

ENSA *S*ymphony *C*oncerts for *W*ar *W*orker
(Organised for the Ministry of Labour and National Service)

LIVERPOOL
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

Leader: David Wise

Conductor:

MUIR MATHIESON

Soloist:

ARTHUR GRUMIAUX

1945

At the Town Hall, Birmingham
on Wednesday, May 30th at 7 p.m.

PROGRAMME PRICE 2d

PROGRAMME

God Save The King

Overture 'Si j'etais Roi' Adam

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Beethoven's only violin concerto was written in the most productive period of his life, between his thirty-fourth and thirty-eighth birthdays. In those years he wrote in addition to this work his third, fourth, fifth and sixth symphonies, the *Appassionata* and *Waldstein* pianoforte sonatas, the three string quartets dedicated to Count Rasoumoffsky and his only opera *Fidelio*, in short a great part of the music which established and upholds his reputation. All these works show Beethoven at the very height of his powers. He had put the eighteenth century and its aristocratic graces behind him and in these four years he altered the whole scale and shape and approach to music by a violence of thought and utterance from which it could never turn back.

One curious aspect of the works of this period is Beethoven's preoccupation with short themes based on one note. The most famous of all is the opening of the Fifth Symphony—the so-called Victory V. The opening of this concerto is but one of many striking cases—five drum taps. But it is not merely an opening, it is the all-pervading idea which unifies the whole of the great first movement. For all the melodic beauty, the masterly writing for the violin, the whole movement is in essence built on this figure.

The second movement is a rapt meditation on a simple theme, first played softly by the muted strings of the orchestra. As the clarinet takes over this melody the soloist starts to weave exquisite traceries around it and continues to do so until he introduces a new melody of his own. The web of enchantment is disturbed by the horns playing a reminder of the opening melody as the soloist mounts higher and higher. Three sharply rhythmic bars from the strings break the spell, and we are pitched without a pause into this finale, where the soloist at once plays a tune which Beethoven plays with like a child with a favourite toy, never letting it out of sight.

Walter Legge. (Author's Copyright.)

Threnody for a Soldier Killed in Action
Michael Heming arr Collins
(1920-1942)

Michael Heming was the only son of Percy Heming, the famous operatic baritone. At the outbreak of war, Michael Heming, then a student at the Royal Academy of Music, volunteered for the Army. On his journey to the Middle East, he made sketches for an orchestral work. He was killed in action at El Alamein. On the advice of John Barbirolli these sketches were sent to Anthony Collins, an old friend and colleague of Percy Heming who edited and orchestrated them to form this moving elegy for a young man of great promise who gave his life in humanity's cause.

Walter Legge. (Author's Copyright.)

Symphony No. 1 in C major Bizet
(1838—1875)

This engaging symphony has not yet taken its deserved place in the concert repertoire and you will search in vain for even a mention of it in the standard literature on Bizet or even in the majority of reference books. It has a curious history. It was written in 1854 when Bizet was a sixteen-year-old student at the Paris Conservatoire, three years before he won the Grand Prix de Rome. There is no record of its having been performed then or at any time during his life and the very existence of the score was unknown until it was discovered in the library of the Conservatoire in the early nineteen-thirties. It was given in London for the first time by Weingartner at a concert of the Royal Philharmonic Society and later taken up by Sir Thomas Beecham.

It is interesting to see in it how in Bizet—who was, at sixteen, an apprentice to the art and who had barely been out of Paris—the seeds which were to produce *Carmen* and *L'Arlesienne* were already germinating. Time and time again he anticipates the works of his maturity in this symphony. He has found not only his characteristic turn of heart-easing melody but the brilliant sunny warmth of colour that makes him unique. No other composer could have written the lovely oboe tune of the slow movement and even the finale which is the most derivative movement—it is the heir of Boieldieu's overtures—has a lissom grace and imaginative swiftness in modulation.

Walter Legge. (Author's Copyright.)

INTERVAL

