TONIC

The Journal of the ROBERT SIMPSON SOCIETY

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All correspondence concerning TONIC should be sent to the Editor (address above).

EDITORIAL

MARTIN J. ANDERSON

On 2 March this year Robert Simpson will be sixty. This second issue of TONIC is intended to be in part a celebration of that birthday. When the Eighth String Quartet was premièred at Brunel University last June, RS sprung on its dedicatee, our Chairman, the surprise of naming the scherzo of the work after a species of mosquito that Professor Gillett had discovered. This had been kept a closely guarded secret, and it was not until Professor Gillett opened his programme on the night of the concert that he knew anything of this. If TONIC's many distinguished contributors (to all of whom I offer my thanks) have maintained the same degree of secrecy, we hope to be able to render our 'dedicatee' as sincere a compliment when he sees the centre pages of this issue. In the Penguin symposium The Symphony, edited by RS, the late Hugh Ottaway, who would have been one of our strongest supporters but for his recent untimely death, opened his chapter on Nielsen with the words: 'To write about the six symphonies of Carl Nielsen is to write about the man himself, for they reflect the development of his mind with an uncommon truthfulness and completeness'. In his article in this issue, Hans Keller argues that much the same holds true of RS, that 'when the man and the music are - almost uniquely - one, the music does not only carry its own conviction, but insistently reflects the man's'; so that those who know but the music can join with those of us who know the man in wishing him a very happy sixtieth birthday, and as many creative years ahead as behind.

The most important news to be carried in this issue is that a new - and unique - work has appeared; full details can be found below. More good news is that the recording project of four string quartets, announced on a sheet accompanying the previous TONIC, has gathered momentum. Sylvia Brooks discusses the project in the article after this editorial; please read it and react - the success of our first major proposal depends entirely on a swift and generous response from you, our members.

But not all, I regret, is good news. The projected first performance of the Sonata for Two Pianos, scheduled for 2 February, has had to be postponed. This work, completed just in time for inclusion in the list of works in the first issue of TONIC, was written for Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir. Shortly after the New Year, we heard that Miss Eden had undergone an operation in her home country of Israel. We wish her the speediest of recoveries and a swift return to the concert platform.

Of the three principal articles in this issue, one - Bayan Northcott's - has already appeared in the December Tempo. Since not all of our members will see Tempo regularly, we did think it worth repeating a slightly edited version in TONIC. Although Mr Northcott does express certain reservations about RS's music, his comments are born of lengthy acquaintance and study of the music - and, of course, it is to be hoped that his guarded enthusiasm will provoke enraged readers to write for TONIC! Nor do I suppose that RS would thank us if TONIC adopted a role no more searching than the whole-hearted adulation of a fan club bulletin.

If TONIC is to succeed in combining the functions of journal and newsletter, which is hoping for rather a lot from a quarterly, we must issue a plea for members to inform us the moment they hear of any forthcoming performances. We could not, for example, inform members of a performance of the Seventh Quartet that the Gabrieli Quartet gave in Colchester in February, nor ones of the Sixth and Seventh by the Delme Quartet in Birmingham, because we learned of them only after the first issue had gone to press. Broadcasts, of course, will always prove difficult to announce since they are usually decided upon at much shorter notice, but the BBC has provided us with information about its longer-term plans to mark RS's birthday (see Broadcasts).

In the first issue, we announced our intention of printing the names and addresses of members - not to flesh out TONIC but to facilitate exchange between you. Perhaps, too, if it does not involve any breach of copyright law, we may be able to carry some indication of those who can help others acquire tapes of the music that is lacking in some RS collections. If any of you do not wish your addresses to be released into the 'semi-public' domain, please let us know shortly.

And, of course, let me repeat my plea for contributions to TONIC: I have had promises of articles from several well-known names outside the Society, but there is no dearth of scholarship among the membership. Contributions can be as long or as short as you wish; musical examples can be carried; the argument can be as dense or as discursive as the author wishes. And even if you are reluctant to enter into print yourself, you must have a few topics in mind that TONIC ought to carry. I await your voluminous correspondence.

OUR FIRST RECORDING PROJECT

SYLVIA BROOKS

When the formation of a Robert Simpson Society was suggested last year, over one hundred people wrote enthusiastic letters supporting the idea. Again and again, they regretted the lack of recordings and the opportunity these would afford for the study of Simpson's music and for it to become known to a wider audience. The group of people who agreed to serve on the executive committee believes recording should be a first priority. The Society now has a magnificent opportunity to start bringing this about.

The Delme Quartet are performing four of Robert Simpson's string quartets at the Greenwich Festival this summer: Nos 3, 6, 7, and 8 (see Performances). The Society has been approached by an enthusiastic record producer who wants to record the quartets for release in a double album. The recording company will meet a good deal of the cost; and in addition making a recording this summer will minimise rehearsal time - and therefore cost.

At this stage the Society needs to show that we have the will, the know-how, the ability to raise finance and promote sales to make this venture a success. Then, having established our credibility, we can confidently turn to industry and the charitable foundations to seek backing for recording the symphonies.

The ability of impresarios to recognise great music has always been limited. Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto had to wait twenty years for a second performance. The Robert Simpson Society can do far better than that. Contributions have begun to come in. Offers to provide sleeve-notes, publicity, technical help, etc., have been made, and already nearly £500 (£300 from one far-from-rich member) has been received. All contributions are welcome, of course, but we do hope that some of our members will want to make substantial gifts. This initiative is unprecedented (we are told) for a living composer. Don't give too little - your grandchildren would be shocked to find you missed the opportunity of securing the recording of these marvellous works. You don't need to be Frederick the Great or King Ludwig of Bavaria in 1981. Contribute as generously as you can. Fill in the form at the back of this issue of TONIC - and do it NOW!

NEW WORK

RS has just completed a new work, to be premièred on 27 April at the Wigmore Hall by the London Double-Bass Ensemble (see Performances). It is a quintet, scored for the unique combination of clarinet, bass clarinet and three double-basses. The composer tells me that the quintet is a surprisingly large work, considering the forces. Lasting around twenty minutes, the form resembles that of the Seventh Quartet, starting very slowly, building up into a very energetic Allegro middle section and at the climax falling back into the Adagio, to die away very slowly.

He has approached the work seriously, not playing on the peculiarities of the combination or the individual instruments. The success of the work, he says, will depend entirely on the intensity of the thought: with this combination of forces he has had to rely on invention rather than sound alone.

M.J.A.

