, pillared splendour.

COMFORTS: Minimal.

ST MARY'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

Edinburgh's main Anglican church, completed in 1917, with a Gothic spire looming 276 feet over Palmerston Place. Much used for choral concerts and (since it boasts one of the few respectable organs in Edinburgh) organ recitals.

EVENTS: Regular concerts by the Cathedral choir, by the Edinburgh Bach Society, and others; recitals arranged by the Edinburgh Organ Recitals Committee; sometimes used for suitable opera productions during the Edinburgh Festival. Britten's three church parables have been

staged there, and the Deutsche Oper am Rhein will present Cavalieri's *Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo* in August. Visiting choruses also appear there, and special programmes are arranged at Christmas, Easter and other times of year.

ACOUSTICS: Disappointingly mushy, ill-defined, unrewarding. Best seats: central, middle to rear of church. Worst seats: side, towards front.

ATMOSPHERE: Gothic splendour; poor sight-lines for opera performances; can sometimes be chilly.

RANDOLPH HALL

YWCA premises in Randolph Place, let out for occasional concerts.

SIZE: 200 seats.

EVENTS: During the winter season, monthly Connoisseur Concerts featuring the Pro Arte Orchestra; piano recitals, etc.

ACOUSTICS: Bright, somewhat brash, but acceptable. Best home the Connoisseur Concert Society has found in the course of years of trial and error.

ATMOSPHERE: A conventional modern auditorium on the ground floor of an older building. Adequate, but rather cramped and featureless.

COMFORTS: Coffee bar in basement.

FRENCH INSTITUTE

France's cultural headquarters in Scotland, handsomely representing the Auld Alliance, complete with teaching facilities, library, lectures, exhibitions, film shows, plays and occasional chamber concerts and recitals in the charming upstairs salon.

SIZE: Flexible.

ACOUSTICS: Adequate.

ATMOSPHERE: Cosy, attractive room, with deep windows overlooking Randolph Crescent at the front, and with a breathtaking view across the Dean Valley at the back. The Gaveau piano, much used, has seen happier days.

THE PILLARS OF MUSICAL EDINBURGH

The Festival, the SNO and Scottish Opera are the outstanding features of Edinburgh's musical life. What they each need now is that long-delayed Opera House, says **CONRAD WILSON**.

The Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Opera and the Edinburgh Festival are the three pillars of Edinburgh music. To them go the largest subsidies, and the largest audiences. From them come the richest, most varied of our musical experiences. By them are set the standards we have now come to take for granted.

Each, in a sense, aids the success of the others. The SNO, apart from giving weekly concerts at the Usher Hall during the winter season, plays in the pit for Scottish Opera and appears at the Edinburgh Festival. Scottish Opera's burgeoning international reputation has depended, from the start, on the quality of playing it gets from the SNO. The Festival increasingly calls upon both the SNO and Scottish Opera to supply some of its most important, and most individual, events.

Various dates can be suggested for the starting point of this combined success story. Scottish Opera, launched in Glasgow in 1962, first appeared in Edinburgh in 1963 and entered the Festival in 1967 with Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. The Festival, founded in 1947, first made use of the SNO—or what was then, simply, the Scottish Orchestra—in that historic inaugural year, when it performed Dvorak's eighth symphony under Walter Susskind and the Ravel piano concerto with Michelangeli, and accompanied the Glyndebourne productions of *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Macbeth* at the King's Theatre. The old Scottish Orchestra—based, like its successor, in Glasgow—first visited Edinburgh in 1894 when it appeared at the Music Hall under Sir George Henschel, with a lucky dip of a programme including Mendelssohn's *Scotch* symphony, the prelude to Act Three of *Maistersinger*, Boccherini's minuet, songs by Brahms and MacCunn, and Edward German's *Henry VIII Dances*.

The playing of the orchestra under Henschel, and later, in the 1930s, under Szell and Barbirolli, was presumably very different from its playing today. Szell, indeed, on welcoming the distinguished Polish violinist, Bronislaw Huberman, to a rehearsal, is reputed to have remarked to him, in German, "Wait till you hear this bunch."

Certainly, under Susskind in the 1940s and early 50s, the orchestra's programmes

were often more imaginative than its performances were expert—whereas today things tend to be the other way about. Susskind, for all his charm, failed to win the confidence of Edinburgh audiences, though his work with the orchestra formed a fascinating period in SNO history, especially during his farewell season when he conducted only the pieces he wanted to conduct, irrespective of whether the audience wanted to hear them or the orchestra was able to play them.

Karl Rankl, next in the SNO's series of Central European conductors, set about imposing greater discipline on the players and on choice of programmes, though the results were less memorable and even at that time fluffs during horn solos were the rule rather than the exception. On one occasion, a performance of the Mussorgsky-Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition* never recovered from the fact that it had begun with a glaringly cracked trumpet note.

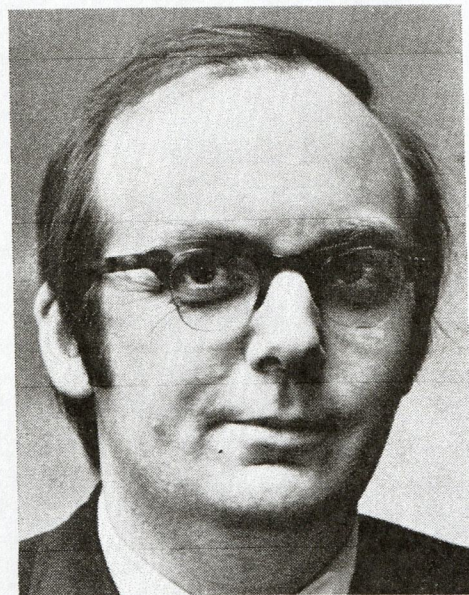
THE SNO UNDER GIBSON

Such accidents are less frequent now. Under Alexander Gibson—the orchestra's first British conductor since Barbirolli, and the only Scot in its whole history—the playing has gained not only a precision but also a distinctive style, a poetry and lyricism which can sometimes seem soft-edged in comparison with the brasher brilliance of some of the London and foreign orchestras, yet which can be very refreshing. Moreover, the orchestra at last has gained an audience which packs the Usher Hall most Fridays, no matter whether the programme is built on familiar classics or more enterprising fare.

