

TONIC

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ROBERT SIMPSON SOCIETY

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THE ROBERT SIMPSON SOCIETY

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EDITORIAL

Martin Anderson

At last another issue of TONIC has struggled through to production. 'Parturiunt montes, nascietur ridiculus mus' (The mountains labour, a laughable mouse is born) said some unkind Roman - Horace? - I forget - although I hope that members of the RSS will be kinder. From this issue onwards the more time-consuming and infinitely less grateful, task of typing and laying out the material, in addition to editorial duties, will be taken over by Christine Skinner; all I have to do is stimulate the flow of articles and other pieces. But we must thank Mike Hall and Anna Thomson-Hall for typing most of the material in this issue and much of that in the next, and also Brian Duke for drawing the music examples for Kevin Norbury's article. My thanks to Chris and my apologies to RSS members for the inordinate gaps that have yawned between TONICs.

One of the results of the delay is that RS's tribute to our dear friends Hans Keller and Edmund Rubbra appears over a year after their deaths. The delay is a discourtesy to RS, although (no excuse, this) the loss of these two outstanding musicians is still keenly felt. It was through my work for the RSS that I initially came into contact with Hans and Edmund, a contact strengthened by Toccata Press, at the gate of which you may lay the blame for the infrequency of TONIC. Shortly after the publication of RS's *The Proms and Natural Justice*, Hans sent its author one of his utterly characteristic letters, a heady mixture of praise and hearty disagreement. RS duly passed the letter on to me, with a playful 'Good luck when you publish him!' at the top. I published him within months, in *Stravinsky Seen and Heard*, written with his dear wife Milein Cosman, whose drawing of her husband appears (with our thanks) on p.5. It engendered one of the most formative friendships I have ever had: the five short years left to Hans will colour what remains in front of me.

Although I did not have the good fortune to draw so close to Edmund, we were frequent correspondents and often spoke on the 'phone; and he was happy that Toccata Press should be publishing both a study of his music, by Ralph Grover, and a collection of his writings.

These personal reflections are hardly germane to an editorial in TONIC, although I do not apologise for them: it was directly through RS and TONIC that I came to know these two great minds (I never use that adjective lightly); hence this expression of gratitude.

Time surges on, and the music that was to be the last that Hans Keller ever read - the first movement of RS's Ninth Symphony, before the work had adopted its present continuous form - has long since been completed for its premiere on 8 April by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Vernon Handley. Now the RSS is faced with its most daunting task to date. Sharp-eyed members may have noticed a letter, signed by me, in the April issue of *Gramophone*, appealing for funds to help make the possibility of recording the Ninth Symphony a reality. The amount we have to raise - £9,000 - is large, but not impossible; as John Brooks wrote in *Leading Notes* 15, the Havergal Brian Society put out a similar appeal among its members to raise funds for the first performance of Brian's first opera, *The Tigers*. With not many more members than the RSS, the HBS assembled no less than £3,000. (One of the first cheques to be received, and one of the most generous, if he will forgive me this indiscretion, was from RS.) The \$10,000 grant from the Rex Foundation in California is already evidence of huge magnanimity; although the £50 we have asked members each to try to contribute will be more than some will be able to spare, we are confident that everyone will be as open-handed as he or she can. And we should also here pay tribute to the fund-raising efforts currently being made by Professor Ian Craft; we wish him every success. The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra is being extremely flexible about payment, and is prepared to do what it can to ensure that the recording goes ahead; and Hyperion stands ready to record the Ninth as soon as the sessions are secured. But we cannot wave the Orchestra ahead to find that we shall not, after all, be able to raise the money, leaving the BSO to carry the can. It must be pledged within weeks, to turn the pencilled dates in Tod Handley's and the Orchestra's diaries into certainties. The *Gramophone* appeal may help; but we cannot rely on it. We must dig deep, do without five CDs of someone else's music, seven or eight LPs, to make sure that this massive project does not turn as we reach for it into a mirage.

Members who tuned in to Radio 3 on 10 April in the expectation of hearing the first broadcast (and second ever) performance of the Ninth Symphony will have been surprised to hear the Delius Violin Concerto, *inter alia*, instead of the Simpson. The announcer, I am told, did reveal that Vernon Handley had had a serious nose-bleed; what apparently wasn't revealed over the air was that RS himself conducted the work, on an astonishing ten minutes' notice. I can think of no more fitting compliment than that, to me, sitting in the balcony, the Ninth sounded like vintage Simpson; RS says that the premiere two days beforehand, undisrupted by Dr Handley's nose, was incomparably better. The Symphony has since been recorded by the BBC for future broadcast. It may be that this recording will be good enough for us to seek to buy the tape for release on record, or perhaps the standards required by CD will necessitate another visit to the studio (the cost will be the same) - in which case it is imperative that we collect the money we require while the

orchestra has the music to the fore of its collective memory and before its personnel changes much more. (A report on the first and second performances of the Ninth Symphony will appear in a future issue of TONIC.)

We may at last have found an arrangement that will allow TONICs to appear with the regularity that has eluded us until now - a claim that may have a hollow ring to those members who have heard it before - but if TONIC is to be published with anything like the desired frequency, we shall have to rely on you to supply far more material than you have in the past. We range, we RSS members, from gifted musicologists and composers to musical laypersons (can't say 'laymen' these days), every one of whom has something individual to say about RS's music, or his/her response to it. We will give you all the editorial fondling you want, if you're shy; the bulk of RSS members require little encouragement to talk about RS's music - why not write about it too? Since you've already taken pen in hand to ascribe millions to the RSS Recording Fund, simply drop a couple of sheets of paper under the nib to draft your article. I stand by my letterbox (which, incidentally, has moved since the last TONIC; the new address can be found on the inside front cover of this issue). Reviews, letters, analyses, suggestions, complaints - everything is welcome.

PROFESSOR DAVID GILLETT

John Brooks

Members will be sorry to hear that Professor David Gillett has decided to retire from the chairmanship of the Society; a post which he has held since its foundation in June 1980.

As Chairman of the Brunel Philharmonic Society (when he was Professor of Biological Sciences at the University), David was largely responsible for arranging the great series of eight recitals at Brunel in 1980 which were subsequently broadcast. In these recitals the Delme Quartet played RS's eight quartets in company with eight Beethoven quartets and various of the Contrapuncti from Bach's 'Art of Fugue' arranged for string quartet by RS. The series culminated on 21 June with RS's 8th Quartet (later recorded), which is dedicated to David and contains a musical portrait of the mosquito Eretmapodites Gilletti discovered by him in Uganda. It was on that day that the Society was inaugurated with David as Chairman.