BROADCASTS

The BBC does intend to mark the occasion of RS's birthday in the second and third quarters of the year. There are plans to broadcast the recordings of the Delme Quartet recordings of all of the String Quartets, with RS's arrangement of the The Art of Fugue. It also intends to re-broadcast the Gabrieli Quartet première performances of String Quartets Nos 4, 5 and 6, along with the three Rasumovsky Quartets. At present, however, no details are available of the recording times and dates and unfortunately we can do no more than advise members to keep a beady eye on the Radio Times. If details are to hand in time for inclusion in the third issue of TONIC, we shall, of course, carry them; but the broadcasts may, like the performance of Volcano early in the morning of 31 January, beat us to the press.

60TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

We could not let the occasion of RS's sixtieth birthday pass having done no more than draw attention to the fact in TONIC. Accordingly, for the Saturday after Easter, we have booked the Small Hall of the Conway Hall (Red Lion Square, London WC1) for a lecture-cum-recital-cum-social evening. CBS have a series of composer-conducted records called 'Meet the Composer'. We can go one better: RS has kindly agreed to be present, as have the members of the Delme Quartet. He will give a short talk on the Eighth Quartet, which the Delme Quartet will then play. After the performance, members will be able to meet and talk to the composer. Wine and other refreshments will be provided. We shall start at 7.30 p.m.; tickets are £3.00 per person. There is a form at the back of this issue of TONIC which can be removed without loss.

Some of you may think it odd that we should charge £3.00 for a birthday party. Although it would be pleasant simply to have a musical social evening, we do have costs to cover: the hire of the hall, the cost of the various * refreshments, and the Quartet's fee. (Although the members of the Delme Quartet have been very generous to us, musicians, too, have to eat.) There will, furthermore, be one or two guests present, whose costs the Society will bear. It is important that the Society funds otherwise earmarked for the recording project are not depleted by this function, and, indeed, if there be any surplus of income over expenditure from the birthday party, it will be put into the recording fund. We ask you to apply promptly - as the end of April is not far away, and the hall seats only 100 or so.

PLACE: Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

TIME: 7.30 p.m.

DATE: Saturday, 25 April 1981

*Each person attending will be given a glass of wine with the compliments of the Society. To sell it would infringe the licencing laws.

PERFORMANCES

Friday, 20 March 1981
7.30 p.m.
Studio 1, BBC, Pebble Mill Road, Birmingham B5 7QQ
STRING QUARTET NO. 8
Delme Quartet
With Bach, Contrapunctus 14 from The Art of Fugue; Beethoven, Quartet in C minor, Op.131
Tickets: by invitation (send s.a.e. to Room 709, BBC, at the above address). (Information: 021 472 5353 x 2329)

Saturday, 25 April 1981
7.30 p.m.
Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1
STRING QUARTET NO.8
Delme Quartet
Tickets: £3.00 - see '60TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION' announcement.

Monday, 27 April 1981
7.30 p.m.
Wigmore Hall, Wigmore Street, London W1
QUINTET FOR CLARINET, BASS CLARINET AND THREE DOUBLE-BASSES (Première)
Jack Brymer (clarinet), Stephen Tryer (bass clarinet), members of the London Double-Bass Ensemble.
With: Quartets for four double-basses by Schuller, Hoddinott, Runswick; Mozart, Concert Aria, K612 (with John Shirley-Quirk); Bottesini, Duo for two double-basses
Tickets: £3.00, £2.40, £1.80, £1.20. (Available from 27 March).
(Tel. 01 935 2141)

Sunday, 7 June 1981*
7.30 p.m.
STRING QUARTET No.3
With Mozart, K589; Haydn, OP.76, No.2

Sunday, 14 June 1981*
7.30 p.m.
STRING QUARTET NO. 6
With Haydn, Op.17, No.5; Mozart, K421

Sunday, 21 June 1981*
7.30 p.m.
STRING QUARTET NO. 7
With Haydn, Op.20, No.4; Mozart, K590

Sunday, 28 June 1981*
7.30 p.m.
STRING QUARTET NO. 8
With Mozart, K546; Haydn, Op.74, No.3

*All four of these recitals will be given by the Delme Quartet in Ranger's House, Chesterfield Walk, Blackheath, London SE10.
Tickets (£2.75; £2.20) and booking information are available from the Booking Office, Department for Recreation and the Arts, GLC, Room 89, The County Hall, London SE1 7PB (tel. 01 633 1707); or from Greenwich Entertainment Service, 25 Woolwich New Road, London SE18, (tel. 01 317 8687).
Ranger's House seats only 140 - apply promptly after booking opens on 1 May 1981.

Friday, 26 June 1981
10.00 p.m.
Main Marquee, South Hill Park, Bracknell, Berkshire
QUINTET FOR CLARINET, BASS CLARINET AND THREE DOUBLE-BASSES
The London Double-Bass Ensemble
With Guy and Hoddinott, Quartets for Four Double-Basses
Tickets and information from: The Festival Organiser at above address (tel. 0344 27272).

THE BRITISH MUSIC SOCIETY

President: Sir Lennox Berkeley CBE

BRITISH MUSIC CONCERTS: REMAINDER OF SEASON 1980-81

Chelsea College Concerts, presented by the Chelsea College Music Society in association with the British Music Society

26 March
FERGUSON: Octet BERKELEY: Quartet No.2
BLISS: Elegiac Sonnet

7 May
Music of YORK BOWEN introduced by John Lindsay of the York Bowen Society

4 June
Music of Sir ARTHUR BLISS, to include Ballads of the Four Seasons, Angels of the Mind, etc.

18 June
Music to include works by RUBBRA, HARTY and REIZENSTEIN

Admission is free to all these concerts, but donations to help cover costs are gratefully accepted.

ALL CONCERTS TAKE PLACE IN ROOM 201, CHELSEA COLLEGE, MANRESA ROAD (OFF KING'S ROAD), LONDON SW7.
(Entrance between two leaning plane trees)
Starting time for all concerts: 7.00p.m.

FURTHER DETAILS FROM: ANDREW GUYATT 01 351 2488 ext 429

Goldsmiths' College, School of Adult and Social Studies, in conjunction with the British Music Society, Lecture-Recitals

14 March
JOHN FOULDS: Lecture by Malcolm Macdonald, followed by recital to include works for 'cello and piano, and string quartet

21 March
GEOFFREY BUSH: Lecture by Dr Bush on C. V. Stanford, followed by recital to include Clarinet Sonata by Stanford, and Dialogue and Songs of Wonder by Bush

Lectures begin at 2.30 p.m., recitals at 4.30
Tickets at the door: £1.00 to each event
Goldsmiths' college, Lewisham Way, London SE14

THE MAN AND THE MUSIC

HANS KELLER

To the English-reading intellectual, Friedrich Schiller is a second-rate poet and a playwright who seems to have stimulated a great composer or two, and that's about it: the mistranslated 'Ode to Joy' is, perhaps, all he knows. To educated Germans, Schiller is one of their two or three leading literary genuises - but even they don't know enough of his output; his plays and his poetry are all that is common knowledge. In point of fact, however, he was an important post-Kantian philosopher too - and only philosophical circles are aware of the fact.

