ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

PATRON - HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

Salvatore Accardo

122nd SEASON

of Viale Mughetta
Torre del Greco

SIXTH

SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT

Tuesday 29 November 1960

at 7.30 p.m.

PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING

ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

(Leader, Peter Mountain)

PATRON - HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

Soloists

GEORGE MALCOLM
SALVATORE ACCARDO

PROGRAMME

National Anthem

Harpsichord Concerto No. 1 in D minor	...	*Bach*
Violin Concerto in D, Op. 61	...	*Beethoven*
Symphony No. 4 (The Inextinguishable) ...	...	*Nielsen*

Conductor

JOHN PRITCHARD

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ANALYTICAL NOTES

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Harpsichord Concerto No. 1 in D minor ... ... **Bach**
(*20 minutes*) (1685—1750)

Allegro—Adagio—Allegro

Soloist—GEORGE MALCOLM

Several of Bach's keyboard concertos are known to have been transcriptions of earlier violin concertos and from the fact that the latter, where they exist, are in every case written a tone higher than the Cembalo version, it is conjectured that they were composed at an earlier period for ensembles whose normal pitch differed from that of the Collegium Musicum at Leipzig which Bach conducted from 1729-36 and for which these transcriptions were made. Keyboard concertos were something of a novelty at the time and Bach experimented with concertos for one, two, three and even four claviers, the last being known to be a transcription from a string concerto by Vivaldi. Whether the present concerto was derived similarly from Vivaldi or some other violin composer is doubtful but it is certain that none but Bach could have given the precise stamp to this, perhaps the finest of his concertos for a single keyboard. The original composition is in any case lost.

That Bach had a peculiar affection for it is shown by the fact that he makes use of movements from it in two of his church cantatas (Nos. 146 and 188).

The opening ritornello is a vigorous six-bar statement at the unison and octave of the basic material of the movement. The soloist enters with the first of the paraphrases or elaborations of the subject, after each of which the ritornello breaks in, though in related keys to which the music has modulated in the course of the development. There is a cadenza for the soloist followed by a varied recapitulation.

The Adagio opens with an ascending figure followed by a drop of a seventh which forms a modulating ground bass when the soloist enters in dialogue with the upper strings. The solo writing becomes increasingly elaborate while the violins maintain their calm progress and the bass figure persists. Finally there is a restatement of the opening unisons. It will be noted that this movement is also in the minor (G) instead of the more usual major, but the effect is that of a more sombre colouring.

And indeed there is nothing sombre about the lively D minor allegro which follows. The ritornello is a long paragraph, some sections of which are used piecemeal in the ensuing development. Another point to note is that the bass (which enters at the

second bar) is later worked in double counterpoint with the treble: that is, the roles are inverted, the bass becoming the treble and vice versa. The violinistic origins of the concerto are noticeable in many passages in the keyboard writing throughout. There is again a cadenza, part of which is accompanied, and a final return of the opening theme.

A. K. HOLLAND.

Violin Concerto in D, Op. 61 ... ... **Beethoven**
(*41 minutes*) (1770—1827)

Allegro ma non troppo
Larghetto
Rondo: allegro

Soloist—SALVATORE ACCARDO

Beethoven's knowledge of the violin was as practical, if not as profound, as his understanding of the pianoforte. He learned the instrument in his youth and came into contact with several notable violinists in the course of his career. The present work was written for a Viennese player, Franz Clement, who performed it in 1806. Like the *Kreutzer* sonata, the concerto came into the world in a rather haphazard condition, and it is even said that Clement gave the first performance without rehearsal. It is probable that Beethoven subsequently revised the original score.

What is clear about Beethoven's only completed violin concerto and the companion sonatas is that he wrote them for instrumentalists of the very highest order of technique. That technique embraces, in the first movement, a beauty of style in the treatment of scale passages and of singing melodies; a sense of pathos expressed in the very simple and direct terms of the slow movement; and, finally, an exhibition of virtuoso skill in the *rondo*. There is an absurd story that the reiterated notes which the drum beats out in the opening movement were suggested to Beethoven by someone hammering on the door late at night. This has just as much (and as little) relevance to the purport of the music as the famous Fate theme of the fifth symphony. If composers need, as they probably do, some external stimulus to set their minds working, that is very little of our business, and it is unnecessary to conjure up any picture in listening to this work, which seems to go to the basic elements of music and to deal primarily with such fundamental formulae as scales and arpeggios. In other words, the concerto has a kind of massive simplicity which appears to have been all the more puzzling to contemporary minds.

