



**The Liverpool
Philharmonic Orchestra**

Belfast concerts

April 1946

from the

**Orchestral
Concerts' Database**

compiled by David Byers

Cover of an autographed 1946 programme



LIVERPOOL PHIL AND SARGENT

GREAT OCCASION

SUPERB PERFORMANCE

Dr. Malcolm Sargent and the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, paying their first visit to Belfast under the auspices of C.E.M.A., met with a great reception at their opening concert in the Ulster Hall on Thursday evening. They played to a capacity audience, who listened with rapt attention from first to last, and at the close they evoked an enthusiasm in which there was a special quality that has not been so evident here in recent years at concerts of this kind. That is to say, the enthusiasm had a certain fervour which was much more impressive than any demonstrations merely insistent in a demand for encores.

It was, indeed, an occasion of more than usual interest in several ways. For one thing, it was good to hear once again at first hand a standard of playing which showed the absolute unanimity that is the result of constant rehearsal and concert work under a permanent conductor, a thing that has been precluded in Belfast since pre-war years. The playing, in consequence, had an ease of style that was all the more enjoyable because of its rarity, and the fact that it also showed so many subtleties in many matters of detail – not least so in the woodwind and brass departments – added not a little to one's pleasure.

FIRM, BUT FLEXIBLE

Dr. Sargent was always eloquent as well as persuasive, and kept a firm though flexible control. It is true that his motions are over-elaborate at times, and tend to distract one's attention from more essential matters. They are always graceful, however, and never obscure a beat which is admirably decisive. He is rather less impetuous than he was at one time, and by reason of that fact derives more advantage from a rhythmical feeling that is particularly keen. His tempo has a more balanced proportion. The result is that his climaxes have an added power in bearing a better relation to the outline as a whole.

This fact was demonstrated with particular point on more than one occasion in the Tchaikovsky Symphony No.5 in E minor, which occupied the second part of the programme. It was very marked in the opening Allegro, which was controlled in a masterly way, and the movement in consequence was more than usually satisfying in a constructive sense. It was no less evident in the Andante Cantabile which follows it. The way in which he built up its climaxes by broadening rather than hastening the tempi both emphasised and gave an added significance to their dramatic point.

TCHAIKOVSKY CRITICISM

Whether it is a great symphony, or even great music, I take leave to doubt. Is it, even at its best, anything more than glorified salon music? There is no doubt that it has many beauties of its own. Tchaikovsky's scoring has invariably a sureness of effect that is absolute, and, besides that, it always leaves the impression that the music was conceived purely in terms of the orchestra. Many particular details in the score – the quartet passage for trombones and tuba, or the individual treatment of the clarinets, to mention some examples at random – are a sheer delight to the ear, and the texture more often than not ravishes the senses, particularly in the beautiful Valse movement. But it all amounts to singularly little in the end.

In fact the programme as a whole, entirely devoted to music by Tchaikovsky, was too slight, at least for my liking. The *Marche Slav* is empty bombast, and the *Nutcracker* Suite, for all the charm of some of its movements, has staled with too frequent performances. The best thing of all in this part of the programme was the beautiful *Andante Cantabile* from the D major quartet for strings. But my enjoyment in the programme, for the greater part, lay in the performances rather than in the music.

RATHCOL.

DB's Orchestral Concerts' Database

19460411 *Unique reference number*

Orchestra/Ensemble	Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
Date	11 April 1946, 7.30pm
Venue & Start Time	Belfast, Ulster Hall
Category/Title	
Conductor	Dr Malcolm Sargent
Leader	David Wise
Soloist(s)	
Choir(s)	
Repertoire	Tchaikovsky Marche slave, Op.31 Tchaikovsky Andante cantabile Tchaikovsky Nutcracker Suite, Op.71a Tchaikovsky Symphony No.5 in E minor, Op.64
Programme in archive Y/N	N
List of Players Y/N	N
Programme Notes Y/N	Y
Writer of Notes (if known)	"Descriptive notes by A.K. Holland"
Biographical Notes Y/N	N
Additional Information	<p>Concert began with the National Anthem.</p> <p>Durations are listed for each work.</p> <p>Note on back page of four page concert programme states:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C.E.M.A. (N.I.)</p> <p>These are the initials of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (Northern Ireland), which has been established by the Ministry of Education and the Queen's University of Belfast Joint Committee for Adult Education, with assistance from the Pilgrim Trust. The aim of the Council, whose Chairman is Mr. D. Lindsay Keir, is to bring good art, drama and music to the people of Northern Ireland. Enquiries should be addressed to the Organiser, Tyrone House, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast.</p> <p>[Mr Keir was also the Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University.]</p>

