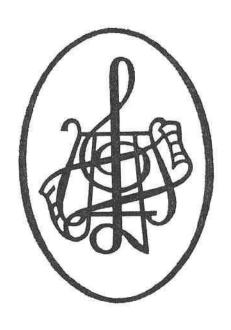
Background information about the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra to accompany the Klassic Haus Restorations release of the Tippett and Young Unicorn recording



Leicestershire County School of Music

Sir Michael Tippett's *The Shires Suite*Some recollections of rehearsals and performances Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra

John Whitmore, June 1999

From the mid-1960s until the early 1970s, Sir Michael Tippett had a close relationship with the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra, regularly conducting them in the UK and on tour in Europe and generally supporting the state-funded musical education programme which had produced an orchestra of such high standards. He conducted the LSSO almost exclusively in twentieth-century music - from Holst's *The Planets* to Charles Ives's *Three Places in New England*, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphoses* and many new works by English composers. Under Tippett, the LSSO, an orchestra of ordinary secondary school children aged 14 to 18, regularly performed on BBC radio and TV, made commercial gramophone records and established new standards for music-making in an educational context. Many leading British performers had their first experience of orchestral music in the LSSO under Tippett.

Sir Michael first became involved with the Leicestershire County School of Music in 1965 when he became patron of the Schools Music Festival and conducted two concerts at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester. The logistical problems in actually rehearsing for this festival were overcome by the orchestra travelling down to Corsham, close to Sir Michael's home, and taking up residence in a local school for a full week during the Easter holidays. This enabled Michael to work with the orchestra after his usual day's schedule. In this way, his composing routine was not disrupted but perhaps more importantly, from an LSSO perspective, there was substantial rehearsal time for the players and Michael to get to know each other. In the mid 1960's ABC Television ran an Arts programme called *Tempo* and the week's events at Corsham were filmed for an edition entitled *Overture with Beginners*. Sir Michael proved to be great fun and a rapport was immediately established.

The 1965 festival included a specially commissioned symphony by Alan Ridout, Elgar *Cockaigne*, Holst's *Planets*, Michael's own *Concerto for Double String Orchestra* and *Child of Our Time*. He also composed two new pieces for the occasion: *Prologue* and *Epilogue*.

These were performed to open and close the festival.

The *Prologue* is a setting of *Soomer is i-coomen in*:

Soomer is i-coomen in,
Loode sing cuckoo
Groweth sayd and bloweth mayd and springth the wood-e new.
Sing cuc-koo
A-we blay-teth after lamb.
Lowth after calve coo
Bullock stair-teth book-e-vair-teth.
Mirry sing cuckoo,
Cuc-koo, cuc-koo,
Well sing-es thoo, cuckoo,
Nay sweek thoo nay-ver noo.

The *Epilogue* has real significance for the LSSO because it is a setting of *Non Nobis Domine* by William Byrd and Michael heard this performed *a capella* by the orchestra during the visit to Corsham.

Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, Sed nomini tuo, da gloriam.

(This used to be sung in the state schools of Leicestershire as a Grace.)

The *Prologue* and *Epilogue* would eventually become the opening and closing movements of a new suite that was written for the LSSO between 1965 and 1970. On its completion, this became known as the *Shires Suite*.

After the 1965 festival, Sir Michael's appearances with the orchestra included a wonderful *Enigma Variations* televised live in Brussels (1966), a second Schools Festival (1967) and a gramophone recording of his *Suite in D* for the now defunct Pye Golden Guinea label.

In 1969 the second phase of the Shires Suite was unveiled at the LSSO Easter residential course in Cirencester. Orchestral parts, in manuscript, for *Interlude II* turned up at sectional rehearsals one morning. The first full orchestral rehearsals for Interlude II were directed by Norman Del Mar. Sir Michael joined us later in the week and a BBC television crew also arrived to film him conducting Interlude II and Ives' Putnam's Camp for a BBC-2 programme called Music Now. The television recording was somewhat disrupted by the Red Arrows flying above the school but a personal telephone call from Michael to the Red Arrows H.Q. soon put a stop to the noise. I am reliably informed that this was the first time in history that the Red Arrows had been 'grounded' in such a manner. Looking back, the rehearsals for *Interlude II* were absolutely riotous mainly due to the scruffy hand written orchestral parts and the novel inclusion of an electric guitar. The purely orchestral *Interlude II* is based on the music which introduces the characters Dov and Mel at their entry in Act I of Tippett's opera, The Knot Garden, which was written at the same time (1966-69) as this Suite. Interlude II also incorporates the canon 'Great Tom is Cast' which appears three times, scored first for 3 trumpets and finally trumpets and trombones in octaves.

The new trilogy of *Prologue, Interlude II and Epilogue* received its first public performance at the Bath Festival on June 21st 1969 where the LSSO was conducted by Sir Michael. In a press review of the concert, one eminent critic '...*failed to detect the promised part for electric guitar*...' The guitar part, played by David Abbott, was nigh on deafening from where I was sitting in the 2nd fiddles. That's critics for you, I suppose.

Overall, 1969 was a great year for the orchestra. Michael and the LSSO played a memorable concert in the Philharmonie, Berlin which included *Prologue, Interlude II and Epilogue*, Ives' *Putnam's Camp*, Copland's *Quiet City* and *Brigg Fair* by Delius. Richard Rodney Bennett was the soloist in *Rhapsody in Blue*. We also spent some time with Sir John Barbirolli who attended the afternoon rehearsals of *Brigg Fair*. The night after our concert he was performing Tchaikovsky's 4th with the Berlin Philharmonic. The orchestra were hailed as Britain's best cultural export but most of us also had the feeling that our programme was rather alien to a German public weaned on Brahms and Beethoven. The sounds of Charles Ives must have been a shock, let alone *Interlude II*.

The 1970 Easter course was held at Oxford. Yet another week of sleeping on camp beds in a school and being rehearsed by Sir Arthur Bliss, Bryan Kelly, Herbert Chappell and Sir Michael. The preparations this time were focused on rehearsing for an appearance at the Cheltenham Festival in July and a new gramophone record for Argo, which would include the *Introduction and Allegro* by Bliss, conducted by the composer and Tippett conducting his own *Interlude II and Epilogue*. During this week at Oxford, Michael introduced the final two movements of the *Shires Suite - Interlude I* and *Cantata*.

The slow, purely orchestral *Interlude I* is a kind of chorale prelude, based on the canon *'The Silver Swan'*. The three melodic lines of the canon are presented at different speeds: Trumpet and trombone (normal speed), strings (decorated and much transformed, twice as slow) and bells and woodwind (clusters, one-a-half times as slow).

The *Cantata* is a setting of three canons, before each of which the choir sings, 'Come let us sing you a song in canon.'

First comes a hunting canon by William Byrd:

Hey, ho, to the Greenwood Now let us go, Sing heave and ho And there shall we find Both buck and doe Sing heave and ho The hart and hind And the little pretty doe Sing heave and ho

Second, a drinking catch by Purcell to the words:

'Fie, nay prithee, John Do not quarrel man, Let us be merry and drink about.'

'You're a rogue, you cheated me, I'll prove before this company, I caren't a farthing, Sir, for all you are so stout.'

'Sir, you lie, I scorn your word, Or any man that wears a sword, For all your huff, who cares a fig or who cares for you?'

Third, a canon by Alexander Goehr to an epigram of William Blake, presented to the composer as a 60th birthday present. The words are:

The sword sung on the barren heath, The sickle on the fruitful field: The sword he sang a song of death, But could not make the sickle yield. By 1970, Michael had made some close friendships at the County School of Music and he kept in regular contact by telephone. On one famous occasion he was chatting to the orchestra's PR manager, Jack Richards about the problems he was having with the percussion scoring in the *Cantata* of the *Shires Suite*. Jack's miniscule office was situated next door to the school canteen and as the conversation progressed a careless dinner lady dropped a tray of cutlery. This sparked the composer's imagination and Jack spent the next quarter of an hour or so dropping various combinations of forks and spoons onto the floor from different heights until the correct sound was achieved to the satisfaction of the composer. Who suggested the title given to the completed work? Jack Richards.

The Cheltenham Festival concert took place in the Town Hall on July 8th and the podium was shared by Sir Arthur Bliss, who conducted his own *Piano Concerto* with Frank Wibaut as soloist and Sir Michael, who directed Ives' riotous *Circus Band* a rather scrappy *Rhapsody in Blue* and the first public performance of the *Shires Suite*. It must be mentioned that in the early hours of July 8th, Michael was involved, as a passenger, in a serious road traffic accident whilst he was travelling from the Queen Elizabeth Hall. Despite this he continued his journey to Cheltenham, took a three hour rehearsal in the afternoon and then directed the concert in the evening. Even 30 years after the event I can still vividly recall the electric atmosphere at this concert, which received wide critical acclaim from the national press. Sir Arthur referred to the concert as the best one of the 1970 festival. Later that evening Jack Richards appeared on the orchestra's coach after the concert wearing a huge grin and clutching a reel-to-reel tape of the *Shires Suite*.