David will be particularly remembered by the Committee for his incisive chairmanship, for his profound and knowledgeable love of RS's music, for his commitment to arduous programmes of entomological research at the School of Tropical Medicine, and

for his devotion to his splendid garden at Bourne End, which we hear the BBC 'Gardener's World' TV programme may soon be featuring. Members fortunate enough to attend the Society's summer party in July 1985 will not quickly forget the beauty of the garden, and the gracious manner in which David and Irena presided over the occasion.

You will be pleased to know that David is to remain on the Committee and has accepted nomination as a Vice-President of the Society, so we shall hope to benefit from his presence and his wise counsel for many years to come.

TWO FRIENDS 'GONE'

Robert Simpson

But have they gone? Two opposites, the gentle, unaggressive Edmund Rubbra, one of the greatest of English composers, and the provocative, argumentative, unforgettable Hans Keller, one of the clearest thinkers about music in our time.

Edmund has left behind him a rich and profound legacy that will never be exhausted. So far only a few have understood the scope of his achievement, but in time it will be unmistakeable. Art is the study of relationships - between things, between feelings, between human creatures - the myriad experiences of which we are capable, concentrated into sensed form. Edmund's music is a distinguished and necessary contribution to this study, and so of essential value to all who wish to enhance human consciousness. Anyone neglecting it must be the loser. As a friend he was sympathetic, humourous, unassertive, and the neglect he suffered in later years did not embitter him. He had a serene sense that what he had done was as good as he could make it; he somehow knew that it would (in Beethoven's word) 'wash'. It was a considerable output, works of all kinds except opera, with a strong current of vocal music, for which he had a fine genius, reflected even in his instrumental work. Indeed, his symphonies have been called madrigals for orchestra, but we must be careful not to be misled by such easy words; deep within these genuinely symphonic works is powerful, steady impulse propelling subtle and resourceful development, in which the very nature of the matter itself is explored and transformed as it grows. Such an accomplishment is not possible without the human stuff of a man in it. In Rubbra's work the intellectual achievement is in the mastery of musical manipulation for the purpose of human expression. I miss him as a living, breathing friend - yet he is still with

us in every note that he wrote, his nature, his very mind and heart. So he has not 'gone'.

Nor has Hans. Who could forget that sharp ear and brain, the eye that sparkles at the chance of an argument, the dark, thin, bewhiskered smile. They are still there for anyone who knew them. We all change one another's lives, and all of us mark the world we leave. Some mark it ill, others for good - no one dies without a trace. Therefore the future of the species depends on the quality of its individuals. If the human race were Keller-like life would be pretty hectic but there would be no wars - only arguments; there would be no stupidity; there would be no sentimentality; there would be no dishonesty; there would be no vindictiveness, no hate. And a lot of the so-called music we have to endure would never have been written! Hans left a mark and no mistake. Anyone who knew him even for a moment was changed, and permanently; his very nature challenged all your thought. Even when you thought (or even knew!) he was wrong, he had shoved your mind on to a new road; you found yourself looking at fresh territory. Above all, Hans was determined to find the shortest way to the truth; it is what he saw in the great composers. Sometimes his love of paradox obstructed the unsuspecting reader, and he could cheerfully talk at considerable length (without illustration) about music completely unfamiliar to his audience, with somewhat dizzying results. But even while his hearers groped they sensed an altogether exceptional mind and personality. The better you knew him, the kinder he was. He was a good listener; if he was on the lookout for an argument, he was also anxious to help. No - he hasn't 'gone'. He has left tingling vibrations all over the place.



Hans Keller by Milein Cosman

THE NINTH SYMPHONY (1986)

Maestoso, tempo giusto - Molto vivace - Maestoso

Robert Simpson

Commissioned by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain, this Symphony is dedicated to my wife Angela.

It is in one movement lasting some fifty minutes, and the whole is carried on a consistent pulse, which underlies the scherzo-like middle part as well as the two large outer sections in broader tempi. In the deliberation of its movement the symphony may sometimes suggest Bruckner, and one passage, is in fact a conscious tribute to him; anyone knowing the Bruckner symphonies will not find it difficult to identify its origin. Even stronger is the influence of Bach; the whole of the first part is like a vast chorale prelude, in which periodic sustained entries, like the lines of a chorale, are heard in a polyphonic setting. In the central scherzo Beethoven's characteristic fast triple time appears, but it develops in new ways the same matter as before, it reaches a massive striding climax with a return of the *Maestoso* tempo, and the Symphony ends with a slow movement (also polyphonic, beginning like a fugue) on the same scale as the first part. At a fairly late stage, during the growth to the final climax, a series of variations is heard, increasing in activity as a great crescendo is built. After this, the music gradually comes to a peaceful end. Here is a rather more detailed account for anyone wishing to have it. Everything in the symphony grows from the very opening. Around a sustained soft D sharp pulsing in triplets, various intervals are active, tending to fan outwards from it. These form different shapes as the held note moves in a slow series of fourths until a complete cycle of pitches has been traversed. With the same material (there is no other in the whole work) the music then becomes fugal. Fourth's are naturally frequent and contribute to the constant transformation of the material. Founded on the initial group of intervals, the chorale-like spine of the movement is revealed in widely spaced stages. This creates a long and deliberate climb towards a climax, at the height of which the triplets that began the symphony insist on impelling a new tempo.

This is the scherzo, though it is in no sense a separate movement - its pace as well as its matter comes from what has gone before, and the music simply increases its rate of action. In one passage sustained notes move gradually in a cycle of

fifths (inverted fourths) through all the pitches, gradually forming a complex chord while the strings energetically develop the original material.

At the climax of the scherzo the motion becomes broader and the original tempo, superimposed, creates a massive striding passage; this slowly subsides, and the final section begins quietly with a deeply contemplative fugue in the strings, on a subject that gives out the basic intervals in reverse order - that is to say, slowly closing inwards instead of fanning outwards. Reversal suggests the idea of a palindrome, like something opening and closing (forwards-backwards, so that the whole is the same in reverse as forwards) and with the first entry of the bassoons we hear a rather mysterious one. Three times this palindrome floats by while the polyphony continues: then there is a phrase of more active counterpoint that brings about an expectant crescendo. After a hush the palindrome becomes the theme of five cumulative variations, raising the main climax of the symphony, in which the triplet rhythm dominates for the last time. When it dies away, the fugue resumes gently, now on a new-but-not-new subject, and the music is slowly pervaded by calm irregular rising scales emerging naturally from all the polyphony. The ending seems to be starting a new formation from the old intervals, as if the process could go on for ever.

All this is plain formal signposting; it is dangerous for a composer to describe his own work in any other terms. But without human content music is nothing; listen for that first - the rest is mere map reading.

