

GUILDFORD
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

Leader: WILLIAM ARMON

PROTEUS CHOIR

Guildford Corporation Concerts

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: VERNON HANDLEY

CIVIC HALL

SATURDAY, 17th DECEMBER, 1966, at 7.45 p.m.

PIANOFORTE

DAVID WILDE

CONDUCTOR

VERNON HANDLEY

PROGRAMME - SIXPENCE

DAVID WILDE

David Wilde was born in Stretford, Lancashire, in 1935. When he was ten years old, he studied with the distinguished composer-pianist, Franz Reizenstein, at the recommendation of Solomon. From 1948 to 1953 he attended the Royal Manchester College of Music, where he studied piano with Iso Elinson and composition with Richard Hall. His other teachers have included Gordon Green and Paul Badura-Skoda.

His professional career began in 1956 as an orchestral pianist and accompanist in Worthing, and from 1959 to 1962 he was engaged by the BBC in Scotland as full-time staff accompanist and orchestral pianist. He has won numerous prizes, including shared first prize at the Liszt-Bartok International Piano Competition in Budapest, 1961. His appearances with most of Britain's leading orchestras have been greeted with critical acclaim, and his appearances abroad have been spectacularly successful. He appeared in the 1962 season of Henry Wood Promenade Concerts and, later in the same year, at the Royal Concert in the Royal Festival Hall.

PROTEUS CHOIR

The Proteus Choir was formed in 1963 to provide a chorus where young people could gain experience in choral training. Rehearsal programmes are specially devised so that members who are at University are able to sing in the choir's concerts because they receive an ample number of rehearsals before the University terms begin, and at the end of those terms. The name "Proteus", chosen by the chorus itself, refers to the Sea God who was able to change himself into many forms, and this was felt to be appropriate to the constantly changing membership, and the tremendous variety of works that the choir covers. As well as singing large choral works with the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, it gives a number of unaccompanied concerts, including carols and part-songs, as well as religious motets and in 1964 visited Dusseldorf, Duisburg, Cologne and Bonn and made a record of English music for Cologne Radio. In 1965 a section of the choir made a recording of the complete "Midsummer Night's Dream" music of Mendelssohn with the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra for the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre production, and in February last, twenty-five members of the choir were invited to sing on the BBC Television programme "Seeing and Believing".

Mr. Handley wishes to record his thanks to Miss Mary Rivers, Miss Maureen Hall and Mr. Kenneth Lank for the help that they have given in training the choir.

PROGRAMME

Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis . Vaughan Williams

Thomas Tallis (about 1505-1585) was a "Gentleman of the Royal Chapel" under Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. Vaughan Williams's Fantasia is based on material from the third of eight tunes that Tallis wrote in 1567 for the metrical psalter of Mathew Parker, the then Archbishop of Canterbury. "Fantasia" has come to mean something quite different from the form that was popular in the time of Tallis, and which was undoubtedly in Vaughan Williams's mind when he wrote this work, and although the word carried the idea of fancy, it did not necessarily mean something uncontrolled in form. Vaughan Williams's work does not contain a single bar that is not directly related to the material he chose. The work is laid out for a solo string quartet and two string orchestras, the second much smaller than the first (it becomes a sort of echo) and directed to be placed some distance from the orchestra. The whole group is subject to a great deal of divisi writing, and the two orchestras are variously subdivided antiphonally as the work proceeds. The work begins with a setting of the scene harmonically on long held

quiet chords. Then the theme is played pizzicato; the first orchestra takes up the tune, and the Fantasia begins to unfold. Another phrase of the tune receives treatment on the solo quartet, and the different phrases are brought together in a huge climax, which shows Vaughan Williams's understanding of the string medium. Indeed, it is as much because of the writing for strings in this work, as for the worth of the material itself, that the piece has been such a success, for it is another example of an English composer writing magnificently for string orchestra, and takes its place beside the Elgar 'Introduction and Allegro' as one of the most remarkable string works in the literature. That these two works must, in some sense, have inspired Bliss's "Music for Strings" and Tippett's "Concerto for Double String Orchestra" is certain.

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini . . . Rachmaninov

Rachmaninov left Russia for ever in 1917. It is not generally realised that he composed the majority of his works before that date. During the twenty-six years that he spent in exile, he composed only now and then, and it was not until 1934 that he composed the Paganini Rhapsody which, with the Second Piano Concerto, shares a popularity not attained by any of his other compositions.

