

SCOTTISH SINFONIA

leader PHILIP TAYLOR

soloist BRYN TURLEY

patron Roderick Brydon
conductor Neil Mantle

CONCERT

Reid Concert Hall

Saturday 18 November 1978 at 7.30pm

programme 10p

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF
(1873-1943)

PIANO CONCERTO NO.3 in D MINOR
(opus 30)

Allegro ma non tanto
Intermezzo (adagio) -
Finale

BRYN TURLEY piano

Rachmaninoff composed his third concerto in Russia during the summer of 1909 on his country estate at Ivanovka near Tambov. It was intended for première on his first American tour, which took place later that year. Rachmaninoff was so busy completing the orchestration that he had no time to learn the difficult solo part before his departure, and so it was that he boarded ship armed not only with the orchestral parts of his new concerto but also with a dummy keyboard on which to practise!

The first performance was given in New York on Sunday 28 November; the work was well if not ecstatically received. One critic called it 'sound, reasonable music ... not a great or memorable proclamation.' Incidentally, for the second performance soon after the conductor was none other than Mahler.

The concerto was dedicated to Joseph Hofmann, who unfortunately did not care for it at all and never played it. Its first champion was - and is - Horowitz. He first performed it in 1920, when he was sixteen, as his graduation piece from Kiev University. Since then he has played it many times, notably as recently as in September this year. In fact Horowitz' 1930 recording (the first of three) was so highly regarded by Rachmaninoff that he refused to record it himself. He was finally persuaded to do so in 1939. It was fortunate that he did because later that year he heard Gieseking play the work over the radio and once more refused to perform it himself. He died keeping his vow.

In his recording Rachmaninoff made four cuts which were followed by most pianists until recently, but now the complete version is more usually heard, as is the case tonight. Incidentally, Rachmaninoff's performance may still be heard on an RCA LP transfer, and it is mandatory listening for all who care about his music.

The themes and their developments are all fairly easy to identify. However I should like to draw the listener's attention to a very clever alteration in note values of the opening theme, which becomes this

in the faster middle section of the second movement.

Although it would be idle to pretend that the Third Concerto has ever achieved the success of its predecessor, it has a great many beauties of its own and has in recent years been taken up by many pianists of the younger school.

- INTERVAL -

PETER TCHAIKOVSKY
(1840-1893)

SYMPHONY NO.6 in B MINOR 'PATHÉTIQUE'
(opus 74)

Adagio - Allegro non troppo
Allegro con grazia
Allegro molto vivace
Adagio lamentoso

Tchaikovsky began work on what was to be his last symphony in May 1892, but progress was slow and much of the material found its way into the unfinished Third Piano Concerto. The following February he made a fresh start on the symphony 'with a programme, but a programme of a kind which remains an enigma to all. Let them guess it who can. It will be

entitled a programme symphony.' The composition proceeded more smoothly this time, although Tchaikovsky complained that everything, especially the orchestration, took him far longer than in previous years.

The first performance was on 28 October and was a success, although the symphonic alternation between high spirits in the third movement and the total dependency of the Finale apparently bewildered the audience. The title 'Pathétique' was not bestowed until after that first performance and was suggested by Tchaikovsky's brother Modest.

There was at that time a cholera epidemic raging, and Tchaikovsky caught the disease after having drunk - in spite of strong warnings from his friends - a glass of unboiled tap water; what in the circumstances was almost a death wish. Ten days after the first performance he was dead. It is uncertain to what extent Tchaikovsky intended the 'Pathétique' as his musical last will and testament. It is known that the work was very important to him and that he considered it to be his best composition. There is however a quotation by him which is very revealing and gives us perhaps the real clue: 'The theme of the Symphony is so full of subjective feeling - so much so that as I was composing it I frequently wept.'

The symphony begins with a slow introduction in which the bassoon foreshadows the first subject of the first movement given out by the violas at the start of the Allegro proper a few bars later:



Notice the dry, parched sound Tchaikovsky obtains by using only the darker-toned violas and double basses in this opening. The second subject, a beautiful singing melody, is given a veiled quality by the muted strings.

