ROYAL ALBERT HALL
Manager: C. S. Taylor

THE BBC PRESENTS
HENRY WOOD
PROMENADE CONCERTS

* WINTER SERIES *
MONDAY 16 JANUARY 1950

PROGRAMME
PRICE SIXPENCE
PROGRAMME NOTES

PART I

OVERTURE, A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Mendelssohn

In the roll of juvenilia fame the first place goes to Mozart, the second to Schubert for his early songs, and the third to Mendelssohn for his Midsummer Night’s Dream Overture. It was composed in 1826 when Felix (as he was then seventeen) and it contains none of the most happily-inspired ideas that ever came to him. At this the world has wondered for a hundred years, as if the knack of hitting upon pretty musical ideas was at its best before the age of seventeen. What we should really marvel at is that he had the imagination to think of something so complete and so marvellous. Mozart’s youth was his age of learning, his capacity to express himself in music. The emotion and drama in Schubert’s G minor and E flat, and in Schumann’s G minor, are those of a young man who has himself learned that life is real and life is earnest. In Mendelssohn’s Overture the shaping and proportion, the progress from one idea to another, the clever jollity, the exquisite detail, the无忧 of it all—all these are tokens, one would say, of a mind that has taken years to polish its craft.

The piece was immediately popular. In 1830 it was heard at the Philharmonic, and now it survives after shedding most of its special companions. The remainder of the Midsummer Night’s Dream music—the scherzo, nocturne, wedding march and all the madrigals—was written seventeen years later for the production of the play in Berlin.

The Overture is programme music as far as the themes were suggested by, and themselves suggest, various persons and things; and it is absolute music as far as the persons and things are marshalled in sonata form. Thus Duke Thouroude makes his ceremonial entry twice over, because he is the first subject. No character is linked to the second subject; but Bolly Bottom with the Am’s Head trails behind at each time, because he is the after-subject. On the whole the programme interest takes the fore-ground, for it is the music of op inspiration, which is the part we enjoy most; and formal interest is there because a musical text, however inspired, goes uncomfortably without an artistic process of its own.

The persons and things need little pointing out. Anybody can tell where the spirit says ‘enter fairies’; the Duke and his court effectually announce themselves; so do the humped horses.
and the axe's Bray. And in the development section you can if you
like hear the fairies obeying their king's bellow. Juggles.

Through this house give glimmering light
By the dead and burning fire;
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as hearken to brier.

But the true programme is not in these picturesque details;
rather is it the midsummer-night air that pervades the piece and
takes us to a land as fantastical as the poet's, where everything is
a dream more real than Regent's Park. The sign of this translation
is the fairy formula, four chords long, that begins and ends the
Overture—two of those simple and obvious things that need a genius
to think of them.

W. MONKARTY

CONCERTO in E minor, for Violin and Orchestra
Mendelssohn

Allegro molto appassionato—
Andante—
Allegretto non troppo—
Allegro molto vivace

Solo Violin ALAN LOVEDAY

In the six favourite violin concertos had to be reduced to a Big Three
this would be one of them, slight as it is in stature and unassuming by
nature. It comes into the front rank by the excellence of its melodies,
all so clear-cut, sure of themselves and pleasing to the ear; by its
beautiful workmanship throughout; and by the aptness of every-
thing—the tunes, the development, the design, the fiddling, the
orchestral writing, and little touches everywhere that come in just
tightly. In short, a perfect work of the kind that does not aspire to
be great.

In the case of so familiar a work everything that it is and does is
apt to be taken for granted. A few technical comments, however,
may serve to show that it did in fact break conventionalities. The first is
concerned with the way the concerto begins.

1. One of the formal requirements of the classical concerto was the
double exposition. The main themes were first exposed to view by
the orchestra, then the soloist laid them out in a different way. Such
was the plan to which Mozart and Beethoven adhered, and within
it they were constantly doing interesting things that gave life and
growth to the pattern. Mendelssohn, very boldly, shortened it to a
single exposition, with the soloist in the conciattid nearly all the time.