The work is not really a Rhapsody, but a straightforward set of variations. The theme chosen is that which has attracted many composers and has been used for a set of variations by Schumann, Liszt, Brahms, and in this century by Blacher, the German composer, whose set for orchestra is one of the most engaging and entertaining of modern works. In the seventh and tenth of the variations Rachmaninov opposes to the Paganini tune the tune of "Dies Irae" which, at least in outline, has a kinship to the main tune. The work starts with a nine bar introduction and then the orchestra sketches the basic harmony of the theme and this is, in fact, the first variation. Then we hear the theme itself, which is announced by the violins with the piano playing the outline which had previously been given to the orchestra. The first group of variations (2 to 5) carries on the opening allegro, but No. 6, with its phrases on the cor anglais, introduces a very nostalgic and lyrical tone. The next four variations either use or are overshadowed by the "Dies Irae" tune. From No. 12 to No. 15 there is a new key, D minor, while 16, 17 and 18 are in D flat major. The last of these is the glorious tune to which the work owes most of its popularity. Audiences are often disturbed by the fact that when the orchestra joins the soloist in this section there seems in every other bar to be a disagreement between soloist and conductor, but, in fact, to give a feeling of ecstatic freedom in the tune, Rachmaninov has written four notes for the orchestra on the last beat of every other bar when there are only three notes, a triplet, for the soloist.

After this, the Rhapsody hurries in each variation towards its conclusion. There are several brief cadenzas and then with the "Dies Irae" appearing threateningly in the brass, Rachmaninov stops the noise and ends the work with a brief and very quiet reference to the Paganini tune.

INTERVAL

El Corpus en Sevilla . . . Albeniz

Albeniz wrote a set of pieces for piano called "Iberia". His colleague, Fernandez Arbos, transcribed them for orchestra, and of the five movements two, "Triana" and "Fête Dieu a Seville" have become popular orchestral pieces. The sub-title of the second of these two, "El Corpus en Sevilla", is the title usually used when this single movement is played. It is a tone painting of the Corpus Christi Procession and Festival. The Procession, strewn with flowers, winds its way along the streets and halts from time to time while spontaneous songs are improvised by the worshippers. The tone picture is notable for the fascinating interplay of two themes: a march, and one of the spontaneous songs. Albeniz concludes the piece with a picture of the silent

town after the Procession has gone into the distance, and it is Arbos' finest achievement that in the orchestration of an otherwise gay piece, he manages to capture the simplicity and stillness of the Spanish town when all the noise of the Festival has cleared away. The huge orchestra is only allowed one or two noisy climaxes, and otherwise the large percussion section and woodwind band are used for timbre rather than weight, and the strings are directed to play a number of extraordinary effects. An interesting note says that the small bells used in the piece need not be of any particular pitch.

Daphnis and Chloë Ravel
 (Symphonic Fragments - Second Series)

**Daybreak
 Pantomime
 General Dance**

Chloë, having been captured by pirates is rescued by the nymphs and satyrs of the sacred wood. When the will-o'-the-wisps and fantastic apparitions appear and the pirates flee terrified, Chloë remains motionless, a halo of light about her head. Dawn begins to break through the darkness, and it is in the depicting of this scene that the second concert suite begins. Streams, swelled by dew, trickle along their course, the occasional bird begins its dawn chorus, and, in the distance, shepherds are beginning to move their flocks. As day breaks, Daphnis wakes up and immediately looks for Chloë, searching here and there through the wood. When she at last appears, she is surrounded by shepherdesses. The two lovers fall into each other's arms; an old shepherd explains that Pan had answered Daphnis's prayer to save Chloë because he remembered the nymph, Syrinx, whom he once loved. The two lovers mime the story of the God and the Nymph to the accompaniment of a solo flute. Their mime ends in an embrace, and then the shepherds and shepherdesses surround them, beginning the bacchanalia, which ends the ballet in a tumultuous celebration of love.

Although the virtuoso orchestral writing has been the great superficial attraction of this work, its lasting value is undoubtedly that the whole ballet is a work of symphonic importance. Even when the second suite is performed alone, the interplay of the thematic material and the balance of the three movements, which are played without a break, are really the elements which carry an audience along. In many modern performances too much emphasis is placed on sheer virtuosity of orchestral execution, thus obscuring Ravel's beautifully ordered plan.

SUNDAY, 22nd JANUARY, 1967, at 3 p.m.

OVERTURE—'Susanna's Secret'	Wolf-Ferrari
RITORNA VINCITOR from 'Aida'	Verdi
SALCE (The Willow Song) from 'Otello'	Verdi
SUITE L'ARLESIENNE	Bizet
'CELLO CONCERTO in E minor	Vivaldi
ROMEO AND JULIET—Fantasy Overture	Tchaikovsky

JOSEPHINE BARSTOW Soprano
ELIZABETH ANGEL 'Cello

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