TONIC

The Journal of the ROBERT SIMPSON SOCIETY

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THE ROBERT SIMPSON SOCIETY

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THE ROBERT SIMPSON SOCIETY

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Application for membership and other enquiries should be sent to the Joint Secretaries (address above).

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

EDITORIAL

MARTIN J. ANDERSON

Here, at last, is the issue of TONIC you all thought was aspiring to the status of Sibelius' Eighth Symphony: rumoured to exist in some form, but unlikely ever to be made public. I hope this delay will bring no discredit either to the Society or its Committee; latterly it must, I am afraid, be ascribed to me. After the initial delay caused by Lengnick's printing schedule being full, and of which members were informed in MEDIANT (of which more below), TONIC should have appeared in early March, already some months late. But at the point where I should have been able to devote my attentions to it, there came a distraction I neither could ignore nor would have done: the publication of Toccata Press' next title, Stravinsky Seen and Heard, by a Vice-President of this Society, Hans Keller, and his wife, Milein Cosman. (There is a brief announcement later in this issue.) It is becoming obvious that the encroachments Toccata Press is beginning to make on time that would have been TONIC's cannot be in the best interests of this Journal. Much though I should like to continue as Editor, I fear that to attempt to do so would be a simple vanity unfair to the Society, its members, its effectiveness, and, not least, to RS. I have no intention, of course, of simply abandoning TONIC before the arrival of a volunteer able and willing to devote to it the time and energy the project deserves, and I now canvass for applications for this rewarding and enjoyable task. (I should point out that he or she will not have to start from scratch: there is plenty of material waiting in the wings.) In the meantime members of the committee have induced me (by flattery) to remain. We shall be trying a different method of setting and printing - but TONIC still deserves more time than I find I can give it. One possibility is that TONIC become bi-annual, increasing in size as it decreases in frequency. The issue of interim bulletins would then become much more regular. I would be grateful for members' views on this change.

I hope that whoever replaces me will maintain the Newsletter the birth of which was occasioned by the delays accompanying the appearance of this TONIC. I opened MEDIANT by apologising for the pun that was its title, but, as Hans Keller pointed out, if it wasn't musically meaningful (which it wasn't), then it wasn't a pun. I am grateful to Hans for criticism so constructive that it included a replacement title somewhat more effective: LEADING NOTES.

Despite appearances of inactivity, plans are being made for several recording projects on various scales, instrumental to symphonic; I hope that shortly you will have something more to show for your membership than the now nigh-annual TONIC. A Sponsorship Sub-Committee has been formed to raise money for projects beyond the Society's reach; if any members are boiling with enthusiasm, we shall be delighted to consider co-opting them to the Sub-Committee.

With the possible change of Editor in mind to assure members that it would not be pointless, I shall renew my plea to members to send in material for publication in TONIC. Letters, comments, advice, suggestions - and criticism - are all welcome.

SYMPHONY No. 8

As announced in MEDIANT, the Eighth Symphony has been completed. A Royal Philharmonic Society commission, it is a large work, in four movements in two parts, with an estimated length of 43 minutes.

The orchestration is as follows:

3(3).2+1.2(1 in E flat, 2 in A)+1.3+1.
4.4(2 in D, 2 in B flat).4(2 tenor, 2 bass).2.
2 Timpanists (placed either side of the orchestra).
Perc.(3). Strings.

The first performance will be given on 10 November 1982 in the Royal Festival Hall, when the Royal Danish Orchestra will be conducted by Jerzy Semkow. The Eighth Symphony is dedicated to Anthony and Daphne Dorrell.

STRING QUARTET No.9

Again as announced in MEDIANT, the Delme Quartet, in celebration of the 250th anniversary of Haydn's birth, have commissioned a series of string quartets from prominent British composers. They are RS, John McCabe, Wilfred Josephs, Daniel Jones, Christopher Headington and Carl Davis. All of the works have a Haydn connection, and will be performed in conjunction with Haydn and Schubert quartets in the Wigmore Hall this autumn.

RS's response to the commission was to take the theme on which he had composed his Variations and Finale on a Theme of Haydn (which Peter Jacobs performed in London in May) of 1948, and to use it in a further set of variations. The theme is the palindromic one which Haydn used twice, in the Symphony No.47 in G and the Piano Sonata in A (H.26, Landon 41); accordingly, each of RS's variations is palindromic. As there are 32 variations in the Ninth Quartet, RS's achievement becomes obvious. (It's not that difficult,' he told me. 'All you've got to do is write out the first half, then copy it out backwards!') Three of the variations are transcriptions of variations from the piano set; the whole is followed by a fugue.

As the entire quartet lasts some 50 minutes, the Delme Quartet are looking forward with eagerness but with understandable trepidation to giving the work its première on 6th October in the Wigmore Hall. Details of the rest of the series can be found under 'The Friends of the Delme'.

THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS: SUITE FOR BRASS BAND

RS has started work on a commission from the Yorkshire Imperial Band. He has chosen the same 'subject' as Nielsen's Second Symphony, but with the difference that he is working through the four temperaments in a different order - so that, beginning with the sanguine, the phlegmatic and the melancholic, the temperament with which he ends will be the choleric!

RSS STUDY ARCHIVE

Through the kind offices of Dr Lionel Pike, a member of our committee, we have been able to secure the use of the Library at Royal Holloway College, Egham, to house an archive for the study of RS's music. The Archive will contain scores, books, recordings, cuttings, and sundry Simpsoniana. It will be open to members and other interested parties through arrangement with the College. More detailed information will be announced once plans are further advanced. In the interim, if members have items for deposit in the Archive - either as gifts or on permanent or temporary loan - they should send them to:

Dr Lionel Pike
Department of Music
Royal Holloway College
Egham
Surrey

BROADCASTS

The Sonata for Two Pianos was given its first broadcast on Tuesday, 18 May, in a performance by its dedicatees, Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir. Although the broadcast was expected at some point, we had no prior warning of it and could not have informed members in time. We hope you kept your eye on Radio Times.

Less expected was the repeat broadcast on Sunday, 23 May, of the Eighth String Quartet from the series given by the Delme Quartet. The programme also included RS's arrangement of Tovey's completion of the Contrapunctus 14 from The Art of Fugue, as well as Beethoven's Op.131.

We have no information about any further broadcasts, and can only repeat our exhortation to weekly perusal of Radio Times.

THE FRIENDS OF THE DELME QUARTET

This Society is in the process of being formed, its purpose the support of the Quartet at its concerts in London. It is envisaged that two or three times a year the Quartet and 'the Friends' will meet in private homes so that works new to the Quartet's repertoire can be performed. Anyone interested in joining the Friends of the Delme Quartet should contact:

Mr A. R. Dent, 5 Pond Road, Blackheath, London SE3;
tel. 01 852 3868

The Delme Quartet is celebrating its twentieth anniversary. In September, October and November it will be giving a series of concerts at the Wigmore Hall. Each concert will consist (concelebratorily) of a quartet by Haydn, one of Schubert's major chamber works, and a newly commissioned quartet.