Interlude II and Epilogue were recorded by Sir Michael and the LSSO on August 31st, 1970 for Argo Records. The session took place in Decca Studio No.3, West Hampstead and the disc was released in April 1971. The sound quality and performance, however, were something of a let down compared to the concert at Cheltenham.

In April 1980, some 10 years after its first complete performance at Cheltenham, the LSSO with the Leicestershire Chorale recorded the suite for Unicorn Records at De Montfort Hall under the direction of Eric Pinkett's successor, Peter Fletcher. The suite was coupled with a performance of *Virages - Region One* by Douglas Young, conducted by the composer with the solo cello part played by Rohan de Saram.

In September 1998, during a project to fully update some personal archives relating to the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra, the mystery tape from Cheltenham finally resurfaced in an attic 28 years after the event. It had been recorded in stereophonic sound of excellent quality. I simply couldn't believe my luck. This recording has now been shared with some colleagues and friends who played in the concert. The sound is little short of amazing and the performance is also highly accomplished - a world premier beautifully captured as it took place that night in Cheltenham Town Hall and a permanent reminder of the special relationship between the Leicestershire County School of Music and Sir Michael Tippett.

Boost for the county's musical significance

THE SIGNS are that next year's Leicestershire schools music festival is going to give the County School of Music its biggest prestige boost ever.

First performances of a new symphony and a festival pro-logue and epilogue — all specially written for the occasion — will contribute to an event of nation-wide importance, and a competition open to student composers throughout Britain enhance Leicesterfurther shire's growing musical significance and provide yet another new work for first performance during festival

The festival will occupy six hectic and exciting days from May 9 to 14 and will revolve around the name and personality of the famous British composer Michael Tippett, whose enthusiasm for the Leicestershire enterprise is boundless.

Specially written

He has agreed to compose He has agreed to compose a prologue and epilogue and, as the festival's conductor-in-chief, he will direct the first performance of a symphony written specially for the County Youth Orchestra by his distinguished ex-pupil Alan Ridout, who is well-known for his series of BBC music talks. music talks.

Mr. Ridout heard the orchestra earlier this year at their De Montfort Hall concert when his "Three Pictures of Picasso" formed part of a programme conducted by programme conducted by Rudolf Schwarz. He was so impressed with their playing that he had no hesitation in agreeing to write a symphony specially for them

Exciting, too, is the pros-pect of a festival production of Mr. Ridout's recently written opera. Its title is "The Rescue", and its setting



ALAN RIDOUT "I was delighted to write a symphony for the County Youth Orchestra. I have made few concessions on grounds of technical difficulty except to allow for the fact that string players develop less quickly than wind players. But I have not evaded this—the slow not evaded this—the slow movement is for strings only,"

in a Paddington confee bar bears testimony to its con-temporary theme. The Lei-cester presentation will, in fact, be its fourth per-

formance.
The idea of the 1965 festival is both courageous and imaginative and of particular value at a time when the need for the encouragement of active participation in music is considered to be of prime importance.



MICHAEL TIPPETT

"The Leicestershire Festival seems to be an astonishing affair. I have had the feeling or some time that your part of the country is undergoing a kind of renaissance in its musical life — particularly in schools music. I couldn't be more pleased than to be actively involved in this stimulating and exciting venture".

Main inspiration

The festival supplants the memorable pageants which, in past years, crowned the county's

past years, crowned the county's schools music and drama activities from time to time.

As good as they were, the need was for something different. This was the view of Mr. Eric Pinkett, county music adviser and the main inspiration behind the venture. venture.

By the very magnitude of the festival's programme it seems he has proved himself right in declding it was time for new ideas —for a bigger conception and a broader horizon.

broader horizon.

But he admits that luck has been running with him and that his first stroke of good fortune was Michael Tippett's instant enthusiasm for the festival enterprise and his ready acceptance

enthusiasm for the restival enterprise and his ready acceptance of the principal role.

It so happens that the festival will gain still more in significance from the fact that it will take place in the year of Tippett's 69th birthday (he was born on January 2, 1995) and at a time when anniversary programmes will give particular emphasis to his name and to his music.

His double concerto for orchestra will be included among the works he will conduct during the festival. So, too, his delightful oratoric "Child of our Time" which will be performed by a full complement of young Leicestershire musicians including yocal soloists, instrumentalists and a choir of 500.

R.A.P.

Leicester Mercury October 1964

Youth Orchestra Impresses Michael Tippett

10MPOSER Michael Tippett travelled from his home in Corsham, near Bath, on Saturday to listen for the first time to Leicestershire County Youth Orchestra-the orchestra he is to conduct during next May's Festival of Music.

For members of the orchestra and the music staff it was exception that there was an a normal Saturday rehearsal

exception that there was an extension from the usual one o'clock finishing time to three o'clock.

Mr. Tippett who arrived just after midday was thus able to make a good assessment of the playing standard, and also to judge their response to his own conducting.

His verdict: "They are very but you know good;

already."

But for Mr. Tippett there apparently was an earlier moment of doubt about the wisdom of his decision to become associated with the orchestra.

The whole school area was alive with the sounds of musicmaking when he arrived, and it so happened that the first sound that Mr. Tippett heard came from the smallest and rawest recruits.

He said nothing, but the expression on his indicated his fear that this was orchestra he had been invited to conduct.

A member of the County music staff was quick to sense the situation and to restore Mr. Tippett's mental calm.

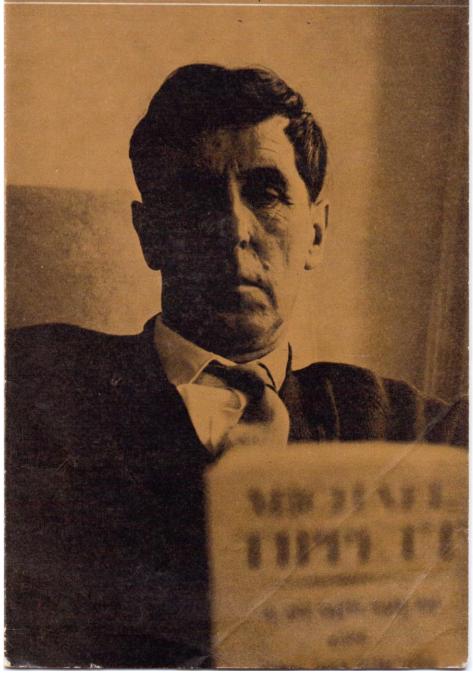
"This way, Mr. Tippett", he said, directing the composer's footsteps away from the juniors' amiable cacophony, "The senior orchestra's rehearsal further on".

And, so. Mr. Tippett's features resumed their remarkably youthful lock. As he listened to the seniors polishing up a section from Britten's "Sea Interludes" orchestral suite, he was smiling.

Leicester Mercury 1965

Leicestershire Schools Festival of Music

Choral and orchestral concert conducted by Michael Tippett and performed at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester, May 1965.



A programme of music conducted by Michael Tippett, and performed by the Senior Symphony Orchestra of the County School of Music and the choirs of primary schools.

| National Anthem | arr. Stanford |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Prologue (written for the occasion) | Michael Tippett |
| Overture 'Cockaigne' | Elgar |
| Junior Choir and Instrumentalists | |
| Symphony No. 2 | Alan Ridout |
| Interval | |

Interval

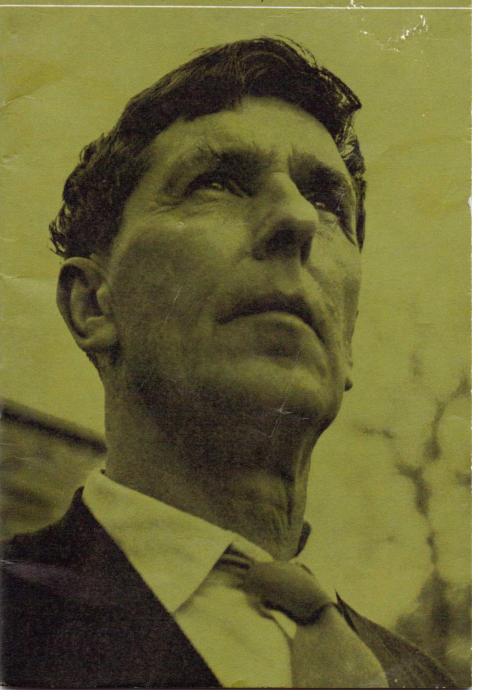
| Concerto for Double String Orchestra | Michael Tippett | | |
|---|-----------------|--|--|
| Junior Choir and Instrumentalists | | | |
| Four Sea Interludes from 'Peter Grimes' | Britten | | |

Choirs taking part are from the following primary schools:
Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Coalville All Saints
Coalville Broomleys
Glen Parva Rolleston
Hinckley Westfield
Loughborough Mountfields
Loughborough Shelthorpe
Oadby Launde
Thurmaston Church Hill

Tenors and basses for the Prologue are from Longslade Grammar School, Birstall and Beauchamp Grammar School, Oadby.