So far as his aesthetic writings are concerned, and although he did not examine music, he is, or should be, an indispensable mind for us musicians: what he has to say about the nature of art in general and the literary arts in particular is, quite often, more relevant to the art of music than are the reflections of sundry musical aestheticians, despite the fact that music is more unlike any other art than is any other art.

His treatise On Naive and Sentimentalic Poetry (Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung), though it never mentions music, is the most important musical characterology I know - a basic means of defining, and differentiating between, creative character types. The only incomprehensible thing about it is its English title. For one thing, that is to say, Dichtung isn't 'poetry': the concept extends over the whole of creative writing, and there is no English word for it. For another, 'sentimentalic' isn't an English word - but then, it wasn't a German one either before Schiller invented it (i.e., sentimentalisch), and God knows why he did: 'sentimental' is the same word with the same meaning in both English and German, and 'sentimentalic' doesn't give one any inkling of what Schiller means by it.

But he does explain. He means, creatively speaking, the opposite of 'naive' - and the 'naive' artist he considers to be in tune with nature, expressing it, its laws, its truths spontaneously - a mouthpiece, as it were, of physical, metaphysical, and psychological truth. The 'sentimentalic' artist, on the other hand, is in search of lost nature: he is the perpetual striver who thinks it is better to travel than to arrive - who suspects arrival itself as an illusion, an excuse for not continuing to strive. In short, if one doesn't arrive, one travels further.

And just as C. G. Jung discovered his personality types when he compared Freud's personality with his own, so Schiller discovered his artistic personality types on the basis of what he felt to be the sharp contrast between Goethe's artistic personality, which he thought 'naive', and his own, which he knew to be 'sentimentalic', striving; he forgot in the process that the entire history of art, any art, cannot boast any striver, either amongst its creators or amongst the figures they created, who can be remotely compared to that striver par excellence, Goethe's own Faust. Nor would it do for Schiller to retort that the 'sentimentalic' Faust is Goethe's 'naive' creation, for the poet's lifelong obsession with his hero cum anti-hero was a

measure of his autobiographical involvement: the more we know about Goethe, the more we realise how much we can learn about him, the character of his creative mind, through Faust's.

Let that pass. Schiller's illusions about Goethe, his works and his psychology are one thing; the searching validity of his thesis is another. For he did apply his differential diagnosis not only to the artist but - aesthetically immeasurably more importantly - to his art, as witness his very title. And again, the differentiation does not only apply to Schiller's chosen art, which is poetry and literature, but also to music. I would, in fact, go much further than Schiller did, in proportion as I am more musical than he was: I would suggest that his eminently practical theory applies more purely to music than to any other art - and that it is music, alone among the arts, which is the ideal touchstone for any aesthetic theory, for the elementary and elemental reason that music cannot contain anything inartistic, extra-artistic, without ceasing to be music altogether.

So far is music as such removed from any pictorial or conceptual thought that it is almost impossible to talk about it without distorting it. If, nevertheless, music is a successful touchstone for Schiller's theory, his theory must be an equally smooth key to one particular aspect of music - its aesthetic typology: for once, that is to say, one may hope that concepts, words, though by their nature static, will not distort the dynamic essence of music.

One aural glance at the best-known part of our history of music convinces us that an otherwise inexpressible, profound difference between musics and musics suddenly becomes verbally clear in the warm light of Schiller's theory, to wit, the fundamental characterological contrast between Mozart and Haydn or Mozart and Beethoven, between Bruckner and Mahler, Britten and Wagner, or Stravinsky and Schoenberg - so much so that one need hardly spell it all out: Schiller's theory applies without our having to apply it - which is the highest and rarest compliment we can pay any theory, i.e., the inevitability of its practice. They fall from our ears as if they had been scales: the music of Mozart, Bruckner, Britten and Stravinsky is 'naive', as indeed are the composers themselves in their creative attitudes; whereas Haydn, Beethoven, Mahler and Schoenberg are prototypically 'sentimentalic'.

Nor need readers of this journal be told into which of the two categories its patron saint falls, and if it be objected that saints tend to be 'naive', my rejoinder is that while St Teresa, revelations and all, may have been 'naive', Joan of Arc was a striver, who'd never have attained her sainthood without striving. It is not suggested, of course, that the 'naive' artist must needs be without striving elements, and vice versa; and even Beethoven, the striver of strivers, achieved 'naivety' at the very end - in his last quartet and in what was, chronologically, his last quartet movement, the second finale for Op.130. Our own composer, likewise, has his 'naive' moments, the least developmental of his symphonies being one of them, but the striving centre of his creative character remains unaffected by his 'naive' insights.

Not by chance did I mention his least developmental symphony (which, incidentally, is the one I least understand): strictly musically, development is indeed the hallmark of the striver - and between ourselves, we may remind ourselves that even a Mozart wasn't all that fond of it, found various inspired, masterly ways out

of it, or else didn't even plunge into it in the first place - as, say, in the Figaro Overture. The 'naive' composer's revelations are, naturally, statements (Bruckner's themes), whereas the striver's statements, far from being revelatory, are material for development, which is his creativity's centre of gravity. In this context, it is fascinating to remember that our own composer, in an argument about melodic invention, once asserted that virtually anything can be used as the basis of symphonic momentum. Beethoven would have agreed; Mozart wouldn't. There is no argument: the statement is true for Beethoven, and not for Mozart.

Its musical applicability apart, I have one contribution to make to Schiller's theory: in the case of the 'naive' artist, the relation between the man and his art may be remote or - as in the case of Mozart - virtually non-existent. If you know the 'naive' artist without knowing his work, it is impossible to make any meaningful guesses about its nature. In the case of the 'sentimentalic' artist, on the other hand, the relation between him and his creations is intimate: knowing Beethoven the man, one could have got a shrewd idea about the nature of his art, its ethical and philosophical function. It is, in fact, the striver who puts his art at the service of something, even though it may not be 'committed' art in the banal sense: that something will be, simply, his philosophy. The 'naive' artist, the 'vessel', couldn't care less about commitment; he simply expresses what he has to express, the way he eats in order to stay alive.