THE FIFTH SYMPHONY

An Analytical Commentary

Paul Pellay

Robert Simpson wrote his Fifth Symphony in 1972 in response to a commission by the London Symphony Orchestra, which gave the first performance of the work at the Royal Festival Hall on 3 May of the following year. The conductor on that occasion was Andrew Davis. Audience and press reception was unanimously enthusiastic. After that, however, the work had to wait 11 years to receive a second British performance.''' This took place on 29 March 1984, again in the Royal Festival Hall; the orchestra on this occasion was the Philharmonia. Once more, Andrew Davis took charge of the proceedings, and again, both audience and critics responded enthusiastically.

This work, cast in a single long movement lasting some 37 minutes, requires an unusually large orchestra: triple woodwinds; four each of horns, trumpets and trombones; two tubas; two sets of timpani (placed at opposite sides, as in Nielsen's Fourth Symphony); side drum; cymbals; and a body of strings large enough to match the massive woodwind and brass contingents. The structure of this single-movement work is divided into five symmetrically positioned sections: the two outermost fast sections framing two slow canonic sections which in turn enclose a short central *Scherzino*.

An all-pervasive feature of this work is a particular chord (which I shall refer to subsequently as The Chord). This chord, spread out over five octaves, contains five of the six notes which constitute the whole-tone scale (in rising order: C, E, D, Fsharp, A flat, with a C as The Chord's topmost note). The missing sixth note, B flat, provides the focus for a tonal tug-of-war, which begins half-way through the Symphony, between the tonality of B flat and the strongly C-majorish 'tang' of The Chord, which I shall consider below.

This all-pervasive Chord acts very much as a background against which the symphonic argument of the work unfolds. The Chord opens the Symphony, in the form in which it almost invariably confronts the listener - seemingly motionless and set at an almost inaudible *ppp* on the strings (minus double basses). Faint, distant glimmers of light on the woodwinds and remote rolls of thunder from the timpani are the only elements disturbing this otherwise deserted musical landscape. The first section bursts upon the scene, *fff*, with thundering timpani, harsh snorts on the trumpets and piccolos, and

strenuously rushing semiquavers on strings. All this is a background to a theme declaimed on the four trombones, characterised by opening upward-movement and, at its apex, a downward slur of a semitone followed by repeated notes a major third lower. (This theme is to reappear as a primary driving force in the final section, though in a varied and elongated form.) It is the first subject of a powerful, tersely argued sonata form. Also to be noted here is another thematic element, characterised by an initial, twice-repeated downward thrust of a minor third. It will make two dramatic reappearances during the section. This thematic germ ends what may be termed the first subject group, leading straight to the second subject; the only moment of respite from the otherwise all-pervading strenuous activity of this section. Heard on the oboe, it is simply an elaboration of the elements constituting the first subject, notably the downward semitone dip and the concluding repeated notes. This second subject does not appear again.

The development section is divided into two parts: the first building up to the second, which consists of an angry, wiry fugato, its subject starting on an oscillation of a semitone. The course followed by this fugato leads straight into the recapitulation of the first subject group, slightly more elaborate than in the exposition. At its peak the music is abruptly cut off, revealing The Chord, *ppp*, on the strings, immobile and impassive. Repeatedly, and each time with waning power, the rest of the orchestra violently tries to reset the music in motion, but The Chord persists, just as if nothing had happened. The scene is set for the second section, the first of the work's two Canoni.

The first canonic entry, on the piccolo starts on the topmost note of The Chord, C three octaves above middle C, with each subsequent entry starting on the next downward note of The Chord. The second entry starts on the first clarinet, the third on the first oboe, the fourth on the first bassoon, the fifth on the bass clarinet doubled by *pizzicato* cellos, and the last entry by cellos and basses, doubled two octaves above by second oboe and first clarinet. Thus RS has literally dismantled The Chord with this series of canonic entries. The atmosphere conveyed is not unlike that of birdsong breaking the silence of night at the first remote glimmers of dawn. (2)

As the last canonic entry draws to a standstill, the central *Scherzino* sets itself in motion. This grim, destructive little section is set in a compound rhythm spread over three bars, namely $6/8 + 6/8 + 3/8$. Four elements dominate the proceedings: a pattering rhythm on the side-drum; a tiny *acciaccatura* flick setting the rhythm in motion; an upward-climbing two-voice motion curling downwards at its peak; and a thematic fragment which twice slides down in the bass. The section structurally describes an arch, the mid-point of which is a truculent climax which settles itself down firmly in the

region of B flat, thus sowing the seeds of the work's tonal conflict. Indeed, as soon as the climax begins to subside, the music immediately shifts back to C, and towards the end, the atmosphere gradually darkens as the bass firmly anchors itself on C. Twice, at the end, the cellós heave upwards trying to move away from that hypnotic C, but in vain. A furious snarl from the trombones, a final defiant shout from the upper strings, and the C is left on its own paving the way for the Symphony's second Canone.

In the first Canone The Chord was effectively dismantled by a series of canonic entries. The second uses exactly the same procedure to rebuild The Chord, but does so in reverse i.e. starting from The Chord's lowest note and going upwards from there. Each entry starts on one of The Chord's component notes with a long, arch-like melisma which ends on the note on which it began, whereupon it starts a strange, tapping ostinato on that note, just as the succeeding canonic entry gets underway. At the end of this The Chord re-appears, ticking away on *pizzicato* strings, and woodwinds, *ppp*, like some monstrous time-bomb, poised to explode at any moment. Then, quite unexpectedly, some of the remaining woodwind and brass intone The Chord a minor third higher. This results in a chord containing no fewer than ten of the chromatic scale's twelve notes (C, E, D, F# and A flat from the original Chord: E flat, G, F, A and B in the transposed Chord). As the volume and tension inexorably increases, the four trumpets and two of the trombones sound the two missing notes, D flat and B flat. The tension is screwed to breaking point, at which the entire brass section (supported by earth-shaking timpani cannonades) is left alone blaring out those two notes, *fff*. It is the beginning of the finale, effectively the longest part of the Symphony.