Leicestershire Schools Festival of Music

Choral and orchestral concert conducted by Michael Tippett and performed at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester, May 1965.



Leicestershire Schools Festival of Music 1965

A programme of music conducted by Michael Tippett, and performed by choirs from the Grammar Schools and the Senior Symphony Orchestra of the County School of Music.

| National Anthem | arr. Stanford Holst | |
|---|------------------------|--|
| 'Mars' and 'Jupiter' from 'The Planets' | | |
| Divertimento for String Orchestra | Shaun Dillon | |

Presentation of Leicestershire County Council Education Committee's prize to the winner of the Composition Competition restricted to students at the Colleges of Music: Shaun Dillon, Royal Scottish Academy of Music, Glasgow.

Interval

| The Oratorio 'A Child of our Time' | Michael Tippett | |
|---|----------------------|--|
| Soprano Soloist | Glenda Russell | |
| Contralto Soloist | Kathleen Pring | |
| Tenor Soloist | James Griffett | |
| Bass Soloist | Lionel Fawcett | |
| Soloists appear by courtesy of the Director of the Ro | yal College of Music | |
| Epilogue (composed specially for the Festival) | Michael Tippett | |

Choirs from the following grammar schools will take part:
Ashby-de-la-Zouch Boys' Grammar School
Ashby-de-la-Zouch Girls' Grammar School
Beauchamp School, Oadby
Dixie School, Market Bosworth
Guthlaxton School, Wigston Magna
Hinckley Grammar School
Longslade School, Birstall
Loughborough Grammar School
Rawlins School, Quorn

TOURAGEOUS and imagina-) tive enterprises seem inevitably to get the success

they deserve.

And so it happened last night, that the opening concert of Leicestershire Schools of Leicestershire Schools Festival of Music at the De Montfort Hall, was an exhila-rating triumph for all con-cerned in it and, in particular, for Michael Tippett whose inspiring direction and warm personality evoked playing personality evoked playing from his young orchestra that, at times, had a touch of miraculousness about it.

The programme was both ambitious and cleverly designed to display visually and aurally the two extremes of the gamut of musical adjuction

cal education organised and of Music.

Massed

choirs from

nine county primary schools represented the beginnings of musical experience as they sang, confident and clear-voiced, and produced a proliferation of sounds from recorders, dulcimers, guitars, hells and an assertment of percussive instruments. They num-bered in their hundreds and they made an impressive stage backeloth of white shirts, coloured ties and shining bright faces.

The fine playing of the senior Youth Symphony Orchestra demonstrated the quite amazing progress in individual

Musical Miracle

skill and corporate response that are achieved in relatively few years.

Energy

The music they played, with the exception of Elgar's "Cockaigne" overture, was all written by composers who are still livingand the same contemporary emphasis typifies the programmes of the whole Festival week. A wise and fitting concept this, for a generation which, more than any other, perhaps is very much concerned

with its own age

Last night's concert began with Michael Tippett's special-- written

arrangement for choir and orchestra of the traditional tune "Soomer is i-coomen in" which impressively established a mood of youthful well-being and energy.

Fun

An eagerly awaited first per-formance was that of Alan Ridout's second symphory in three movements, dedicated to his former teacher Michael Tippett as a 60th birthday tribute and written especially for the County Schools' Symphony Orchestra at the request of the indomitable Friends of the County School of Musica Music.

INSPIRED

The symphony may well have been an expression of the view that serialism can be fun. It has a not inflexible 12-note system and, in its outer movements, displays a wealth of lively rhythmic and melodic ideas whose natural and uninhibited flow and bustling good humour belie their tight organisation.

Tippett's direction was superb and the orchestra played with protestional maturity and with the obvious pride of co-ownership.

Tippett's direction was superb and the orchestra played with protestional maturity and with the obvious pride of co-ownership.

Tippett's direction was superb and the orchestra played with protestional maturity and with the obvious pride of co-ownership.

Tippett's direction was superb and the orchestra played with protestional maturity and with the obvious pride of co-ownership.

Tippett's direction was superb and the orchestra played with protestional maturity and with the obvious pride of co-ownership.

Tippett's direction was superb and the orchestra played with protestional maturity and with the obvious pride of co-ownership.

Tippett's direction was superb and the orchestra played with protestional maturity and with the obvious pride of co-ownership.

Tippett's own concerto for gould and the orchestra played with protestional maturity and with the obvious pride of co-ownership.

Tippett's direction was superb and the orchestra played with protestional maturity and with the obvious pride of co-ownership.

Topett's own concerto for double string orchestra was splendidly performed with a played with protestional maturity and with the obvious pride of co-ownership. sation.

The last movement, with its extended centrepiece for solo percussion, is a sort of concentrated Young Person's Guide designed to reveal the technical strength of all sections of the young county musicians.

Incredible

The slow movement for strings only provides an excellent and finely-proportioned contrast, its

finely-proportioned contrast, its brooding and tense atmosphere being ingeniously and assuredly created and quite moving.

Alan Ridout has an orchestral rocabulary that is very much his own and, apart from the exciting sounds he invents, it is typified by the unusually precise and cleanedged textures that are an important element of his attractive style. tive style.

movement's elegantly discursive melodic line.

Even more exacting were Britten's Four Sea Interludes from "Peter Grimes" in which the from "Peter Grimes" in which the full orchestra rose to the very heights of their achievement. There must have been many people in the audience who occasionally pinched themselves (as I did) as a reminder that this assured, virtuoistic performance was by schoolchildren.

ance was Incredible!

Charming

The primary choirs charmed the whole-audience with their delightful singing and playing—sometimes with the help of their seniors in the crehestra and sometimes wholly self-supporting. Indeed, it might be said that their rumba with full orchestral support was the show stealer!

Mr. Timett danced on his

support was the show stealer!

Mr. Tippett danced on his rostrum with obvious pleasure and, when it was all over, turned to the audience and said: "We'll have that again!"

This was, indeed, typical of the exuberance and the eternal youthfulness of the man. The last words of praise must go to him for the energy and devotion with which he directed the programme and for the affection and the wholehearted response which he drew from every performer.

he drew from every performer.
The ovation he received was generous and enthusiastic—and

Leicester Mercury May 1965

Eleven plus **Festival**

LEICESTERSHIRE Education Committee is holding next week a characteristically adventurous Festival of Music. There will be thirteen concerts on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in all parts of the county, and on Monday and Friday there will be two important choral and orchestral concerts in the De Montfort Hall Leicester.

Hall, Leicester.

The events in the county include three performances of short operas by Alan Ridout ("The Rescue") and Arthur Benjamin ("Prima Donna"), recitals by the Northern Sinfonia Trio and the Cam-den Wind Quintet, and a programme of prize-winning compositions in a specially arranged competition. More than two thirds of the cost of these concerts (£1,500) has been returned in advance subscriptions, and it is expected that ticket receipts will cover the rest, including the two concerts in the De Montfort Hall which should be well filled on Monday and Friday.

At the first of these Michael Tippett will

At the first of these Michael Tippett will conduct the first performance of his own Prologue and of Alan Ridout's Second Symphony (both of them written for the occasion), together with Elgar's "Cockaigne" Overture, Britten's Four Sea Interludes from "Peter Grimes," and Tippett's Double Concerto. On the Friday he will conduct another works written for the Festival—an Epilogue—Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for four wind instruments, and his own "A Child

of our Time.'

