



John Pritchard at Edinburgh, 1962



On Wednesday the LSO, conducted by John Pritchard, performed for the first time a cantata by Luigi Nono called "Sul Ponte di Hiroshima." It is composed for soprano, tenor, and orchestra, and is a setting of the German Gunther Anders's "The Man on the Bridge," translated into Italian, with an interpolation for soprano solo in Spanish. The poem tells us that "they must not just lie around, their death is not death in the usual sense but a warning to be passed on." It ends with "A door will open. The tumult of the streets will be the tumult in my heart in the light of the morning. . . ." There was certainly tumult in the orchestra. But Nono has undoubtedly set his serious text seriously. He aims at finding an expression of pity, horror, awakening dawn and hope, by a sort of instrumental onomatopoeia. The violins pressed down their strings and hit them with their hands. There is a clever amalgam of slitherings and harmonics. The brass trumpets like wounded elephants. There are pretty tinklings of bells. Occasionally there are sounds of a furniture removal. The solo voices wail, sometimes with an indefinable pathos. But frankly I don't pretend to understand this score as music. Not as music of the kind on which I can speak with some authority.

It may have genius, potential or actual, though I suspect it is not more than a matter of an ingenious ear, plus naïve imagination. Richard Lewis, at this performance, did his best in the circumstances to make good the deficiency. And Dorothy Dow coped with her soprano parts successfully I imagine. But only Mr Pritchard is in a position to state with certainty how many of the notes written down on paper were reproduced in this performance in their right places, and order. And, probably, the composer himself.

Neville Cardus, The Guardian, 24 August 1962 (*excerpt*)

Producer's Note

This final of three visits to the 1962 Edinburgh Festival brings yet another "new" conductor to the Pristine catalogue, John Pritchard. Wikipedia tells us he was "known for his interpretations of Mozart operas and for his support of contemporary music", and whilst he was instrumental at the Glyndebourne Festival Opera for much of his life he did also take up posts as musical director of the London Philharmonic in the 1960s and later as chief conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Here we find him with the London Symphony Orchestra, and perhaps appropriately enough, conducting both Mozart and a contemporary work by Luigi Nono. In fact it is perhaps the latter for which this release is the most important - Nono's "Canti di vita e d'amore: Sul ponte di Hiroshima" was commissioned for the Edinburgh Festival and this excellent stereo recording of its world première performance may also be the first full commercial release of the work. (I've not been able to confirm this but I believe the central unaccompanied soprano solo section has been previously issued.) The recording was made by the BBC Transcription Service most probably for distribution to American broadcasters rather than domestic transmission; announcements suggest two "programmes" were prepared, with the Debussy *Nocturnes* separate from the rest of the concert. I've retained most of the original announcements, though some trimming of these and lengthy audience applause was necessary to ensure the full recording could be accommodated on a single CD. **Andrew Rose**



pritchard

at the edinburgh festival, 1962



mozart
symphony no. 31 - 'paris'

tchaikovsky
romeo and juliet love duet

nono
sul ponte di hiroshima
(world première)

debussy
nocturnes

marie collier, soprano
dorothy dorow, soprano
richard lewis, tenor
edinburgh royal choral union
london symphony orchestra
john pritchard, conductor
stereo bbc transcription service recording

pritchard

at the edinburgh festival, 1962

COMPACT
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PASC 499

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Andrew Rose

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Live concert recording
Edinburgh Festival
Usher Hall, Edinburgh
August 22, 1962

Recorded by
BBC Transcription Services

Total duration: 78:30

1 BBC Introduction (0:48)

MOZART Symphony No. 31 in D, K.297/300a, "Paris"

2 1st mvt. - Allegro assai (7:51)

3 2nd mvt. - Andante (6:47)

4 3rd mvt. - Allegro (4:29)

5 TCHAIKOVSKY Romeo and Juliet Love Duet (15:25)

Marie Collier *soprano*

Richard Lewis *tenor*

NONO Canti di vita e d'amore: Sul ponte di Hiroshima

6 1. Sul ponte di Hiroshima (8:21)

7 2. Djamilia Boupachà (3:48)

8 3. Tu (8:01)

Dorothy Dorow *soprano*

Richard Lewis *tenor*

DEBUSSY Nocturnes

9 1. Nuages (6:56)

10 2. Fêtes (6:22)

11 3. Sirènes (9:42)

Edinburgh Royal Choral Union

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London Symphony Orchestra *John Pritchard*

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