

Central Hall, Westminster

ROBERT MAYER

Concerts *for* Children

(TENTH SEASON)

SIXTH CONCERT

Saturday Morning, February 18th, 1933

Doors Open at 10.40 a.m.

Commence at 11 a.m. sharp



KUTCHER QUARTET

Messrs. KUTCHER, GRINKE,
JEREMY and CAMERON

MALCOLM SARGENT

PIANO

MARIE GOOSSENS

HARP

VICTOR WATSON

DOUBLE BASS

G. JACKSON

FLUTE

REGINALD KELL

CLARINET

CONDUCTOR

-

Dr. MALCOLM SARGENT

Programme & Analytical Notes

Notes by EDWIN EVANS

God Save the King

Concerto for Double Bass, and Small Orchestra .. Handel (1685-1759)

Grave-Allegro

Largo

Allegro

Double Bass : VICTOR WATSON

The double bass is the largest and deepest member of the violin family. Eighty years ago an instrument-maker named Vuillaume invented an octobass, which was thirteen feet high and played by means of levers and pedals, but nobody wanted it. The old name of the double-bass is *violone*, which shows its ancestry, as names should. In Italian there are endings that can be added to words, meaning "little" or "big," or "ugly" and so on. Thus if "cat" were an Italian word, which it is not (though there is one like it), a "catino" or a "catello" would be a little cat, a "catone" a big cat, a "cataccio" an ugly cat. Now the ancestor of all the violin family is the viol, or viola, whose name has survived as that of the tenor violin. Violino, or violin, therefore means a little viol, and violone means a great big viol. There is yet another instrument between the viola and the violone, and as it is more like the latter than the former they call it violoncello or "little bigviol." That is why it must be violoncello (little *violone*), and not as you will hear people say, violincello (little wee viol). But if you find that hard to remember, you just say 'cello and have done with it.

This Concerto, which Mr. Victor Watson will play on his double-bass (or *violone*), was not written for that instrument. It is one of several concertos which Handel wrote, when he was a young man, for the hautbois (which is French for "high-wood"). But not many composers have written solos for the double-bass, so that when a player wants one he has to see what he can find that is suitable. There was once a great double-bass player named Franz Simandl. He played in the Vienna Court Orchestra, taught at the Vienna Conservatoire, and wrote a tremendous double-bass tutor, in several volumes. Perhaps he thought that tutors should be in proportion to the instrument. Although this concerto was written for "high-wood" he found that it could be made suitable for "low-string." So he adapted it for double-bass and piano, and another musician, Adolf Lopper, has now scored the accompaniment for small orchestra.

Introduction and Allegro for Harp, with String Quartet,

Flute and Clarinet Ravel (1875-)

Probably the harp is not quite the oldest of all musical instruments. There may have been reed pipes earlier, and most certainly there were drums. But it is the oldest instrument of which examples have survived, for the excavations at Ur of the Chaldees have brought to light a harp said to

date from the First Dynasty of Ur, which reigned there nearly six thousand years ago. The harp has been played in many countries from that day to this.

You would think that the harp was an instrument of peace, but there was one occasion when it was an instrument of discord. Thirty years ago there were in Paris two firms of harp-makers whose rivalry became acute and violent. But it produced good results. Just as piano-makers strive their hardest to get the greatest pianists to play their instruments, these two harp-makers strove to persuade composers to write music for them. And thus it came about that there was a lot of music written at that time that we would not have had but for those two harp-makers being such rivals. Among the compositions that resulted were Debussy's "Sacred and Profane Dance," and this work of Ravel. It opens like an eclogue (a pastoral poem) with a languorous theme for the flute and clarinet in thirds, and then merges into a graceful and stately dance that suggests Ancient Greece.

**Quintet Op. 114, "The Trout," for Piano, Violin, Viola, Violoncello
and Double Bass Schubert (1797-1828)**

Allegro vivace

Andante

Scherzo: Presto

Theme ("The Trout") with Variations

Finale: Allegro giusto

Schubert wrote in his short life over six hundred songs. They are of all kinds, long and short, grave and gay. "The Trout," which is a great favourite with everybody, is a pretty little song about a little trout, darting freely this way and that whilst the water of the brook is clear. But an artful angler stirs the water, makes it muddy, and then the little trout is soon caught.

Now in the summer of 1819, when Schubert was twenty-two, he found himself able to afford a little holiday, having earned some money teaching the Esterhazy family. With his great friend Vogl he set out for Upper Austria, where he revelled in the scenery and made music as he went along. They came in this way to Steyr, where Vogl was born, and where he introduced the composer to his many friends. Among these was an amateur named Paumgartner, who took a great fancy to "The Trout," which he had heard Vogl sing many times. It was Paumgartner who suggested that Schubert should make something bigger of it, and, though we do not know for certain, probably offered to pay for it.

A little while earlier Hummel (1778-1837) had published a quintet for piano, violin, viola, 'cello and double bass, which these amateurs of Steyr found a very convenient combination for them. So they persuaded Schubert to use the same instruments. Thus originated the famous "Trout" Quintet. It has five movements, which suggests that Schubert was unwilling to omit any of the usual four movements to make room for his "Trout" Variations. Thus we have a vigorous Allegro, a noble slow movement, a jolly Scherzo, then "The Trout" with five variations and a repetition of the tune to finish them, and a cheerful Finale to conclude the work.

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