2. Mendelssohn wisely protected himself from that perennial
infatuation, the cadenza composed by someone else. Probably he had
witnessed with alarm the growing licence by which composers of no
account imposed long sections of storied development under the
heading of ‘cadenza’ [they are still doing it], though all that the
composer meant was a few flourishes on the part of the virtuoso or
pianist to show that he still had some technical tricks up his sleeve.
So Mendelssohn refrained from providing the usual signpost
(a chord and a pause), and wrote his own cadenza, thus obviating
the intention of an alien style to one’s own style. Moreover, he did
not put the cadenza in the usual place near the end of the movement.
He put it into his development section, where he used it in an entirely
novel way to bring back the chief melody. The moment when the
soloist carries on with his arpeggios while the orchestra exits with
the tune is one of those touches that belong to the region of genius.

3. At the end of the first movement the music does not stop.
A baremm note remains poised in the air and leads into the Andante.
In the days (not so long ago) when each movement of a concerto
was applauded this link was usually lost in a burst of clapping
followed by a chorus of “Sh!?” from those who were quick to spot that
the conductor was still conducting. We know better now.

4. The da reta is in the only right key: it had to be C major.
But, after a slow movement in C, how to proceed with a quick
movement in E? Mendelssohn could have plucked; but, the music
being as it is, the jerk would have been unsmooth. So we have another
unsmoothness in the form of a quiet introduction to the last move-
ment. It picks up the tale discreetly, makes the required key-change
and ends with a pretty cadence that invites the plagato. Then comes
the finale, which snaps a gay finger at the writer of programme-notes.

W. MONKARTY

SYMPHONY no. 7, in D

Allegro non troppo
Adagio non troppo
Allegretto grazioso (Quasi Adagio)
Allegro con spirito

Brahms waited till he was over eighty before writing upon so consi-
derable a work as a symphony. Meanwhile the art of the symphony
had been fighting a losing battle. Music was no longer content to
convey its own meaning and submit to a system of artistic controls.
Everything that Wagner wrote was a symbol, and the only control
known to Liszt’s music was that of the emotions. This nineteenth-century modernism, unlike its twentieth-century counterpart, proved very attractive to the world of its time; and it seemed that the art had abandoned the chief sources and safeguards of its culture and of its integrity. Symphonics were still being written; acceptable symphonies by Mendelssohn, Schumann and Raff; but not symphonics of the true line.

Then came two eventful years:

1876 August—Wagner’s The Ring at Bayreuth.
1876 November—Brahms’s first Symphony, in C minor.
1877 December—Brahms’s second Symphony, in D.

—so that just at the time when the romantic ideal rose to its most spectacular achievement, the classical ideal re-asserted itself with a power and an assurance unknown since Beethoven.

The C minor and D major symphonies were complementary in their difference. The former is tragic; the latter’s symphony is lyrical. Between them they sum up what is best known of Brahms’ two personalities, the one rather forbidding, the other kindly and agreeable—but each a great stickler for the artistic proprieties. The D major is perhaps the best full-scale display of Brahms’s sunny side; one the less so for an occasional reminder that the stern side of him is in attendance. The four movements lend themselves to copious technical analysis, while their nature pleads for more. It may serve just as well to quote Brahms’s own analysis; he told Harms to expect ‘a symphony which sounds so cheerful and delightful that you will think I wrote it especially for you, or rather your young wife’. When Richter conducted the first performance at Vienna the symphony was warmly received; the third movement being actually encored, and it has ever since been a favourite with the Viennese.

PART II

(at 9.30 p.m., approximately)

Concerto No. 1, in C minor, for Piano and Orchestra
Mendelssohn

Moderato con fuoco—
Andante—
Presto—

Solo Piano Cyril Preedy

This piano concerto plays an unusually important roles in its early concerto. Mendelssohn himself referred to it as ‘a thing rapidly

thrown off’; dating from about 1840, it was used by him as a display piece on his second visit to Munich on 17 October 1841, when the composer was in his twenty-third year, at a concert of his works; the programme also contained his C minor Symphony (the one which bears the number 1 but which was in fact his thirteenth essay in the form), the Midsummer Night’s Dream overture, and an improvisation by himself. The concerto is scored for an orchestra that includes two horns but no trumpets, on the classical model. After an introduction the pianoforte takes the music in hand and states the main subject; the second subject is also announced by the soloist, with a curious hesitancy; catch on the first beat. In the slow movement there is a much-fingered work for the pianoforte. The last movement, again, opens with an introduction and, again, the pianoforte takes the lead. It is more in the character of a scherzo than a finale. The concerto has a prodigious fluency and, as well as balance, more than a little youthful charm.