DB's Orchestral Concerts' Database

19460412 i *Unique reference number*

Orchestra/Ensemble	Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
Date	12 April 1946, [2pm?]
Venue & Start Time	Belfast, Ulster Hall
Category/Title	
Conductor	Dr Malcolm Sargent
Leader	David Wise
Soloist(s)	
Choir(s)	
Repertoire	Berlioz Overture: Le Carnaval romain, Op.9 Percy Grainger The Londonderry Air Handel arr. Harty Suite: Water Music Delius On hearing the first cuckoo in spring Tchaikovsky Nutcracker Suite, Op.71a
Programme in archive Y/N	N
List of Players Y/N	N
Programme Notes Y/N	?
Writer of Notes (if known)	
Biographical Notes Y/N	
Additional Information	<p>Information for this concert has been gleaned from a review in the <i>Belfast Telegraph</i>, 12 April 1946 – presumably a late edition!</p> <p>"Hundreds of eager schoolchildren thronged the Ulster Hall, Belfast, this afternoon for the special concert given for them by the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, under Dr. Malcolm Sargent. It was the biggest musical event organised by C.E.M.A. in its efforts to bring more music to the schools. Tickets, which cost one shilling, were sent to secondary and public elementary schools, and were completely sold out. Before the concert Dr. Sargent, who was loudly cheered, gave a talk on the orchestra and its instruments and on the programme which was selected as an introduction to orchestral music."</p> <p>The final paragraph of the review named the works listed above.</p> <p>The <i>Belfast News-Letter</i>, 13 April 1946, suggested an audience of "about 1,500 children". "Before each item Dr. Sargent explained the music and used the piano to good effect to illustrate his meaning."</p>

DB's Orchestral Concerts' Database

19460412 ii *Unique reference number*

Orchestra/Ensemble	Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
Date	12 April 1946, 7.30pm
Venue & Start Time	Belfast, Ulster Hall
Category/Title	
Conductor	Dr Malcolm Sargent
Leader	David Wise
Soloist(s)	
Choir(s)	
Repertoire	Berlioz Overture: Le Carnaval romain, Op.9 Falla Suite: The Three-Cornered Hat Delius On hearing the first cuckoo in spring Wagner Introduction to Act 3; Dance of the Apprentices; The Mastersingers' Procession (<i>Die Meistersinger</i>) Beethoven Symphony No.5 in C minor, Op.67
Programme in archive Y/N	N
List of Players Y/N	N
Programme Notes Y/N	Y
Writer of Notes (if known)	"Descriptive notes by A.K. Holland"
Biographical Notes Y/N	N
Additional Information	<p>Concert began with the National Anthem.</p> <p>Same note on back page of four page concert programme as 11 April 1946.</p> <p>Durations are listed for each work.</p> <p>Reviewed favourably by Rathcol in the <i>Belfast Telegraph</i>, 13 April 1946. The <i>Belfast News-Letter</i> thought the programme contained "music of much more intrinsic merit [than the previous night], which brought out the breadth of style and wide range of tone gradation which Dr. Malcolm Sargent obtains with such apparent ease from his players."</p>

DB's Orchestral Concerts' Database

19460413 *Unique reference number*

Orchestra/Ensemble	Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
Date	13 April 1946, 3pm
Venue & Start Time	Belfast, Ulster Hall
Category/Title	
Conductor	Dr Malcolm Sargent
Leader	David Wise
Soloist(s)	
Choir(s)	
Repertoire	Weber Overture: Oberon Borodin arr. Sargent Nocturne (String Quartet No.2) Schubert Symphony No.8 in B minor, <i>Unfinished</i> Debussy <i>Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune</i> Wagner Overture:Tannhauser Elgar Enigma Variations
Programme in archive Y/N	N
List of Players Y/N	N
Programme Notes Y/N	Y
Writer of Notes (if known)	"Descriptive notes by A.K. Holland"
Biographical Notes Y/N	N
Additional Information	Concert began with the National Anthem. Same note on back page of four page concert programme as 11 April 1946. Durations are listed for each work.