

Instead, he brings back the second one at full strength. The slow movement, *Adagio ma non troppo*, grows naturally from a lyrical melody for clarinet. An interesting point about the later contrasting subject-matter is that it comes (as Alec Robertson

reminds us in his biography) from the first phrase of a Dvorák song. The Finale, *Allegro moderato*, is a free Rondo of which the chief melody is foreshadowed in the introduction, and then given out as a 'cello solo.

ACADEMIC FESTIVAL OVERTURE (Op. 80)

Brahms

This Overture is truly festive, despite its rather severe title, and it has an interesting history. When Breslau University conferred on Brahms the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in 1880, he offered this lighthearted work as a thesis. At that time, university students had lately been given leave to reorganize themselves into associations—a privilege taken away some years before on political grounds. It struck Brahms that nothing could be more graceful or timely than to base his Overture on some of the best-known students' songs. He allows full play here to his sense of comedy, not only in the orchestration, but by a decep-

tively solemn manner at the opening of the work. He begins the Overture with two themes of his own, the first for violins, and the second for violas. Their grave mood is kept up till a tune known as "The Stately House" has been given out by three trumpets. After that, the music becomes increasingly cheerful, and when Brahms reaches the "Freshman's Song", he throws it to every instrument in turn except the trombones. Perhaps the dry wit of the bassoon helps to make up for their absence. The Overture ends resoundingly with the festive tune of "Gaudeamus igitur" ("Let us be merry").

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GOD SAVE THE KING

Symphony No. 1, in C (Op. 21)

BEETHOVEN

1770-1827

Nocturne, Paris (The Song of a Great City)

DELIUS

1863-1934

INTERVAL

Concerto in B minor for Violoncello and Orchestra (Op. 104)

DVORÁK

1841-1904

Academic Festival Overture (Op. 80)

BRAHMS

1833-1897

Solo Violoncello:

CASALS

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GOD SAVE THE KING

SYMPHONY No. 1, in C (Op. 21)

Beethoven

THOUGH the first performance of this work took place in Vienna on 2 April, 1800, at one of Beethoven's benefit concerts, the composer had sketched a symphony in the same key at least five years earlier. The style of No. 1 in C major owes much to Beethoven himself, and rather more to his studies with Haydn. This echo is sometimes ignored on a plea that master and pupil had scant regard for one another, but the effect of their relationship cannot be disposed of so easily. Whatever Beethoven may have said about Haydn in a hasty moment, his actions seem to have implied respect. He improvised in public on Haydn's themes, scored one of the quartets for his personal use, and kept the autograph copy of Symphony No. 98 in B flat till the end of his life.

More than that, Haydn's spirit of musical adventure finds its way into the brief but bold *Adagio molto* which provides an Introduction to the C major Symphony. Beethoven begins with a daring, Haydn-like search for the home-key, and then settles down to

the first movement proper, *Allegro con brio*, whose leading theme is played by the strings. A second, contrasted idea for wood-wind completes the main subject-matter. The pith of Beethoven's discussion lies in nimble dialogue, especially between the wood-wind, and he points his re-statement by giving the strings an A minor version of the chief theme. The second movement, *Andante cantabile con moto*, is based on two tunes after the manner of question and answer. There is no mistaking Beethoven's voice in the "question", nor his originality in adding impulse to the *Andante* by a subdued, rhythmic accompaniment for drums. *Menuetto and Trio* is the title of the third movement: anything less like a Minuet, and more like a full-blooded Beethoven scherzo, it would be hard to imagine. In the Finale, we are given a sparkling, clear-cut Rondo. The music begins with a neat pretence of hesitation, and then flowers into an enchanting gaiety which carries the movement happily to its close.

NOCTURNE, Paris (The Song of a Great City)

Delius

"PARIS" was written in 1899, only a year before Delius began the opera "A Village Romeo and Juliet", often spoken of as his masterpiece. This point is important in any argument about the Nocturne's maturity. Some caution, too, is advisable in regarding "Paris" as an exception to Delius's style. If "Brigg Fair" were taken as a norm, the greater part of his output

would have to be classified as "exceptional". The case is, rather, that Delius has a much broader range than he is usually credited with, and that such widely dissimilar works as "Paris", the "North Country Sketches", and "Eventyr" each represent a true aspect of the composer.

The Nocturne is not based on any kind of story or "programme", but

(like Vaughan Williams's "London Symphony") contains personal thoughts suggested by long familiarity with the inner spirit of a great city. "For Delius", so Philip Heseltine tells us, "Paris is not so much the capital city of France as a corner of his own soul, a chapter of his own memoirs". The descriptive title, "Nocturne", is a reminder that Delius interprets these recollections from the viewpoint of night and early dawn. He includes one or two realistic details, such as street cries peculiar to Paris, but each is incidental in the same way as Vaughan Williams's echo of "Westminster Chimes". This "Song of a Great City", which is scored for large orchestra, unfolds a pattern of well-defined moods. The work opens with a very

quiet introduction from whose dark colours the whole of Delius's vision seems to take shape. By degrees, the sombre atmosphere is lightened, and gives way to some pages of growing excitement. Here a vigorous tune for trumpets and trombones marks the climax. When this outburst has subsided, the mood alters to one of tranquil ecstasy, and an enchanting tune for violas appears as the central theme of the Nocturne. It is richly elaborated, but the music becomes more restless, until the greatest crisis of all is reached in some very strenuous writing for brass. Then the feeling of hectic gaiety dies down, and the vision fades into the dark, mysterious depths from which it arose.

INTERVAL

CONCERTO in B minor for Violoncello and Orchestra (Op. 104) Dvořák

Solo Violoncello CASALS

THE repertoire of 'cello concertos ranges from a set of four by Boccherini (1743-1805) to a very recent one by E. J. Moeran. Yet only a chosen few have held their place, and few can rival the first-rate quality of Dvořák's contribution. Before his day, the difficult problem of striking a true balance between 'cellist and orchestra still awaited an ideal solution. Though Dvořák had composed an early 'cello concerto in A major, a stronger advantage seems to have been his great experience of stringed instruments in chamber music. In the B minor Concerto, he creates a rôle for the 'cellist which keeps mid-way between frank virtuosity and overmuch restraint. The extraordinary skill of his accompaniment, notably in using wood-wind and horns for background, ensures that every note of the solo part can be

plainly heard. This Concerto was written between November 1894 and February 1895 during Dvořák's second American visit, and received its first performance in England under his conductorship on 19 March, 1896, the soloist being Mr. Leo Stern.

The main theme of the first movement, *Allegro*, is given out at once by clarinets, the bassoons joining in for the latter half of this melody. The second principal tune is one of the loveliest horn passages ever written. When these two ideas have been fully stated, the soloist makes a dramatic entry with the main theme, and treats it in improvisatory style. It is this theme, too, which Dvořák selects for rhapsodic discussion by the 'cellist. When the re-statement is due, he shows imagination amounting to genius by avoiding a repetition of his main idea.