Indeed, so faithful has the audience become that one wishes the orchestra were prepared to take risks more frequently. Would it really empty the hall if works by modern composers as important as Roberto Gerhard, Pierre Boulez and Krzysztof Penderecki—none of whom has been represented so far in SNO programmes—were included from time to time alongside Beethoven and Brahms? But part of the trouble lies, not in timidity, but in lack of rehearsal time; and we should perhaps consider ourselves lucky that the programmes are often

livelier than those of the major London orchestras, and that time has been found in recent years to make a feature of the music of Hans Werner Henze (including several British premières) and to give a reasonable amount of encouragement to local composers.

Of course, if the orchestra is to keep up with modern concert trends, it will need to find in Edinburgh an alternative hall to the Usher. In London, the scene of really creative music-making has shifted away from the Festival Hall (not that it was ever there in the first place) to the Round House in Camden and St John's Church in Chelsea, where performers are able to find more flexible environments than those of traditional concert halls. Edinburgh suffers from having no good churches for music, which means that there is nowhere to hear Bach's cantatas and passions or Haydn's masses in ideal surroundings; nor does it boast the sort of hall where one can visualise Stockhausen's *Gruppen* or *Kontakt* being performed, though it may be that suitable premises will suddenly come to light in



CONRAD WILSON has been music critic of *The Scotsman* since 1963 and is the author of *Scottish Opera: The First Ten Years* and *A Critic's Choice*, a guide to gramophone records.

Three weeks of Festival brilliance but

FORTY-NINE WEEKS OF STEADY BRIGHTNESS

Each year when the Edinburgh Festival comes to an end there are those who moan that the city becomes once more a cultural back-water—but is this really so? No, indeed, says **ROBERT CRAWFORD**.

It would be impossible to sustain the concentration of famous names to be heard throughout these hectic three weeks, and indeed it would be most undesirable. The Festival is the gilt on the gingerbread, yet the cake itself is made of a most choice and digestible mixture.

First, between October and March, there are the weekly concerts of the Scottish National Orchestra under Alexander Gibson, which fill the Usher Hall to capacity for programmes which are becoming more rewarding each year. The Fauré Requiem, Iain Hamilton's violin concerto, Holst's "Planets" and Bruckner's Sixth Symphony are not in every orchestra's repertoire, yet all these were done in the past season by the SNO.

Such is the reputation of this orchestra that it now takes a European tour in its stride, bringing in visiting orchestras like the Royal Philharmonic, the London Symphony Wind Ensemble, the Menuhin Festival Orchestra, the New Philharmonia, the English Chamber Orchestra and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra to fill the gap when it is away from home.

In recent years the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra has been appearing in public more and more frequently, and with James Loughran and his successor, Christopher Seaman, it has begun to give its own regular series in the Usher Hall. A violin concerto has been featured in each of the concerts this season, including the Berg, the Bliss and the Walton as well as the more familiar Beethoven.

While the BBC's "Tertia Liebenthal" Lunch-hour concerts at the Queen Street studio of the BBC do not attempt to carry on the work of this remarkable woman, they do provide a welcome memorial to her. Unlike Miss Liebenthal's National Gallery Concerts, those at the BBC use resident musicians almost exclusively, but they do make a point of including contemporary, and particularly Scottish, composers, as well as other interesting items.

At Edinburgh University there are chamber concerts often featuring the Edinburgh Quartet, alternating with programmes by the Reid Orchestra, conducted mainly by members of the music faculty staff. These are designed to supplement the work of the music students but over the years they have

become more adventurous and are open to the general public.

St Cecilia's Hall also comes under the care of the University, having been extensively restored not so many years ago, and Dr Peter Williams, the director, can be heard on various occasions playing some of the precious keyboard instruments of the Russell collection which has been donated to the University.

This delightful hall is also used by other concert promoters who may wish to use these instruments for early music, such as the Martin Chamber Concerts Society. An outstanding recital last December was given by Jill Gomez and Peter Williams who performed some of Haydn's English Canzonettas.

In this hall too, last November, the Saltire Music Group presented a programme of eighteenth-century music of a kind performed here 200 years ago. More usually the concerts of this music group are given in the charming old drawing room at Gladstone's Land in the Lawnmarket, the headquarters of the Society, and music by living Scottish composers is always included.

The Connoisseur Concerts, directed by Eric Roberts, also feature music by living Scottish composers along with less-familiar eighteenth-century material and anything else that can be played by the Pro Arte Players under Miles Baster, at the Randolph Hall. Chamber music and recitals are also arranged by this society and the Beaux Arts Trio from New York recently made a welcome appearance, though in a rather out-of-the-way hall at St Oswald's, Montpelier, which did less than justice to this fine ensemble, underlining the shortage of good halls in Edinburgh for chamber music.

At the height of the season there is music to be heard almost every night of the week, either professional or amateur, and it is by no means unusual to have the choice of two concerts on one night so that the need for suitable small halls is very real.

Talking of halls brings me naturally to the Nelson Hall concerts for these are named after not one, but several halls, all attached to Edinburgh's public libraries. Concerts have been held there for many years and were originally arranged by Dr Douglas Dickson. They are now continued by his daughter, the distinguished cellist, Joan Dickson. In these programmes you

can often hear outstanding young musicians who are on the threshold of their careers. In December there was a recital by Margaret Marshall, a gifted soprano and winner of the BBC's Herbert Wiseman Award. She also has a Caird Scholarship for further studies abroad and is a singer to watch.

While concerts are on the increase and attracting larger audiences there is one place which seems to some extent to have withdrawn from this field. The French Institute in Randolph Crescent used to have regular recitals by visiting French musicians as well as resident ones, but its activities are now limited to a few concerts a year. One can only hope for a reversal of this trend as these concerts were often refreshingly different.

There is a big following for the recitals of the Classical Guitar Society which can fill Leith Town Hall for an occasion such as a visit by Julian Bream, or the memorable appearance last season of Segovia.