Now these programmes are to be performed not by any body of professionals, who would find them challenging enough, but by the boys and girls of the Symphony Orchestra of the County School of Music and its junior and senior choirs. None of this music has been composed especially for children—even those pieces written for Now, these programmes are to be per-

this music has been composed especially for children—even those pieces written for the occasion show no sign of writing down. Dedicated to his former teacher, Michael Tippett, Ridout's Second Symphony is neticeably Tippettian in style and so includes the consequent rhythmic complexities and contrapuntal texture. It does not call for individual virtuoso technique, but it does call for considerable corporate skill in sustaining a clear texture so that the interweaving metodic lines are audible skill in sustaining a clear texture so that the interweaving neelodic lines are audible on all levels (as in the slow movement for strings and percussion), for precision and a sense of the dramatic in the interpretation of the dynamics, and for advanced rhythmic command to deal not only with the frequent syncopations and off-beat entries but also the many asymmetrical metres. Tippett's Prologue ("Non nobis domine") are based on familiar settings of the words, but in neither case has he restrained his individuality in cross rhythms, tricky polyphony and tonality merely in order to spare his young singers.

LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS MUSIC FESTIVAL by Gerald Larner

A SSEMBLED at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester, on Monday for the opening concert of the Leicestershire Schools Music Festival, the 400 or so singers and instrumentalists looked alarmingly young. What from a distance had seemed adventurous, looked more like foolbardiness from close to. Even the entry of the conductor, Michael Tippett, did not quell all apprehensions, but the events of the rest of the evening finally condemned all fears as unjust and groundless.

In fact, this was one of the few concerts that can be classed as an experience. It was not are entirely musical experience, for no one could fail to be touched by the spectacle of one of this country's most important composers devoting so much care and energy to a concert by schoolchildren.

But there was more to it than this. Tippett conducted the first performance of the Prologue he had written for the Festival and was rewarded by some very bright brass and percussion playing, although this did tend to divorce itself from the voices partly because the composer the voices, partly because the composer had failed to integrate the texture and

partly because the performance was not properly balanced. His Concerto for Double String Orchestra was rewarding, too. The String Orchestra was rewarding too. The strings of the Senior Orchestra of the Leicestershire School of Music do not possess the strength or brilliance of tone that the Concerto really needs, but the rhythms are the main thing and these were skilfully dealt with and, as the composer rightly refused to relax the tempt, the nerformance maintained its essential the performance maintained its essential impetus and vitality. The counterpoint was not often obscured, the antiphonal effects came off and intonation was never so bad as to be disturbing as to be disturbing.

Perhaps the most surprising performance of all was that of Alan Ridout's Second Symphony, the other work commissioned for the occasion. It is not a great work, but it is a pleasing one with considerable rhythmic interest. Again, the orchestra was equal to this aspect of the music, even in the most tricky metres, and the whole performance was admirable for its discipline, its lively colouring and its purposefulness. In comparison with this, Elgar's "Cockaigne" Overture and Britten's Four Sea Utschulde scopped pracy shill; Sea Interludes seemed mere child's play.

HOWEVER, to have trusted this music to instrumentalists and singers of school age is not as unwisely ambitious as it might seem. For 17 years now Leicestershire's Adviser for Music has been Eric Pinkett, and it is he who rescued school music in the county from a state of post-war inertia

and so developed it that the orchestra
regularly plays abroad, gives full-scale
symphony concerts in Leicester (with conductors like Schwarz and Boult), and has taken part in six previous (and less ambitious) Leicestershire Schools Festivals.

The centre of activity is the County School of Music, a meeting for rehearsal every Saturday morning at the Longslade Grammar School on the outskirts of Leicester of the most promising musicians from the surrounding county schools. The orchestra, which naturally loses many of its members every year, is sustained by a junior orchestra, and the supply of instrumentalists is kept up in the schools by a carefully planned teaching programme, the basis of which is the county's seven projected.

seven peripatetic instrumental tutors.
It is a thorough, highly developed, and It is a thorough, highly developed, and apparently effective arrangement that must be the envy of most other education authorities. Perhaps the most inspired example of Eric Pinkett's planning is that this year the senior orchestra took its annual Easter vacation course at Corsham, Wiltshire, where Michael Tippett lives. Here they stayed, with a "Tempo" camera team and other fascinated visitors, near the home of the composer who reheaved them. home of the composer who rehearsed them nome of the composer who rehearsed them twice a day for a week. The teachers present were impressed by Tippett's way with the children, Tippett was impressed by their orchestra, and the children have benefited enormously by this close and prelonged contact with such an original musical mind.

A symptomatic story was told to me by the secretary, of the Festival, Jack Richards: At the end of the week members of the orchestra spontaneously made a collection between themselves, went to Bath, sought out a respectable tailor, inquired if he were Mr Tippett's tailor (which he was) and bought him a waist-coat. No doubt he will be wearing it in Leicester next week.

Gerald Larner

WITH a skilful and spirited performance of Michael Tippett's oratorio 'A Child of our Time" the several hundred school children who have this week been rehearsing and studying with Tippett brought the first Leicestershire Schools Festival of Music to a satisfying conclusion at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester, on Friday. It was a performance which in spite of the inevitable deficiencies must have given the composer, who directed it, pleasure for there was no mistaking the commitment of these young singers. these young singers.

For them the conditions which permitted the enormities of the last war are history but they clearly appreciate Tippett's passionate protest against injustice and his passionate protest against injustice and his consolatory optimism and faith in humanity's potential for goodness and decency. They sang with an intelligent liveliness which belied their youth and inexperience, dealing valiantly with the awkward accents and wicked cross-rhythms. awkward accents and wicked cross-rhythms. By way of relaxation they intoned the measures of the Chorale—like spirituals with a warm religious fervour, remembering the composer's injunction to "swing" it a little. It was a performance which proclaimed Tippett's natural control of emotional tensions and a grasp of spiritual fundamentals which override questions of time and location. In short, a very creditable effort. The soloists, all of them students at the Royal College of Music, were Glenda Russell (soprano), Kathleen Pring (contralto), James Griffett (tenor), Lionel Fawcett (bass).

Shaun Dillon's "Divertimento for string orchestra," which won him the first prize in the festival's composition section, was included in the programme, conducted by

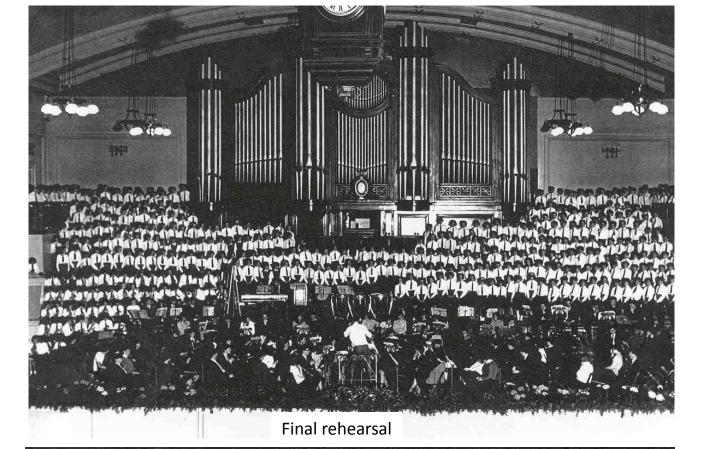
included in the programme, conducted by Eric Pinkelt, director of the County School of Music. It is a commendable piece of graceful writing.

The Guardian May 1965





Rehearsals in Corsham with Sir Michael Tippett in 1965



The state of the s

The 1965 Music Festival, De Montfort Hall, Leicester





The 1965 Music Festival, De Montfort Hall, Leicester

County Schools Orchestra For Bath Festival

LEICESTERSHIRE Schools Symphony Orchestra will tomorrow become the first orchestra of its kind to play at the Bath Festival.

Their patron, Sir Michael Tippett — one of the festival's three new directors — will conduct and the programme will include the first performance of his own "Interlude" which eventually will form part of a suite specially written for Leicestershire, of which the prelude and epilogue are already in the orchestra's repertoire.

epilogue are already in the orchestra's repertoire.

Charles Ives's "Three Places In New England" will reflect Sir Michael's current interest in American music's father-figure and his basic fondness for jazz accounts for his choice of Gershwin's "Rapsody in Blue" and Constant Lambert's "Rio Grande." Sir Michael has said that his present approach to composition embraces what he calls a re-exploration of the "blues."

Soloist

The Young Composer Richard Rodney Bennett will be the piano soloist in both these works. But when it comes to rehearsal time, he, Sir Michael, the orchestra and the Leicestershire Schools cheir, who will sing in Rio Grande, will yield to another manifestation of Americana. The concert takes place in Bath's Forum Cinema which on Saturday afternoons is given over irrevocably to bingo. So the Leicestershire contingent travel today to be ready for tomorrow morning's run-through.

The Schools Orchestra will soon be represented on another LP record. A chamber group of young musiclans is to repeat for one side of the disc a performance (shown on ITV recently) of "Dead in Tune" — a music fantasy for young viewers with a text written and spoken by Robin Ray and music by Bert Chappell.