The concerts all take place on Wednesdays, at 7.30pm. It is the first time since Mozart's day that six quartets have been commissioned 'for Haydn'. All except RS's are connected with the Haydn quartet performed in that concert; each composer has chosen the Haydn work with which he would like his quartet to be played. All six quartets are dedicated to the Delme, whose courage and vision in this enterprise deserve, at the very least, full houses. There will be a special reduction for anyone buying tickets for all six concerts.

8 Sept	HAYDN	Op. 76, No.1 in D major
	JOSEPHS	No.4
	SCHUBERT	Trout Quintet (with Allan Schiller, piano, and Ray Costa, double-bass)
22 Sept	HAYDN	Op.77, No.1
	HEADINGTON	No.3
	SCHUBERT	No.14 in D minor (D.810), 'Death and the Maiden'
6 Oct	SCHUBERT	Quartettsatz
	SIMPSON	No.9
	HAYDN	Op.76, No.3 in C, 'Emperor'
20 Oct	HAYDN	Op.20, No.5 in F minor
	McCABE	No.4
	SCHUBERT	A minor, Op.29
3 Nov	HAYDN	Op.76, No.4, 'Sunrise'
	JONES	Quartet 1982
	SCHUBERT	G major, Op.161
17 Nov	HAYDN	Op.50, No.1
	DAVIS	No.1
	SCHUBERT	Quintet in C major (with Charles Tunnell, 'cello)

Further details will be available from the Wigmore Hall, Wigmore Street, London W1; tel. 01 935 2141

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1981

The Society's first AGM was held on 25th June at the Institute of Economic Affairs (through - and in - the good offices of our Editor, Martin Anderson).

In his report to the meeting our Chairman, Professor J. D. Gillett, reviewed the work of the Society in the twelve months since the inaugural meeting at Brunel University on 21st June 1980. He singled out for special attention, firstly, the successful launch of TONIC, which had provided a vehicle for discussion of RS's music and making the Society known; secondly, the enjoyable party to mark RS's sixtieth year, with our members, the Delme Quartet, playing the 8th Quartet; and thirdly, the playing by the Delme of four of RS's quartets at the Greenwich Festival.

The Chairman then referred to the prospects for the playing of RS's Symphony No.8 by the Royal Danish Orchestra during its projected visit to London in autumn 1982, and ended by reminding the meeting that for founder members the second year's subscription was due and handed over his cheque forthwith.

The Joint Secretaries, Sylvia and John Brooks, reported 105 members at the latest count. The Society had had some publicity: letters announcing its formation had appeared in various musical journals and in The Listener and it had been mentioned in RS's birthday interview with Michael Oliver on the BBC Radio 3 programme Music Weekly. Leaflets had been distributed with RS concert programmes at the Wigmore Hall and at Ranger's House, Blackheath.

The Secretaries said that the Society's policy was to give priority to recordings. We hoped to record some of the quartets from our own resources, saving appeals to the Arts Council and the various Trusts for the orchestral works. It had so far proved difficult to arrange recordings, because of insufficiency of funds and artists' contractual obligations, but other avenues, including co-operation with BBC Enterprises, were being explored.

Reporting on sales and loans of scores, the Secretaries stated that sales had so far realised £17.20 for the Society. To conclude, the main achievement of the Society's first year was a solid start, on which it should be possible to build a wide range of activities.

The Secretaries said that the following had accepted nomination as Honorary Officers of the Society: Dr Edmund Rubbra as President, and Hans Keller, Ronald Smith and Ronald Stevenson as Vice-Presidents. These nominees were elected by acclamation. (A fourth nominee for Vice-President, John McCabe, has since accepted nomination).

The Treasurer, Geoffrey Seddon, said when presenting the accounts that the Society had been refused charitable status because its activities would be likely to benefit a single living person. The latest total for the Recording Fund was given as £784. The Treasurer recommended that, in view of the fact that the production of TONIC had cost less than had been budgeted because of most extensive and welcome help from Lengnicks, subscriptions should remain at the same level for the 1981/82 year, except that members aged under 25 should pay only £3. The accounts (details below) and the subscription proposals were accepted by the meeting.

The Editor of TONIC, Martin J. Anderson, reported that following the successful publication of TONICs 1 and 2, TONIC 3 had been held up by machine failure but would be out before the end of summer. He said that there was plenty of existing material, such as past broadcast talks, available for future issues, but he looked forward to receiving new material from members and other friends.

The draft Constitution was approved by the meeting, and in the absence of other nominations the officers were re-elected for 1981/82. The 1980/81 Provisional Committee was also re-elected, with one change: Alastair Sampson, who had resigned owing to difficulty in attending meetings, was replaced by Angela Musgrave. (Subsequent to the AGM, the Committee decided to co-opt Ron Russell of Los Angeles, as a member, to act as US Secretary, subject to confirmation by the next AGM.)

The meeting concluded after helpful suggestions had been made by David Gow, who asked the Committee to approach festival committees and organisers to perform RS's work, and by Robert Matthew-Walker, who suggested the holding of a study weekend on RS's music. The Chairman drew attention to the usefulness of TONIC as a forum for further suggestions on policy and future activities.

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

Account for the period 21.6.80–31.3.81

RECEIPTS	£	PAYMENTS	£
Membership subscriptions	432.50	Postages	45.11
Donations	7.73	Printing, stationery and sundries	10.80
Recording project appeal	485.00	TONIC incidental expenses	5.63
Interest on deposits	10.15	Expenditure to be recouped during next financial year	31.50
		Balance at bank, 31.3.81	
		Current account £162.19	
		Deposit account 680.15	
			842.34
	935.38		935.38

Signed: G. Seddon (Treasurer)
J. E. Young (Auditor)

Note:

1. The membership subscriptions cover a period of one year from the date of joining.

2. Contributions in response to the appeal for funds to sponsor recordings amounted on 31.3.81 to £485.00. Should it not be possible to carry out this project, there is a contingent liability on the Society to make refunds to contributors should they so wish.

THE CONSTITUTION

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SOCIETY, adopted at the Annual General Meeting held on 25th June 1981, as amended at that meeting:

1. TITLE. The association shall be called 'The Robert Simpson Society', hereinafter referred to as 'the Society'.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTS. The aims and objects of the Society shall be to promote knowledge and appreciation of the work of Dr Robert Simpson, and to sponsor the study, performance and recording of his music.

In pursuit of its objects the Society may engage in any lawful fund-raising or trading activity, but in no circumstances shall any profit or financial surplus arising from such an activity be distributed to or applied for the personal benefit of any member of the Society or otherwise than in furthering the aims of the Society.

3. MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS. Membership of the Society shall be secured by the payment of an annual subscription. The amount of the subscription shall be fixed annually by the Annual General Meeting of members. Subscriptions shall cover a period of one year from the date of joining the Society or the anniversary of that date.

4. MANAGEMENT. The management of the Society shall be in the hands of a Committee comprising not more than ten members, plus a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Editor, who shall be the Officers of the Society. The Chairman shall have a casting vote at meetings of member and of the Committee, and the quorum for meetings of the Committee shall be five persons including two officers.

The Committee shall have power to appoint a Patron, one or two Presidents and not more than ten Vice-Presidents, to further the interests of the Society. The Patron, Presidents and Vice-Presidents shall have no vote at meetings of members or of the Committee, except in their capacity as members. The Committee shall have power to appoint sub-committees and to delegate to them such powers as it considers appropriate.

No members of the Society shall make public statements or enter into commitments on behalf of the Society unless so authorised by the Committee. The Committee shall have full powers to pursue the aims and objects of the Society on behalf of members.

5. ELECTIONS. The Officers, Committee and Auditor shall be elected annually by members at the Annual General Meeting to serve until the following Annual General Meeting. The Committee shall have power to fill any casual vacancies arising during the year in its membership, and to co-opt additional members as required.

6. GENERAL MEETINGS. The Annual General Meeting shall be held before the end of June in each year. Not less than fourteen days' notice of general meetings shall be given in writing to members. The quorum for general meetings shall be 8 members, including 2 officers, present in person. An extraordinary general meeting of members shall be convened by the Secretary on the request of not less than

one-fifth of the membership or twenty members (whichever is the less).

7. ACCOUNTS. The financial year of the Society shall run from 1st April to 31st March, and the audited accounts for that period shall be submitted at the Annual General Meeting.

8. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION. The Constitution may be amended or rescinded with the consent of at least two-thirds of members present at a general meeting when notice of such intention has been given to members.

9. WINDING-UP. In the event of dissolution of the Society, all assets remaining shall be transferred to such body or organisation whose aims are compatible with those of the Society, as shall be approved by the members present at the general meeting approving such dissolution.

SIMPSON'S RASUMOVSKY QUARTETS

An Introduction

LIONEL PIKE

The biggest problem faced by any analyst is that of describing the musical events he perceives in such a way that they are intelligible to those with less than his own expertise. The more a composer thinks in abstract terms, the more difficult it is to explain the working of his mind in non-musical terms. It is clear that the language which will explain all musical procedures without ambiguity has yet to be invented. Many analysts have tried in various ways to produce such a language; but it remains true that music is organised sound, and the moment one gets away from that sound, something essential is lost. Music is itself an extremely complex language, with its own modes of thought, grammar and syntax; for this reason, it is cannot be fully translated into another medium, with (necessarily) a different set of rules. It is difficult to unravel the various simultaneous levels of argument which the musical ear instinctively appreciates: the attempt can lead to opaque prose, such as few readers would have sufficient patience to digest - even a score fully marked up with analysis is not necessarily very helpful, since the result can be so cluttered as to become indecipherable. The graphic analyses of Schenker seek to overcome this difficulty of expressing the simultaneity of musical levels, but they are hopelessly inadequate when applied to the subtleties of complete sonata structures.

Many analysts seem to view a piece of music as one might a piece of architecture; yet one cannot walk round a piece of music and touch it, or measure its height or depth. It exists in performance alone and its impact may well be at different level for each hearer or for the same listener on different occasions. An architect can look at a Gothic cathedral and explain its structure in terms of stresses, strains and mathematical formulae. There are many points of contact between architecture and music, and a cathedral may affect us in

different ways; but it is idle to pretend that you can measure the stresses and strains of sonata form, and reduce them to a formula. So intricate are the musical processes - so much is every single note of (for instance) Beethoven's sonata structures influenced by the forces involved - that words just will not provide sufficient elucidation. Indeed, the balancing of levels of tension, and the handling of motion, both of which are of vital importance to sonata structures, are dealt with by no analyst: there does not exist any readily available non-musical means of discussing them.

All good analysts have the feeling - not at all unlike that of religious conversion - that the discoveries they make about a composer's thought processes are so thrilling that they must communicate them to others. The difficulty lies in this act of communication. The person most likely to have something to say about a composer - about Beethoven, for instance - is one who has spent a lifetime thinking deeply about that composer's music; one, moreover, who has such an affinity with that composer as to face similar problems in his own compositions. Such a man will not need the services of musical analysis: like the architect, he will be able to re-interpret in his own terms what he hears. Such a man is Robert Simpson. He knows that Beethoven's music is still inadequately understood; and when he makes a statement about this music, it behoves us all to sit up and take notice. Perhaps it really takes a composer's mind to understand the true essence of Beethoven's sonata structures and since their significance cannot be adequately discussed in words, and has not been demonstrated even by Schenker in his graphs, Robert Simpson has chosen to explore them by tracing the thought processes for himself through the medium of his own composition. His Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Quartets, though they are themselves masterpieces, are also brilliant and succinct studies of Beethoven's three Opus 59 Quartets.

There is a tradition of using this kind of activity for educational purposes. Ingres used to trace as a means of training himself as a painter; while composition teachers used to make their pupils copy the form (in exact bar numbers) and tonal design of accepted classical masterpieces before allowing them to fill up this framework with their own notes. Although it is true that Simpson's bar numbers sometimes correspond closely to Beethoven's they do not always do so, for this is neither pastiche nor parody. Simpson's process of writing three new quartets which are close studies of existing masterpieces is unique in the history of music. Naturally, in works of this status, the form is an expression of the content; and since Robert Simpson's music uses different material from Beethoven's, it will at times lead him in different directions. For this is not merely a pedagogical exercise: Simpson's quartets are magnificent works of art in their own right.

The pedagogical value of Simpson's Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Quartets is nevertheless enormous, and no student of Beethoven can afford to ignore them. I have personally learned more about the Opus 59 Quartets from a close comparison of them with Simpson's Quartets than I have from any other analysis. As a brief example I may take the opening movement of the First Rasumovsky. I had not previously realised how Beethoven uses pedals to govern the ebb and flow of rhythm (on the large and small scale) as well as the tonality, or how he creates (at times) a feeling of uncertainty about strong and weak pulses. But to attempt to elucidate all that one has learned would be futile, because of the difficulties of communication

already mentioned: one can only encourage others to study the correspondences for themselves.