The New Town Concerts continue the tradition of the Freemasons' Hall concerts of earlier years, by bringing string quartets and other chamber music ensembles of international repute to the city. In the past season we have had the Warsaw Piano Quintet, who played Shostakovich's fine quintet; Gyorgy Pauk and Peter Frankl with Prokofiev's second sonata for violin and piano; and the Tel Aviv Quartet who played Britten's second string quartet.

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ROBERT CRAWFORD was born in Edinburgh and studied at the Guildhall School of Music in London. As a composer he has written two string quartets, two piano sonatas and other instrumental pieces, and is chairman of the Scottish branch of the Composers' Guild. As a radio music producer he works for the BBC in Glasgow, and as a critic he writes for various Scottish newspapers.



ST CECILIA'S HALL in Niddry Street was built by Robert Mylne in 1762 and restored by the University of Edinburgh in 1968. The oval concert hall is modelled on the Opera House in Parma.

ST CECILIA'S HALL

PETER WILLIAMS describes Edinburgh's charming 18th-century concert hall and its unique collection of musical instruments.

St Cecilia's Hall is the oldest concert hall in Edinburgh and one of the three oldest in Britain. Since it seats a mere 250, the concerts heard there can afford to be rather out of the ordinary, not to say rarefied. For the twenty or so major public concerts held there each year, plus poetry readings during each Edinburgh Festival, the hall is always full and has become known among a small but select group of international musicians as one of the most fitting concert halls in the world for certain kinds of chamber music.

The reasons for this lie at least partly in the prettiness of the elliptical eighteenth-century concert-room, with its facilities for refreshments and for private music clubs and societies. It was, after all, built for the Edinburgh Musical Society in 1762. The chief reason, however, is the collection of harpsichords on display in the two galleries surrounding the hall—a small and uniquely representative group of some three dozen instruments, including virginals, spinets, harpsichords, clavichords, fortepianos and organs from Italy, Flanders, France, Germany and England. Though mostly harpsichords, the collection also boasts the oldest English grand piano. The instruments are named after Raymond Russell in whose memory about half of them were given to the University for the reopening of St Cecilia's Hall (which it now owns and restored) in June 1968. The building and its instruments are thus part of the Faculty of Music in the University, run by a director, curator and instrument-restorers who work to bring the instruments into playing order. This itself is highly unusual in the museum world, and indeed none of the staff regard it as a museum so much as a live collection of beautiful instruments to be seen, played, heard and recorded.

The three most important series of

concerts heard there are geared towards both the clear acoustics of the concert-room itself and the special demands of the antique instruments kept in the galleries. Thus the University sponsors a group of concerts in early June each year devoted exclusively to the chamber music of J. S. Bach—those for 1972, for instance, include all the cello and viola da gamba sonatas. At such concerts the only antique German harpsichord on public show in Britain can be regularly heard; future plans include the gradual performance of all the harpsichord and clavichord works of Bach. A more varied diet is supplied by the Martin Chamber Concerts Society, an independent body producing concerts of rarely heard music from (so far) John Dunstable in the fifteenth century to Benjamin Britten in the twentieth. The emphasis here is not so much on baroque music as on that of all periods suitable for the intimate surroundings of St Cecilia's. A third series concerns the poetry readings during the Festival, while an occasional series of harpsichord recitals and public lecture-recitals on old instruments (such as viols) is undertaken by the music faculty.

At the same time, St Cecilia's Hall also contains a minor but interesting collection of pictures (Pannini, Ruysdael), tapestries (Chinese, English) and other works of art, including a sedan chair associated with the original hall. The building is much used by students, either alone or in groups, making music and taking the opportunity of getting to know such instruments. Furthermore, to develop activities in general and to acquire exhibition items in particular, a Society of the Friends of St Cecilia's Hall was formed in March 1971, and its members will engage in visits to other instrument collections (Scotland happens to be rich in old

instruments), special lectures, meetings and concerts planned around the harpsichords and the concert hall. Ideas for the future include the holding of an Easter or Summer School in harpsichord-playing and restoration, with particular reference to J. S. Bach. Both the tutors and the students on such a course would, it is hoped, be drawn from far afield and include those with both professional and amateur interests.

Continued from p. 12

Two concerts of special interest were presented by Masterconcerts of Glasgow, making their Edinburgh début at the Lyceum Theatre: the Scottish Baroque Ensemble with the BBC Scottish Chorus gave a Handel programme with excerpts from the opera "Susanna" and the magnificent "Dixit Dominus," with Andrew Davis conducting, while the Fires of London brought the solo dancer, William Louthier, in a programme of works arranged, realised and composed by their director, Peter Maxwell Davies, including the "Versalii Iconis," a series of fourteen dances based on anatomical drawings by the sixteenth-century painter, Andreas Vesalius.

This spring there are visits from Scottish Opera and Sadler's Wells, and Scottish Opera will be back twice more during the summer. There are many choral concerts and organ recitals all over town, including an Easter performance of the St Matthew Passion at St Giles' Cathedral—this with Herrick Bunney as the conductor. No evidence, then, that Edinburgh's musical year consists of 49 weeks of darkness as penance for its three weeks of festival; but plenty of evidence of a rich and varied musical life.

TOWARDS AN ENVIRONMENT FOR MODERN MUSIC

EDWARD HARPER surveys the prospects for improving facilities and support for new trends in modern music.

Ideally, one would live in a city which pulsated with new music; where, at least twice a week, one could hear a couple of first performances, some works by contemporary composers both British and foreign, and a number of works by older-established composers; where there were countless, eager musicians looking for new works to play and where, when they did play them, the concerts would be attended by large and enthusiastic audiences. In Edinburgh it is possible for weeks to pass without there being a performance of a work written, let us say, in the last thirty years. There is no regular series of concerts of modern works. There are hardly any musicians whose primary interest is in contemporary music.

