

TOWN HALL - BIRMINGHAM

Tuesday, January 26th, 1943, at 6.15 p.m.



MUSICAL CULTURE LIMITED

presents

THE LONDON
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

(Leader - JEAN PUGNET)

Conductor :

WARWICK BRAITHWAITE

Narrator :

MARGARETTA SCOTT

Solo Trumpet - MALCOLM ARNOLD

Solo Organ - G. D. CUNNINGHAM

Programme and
Notes price, 6d.

PROGRAMME AND ANALYTICAL NOTES

By THOMAS RUSSELL

(Author's Copyright)

Academic Festival Overture - Brahms (1833-1897)

This work was first performed in Breslau in 1880, when the degree of Doctor of Philosophy was conferred upon the composer. In spite of this fact, the severe title of the work is apt to mislead new listeners unaware that in writing this work especially for the occasion, Brahms built it upon a number of student songs, which he developed and orchestrated in a masterly way.

As with many of Brahms's works, the "Academic Festival Overture" was one of a pair, having been written at the same time as the "Tragic Overture." The Overture opens with a quiet, tapping figure in the strings, followed by a more flowing one played by the violas, after which the tapping figure is heard again. A stately tune is then introduced by the trumpets against a drum roll, and is then developed in conjunction with the original theme. This development leads to a student song introduced by the violins and, after some triplets in the wood-wind, another more humorous student song is first heard in the bassoons. All this material is brought back again, and a *Coda* of great strength and brilliance, based on the famous *Gaudamus Igitur*, concludes the work.

En Saga - - - Sibelius (Born 1865)

This work was the first by which the name of Sibelius was made known outside Finland. Its introduction by Busoni in the 'nineties made a deep impression. Cecil Gray points out the wealth of melodic invention to be found in the work, remarking that it contains sufficient excellent material to serve for several compositions. He also refers to the abundant use of pedal points in this work which, he says, are largely responsible for its "dark, threatening, sombre tone-quality."

The work opens with five bars of introduction, in which the second bassoon and horns have sustained chordal passages against *pp spiccato* arpeggios in the strings. A theme with a hesitating rhythm appears in the wood-wind. After this statement the string arpeggios reappear against a cymbal roll, with a sustained melody in the bassoons, supported by *pizzicato* in cellos and basses. This is developed with changing instrumentation. Several new, contrasted themes appear. The original theme reappears, now played by the violas, who presently divide, leaving the solo viola with the theme while the remainder reinforce it *pizzicato*. This is used in contrast with the flowing theme already heard. After a *diminuendo* a forceful *forte* subject is given to the first violins and violas in octaves, later taken up by the full orchestra. A *scherzando* passage is heard over a curious waving discord in the strings. As the string movement swells, the forceful subject is given out by the brass, and leads to a re-statement of the first theme with a *pizzicato* accompaniment. A development of the *scherzando* subject is heard in conjunction with the forceful theme. A strong syncopated figure in the strings leads to a climax, in which the forceful figure is heard in wood-wind and horns. An even greater climax is followed by a *diminuendo*, revealing the original theme in string octaves. After a long, tranquil and rather mysterious passage the music dies away to some sustained chords in solo strings. Then the wood-wind has a short passage alone, after which the first rhythm is heard

in *f* string chords. A section follows in which the wood-wind counterpoint and the energetic writing for the strings divided the attention, and the work comes to an end with a clarinet solo, against sustained string chords and a cymbal roll. As the solo ends, the 'cellos play a reference to the original subject.

Peter and the Wolf - - Prokofieff (Born 1891) Narrator - MARGARETTA SCOTT

Prokofieff was born in Russia, but spent much of his earlier life abroad, living in London and Paris, America, Japan and Germany. He caused some surprise when he returned to the Soviet Union a few years ago and took an active part in its musical life. He has approved of the prevailing idea that composers should work with the public in mind, regarding music rather as a social service than an isolated activity of the individual. He has turned his attention on these lines to music for children, playing a great part in stimulating their appreciation of music.