This starts with an elaborated version of the first section's first subject to which I referred earlier. This is divided into five discernible parts. The first, after setting itself in motion, uses the remainder of its time as an extended build-up over a long constantly rising passage on two overlapping tubas doubled by the lower strings. The culmination of this is a furious confrontation between strings, woodwind and brass all playing The Chord in different 'tonalities'. The outcome is a sudden, dramatic reappearance of the thematic fragment from the first section, characterised by two downward thrusts of a minor third. At this, the music subsides into the second part, really a bridge-passage to the third. At the climax of the second part there is a powerful brass interruption. As it is sharply cut off the long third part begins. The Chord harmonically dominates the beginning of this part while the music maintains the rhythmic momentum. At first the music is in The Chord's original 'tonality' of C. The brass, with side drum, interrupts this, leading to sustained chords on horns and tubas. As this subsides strings and woodwinds violently cut in with the same rhythmic figuration on The Chord's harmony, but

this time in B flat. Again powerfully sustained brass chords, this time rhythmically bolstered by timpani and side drum, imperiously interrupt the flow. As they subside, the music now attempts to recover the momentum and to propagate it still further. At length The Chord crashes around our ears once more, the first time in B, but immediately shifting back to C. A moment later it plunges even more violently into B flat, *fff*. It should also be noted that this is the only time in the entire Symphony that The Chord is played by the whole orchestra, and it is the strongest challenge B flat has yet put forward. The fourth part follows immediately in the wake of this tremendous challenge, a tense lull of string *tremolandi* in which the volume drops suddenly to *ppp*. Through these *tremolandi* The Chord glowers on woodwind, brass and timpani five times, each time more insistently than the last, as the tonality progresses through B, C, E flat, F and A, and by now the music is once again a blazing *fortissimo* as the brass angrily re-establish the rhythmic momentum which had been generated hitherto. The fifth and last part has started. The forward thrust is now untrammelled as the music now gathers its strength for the work's devastating climax. This time all hell breaks loose, as the air is filled with the wild shrieking of the piccolos, the brass's harsh, blinding glare, the timpani's ferocious detonations and the side drum's relentless rattle. At its height the first section's theme with the downward-thrusting minor thirds once again bares its fangs as the music is flung violently into B flat. The orchestra staggers momentarily at this, and responds with a stupendous *sffff* chord (two seventh chords on C and B flat: effectively an amalgamation of the two keys), and holds it firmly down for a very long time. Suddenly it is sharply cut off, to reveal The Chord standing just as we heard it at the outset on the strings, at a barely perceptible *ppp*. Three times woodwinds and brass try to reinstate the momentum that the music had lost with this sudden interruption, but in vain: The Chord stands on - unmoved, glacial. Timpani fling a violent thunderbolt. This is heard a second time, noticeably less powerfully. A third time it is but a distant echo. The Chord is still there, as if nothing had ever happened. Woodwinds intone The Chord a minor third above, as we had heard it in Canone 2, momentarily hovering uncertainly between D and E flat, and as they disappear, trumpets and timpani intone B flat and D flat, swelling from *ppp* to *ff* and then abruptly stop: a final, enigmatically defiant gesture and a last reminder of that conflict that only minutes before had been raging so furiously. The Chord stands on: the final and ultimately inevitable victor of this conflict. Now, like a ghost, it disappears. From the lowest note upwards each note extinguishes itself until we are left only with the high C in the first violins. Finally that too disappears, leaving only an all-enveloping silence.

After being confronted with a work of this magnitude, it strikes me as profoundly dispiriting that this work should have been played only four times in over a decade. True, it is a

fearsome test of any orchestra's stamina, but that it can be achieved was triumphantly demonstrated by both the LSO in 1973 and the Philharmonia in 1984. I find it quite inexplicable that such a work should have been so studiously neglected by our orchestras, (although one could say the same of any of RS's other symphonies), all the more so since both critics and audiences pronounced it a masterpiece in the most unequivocal terms.

The 20th century has produced a very distinguished crop of exponents of that most challenging of all musical forms, the symphony. Composers like Sibelius, Nielsen, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, Roy Harris, Roger Sessions, Walter Piston and William Schuman have all kept the symphony very much alive in the western world. Of all the symphonies written in Britain, those which can match the achievements of those international figures are not many. One thinks of the obvious examples: Elgar's Second; Walton's First; Vaughan Williams' Fourth and Sixth; and Tippett's First. In addition there are the lesser known ones: Bax's First and Second; Havergal Brian's Sixth and Eighth; and John McCabe's Second. To those names I have no hesitation whatsoever in adding the name of Robert Simpson, whose Fifth Symphony emerges as one of the most impressive symphonies of this century.

(1) The Fifth Symphony has also been performed abroad: on the 12th February 1975 by the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Jaromir Nohejl; and, apparently, January 1985 by the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra under Ole Schmidt. ('Apparently', because letters from the RSS concerning the performance were never answered.) ED.

(2) In a radio interview with Michael Oliver RS revealed that the power of incipient birdsong at dawn provided the inspiration for the finale of the Third Symphony (cf. TONIC, Vol.1, No.3, p.10). ED.

(3) The Young Musicians' Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of James Blair, will be performing the Fifth Symphony next year on Saturday, 14 May 1988, at St. John's, Smith Square, London SW1. ED.

THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS

Kevin Norbury

The Four Temperaments was completed in August 1982. It was commissioned by the Yorkshire Imperial Band and funded by the Yorkshire Arts Association. In this music RS portrays those elusive metaphysical qualities: the sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholic, and choleric temperaments, which are all ingredients of the human persona.

In his two previous works, Energy and Volcano, the composer was concerned with portraying the elemental forces of nature. They could both be thought of as symphonic poems. This suite is concerned with portraying the elements of human nature. The composer has chosen to portray these different qualities by the use of various forms which are eminently appropriate. They are: (1) Scherzo - sanguine, (2) Intermezzo - phlegmatic, (3) Elegy - melancholic, and (4) Fantasia - choleric. It would be tempting in the case of R.S.'s music to squeeze this work into a symphonic mould, but if we must think of this work in those terms, then let us think of it as a symphonic suite. The compositional processes do reveal the mind of a symphonist so perhaps that is the best place for comment of this nature to rest. Keen-eared listeners will recognize common characteristics from the two previous works, but it would be as well to mention the most obvious. 1. Robust, traditional scoring in the main, but with a heavy reliance on the soprano cornet. 2. Strong, triple-based rhythms. 3. The interval of a fifth as a basis for musical construction. 4. Superimposition of rhythms creating strong cross-rhythms. This suite can perhaps be regarded as the composer's finest opus for the brass band to date.

1. SCHERZO - THE SANGUINE TEMPERAMENT

'The sanguine temperament crashes through life with irrepressible enthusiasm. Obstacles stop him only for a moment, and he goes roaring on as if nothing had happened.'

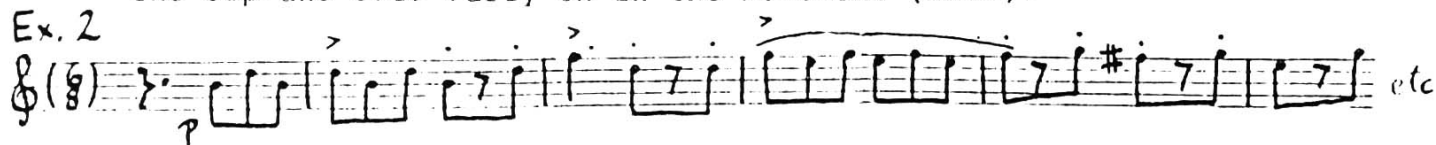
(R.S.)