The peace of this episode is rudely interrupted by the development section based largely on the first theme's two opening fragments (qv). The massive climax of this section, surely the most anguished music ever written by Tchaikovsky, eventually gives way to a wonderfully embellished version of the second subject. The movement ends with a brief coda built over a descending string scale. The second movement brings some relief from the gloom, but even in this waltz in unusual 5/4 time one feels a shadowy figure hovering. There are two themes, both easy to recognise. The second is played over a pedal-point (the same bass note repeated again and again). The third movement is a great scherzo combined with march requiring considerable orchestral virtuosity. With the fourth movement we are once more plunged into the deepest gloom. The construction is very simply wrought of two themes both played by the strings. The second theme, one of tragic nobility, is heralded by a hesitant triplet heartbeat in the horns:

After a climax of great emotional power the Symphony descends deeper and deeper until only the cellos and basses are left in their lowest registers divided into four parts and the triplet heartbeat now in the double basses is finally stilled.

NM

BRYN TURLEY won a scholarship at the age of 15 to the Royal College of Music, where he studied with the late Cyril Smith and with Bernard Roberts. He has since given many recitals in London and throughout the country, and has performed in America and several European countries. He is now on the staff of the Edinburgh Academy, and gives regular broadcasts on BBC Scotland.

SCOTTISH SINFONIA

leader Philip Taylor
conductor Neil Mantle

Violins I

Philip Taylor
Robert Fraser
George Murphy
Jan Kouwenhoven
John Hiley
Briget MacLean
Andrew Rodden
Nicola Foot
Carolyn Thomson
Catriona Thomson
Kevin Deland
Sheena Black
Bridget Blackmore
Daya Rasaratnam
Alison Scott
Lucy Fisher
Christopher Samuel
Katie Cullen

Violins II

Doreen Busbridge
Susan Kirakowska
Elizabeth Alexander
Morvyth Armstrong
Gillian Pickup
Pamela Redman
Irene Horne
Morag Campbell
Lawrence Dunn
Julian Ryall
Howard Duthie
John Innes
Judith Dean
Philippa Snell
Katherine Borthwick

Violas

Claire Spence
Alison Dundas
Helen Tasker
Gary Clemson
Patrick Criswell
Penny Wheatley
Sarah Lupton
Carrick McLelland

Cellos

John Busbridge
Astrid Gorrie
Sam Coe
Alan Anderson
Miles Morrison
Jeremy Ryall
Kimberley Zuzelo
Betsey Whiting
Christopher Smith
Pamela Highfield
Jane McNaught
Edward Kingsley

Basses

Gordon Murray
Fiona Donaldson
Catherine Side
Dorothy McCabe
Eric Jeffrey
Paul Spiers
Francis Cowan
David Ogilvie

Flutes

Anne Evans
Jean Murray
Peter Lunt

Piccolo

Peter Lunt

Oboes

Charles Dodds
Alastair Thompson

Clarinets

Pamela Turley
Vaughan Townhill

Bassoons

Bruce Gordon
Graham Fraser

Horns

Lindsay Carrick
Fiona Elliott
Dick Rimer
David Pryce

Trumpets

Colin Douglas
Andrew Kinnear

Trombones

Bill Giles
James Bertram
Ian Burness

Tuba

Tom King

Timpani

Anne Douglas

Percussion

Euan Fairbairn
Jennifer Rimer

Orchestral Manager

Stewart Wilson

Concert Administration

Inga Mantle
Jonathan Ebsworth
Anne Biggers
Antonia Dodds

SCOTTISH SINFONIA

NEXT CONCERT: SATURDAY 20 JANUARY 7.30

BEETHOVEN Overture 'Coriolan'
BRAHMS Double Concerto in A Minor
DVORAK Symphony No.7 in D Minor

EDWIN PALING violin
DAVID EDWARDS cello
NEIL MANTLE conductor

Reid Concert Hall

Tickets £1 (students/oap's 75p) from the
Usher Hall Box Office and the Edinburgh
Bookshop. Early booking is advised.