"Peter and the Wolf" is described as a "Musical Tale for Children," and its simple, amusing story is designed to introduce the various instruments of the orchestra to young listeners. It is so skilfully done, however, that older audiences will not fail to appreciate the humour and profit by the attention drawn to individual instruments. When the performance is given for children, a short introduction is played, in which the characters of the story are shown to be represented by certain instruments or combination of instruments. Thus the flute represents the bird, the oboe the duck, the clarinet the cat, the bassoon the grandfather, three horns the wolf, Peter by the string quartet, while the rifle shots of the hunters are illustrated by the tympani and big drum.

The Narrator explains the progress of the story, to which the different themes, separately or in combination, add humorous point.

INTERVAL

A Trumpet Voluntary - Purcell (Circa 1658-9—1695)

Solo Organ - G. D. CUNNINGHAM

Solo Trumpet - MALCOLM ARNOLD

Purcell is without doubt the greatest figure in English music and is, perhaps, the only one who has been accepted abroad as being worthy to stand in the narrow ranks of the finest masters of the art. His fame has always cast a lustre over his own period. As Grove says: "By way of exception to the usual course of composers' reputations, there has always been a tradition of Purcell's greatness, and a more or less continuous stream of editions of his works. Even the vogue of Handel was not enough to obliterate all trace of Purcell's fame. The influence of the Englishman's music upon the German master is quite unmistakable; before Handel came to England the massive choral effects, produced by means of the utmost simplicity, are not to be found in any of his works; they are the distinguishing mark of Purcell's choruses..." The work to be heard to-day, although of small dimensions, has the "modern" quality, which is amazing when compared with even its best contemporary achievements.

Variations on an Original Theme (Enigma) Elgar (1857-1934)

Since these Variations were first performed in 1899, there has been much speculation over the meaning behind the word Enigma which Elgar wrote above the theme on the first page of the full score. He explained that "Another and larger" theme "went" with each variation. As Ernest Newman has pointed out, this statement becomes a sheer absurdity if we are to understand by the word "theme" a "tune," for obviously no one tune will make any kind of a counterpoint to all the different variations. The Variations are dedicated "To my friends pictured within," and each variation depicts the friend whose initials precede it, or is designed as Elgar fancied it would have been had the friend been a composer. This adds weight to Mr. Newman's apt suggestion that the "other and larger" theme is not a musical tune, but the human theme of love and friendship.

Enigma. *Andante* 4/4.

- Variation I. (C.A.E.) *L'istesso tempo* 4/4.
Variation II. (H.D.S-P.) *Allegro* 3/8.
Variation III. (R.B.T.) *Allegretto* 3/8
Variation IV. (W.M.B.) *Allegro di molto* 3/4
Variation V. (R.P.A.) *Moderato* 12/8 (4/4).
Variation VI. (Ysobel.) *Andantino* 3/2.
Variation VII. (Troyte.) *Presto* 1/1.
Variation VIII. (W.N.) *Allegretto* 6/8.
Variation IX. (Nimrod) *Moderato* 3/4.
Variation X. (Dorabella) Intermezzo. *Allegretto* 3/4.
Variation XI. (G.R.S.) *Allegro di molto*. 2/2
Variation XII. (B.G.N.) *Andante* 4/4
Variation XIII. (***) Romanza. *Moderato* 3/4
Variation XIV. (E.D.U.) Finale. *Allegro* 4/4
-

The next visit of the LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16th, 1943

Conducted by **EDRIC CUNDELL**

Solo Tenor **PARRY JONES**

Programme

- | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| WAGNER | - | - | Introduction to Act III., Lohengrin |
| SIBELIUS | - | - | Symphony No. 2 |
| TSCHAIKOWSKY | - | - | Sleeping Beauty Waltz |
| TSCHAIKOWSKY | - | - | Eugene Onegin, Lenskis Aria |
| TSCHAIKOWSKY | - | - | Theme and Variations (Suite No. 3 in G) |