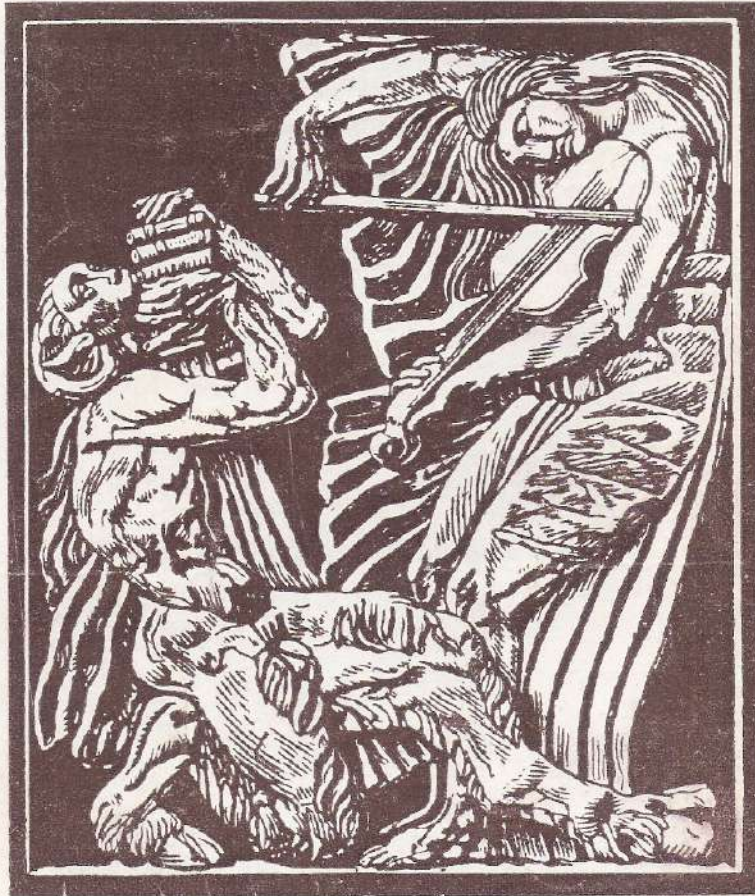


ALBERT HALL - NOTTINGHAM

Friday, 22nd February, 1952



EILEEN JOYCE

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

NORMAN DEL MAR

Programme and Notes—Sixpence

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EILEEN JOYCE

THE THOMAS BEECHAM CONCERTS SOCIETY

presents

EILEEN JOYCE

with the

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

(Leader : David McCallum)

conducted by

NORMAN DEL MAR

PROGRAMME

Overture, Carnaval	<i>Dvorak</i>
The Walk to the Paradise Garden	<i>Delius</i>
Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor Op. 23	<i>Tchaikovsky</i>
<i>Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso;</i>	
<i>Andantino semplice - Prestissimo;</i>	
<i>Allegro con fuoco</i>	

INTERVAL

Variations on a Nursery Tune, for Piano and Orchestra	<i>Dohnanyi</i>
Don Juan	<i>Strauss</i>

Management : S. A. GORLINSKY Ltd.,
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PROGRAMME NOTES

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Overture, *Carnaval* - - - - - *Dvořák (1841-1904)*

Carnaval is one of three concert overtures linked by a common theme. The connection is a curious one, as though the composer wavered; for the other two are entitled *In Nature* and *Othello*. Dvořák was a peasant and very much at one with Nature as many a work of his proclaims. But he was never at his best when he attempted to interpret the deeper passions; for the *Othello* overture deals with the passions expressed by Shakespeare rather than with the drama itself. In *Carnaval* the peasant asserts himself most happily, even riotously. The work has the qualities of the song and dance of the Czech people, which we find in the Slavonic Dances and Rhapsodies, rarified by his genius, no small part of which appears in the colourful richness of his orchestration.

The Walk to the Paradise Garden - - - *Delius (1862-1934)*

"The Village Romeo and Juliet" has little dramatic action. Delius's pair of lovers prefer death while love's young dream is blissful and unsullied to the baser pleasures offered them by a Dark Fiddler. Hand-in-hand they walk to the Paradise Garden of their own desires. The orchestral texture woven in this opera presents a moving vision of spiritual values. The present excerpt is a symphonic interlude during which, on the stage, we see Sali and Vrenchen set off on their ecstatic journey.

Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 23 - *Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)*

Tchaikovsky's piano writing caused a panic in the breast of Nicholas Rubenstein, who was a brilliant virtuoso. He demanded modifications which Tchaikovsky was not willing to make. In fact, the irate composer withdrew dedication to the pianist; later he revised the part though not actually to Rubenstein's requirements. He rededicated it, still unrevised, to Bulow, and it had its first performance in Boston in one of the latter's American tours. At length Tchaikovsky admitted the wisdom of some of Rubenstein's suggestions and improved the piano-writing and the pianist started the concerto on the road to European popularity.

Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso. And very majestic (*maestoso*) Tchaikovsky's lengthy introduction is. His initial inspiration is so prodigal that he is able to throw up a resplendent façade and then forget all about it. This is today the most popular concerto in the world but it would be safe to bet that three-quarters of its adorers have never progressed much further than the tune announced by horns and continued by violins, while the piano gives forth in monumental chords before grandiosely taking it over, working it up into a dazzling cadenza and then harking back to its great chords, now doubled. Before all this has run its course, trumpets issue a warning that the really serious business of the movement is at hand. The true text or first theme consists of a sustained melody, a Ukrainian folk-song, whose clipped particles are precisely suited to the piano that brings them forward. (The measure consists of twelve notes in a bar, the last one of each group of three being omitted.) Yet it is not surprising that flutes and clarinets cannot resist chirruping them. A good deal is made of all this until, in complete contrast, a clarinet (with the help of oboes, bassoons and horns) inserts a more lyrical melody, theme two, which is taken over by the piano; and in its turn it entices a tranquil tune from the violins, though this is only subsidiary to the second theme. Now a flute joins the piano in an embellished presentation of theme two. Development begins work on the subsidiary tune, brings in theme one, insists on a solo cadenza, then deals with theme two more by implication than direct utterance, and piles up another cadenza. At last an oboe sings theme two and the composer recapitulates, not without a third resounding cadenza, and a high-speed coda.

Andantino semplice. For the moment all strings are muted, and plucked. A flute voices a songful melody, to be taken up by the piano in dialogue with a bassoon. The solo part decorates it mellifluously and soon two 'cellos detach themselves to voice the tune afresh. With an increase in pace, violas and 'cellos enter with a new, swaying tune, after which a free recapitulation is effected.

Allegro con fuoco. Here indubitably is a Russian dance, worked up with great brilliance by all participants. A short solo passage leads to a waltz-like theme for violins and ornamented by the piano. This scheme, with appropriate modifications, is thrice repeated. Then, after a thunderous cadenza for the soloist, all forces are combined for an aggrandized delivery of the second theme, a fitting climax to a magnificent conception.

Variations on a Nursery Tune - - - Dohnányi (1877-)

This work should not be regarded as a piano concerto in which a solo instrument is poised against an orchestra or *vice versa*. The composer calls it a piece for full orchestra and piano *concertante*, thus securing to himself the right to make the piano merge with and assist the orchestra as he thinks fit. His orchestra is a large one, and the truth is that the work is a frolic for all. It opens with a formidable preamble which gives the very familiar theme a surprisingly droll aspect.

That theme is presented in bare octaves by the piano. There follow eleven variations widely different in style. In the first, for instance, the solo pianist shows off by way of contrast. The horn presents an odd notion of the theme in the second, piano and woodwind enriching it with melting harmonic progressions. Again, in number three, the piano enlarges the theme and then, in the fourth, has an argument with shifting woodwind combinations. The seventh variation uses the tune for a fair-sized waltz not without familiar associations, with a march as successor. Number ten declares its learning in the form of a passacaglia, or set of variants, using a version of the theme as a recurring ground bass, passing into the massive chorale which is the last of the set. But not the composer's last word: still fascinated by the nursery tune, he contrives a loose-limbed but adroit fugue before ending with something like the simplicity of the original.

Symphonic Poem, Don Juan, Op. 20 - - - Strauss (1864-1949)

The mass of Strauss's music is of a frankly descriptive character, expressing itself even more broadly in the operatic works. As far as the purely orchestral music is concerned, the symphonic tone-poem originated by Liszt provided him with a suitably elastic medium. Instead of the logical thematic development demanded by the symphony, the tone-poem allows of a freer "transformation" of graphic, representational subjects.

Strauss's earlier poems depict soul-states; the later ones are more objective in their nature. *Don Juan* belongs to the former group. It is based on the romantic content of the poem by Lenau and presents little of the external action which informs Mozart's opera or of the adventures of Byron's hero.

A brief prelude foreshadows Don Juan's chief theme, forcibly announced by strings. A complementary theme, genially expressive, is introduced by the horns, but not till rather more than half-way through the work. The feminine element is represented by a seductive melody divided between violins and flutes, instantaneous response coming in a new version of Juan's first theme; it is developed almost at once. Then appears (violas and 'cellos) a passionately mournful theme to which a solo flute adds a revealing comment; and yet a third, tender and longing (solo oboe) subtly related in its opening octave to Juan's second theme. From this material Strauss distils music which runs the gamut of amorous experience, the freshness of young love, the cautious ventures of increasing years, the wistful satiety of old age. The composition ends in a tragic coda.



PRELUDE

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