Those who have no interest in analysis of music need not fear that this is merely an academic exercise, for Simpson's music is thoroughly approachable. We may well feel that his three quartets recapture for us some of the power the Rasumovskies had for their first hearers: our ears are dulled to much of this impact because of all the music that continually assaults them and because of our familiarity with Beethoven's style. Moreover, Simpson's process can work in reverse: a knowledge of Beethoven's Rasumovskies can in turn teach us much about Robert Simpson's music. All this apart, Simpson's Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Quartets represent an important twentieth-century contribution to the string repertoire: they are powerful masterpieces, which cry out to be made available to the world at large in a commercial recording.

SIMPSON'S RASUMOVSKYS

Three discussions on the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth String Quartets

Part I: String Quartet No. 4

MALCOLM MACDONALD: Let me start this discussion on the relationship between your Fourth String Quartet and the first Beethoven Rasumovsky Quartet by quoting the note at the beginning of the published scores of the Fourth Quartet and of its two successors:

> 'The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Quartets constitute a close study of Beethoven's three Rasumovsky Quartets, Opus 59; that is to say, the attempt to understand those great works resulted in not a verbal analysis, but music. The hope is that anyone studying intelligently the musical analogies offered here will find the experience a benefit in approaching and entering Beethoven's masterpieces. To try to describe such analogies in words would defeat the object. Some of them are obvious, of the kind that Brahms would say any fool can see. Others are much less so and reflect subtleties that defy language. They may be perceived only by those with ears to hear them. If these three string quartets enhance our understanding of the genius of Beethoven at their own expense, their purpose will have been served.'

Before we go any further, in fairness to you I ought to say something about the appalling modesty of that last sentence, something which you cannot say yourself, but which I as an independent listener can: namely, that though your quartets - like nearly anybody else's - may surrender something in direct comparison with the Rasumovskys, in their own right, as mature and characteristic pieces of Robert Simpson they stand four-square on their own two feet. The listener will have no difficulty in enjoying them and in being able to assess their worth as string quartets. Personally, I think they are among the finest string quartets written in these islands.

ROBERT SIMPSON: As far as modesty is concerned, I was sticking my neck out by writing what amount to variations on the Rasumovsky Quartets. In saying at the end of the paragraph that if these works enhance the understanding of Beethoven at their own expense, their purpose will have been served, I was only stating what happened to me when I was composing them. I learned such a lot in this process that I hope only that somebody else might get some sort of benefit from it. I think I would have been less than just if I had said that if Beethoven's Rasumovsky Quartets enhance the understanding of mine at their own expense, their purpose will have been served.

MM: The whole idea of structuring these three quartets as analogies to the Rasumovskys is fascinating, because it is not something that one meets within music at all. It is, perhaps, more familiar in painting where a painter might use the general composition and subject of another painter's work as the basis of a free composition of his own. We are more familiar in music with the idea of music written in the style of another composer (that is, pastiche) than with these 'analogies'. As far as I can see, you have taken the

Rasumovskys as a kind of extremely specific background that provides certain proportions, a certain succession of events for ordering your own music in your own particular way. Would you agree with that?

RS: Yes. It is quite common for one composer to write variations on another composer's theme. Very often with these variations one finds that as the composer, in his variations, gets deeper and deeper into the structure of the theme, the variations become less and less like the original. Some of the Diabelli Variations are barely remotely connected with the theme, except in terms of structure. If one heard the theme followed by one of the later variations (for instance, that very mysterious pianissimo one, No.20) one would hardly associate it with Diabelli's Waltz.

Thus it is that, when you come to study some great masterpiece on a large scale, you immediately begin to sense tensions, and distributions of tensions and proportions, in the work as a whole. It teaches you something about momentum, about harmonic spacing, about counterpoint, about structure in general. You begin to feel: well, if only I can do something like that. How can this kind of appreciation or knowledge be somehow reflected in another language, in one's own contemporary language? Since one of my aims as a composer has always been to try to recapture classical momentum, which has been largely lost in a lot of contemporary music, this was one way of getting very close to the matter. It started when I had to do a television programme about Rasumovsky No.3. I had to study it very closely. People asked me after the programme, which seemed to have gone down quite well, why I didn't write a book on the Beethoven quartets, and on the Rasumovskys in particular. But I don't really want to write any more books. Words seem to be rather an inadequate means of expression. More and more, as I went looking into the Rasumovsky Quartets, which I have known since I was a boy, I felt that somehow I could learn something about composing from them in a positive way, by taking them as models. The interesting thing was that although each one of my Quartets starts off in a way which is obviously similar to the Beethoven, each began to develop along lines of its own,* so that in the end what I produced are not attempts to recapture the mood of Beethoven's quartets - heaven forbid that anyone should attempt to do that! - but I took the Rasumovskys as their starting point, then allowed the music to develop, keeping an eye on the model all the time and seeing the interesting, fascinating, compelling things that can happen to one during this process. And so you find the proportions of the work are much the same as those of the Beethoven. But the material itself is different, therefore producing different key distributions in places, and so, in the end, different works. It is the differences, rather than the similarities, between my Quartets and Beethoven's masterpieces which should shed light on both of us - I hope.

moods

MM: I think it does; in fact, it is noticeable that as soon as one has listened to your Fourth Quartet even once, how the whole expressive weight of the piece is differently slanted. To take perhaps the most obvious instance: the finale of your Quartet, when compared to Beethoven's finale. Yours is much more of a 'finale quartet', in that a great deal of the weight falls on the finale, whereas Beethoven, with the Russian folk theme and the more pastoral vision of his finale, produced something lighter and calmer in spirit than yours. It could be said that the main argument of the quartet is conducted ~~in your finale and~~ with the greatest fierceness in your finale.

* and the nature of the material itself dictated the nature of the work.

RS: That's quite true. There is also another difference arising from the same thing: the first movement of my Quartet is shorter than Beethoven's first movement simply because - this sounds silly and naive - it is in 3/4 time instead of 4/4. In other words, there is one beat less in each bar, and so the entire movement is considerably shorter. The effect is to lighten the movement, to make it generally feel quicker and more animated in a different way. This means that whereas Beethoven put the main weight of his argument in the first movement, mine has to go the other way: it expands, and the last movement tends to be bigger and weightier than Beethoven's, which is intentionally Arcadian after the dark slow movement. In Beethoven's last movement, too, we find a very delicate contest between the very plain F major and the Dorian D minor of the Russian folk tune, and he makes wonderful play with this. Naturally, with the influence of composers like Nielsen behind me, I became fascinated by this and began to think of it spread out not in the finale particularly but throughout the whole Quartet, in a way which Beethoven doesn't entertain; and so the very first theme of the first movement of this Quartet oscillates in a way between F and D. If you listen to the opening of the Beethoven you will hear how the second violin and the viola are playing in thirds, while the 'cello plays his plain F major theme underneath it. The effect is like a sustained, extended 6/4 chord of F; there's no real doubt about where the tonality is going to go. Now, Beethoven makes that plain F major and what I have done in this case is, instead of putting a simple third on the two other instruments against the 'cello, I have made quite a simple change to accompany the 'cello - an A and a G which immediately suggest the possibility of D minor. If you listed to the 'cello, you will see that he very soon does a little twist out of F and back again, and the same thing happens when the violin comes in. The whole thing builds up in a more ambiguous way than with Beethoven. This was one of the things that Brahms would have said any fool could see: it is so obviously connected with the Beethoven. But that is the basic difference from which the rest of the work develops.