Examining the scene in more detail one finds that, in the present series of concerts in the Usher Hall given by the Scottish National Orchestra, there is a sprinkling of works by well-established twentieth-century composers (Bartók, Stravinsky, Walton, Shostakovich); but there is not one work which would give an audience any indication of the way music is developing at the moment. This is in no way meant to criticise the organisers of such a series of concerts; they presumably have to rely to a large extent on the subscriptions of people who, understandably, want to know exactly what they are getting for their money, and for this reason they do not have complete freedom of choice in programme planning. Probably such concerts are not the best place to introduce the unfamiliar. But events like the cycle of Henze symphonies, and the "Musica Nova" concerts last year (though these of course were in Glasgow) leave one wishing that they were not quite such isolated occasions.

Consideration of two other series of concerts reveals a slightly brighter prospect. The BBC, in their broadcasts on the Scottish Home Service, are extremely generous in promoting the works of Scottish composers, or composers living in Scotland. Chamber concerts, and many orchestral concerts, regularly contain works by local composers. I think it is a pity, however, that more modern works from outside Scotland are not broadcast by Scottish players. Few composers working in Scotland would claim to be particularly representative of the most recent musical trends. I am not suggesting that they necessarily should

be, but I feel that the more types of contemporary musical style that are represented in concerts in Edinburgh, the more stimulating it would be, both for composer and audience. Of course Boulez, Nono, Maxwell Davies, and others can be heard reasonably often on Radio 3, but that is not the same as having these composers performed by musicians living in Scotland—a point to which I shall return.

The other series of concerts to which I referred is that given by the University. This would seem, potentially, the most rewarding possibility: a series of orchestral and chamber concerts not committed to drawing large audiences, and which can explore less common avenues of the musical repertoire, including those of contemporary music. In the last few years the music prospectus of the University concert series has shown a marked increase in the number of modern works played. Nonetheless, problems occur when it comes to working out programmes containing modern works. A large number of works are ruled out because they demand instrumental resources far beyond those available to the University, or because they would not be effective in the Reid Concert Hall (ideal for an eighteenth-century orchestra, but little else), or because they need electronic facilities in Edinburgh, and while this is the case a large and important area of contemporary music will remain a closed book to Edinburgh audiences and musicians.

Then there is the question of rehearsal time: there is hardly ever enough time to allow rehearsal of a modern piece. A modern piece needs more rehearsal not simply because the notes are more difficult, but because the idiom is so strange to the players. In a rehearsal of a Beethoven symphony, there is already a certain understanding on the part of everyone present of the basic musical idiom, the players know what the music is about, and consequently there are many things which can be taken for granted. In a rehearsal of a work by Berio, nothing can be taken for granted; the music is not immediately understood by the players, and it would take a large amount of rehearsal time before it was. This is not the fault of the musicians. All the musicians I have worked with in Edinburgh have always been extremely

interested in and willing to perform new works, and have performed them with a great deal of skill. But in such a musical environment as Edinburgh's it is very hard for a player to get the kind of experience which will enable him to take all types of modern idiom in his stride.

These are just random observations. They are in no way intended to be a comprehensive survey of the contemporary musical scene in Edinburgh, nor do I offer any immediate remedies to what I consider an unhealthy situation regarding the small number of performances of modern music. But I will end by suggesting four innovations I would like to see made in Edinburgh. First, a new concert hall, in which a more informal relationship between performer and audience would be possible. Second, an electronic studio. Third, a group of musicians specialising in the performance of modern music, who could pass from Stravinsky to Stockhausen without turning a hair. Finally, and perhaps most important, the establishment of a College of Music for young, aspiring professional musicians. I feel the effect of having in the city a large number of young instrumentalists would open up all sorts of possibilities in putting on concerts of new music, and would particularly benefit young composers in Edinburgh, who have little opportunity of performances. This idea has, I know, often been discussed, and I hope it will not be too long before such a college is established. Maybe these things would not transform Edinburgh into the ideal musical environment I described at the beginning of this article, but they would go a long way towards it.

EDWARD HARPER was born in 1941 and studied at Oxford, the Royal College of Music in London, and in Milan with Franco Donatoni. He has been a lecturer in the Faculty of Music at Edinburgh University since 1964, and is the composer of a violin concerto, a piano concerto, a string quartet and various vocal and instrumental works.

MUSIC IN THE UNIVERSITY

KENNETH LEIGHTON, Reid Professor of Music at Edinburgh University, outlines the widening scope of the Music Faculty with its increasing concern for live music making.

In 1803 General John Reid, General in His Majesty's army and Colonel of the 88th regiment of foot, music lover, flautist and composer of several quaint but delightful suites, signed his will, directing his trustees to apportion a fund for "the endowment and maintenance in all time coming of a Professor of the theory of music, an art and science in which the Scots stand unrivalled by all the neighbouring regions in pastoral melody and sweet combination of sounds."

Since that time and since the laying of the foundation stone of the Reid School of Music in 1858 (only achieved after long litigation) music in the University has developed in countless directions far beyond the wildest dreams of the first Professor, John Thomson. Between the wars, Edinburgh had the immense benefit of the presence of Tovey who, with his Reid Orchestra, performed many rarely-heard classical works, and has left an impression on the musical experience of the city which is even today widely felt and deeply appreciated.

More recently, and in spite of the emergence of new professional orchestras, the Reid Orchestra (itself largely professional and entirely financed by the University) has continued to play a vital rôle. Throughout his career the late Sidney Newman remained deeply concerned for the well-being of the orchestra, and his many exciting performances of a wide classical repertoire, his championship of Haydn (at a time when this composer was known only by a handful of works), his devotion to the music of Sibelius and to that of several of his British contemporaries, will be remembered with gratitude for many years to come.

In a constantly growing Faculty, Newman was also responsible for two major contributions to the musical life of the University, the Edinburgh Quartet (again subsidised by the University and one of the first of its kind), and the housing of the magnificent Russell collection of early keyboard instruments in St Cecilia's Hall.

Tovey, apart from being a great writer on music, was, of course, a very distinguished performer and the composer of large-scale works. Luckily the emphasis on the practical and creative aspects of music has continued and increased during the intervening years. Though the musicological and historical disciplines are by no means neglected in the Faculty of Music, it is noticeable that the staff is made up of musicians who play a major

rôle in Edinburgh's musical life as performers, conductors and composers. In a world of over-specialisation it is of deepest concern to maintain the breadth of outlook which has always been essential to the great periods of Western music. So the students too are required to be performers and the aim is always to relate academic disciplines as closely as possible to the business of live music-making. This is reflected not only in the considerable number of distinguished performers who are graduates of the Faculty, but also in the rising standards of performance in the University's choirs and two student orchestras, as well as in the newly revived interest in student opera.