But intimate though the relation is between the striver's art and his life, his extra-artistic thought, the entire history of music does not, to my knowledge, show a single instance of as close an integration between the two as is our composer, whose conceptual, verbal articulateness is, of course, an enormous help in this continuing process of striving integration, and integrated striving. His integrity as a man is quite exceptional; normally, that is to say, one would expect substantial art, rather than a substantial man, to show such flawless and consistent integrity. He treats his life with the uncompromising thematicism of a work of art, and he does not allow his art to grow without equally rigid reference to the purpose of life. Beethoven would know what I am talking about; Mozart wouldn't. Not unnaturally, Simpson's* understanding of Beethoven is far more immediate than his understanding of Mozart - though one quickly ought to add that the striver often admires the 'naive' artist (see Schiller's vis-à-vis Goethe, Beethoven and Schoenberg vis-à-vis Mozart, or Simpson vis-à-vis Bruckner), whereas the 'naive' artist will do without striving admiration, though he may admire the striver's art as art, regardless of its nature and the nature of his own work. Mozart's admiration of Haydn's music is a case in point; it never turned Mozart into more of a developer.

Other things being equal, this unity between life and art produces developments in either dimension which would not be possible without it. For the 'naive' artist, any such unity would not only be senseless, but unachievable in the first place: you can't treat life as a vessel - and, mind you, the artistic 'vessel' need not

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* The fact that his name here occurs for the first time is due to an experiment: I am dictating this essay to a highly musical secretary, whom I wanted to guess which composer I was talking about; it was at this stage that she guessed - a circumstance which, itself, may be of relevance to the validity (or notherwise) of my argument.

happen on Mozart's level, but occurs, with crystal-clarity, on less exalted planes of creativity, George Gershwin being an outstanding example - whose music, needless to add, Simpson doesn't understand at all, though he would violently disagree with my verdict and, instead, relegate the authentic revelations of this minor genius to the rubbish dump of phoney art.

If one knows Simpson the man, then, one knows Simpson the artist - the artist's character, anyhow, and if one knows Simpson's music, one knows more than the character of the man: one realises the consistency of his words and his actions - some of which would, without the music, merely seem anti-conventional, rather than positively subservient to his aims; and the striver's aims are, inevitably, ideals.

Those of us who have had discussions with Simpson about music in general and, ineluctably, symphonically striving music in particular, are struck by one word he never tires of using in this context, a word which seems to have almost magic significance for him - and one which, at the same time, is not part and parcel of our normal critical vocabulary, though I have advisedly used it in the present essay.

It is the word 'momentum', and once one knows one's Simpson well, both musically and verbally, one realises that it is the ideal word for the kind of intra-musical striving that lies, or rather moves, at the centre of both his own art and the music he most admires. The concept not only covers the quantity of motion, but also the product of a body's mass by its velocity: no mass without velocity for Simpson, and no velocity without mass, without substance. For the truly creative striver, all developing is transitive: something is being developed, both in the man and his music. Moving substance is the essence of his art, ever-changing without being transient. And it is because the man and the artist are so harmoniously striving that one feels his antipathy to 'naive' art to be downright creative: there are aggressive elements in Simpson's music which are directed against what he wrongly thinks is the nature of the art of, say, a George Gershwin. I say 'Gershwin' rather than 'Mozart', although I would suspect that even Simpson's admiration for Mozart is relatively cool - relative, that is to say, to his boiling identification with Beethoven. For the striver, life is striving; strifeless life, strifeless art can only be admired to the extent to which anything lifeless can be. So long as he is alive, that is, he can't identify, though he generously promises that once he's dead, he will - even with the superhuman Mozart.

Meanwhile, his art carries an element the 'naive' artist's revelations have to, want to do without - the element of conviction. A revelation convinces the way a perception does: it simply is; it is not itself convinced. We may be convinced that this is a table - but the table doesn't go out of its way to convince us, nor, therefore, does our perception of it.

Now, the striving work has to turn the listener into a striver, too; otherwise, there is no understanding. And in order to make the listener strive, the work has to be convinced of its case and thus convince him of it - its case being, paradigmatically, the theme and its fate, which is thematic evolution and striving development.

When the man and the music are - almost uniquely - one, the music does not only carry its own conviction, but insistently reflects the man's: Robert Simpson's music does not persuade, tempt, seduce,

as Richard Strauss' does, for example - that failed striver's. In a word, Simpson doesn't get you round. Instead, he invites you to share his convictions, confiding to you what convinced him to begin with - which, ultimately, is life as strife.

There is a single, highly significant inconsistency in his life and his output - an inconsistency that proves that singular consistency of his total personality that is the subject of my piece. Again and again, Robert Simpson has said that he won't resume writing - words, that is; composing will remain his sole mode of expression. And again and again, his outstanding verbal thought processes are breaking the promise: the man and the music remain one in the words and the notes - strive as one. In fact, an important verbal manifesto is about to appear.

THE ORIGIN OF THE FIRST SYMPHONY

HAROLD TRUSCOTT

On Sunday, October 5th 1945, 1 attended the Stoll Theatre, Kingsway, for the first public performance in the British Isles of Mahler's Fifth Symphony, which was wrested, with blood and sweat, from an unwilling London Symphony Orchestra by the sheer will-power and determination, coupled with his unshakable belief in Mahler's music, of a very great conductor, Heinz Unger. After that performance the finale still humming in my brain, I met for the first time Donald Mitchell, who had also attended. I had for many years been a devoted admirer and student of the music of Max Reger, and had recently seen a letter in the Musical Times from Mitchell, asking for any material concerning Reger, since he was planning a biography. I had written to him through the Musical Times, and told him that I had no material for him, except the bulk of Reger's music, which I assumed (in my innocence) that he would already know. But I conjured him, when he wrote his book, not to repeat the rubbish which was the norm for English music critics writing about Reger and a number of other composers, such as Bruckner and Mahler. (Some of the music journalists who were at that time most vitriolic on the subject of Bruckner and Mahler, and on any attempt to perform even a single movement from any one of their symphonies, were later, from what they wrote, among the most devoted admirers of these composers - but, of course, since the period of their anti-attitude they had, presumably, got to know some of the music they had so severely castigated; although one cannot be sure. Bandwagons do not demand knowledge as a password before they begin to roll.)

In the event, Mitchell never wrote his book on Reger; but he wrote to me and said he would like to meet me, which would be possible if I were going to the Stoll Theatre on October 5th, which I was; wild horses would not have kept me away. So witness me wandering round the foyer with the score of Reger's Op.141 Flute Serenade under my arm, so that Donald would know me. We met, and talked, and eventually I visited him at his home in Alleyn Park, Dulwich. Among other things, he mentioned a young man named Bob Simpson, with whom, he said, I should get on like a house on fire. 'He's mad on Bruckner, too,' he assured me. I was prepared to meet and like anyone who was mad on Bruckner. This sort of thing is the quickest passport to friendship I know, however disparate other tastes may be.(1)

(continued on page 14)

A B I R T H D A Y

I have great admiration for Bob Simpson's achievement as a composer. His spirit of independence, his refusal to follow fashion and his sheer love of music for its own sake are equalled by the quality of his own work and of everything he stands for.