Ray and music by Bert Chappell.
The reverse side will appeal similarly to the young. Bert Chappell is again the composer and the words are by John Kershaw of Thames TV, who was concerned with the very first television programme in which the County School of Music was featured. — R.A.P.

Leicester Mercury
June 1969

A CCENT on youth at the Bath Festival: A Sir Michael Tippett on Saturday evening conducted the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in modern British and American music; and yesterday afternoon, Colin Davis, the other musician member of the Festival's directorate, conducted the BBC Training Orchestra in a more sophisticated programme of Mozart, Haydn, Ravel, and Stravinsky.

Tippett's programme might have been designed expressly to contradict everything that the Menuhin era at Bath has stood for. As at the opening concert a week earlier, the music of Charles Iwes was prominent, shatteringly wild yet beautiful in "Putnam's Camp." This devotion to Iwes provided a clear pointer

to the new piece that Tippett himself had composed for the occasion, an Interluce to go with a Prologue and Epilogue written for the orchestra some four years ago, when he first became associated with it. The canon "Great Tom is Cast" keeps coming in, Ives-like, bold with heavy brass, piercing heavy clouds of notes. Though I failed to detect the promised part for electric guitar, it was a riot for everyone, not least for Sir Michael himself as conductor.

He gives himself with such intensity in his music-making that these wonderfully responsive children almost unfailingly return the compliment. His is not the quick professionalism such as electrifies Britten's work at Aldeburgh. Where Britten moves mountains overnight, Tippett is slower.

But Tippett, like Britten, can go true as an arrow to the emotional core of music quite alien from his own. So with Richard Rodney Bennett, another composer-interpreter, as a superb plano soloist Tippett directed a moving performance of Constant Lambert's wickedly neglected "Rio Grande."

The Guardian June 1969

9.30 IEDIOURI MUSIC NOW

The monthly review of what is happening in

MUSIC NOW

The last programme of the current series

SIR MICHAEL TIPPETT

co-director of the Bath Festival, discusses its aims and conducts the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra in his new work Interlude II

Radio Times June 1969



Richard Rod

1969 Bath Festival June 13-29

Artistic Directors: Sir Michael Tippett/Colin Davis/Jack Phipps

Saturday 21 June at 6 pm The Forum

Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Michael Tippett

Richard Rodney Bennett, piano Helen Attfield, contralto truff

Copland

Putnam's Camp

Quiet City

Lambert

The Rio Grande

Interval

Tippett

Divertimento: 'Sellinger's Round'

Gershwin

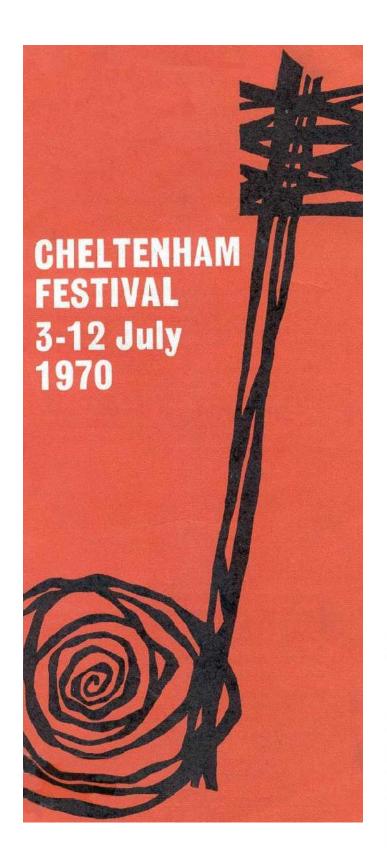
Rhapsody in Blue

Tippett

Prologue, Interlude and Epilogue *

(* first public performance of Interlude)

The chorus is drawn from Ashby-de-la-Zouch Girls' Grammar School and Boys' Grammar School, Longslade Upper School, Birstall and Lutterworth Grammar School.



The jolliest, most rousing, not to say rowdy, concert of the week was that of the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra, which tackled brilliantly, though of course not impeccably, the complex score of Sir Arthur Bliss's Piano Concerto under the guidance of the composer, while Frank Wibaut revelled in the unabashed bravura and romantic cantilena of the keyboard writing. The rest of the concert was conducted by Sir Michael Tippett, who, in one way and another, both here and in London, has emerged as musical hero_of the week

Having appeared on the previous evening in a "Meet the Composer" programme at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, he was returning thence in the small hours when he was involved as passenger in a serious road accident. from which he emerged shaken but mercifully unharmed. Without a word, he thereupon made his way to Cheltenham, took the three-hour afternoon rehearsal. conducted a long concert (with an encore of Ives' riotous " Circus Band") and did not even dinch from a "Composer in Person" appearance at 11 p.m. after the concert. Who else could have done it? Dame Ethel Smyth, perhaps.

The Ives piece, together with his naively solemn Ninetieth Psalm (fervently sung by the Schola Cantorum of Oxford) and Gershwin's zippy "Rhapsody in (polished off with huge Blue " gusto bv Wibaut), brought America vividly to our doorstep at last; and the concert ended with the first complete performance of the hero's own "Shires Suite," written at intervals for these young performers, which makes varied and subtle play with canons composed by others (from Byrd to Gochr) and concludes with a moving version of "Non nobis, Domine," Byrd's contained within. glowing. a envelope of orchestral tone.

Famous composers conduct young musicians

Last night at Cheltenham Festival was a gala occasion for the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra, who gave a lively and vivid concert at the Town Hall, under the direction of Sir Arthur Bliss and Sir Michael Tippett. The young musicians. augmented in the choral works by the fine chair of the Schola Canteron of Oxford. were clearly on their toes with excitement and enjoyed every minute of it. So did the audience.

Tippett's work with the Leicester Schools Orchestra is renowned, and his "Suires Suite" has been written for them in stages over the past few years. Last night saw its first complete performance, under its composer's direction.

It is probably not generally known that Tippett came almost straight from hospital after a bad car accident the night before. and took a long and arduous rehearsal with the young players in the afternoon before conducting the evening concert.

His devotion was well rewarded. Both the orchestra and the choir gave him all

they had got. The work itself demands astonishing virtuosity from the players. It begins with a Prologue, with a flerce and lively opening for the orchestra which leads in the chorus setting of "Scomer is 1-coomen in's against cheerful percussive ejaculations.

The slow Interlude I is brought in with some firm

Gloucestershire Echo July 1970

brass chording, leading to a long slow chorale-like brass tune based on the canon "The Silver Swan."

BONGO DRUMS

Strings take it up, still slower, and the percussion with bells and woodwind repeat it in measured, even slower note clusters. Bongo drums lead in the light-hearted hunting canon which follows-"Hey ho, to the Greenwood" which ends with shouts of Tantivy" in a roaring climax with megaphones, and then dies suddenly away.

A drinking catch follows, with an amusing cork-out-ofbottle percussive opening, and gusts of cheerful laughter to

end each yerse.

The third canon is a slower and more serious one by Alexander Goehr to Blake's words: "The sword sung on the barren heath," with a small dialogue between trumpets and guitar echoing the song of death which is cancelled by the swinging sound of the sickle "which will not yield."

VERY FAST

The second interlude is very fast and difficult, with a repeated swift string motif. equally swift percussive interjections leading to a climatic ending with the gong re-verberating on into silence for the last section, the beautiful little epilogue.

This moving small movement with its slow, upward-nuving string tune beginning on a low B flat is grave and quiet and leads to the final canon, "Non Nobis Domine," which has a special significance for the Leicestershire

schools.

The canon grows, with the orchestral motives all bound in together, to a massive climax, and then dies quietly away. The crchestra and caoir gave the work a most spirited and heart - warming performance.

BRILLIANT PIANIST

The rest of the concert was equally exciting Frank Wibaut, a young planist of 25 from London gave a brilliant virtuoso performance of Bliss's Piano Concerto in B flat. This is a full-blooded work in the great remantic concerto style, and this young planist fully understood this, and produced lyric tone and feeling, great strength when needed and equally great restraint and quietude.

The young orchestra, under Sir Arthur's crisp and sparkling direction, rose to the occasion and matched their soloist with vitality and

attack.

Frank Wibaut's second appearance of the evening was in Gershwin's famous Rhapsody in Blue, This, too, sounded vivid and pulsing with excitement, and orchestra almost matched the planist's astonishingly subtle jazz l'It. It was a tour de force for the soloist, especially after his prodigious performance in the Eliss Concerto.

TWO WORKS BY CHARLES IVES

The Schola Canterum began the evening with one of Charles Ives's best worksthe small, fervent setting of Psulm XC. With organ and bells for accompaniment, they sang this well-shaped work with firm, strong conviction.

