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MENDELSSOHN'S SCOTCH SYMPHONY.

(IN A MINOR. OP. 56.)

BY SIR GEORGE GROVE, C.B.

*Andante con moto ; Allegro un poco agitato.**Vivace non troppo.**Adagio.**Allegro vivacissimo, and Allegro maestoso assai.*

Mendelssohn paid his first visit to Great Britain in 1829. After passing the musical season in London, conducting his Symphony in C minor at the Philharmonic, and his Midsummer Night's Dream Overture at another Concert—both for the first time in this country—and playing Beethoven's Pianoforte Concerto in E flat; hearing debates in the House of Commons, going to an infinity of balls, and otherwise madly enjoying himself—after all this, he and his friend Klingemann started at the end of July for a six weeks' journey in the Highlands. He was then just twenty years old, in the rich springtime of his wonderful youth, the very soul of gaiety and activity, and of hearty, happy spirits. The tour comprised much of the finest scenery of the Highlands, from Staffa to Loch Tay, and from Edinburgh to Blair Athol, and much that was characteristic of the country, including the gathering of the clans at the last-named place. Of the impressions made by the journey, the Scotch Symphony and the beautiful Overture known as 'The Hebrides,' or 'Fingal's Cave,' are the two chief musical records. The abundant letters which he sent to his friends are other—though he himself would certainly have said* not more detailed or definite—chronicles of his thoughts or feelings. The two great orchestral works just named form in themselves a whole gallery of Scottish pictures, in which the Pianoforte Fantasia in F sharp minor (Op. 28), originally entitled by its author 'Sonate écossaise,' and probably also the Fantasia in A minor for pianoforte (Op. 16, No. 1)† and the two-part song 'O wert thou in the cauld blast?' may be minor works. Both Symphony and Overture were planned and begun during Mendelssohn's residence in Italy in 1831—that season of production in which he conceived or matured no less than four of his greatest and most characteristic works, namely, the Hebrides Overture, the Italian and Scotch Symphonies, and the Walpurgis Night.

There is no doubt that the work was intended to record his Scotch reminiscences, for the name 'Scotch Symphony' is his own; and though not attached to the score it occurs in his published letters. His unpublished letters also supply the date of the first conception of the subject of the *Andante* and the reason of the profound melancholy which pervades it, and tinges more or less the whole of that movement, and of the *Allegro* which follows it. Writing to his family from Edinburgh on July 30, 1829,‡ soon after the arrival of himself and Klingemann in Scotland, he describes his visit 'in the deep twilight' of the summer evening to Queen Mary's Palace of Holyrood,

* See his remarkable letter to Souchay (October 15, 1842): 'Words seem to me so ambiguous, so vague, so unintelligible when compared with music. . . . What music expresses to me is not too indefinite to put into words, but too definite.'

† Written at the house of Mr. Taylor, at Coed Du, near Holywell, North Wales, on September 4, 1829, on his way back from Scotland. No. 1 (*Andante and Allegro*) has the inscription 'Rosen und Nelken in Menge'—Roses and pinks in plenty. One member of the nosegay still blossoms in the little pocket-book he then carried with him—a carnation, drawn in pencil, full size, and carefully dated with the date just given. Mrs. Austin, who knew him well, has told us of 'the pensive character which he attributed to his favourite carnations' (*Fraser's Magazine*, April, 1848), a character well reflected in the *Andante* referred to; and in the Life of Moscheles (English translation, i. 297) we find it mentioned as his favourite flower, which he loved to have given to him. [See also 'The Mendelssohn Family,' by Sebastian Hensel, English translation, i. 224, 227.—E.D. M.T.]