SIR LENNOX BERKELEY

On his sixtieth birthday Dr Robert Simpson will be thought of by all his friends, and I feel that this is more than an ordinary birthday of the sort by which we celebrate our composers nowadays. The reason for this is that all his working life Dr Simpson has been on the staff of the BBC where he has taken special pains to do honour to several of his contemporaries in a way in which can have no parallel in the music of our time. It is only right that we should all feel that Dr Simpson's very special output should be very specially celebrated on this occasion.

SIR ADRIAN BOULT

On behalf of all of us here at the Composers' Guild, I would like to send you greetings on the occasion of your sixtieth birthday. You and your music are held in warm affection by us all, and we wish you every happiness and success for the future.

DEREK BOURGEOIS

I am pleased to join in sending greetings to Robert Simpson on his sixtieth birthday - especially since I have just joined that exclusive club myself. My congratulations on his stature and integrity, and my very best wishes for his continuing distinguished work and creative activity.

PETER RACINE FRICKER

Robert Simpson and I met for the first time in Denmark years ago, and I immediately felt what a rich human mind he possesses and - through the years what a profound composer he is.
It is very easy for me as a Dane to understand his temperament, his humour and light irony and his stubborn will to write his own music in spite of varying fashions.
Dear Bob, it is important for me, and many others, to know that you exist as a man and composer, and I congratulate you on your birthday and wish you many happy returns of the day.

VAGN HOLMBOE

Happy birthday. It is difficult for me to realise that you are now 60, i.e., approaching early middle age, because your music itself maintains that particular energy and vitality that has always characterised it. I was trying to pin down in my mind what it is that best personifies the essential quality of your work as far as I am concerned, and it seems to me that it is the sheer power and imagery of the musical ideas themselves. Your music has, of course, great variety, humanity, control and imagination, but I am always especially impressed and moved by the size of the musical ideas and their quality of conveying with the utmost vividness images of

absolute and compelling honesty. By 'images' I don't mean pictures - I mean, if you like, philosophical images, structural images, ideas which are both abstract and at the same time immensely human.
This quality is a rare and precious gift, something that cannot be gained by study or experience but which is there from the very start (as it is in your music, from the Piano Sonata onwards - and how I wish I had hands big enough to play that work). Your music has not only given me great pleasure but also great stimulus - and like so many other people, I look forward to many more works from your pen and (a fervent desire of mine) performances of the works already known and loved.

In great admiration, with great affection,

JOHN McCABE

Auguri e complimenti, Dr Simpson, per lunghi e felici anni futuri, con le sincere cordialità.

GOFFREDO PETRASSI

Let me take the occasion of Robert Simpson's sixtieth birthday to welcome the formation of the Robert Simpson Society under the distinguished patronage of Sir Adrian Boult. Simpson's music needs the push that such a Society can give, as it doesn't subscribe to the current confusion of values: rather is it firmly and confidently based on the belief that the concept of tonality is inexhaustible in its creative possibilities. From this intensely held belief Simpson's music derives its urgency, vitality and originality.

EDMUND RUBBRA

Congratulations to Robert Simpson on his sixtieth birthday. And congratulations too on his remarkable music and all the good work he has done for music at the BBC.

HUMPHREY SEARLE

Robert Simpson doesn't particularly like his birthdays. But that doesn't mean that we, his friends and admirers, shouldn't celebrate. For Simpson his birthdays mean a tug-of-time. For us they mean milestones in his creative pilgrim's progress; every year yielding more of his splendid music. As he's not a 'believer', he doesn't need to believe in 'three score years and ten'. We look forward to decades more for him.
Dear Bob, Charles Lamb used to talk of 'walking ten pints'. I hope you'll live thirty-two symphonies (like one of your heroes) to stand beside the thirty-two sonatas of another of your heroes.

Your friend and colleague,

RONALD STEVENSON

Robert Simpson is one of the rare composers who care for their colleagues, past and present, with a true generosity of spirit. He also cares for enduring values and proper quality within the vast bureaucracies of all our musical institutions. 'I shall not cease from mental fight' might well be his motto.

SIR MICHAEL TIPPETT

I met Bob, and we talked until the cows came home. But it was not all talk. I played to him, on the piano, all sorts of music by composers he had either never heard of, or had heard of but had heard nothing by them. A great and completely neglected English composer, Algernon Ashton, was one of them. Another was Alkan, of whom Bob had heard but, as he told me, had nothing of his, and had never imagined that he would one day be sitting by the piano while someone actually played the four studies from Alkan's Op. 39 which form the Symphony. Brian, too, was among the composers whose music he encountered for the first time. I played him the Kelly Variations, a 2-hand version I had prepared myself of Wild Horsemen and the Ballet of Gargoyles, all from the opera, The Tigers.(2) None of these Brian extracts, I am forced to say, seemed to impress him very much; but, to be fair, he was hearing them on the piano, a medium for which they were neither intended nor suited. I also played him the Four Miniatures and the Three Illuminations, which were designed for piano (although the second and fourth of the Four Miniatures were rewritings of songs, The Birds and Land of Dreams). When they came along, later, in 1948 (they were published just 24 years after they were composed) I played Bob Brian's two Preludes and Fugues, in C minor and D minor, and the Double Fugue in E Flat;(3) these certainly interested him more, which could have been due to their contrapuntal content.

One of Bob's biggest enthusiasms among the composers to whom I thus introduced him was Medtner, who had, until then, been a closed book to him. And Schubert sonatas, especially the great Unfinished C major of 1825. In 1946, apart for Schnabel's advocacy, no-one played Schubert's sonatas in public as they do automatically today. One of my musician friends lamented the fact that Schubert 'had wasted so many fine ideas on a form of music he did not understand'. And he was only echoing a view which was prevalent at the time and for quite some years afterwards.