MM: How is this developed through the movement?

RS: Throughout the whole movement there are not very violent, but sometimes quite subtle, examples of this, but in the first movement I didn't want the thing to develop into a full-scale war between these two tonalities. I thought that if that were to happen, it would be better to leave it to the last movement which seemed the right place for it. Compare these two passages. See, for instance, what happened at the beginning of the development section in the Beethoven. Beethoven comes back as if he is going to repeat the exposition: we get the 'cello passage just as it was at the beginning and then suddenly it takes another turn; a G flat intervenes and the music goes off into another key (bars 103-114). Now when I came to this point myself, having gone through exactly the same proportions in the exposition, I had also to suggest that I was going to repeat the exposition and yet not do so - in other words, take another twist just as Beethoven did. But with my other scheme in mind, with this conflict between these tonalities, I thought I would turn my G flat (Beethoven's G flat) into an F sharp, and we'll go into D, and D major it is. From there on the movement develops as a normal sonata movement, but without a repeated exposition. It expands a little bit more than Beethoven's just at the end to make up for the fact that it is shorter and lighter and needs a little bit more weight. Then in the scherzo, the second movement, again I have done the same,. In this scherzo D minor comes in from time to time with obviously slightly disruptive intent.

The slow movement is unlike Beethoven's, in that whereas the Beethoven is like a very solidly established kind of private funeral march in F minor, in a very solidly rooted F minor with both feet on the ground - almost with one in the grave - in a sense my movement isn't rooted to the same extent in F minor. F is behind it, but it purposely avoids this solid establishment for the simple reason that it has to be a preparation for what is going to happen in the last movement.

The last movement is going to be the crux of this contest between these two keys. There is nothing sinister, by the way, about the contest between these two keys. It is all very high-spirited and energetic and is not a conflict in the usual sense of the term. It is a good-natured contest between two tonal centres. But the slow movement, like Beethoven's, is dark and sad, and forms the necessary contrast to the last. By the time the slow movement comes to an end we think the key is almost C minor. It sounds almost like C minor until the last C that is left at the bottom on the 'cello begins to hang on. As Tovey said, if you hang on to a note long enough, it will sound like a dominant, and that is what happens to it in this case: it sounds like the dominant of F. But when the finale theme begins, it is itself a miniaturised contest between F and D, D minor, D major, all mixed up together. Incidentally, you know how, at the end of the slow movement of the Beethoven, the air clears marvellously; you get a kind of cadenza passage on the violin, it all goes into a bright C major which is only the dominant of F major, and at last all the darkness has vanished. What I have done is not this - it would have been too obvious and too difficult to compete with that. I have made the transition not in the tempo of the slow movement but in that of the finale, so that the actual transition between the darkness of the slow movement and the brightness of the last movement is after the allegro begins. So we have this rhythm of the last movement, and when the theme comes in the tempo is throroughly established and the air lighter: but there's a little bit of needle in it as well.

Throughout the last movement, then, we get this conflict. One last illustration of that is one passage where it really is fierce: bars 411-444. There is a heck of a lot going on in all the parts, but the note D is continually trying to force its way through the texture, through everything, like a knife; and in the end it forces the music into its own dominant. The music comes to the dominant with absolute classical clarity. You couldn't have a clearer dominant of D in a Beethoven or Haydn quartet than when you get to the end of this passage.

MM: This contest or conflict is, then, never wholly resolved.

RS: Not in the sense that Beethoven's is, but Beethoven marvellously absorbs the Dorian mode somehow into F. I didn't intend to do anything like that. What happens is that in the last movement there is a slow passage, just as there is in the Beethoven, except that in my quartet it is longer. In there is the ambiguity between the keys, and just towards the end of it, it sideslips dangerously in the direction of D, which gives D a chance to slam in fortissimo -the big ferocious passage at the end of the last movement. The only thing one can do against that is to dismiss it, and so it is dismissed by the note F and that's the end of it. You may or may not feel that that is conclusive.

MM: Let us look at a couple of other aspects of the work. In the scherzo, for instance, Beethoven's is a unique kind of structure and unique in character, too, even for Beethoven. Your scherzo, strangely enough, has much more of the feeling, in its pace, of what one thinks of as the typical Beethoven scherzo.

RS: That was deliberate. How on earth could I write a unique type of Beethoven scherzo in an idiom which Beethoven only used in that scherzo? Nobody could possibly attempt to do that. On the other hand the structure of the scherzo is also very idiosyncratic. There is no other Beethoven scherzo constructed like this one. Stylistically, the only subsequent scherzos that resemble it at all are Mahler's, in their construction, in the kind of texture they produce, and in their quick changes of style, of texture, of feeling and of movement. Also they have a moderate tempo in general - not a fast tempo, but a moderately paced scherzo. To some extent Mendelssohn also learned something from it; but they are the only two composers I can think of who did that. I didn't want to try and imitate it in any way, and so I thought it would be, at least, not a bad joke to turn my version of it into a typical Beethoven scherzo tempo. If he didn't want to do that, I'll have a go at it. There is one slightly different element: there is a passage which you referred to in conversation as a sort of trio.

MM: This, I feel, is much more the Arcadian, pastoral moment in your Quartet. Beethoven does have a contrasting theme at the same stage in the structure as you introduce this theme I call the 'trio', but the contrast in your scherzo, as far as I can see, is even greater. It is a contrast partly of tempo as well as of character. There is also the fact that you bring this theme back at the end of the scherzo, which Beethoven does not do with his contrasting theme, so that it has much more the feeling of a Beethoven scherzo in which the 'trio element' (I agree it is a very small trio for such a large scherzo) is repeated just as the scherzo is repeated.

RS: Do you mean the way Beethoven brings back the trio at the end of his Seventh, or his Ninth, Symphony, and then cuts it off?

MM: Yes, it does have something of that feeling.

RS: I didn't really intend that, but I can see whan you mean. It's not really a trio, of course.

MM: But it does have a great deal of weight in the movement. The contrast etches it in the mind almost as if it were a self-contained section like a trio.