‡ This letter was shown to me by Dr. Karl Mendelssohn, the son of the composer, at Freiburg. [It is now printed in 'The Mendelssohn Family,' English translation, i. 197.—E.D. M.T.]

his sympathy with the Queen, the effect that the sight of her rooms and of the scene and marks of Rizzio's murder had produced on him, and the roofless chapel. He adds: 'I believe I found to-day in that old chapel the beginning of my Scotch Symphony.' And after he had returned to his inn 'the daughter of the hostess sang a song in minor,' and he became very much depressed, and then the subject again came into his mind. The first sixteen bars of the *Andante* as then written down, exactly as they open the Symphony, and with the date, 'Edinburgh, 30th July, 1829, *Abends*,' were given by Mendelssohn to Klingemann at or very shortly after the time:—

No. 1.

Andante con moto.

The autograph of the finished score is dated January 20, 1842, more than twelve years after the date of its first conception.

Counting the 'Reformation' and 'Lobgesang,' this is the fifth of his published Symphonies. On the printed score it is denominated 'No. 3'—No. 1 being the C minor, and No. 2 the 'Sinfonie Cantata,' or Lobgesang (Hymn of Praise), which has as much right to the name Symphony as Beethoven's Ninth (the Choral Symphony), its obviously artistic parent, has. Mendelssohn's 'Italian' Symphony, like the 'Reformation,' was not published during his lifetime, and these two are therefore, as far as order of publication goes, Nos. 4 and 5. But in order of composition the five stand as follows:—

1. Symphony in C minor - - 1824
2. Reformation Symphony - - 1830
3. Italian Symphony - - - - 1833
4. Lobgesang - - - - - 1840
5. Scotch Symphony - - - - 1842

Although not finally completed till 1842, at Berlin, the fifth symphony occupied Mendelssohn's thoughts more or less frequently during the interval between his visit to Scotland and that date, as is evident from the frequent references to it in his letters.

The first performance of the work in England was at the concert of the Philharmonic Society on June 13, 1842.* Mendelssohn himself conducted, and both the composer and his music were received with the greatest enthusiasm; the applause was uproarious after each movement, the *Scherzo* was redemanded, and an attempt—not successful—was made to obtain from the Directors of the Society a repetition of the performance. The letters in which Mendelssohn arranges with Sterndale Bennett for his arrival and for the dates of the concerts which he was to conduct will be found in the Appendix to Hogarth's 'History of the Philharmonic Society.' The Symphony appears to have been previously played at the Gewandhaus, Leipzig, on March 3 (1842), and repeated at the following concert. It is dedicated to 'Victoria, Queen of England,' from whom Mendelssohn obtained the necessary permission during a visit to Buckingham Palace, which he describes in a long letter to his mother dated July 19, 1842.†

* In the programme of this concert the work is simply described as 'New MS. Sinfonia in A minor,' without any reference whatever to its Scottish origin. In the score it is simply entitled 'Symphonie No. 3,' with the dedication to Queen Victoria.—[E.D. M.T.]

† An English translation of this letter is printed in 'Goethe and Mendelssohn.' Second edition, p. 141.

This Symphony, like Schumann's Fourth (in D minor) and Mendelssohn's own Violin Concerto, exhibits the peculiarity that it is to be played throughout as one piece, the movements following each other rapidly, without the customary intervals. This is expressly directed by the author in a preface to the printed score, of which the following is a translation:—

'The several movements of this Symphony must follow one another immediately, and not be separated by the usual pauses. For the information of the audience its contents may be stated on the programme as follows:—

SINFONIA.

Introduction, and Allegro agitato,
Scherzo Assai vivace,
Adagio, cantabile,
Allegro guerriero, and Finale maestoso.'

It will be observed that the names of the movements here given are different from those now prefixed to the music itself and stated at the head of this notice.