I apologise in advance now if I seem to perform a solo on an instrument I do not really play - that is to say, blow my own trumpet. It is not done for its own sake, but because it has a bearing on my subject. It has to do, also, with the fact that the only instrument Bob plays (or did play) is a trumpet - his own, only in the sense that he owned it. The piano he did play, although I once caught him finding his way through some of the first movement of that Schubert Unfinished C major Sonata, rather in the manner of someone fighting their way through a thick jungle. The point, is, as he said, that meeting me stimulated his interest in the piano. Piano music, such as the Beethoven and Mozart sonatas, later on Schubert, he enjoyed listening to, but the piano as a medium for his own composition he had not thought about before. Now he did. He wanted to provide some music for me to play. And this is where my own trumpet, blown in as subdued a manner as possible, comes in. One of the things I have been able to ever since I could play a piano at all, from about the age of eight, is to sight-read any piano music I came across, or arrangements of orchestral and chamber music, accurately and at about the speed the music demanded. Stumbling through fast music, hesitantly and at about a quarter of the proper speed, which usually passes for sight-reading, is simply not sight-reading at all, any more than crawling along, like a tired snail, can be called running a cross-country race. When I was 10, I made a vow to myself that I would never play at sight any fast music

slower than the tempo which I judged was right for it, or slow music faster than it should be; either, so far from being sight-reading, is a distortion of the music, and therefore not that piece. I have kept that vow. Now, this fascinated Bob; he had never met anything like it before. The immediate effect was shown in two ways: he began to write a piano sonata in E major, and he also began to devise all sorts of pieces and passages, designed to test my sight-reading powers. On one occasion, when his Variations and Finale on a Theme of Haydn, dedicated to me, were broadcast, he talked about them first, referred to my sight-reading and his attempts to beat it and admitted that he never succeeded. My trumpet-blowing is over.

The important point is that all this stimulated Bob's imagination. He finished the sonata, of which I gave the first performance; I also recorded it for him. Later it was played by Ronald Smith. It is a very fine work, and the fact that its texture is largely contrapuntal hides the further fact the Bob's writing for the piano is not the most pianistic one could imagine. The same is true, mainly, of the Variations. But the music, as such, is splendid, and with a good contrapuntal style one can get away with a lot - and Bob did. But one does not always write contrapuntally for piano - even Hindemith did not always. Sooner or later the lack of a real piano technique, which means, for the composer, an intimate knowledge of the piano keyboard, which, in the last resort, can only be garnered from actual experience of playing the piano, all let one down. And there came a time when it let Bob down. He rang me one day in a state of great excitement. He had begun a new sonata for piano, and wanted me to try what he had written; when could I come over? I was as excited as he was and I got across to Crofton Park (I lived then in Ilford, Essex) as soon as I could. I played what he had written, about a couple of pages of manuscript, stopped and thought about it; I played it again, and yet a third time. He was listening and watching my face, I could feel it. At last I shook my head. It was magnificent, I told him, but not for piano. The kind of power it required the piano could not give, not the best instrument one could find. That sort of power the piano has not got. I had often played through the abominable two-hand arrangement of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony by August Stradal, because I loved the music so much, and there was little or no chance of hearing it being performed; the result was like trying to paint a great mural with the kind of small brush with which flowers are painted on china. I had the same feeling playing Bob's opening for this sonata; the difference was that it did not go on so long; there was considerably less of it. I demonstrated it to him, and sadly he agreed; it was not piano music. So what could he do with it? I thought about this a lot during the next few days, and at last the nature of the music gave me an idea; it was not only orchestral power that was wanted, but it was symphonic.(4) Now, when I first met Bob he had been working slowly on an orchestral piece which he called, tentatively, 'Cathedral Music'. It was not finished; indeed, it was a wandering fragment, for it had no proper beginning, either, as yet. I thought of both these things: the symphonic nature of that 'sonata' beginning and the hazy 'Cathedral Music'. In the event, as it happened, there was no need for me to mention it first. He, too, had been thinking hard about this, and he had thought of the connection, too. It did not happen all at once, but this is what it came to eventually. That 'sonata' beginning became the beginning of Robert Simpson's First Symphony, and, with extension, gave way to the 'Cathedral Music', which at last found its rightful home, in a work the completion of

which was still quite a long way ahead. It was the result of his desire to provide me with a second sonata, when in fact, his orchestral mind, which was much more natural to him, took over.

(1) To follow up this point: back in the 'sixties a very fine organist, W. O. Minay, used to broadcast regularly from St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh. He frequently included one of the mighty organ works of Franz Schmidt, who had been (and still is) in my estimation one of the truly great composers, without question. I taped all Minay's Schmidt performances, which were superb. Some years ago an organist colleague of mine returned from a visit to Edinburgh and said that he had met Minay and told him of my love for Schmidt and for his broadcasts of the latter's organ works. 'Tell him that anyone who likes Schmidt is a friend of mine,' Minay told my colleague, who duly repeated this to me. And, to cap it, a year or two later, when I was playing for a student in a Trinity College examination, one of the examiners turned out to be Minay, who, when he learned who I was, enthusiastically repeated what he had told my colleague in Edinburgh.

(2) /The Havergal Brian Society hopes to mount the world première of The Tigers in a semi-staged, concert performance in late 1982 or early 1983. Details are available from David Brown, Secretary, HBS, 33 Coopers Road, Little Heath, Potters Bar, Herts., EN6 1JQ. The HBS welcomes donations to cover the preparation of material for this performance. -Ed./

(3) /Mr Truscott has transcribed Brian's Double Fugue for organ. Potential performers are asked to contact the Secretary, HBS, at the address above.-Ed./

(4) /This may ring a bell with some readers. In Monsieur Croche the Dilettante Hater, Debussy puts in M. Croche's mouth the words: 'Beethoven's sonatas are very badly written for the piano; they are, particularly those that came later, more accurately described as orchestral transcriptions' (Dover, 1962). RS is in good company. -Ed./

1980: A YEAR OF SIMPSON

BAYAN NORTHCOTT

It is - happily - a bit late to start fulminating about the neglect of Robert Simpson, even though one may continue to regret that the old recordings of the First Symphony (1951) and the First String Quartet (1952) have long been allowed to lapse, that the Fourth Symphony (1972) has yet to receive a convincing performance or the stunning Fifth (1972) the many it deserves, and that the Seventh (1977), which was specifically composed to complete a disc with a much-needed recording of the Second (1956), has still to be heard owing to the clobbering of that project by conglomerate accountancy. In January and February 1980, the BBC at last put out the Gabrieli Quartet's première recordings of the Fourth, Fifth and

Sixth String Quartets (1973-5), upon which it had been sitting for nearly a year. In March and April the three works were given their first public performances at the Wigmore Hall by the Delme Quartet, who went on to repeat them as part of their complete Simpson cycle culminating in the world première of the Eighth (1979) and coupled with his arrangments of The Art of Fugue and appropriate Beethoven quartets at Brunel University in May and June. Meanwhile, the fine Unicorn recordings of the Clarinet Quintet (1968) and the Third Symphony (1962) have been restored to the catalogue, while the Sixth Symphony had its world première at the Royal Festival Hall on 8 April by the London Philharmonic under Sir Charles Groves.