Ivea's other piece for the evening was the orchestral setting of "The Circus Band," which works a lot better in this cheerful, hearty arrangement than as a song. It is eminently suitable for young people to perform, and both chorus and orchestra gave it lively and amusing treatment. It was so well received, that it was given a second perform-

Altogether a happy occasion in which youth took us all by

Berlin

Kaiserwilhelmkirche

10 September 1969

Dirigent: Eric Pinkett

Banks of Green Willow Trompetenkonzert

Sinfonische Metamorphosen

über Themen von Weber

Ouverture: 'Sancho Panza' 'Sellinger's Round'

Brigg Fair

Butterworth F. X. Richter

Hindemith

Brian Kelly Michael Tippett

Delius

Berlin

Philharmonie (Schulkonzert) 12 September 1969

Dirigent: Sir Michael Tippett Solist: Richard Rodney Bennett

'Russlan und Ludmilla'

Trompetenkonzert Sinfonische Metamorphosen

über Themen von Weber

Rhapsody in Blue Sellinger's Round'

Schottische Tänze

Hindemith

Glinka

F. X. Richter

Gershwin Michael Tippett lain Hamilton

Berlin

Philharmonie (öffentliches Konzert)

13 September 1969

Dirigent: Sir Michael Tippett Solist: Richard Rodney Bennett

Chor: Berliner Konzert Chor

Sinfonische Metamorphosen über Themen von Weber

Brigg Fair

Putnam's Camp

Pause

Quiet City Rhapsody in Blue

Prolog, Intermezzo und Epilog

Hindemith Delius

Ives

Aaron Copland Gershwin Michael Tippett Hannover

Theater am Aegi 15 September 1969

Dirigent: Sir Michael Tippett

Solist: Richard Rodney Bennett Chor: Der Niedersächsischen Singkreis

Russlan und Ludmilla' Trompetenkonzert

Sinfonische Metamorphosen über Themen von Weber

Rhapsody in Blue Putnam's Camp

Prolog, Intermezzo und Epilog

Glinka F. X. Richter

Hindemith

Gershwin

IVAS Michael Tippett

Gelsenkirchen

Hans-Sachs-Hans Grosser Saal 16 September 1969

Dirigent: Sir Michael Tippett Solist: Richard Rodney Bennett

Chor: Der Junge Chor der Stadt Bochum und die VHS Chorgruppen Gelsenkirchen

'Russlan und Ludmilia' Trompetenkonzert

Sinfonische Metamorphosen über Themen von Weber

Pause

Rhapsody in Blue Putnam's Camp Prolog, Intermezzo und Epilog Glinka F. X. Richter

Hindemith

Gershwin

Ives

Michael Tippett

Gymnasium Kreuzgasse 17 September 1969

Dirigent: Sir Michael Tippett Solist: Richard Rodney Bennett

Chor: Chor'61

'Russlan und Ludmilla' Trompetenkonzert

Sinfonische Metamorphosen

über Themen von Weber

Glinka

Hindemith

F. X. Richter

Rhapsody in Blue Putnam's Camp Prolog, Intermezzo und Epilog

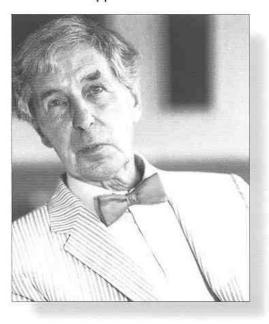
Gershwin Ives

Michael Tippett

Eric Pinkett rightly became a legend in the history of music education. His work in Leicestershire has been emulated by many Local Education Authorities since. In his book *Time to Remember* published on the 21st Anniversary of the County School of Music, he describes the beginnings of the first orchestra which Malcolm Fletcher joined on the first day. Pinkett writes "Thus in May 1948 there began the Saturday morning routine, which has continued without pause for these 21 years. There were about 60 players, mostly strings, with only one cellist and very few violas, one flute, one oboe and a host of brass wind..... week by week, I added fresh members to the orchestra, just as soon as they could blow or scrape well enough to make a tolerable sound" (*Time to Remember*). The Saturday morning tradition continues 50 years on with ten bands and orchestras, ballet and dance groups, Indian music and Dance, Steel Pans and Youth Theatre groups reflecting the wider brief of the organisation now known as Leicestershire and Leicester Arts in Education.

Pinkett found instruments in junk shops, friends' attics and by advertising in the press. We still have some of those instruments, added more over time through the good offices of the LEA and fund raising and of course the National Lottery. Pinkett's County Youth Orchestra soon made more than a 'tolerable sound'. Under his conductorship, the players achieved excellence both nationally and in Europe where the orchestra went on many successful tours. Many famous conductors and composers worked with the orchestra over the years and extended the range and quality of the musical experience for young people in Leicestershire. They included Sir Adrian Boult, Douglas Cameron, George Weldon, Norman Del Mar, Andre Previn and, above all, the late Sir Michael Tippett who worked with the Orchestra in the 1960s and continued to be its patron until his death in 1998.

Sir Michael Tippett



Stewart Mason, Pinkett's Director of Education, was an ardent supporter of the County School of Music and went on tours with the orchestra. In a postscript in *Time to Remember*, he writes: "What a great day it was when past members of the County School of Music after finishing their higher education in music started coming back to teach in our schools... We have seen over these 21 years, the musical life of the County at every level getting richer and richer - and at every level the programme becoming more ambitious and more creative." In 1998 there are ex members of past orchestras still teaching as peripatetic instrumental teachers and music teachers in Leicestershire schools. In 1976, Eric Pinkett finally retired. After such an inspiring reign, his successor had to be special. Andrew Fairbairn, Director of Education from 1971 - 1984, takes up the story.



Eric Pinkett's last great accomplishment was the easy integration of the City of Leicester's bands and orchestras into the Leicestershire School of Music because of the reorganisation of Local Government in 1974. Such was the County School of Music's reputation nationally and internationally that the process was appreciated as being in the best interest of children and students

With the great support of Nathan Harris, Chairman of the Leicestershire Education Committee in 1977, we were fortunate to appoint Peter Fletcher, Peter was then Chairman of the outstanding and second to none in Great Britain.

Dalhousie University's Music Faculty in Nova Scotia, and before that had been Staff Inspector for Music in the Inner London Education Authority. His recruitment of a first rate band of peripatetic instrumental teachers, the introduction of much contemporary repertoire, of Douglas Young as Composer in Residence, major overseas tours, concerts in St. John's Smith Square, recordings etc., and tireless development of the School of Music to a new pitch of excellence was legendary. Peter brought into focus the choral side of music which had tended to be obscured by the powerful development of the instrumental and curriculum aspects of the work. His establishment of the Leicestershire Chorale as a teachers' choir and of the Loughborough Singing Week are examples. He may have been a thorn in the flesh of the office, but the results until his move to be Principal of the Welsh College of Music & Drama in 1984, were

To follow the Pinkett era, I reckoned that it was important to select someone charismatic, but different in character and approach; someone with excellent musical credentials, wide experience of music education and who would make an immediate rapport with students and insist on the highest possible standards. I wanted someone who would maintain and enhance the Leicestershire Schools' Symphony Orchestra's and the School of Music's reputation as the best in the United Kingdom.

Peter Fletcher





TIPPETT. Shires Suite*.

YOUNG. Virages—Region Onet. *Leicestershire Chorale; †Rohan de Saram (vlc); *†Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra / *Peter Fletcher; †Douglas Young. Unicorn UNS267 (£3.99).

The Shires Suite is both a deserved tribute to the adventurous skill of the young players for whom Tippett composed it and at the same time virtually a 'young person's guide' to the developments that took place in his music during the late 1960s (it was written, in stages, between 1965 and 1970, the years of The Knot Garden and the Third Symphony). Despite, though, its pastoralsounding title and the fact that each movement is based on well-known rounds or canons, it is not simplified Tippett. It contains many of the features that, at that period, took his adult audiences by surprise: overt jazz influence, the pungent sound of the electric guitar, richly complex textures side by side with jaggedly harsh ones. Around a central 'cantata'-canons by Byrd (accelerated to the point of disintegration), Purcell (embellished with electronic wailings and whoopings) and Alexander Goehr (framed by shining trumpets and bell-like guitar tollings)are placed two scherzos (an urgent toccataprelude based on Sumer is i-cumen in and an ingenious fusion of Dov's music in The Knot Garden with Great Tom is cast) and two slow movements, the first a densely-woven canon by diminution on The Silver Swan, the second a hauntingly beautiful, almost Ivesian meditation on Byrd's Non nobis, Domine. It is a rich, complex and fascinating work, performed with great panache and enthusiasm. Douglas Young's Virages (the word means 'cornerings' or 'turning-points') descends from Messiaen via Xenakis (and Tippett's own Concerto for orchestra, perhaps) in its exploration of the ways in which time and space can inter-react in music: slow crescendi, shimmering sound-clusters, points of intensifying light and flickering arabesques emerge from silence, hover and rotate through an orchestral space defined by tiny, disparate groups arranged in pitch order—violins and piccolo at the back, double-basses and bass trombones at the front. Like the Tippett, it is a work that needs the leisured listening that recording allows; like the Tippett, it receives a formidably assured performance. The recording has an excellent sense (especially valuable in Virages) of depth as well as M.E.O. presence.

