

TWO VICTORIAN MUSICIANS AND SPOHR

by Keith Warsop

1. A Yorkshire Violinist

John Tiplady Carrodus (1836-1895) was a pupil of the violinist Bernhard Molique (1802-1869) and a notable figure in the annals of British music in his time, appearing as soloist at the Philharmonic Society concerts and others, was one of the original members of the Hallé Orchestra, the regular second fiddle at Ella's well-known Musical Union Chamber Music Concerts, a member of London's Royal Italian Opera and Covent Garden orchestras and took part in many of the big musical festivals of the day. He was also professor of violin at the National Training School, the forerunner of the Royal College of Music. After his death a memoir of his life, written by Ada Carrodus, was published in 1897 and we recently acquired a copy. The title page reads:

J.T. CARRODUS / VIOLINIST / A LIFE STORY: 1838 [sic]-1895, / BY / ADA CARRODUS. / WITH / AN ACCOUNT OF HIS STUDENT DAYS / BY / CLARA MOLIQUE./With Photogravure Portrait and Illustration./LONDON:/A.J. BOWDEN, 510^B, HORNSEY ROAD./1897./All rights reserved.

From the chapter headings, which are as follows:

I. EARLY DAYS; II. LESSONS FROM MOLIQUE; III. STUDENT DAYS IN STUTTGART; IV. AT HOME; V. SPOHR; VI. WORK; VII. AMENITIES; VIII. WORK UNCEASING

it will be seen immediately that Chapter V holds a special interest for us.

Carrodus was born in January 1836 in the Yorkshire village of Braithwaite close to Keighley on the edge of the Yorkshire moors, some two to three miles from Haworth, famous as the home of the Brontës. He proved to be something of a child prodigy after having his first violin at the age of about six and although his father was not well off he was an ardent musician and determined to do his best to help his son to make a career in music. We read: "There was great difficulty in getting money to purchase music for him, and it was a great struggle to manage to get him Spohr's "Violin School," which his father was most anxious he should have. When eight years old he was playing in the orchestra at a concert in Keighley, his father leading upon the occasion. The lady vocalist, a Mrs. Winterbottom, was so pleased with his playing that she gave him five shillings. Her example was followed by a gentleman present, and this ten shillings (with the addition of money the boy earned for playing at concerts here and there) was used for the purchase of the much coveted book."

In 1847-48 Carrodus was sent to London for lessons with the elder Zerbini but soon went to Molique who was so impressed that he offered to continue the lessons without charge when the father could not afford to pay for more and that July took the boy with him back to Stuttgart for further tuition. Back in London, the book switches to Clara Molique's reminiscences and she relates: "In the spring of 1852, my father gave a series of concerts of chamber music in London at the Beethoven Rooms. At the second of these concerts I remember how beautifully my father and John Carrodus, then 16 years of age, played together in Spohr's Duo in D minor for two violins. The composer was present; he sat with Madame Spohr (his second wife) in a corner of the room. There was a quiet dignity in his appearance, and when the audience became aware of the fact that Spohr was among the first to arrive, everyone turned round to look at the grand old man. When the concert began he listened with great attention, and he could not fail to remark how the two violins when heard together were in perfect unison, and when one solo passage followed another, each instrument had its own eloquent and characteristic language, grand and noble, sweet and impressive, both telling a beautiful tale in tones of crystal purity. At the end of the performance, Spohr stood up, he was at that time nearly 68 years of age — he wore a wig, but his figure was still quite erect, he was more than six feet in height, a venerable looking man. Carrodus was very proud of the praise and kind words of encouragement Spohr did not spare on that occasion."

We now quote the opening paragraphs of Chapter V which is entitled SPOHR. "In June 1853, Mr. Carrodus was invited to meet Dr. Spohr at the Musical Institution, and a note from Molique on the subject runs: 'My dear John. Practise well the Duo by Spohr, G minor (which we played together at our first concert), and come today till six o'clock with the duet and your violin to me. You must play it tomorrow evening in the Musical Institution, where is the reception of Spohr.' A week or so later Molique arranged a private meeting for Dr. Spohr to hear John play a solo. He played the Seventh Concerto by that eminent artist, and received from him an autograph testimonial, which is as follows: 'I hereby certify that Mr. J.T. Carrodus played my Seventh Violin Concerto with very great perfection, and I am convinced would, by playing the same in public, meet with the greatest success. July, 1853. Dr. Louis Spohr.' Dr. Spohr during the same visit to London invited Mr. Carrodus to play with him in a private performance of his Sextet. Spohr arranged this performance to remove a very unpleasant impression he had of an interpretation given a week before, when the composer was present in the audience and at which it was so indifferently played that he was much displeased. Strenuous efforts were made for John to play a solo at the Bradford Festival, on the occasion of the opening of the St. George's Hall (1853), and after much uncertainty the balance went in his favour on his presenting Dr. Spohr's flattering testimonial. [...] He had hoped on this occasion to play the Seventh Concerto of Spohr's, but Sir Michael Costa (then Mr. Costa), who was the conductor, deemed it too long for the programme, so he substituted a fantasia by Molique on English airs."

