

ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

THE COLLEGE THEATRE

TUESDAY, 15th NOVEMBER, 1966

BANBURY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Leader: Lawrence Farbrother

The National Federation of Music Societies, to which this Society
is affiliated, gives support towards the cost of this Concert with
funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain

Conductor

IAN BARTLETT

PENNY SCOTT

Piano

Programme - One Shilling

PROGRAMME

Overture from "The Fairy Queen"

Henry Purcell (1659-95)

Maestoso—allegro moderato

Larghetto

Allegro—adagio—allegro

Purcell wrote the music for "The Fairy Queen," an adaptation of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in 1692. The score was thought to be lost until a theatre copy was discovered in the library of the Royal Academy of Music in 1901, since when a number of revivals of this impressive semi-opera have taken place. The music we are to hear is taken from Act IV and is scored for two trumpets, timpani and strings.

Titania, sleeping on the ground, is wakened at dawn by Oberon. She calls for "all variety of music, all that should welcome up the rising sun." "The scene changes to a garden of fountains. A sonata plays while the sun rises. It appears red through the mist. As it ascends it dissipates the vapours, and is seen in its full lustre. Then the scene is richly discovered, the fountains enriched with gilding, and adorn'd with statues."

The music, however, is not in any sense descriptive, but is a typical ceremonial instrumental overture such as Purcell wrote for the numerous Odes of Welcome or Celebration which his Royal Appointments required of him. The slow sections have a gravity and intensity which is reminiscent of some of the finest inspirations of "Dido and Aeneas."

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major Opus 58

Beethoven (1770-1827)

(i) Allegro moderato

(ii) Andante con moto

(iii) Rondo (Vivace)

Soloist: PENNY SCOTT

This concerto, which was composed during 1805-6, belongs to one of the most fertile periods of Beethoven's creative life, when within two years he completed his only opera "Fidelio," the three "Leonora" overtures, the Violin Concerto, the fourth Symphony, the thirty-two variations for piano and the three string quartets opus 59, besides other hardly less distinguished music. Beethoven himself played the solo part at the first performance which had to wait until the end of 1808.

In spite of the suggestion in one of Mozart's piano concertos that the soloist might participate in the argument right from the start (an idea which Mozart did not pursue again), the Viennese public had to wait for this concerto before any composer dared to break completely with the classical tradition that the orchestra should introduce the main ideas of the opening movement before the soloist made his own dramatic entry. The sublime simplicity of the piano's opening statement is marvellously effective in establishing the mood of the first movement immediately, and in setting the scene for the surprising change of key which occurs when the strings first enter. Beethoven follows tradition, nevertheless, in allowing the orchestra a lengthy presentation of thematic material without further participation by the soloist, and by reserving one main theme for the second presentation of material shared now by the soloist and orchestra.

There seems little reason to question the aptness of Liszt's comparison of the slow movement to the taming by Orpheus (piano) with his lyre, of the wild beasts (strings and orchestra) in the underworld, but there is no firm evidence that Beethoven himself had any such idea in his mind when he conceived this remarkable dialogue.

The finale follows without a break, and is remarkable for the way in which Beethoven transforms the main rondo theme (which is heard at the start) on its subsequent appearances. The cadenzas to be played tonight are not the Beethoven ones usually played, but those composed by Clara Schumann.

INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES

Overture from "The Indian Queen"

Henry Purcell

Maestoso—

Allegro moderato—

Adagio

In the last year of his life, Purcell provided music for "The Indian Queen," a play by Dryden and Robert Howard.

This overture adopts the form of French Overture established by Purcell's great contemporary Lully. A dignified introduction is followed by a lively, imaginative allegro with concerto-like dialogue between trumpet and strings, which leads into a solemn concluding sentence for strings alone.

"Capriol" Suite for String Orchestra

Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

(i) Basse-Danse

(ii) Pavane

(iii) Tordion

(iv) Bransles

(v) Pieds-en-l'air

(vi) Mattachins

Philip Heseltine, who reserved his real name for literary and critical work, while adopting the name of Peter Warlock for composing purposes, wrote this suite in 1926. Most of the thematic material is taken from a French treatise on dancing called "Orchesographie" by Thoinot Arbeau (also the pseudonym of a Cathedral Canon) published in 1589. Warlock, largely a self-taught composer, was, like many of his contemporaries, attracted to Elizabethan music and folk-song, the influence of which can easily be detected in this work.

Arbeau discusses in his book the favoured dance measures of the time with "Capriol," a lawyer, and included nearly fifty dance tunes of the period as well. The Basse-Danse, in triple time, and already obsolete in Arbeau's day, was distinguished by the fact that the feet were not to be raised but glided over the floor. The pavan, from Italy, was slow and stately and frequently paired with the faster Galliard. The Tordion was the final figure of the Basse Danse and rather more lively than what went before. Of rustic origin, the Bransle took on many different forms in its aristocratic usage. Shakespeare refers in "Love's Labours Lost" to a "French Brawl" and a form of the dance was still in use nearly a century later at the Court of Charles II. The Pieds-en-l'air was a figure in the galliard, but this example is tranquil in its movement. Mattachins, an old sword dance, concludes Warlock's imaginative exploitation of string textures, in lively fashion.

Overture "I Tancredi"

Rossini (1792-1868)

Rossini's opera "I Tancredi" was first performed in Venice in 1813 where it was immediately received with great enthusiasm. Themes from the work were soon being sung all over Italy, and the impact of Rossini's vital and engaging music excited something like hysteria among the Venetians. Rossini later recalled: "I fancied that after hearing my opera they would put me into a mad-house—on the contrary, they were madder than I!"

In the slow introduction to the overture the main material is presented by the woodwind and horns of the orchestra. In the ensuing allegro there is more than a little of what Bernard Shaw described as "rum-tum-tum" in the accompaniments, but the infectious high spirits of the melodic ideas require nothing more to support them. No Rossini overture would be complete without at least a pair of long orchestral crescendi, which are here, as usual, based on the alteration of two chords, and which achieve characteristically the maximum of effect from the simplest of means.

The Committee are very grateful to Messrs. Haydn Heard for their help
with Box Office and publicity.

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