GRAMOPHONE
JUNE 81

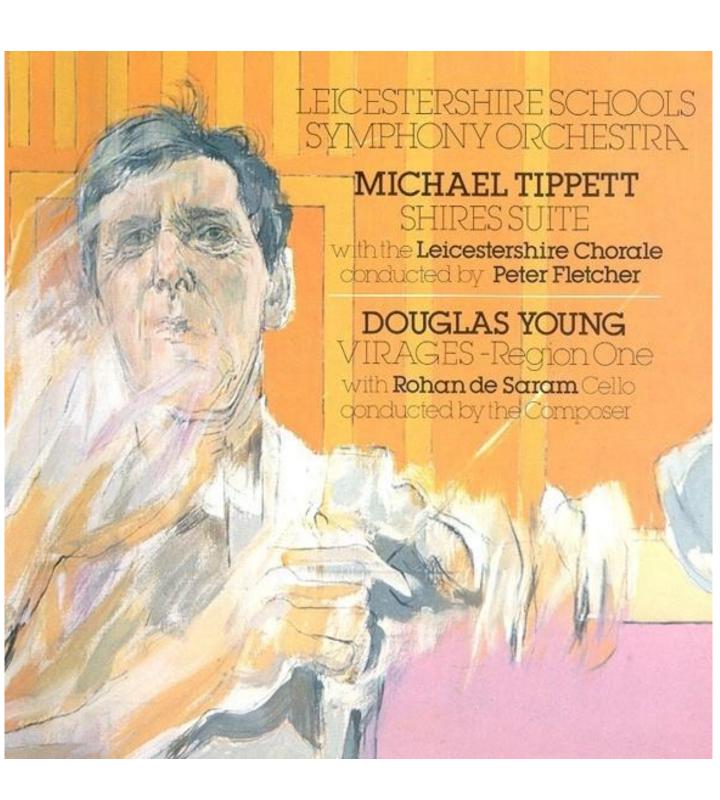
TIPPETT: Shires Suite / YOUNG: Virage-Region One

Rohan de Saram (vlc) / Leicestershire Chorale / Leicestershire Schools SO / Fletcher / Young Unicorn UNS 267 (£3.99)

A complete recording of Tippett's Shires Suite for chorus and orchestra has long been conspicuous by its absence from the catalogue. The work was written for the Leicestershire Schools SO between 1965 and 1970, the gestation period of *The Knot Garden*, and has thematic and textural similarities with the opera. The performance captured in this recording is finely in tune with the vigour and subtleties of the score. Douglas Young's Virages-Region One for cello and orchestra is primarily concerned with the juxtaposition and interaction of dynamic and reflective temporal modes (as the composer describes them) but also has an important spatial and timbral element, with the orchestra disposed in a number of small groups arranged by register. The solo cello, brilliantly played by Rohan de Saram, functions as the chief instigator in the ramified ensemble's development of the musical ideas. The orchestra itself produces a fully committed and assured account of the work. The careful placing of the players in this work requires something special in the way of recording and here it is Ambisonic UHJ 2-channel encoded to produce, with the appropriate playback equipment, 'a greatly enhanced sense of space and direction'. Even with normal stereo playback there is a more clearly defined front-to-back placing than usual and the left-to-right spread is well detailed. By modern standards, however, the reproduction of instrumental timbre is good, but nothing more. An average A, therefore. Overall, the disc can be warmly recommended and Leicester City Council, who aided its production, can think their money well spent. [A: 1]

Doug Hammond

HI - FI NEWS JUNE 81



CESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

SIDE 1

Sir Michael Tippett (b. 1905) Shires Suite Published by Schott & Co.

with The Leicestershire Chorale conducted by Peter Fletcher

1. Prologue (1:50)

Canon: 'Soomer is i-coomen in Loode sing cuckoo'

2. Interlude I (3:30)

The orchestral Interlude I is slow, somewhat on the lines of a chorale prelude. It is based on the canon 'The Silver Swan'. The three melodic lines of the canon are presented at different speeds as between: Trumpet and Trombone (plain, normal speed); Strings (decorated and much transformed, twice as slow); Bells and Woodwind (cluster, one-and-a-half times as slow).

3. Cantata (7:00)

Comprising three canons (the third one being a setting by Alexander Goehr of a Blake epigram) each introduced by the words: 'Come let us sing you a

Canon I (Byrd) Canon II (Purcell) 'Hey ho, to the Greenwood

Now let us go.

'Fie, nay prithee, John

Do, not quarrel man

Let's be merry and drink about.'

Canon III (Goehr)

'The sword sang on the barren heath The sickle on the fruitful field: The sword he sung a song of death, But could not make the sickle yeald.'

4. Interlude II (3:05)

The orchestral Interlude II is very fast, of considerable virtuosity and occasionally jazzy. The canon 'Great Tom is Cast' appears three times: 3 Trumpets; 3 Trombones; Trumpets and Trombones in octaves.

5. Epilogue (5:17)

Canon (Byrd)

'Non nobis, Domine non nobis, Sed nomini tuo, da gloriam.

In the early 1960's, Sir Michael Tippett became associated with musical education in Leicestershire. At the invitation of the late Eric Pinkett, then Music Adviser, Sir Michael visited Leicestershire regularly to conduct rehearsals and performances of his own works, and those of Ives. This was no celebrity taking the baton at the dress rehearsal; Sir Michael gave a great deal of time to the young orchestra, and would talk, often at considerable length, about the ideas and compositional techniques that lay beneath the musical surface.

Leicestershire's close involvement with contemporary music was stimulated by Sir Michael's enthusiasm. But the Shires Suite, fruit of this liaison, is of double interest through being the record of a major composer's musical development at a crucial turning point in his artistic life.

Like W. B. Yeats, Tippett had transformed his artistic style at a Like W. B. Yeats, Tippett had transformed his artistic style ats single blow. The superabundant lyricism of the 1950's suddenly gave way to a pungent monody, virile yet austere, whose athletic lines could sustain a vigorous but limited vision. By 1965 an impasse was in sight. The next five years, which saw the growth of *The Knot Garden* and *Shires Suite*, was the period in which Tippett struggled towards the complex synthesis he was finally to achieve, magnificently, in the *3rd Symphony* of 1971.

The Shires Suite is a diary of this struggle. From the title one might expect a nostalgic pastoral dedicated to the spirits of the Malvern Hills; but this work looks as much to the "living language" of the urban present as to the misty horizons of rural language" of the urban present as to the misty horizons of truit archetypes. The Prologue and Epilogue (composed in 1965) may recall the world of the Midsummer Marriage, but the second Interlude (1969) is an extended jazzy development of the "wailing music" association with Dov in The Knot Garden; the Cantata (1970) seems a first intimation of the "Blues" with which the 3rd Symphony was to end, (even down to a common thematic progression from innocence to experience), while Interlude I foreshadows, in its densely stratified polyphony, still more recent developments in Tippett's art.

What might appear a hybrid conception is unified by the use of familiar (and some not-so-familiar) canons in each movement—a contrapuntal rigour which recalls another five-movement work—the 3rd String Quartet of twenty years earlier. But there is nothing academic about this Suite, which is often entertaining, frequently exciting, and in the case of the Epilogue hauntingly beautiful. Here Tippett has used Byrd's canon "Non nobis, Domine", revealing its tonal ambiguity as the melody leans towards Ab, Eb, Bb, C minor, G major—finally combining all these implications in a single chord.

SIDE 2

Douglas Young (b. 1947) Virages - Region One (32:00) Composer's Copyright

with Rohan de Saram, Cello conducted by the Composer

"Virages", in its full form, is a trilogy of works for 'cello and various instrumental ensembles. The first of these — "Region One" — employs a large orchestra but is not a concerto in the usual sense. It might be better thought of as a musical landscape in which the 'cello leads us along various musical paths which emerge into constantly new orchestral areas, each with its own distinctive "view".

This movement in space is quite literal. As the music progresses so the orchestral sound will journey from back-left to front-left, across to front-right and finally disappear to back-right. The journey in space is, however, continually contradicted. Sometimes we see/hear a "view" that we have observed previously — but now from a new perspective. At other times a large number of musical areas will sound together.