This movement is marked presto and because of the 6/8 time signature a considerable amount of music is condensed into a relatively short time-span of approximately three and a half minutes. The music erupts into life with two explosive flourishes which rise scalically through the band. The motif which provides the generating force and musical basis of the movement is then heard immediately in baritones, trombones and euphonium (Ex.1).

Ex. 1



This motif is aggressive and has a strong sense of forward motion. It would be a mistake to search for too many musical clues such as motifs and themes since the music is so tightly constructed that nearly all of the melodic content is either based on, or is an extension of this one motif. There is, however, a theme which should be pointed out, and that is the soprano solo early on in the movement (Ex.2).

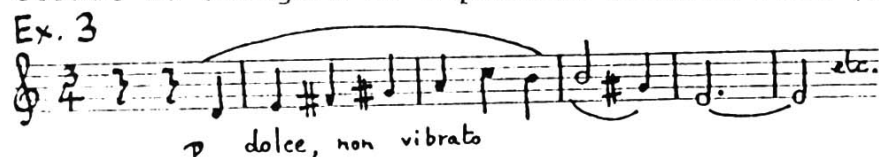


This illustrates an element in the structure of this movement - the interval of a third. Whether sounded simultaneously or in rapid re-iteration, this is one of the prime motivating factors in this movement. Another feature of this movement is the considerable use of constant quaver movement which is achieved either by dovetailing in the score or by scalar movement. A rhythmic device featured in this movement is the use of hemiola. This is simply a rhythmic device which consists of superimposing two notes in the time of three or vice-versa.⁽¹⁾ This device serves to extend the time-span of a motif in this instance. The surprise of this movement can be explained by reference to the last sentence of R.S.'s quote - 'Obstacles stop him only for a moment, and he goes roaring on...' There are five points at which the movement stops abruptly and then starts up again straight back in time. In four of the five instances the music recommences quietly, but in the fifth case we are led with renewed strength and vigour into the final section of the movement. The music reaches a point of uneasy repose on a sustained chord built up in fifths, over a reiterated quaver timpani pedal for five and a half bars. As in the case of the previous punctuation points the music comes to an abrupt halt, but this time an octave drop, not a fifth as before.

2. INTERMEZZO - THE PHLEGMATIC TEMPERAMENT.

'The phlegmatic character is placid, not readily upset. It is not stupid or bovine (as is sometimes supposed) but it cannot be easily ruffled.' (R.S.)

The music of the first couple or so minutes illustrates R.S.'s comment admirably. The effect is achieved by a chord being built downwards in a sort of 'inverted pyramid'. This procedure is then repeated on the second and third beats ($\frac{3}{4}$). This pattern is then repeated and subsequently transposed. The soprano cornet is assigned as important melodic role (Ex.3)



which provides the basis for the melodic work in the opening section. The rhythmic/harmonic pattern is then transferred to cornets and horns and altered by diminution under which another theme is presented (Ex.4)

Ex. 4



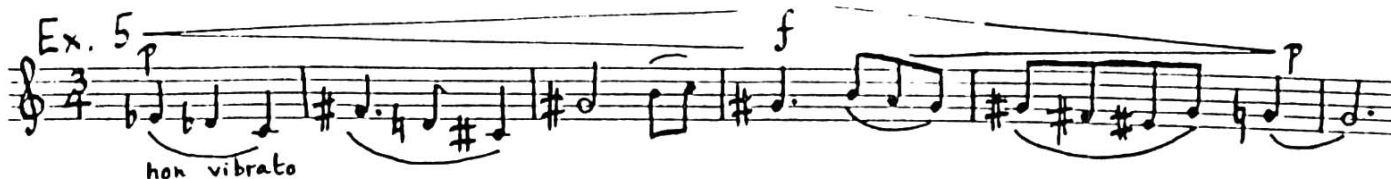
by the lower instruments. The music takes on a static air which is punctuated by general pauses. It is as if the composer seeks to demonstrate further the imperturbable qualities of this temperament - 'it is seen to be unperturbed by a considerable disturbance from the timpani and side drum.' Timpani and side-drums engage in a dialogue under sustained but fragmentary phrases. The intensity and disruptive force increase until, with the aid of *fortissimo* trombones, the percussion soloists are ushered out of existence. The music is now stylistically akin to that at the opening of the movement. An unaccompanied duet between soprano and solo cornet which is very close and interviewing at times brings the movement to a peaceful conclusion on a major triad. Reference is made to previous procedure in the way the final cadence is constructed downwards.

3. ELEGY - THE MELANCHOLIC TEMPERAMENT

'The melancholic nature is not merely lugubrious. It is deep-feeling, serious and dignified. There is something grand and courageous in its gloom, and strength in its willingness to face grim facts.'

(R.S.)

The indication is *Mesto* (sad, mournful) with a very slow tempo indication, crotchet = 56. The movement is opened by solo baritones (Ex. 5)



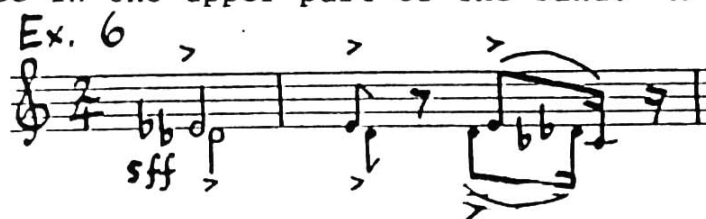
and is answered in fugal style by E♭ bass and soprano cornet. After this thinly scored opening the weight of the scoring is increased and Ex 5 receives a more homophonic treatment. After this the scoring thins and we embark upon a passage of textural contrasts in which passages of movement are answered by straight, crotchet-motion chord streams. The music increases in intensity to a dramatic climax over a timpani pedal fifth. These climactic chordal measures are punctuated by four bars of contrary motion crotchet movement in trombones, euphonium and cornets over a bass and timpani pedal. After this climactic sequence the volume and texture diminishes rapidly and the music reaches a subdued and resigned conclusion at a low dynamic level, on a low octave unison.

4. FANTASIA - THE CHOLERIC TEMPERAMENT

'The choleric man is quick to anger, but is not

simply vituperative - he has in him good and generous qualities, but even when he is calm something is smouldering inside him, ready to burst into flame.' (R.S.)