Neither here nor in the 'Italian' Symphony does the score include trombones. That Mendelssohn could use the 'brass' with effect is shown in the 'Lobgesang,' the Overture to 'Ruy Blas,' and other works, but he seems to have feared it almost as much as Mozart is known to have feared the trumpet.* 'If I proceed slowly with St. Paul,' says he, in an English letter to William Horsley, 'it is at least without trombones, and I flatter myself to have been as moderate in the use of brass as an enemy of the Birmingham industry or a friend to invalid trumpeters could have wished; for out of twelve choruses in the first part there are but two with the brass band, and the beginning is even without trumpets.'†

I.—The Symphony opens (contrary to Mendelssohn's practice in his C minor and Italian Symphonies) with an introductory movement, *Andante con moto*, in 3-4 time. This *Andante*, sixty-three bars in length, is, by a curious coincidence, of the same extent, within one bar, as the *Poco sostenuto* to Beethoven's Symphony in A (No. 7). Mendelssohn starts with the subject already quoted (No. 1), a regular strain, in two portions of eight bars each, harmonized (as if in allusion to the national music of Scotland) for the wind band and the lower strings only—violas in the first portion, and violas, violoncellos, and basses in the second, the violins silent throughout, and nothing to obscure the shrill prominence of the oboes. This is immediately succeeded by a passage, for the first and second violins in unison, of extraordinary energy:—

No. 2. *sf* Violins 1 & 2 in unison.

(Notice here the use of the Scotch scale, in which D sharp succeeds C natural and G sharp succeeds F natural.) After a short time the original subject (No. 1) is heard in the wind instruments, but the violins maintain their accompaniment figure to the

* See Edward Holmes's 'The Life of Mozart,' p. 11 (1878 edition).

† 'Goethe and Mendelssohn,' Second edition. Letter 6, p. 113. The trumpets were afterwards added to the first chorus, though very sparingly.

end of the Introduction. The personality which distinguishes the instruments of the orchestra is rarely more marked than in this Symphony. As Schumann says, 'They talk like people,' and people of the most varied and marked character. It is impossible, for instance, not to notice at the close of the Introduction how the flutes begin *calling* in the intervals between the violin *arpeggios*, as if impatient for what is to come next:—

and we shall find many another instance.

II.—The 'first subject' of the *Allegro un poco agitato* which follows, and of which we can only quote eight bars out of twenty-two, is closely related to that of the Introduction (No. 1):—

No. 4.

It is announced by the strings, with the clarinet (an instrument specially honoured by Mendelssohn, and seldom more than in this particular work) in octaves below the first violins—at that time a new combination. Between the 'first' and 'second' subjects of the movement an episodic idea intervenes, the concise character and abrupt rhythm of which are in strong contrast to the flowing melody which precedes it:—

No. 5.

Of this episode much use is made at a later time. It is given out by the whole band *fortissimo*, the pace at the same time quickening to *Assai animato*.

The second subject—in the dominant key of E minor, not the relative major key of C—is remarkable for the same northern cast as before (C natural succeeding D sharp, &c.). Like its predecessor (No. 4) it is two strains of eight bars each, the melody of the first strain being given out by the clarinets:—

No. 6. Clarinet.

and that of the second by the first violins; the accompaniment in both strains being ingeniously formed of a phrase out of the 'first subject' itself. A beautiful episode or tributary theme, itself a modification of a portion of the principal subject, is used as a *Coda* to the first part of the movement:—

No. 7. Violins in octaves.

The first part of the movement is repeated from the double bar, according to the prescribed form. The second part is remarkable among many beauties for two especial things:—First, for the long and bold series of modulations with which it begins, on a fragment of the 'first subject' (No. 4). In this extraordinary passage the strings of the orchestra move down in energetic unison from E—by D sharp, D natural, C sharp, C natural—till they land on B natural. The following is the phrase which is thus repeated again and again:—

No. 8.



The *pianissimo* maintained during the first fourteen bars, then the *crescendo*, and at length the *fortissimo*, as the phrases increase in rapidity till at last they reach their climax, deepen the impression produced by the progression of the notes. It is remarkable, secondly, for the variety obtained by the introduction of a long solo for the violoncello, preceding and accompanying the re-entry of the first subject, and itself accompanied by the horns and bassoons. (This does not need quotation.)

The *Coda* of the movement, which is long and important, begins with a progression for the strings in unison, in semitones, of the same nature as that already quoted (No. 8), but rising (from A to C) instead of falling:—

No. 8a.

Strings in unison.