RS: Perhaps I could just show the difference. Beethoven's theme really goes in to the key of E major (or C flat, this is). It is a wonderful new idea, so completely simple that when I heard it, I wondered what on earth I could do. I couldn't do anything as marvellous as that in the same tempo, especially in this fast tempo which is going flat-out like a presto. And so I thought, I must have a contrast of that nature, something that is going to be very noticeable, and it must be in that key at that particular point for reasons of my own as well as Beethoven's. I thought, I'll have the same tempo basically but I'll make two crochets equal three, and with a new theme which is, incidentally, not unconnected with the other material. Now, this was an enormous contrast with the rest of the texture and tempo of the movement as compared with Beethoven's;

indeed, I felt it was such a contrast that, unlike Beethoven, I had to bring it back at the end. It demands somehow to be heard again, to give the listener some sense of symmentry, and so it turns up again just before the end of the scherzo.

MM: It certainly gives a very different feel to the whole movement. Of course, these expressive differences between the two quartets are really important. In the slow movement, you have already said something about how Beethoven's movement is weighted down to F minor within its funeral march rhythms, whereas yours seems to be somehow suspended in mid-air, although it is still emotionally very weighty. There are other strange things I have noticed.

At three recurrent points Beethoven uses a texture with funeral march rhythms, in the first violin and 'cello, that is, at the bottom and top of the texture (bars 37-40), and you also at the appropriate points in your movements have the texture with a first violin high up and a 'cello low down and inner parts on the second violin and the viola, but what the violin and cello are playing is something much less clearly defined, much less commanding of the attention than Beethoven's middle figures. It is more just this mysterious oscillation which, in any case, I find rather common to your style, but this seems to throw the whole balance of the texture a different way, so that one is concentrating much more on the inner parts. Was that your intention?

RS: Yes. Again, where you have got something in the Beethoven Quartet which is so obviously characteristic as those funeral march rhythms, simply to produce some different funeral march rhythms is going to be frightfully obvious and laughable. I wasn't going to be drawn into a trap of that kind, and I felt that this passage must also have another function. Its function is to turn the tonality into a different direction each time it comes. The way I have done it is to use the same inner parts on the same notes, while the 'shake' is on a different note. The last time it occurs, the shake is on a D flat. There is a big modulation in Beethoven's movement to D flat before the recapitulation, and at this point I also wanted to go into D flat. But I didn't want to make it such a dramatic event as the denial of an expected recapitulation, which is what Beethoven's is, and I anticipated it by putting that shake on the D flat over those very same inner parts which float along quietly. It then goes into D flat in a natural way rather than in a dramatic way.

(This discussion was first broadcast on 27 January 1980. The two subsequent broadcasts, dealing with the String Quartets Nos. 5 and 6, will appear in TONIC, Vol.2, Nos. 1 and 2. My thanks to the contributors for permission to reprint here.-Ed.)

Simpson Revisionistes?

As is well known, Bruckner's First Symphony exists in two versions, the earlier of which now has the popular sobriquet 'Linz'. In RS's book The Essence of Bruckner, he reprimands the later composer for tinkering with the work of the earlier on the grounds that the original 'Linz' version continues to be a valid representation of Bruckner's musical thought at the time of its composition.

I hear that, almost ten years after its composition, RS has recently completely re-written the 'Linz' slow movement of his Fourth Symphony. Accordingly, I respectfully wonder if RS stands outside the passage of time.

Yours,

Nicholas Woollven,
Teddington, Middlesex.

RS writes:

Bruckner, it is well known, did most of his late revision of earlier works under pressure from well-intentioned but misguided friends, who encouraged him to shove his music in a disastrously inapt Wagnerian direction. I must assure Mr Woollven that any revisions I undertake will be under no kind of duress, except that of my own artistic conscience. This is not to say that Bruckner's artistic conscience was lacking - but its confusions caused him much externally induced trouble. Even so, he was careful to preserve his original scores 'for 50 years time'. Being more fortunate in my friends, I can guarantee that my work is, for better or worse, all my own, and that 'original versions' will be prevented from surviving into the week following their revision, let alone for 50 years.

The BRITISH MUSIC SOCIETY has just released its first pre-recorded cassette, in association with Whitetower Records. The cassette features 20th century British piano music:

GOOSSENS	Kaleidoscope
SCOTT	Autumn Idyll
	Cuckoo Call
	Sonata No. 3

RAPHAEL TERRONI (piano)

The cassette is available from John Dodd, Hon. Secretary, BMS, 40 Laburnham Road, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 4DE. It costs £3.75. The BMS Journal No. 3 contained the complete score of Cyril Scott's Sonata; cassette and Journal can be purchased jointly for £6.00 from the above address.

THE PROMS AND NATURAL JUSTICE

A Comment

ROBERT MATTHEW-WALKER

The journal of the Robert Simpson Society could seem a superfluous medium in which to comment on the latest publication by its eponymous musician, for one can assume the majority of TONIC readers will be familiar with the book's existence, and might already possess it. However, the issues raised by this book demand the widest possible discussion, not least among members of this Society.

The Proms and Natural Justice is principally a closely argued alternative plan to the manner in which this great music festival is presently controlled. The case - an ethical one - is that it is morally indefensible (and artistically so in practice as well) for the Proms to remain in the single-handed control of one person from the moment he assumes the position of Controller, Music of the BBC until he retires, which can of course be a very long time - as much as thirty years, or even more. Such single-handed control is as indefensible here as in any single-party state: furthermore, it has no basis in logic. No right-minded human being will disagree with this, and one must welcome RS's thorough statement of this ethical principle insofar as it applies to the running of the Proms. While welcoming the identification and exposition of the principle, if the currently offending practice is to be changed, an acceptable and workable alternative must be found. There are, however, aspects of the application of this alternative which are not wholly convincing. The following comments should not therefore be seen as a criticism of the ethical principle involved, which is unanswerable in the abstract.

RS is well qualified for the task: as a BBC staff Music Producer for 30 years, he possesses rare qualities among writers on music today - knowledge and experience of his subject - which are expressed in his distinctive and lucid prose. A first impression was that the case is argued at too great a length, but subsequent readings have modified this view. The rephrasing of several comments and the removal of exclamation marks would have enhanced RS's argument on a subject about which it must be difficult for him to write without seeming to fall off the ethical tight-rope which, as a former BBC employee, he must walk.

RS's remarks on the Glock era are laudable, although his natural wish to avoid personal censure of the former BBC Controller softens his strongest criticism. RS is on sure ground with the list of composers Sir William saw fit to ignore - this list could be lengthened, nor is it concerned with individual works. The neglect of much important music constitutes the most damning criticism of the Glock era, which found the time, money and presumably artistic justification for mounting the Soft Machine rock concert, as preposterous and inappropriate a contribution to the Proms as a group of Hugo Wolf lieder would be at a heavy metal gig.