Concert programmes in a University must aim at finding some sort of balance. It must not be forgotten that students come along with little knowledge even of the standard repertoire and of the more familiar classics. But with these so easily available on records and in the concert hall, a university can also play a vital part in enriching and enlivening the scene. Not only twentieth-century music but less-familiar music of all periods can become the special domain of universities, and it is certainly the hope of this Faculty that it may contribute substantially to this kind of enrichment. Subsidising a quartet and an orchestra may preclude the possibility of promoting concerts by leading artists of the day, but it has the precious compensation of contributing towards the growth of a musical community independent of the over-centralised rat race of the metropolis.

Inside the Faculty itself a very wide variety of activities can be found. Work on forthcoming books, articles and research flourishes side by side with composition and the preparation of performances. Students have facilities for instrumental practice which are unsurpassed in British universities, and scholarships at post-graduate level provide unparalleled opportunities for advanced study in composition and performance. Recent awards have enabled graduates to pursue such diverse studies as conducting and composition in Rome, piano in Vienna, harpsichord in Utrecht and musicology in Paris.

Students and teachers also have the enormous advantage of one of the finest music libraries in the country. Founded about 120 years ago in the time of Professor John Donaldson, and enriched by men like Niecks and Tovey, the library continues to grow with ever-increasing momentum. In addition to all the monumental and collected editions that one could expect to find in such an

institution, and in addition to many precious manuscripts and original editions of theoretical works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the corpus of twentieth-century music is constantly growing. The history syllabus now covers music up to the present day, and it is hoped that a further extension into the fields of pre-renaissance and medieval music may eventually be achieved.

British university music is a unique and, in the eyes of the foreigner, a curious institution which is certainly not without its problems and anachronisms. But the British approach to musical education, pragmatic and respectful of tradition, has its own peculiar strength. It seems to me that a renewed sense of purpose and a greater concern for the creative aspects of music have entered the field, and we all hope that the Edinburgh Faculty will play its full part in these developments. The foundation of a second Chair of Music (the Tovey Chair) and the general increase in the scope of the Faculty at all levels augur well for the future.



KENNETH LEIGHTON was born in Wakefield in 1929. He studied at Oxford and later with Petrassi in Rome. From 1956 to 1968 he taught at Edinburgh University and then, after two years at Oxford (where he succeeded Edmund Rubbra), he returned to Edinburgh as Reid Professor of Music. As a composer he has won numerous prizes, including the Cobbett Medal for distinguished services to chamber music, the Busoni Prize, and two Royal Philharmonic prizes. His symphony won the Trieste International Competition for a new symphonic work.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Edinburgh's musical life, it's agreed, is good but could be better. But what stands most in need of improvement? Various musical personalities have been asked this question, and in the following symposium they provide their answers.

Emphasised as the most pressing needs are that new opera house, much needed improvements to the Usher Hall and better teaching facilities. But they will not be met without concerted effort. The conservationists have shown what can sometimes be achieved by organised pressure. There is little doubt that musical Edinburgh could gain its objectives more readily if it had a strong action group composed of people with determination and influence.

Another carafe of water

DAVID DORWARD
composer, BBC music producer
in Edinburgh

(1) The Usher Hall—could we have two carafes of water instead of one?

(2) We need a new school of music for younger musicians in Edinburgh.

(3) We need a decent new hall for the many smaller concerts and recitals in Edinburgh.

(4) In general we need to make concert-going more comfortable. If we can't lure the public to concerts by providing attractive facilities, they're less likely to come. At present the Usher Hall is a penance to go to.

Hall for chamber music

CHRISTIE DUNCAN
musical assistant, Scottish Arts Council

Edinburgh needs to build a new 600-seat hall for chamber music. At present we have the Usher Hall, which is a good hall for larger-scale music and which is going to be a very good hall once it is improved. We'll have the opera house in a few years. We have the Freemasons' Hall, which is good in its way for chamber music, but it is privately owned and its availability for concerts outside of the Festival is always uncertain. There's Leith Town Hall, but that's not an ideal chamber hall, and there's the Reid Concert Hall and various other places which are privately owned or may have other snags. So let's have a good new hall, under public ownership, as a matter of priority.

Need for conservatory

COLIN KINGSLEY
concert pianist, lecturer in music,
Edinburgh University

(1) At present Edinburgh is miserably short of good pianos in the seven-foot range, but there is some hope of improvements here soon.

(2) I would like to see a broadening out of Edinburgh music at a training level, with the foundation ultimately of a conservatory of music.

A worthier Usher Hall

ROBERT PONSONBY
general administrator,
Scottish National Orchestra

The main scope for improvement still lies in the Usher Hall—I've absolutely no doubt at all about this. If you look at the other available halls in Edinburgh, they've all got qualities superior to the Usher. There's the marvellous St Cecilia's, even though it's acoustically a bit quirky; there's the Freemasons', used for many years, if a bit resonant; and Leith is useful, comfortable, if acoustically dead. The Usher Hall also has acoustical drawbacks, which could be improved, but its other facilities are deplorable—though I understand that improvements are at last being undertaken. One thing that would be welcome would be a comfortable restaurant adjacent to the Usher Hall, perhaps in that little church nearby, with covered access from restaurant to hall.

I have the impression that there's a good deal of music going on in Edinburgh, most of it pretty well supported. When Masterconcerts of Glasgow recently put

on some events at the Lyceum, they attracted a bright, intelligent audience, with lots of young people. If that aspect could be developed, then I think Edinburgh would be even better served than it is now.