It has already been remarked that each movement is an appropriate formal expression for the temperament the composer seeks to portray. It is equally appropriate then, that a free form like the fantasia is the chosen mode of expression for such an unpredictable quality. The music explodes into being with much semi-quaver activity at high dynamic levels. After this intimidating opening the volume decreases and the texture thins. The music becomes more tranquil with the occasional flurry of semi-quaver activity and high-dynamic outbursts. The texture again thins until a duet between soprano and solo cornet is accompanied only by sustained notes low in the register of the lower instruments. Whilst the scoring stays thin, the widely spaced registers converge until most of the action takes place in the upper part of the band. A motif appears (Ex.6)



which seems to have some bearing on the ensuing music. The increase in intensity is controlled beautifully and the music builds up to an eruption of the opening measures, only this time transposed. From here on the music is fiery and aggressive. The final section of the work is in triple rhythm as in Energy and Volcano and can therefore be regarded as an element of R.S.'s style. The effect is one of strength and inevitability. The reiterated interval of a tone harmonised as a seventh chord over a pedal is featured. The music concludes with five irregularly spaced unisons.

(This article first appeared in The British Bandsman, No 4194. It is reproduced with permission - and with our thanks - ED.)

(1) Hemiola is a device frequently used at cadence points where, in 3/4, two bars are written or accented to produce the effect of one bar in 3/2.

e.g.

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Bardic Edition is proud to announce the première publication of a new work for piano solo **Fantasiettina** sul nome illustre dell'egregio poeta **Hugh MacDiarmid** ossia **Christopher Grieve** by **Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji** in a performing edition by the distinguished Scottish composer/pianist **Ronald Stevenson**.

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- 16/12/79 Vogt Theatre Library, Bloomfield, N.J., U.S.A.
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Michael Habermann, piano
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Ronald Stevenson, piano
- 5/3/85 Convocation Hall, McMaster University, Canada.
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SIMPSON'S RASUMOVSKYS

Three discussions on the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth String Quartets Part III : String Quartet No.6

MM: In our last discussion about your Fifth String Quartet [Tonic Vol.2, No.1 - Ed.] we started by contrasting that Quartet with the Fourth Quartet and the Sixth, and by saying whether or not these three Quartets have contrasts and interactions in the same way that Beethoven's Rasumovskys might be said to have. This time, perhaps I should begin with a personal opinion, which is that your Sixth Quartet is for me the one of these three which bears the closest spiritual relationship to the Beethoven Rasumovsky on which it is based, that is, the Third, the C major, even though in certain places (especially in the middle movements) it might be said to depart quite some way from the letter of Beethoven's own structures.

In both Quartets there is a slow, tense, mysterious introduction that concentrates on a single dissonant harmony which eventually gives way to a highly energetic and positive Allegro. Both quartets have a quasi allegretto movement that has a strange obsessive quality about it, which brings back and reinforces the mystery. In both Quartets one has a movement which is, formally and emotionally, fairly straightforward, but its very orthodoxy turns out to be, in the context of the other movements, rather mysterious. Finally, both Quartets possess a finale that is a magnificent fusion of fugato and sonata style which ends the quartet in a tremendous burst of energy. How is that for a thumb-nail analysis?

RS: Well, it's a very kind analysis as far as my Quartet is concerned, but I think it is perfectly true what you say; that this Quartet does resemble its Beethoven model more obviously as a whole than the other two. When I started each one of these three Quartets, the resemblance was pretty obvious, although obviously as you go on it gets further away because the ideas begin to take on life of their own, begin to insist on developments which aren't altogether like the original Beethoven ones.

The slow introduction of the Sixth is mysterious, taking into account the fact that Beethoven had used a diminished seventh at the beginning - the old diminished seventh, for which he expressed so much contempt when other people used it - and then discovers mysteries in it, explores it to its depths in a way that it had never been explored before. In Rasumovsky No.3 the diminished seventh is also very important in the other movements in various ways which we don't need to go into now. But I wanted to find something equivalent in more modern terms, if you like, which was equally ambiguous. Now, if you're going to be ambiguous, you've got to take in the possibility of meaning,

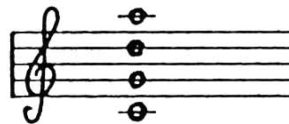
so it is rather difficult for contemporary composers to be ambiguous when they don't mean anything. Thus I had to mean something, and so I had to use a chord which was connected with the traditional, basic, natural intervals, and which could create some sort of expectancy harmonically. I took this chord, with a major second, and then another major second a long way down (in fact, a fifth away, but a fifth plus a couple of octaves). You put them together and that is the dissonance with which this Quartet starts.

Ex.1



Now, if you take those four notes and you string them out in order, what you get is a succession of fifths.

Ex.2



That chord is as ambiguous as the diminished seventh; it can go in any one of several directions. There are many possibilities, and one can use this chord in all sorts of ways. And so, Beethoven explored the diminished seventh in his introduction. I have explored this one in mine. And it dominates the rest of the work too, perhaps more specifically than the diminished seventh does in Beethoven's case. But it still doesn't dominate the piece obsessively by merely excluding other possibilities; I think that is the worst kind of unity - when you say that a piece is developed, say, from one chord or from a few notes - these things mean something only in a context, having found the thing that you want to be meaningful, it's up to you to devise a context for it.

One way in which I have made this chord behave is as a beginning for each movement. It starts the first movement absolutely as it stands, as a dissonance, but in all the other movement the instruments come in one after the other on successive notes of the chord. The second movement and the third movement (which is a canon) do it, as does the last, which starts off like a fugue, just as Beethoven starts his off like a fugue. That's just one aspect of the way that chord is used. To go into a lot of detail now would be rather counter-productive, I think - our audience would be asleep long before the work started.

But you referred also to the formal nature of the third movement. It really interested me very much about Beethoven's Quartet that for the first time in many, many years he writes a minuet and, what's more, in the context of a work extremely

energetic and rather disturbed as a whole, we get this completely calm minuet. It's the one point of repose in the whole work. Now I suppose I could have written some kind of pastiche minuet. But I thought to myself that a minuet wouldn't generally have much meaning for people nowadays, but on the other hand I think Beethoven was looking back.

I have a curious idea about Opus 59, No.3. I am really quite convinced that there is an autobiographical significance to the whole Quartet. Beethoven was becoming aware of his deafness very acutely at this time. It was a terrible problem to him around the time that he was writing all these great works. That introduction was always struck me as being like someone struggling to hear something, twisting this was and that, trying to hear what's happening. When the Allegro breaks out there's a sort of sense of relief, as if he is saying, 'Well, that's all right. My inner ear is all right; I can hear inside my head perfectly well, everything is perfectly clear'.