The reduction of playing-time at concerts - a direct result of Glock's example - ought to have elicited RS's opinion, especially as

this has led to the neglect of many orchestral works, to say nothing of the virtual abandonment of the overture in contemporary concerts. One of Glock's great strokes of luck was the abolition of the Home Service nine o'clock news which dominated all programme-planning. But freed from this restriction the result has been a gradual contraction of programme length. A contributory factor is that orchestras - apart from the BBC's - are self-governing and see no reason to programme overtures or shorter pieces, for they get just as much money by not playing them.

Another recent troubling Prom development has been the neglect of much of the standard orchestral repertoire. It is impossible to cover everything each year, and to the claim that this music is readily available elsewhere RS replies that Beethoven and Brahms are the only composers whose music is heard regularly in toto. To these should be added Mahler and Bruckner, for hardly a week goes by without at least one symphony by either composer - or more often both - being performed in London.

With the book's basic propositions it is difficult not to agree. On cost factors alone, the under-use of the BBC's own orchestras is a serious misuse of public money and must be remedied forthwith, no matter what other changes are made, but for the author to calculate his financial savings to eight decimal places weakens the force of his point.

There is a debit side to RS's argument. Nowhere is the annual salary of the proposed Prom planner mentioned. How long does it take to plan the Proms? Is it a full-time occupation for two weeks, three months, or a year? Whoever takes on this job needs paying - and paying well, if it is to be done properly. At current prices it cannot be undertaken for less than £10,000 per annum, and whilst there may be people prepared to do it for less, administrative expenses have to be included.

The planner's job should go to a Briton as a matter of course. The Proms are a British institution, and as two of Simpson's points are to use the orchestral resources of the BBC to the full, and to engage native musicians where necessary, it appears inconsistent not to demand a British Prom planner. Nor would a committee be the best way to appoint the planner, although a suitable alternative does not readily suggest itself. A committee - always assuming one could be constituted that would result in agreement - would almost certainly appoint Establishment figures, and by Establishment I mean the New Establishment. RS should also have firmly decided upon a term of office for the planner of not more than four years.

There is, however, a further serious practical matter. RS states 'the BBC would have the right to make necessary though apt programme or casting alterations if the planner were not available' (p.38). Leaving aside the question why the planner is unavailable for consultation, especially by a fast-moving communications organisation like the BBC, imagine a sensitive soul having been appointed to the planner's job disagreeing with the BBC's changes to his concerts, as the Corporation exercises its right, to the point of resignation. Such a likely event would encourage warring factions within the BBC (who might resent the appointment of an outsider) to jeopardise the success of the whole venture and give ammunition to those who feel they have been slighted by the adoption of the proposals. The bad publicity, the financial penalties of terminating

contracts as well as the additional cost and uncertainty of finding a suitable replacement planner quickly, are not events one can view with equanimity. No - for better or worse, the planner must have total authority. But if he has, the BBC abrogates control over the content of the programmes it promotes and broadcasts. Can the Corporation agree to this? It must therefore be the responsibility of those who appoint the planner to ensure he does not abuse his position. In other words, one is not convinced that RS's plan, as detailed in the book, would work satisfactorily in practice, although clearly in the abstract the principle is unanswerable.

There remain a few peripheral questions. First, the manner by which the BBC's Controller, Music is appointed should be made more appropriate to a publicly funded body. Secondly, one would like to see a profit-and-loss analysis of the cost and sales of the Prom prospectus.

It is a curious experience to read a book on the Proms without once encountering the name of Sir Malcolm Sargent - but RS brings the book to a close by musing over the contemporary relationship between composer and public. It would be fascinating to read another book of similar length on how composer-audience relationships have changed since Bach's time. One is forced to the observation that it is not the Mass but the mass media which unite people today.

According to the cover photograph, RS is exceptional among left-handed people: he wears his wrist-watch on his left wrist, instead of on the right, a rare visible sign of this artist's profoundly individual character.

RS responds:

What is an 'ethical tightrope'? If there is such a thing, isn't it the BBC that is attempting to walk it? To maintain the clarity of the ethics, it was necessary to eschew detailed criticism of this or that Controller's programme making; further, such criticism could easily be misinterpreted as personal attack. So such matters as reduction of playing time - which Glock brought about in the hope that higher performance standards would result - are not discussed in the book. The fact that any unlimited personal monopoly will result in serious imbalances is enough ammunition against the present system, and the lists of composers neglected by Glock are selected on a purely statistical basis, to show that no one man can be even-handed over a protracted period. Some may rightly feel (as I do) that one or two of these composers deserved neglect; but every one of them has substantial admirers, whom no Controller has the right to ignore.

I suggest that my old friend look again at pp.30-31 of the book where it says: 'There are in fact only two great composers all of whose major orchestral works are regularly performed at public concerts - Beethoven and Brahms'. This is true. All of Bruckner's and Mahler's orchestral works are not regularly performed - only a few of each. How often do you hear Mahler No.7 at the Festival Hall, or Bruckner No.1? But this is a small point; a much more serious misreading of the book brings about the complaint that the planner's 'salary' is not mentioned. To draw up a projected series of fifty-odd

programmes would require an agreed fee, not a salary. The job could be done in a week or two, given the command over repertoire the use of the BBC's resources would bring. The present calamitous system, with its hapless dependence on what other organisations can offer, is much more laborious, and plans continually have to be changed by force majeure, resulting in an amorphous season.

There is none but jingoistic reason for insistence that the planner be British. If he is, some will take pleasure in the fact. If he is not, it is to be hoped he is the best choice. Good programmes are all that matters. The Proms can't be said to be altogether a British institution; if they were, we would hear at them none but British performers, perhaps playing nothing but British music. I see no reason why the Proms should not benefit from the ideas of a musician of internationally recognised distinction, regardless of nationality. If the planner provides a plan, his job should largely be done with, except for some consultations where practical difficulties crop up; the BBC, who sponsor and pay for the Proms, should have the inalienable right to adjust details in emergency, and this could easily be agreed with the planner as part of his brief, which should stipulate also that his programmes should be reasonably comprehensive. None of this would endanger his freedom to use his imagination. All this is clear in the book, as also are the methods of his selection proposed in Chapter 5 - none of them dependent on a rigid committee.

STRAVINSKY SEEN AND HEARD

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'Toccata Press keeps it in the family'

Following RS's The Proms and Natural Justice, the next Toccata Press publication is by an RSS Vice-President, Hans Keller, and his wife, Milein Cosman. Entitled Stravinsky Seen and Heard, the book is divided into two parts. The first, 'Stravinsky Heard', is an examination by Hans Keller of the nature and causes of Stravinsky's sudden conversion to serialism following the death of Schoenberg; he finds evidence of serial tendencies in Stravinsky's earlier, neo-classical music, assesses Stravinsky's potential impact on the future of music, and considers the vexed question of whether music can have any meaning outside itself. Part Two, 'Stravinsky Seen', by Milein Cosman, is an extended sequence of over 60 drawings of Stravinsky, made when he was in London to conduct some concerts of his music. A review in Music and Musicians called the book 'stimulating, valuable and utterly unique ... which anyone who professes to care about twentieth-century art should possess'.