The first movement opens with five reiterated D's quietly tapped out on the kettledrum. This five-note figure forms a rhythmic leit-motiv to the whole movement. On the fifth beat

the wood-winds enter with a serenely beautiful phrase which forms part of the first-subject group of themes. The violins repeat the drum-rhythm but on a wholly unexpected D sharp (which may be compared with the equally awe-inspiring reply of the strings in a 'foreign' key in the opening of the G major pianoforte concerto). Several other themes occur in this preliminary exposition, one consisting of the ascending scale of D major and the second a more vigorous transition-theme which goes, again unexpectedly, into B flat. This is only a momentary departure from the tonic key which is restored by the second subject, also built on a scalic motion and encompassed by the now familiar drum-rhythm. It is supplemented by a fine surging theme for the full orchestra which completes the exposition.

The entry of the soloist is one of Beethoven's most memorable strokes. The orchestra makes way, as it were, for the appearance of the principal actor by effacing itself, and the latter proceeds majestically to discourse upon the subjects they have been objectively presented, to vary and develop them, and give them a personal meaning. There is at the same time an extraordinary sense of unity in this movement, and the dramatic strokes are produced by the inter-relationship of soloist and orchestra rather than by any spectacular display on the soloist's part. The cadenza is another matter. It is the soloist's opportunity to go his own way and discourse quasi-extempore on the matter in hand.

The Larghetto is a series of variations interrupted by two lyrical episodes. The theme is presented on muted strings (the scoring throughout the movement is of extreme delicacy). Then follow three variations, in the first two of which the soloist engages in dreaming arabesques. In the third, the orchestra in subdued tones presents a harmonic version of the theme. Now the violin takes up the tale with a broad cantabile theme which leads in turn to the fourth variation. Still another new episode appears in which the theme is hinted at only by its opening rhythmic figure (in the horns) and finally there is a short coda and cadenza linking the movement with the finale.

This is a rondo based on a bouncing arpeggio theme stated at once by the soloist, and repeated at the octave. The orchestra clinches the matter with a second repeat. The first episode (A major) beginning with a sustained high A on the violin accompanied by chains of thirds and sixths on the horns is in the nature of an exchange between soloist and orchestra. After the rondo theme has been repeated there is a second episode in G minor. There follows a restatement of the whole opening section including the first episode. There is an important coda in the course of which the soloist has his second opportunity for a cadenza.

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Notes on the next Concerts in this Series are inside front cover.

Symphony No. 4 (The Inextinguishable) ... ... **Nielsen**
(36 minutes) (1865—1931)

Allegro—
Poco allegretto—
Poco adagio quasi andante—
Allegro

Carl Nielsen is generally recognised as the greatest figure in Danish music of modern times. He was born, in the same year as Sibelius, of humble peasant stock on the island of Funen, a few miles from the birthplace of Hans Andersen. His musical gifts developed early and at the age of fourteen he was entered as a bugler in the garrison band of a neighbouring town. A few years later he secured an introduction to Gade, then head of the Copenhagen Conservatoire, who was impressed with his youthful compositions and accepted him as a student. Later he entered the Royal Orchestra and on the retirement of Svendsen in 1908 succeeded him as conductor. In 1915 he became director of the Conservatoire and conductor of the Musical Society in Copenhagen. He came to England in 1923 and conducted, among other works, the present symphony.

His six symphonies represent his paramount achievement but he also wrote works in many other forms; two operas, concertos for several instruments, much choral and chamber music for strings and wind, many songs and some pianoforte and organ music. The fourth symphony was written in 1915-16.

The title of the work is taken from a motto which Nielsen has also prefaced to a volume of essays entitled *Living Music*. It reads: "Music is life and, like life, inextinguishable". It is not intended, the composer explains, to form the basis of a "programme", but is merely a suggestive hint as to the proper domain of music. Music, he holds, has nothing to do with ideas. "The media of music, i.e. tones, can produce intense emotional effects, simply as tones, unaided by ideas". At the same time, there can be no doubt that at this period (during the first world war) Nielsen was impressed by a growing sense of conflict in the world of man and nature, but he had an unquenchable faith in the power of survival inherent in all forms of life, and this faith he expresses in the present symphony.

The essence of the work, which might be described as "four movements in search of E major", resides in the conflict of tonalities so characteristic of Nielsen. The *allegro* gets away at once

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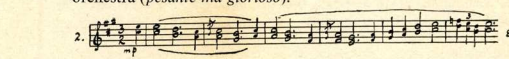
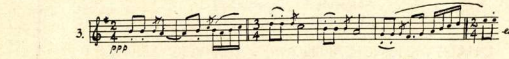
with a strenuous assertion of the key of D minor-major (Ex. 1) in the full wood-wind, while the strings maintain a pedal C. The

latter are drawn into the orbit of the first-named tonality for a moment but then immediately revert to C. Note also the drum-notes tuned in a diminished fifth, a feature we shall encounter in the last movement. After this turbulent opening, with its powerful unisons, the music quietens down to prepare for the second theme which is to become one of the most important in the symphony. It is impossible to do more than suggest the long-drawn nature of most of Nielsen's themes but Ex. 2 shows the beginning of this A major theme in thirds which is first of all presented by the clarinets and then taken up and extended by the violins, culminating in a tremendous outburst for the whole orchestra (*pesante ma glorioso*).