Academic Festival Overture

Brahms

This is a pièce d’occasion, though it does not in any way sound like it. The occasion was the visit of Brahms, in 1886, as an honorary Doctorate of Philosophy at the University of Berlin. This overture was his offering, or thesis, to qualify for his honour. The Academic Overture appears to have been written in the late summer recess at Ithaca, and the two strangely different works were performed together at Berlin on 4th January, 1881, and given at Leipzig nine days later. The material for the Academic Overture is drawn from old and customary tunes—a student’s convivial song, the Goethean Overture, which is, one believes, still sung, even in those anti-old-school-tie days, and such-like airs. It was an audacious experiment, wrote Sir Henry Hadow, ‘and one which could only have succeeded in Germany. Not even Brahms could offer, as a Doctorate’s exercise at Oxford or Cambridge, a work based on the melodies with which our own students youth beguiles its leisure moments’. Sixty-nine years have passed—more than thirty since Hadow wrote those words—and times and manners have changed. So massive a piece as Brahms’s might seem out of place, even in a Doctorate’s thesis, today; but we can still enjoy Brahms’s North German fun, and hear the shouts of the alumni as he gives us their tunes.

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HENRY WOOD
PROMENADE CONCERTS

TOMORROW at 7.30
THE BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Conductor: Sir Malcolm Sargent

MOZART — HAYDN CONCERT
Symphony No. 21 in C major (K.104) (Kapellmeister Wenzeslaus von Haller); Overture to The Magic Flute (K.198; French version); Symphony No. 9, in G minor (K.95); Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor (K.466; French version); Piano Concerto No. 22 in E major (K.482; French version); Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major (K.495; French version).

JOHN ALEXANDER
Solo Violin: Paul Burgess
Solo Piano: Richard North
Solo Voice: Richard Newton
Solo Pianist: Sir Malcolm Sargent

WEDNESDAY 18 JANUARY at 7.30
THE BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Conductor: Sir Malcolm Sargent

SACH — HANDEL CONCERT
Suite No. 3 in D minor (W.106); Overture to Serse (HWV 430); Organ Concerto No. 5 in D major (Wq.51); Violin Concerto No. 6 in E major (Wq.144); Flute Concerto No. 3 in G major (Wq.362); Divertimento in C major (Wq.114); Overture to Parnassus (HWV 283).

ELINOR MOORE
Solo Piano: Max Rostal
Solo Voice: George Thomas

THURSDAY 19 JANUARY at 7.30
THE BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Conductor: Sir Malcolm Sargent

OVERTURE, The Magic Flute (W.171); Violin Concerto in B minor (W.116); Symphony in C major (W.180); Flashlight Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra (Wq.109); Concerto, Lamented (Wq.115);

Solo Violin: Anthony Pinn
Solo Pianist: Morton Wood

FRIDAY 20 JANUARY at 7.30
THE BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Conductor: Sir Malcolm Sargent

OVERTURE, Serse (HWV 430); Symphony No. 7 in D minor (Wq.117; revised); Part II, conducted by John Hollingworth; Symphony No. 4, in E minor (Wq.117; revised); Symphony No. 2 in C major (Wq.116); Symphony No. 3 in E flat (Wq.115); Symphony No. 5 in G minor (Wq.114);

SIR ADRIAN BOUTE
Solo Violin: Max Rostal
Solo Pianist: Elinor Moore

SATURDAY 21 JANUARY at 7.30
THE BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Conductor: Sir Malcolm Sargent

OVERTURE, The Magic Flute (Kapellmeister Wenzeslaus von Haller); Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor (K.95); Symphony No. 9, in G minor (K.95); Piano Concerto No. 22 in E major (K.482); Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major (K.495); Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor (K.95).

Tickets 5s to 50s may be obtained at the Box Office during the interval or from the Ticket Office.