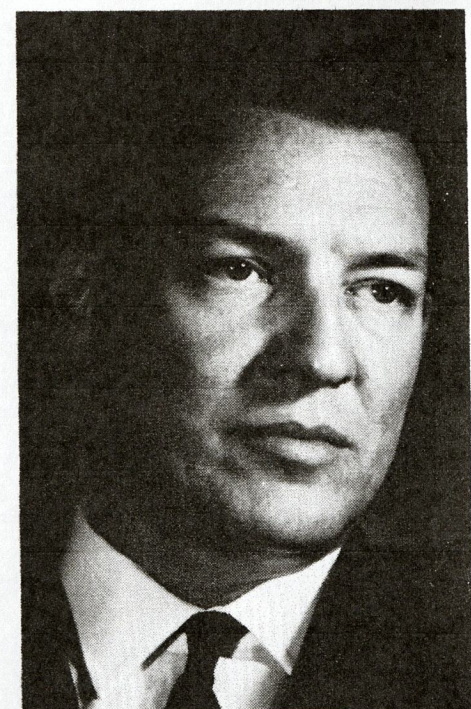
Music in schools

KENNETH LEIGHTON
Reid professor of music,
Edinburgh University

I think school music in Edinburgh could still be improved enormously. Things are better than they used to be, but there are lots of schools where music is still regarded as an eccentric hobby. It's a subject that should be developed at a higher level.

Also the division in Edinburgh education is generally a point of trouble. It militates, for instance, against the formation of a first-class Edinburgh schools orchestra, such as can be found in Glasgow.

Extend the proscenium



ALEXANDER GIBSON
musical director of Scottish Opera
and the Scottish National Orchestra

First the opera house question—this theatre, when we get it, must be a really worthy one, of satisfactory size for opera.

Then there's the Usher Hall. Quite apart from the question of its general amenities, this is a hall whose sound could easily be improved. It would be nice, in such a potentially good hall, to try to extend the proscenium. This would give the platform more depth than at present; and, as experiments during the Festival have shown, it brings a marked improvement to the sound.

National and international orientation

RONALD STEVENSON
composer, pianist, author

(1) A drive for 100 per cent musical literacy in the schools. In my view, the Kodály method is the best and could be transplanted from Hungary to Scotland because its pentatony [five-note scale] is common to both countries.

(2) A school for musically gifted children.

(3) A college of music.

(4) A resident composer in the School of Scottish Studies, to develop Scottish music from its roots, as Bartók developed Hungarian music.

(5) Publication of new music by the University of Edinburgh Press. (Precedents: Carnegie Trust publications in the Twenties and current University of Wales publications).

(6) Mutual activity between the clarsach, piping and fiddle fraternities (at present isolated).

(7) Lecture/recitals by Scottish composers in the schools.

(8) A more national and international orientation in programme-planning—instead of the prevailing parochial and West European orientation; i.e. let's have more East European, Latin American, Eastern, African and American music—and Scottish.

(9) An opera house instead of a hole!

Items 1, 2 and 3 would make the personnel of the SNO and Scottish Opera more indigenous.

Better pianos and a service centre

ERIC ROBERTS
director, Pro Arte Orchestra

First of all, for concerts of the kind I organise, we still need a really suitable hall, with good lighting, heating, refreshment facilities, good green-room accommodation, and a reasonably decent piano—we just haven't got one. The lack of good pianos in Edinburgh, tailored to the size of the hall in which they will be used, has become very serious.

Then there's the business of tying up activities—to see that there's no wasteful doubling of concerts. We need a really good ticket agency, where publicity could be given to all that was happening musically—perhaps an office with the atmosphere of a musical club. Maybe the Scottish Tourist Board at the West End could provide premises of this kind, with posters displayed; or else the Festival Booking Offices in Market Street, which are used only at Festival-time, could be brought into action during the whole year as a sort of general service to the city.

Policy for the new Opera House



PETER HEMMINGS
general administrator, Scottish Opera

I would like to see, in the new opera house, two-to-three month seasons of opera, ballet and drama, with performances intermingled on a nightly repertoire basis.

In this way there could be fifty performances of opera each year in Edinburgh, but spread over several months, with two performances per week. This would be better than the present system, whereby there is opera for a solid fortnight and then nothing for several months. It would result in better houses; people would go to opera more often if it was on an all-the-year-round basis, because they would not have such enormous outlays as when there is a short intensive season of opera.

There would still be time during the year for commercial shows and so forth to be put on in the new opera house. I would like to see this scheme work in co-operation with a similar scheme in Glasgow.

It must be a full-size theatre

RICHARD TELFER
founder-director of Scottish Opera, now one of the company's board of directors

The major improvement we need is the new theatre. We can't do much more at the moment until we get a suitable theatre that will enable us to expand and improve what we're doing in opera. The longer it takes, the more expensive it will be. There seems to be a threat at the moment that the Corporation want to reduce the seating capacity of the theatre even below the 1400-mark to which they have already reduced it. We must make sure that

Edinburgh gets a full-size theatre. We don't want something that's only marginally better than the King's, and substantially smaller in seating capacity. If that were the case, we might as well spend all the money on improving the King's itself.

I'd like to see major new theatres for opera going up in all the main towns of Scotland, but let's meantime content ourselves with small mercies and hope at least for a decent opera house in Edinburgh.

Academy is prime need

ARTHUR OLDHAM
chorusmaster, Edinburgh Festival Chorus

What we now need above all is a school of music in Edinburgh, along the lines of the Royal Scottish Academy in Glasgow. We need more first-class teachers in Edinburgh, both for full-time and part-time students, which we haven't at the moment. This is something we've needed for years.

The University is good for selective teaching; but I have so many people who are good singers—too many for the quantity of good teachers available in Edinburgh—but who maybe can't afford very often to go to Glasgow for their training. An Edinburgh school would solve this problem, not only in singing but in other spheres of music-making.

Wider role for symphony orchestras

ALEXANDER DUNBAR
director, Scottish Arts Council

The first major requirement will be met when we get the new theatre that we're not allowed to call an opera house; the second when conditions at the Usher Hall are improved both for performers and for audience.

I would like to see better integration between the Scottish National Orchestra and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, both for public concert-giving and for supplying orchestral support to Scottish Opera and Scottish Theatre Ballet. It's a pity that the SNO is largely confined to public concert-giving and doesn't get enough broadcasting, whereas the BBC orchestra is largely confined to broadcasting and is not sufficiently well geared for public performance.