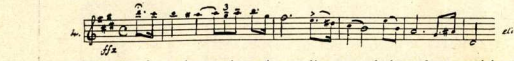


After this has exhausted itself, there is a slight quickening of the tempo and the key of D minor is re-established over a long drum roll, as a series of sinister rhythmic figures prepare the way for the stormy development section. A shortened recapitulation follows.

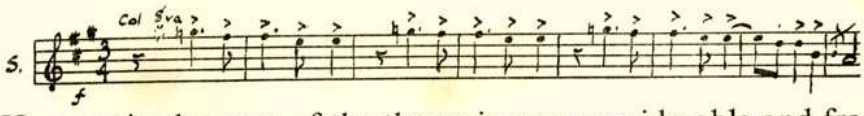
The four movements while running continuously follow the normal divisions. The second, however, is in the nature of a Brahmsian *intermezzo* (Ex. 3) with a contrasting 'trio' introduced by *pizzicato* strings.



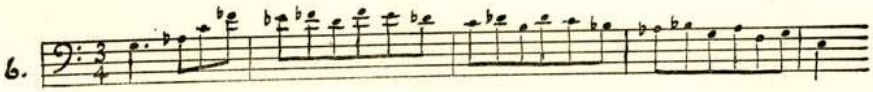
The slow movement opens with another of Nielsen's large-limbed themes (Ex. 4) and begins by seeming securely in E major but soon deviates from the key. A passage for solo strings endeavours in vain to re-establish it and a restless *fugato* passage ensues.



It emerges in a short triumphant climax and then the transition to the finale begins with an animated unison passage for the strings ending dramatically with reiterated E's as the dominant of the new key of A major in which after a silent bar the finale bursts in (though with the contradictory G natural shown in Ex. 5).



Here again the span of the theme is very considerable and fragments of it, such as the reiterated figure at the opening, may be related to previous themes (e.g. to Ex. 2 in diminution). A new theme (Ex. 6), plays havoc with the established tonality and moves towards what is perhaps the most sensational moment of the symphony, the entry of a second pair of timpani to reinforce the first.



A footnote in the score warns both players to adopt a "menacing tone, even in *piano* passages". The drums answer each other antiphonally, both pairs being tuned in diminished fifths. Here apparently the composer wishes to suggest the conflict of forces in their sharpest opposition and crisis. Ultimately the light begins to break through and the key of A major appears at last unambiguously in a sustained passage (*glorioso*). From thence on there is a steady movement towards the final culmination and metamorphosis of the cardinal theme (Ex. 2) in a triumphant E major.

A. K. HOLLAND.

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Tonight's Artists

George Malcolm (Bach—Harpsichord Concerto No. 1 in D minor) will be familiar to all Philharmonic audiences as one of the leading harpsichordists of the day, and members of the Philharmonic Club have already had an opportunity of hearing him talking about and playing the harpsichord at their meeting on Friday last.

Salvatore Accardo made his debut in England last season with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under John Pritchard, who was so struck by his fine, eloquent playing that he immediately proposed him for Liverpool this season, to play the Beethoven Violin Concerto. Not yet 20 years old, Accardo has rapidly made a big reputation for himself on the continent and is being presented with a Stradivarius violin bought out of funds raised by public subscription after a television appearance in Paris had been followed by an appeal for this purpose.

John Pritchard completes this programme with a performance of Nielsen's Symphony No. 4 (The Inextinguishable).

About the next two concerts in this Series

13 December

Karl Rankl was born in Vienna, where he was a pupil of Arnold Schoenberg. He began his career at the Volksoper in Vienna, under Weingartner, and after posts in the Opera Houses of Graz and Prague he became the Musical Director of the Wiesbaden State Opera.

His great achievement in this country was as Musical Director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, from 1946-1951, during which period he built up and trained a splendid opera orchestra. Subsequently he was the Conductor of the Scottish National Orchestra and appeared as a guest with the other major orchestras, including our own.

It is not commonly known that his opera "Deidre of the Sorrows", submitted under a nom-de-plume, won a premier Festival of Britain prize in 1951. His programme includes a short work of his own; the entrancing Schubert Symphony No. 2; and the Symphony No. 4 of Mahler in which the solo soprano part will be sung by Elsie Morison.

3 January

As this concert falls within the Christmas holiday period, John Pritchard has chosen a programme which will make a special appeal to the younger generation down from University and on vacation from school. It ranges from the popular Benvenuto Celleni Overture by Berlioz and Brahms' splendid St. Anthony Chorale Variations to the evocative dramatic beauty of the Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes by Britten and the colourful Háry János Suite by Kodaly.

The Concerto is the Bartok No. 3 and the pianist is Bela Siki, a most thoughtful and musicianly player. Apart from his musical gifts, he will be remembered in Liverpool with special affection for giving his services to the orchestra's concert in aid of the Hungarian Refugee fund in 1956.