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BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Leader: Paul Burgess

SEASON 1949-50

Wednesday, 1 February at 8

Symphony No. 49, in E flat minor (Emperor)
Piano Concerto No. 5, in E flat (Emperor)
Prelude à L'après-midi d'un faune
Le Sacre du printemps

SOLOMON

SIR ADRIAN BOUTE

Wednesday, 15 February at 8

Overture, Il Sogno
Flute Concerto in D
Symphony No. 39, in E flat (K.545)
Symphony No. 3, in E flat (K.550)
Symphony No. 3, in D major (K.550)
Symphony No. 3,, in E flat (K.550)
Symphony No. 3, in D major (K.550)

MOZART

MOZART

MOZART

STRAUSS

STRAUSS

GEOFFREY GILBERT
SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, Bar.?
Wednesday, 8 March at 8

Chacony in G minor, for Strings
Purcell

Songs of Farewell
Delius

The Hymn of Jesus
Holst

Belshazzar's Feast
William Walton

DENNIS NOBLE
THE BBC CHORAL SOCIETY
THE GOLDSMITHS' CHORAL UNION
SIR MALCOLM SARGENT

Wednesday, 22 March at 8

Overture, A Midsummer Night's Dream
Mendelssohn

Symphony No. 3, in F
Brahms

Daphnis and Chloe (The complete Ballet)
Ravel

THE BBC CHORUS
SIR ADRIAN BOULT

Wednesday, 19 April at 8

Variations on a Theme of Haydn
Brahms

Symphony Study, Fauré
Elgar

Symphony No. 9, in C
Schubert

SIR ADRIAN BOULT

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Conductor
SIR ADRIAN BOULT

Overture, Coriolan

Violin Concerto in B minor

Violin Concerto in B minor

BEETHOVEN

ELGAR

BRAHMS

Mendelssohn

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Stevens, George (Leader)
Moor, R.
Stevens, J.
Drake, F.
Parke-Smith, G.
Mozart, R.
Liszt, W.
Davies, R.
Halling, P.
Sillars, I.
Tomlin, R.
Davis, A.
Zimmer, A.
Mansley, W.
Lewis, R.
Rons, A.

Second Violins
Witney, James
Hutfield, L.
Hubert, W.
Cook, T.
Nicholson, R.
Dyson, F.
Veasey, H.
Greenwood, H.
de Lencov, J.
McMonagle, J.
Rawlins, K.
Webb, M.
Leech, A.
Adkins, G.

Violas
Edwards, Gwynne
Grainger, Max E.
Shinglo, C.
Barnes, M.
Kaye, P.
Lindon, H.
Mack, J.
Aronoffsky, C.
Legg, H.
Cunkerton, E.
Turner, H.
Jerome, R.

Cello
de Mest, Wilton
Heath, K.
Talbot, P.
Law, F.
Dawes, H.
Leonard, F.
Rockle, W.
Leonard, L.
Gibbons, J.
Ferneyhough, G.

Double Basses
Yates, George
Bailey, F.
Ferlin, H.
Griffin, A.
Hilton, G.
Meyer, K.
MacArthur, G.
Cooke, A.

Flutes
Walker, Edward
Gibbons, K.
Walker, G.

Piccolo
Sandford, Leon

Oboes
Whistler, Alec
MacColl, J.
Jones, T.

Cor Anglais
Corkish, John

Clarions
Ffoulkes, Syney
Matthews, D.
Hoekstra, F.

Bass Clarinet
Whelan, Patrick

Bassoons
Walker, Ronald
Shannon, J.
Waters, A.

Contra Bassoon
Parry, Peter

Horns
Rastrelli, John
Foster, M.
McCain, A.
Dennis, J.
Reid, J.
Orway, H.

Trumpets
Rubel, George
Wigglesworth, B.
Brown, B.
James, C.

Trombones
Ashby, John
Lindon, G.

Bass Trombone
Manfield, Frederick

Tuba
Bell, Williams

Timpani
Taylor, Henry

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Wilson, Herbert
Wilson, J.
Turner, W.
Norrington, C.

Harp
Green, Muriel
Wilson, Kitty

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The Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent
DX 1447-3

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