At present the two orchestras—for largely administrative reasons—are not sufficiently interchangeable. The whole question of public concert-giving by major orchestras, and orchestral support for opera and ballet, is something that calls for the closest study. Clearly, Scottish Theatre Ballet's orchestral provision is its Achilles' heel at the moment, and this is partly financial. If it had its own orchestra it would be very expensive and wouldn't be needed for much of the year.

Other things needed are more experimental concerts and perhaps master

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MUSICAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANISATIONS

THE EDINBURGH ROYAL CHORAL UNION

The Choral Union, as this Society is affectionately known, began in 1858 in Wood's Musical Rooms, Waterloo Place. It has performed before Royalty on many occasions; one of its great days being that of the visit of Queen Victoria in 1886. The title Royal was conferred in 1911 by King George V. The Choral Union has sung before our present Queen, when Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham at the opening concert of the 1956 International Festival.

Many other famous conductors have had the choir under their baton, especially from 1950 to 1963 when the ERCU made annual appearances at the Festival. During all its years, the principal soloists of the day have sung with the choir, notably Jenny Lind in 1861, Isobel Baillie, Kathleen Ferrier, Peter Pears and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau.

Handel's *Messiah* has been sung at least once a year from 1861 and there has been an annual performance—commencing at midday—on every New Year's Day since 1888.

The ERCU has had remarkably few permanent conductors. Each gave long years of service, thus maintaining the high quality of the choral works performed in the city. The present conductor is Brian Head.

The Choir is a mixed one and has varied in size between two and three hundred, who receive a thorough training in choral singing.

Concerts for the 1972-73 season include a Vaughan Williams Centenary Concert with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Handel's *Messiah*, Monteverdi's *Vespers* and Verdi's *Requiem* will be performed with the Reid Orchestra and soloists.

Hon. President, M. T. Wilson; Vice-President, K. G. Black; Hon. Secretary, Mrs A. M. Michelsen, 32 Greenbank Gardens.

THE EDINBURGH BACH SOCIETY

The Edinburgh Bach Society was founded in 1889 when the works of J. S. Bach were not as well known and not as frequently performed as they are today. In the earlier years the emphasis was on keyboard compositions, and it was in 1917 that the Edinburgh Bach Choir was formed as an adjunct to the Society to enable performances of choral works to be given.

The extent of the repertoire of the Choir has changed markedly, involving per-

formances of works by Bach's contemporaries, such as Handel and Purcell; his predecessors, such as Palestrina and Schutz, and by twentieth-century composers, both British and foreign. Nevertheless, there are those who consider that, chorally, Bach of all composers bears the crown, and so he continues to dominate our programmes.

It is a medium-sized choir, 70-80 strong; a size which makes it eminently suitable for performing Bach Cantatas, Masses and Passions. It is this size, too, which makes it ideal for performing many works by other composers which are unsuitable for a large choir and yet need more than just a few voices to each part.

A Chamber Choir of 24-30 voices from the Bach Choir undertakes the performance of works more suitable to a small group.

Yet another new venture is the holding of Social Meetings at which all members and their friends can foregather, not only for conversational purposes but to hear performances (informal, but of high standard) by members and others, or to listen to short talks about the Society and the works that the Choir are going to perform.

The Society employs only fully professional orchestral players, normally the group known as The Edinburgh Players. The Edinburgh Bach Choir is the only choir in Scotland which broadcasts for the BBC using its own orchestra.

Soloists are professional singers and players, and the aim is to foster native talent whenever possible. As a result there are a number of well-known singers who found a platform in their early days with the Society.

Membership of the Society consists of both non-singing and practising members. Subscription for non-choir members includes attendance at the Society's performances.

Hon. President, Professor Kenneth Leighton; Conductor, James Sloggie; Hon. Treasurer, C. G. Graham; Choir Secretary, Mrs F. Cantlay; Hon. Secretary, B. Cook, 65 Murrayfield Gardens.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH

The Society was founded in 1924 with the object of fostering the love and appreciation of the works of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. During the winter months, a programme of monthly meetings, which take the form of talks, recitals, etc., is arranged and the Society invites all who may wish to join in its activities to contact the PRO, David Hamilton, 86 Willowbrae Avenue, Edinburgh EH8 7HW.

Rehearsals for the annual production take place during the winter months and anybody who is interested in appearing in one of the Society's productions or in helping back-stage with scenery, costumes, etc., should contact Mr Hamilton.

President, George Edmonstone; Vice-President, James Wallace; Hon. Treasurer, Alex Bowie, 41 Queen's Avenue, EH4 3DG.

PORTOBELLO GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

The Portobello Gramophone Society was founded twenty-five years ago and has a record of over six hundred meetings. The Society meets on Sunday evenings at 7.30 p.m. from the first Sunday in October to the middle of December and from the second Sunday in January to the last Sunday in March. Talks are given by members and by guest speakers on all aspects of music—composers, conductors, performers, lieder, opera, symphony and chamber music. The talks are illustrated by the use of gramophone records played on good equipment. Guest speakers include practising musicians, critics, lecturers and teachers. Members have enjoyed talks by Kenneth Leighton, Robert Crawford, Conrad Wilson and Neville Garden.

The Society is affiliated to the National Federation of Gramophone Societies.

Chairman, John Turpie; Hon. Treasurer, Brian Whitworth; Hon. Secretary, Leslie Gage, 226 Milton Road East.

THE SALTIRE SOCIETY

The Saltire Standing Music Conference holds meetings twice each year. Membership is drawn from every important musical activity in Scotland including the Scottish Arts Council, the Universities, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, the Scottish Education Department, BBC, STV and Grampian; Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Opera, Scottish Theatre Ballet, Baroque Ensemble, etc., etc., plus many representing composers, performers and organisers' societies. Representations are made to Government Departments and to Civic Authorities if the Conference so instructs.

The Society maintains a list of practising musicians. Awards for composition and performances are now being organised. Concerts of contemporary music are held periodically and commissioning of new music is encouraged.

The Saltire Music Group organises concerts with an emphasis on Scottish works especially during the Edinburgh Festival period. Gaelic music is featured.