The orchestra is seated by register, with all the high instruments grouped together at the back, all the low instruments at the front. Furthermore, instruments of similar sonority are positioned as far apart from one another as possible (rather than the usual practice of grouping similar families of instruments together). In this way the orchestra becomes an ensemble of some thirty-four chamber music groups, each one of which corresponds to one of the melodic "paths" initiated by the solo 'cello. These range from the simple intervals of the opening the morre elaborate melodic configurations none of which however. 'cello. These range from the simple intervals of the opening to more elaborate melodic configurations none of which, however, function as 'themes'. Rather, they become ever changing forms which are subjected to an unchanging process of elaboration. For instance, the chords that dominate the central sections of Virages are all produced by applying the same process of expansion to different musical intervals (just as mountains assume contrasted shapes despite the consistent process that formed them). In passing it should perhaps be noted that processes of 'contraction' occasionally result in intervals smaller than a semi-tone. smaller than a semi-tone.

If Virages has an over-riding pre-occupation it is with 'time'. In music, 'time' can be divided into two types: the dynamic and the reflective. While it is naive to be schematic about it, in general the West has adopted the dynamic mode, the East, the relective. By 'dynamic' I mean forward moving music which aims at progressing towards a definite climax and resolution; by 'reflective' I mean a more concentric approach, circling continually around a number of relatively static musical ideas, and often jopen-ended,' improvisatory, etc. and often 'open-ended', improvisatory, etc.

and often 'open-ended', improvisatory, etc.

Virages — Region One describes a long curve from the (largely) reflective opening — suggested by a slow motion film of a swan in flight — to the (predominantly) dynamic close—although this music cannot be said to end, merely to recede into inaudibility. For the major part of the work these two temporal elements converge and fuse, producing the 'corners' and 'volte-faces' of the title. This process has a parallel in Monet's famous painting "Impression d'aube" where two colours—red, which appears to advance, and blue, which appears to recede—seem held for a moment in ambiguous equipoise.

The principal ways in which the reflective and dynamic modes are combined in *Virages* are based on the arousal of certain expectations in the listener, which are contradicted, modified, or put into an unorthodox perspective by the context in which they occur. Some examples of this are the long static notes near the beginning, which appear at first to be entirely reflective, but which acquire a strongly dynamic motivation by being given a 'crescendo' and increasing density of instrumentation. They are followed by rather turbulent, apparently dynamic passages, which however merely fade into silence, thus becoming retrospectively 'reflective'.

Another important way of combining dynamic and reflective modes is by the use of *silence*. The principal use of silence in *Virages* is to separate musical figures from one another, so that each figure achieves an almost independent existence. Frequently rapid and dynamic musical figures will appear which as quickly disappear into silence, like the arabesque of birds seen momentarily amid the static vastness of the sky. Or a great musical chord will emerge and subside in the orchestra, like the rise and fall of an immense wave.

At other times each instrument will play strongly dynamic musical figures, which when combined in ensemble will become collectively reflective!, like a stormy sea seen from a distance, or the movements of a crowd from high above. The movement of sound in space, which is such an important part of the work, has constantly to contend with the imposed symmetry of the orchestral layout: the result is a musical kaleidoscope in which a limited number of permissable movements (the concentric or reflective element) jostle to attain maximum (dynamic) freedom. This equation of time and space is reflected in the quotation from Parsifal that heads the score:

"zum Raum wird hier die Zeit".

Virages - region one was composed between 1974 and 1978 with extensive revisions in 1980. It is dedicated to Brigitte Schiffer.

Five sections follow each other without a break:

'Awakening'

(ii) Orchestral tutti

(iii) Central 'plateau' (in many smaller sections)

(iv) Tutti & cello cadenza (v) Conclusion

© Douglas Young, 1980

Original sleeve - back

The Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1948 by Eric Pinkett, OBE, the country's first Music Adviser. During its formative years the orchestra enjoyed close associations with many distinguished soloists, conductors and composers who worked with the orchestra, in particular Sir Michael Tippett. More recently the orchestra has had the benefit of many unusual and exciting musical experiences resulting from the presence of Douglas Young as Composer in Residence in Leicestershire. Over the past few years the orchestra has gained a reputation for its performances of 20th century music under its present conductor, Peter Fletcher. It has continued to tour to important concert venues abroad and recently received a ten minute standing ovation from 2000 citizens of Naples.

The Leicestershire Chorale is a Chamber Choir of forty voices which was formed by Peter Fletcher in 1977 to provide high level performing opportunities for experienced choral singers in the area. It covers a very wide ranging repertoire and has made three European concert tours.

Peter Fletcher is Leicestershire's Principal Music Adviser and Peter Fletcher is Leicestershire's Principal Music Adviser and directs its School of Music. He has held positions as Music Adviser to the East Riding of Yorkshire, organist of Beverley Minster and Professor of Music at Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia, where he established Opera East and conducted regularly for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. At the age of 30 he was appointed to the leading position in music and education in London, as Staff Inspector for Music for the ILEA, where he pioneered many new approaches to music education, including training schemes for young musicians and childrens' concerts in the Royal Festival Hall. More recently, he has devised and conducted childrens' concerts with the Philharmonia Orrhetza He is also author of the book "Roll over Philharmonia Orchestra. He is also author of the book "Roll over

DOUGLAS YOUNG was born in London and studied composition and piano at the R.C.M. under Anthony Milner, Antony Hopkins and Stephen Savage. He was already working professionally while still at college, particularly with choreographer Ronald Hynd for whom he has written several scores. On Benjamin Britten's recommendation Young was awarded a fellowship at Trinity College Cambridge (1973 – 5) where he completed two commissions for the English Chamber Orchestra, and founded the ensemble *Dreamtiger* which has been closely associated with the music of Xenakis Pousseur been closely associated with the music of Xenakis, Pousseur and Crumb. From 1975 to '77 Young was Composer in Residence to the Leicestershire Education Committee.

In addition to *Virages* Young's recent works include several compositions related to the life and poetry of Apollinaire, and a series of concerti titled "Night Journeys under the Sea".

Young gives many recitals with Rohan de Saram, and with his ensemble Dreamtiger. He is married and lives in London.

ROHAN DE SARAM, who spent his childhood in Sri Lanka, studied with Casals and Cassado, establishing himself on the international concert world while still in his teens. The conductor Mitropolous called him "a rare genius, and an amazing young cellist". Platigorsky, no less, presented him with a special bow (which he still uses) in token of his admiration; and recently he was featured on BBC1 (and 2) television in a series of film portraits devoted to "great artists of the 20th century".

Over a performing career that already spans quarter of a century Mr de Saram has worked with many of the great names in modern music, including Kodaly, Shostakovitch and Poulenc. Latterly he has become the inexhaustible champion of the avant-garde, presenting many premieres of works (some specially written for him) by Xenakis, Berio, Pousseur, Crumb, Young, and Ligeti who recently sent him an early work 'to try'.

In addition to a worldwide career as a soloist Rohan de Saram is a member of the ensemble *Dreamtiger*, the *Arditi Quartet*, and the Cummings Trio, and works regularly with violinist Salvatore

Rohan, who is married, also plays the Kandyan drum and evinces strong interest in eastern music. His cello is by Guarnerius the elder, dated 1689.

Douglas Young (Shires Suite)
Peter Hill (Virages)
Recorded by Geoffrey Barton at De Montfort
Hall, Leicester on 5th and 6th April 1980, (with
generous assistance from the Leicester City
Council) utilising an Ampex 104 Tape Recorder with tape speed of 30 inches per second. A single Calrec 'Soundfield' microphone was used.

This record is Ambisonic UHJ 2-channel encoded, stereo compatible. It may be played perfectly as ordinary stereo. However, a greatly enhanced sense of space and direction will be obtained using an Ambisonic UHJ decoder feeding four or more loudspeakers.

Cover Painting (Detail)

Sir Michael Tippett conducting the Leicestershire Schools' Symphony Orchestra at the De Montford Hall, Leicester was painted by Bryan Organ in 1966, and is one of the County Education Committee's Collection of original works of art for Schools and Colleges

Sleeve Lavout

Arran Studios, Leicester

Copyright exists in all Unicorn recordings. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording of records under this trade mark in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. Applications for public performance licences should be addressed to Phonographic Performance Ltd, Ganton House, 14 – 22 Ganton Street, London W1V 1LB.

Also available on Unicorn, the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra performs Havergal Brian Symphonies No. 10 (conducted by James Loughran) and No. 21 (conducted by Eric Pinkett). UNS 265







Rohan de Saram with Douglas Young