RS, in an (unsolicited) letter, commented, 'it's a brilliant and absorbing essay and the pictures are superb - got the old reptile superbly!'

Stravinsky Seen and Heard is 128 pages long, has a detailed and comprehensive index, and is available in both hardback (@ £5.95) and softback (@ £2.95) either from booksellers or directly (+ 50p p&p, please) from:

TOCCATA PRESS, 40 Floral Street, London WC2.

Some RSS members will be glad to be reminded that there are still copies available of The Proms and Natural Justice (@ £1.95, or direct plus 30p p&p).

What may well be the next Toccata Press publication will also keep it in the family: we shall be publishing a collection of Ronald Stevenson's writings on Busoni, probably in the autumn. Watch this space.

MJA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Naive' Statement and 'Sentimentalic' Development

Dear Sir,

The chief reason why Brian Duke's reaction to and against my reflections on 'The Man and The Music' (TONIC, Vol.1, No.2) is not what you say it is, to wit, a 'reply', is that he does not know what 'development' in its technical sense means - not precisely, anyhow. Composers of good developments apart, few people do; and even musicians, musicologists and musical lexicographers tend to hide their ignorance behind applying the term to more or less everything, as Mr Duke does in the case of the Figaro Overture. And indeed, why not? With the possible exception of Stravinsky's, all great music can be said to develop while it lasts: in its technical sense, the English term cannot rid itself of its ambiguity. What is important to realise is that the process which the technical term describes isn't confined to development sections either: in diatonic music, for instance, for even every good, so-miscalled 'bridge passage' or 'transition' contains development. It is the oldest term for the process involved, i.e., the German technical term, which defines it unambiguously - though admittedly, the Germans, too, tend to confine the term to the development section, thus making us forget that Durchführung, i.e., 'leading through' (keys), can happen at any structural juncture.

The essential meaning of 'development' is, at the same time, beautifully simple: it is modulatory instability as opposed to a statement's stable key. For once, then, the Germans caught a complex musical event, the intensive modulatory process that is development in its technical sense, in a single, simple, crystal-clear word.

As a result of his terminological confusion, Mr Duke meets my observation on Mozart's attitude towards development with total incomprehension, and proceeds to misrepresent it - thus offering me a chance to substantiate it in terms of the polarity between the 'naive' Mozart and the 'sentimentalic' Haydn. Mozart's adventurous wealth of melodies and his conservative economy of keys and harmonic destabilisations is the 'naive' counterpart to Haydn's sentimentalic wealth of keys and harmonic destabilisations and his conservative thematic economy. Haydn's development, even outside his development sections, achieve veritable climaxes of instability, just as Mozart's melodies, his stable statements even outside his expositions and recapitulations, achieve veritable culminations of stability. There are in fact outstanding Mozartian development sections which start with the very opposite of development, i.e., with firmly defined, new tunes in the stressedly confirmed and reconfirmed dominant - statements par excellence. Readers who will immediately think of the opening of the development section in the first movement of the 'big' A major Piano Concerto are warned that what I have in mind are far more outspoken, extended, and extreme contradictions of development - repeated, complete sentences, periods in fact, 16 bars of them in every instance. Curiously enough, they tend to happen, most frequently, in the mature Mozart's Bb - or rather, in its dominant: hear, for instance, the opening of the 'Hunt's' development section,

or the equally anti-developmental tune at precisely the same juncture in the second Bb Piano Trio. There is no conceivable, intra-musical reason why such statements in the 'wrongest' possible place should appear, preferably, in F major: the fact throws a fascinating light on a genius' possible subjective associations between certain keys and certain structural innovations; there is considerable evidence in the works of all the great masters.

Aside from the total misrepresentation of my own observations, there are quite a few fruitful insights in Mr Duke's reaction - but the fact remains that development in its clear, technical sense only occurs residually, and for a few bars, in the Figaro Overture. If it had been by Haydn, there could have been a lot of it - outside the development section. As one who may consider himself well practised in the craft of disagreement, may I submit that I have found exclusively fruitful never to disagree before I understand?

Hans Keller
London, NW3

BBC and Birthdays

Dear Sir,

During the last couple of years, four important British composers have celebrated their sixtieth birthdays: Peter Racine Fricker in the autumn of 1980, Adrian Cruft and Robert Simpson last spring, and Malcolm Arnold last autumn (I apologise if there are others I have forgotten). It is curious and disappointing to observe how unevenly the BBC has recognised these events: Dr Fricker was given a talk and a good series of concerts; Mr Cruft had only a very few works broadcast; Dr Simpson had a Sunday morning interview (thankfully reproduced in TONIC, Vol.1, No.3 - I was unable to hear the broadcast itself), but no special concerts - even the excellent series of his eight marvellous string quartets did not appear to be given a special emphasis in relation to his sixtieth birthday; and Mr Arnold was given a talk on the day of his birthday, and not much more (broadcasts of his First and Eighth Symphonies and the Guitar Concerto were the most noticeable events). I know the first three of these composers personally (two through correspondence and one I have met), and Dr Fricker tells me that he also had a fine series of celebration concerts in California, where he has worked for many years.

I should be interested to hear other readers' comments on this state of affairs; surely the three 'residents' deserve as much in the way of sixtieth birthday celebrations as Dr Fricker, who was well served on both sides of the Atlantic. I am delighted that he should be recognised in this way, but believe that the others deserve as much recognition. Some years ago, the BBC did a series of Rubbra's wonderful symphonies; how about a similar series of the symphonies of Malcolm Arnold and Dr Simpson - now?

Yours sincerely,

Ian Milnes,
Hoole, Chester.

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SIMPSON ANTAGONISTES

The European Broadcasting Union should now attend to the possibility of simultaneously improvised works by deaf mutes, afflicted of course from birth to ensure that the purity of their impulses should not be corrupted by the slightest experience of music.

('Why Compose?' Twenty British Composers, Chester, 1975)

I've sometimes been tempted to suggest to the BBC a series called the 'Ignorant Ear', with specially commissioned works from the most qualified practitioners.

(Radio 3, 30.x.77)

Nielsen's First Symphony, composed in 1892 (seven years before that of Sibelius) shows that, like all genuinely original minds, he flouts tradition only by reacting naturally to all the fundamental facts on which it is based. Tonality is a natural, inescapable phenomenon; his mastery of it saves him the embarrassment of trying petulantly to kick it to pieces.

('Carl Nielsen: A Great Symphonist', The Listener, 14.vi.51)

In any art, there must be neither understatement nor overstatement: only adequacy is tolerable.

('The Restraint of Berlioz', The Listener, 4.xii.52)

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