

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Patron: SIR ADRIAN BOULT

Vice-Presidents:

Dr. D. J. Arrowsmith
Dr. R. N. Bayliss
Mrs. O. Bott
Mr. M. Bowron
Mr. M. G. Briggs
Mr. O. Brookes
Sir Eric Clayson
Mrs. J. L. Edwards
Miss M. Elliott
Mr. & Mrs. T. E. Evans
Miss M. Ferady
Miss N. Fuery
Mr. M. Furman
Miss B. Grouse
Mr. & Mrs. T. Dunkley Hogg
Mr. D. H. Hopkinson

Mr. G. Edis Knight
Mr. E. N. Ludlow
Mr. A. May
Dr. & Mrs. D. C. Moore
Mr. L. Morgan
Mrs. D. Morris
Mr. M. Peake
Mr. D. H. Phillips
Mr. C. Preston
Mr. N. J. Reedy
Mrs. J. Roberts
Mr. N. L. Smith
Dr. A. C. Street
Miss O. Tomlinson
Mr. P. E. White
Mr. J. H. D. Young

Vice-Presidents' Treasurer: David Arrowsmith

Conductor: Kenneth Page

Chairman: J. L. Edwards

Concert Manager: Brian Holdsworth

Treasurer: David Arrowsmith

Secretary: Jayne Bowen,
Portelet,
Marlpit Lane,
Redditch.
Phone 64321/2.

Violas I
Leslie Bowron (Leader)
Marguerite Guise
Patricia Hazel
Louise Hogarth
Brian Holdsworth
Eric Leonard
June Morris
Stephen Muth
Margaret Newton
Margaret Osborne
Rosalind Page
Charles Preston
Stanley Webb
Rosalind Whatley

Violas
Joanne Cooper
Joan Maddocks
Laura Sampson
Barbara Sanders
Betty Schever
Lesley Tomkins
Richard Wiley

Cellos
Olive Goodborn
(Principal)
Jayne Bowen
Margaret Dance
Nora Fuery
Paul Green

Violas II
Thomas Hogg (Principal)
David Arrowsmith
Cynthia Bird
Paul Bramwell
Peter Brooks
Paul Dilkes
John Edwards
Ernest Jones
Anthony Smith
Elsie Tann
Stella Tinley
Douglas Walker
Margaret Worsley

Ruth Horlock
Doris Meek
Katherine Smith
Veronica Raven
Geoffrey Wright

Double Bass
Thelma Green (Principal)
Charlotte Horrel
Paul Hough
Andrea Ward

Flutes
John Franklin (Principal)
David Whatley
Philip Leah

Oboes
Alison Lancaster
(Principal)
Patricia Moore

Cor Anglais
Ivor Merry

Clarinets
Rachael Herbert
(Principal)
Roy Lancaster
Mark Sadler

Bassoons
Mike Syrett (Principal)
Richard Clarke
David Robinson

Horns
Michael Wild (Principal)
David Cheshire
Andrew Hunter
Peter Rushton

Trumpets
John Ruddick (Principal)
Colin Butterworth
Andrew Thorne
Jeff Williams

Trombones
Gordon Sill (Principal)
Bryn Roberts-Mazpass
Peter Smith
David Straughan

Tuba
James Henderson

Timpani
Malcolm Peters

Percussion
Malcolm Peake
Roy Billings
Steve Maddox

Harp
Muriel Liddle

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Conductor: KENNETH PAGE

Leader: LESLIE BOWRON

ANGELA BEALE (soprano)

on

SATURDAY, JUNE 11th, 1977, at 7.30 p.m.

in

BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL

Programme 10p

- 1st movement: Molto allegro
 2nd movement: Andante
 3rd movement: Menuetto (Allegretto) e Trio
 4th movement: Finale (Allegro assai)

The composition of Mozart's three last symphonies was miraculous. Often though this has been said, the wonder remains at how a man in desperate financial difficulty and failing health could produce within the space of six weeks (in the summer of 1788) three works which are not only his greatest achievement in symphonic form, but have each a completely separate character. Although he was to live for another three years, Mozart did not attempt another symphony and it is doubtful whether any of these last three was performed in his lifetime.

Of the three, this symphony contains the most pathos and looks forward to the romantic movement of a personal expression of emotion from the composer, rather than the more objective classical tradition, although it maintains a perfect classical form. Its minor key is different not only from the E flat major of No. 39 and the C major of No. 41, but from all Mozart's other symphonies except the "little" G minor, No. 25, K. 183. It exists in two versions; the later one, adding clarinets, is perhaps the real preference of the composer in view of his love for that instrument and his skill in writing for it, although the oboe parts suffer considerable loss in the alteration.

Right from the beginning there is a mood of dark, brooding energy; broken accompaniment on divided violas sets a restless background to the first theme. The sudden entry of the woodwind introduces an auxiliary subject which assumes importance later in the development and a melody of great beauty appears as the second subject, with the plaintive chromatic fall which appears several times in this symphony. As is usual for a classical symphony in a minor key, the second movement changes to the major to give the same relief, but there is little of that here. Stress on weak beats, semitonal clashes and cross-rhythms of 3/4 against the prevailing 6/8 maintain the brooding unease already set and bring a disturbing pathos to the otherwise peaceful conclusion of the movement. Then, far from the usual carefree country dance, the third movement shows the first and only traces in Mozart of the more modern scherzo which was to replace the traditional minuet. The trio, however, in G major, is the only openly lighthearted section of the whole work; it is a short pastoral interlude of simple Arcadian grace. Then, like the first movement, the Finale has an unquiet first theme and a plaintive second one, again using chromatic descents. The development is highly concentrated, complex polyphony which retains a musical beauty because of Mozart's supreme skill at counterpoint, although its surprising modulations must have shocked its contemporary listeners. More than in the first movement, there is here a faster pace and a feeling of driving progress towards an inevitable fate.