The Saltire Singers quartet, while based now furth of Scotland, is heard on occasions and arrangements for the group's performances may be made at Gladstone's Land.

Gladstone's Land has an intimate atmosphere, capacity 60-70, with painted beam ceilings and a tempera painted wall; Bluthner Grand; Broadwood Square 1797; de Blaise Harpsichord.

The Secretary of the Saltire Society is John B. Rankin, Gladstone's Land, 483 Lawnmarket.

THE CONNOISSEUR CONCERTS SOCIETY

The Connoisseur Concerts have played an important part in the musical life of the city since 1956, when they were instituted by Eric Roberts. During these sixteen years over a hundred and twenty musicians living and working in Scotland have taken part, and over a hundred and twenty works by British composers have been played, sixty-seven of them by composers resident in Scotland. During the 1972/73 season, plans include performances of new works by Scottish-based composers, David Dorward, John Maxwell Geddes (a commission by the Society), Edward Harper, Thomas Wilson and William Wordsworth, two of which will be having first performances. There will be music by Vivaldi, Bach, Purcell, Rossini, Brahms, Mendelssohn and others. Artists taking part will include the Duo Barbirolli (Evelyn Rothwell, oboe, and Iris Loveridge, piano), violinist Ruggiero Ricci, Peter Williams, harpsichord, and the Scottish Baroque Ensemble, director and soloist, Leonard Friedman.

Concerts by the Duo Barbirolli and Ruggiero Ricci will be held in the Music Hall, George Street, and those by the Baroque Ensemble and soloists in the Randolph Hall, Randolph Place.

The concerts will be held on Sunday nights monthly at 8 p.m.

Secretary, Robert Mackay, 28 South Learmonth Gardens, Edinburgh EH4 1EZ.

THE NEW TOWN CONCERTS

The New Town Concerts were started by Laurence Harris in 1964 with the object of presenting chamber music and recitals of international standard in Edinburgh during the winter season. In this they are the successors to the Freemasons' Hall Concerts which gave such pleasure for many years. Four concerts are given each season, and amongst the many distinguished ensembles and soloists who have appeared are the Smetana, Hungarian and Amadeus Quartets, the Berlin Octet and John Ogdon.

In 1971 the concerts were placed on a more permanent basis with the formation of a private company, and they are now managed by a committee consisting

of William Berry, David Burns, Martin Haldane, Laurence Harris and Graham Melville-Mason. Particulars of the 1972/73 season, which will open with a concert by the Bartok Quartet in November, can be obtained from the Secretary at 48 India Street.

PRO ARTE MUSICA

The function of Pro Arte Musica is to provide a link between Scottish music clubs and Scottish based musicians. It aids musical organisations, when planning their concert needs, by providing information about the availability of artists.

It gives advice on programme planning, on the production of programmes, posters, halls, the accommodation and general needs of artists on tour, and on general public and press relations.

It undertakes the arrangement of tours and provides a service of lecture-recitals to Education Authorities.

Pro Arte Musica is presenting a series of recitals under the title "Music in June" on four consecutive nights. The first recital, in the Freemasons' Hall on June 13 will be given by a South African baritone, Pieter Serfontein, with the Scottish pianist, Alasdair Graham.

The other three concerts will be held in the Reid Concert Hall. They will include the Viennese cellist, Martin Sieghart, partnered by Margaret Bayne, a young Scottish pianist who recently received the first musical award of £1000 from the Educational Trust established by Sean Connery; the pianist, Julian Dawson, in an all-Schubert programme; and the Eurasia Quartet of Vienna, composed of musicians from Hong Kong, Teheran and Vienna.

FRIENDS OF LEDLANET NIGHTS

Ledlanet is a Kinross-shire country house which has been converted into a miniature theatre, seating 163 to 200 people depending upon the entertainment given. Although it has now been extended to provide for a restaurant and certain necessary additions have been made, patrons are always delighted to find that the house maintains its character and that the intimacy of the performance contributes greatly to their enjoyment. The house has many associations with the Kennedy family and Jack Kennedy, late President of the United States and his brothers often stayed there as boys.

Ledlanet Nights is a non-profit distributing organisation intended to bring an international level of cultural entertainment to an area of Scotland that is within driving distance of Edinburgh and most large population centres. Ledlanet's small auditorium and special seating makes it possible to derive an intimate pleasure and understanding from even the most difficult of modern works and it is the special pride of the organisers that they

have helped to make regular music-lovers and theatre-goers of people who previously felt little attraction towards the higher arts. At the same time they have provided a special setting for the popular arts that are well represented in every season. The maintaining of high standards in a festival with limited seating capacity can only mean operating at a deficit.

In addition to a four-week season every autumn, there are concerts and entertainments at Ledlanet throughout the year.

Chairman, J. M. Fraser; Director, John Calder; General Secretary, Miss Katrina Hoyle, Ledlanet, Milnathort, Kinross-shire.

THE EDINBURGH SOCIETY OF MUSICIANS

The Edinburgh Society of Musicians was founded in 1887 and presently have their premises at 2 Belford Road, Edinburgh.

Concerts are given by Scottish artists every Saturday evening at eight. The duration of the session is from October until the end of the next June. The concerts are invariably serious music, but the Society is not confined to executants. Anybody interested in serious music is welcome.

President, Miles Baster; Secretary, J. B. Hunter; Treasurer, Michael Darke; Organiser of Programmes, Bryce Gould.

Looking to the future

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classes. Probably publicity could be improved, too—there's no sort of concentrated effort. The whole "selling side" of music needs looking at, but I think that will come. Also work needs to be done on audience building. At the moment we're studying whether we can have "Youth and Music" in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The whole of this side of things—catching the interest of young people—is extremely important.

Information centre

LAURENCE HARRIS
director, New Town Concerts

What's needed is something that would improve musical publicity in Edinburgh—a central information centre, with posters up. This could say what's on during the season: something along the lines of the French idea of *Metro* bollards, packed with details of concerts and so on.

Perhaps such a system could also provide better liaison between concert promoters, so that each would know what the others were doing and clashes of events could be avoided.

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