The Andante that follows is very disturbing. Its very lonely music and it suggests to me a man cut off from human communication, fighting against loneliness. And the third movement is a minuet. I really honestly believe that it is a minuet because Beethoven was now thinking in terms of the music he heard most clearly when his hearing was intact, when minuets were commonplace, when it was normally the third movement of a quartet.

And thus we have this minuet, the one movement in this work in which there is peace. And as to the last movement, as we all know Beethoven himself wrote on the sketches: 'Let your deafness be no longer a secret, even in your art'. That's a clue which I think is proof of some autobiographical intention in the work. Obviously I am fortunate enough not to have to express such terrible feelings in my work. When I came to write four movements of a quartet, my ideas about the personal element in Beethoven's Quartet weren't particularly relevant, except in this sense: Beethoven's minuet is there for a specific reason.

It is the one great moment of repose in the work and I, too, wanted a moment of repose, a peaceful part of the work. I couldn't have a stylised pastiche minute, and so I had to have something which, perhaps, had a sense of the archaic about it. I hit on the idea of an absolutely strict canon in four parts on the intervals stated at the beginning of the Quartet, this string of fifths. So each part enters at these same intervals, and the canon is maintained throughout.

Beethoven has a lively middle section - the trio of the minuet is more lively than the minuet itself. I also wanted to reflect that and I have a livelier middle section to the canon, but the canon itself persists through it and through the recapitulation, which is also stated a fifth away from the original pitch - so the fifths come into it in all sorts of ways. This is a very strict canon, note for note, interval for interval. The only way in which it departs from total strict-

ness is in changes of register, where perhaps the cello or the viola has to go up or down an octave just to fit the part in - but I don't really count that as a departure from strictness. It cost me an enormous amount of work, this canon. I'm not ashamed of it; I think it is rather a fine canon, I think it's rather beautiful. So there it is, and that is what it's meant to be - the point of repose. And, of course, the finale (as Beethoven's does) breaks in on it at the end and lets rip in a way I hope players won't find too taxing.

MM: You were taking about the archaic nature of this canon. I can hear the archaism in Beethoven's minuet, but I cannot hear the archaism in your canon. It seems to me to be an absolutely mature Simpson canon of the mid-twentieth century. I think this has to do with the fact that the minuet as a form has certain inevitable archaic associations for us now ...

RS: It's stylised, isn't it?

MM: Yes, it's stylised, while canon as a device has continued to be a vital compositional resource for composers up to our day. Schoenberg, for instance, wrote all those lovely little tonal canons, possibly as style composition, possibly as exercises, but they are also totally Schoenbergian canons throughout his major works (Pierrot Lunaire is an obvious example). And I cannot really believe here that the canon in this work is more 'archaic' than, say, the canonic sections in your Fifth Symphony.

RS: Well, it's not stylised canon. It's not canon with a pastiche flavour. I only said archaic in the sense that the canon is one of the oldest devices in music. And so I went back to that and also to the idea of absolute strictness - not the kind of strictness which is possible nowadays, in which you put down the strict intervals whether or not they make sense, but a strictness in relation to fundamental natural harmonic phenomena - intervals such as fifths and fourths, thirds and octaves, and so on. The harmony is basically diatonic and classical in that sense. A lot of people would think it was archaic.

MM: Yes, I see what you mean. Could we say a little about your second movement? Beethoven's second movement is very obsessive and lonely, as you said, and a very disturbing movement, perhaps the most disturbing movement in this Quartet.

RS: It's unique in Beethoven, that kind of movement.

MM: One of the most obsessive things about it, of course, is the rhythm which hardly ever lets up at this point. In your Quartet you have done something similar; there's a counterpart to Beethoven's rhythm, a sort of hypnotic, treadmill rhythm that goes on for large stretches of it. You seemed to have

spotlighted first one instrument, then another as soloist, and each time that an instrument emerges in this way it seems to be trying desperately to break away, out of this psychotic treadmill notion. So this gives the movement an entirely different character.

RS: That's the result, of course, of using different material. I wasn't out to imitate Beethoven's mood, although I think there is something obsessive in common with these two pieces. The A minorish feeling is very strong in my Quartet: A's and E's stick out like sore thumbs all over the place, and in Beethoven one is very conscious of A minor. Also in the centre of the movement Beethoven suddenly goes into the remote key of E flat with that second theme and a great cloud comes over the whole thing; then it drifts back into A minor. I've reflected that; I think that would be fairly obvious.

MM: It's just that I found very striking the idea of the instrument at one time or another bursting out in these very desperate solo passages.

RS: The viola especially.

MM: And the cello.

RS: But the viola is unmuted and the other instruments are muted. That was an idea I got from Brahms's B flat Quartet - so you see nothing I do is original! I think Goethe said, very kindly, the genius is the most indebted man. So I console myself with this.

MM: Perhaps we could talk a little more about originality in a minute. First I would like to say that I've come to feel studying your Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Quartets that they do - in their own right, quite apart from their relationship to the Rasumovskys - form a self-consistent group; and for me this Sixth Quartet has very definitely the feeling of being the finale, the concluding and conclusive member of the group. I think this comes home especially in the last few pages of the Quartet, because neither the Fourth nor Fifth Quartet has a tonally absolutely decisive ending in the way that No. 6 seems to. In the Fourth Quartet there was a contest between the D and F which in the end isn't really resolved - it's simply ended by F slamming in with the final say; and in the Fifth Quartet the finale scurries off over the horizon and vanishes.

RS: I think the key of E is quite settled at the end, though.

MM: Yes, but the sense is of one of the arguments still going on somewhere else, whereas in the Sixth Quartet it seems to me that the final cadence is absolutely decisive, as if putting an end to possibly more than just this Quartet - the whole discussion that has been going on in all three Quartets. Do you think there is anything in that?