With Simpson celebrating his 60th birthday this March and rumours of an admittedly further-off complete recording of the symphonies, opportunities of getting to grips with his output seem likely to continue for the time being - not to mention the possibility of new works appearing with increased frequency now that he has resigned from the BBC (characteristically over management attempts to snuff out independent debate by staff on the pretext of 'corporate loyalty'). Whether such activity will bring wider public acceptance remains to be seen. Hitherto his music has seemed to resist easy assimilation either by 'advanced' or conservative listeners; regenerating tonal and symphonic principles the former assume to be dead yet refusing to fulfil the nostalgias of the latter for Lyrita Land or Olde Vienna. To be sure, the gramophone has stimulated an increasing cult of the Integral Oeuvre over the individual work - one scarcely dare discuss a Mahler or Shostakovich symphony these days divorced from some cycle — by which Simpson's output might eventually expect to benefit. For if Bruckner's symphonies can be regarded as a gigantic series of variations upon certain limited formal and thematic preoccupations, if Sibelius's can be seen as a dynamic sequence in which each work is conceived as the opposite or complement in procedure and character of the preceding one, Simpson's symphonies and quartets have surely grown out of a conciousness of both approaches, even if much of their material (those rocking thirds and running scale passages, together with their 'progressive tonality') hail from Nielsen, while many of their preoccupations - variety of ostinato in the symphonies, variety of fugal texture in the quartets - hark back ultimately to Beethoven.

The problem for the average listener, or indeed critic, at this juncture remains the fact that the Sixth Symphony, for instance, encountered in isolation is a rather different work from the Sixth Symphony as latest addition to an already assimilated series. One may read Simpson's (unusually explicit) programme of the growth of an organism from the moment of conception, through birth to the prime of life; one may follow its 30-minute realisation in a continuous span of gradually increasing tempo, from the gentle swimmings and mysterious shudderings of the opening, through a gigantic progression of lumbering, slowly-rising sequences to the apocalyptic moment of birth 14 minutes into the work (surely one of the longest structural upbeats in the history of music) and thence, by way of a tenderly swinging post-natal andante-to-scherzo, into a headlong gallop in search of a final effulgent D major. One might criticise (as I did after the first performance) the lumberings and gallopings as a bit literalistic and over-extended or (as others did) the orchestration as somewhat heavy-handed. But, without knowing the other symphonies, one would not necessarily guess that the Sixth represents an excursion into the romantic grand manner rather exceptional for Simpson. Nor would one appreciate the contrasting and complementary

achievement of its compound form as compared with those of the First and Fifth symphonies, or of its structural accelerando as compared with the finale of the Third, or of its optimistic programme as compared with the 'steadfast-consciousness-in-adversity' donnée that gives the Fifth its striking and perhaps more intra-musical sonorous image of an unchanging background chord against which suddenly all hell breaks loose.

The seemingly centrifugal diversity in length and character of the Eighth String Quartet's four movements similarly makes a more positive point heard after the beautiful Seventh's smoothly intergrated single arch—form - though even without knowing the fugues of the First and Third, one could hardly fail to be impressed by the variety of mood and movement through which Simpson leads the ear in the almost 12-minute span of his latest opening movement, with its declamatory Grave, molto intensivo subject and its radiant climax of high, chiming ostinati. The tiny three-and-a-half-minute second movement also proves something exceptional, a focussing of the kind of skittering, scherzando triplet music to be heard all over his quartets into something he has more rarely (too rarely?) attempted - a genuine character piece, suggested in this instance by the fact that the work's dedicatee happens to be a world expert on the mosquito. But its very definition and idiosyncracy rather serve to question the length of the third movement and the individuality of the fourth: a muted, faintly Nielsenesque, waltz-like intermezzo lasting over five minutes and a ten-minute Risoluto finale, partly derived from the first movement by paraphrase technique, but opening with a burst of disorientatingly Shostakovichian skirling and later sustaining its energy in a a somewhat anonymous strain of rushing scales.

If these remarks suggest an ambiguity about the music - or at least about the response of one listener - the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth quartets help to define its nature. Like Schubert's basing of the finale of his late A major piano sonata upon the groundplan of Beethoven's Op.31 No.1, or Goehr's founding of Metamorphosis/Dance upon the variations of Op.111, Simpson's works are a recomposition or, as he puts it, 'a close study of Beethoven's three "Rasumovsky" quartets Op.59; that is to say, the attempt to understand those great works resulted in, not verbal analysis, but music'. The parallel runs closest in the Fourth, in which the contours, textures, rate of harmonic change and so on of Op.59 No.1 are reconstituted in Simpson's own stylistic equivalents virtually bar for bar - though his contraction of Beethoven's opening four-four allegro to a three-four one enables him to shift the weight of the work somewhat to the finale. In the Fifth and Sixth, the parallels become broader and less direct so that, for instance, where Beethoven, for the only time in the set, writes a minuet in Op.59 No.3 - a form that was already backward-looking and 'neo-classical' to him - Simpson in his sixth avoids the problem of becoming doubly neo-classical through a minuet paraphrase by opting instead for a form of analogous archaism from his own standpoint: an elaborate, if somewhat stiff-jointed, double canon. What he nowhere seeks to avoid is the challenge posed by the sheer scale and range of contrasts encompassed in Beethoven's three masterpieces, unprecedented in chamber music up to that time and rarely enough rivalled since. That Simpson the master of the trenchant motive and the long, evolving line fails quite to come up with memorable equivalents to Beethoven's tunes - both russes and original as in the Adagio of Op.59 No.1 - may be accounted an honourable defeat. That what one increasingly suspects to be his curiously ambivalent conception of tonality fails in the vagrant implications of its mixed chromaticism and false relations to match the

broad clarities of Beethoven may partly be ascribed to the present state of composition and the ineluctable influence of the times. That the combined effect of these shortcomings is to question the appropriateness of his musical language for fulfilling the kind of Beethovenian dimensions to which he has continually aspired takes us to the heart of his dilemma.

Or what I would hazard to be his dilemma, having found myself periodically drawn back to his art over almost a quarter of a century with an excitement tinged with just a little disappointment that so independent a composer cannot always find it possible to be even more himself. Naturally drawn to tonality and the sonata principle as timeless, archetypal concepts, he has apparently found himself forced nevertheless into a considered historical position by an historicist avant-garde outlook that would seek to deny such permanencies, and it is difficult not to feel that the thrust of his polemic writing has sometimes taken command of his composing - above all, as a need to demonstrate that strong, coherent, large-scale composition remains as possible as ever in these effete and trendy decades. Whether the relative absence of fantasy from his formal procedures or the pervasive subjection of colour to function in his instrumentation are more innate limitations or the results of a sustaining of logic too consistently close to the surface of his music, the latter surely accounts for a recurrent failure to exploit the possibilities of elision: those breath-catching moments where a composer leaps clean over the intermediate stage of an argument in the confidence that his hearers are musical enough to intuit the continuation of his initial premises for themselves. Perhaps, having heard his 'Rasumovskys', all I am hankering for now is Robert Simpson's Op.95.