Following this, and growing out of it, is the vigorous and picturesque passage known—though with what authority is doubtful—as the Storm. The *Coda* is throughout extraordinarily bold and energetic. We have noticed the *call* of the flutes at the close of the Introduction. Not less eager, and more martial, is the cry of the clarinets in the triumphal close of the *Allegro*:—

No. 9.

Clarinets with Flutes in the 8ve above, & Bassoons in the 8ve below.



as if unable to restrain their warlike elastic ardour. Their energy subsides, however, in a chromatic descent *diminuendo*, and leads into a portion of the introductory *Andante*; so that the movement ends as it began, with the plaintive strain which was the actual origin of the whole work.

This *Allegro* was a great favourite with Wagner, who has left his opinion upon it in unmistakable terms.*

(To be continued.)

* Wolzogen's *Erinnerungen an Richard Wagner* (1883), p. 36. The whole passage on Mendelssohn is extremely interesting and instructive.

Church and Organ Music.

THE TUNE 'HOLLINGSIDE.'

Hymn-tunes are often christened in an arbitrary manner. Their designations give no clue to their origin. St. Ann's is a case in point, its designation having no *raison d'être*, unless one knows that it is named after St. Anne's Church, Soho, of which its composer, Dr. Croft, was organist. So with the tune 'Hollingside.' 'Why was it thus named?' The answer to this question we will now endeavour to give.

It is hardly necessary to say that the composer of 'Hollingside' was the Rev. J. B. Dykes—born in 1823, died in 1876, aged fifty-two. In July, 1849, he was appointed to a minor canonry in Durham Cathedral, and four months later to the Precentorship of that magnificent sanctuary. In a letter to his sister announcing the latter appointment he says:

I am thinking seriously of starting a small establishment, and trying a little bachelor housekeeping. The fact is there is at present a very pretty cottage to be let, about a mile out of Durham, with a nice bit of garden and a very fine prospect; and houses of every description are so difficult to meet with here. I shall want some instructions in the art and science of house-furnishing, and gardening, and servant hiring if I do, but I have not made up my mind yet.

On the following May-day (1850) the young Precentor first occupied that 'very pretty cottage'—named Hollingside Cottage, and this bijou habitation—originally built for an invalid who could not walk upstairs—gave the name to the hymn-tune. One of his sisters thus describes Hollingside Cottage:

All the externals of that sweet home have left a most vivid impression on my mind—the low, one-storied cottage, with its deep verandah covered with creepers, the undulating garden which surrounded it, the beauty of the woods around, and the walk to the Cathedral, to which we generally went twice a day, as well as the joy my brother felt in the service.

Some scenes during that visit will live for ever in my memory. As, for instance, one calm Sunday evening, when I sat in the verandah in the deepening twilight, and heard, through the open window, my brother composing and playing over the tune 'Hollingside' to the words 'Jesu, lover of my soul.'

Hollingside Cottage has now been enlarged by the addition of an upper storey, and it is with regret that we cannot procure a photograph of the house in its original state. As Dr. Dykes, soon after his marriage, removed to a larger house, it may be assumed that 'Hollingside' was composed between 1850 and 1853. The tune made its first appearance in print in 'Hymns Ancient and Modern,' issued in 1861; but it was doubtless first sung, from manuscript copies, in the Galilee of Durham Cathedral at one of the Sunday evening services held therein.

During the autumn of 1860 the clergyman-composer first heard of the proposed publication of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern.' At the suggestion of some friends he ventured to write to W. H. Monk, the Musical Editor of that now well-known hymnal, in the following terms:

Durham, Oct. 12, 1860.

... You will I trust pardon the liberty I am taking, in addressing you, being personally a stranger to you.

I venture however at the request of Mr. Twells [author of 'At even, ere the sun was set'] and also of Mr. Wilkins to send you a few MS. tunes for your inspection, thinking it possible that some of them might do for your forthcoming book. I may, perhaps, in case I find time, send one or two more to-morrow. Of course, you will fully understand that you are not,