- RS: Oh, I think there very well might be. I don't know; I wasn't really conscious of doing that. After all I suppose one is conscious of that in Beethoven quartets, too. The finale of the C major is the finale to end all finales in a sense.
- MM: Let me now be a sort of devil's advocate. What would you say to the criticism - and I'm sure there are going to be some who are going to raise it [and sure enough, one did - Ed.] - that basically these quartets are extremely conservative works, that they don't extend the quartet medium in any way, in the way, for instance, the Rasumovskys did in Beethoven's time; the fact that they are parasitic on Beethoven means they cannot really stand up on their own feet?
- RS: Well, I react to that in rather the same way as Stravinsky (who is not one of my gods, incidentally) reacted when somebody asked him what he thought of Sibelius. He said, 'Why should I think of Sibelius?' And this is the way I react to hostile critics. I see no reason to give them an answer. In fact, I will give you an answer because I don't regard you as an hostile critic. I think that hostility is really pointless in a case like this. What really does matter to me is the fact that I learned a great deal from doing this, and having done it I then decided to come clean. Now I wonder - if I had not declared their origin - whether these works would stand on their own feet. I think probably they will.
- MM: I am absolutely certain they will.
- RS: Well then, there is no more to be said, really. I think there is an obsession nowadays with doing new things, making new sounds, extending the medium - all this stuff and nonsense. You can't extend the medium - a string quartet is a string quartet, it's four stringed instruments which are tuned, even nowadays, in the traditional manner of fifths. A great many composers who write for string quartets these days forget that altogether.
- Many string players, quartet players, have said to me that when they play contemporary works they are not conscious any more of having four individuals in a quartet. All they are doing is making the same sort of noises at different pitches according to the compass of their instruments. The two fiddles don't feel that they are two fiddle players as opposed to a viola or a cello and that they are involved in a discussion. If you are going to get quartets to have some kind of discussion then you must write naturally for them as individuals, you must use basic intervals. This isn't being conservative, this is being conservationist, I would say. 'To be conservative' is the worst way of putting it because what we discover that is new is in us. It is not anywhere else. It is no good some critic telling me that I haven't done anything new when I know myself that for me I have done something that I haven't done before, that I have not seen done

before. Beethoven's Quartets in this case are starting points for something that I wanted to do. There are resemblances that you can see, and I see nothing wrong in that any more than I see anything wrong in a composer writing variations on somebody else's theme. Nobody ever criticises composers for doing that, so I don't really see that they should start doing that if somebody writes a variation on a whole work.

The great thing is to write naturally, as you feel. If you try desperately to be original, then that shows that you are not original, because the harder you try, the more of an effort it becomes, the less spontaneous it becomes. The fact is that you are a different person from anybody else, that we have different fingerprints, that we are totally different individuals, and so if I am myself, if I do what is natural, then I hope I will say something that is characteristic of me and meaningful because I am a person who lives in the twentieth century who is aware of what is going on and who has feelings.

And so I mustn't worry about this, I must just do what comes naturally, and if other people don't like it or don't see it, as far as I am concerned it's their funeral. They've had it. I just carry on doing what I think is right. If you haven't got any individuality at all, you can try as hard as you can, but very likely you won't get it. There are plenty of plodders who make a hell of a lot of effort but don't get it. The real effort should be in discovering what lies inside yourself, and any means is legitimate to do that, whether it is Beethoven's quartets, or Bach's fugues, or nothing at all, any means you might find stimulating, that starts you off, that starts a flow of ideas. The hostile critics can go and stuff themselves as far as I'm concerned.

MM: Beethoven in a sense gives you permission, or frees you into discovering what is in yourself, then?

RS: That's the way it seems to me. Everyone is entitled to his own view. People listening to these Quartets may say: 'For God's sake, what the hell is this chap doing, wasting his time? It's so impertinent to appear to be imitating Beethoven in this way'. It isn't imitation. It is a much sincerer form of flattery than that. It is a desire to discover what went on in Beethoven's musical mind when he was writing these Quartets, and to try and feel my way into them by means of music. I may say that it started because it was suggested to me by several people that I should write a book on Beethoven's Quartets, and the Rasumovsky in particular, arising out of a TV programme that I did on the Third Rasumovsky some years ago. I thought seriously about this, and then I thought no, I don't want to write any more books [sic! - Ed.] I want to write only music, and at least I can teach myself a lesson by doing this. If it doesn't come off, 'all right, I'll put it away and nobody will see it or hear it'. But when they were finished, I thought 'they are worth hearing', and so I took my life in my hands, said 'That's what I've done. There it is. Take it or leave it.'

- MM: Can you imagine ever doing the same kind of thing again with a masterwork by another great composer of the classic period?
- RS: I doubt it but I don't know. It's possible, but I think if I did it again, I wouldn't declare my guilt, I wouldn't confess. I'd just do it and see whether anybody noticed it.

RECORD REVIEWS

The 1986 *Penguin Guide to Compact Discs, Cassettes and LPs* included the following reviews:

String quartets Nos 7 (1977); 8 (1979)
*** Hyp. A 66117. Delme Qt.

The Quartets of Robert Simpson have so far been represented on commercial records only by No. 1, a work of great natural eloquence. The appearance of two relatively recent works, Nos 7 and 8 both from the late 1970s, is therefore something of an event, for they greatly enrich the repertoire. The Seventh has a real sense of vision and something of the stillness of the remote worlds it evokes. It is dedicated to Susi Jeans, the organist and widow of the astronomer, and reflects the composer's own passion for astronomy; he speaks of the universe 'quiet and mysterious yet pulsating with energy'. The Eighth turns from the vastness of space to the microcosmic world of insect-life. Indeed, this provides a superficial link with Bartok, but, as with so much of Simpson's music, there is a concern for musical continuity rather than beauty of incident. Excellent playing by the Delme Quartet, and very good recorded sound too.

String quartet No. 9
*** Hyp. A 66127

What an original and, in its way, masterly conception the Ninth Quartet is! It is quite unlike anything in the literature of chamber music: a set of thirty-two variations and fugue on the Minuet of Haydn's Symphony No. 47. Like the minuet itself, all the variations are in the form of a palindrome; some of the earlier ones derive from an early piano work, thus finding an even more natural habitat in the quartet medium. Many will find it a tough nut to crack, and it certainly calls for - and repays - concentrated study. It is a mighty and serious work, argued with all the resource and ingenuity one expects from this composer. A formidable achievement in any age, and a rarity in ours. The Delme Quartet cope with its difficulties splendidly, and the performance carries the imprimatur of the composer. The recording is very good.

SIMPSON ANTAGONISTES

'No one has ever written more individual or beautiful themes than Beethoven; where necessary he displays a power of self-denial that should not mislead anyone and Stravinsky's claim that he lacked the gift of melody was surely a missile thrown from inside a glass house.'

Beethoven Symphonies, BBC, London 1976 p14

Beethoven was not the man to spend too long performing balancing tricks with a string trio; as soon as he had learned to enjoy handling a three-wheeler his interest in making more purposeful journeys took over, and for this four wheels were more comfortable than three, enabling the driver to concentrate on the road rather than sometimes wondering if he is going to overturn on sharp corners.

'The Chamber Music for Strings', in *The Beethoven Companion* edited by Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune, Faber, London, 1971, p. 244.

RS, on 'phone to Editor of IONIC (MA, not CS!): 'Now, what was it I was going to say to you?'

MA: 'I don't know. "Bugger off"?''

RS: 'I don't think I've ever said that to you. (Long pause)

But it's always ready!

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