Strauss

FOUR LAST SONGS

- No. 1 Beim Schlafengehen (Hesse)
 No. 2 September (Hesse)
 No. 3 Frühling (Hesse)
 No. 4 Im Abendrot (Eichendorff)

Soloist: Angela Beale

The symphony No. 40 is a product of Mozart's final years, but these "Four Last Songs" came even closer to the end of their composer's life. After enjoying an incredible "Indian Summer" of composition, Strauss left a sketch for a fifth song having just completed the other four in September 1948, at the age of 84. He died a year later without writing anything more. During his many years of composing he moved from chamber music to symphonic poem, thence to opera and then back to instrumental music, but at the end of his life he returned to the human voice: he had begun at the age of nineteen with his first published set containing several of his best known songs. These four show links with both youth and age, for they are songs of tranquillity with a readiness for death, yet they contain a spring-like freshness. The orchestration shows the complex intricate detail of a mature master craftsman, yet it has a startling clarity and the third song uses considerably smaller focus.

The differences in orchestration have led to a rearrangement in performance of the chronological order of composition. "Im Abendrot" was not only the first to be written, as early as the winter of 1946, but Strauss really intended it to stand on its own. The words it sets are from a poem by Eichendorff, but by the time he had finished this song in 1948, Strauss had become interested in a volume of poems by his old friend, Herman Hesse, and when he chose three of these and began the other three songs, he linked them with "Im Abendrot." This one, however, is most effective when placed last of the four, because of its large-scale orchestration and its reference to death: after long wandering the poet is tired and asks if this is death at last. A horn quotes the Transfiguration theme from the early tone-poem, "Tod und Verklärung," before the music ends quietly, with distant larks singing. In all these songs the voice is used like another instrument, completely integrated with its orchestral accompaniment and using a wide compass from middle C to high B.

INTERVAL 15 MINUTES
 REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE IN THE BASEMENT HALL

- 1st movement: Allegro vivace e nobilmente
 2nd movement: Larghetto
 3rd movement: Rondo (presto)
 4th movement: Moderato e maestoso

Unlike the two preceding works, Elgar's second symphony did not come at the end of the composer's life. Nevertheless it springs from his complete maturity, for at the time of its composition Elgar was not only at the height of his musical powers, but was enjoying much more recognition and popularity than often comes to a great composer during his lifetime. Already his violin concerto, the "Enigma" Variations, "The Dream of Gerontius" and first symphony had established themselves in the regular concert repertoire, and during the years since he had received his knighthood in 1901, many universities had conferred honorary degrees upon him. To crown all these, in May 1911, just after the first performance of his second symphony, Elgar was awarded the Order of Merit. Although the response to its first performance was a little subdued and disappointed Elgar, this symphony has since become more popular and more often played than his first.

Such acclaim could inhibit a composer: he could be prevented from writing spontaneously by the worry of what his public expected of him. The second symphony shows no such strain. While its rich texture and broad canvas uphold all the traditional English and Edwardian qualities which we associate with Elgar—he showed his love and respect for kingship by dedicating the work to the memory of King Edward VII—there is great depth of thought and an impelling dynamic force driving through the whole carefully constructed symphony. There is great variety of emotion too: perhaps the quotation from Shelley which Elgar wrote on the first page of the score, "Rarely, rarely comest thou Spirit of Delight," refers to this.

From the beginning the work bustles with energy. The writing in the first movement is intense, using sequences of short phrases in a rollicking 12/8 rhythm. Unlike the first symphony, there is no motto theme here, but many thematic cross-references. The slow movement contains some of Elgar's most personal thoughts: it probably refers to the recent death of King Edward VII, though some of its ideas date back to the earlier loss of Elgar's friend, Rodewald. It is tragic in a restless way. Next comes a boisterous moto perpetuo, with vigorous cross-rhythms but a contrasting, beautiful melody in its middle section. The opening theme of the last movement suggests calm, but sadness creeps in with the falling sequences so typical of Elgar. At first this theme uses a restricted rhythmic pattern, then it blazes out in glory. The movement rises to a powerful climax before settling to a tranquil conclusion, like a sunset.

ANGELA BEALE, soprano, was born in Wolverhampton and studied at the Royal College of Music, London, on a Foundation Scholarship. Whilst there she won the major awards, including the Goldbloom Recital Prize.

After leaving she entered the International Vocalisten Concours of 's-Hertogenbosch, Holland, and was awarded second prize. Then followed a trip to South America for the International Song Competition of Rio de Janeiro, where she won first prize and in addition a gold medal for the best interpretation of the music of Villa Lobos.

Miss Beale's appearances on the concert platform have given her considerable experience of oratorio, opera and recitals both throughout the British Isles and on the Continent.

The Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra is an independent association of local musicians. They perform regularly throughout the year in Birmingham Town Hall, the University of Aston in Birmingham, other public halls, schools and cathedrals in the Midlands, often with world-famous soloists. Although many of its members are engaged in the musical profession, everyone gives his services to the orchestra. All share a wish to play large-scale orchestral music and to bring it especially to places and people who might otherwise miss the opportunity of hearing it in a live performance. New members with these aims will be welcomed, and interested musicians should contact the Secretary.

Despite a desperately busy life, Kenneth Page has maintained his resolve to learn all his scores by heart. He is convinced that his sort of conducting cannot be accomplished with a desk and score standing between him and the orchestra. His other activities include his position as leader and frequent conductor of Orchestra da Camera and as an eminent violinist in the world of chamber music, particularly in the Archduke Trio, which he founded in 1961. This season he has demonstrated his notable capabilities as a soloist in performances with the orchestra of Mozart and Beethoven violin concertos.