Later references to Spohr occur as follows: "In January 1854 he made his first appearance at the Manchester Chamber Concerts arranged by Sir Charles Hallé, where he played with Hallé, Molique and Piatti in Spohr's D minor quartet, and also a quartet of Mendelssohn's." In December 1858 he is mentioned as appearing in another Manchester concert, this time involving piano trios by Beethoven and Spohr and in March 1860 performed Spohr's *Gesangszene* concerto for the first time in Manchester.

In February 1895 Carrodus was celebrating the 50th anniversary of his public debut and chose to mark it with a concert in Keighley at which the town council decided to use the occasion to present him with the freedom of the borough. Spohr, of course, featured in the programme, firstly Clara Samuel sang 'Rose, softly blooming', then later came one of the duets from Op.67 in which one of Carrodus's four sons (they were all professional musicians) took the other violin part. Fittingly, it was after the Spohr duet that the presentation of the freedom of the borough took place. It was just in time; Carrodus suffered a fatal heart attack on the night of July 12-13 that summer.

The book raises two mysteries. On page 76 we read that "His most successful interpretations were Molique's and Spohr's concertos and Beethoven's. Of this latter he made a triumphant success, always playing the cadenzas, written expressly for him by Molique, which have never been printed and of which he held the original manuscript, occasionally lending it for study to favoured friends or pupils." Attempts to find out what happened to this cadenza have so far proved fruitless; here is a challenge for a musical detective! The second mystery too is still unsolved: "In the spring of 1892, he paid a visit to the office of the Phonograph, and played several solos which were reproduced; he also spoke the words 'played by me, John Tiplady Carrodus, April 4th, 1892' into the instrument. He listened to the reproduction of 'The Carnival of Venice' with great interest, said, he had never heard himself play before, and thought that it could be made extremely useful to correct faults in playing. [...] The effect of the voice following was very astonishing. The lady attendant said, it was the first really good specimen of violin playing she had ever had, and she seemed very delighted with it."

So, what has happened to the recordings? The British Library National Sound Archive can shed no light on whether they still exist but they were able to add to the information given in the Carrodus memoir. In reply to our enquiry they said: "The word 'phonograph' poses a problem as it has been and still is a term used by Americans for what we, in the past, called the gramophone. However, we have a cylinder of speech recorded on the 26th January 1894 'at the offices of the London Phonograph Company, 62 Broad Street, London'. One other clue you give is the reference to 'the lady attendant'. Colonel George Edward Gouraud (1842-1912) was Edison's representative in London. Mary Helen Ferguson was governess to the Gouraud children and also worked as his part-time secretary. She made recordings of Florence Nightingale and Robert Browning and it is therefore possible that she is the 'lady

attendant' referred to. At this time only one cylinder would have been made and therefore, according to our conservation manager, it is extremely unlikely that these Carrodus recordings have survived even though many of Gouraud's cylinders were sent to the United States and are to this day kept in the vaults of the Edison National Historical Site in West Orange, New Jersey." The National Sound Archive do, however, have recordings made by Carrodus's eldest son, Bernhard Molique Carrodus, in 1901; interestingly, two of the works are by John Tiplady Carrodus, the Scottish Rhapsody, Op.6 and the Scottish Airs, both for violin and piano.

2. A Liverpool Amateur

SPOHR'S first two symphonies were not published in full score but, as was customary in the early years of the 19th century, in parts only. Indeed, not until Clive Brown included handwritten scores of both works in his Garland edition (Selected Works of Louis Spohr. Volume Six: Symphonies; New York, 1987) did they appear in print. The copy of the Second Symphony was prepared in the early 1980s but the source for the First Symphony was a bound score from the 19th century in the collection of Liverpool City Music Library and Dr. Brown, in his introduction to the Garland volume, comments: "The inscription on the title page of the score in the present volume reads: 'Scored by A.G. Kurtz [?] 1871 There being no printed copy of this work Shame be it said.' " The [?] could imply that Kurtz is unknown or possibly that the signature on the score is unclear and even perhaps that the spelling of his name is in doubt.

However, Andrew G. Kurtz (1825-1890) was a prominent Liverpool industrialist who played an important role in the city's music making and he was one of the circle who became friendly with Max Bruch during that German composer's period as Director of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society from 1880 to 1883. Information about Kurtz appears in Christopher Fifield's "Max Bruch: His Life and Works" (London, 1988) which says (Page 228): "When Max Bruch left Liverpool in 1883 he left behind him several friends with whom he kept in touch. [...] One of these was Andrew Kurtz of Grove House, Wavertree. He was head of a chemical factory in St. Helens, a committee member of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, and an amateur pianist. In 1881 Bruch began a Piano Quintet in G minor for Kurtz, which was partially completed by 1886. It remained incomplete until he was urged by a letter from Liverpool in January 1888, containing a plea from the amateur musicians, 'We are all anxious for the completion of the work — which of course we rarely play because of its incompleteness, and because we have been anticipating every week to receive the conclusion of the last movement.' Bruch did complete it, and the manuscript score carries his dedication in English, 'Composed for and dedicated to Mr. A.G. Kurtz in Liverpool, Breslau 1886'. It remains unpublished."

In view of Kurtz's position with the Liverpool Philharmonic Society and his enthusiasm for Spohr (if his remarks on his score of the First Symphony are any guide), investigation into Spohr performances in the Liverpool area from the 1850s to the 1890s may be quite rewarding.