We thank both Mr Northcott and the Editor of Tempo for permission to reprint this article from Tempo 135 (December 1980). -Ed.

LETTERS

I must congratulate you on your first issue. A serious but well-presented journal, devoted to the music of a contemporary composer in the central tradition of Western music, has a valuable contribution to make to the musical life of this country - which, heaven knows, needs a 'tonic', or better still a shot in the arm.

If the Robert Simpson Society and TONIC can help to show the superiority of tonality to the systems that have tried to replace it, and can convey some idea of the vast revolutionary potential it still contains (not, perhaps, too difficult, since RS has done most of the work for us), then this new venture will have amply fulfilled its promise.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Peacock
Mansfield, Notts.

Being in the editing business oneself makes one more aware than most of how irritating it can be to have organised the production in print of several thousand words and numbers, the former spelt correctly, in the main, and the whole lot more or less in the right order, only to receive a letter from someone smugly pointing out those which are not. What follows, therefore, must be taken in the constructive and confusion-avoiding spirit in which it is intended.

Is '3(3).3.2+1' really the full woodwind specification for RS's most lavishly scored symphony (No.5 (1972), List of Works, TONIC 1, p.10)? If anyone ever again decides to organise a performance of this astonishing piece, it would be rather sad if, on the basis of this list, the oboes (or clarinets? or bassoons?) were left out.

Aside from this tiny query, bouquets all round for a varied, lively and literate inaugural issue of TONIC. If the other activities of the Robert Simpson Society reach this standard of general excellence, then we are all in for a lively time.

Yours sincerely,

David Brown, Secretary,
The Havergal Brian Society,
Potters Bar, Herts.

MJA replies: I must confess my failure. The woodwind scoring for the Fifth Symphony should read: '3(3). 3. 2+1. 2+1'. And indeed, when the RSS's activities begin to bear fruit, we shall make sure that all the required players are present. One further omission from the list concerned the Allegro deciso. Stanley Pope has written from Switzerland to keep the records straight: 'This work was performed by the Beromünster Radio Symphony Orchestra in Zürich under my direction and broadcast on 4th December 1958. ... I believe it was, in fact, a first performance.'

My thanks to Messrs Peacock, Brown and Pope and to the other writers of encouraging letters. I shall always be glad to receive suggestions for, comments on and criticisms of TONIC.

COMPLETE DISCOGRAPHY

WORK	PERFORMERS	COUPLED WITH	COMPANY & NO. (YEAR OF ISSUE)
SYMPHONY NO. 1	LPO/Boult	-	EMI/HMV BLP 1092* (1957)
Re-issued with FRICKER: Symphony No.2 (RLPO/Pritchard) on			EMI/HMV HQM 1010* (1966)
SYMPHONY NO. 3	LSO/Horenstein	-	Unicorn UNS 225* (1970)
Re-issued with CLARINET QUINTET on			Unicorn UNS 262 (1980)

'VOLCANO'	Black Dyke Mills Band/ Parkes	Huber, Vinter, Calvert, Gregson	Chandos BBR 1004
'ENERGY'	GUS Footwear Band/ Boddington	Vinter, Berlioz	EMI/HMV TWO 379* (1972)
CANZONA	Philip Jones Brass Ensemble	Bliss, Britten, Bax, Bullock, de Haan, Altenburg, Beethoven, Mozart	Decca SDD 274 (1971)
	Locke Brass Consort/ Stobart	Brian, Bliss, Rubbra, Coe, Tippett, Jacob, Walton, Elgar, Benjamin	RCA RL 25081* (1977)
		Re-issued on	RCA GL 25308 (1980)
CLARINET QUINTET	Bernard Walton/ Aeolian Quartet	String Quartet No.1	Unicorn UNS 234* (1971)
		Re-issued with SYMPHONY NO.3 on	Unicorn UNS 262 (1980)
STRING QUARTET NO.1	Aeolian String Quartet	Clarinet Quintet	Unicorn UNS 234* (1971)

* No longer available

SIMPSON ANTAGONISTES

In BBC auditions - about the fairest system I know - we don't even see the artist, so we don't even know what sex it is, unless its a singer - and even then you can't always be sure.

(Radio 3, 24.xii.79)

It's no use self-conciously avoiding this, eschewing that, abolishing this, excluding that.

Whereas in past periods the creative geniuses, the great exceptions, have by the subtlety and originality of their minds often set problems for their audiences, we are nowadays (if this is the criterion) all geniuses, crawling on our hands and knees, groping after four-leafed clovers and banging our heads together.

Art is doing something imaginative, not imagining you have done something.

(Composing, Third Programme, 22.xi.59)

The human sense of tonality has many times been modified, but cannot be abolished. To attempt to abolish it is to cease to be comprehensive, to be narrowly exclusive. If I appreciate the kind of expression Schoenberg achieved (I happen to dislike it, but that is irrelevant to my appreciation of its accomplishment), my sense of tonality, though it may be deliberately anaesthetised for the time being, is by no means abolished. Since all my musical faculties are not being engaged, I cannot feel that such music is comprehensive. It is certainly concentrated, but that alone will not make it 'symphonic'; if you lose a leg you have to concentrate in order to move about without it, but however hard you concentrate, you cannot escape the conclusion that it is better to have two legs. With these, you can forget problems of locomotion and concentrate on objects. With one leg you can hop about, but will find it difficult to invent new dance steps that have more than the temporary appeal of oddity.

(Introduction to The Symphony, Volume 2, Penguin, 1967)

To: JOHN AND SYLVIA BROOKS
THE ROBERT SIMPSON SOCIETY
3 ENGEL PARK
LONDON
NW7 2HE

I enclose £ ... as a donation towards the costs of recording, for public sale, four previously unrecorded String Quartets by Robert Simpson (Nos. 3, 6, 7, 8: to be confirmed).

I understand that if for any reason this proposal cannot be implemented, I may reclaim my donation or, alternatively, leave it at the disposal of the Robert Simpson Society for use in other projects.

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ADDRESS .....

.....

SIGNATURE ..... DATE .....

To: JOHN AND SYLVIA BROOKS
THE ROBERT SIMPSON SOCIETY
3 ENGEL PARK
LONDON
NW7 2HE

I should like to attend the birthday celebration organised by the Robert Simpson Society

at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday, 25 April 1981, in the Small Hall of the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

I should like ..... tickets (@ £3.00 per ticket) and enclose a cheque/PO for £.....

NAME .....

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Tickets will be held at the door unless acknowledgment is requested

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