

JOACHIM (GEORG) NIKOLAS EGGERT

was born on 22 February 1779 in the village of Gingst on the island of Ruegen off the northern coast of Germany (then part of Swedish Pomerania). He was the youngest of five children born to Barbara Maria (nee Schinkel) and Johann Hindrich Eggert. Eggert was christened at the Saint Jacobi Evangelical Church in Gingst on 25 February 1779. He displayed an affinity for music as a child, and started to play the violin at the age of 11. His first teacher was the local virtuoso, a factory worker who played by ear and often assured young Eggert that only pedants wasted time learning notes and scales. Eggert found more regimented music instruction in 1791 with Johann Friedrich Dammas, a young graduate from the Halberstadt Seminary, who was a schoolteacher and the local organist. For three years, Dammas taught Eggert violin, piano, and harp.

By 1794, Eggert had exacted the maximum musical education Gingst had to offer and he sought to advance his artistry outside his hometown. This encountered strong opposition from his father, a master shoemaker by profession, who felt that music was not the honorable craft that would bring financial security to his son. The long ensuing argument made the younger Eggert grievously ill and the elder Eggert eventually relented in order to save his son's life. With his father's blessings and his family's savings, Eggert traveled to Stralsund to study violin and composition under Friedrich Gregor Kuhlau. Before leaving Stralsund in 1800, Eggert composed some dance music which won him acclaim.

During the period of 1800-1802, Eggert studied music theory under the guidance of Ferdinand Fischer and Friedrich Gottlob Fleischer in Brunswick. In 1802, Eggert was named music director at the court theater of Duke Friedrich Franz I of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, but after six months resigned this post on artistic grounds and returned to his parents' home in Gingst.

At home, Eggert spent his time composing until economical conditions compelled him to seek employment. His intention was to attain a position in St. Petersburg, but his poor health forced him to change directions and try his fortune with the Royal Opera of Pomerania, which had acquired quite a reputation then. His route took him through Stockholm, where he arrived on 7 July 1803. Johann Christian Friedrich Haeffner, the Swedish Royal Kapellmeister, received Eggert most warmly and persuaded him to remain in Stockholm. Eggert was appointed as a violinist to the Swedish Royal Court Orchestra on 9 August 1803. Later that year, he began to receive commissions to compose music for special occasions. The performance of his Funeral Cantata for Duke Fredrik Adolf on 10 September 1804 brought Eggert well-deserved recognition as a composer. The first time that a Stockholm concert program featured a composition by Eggert was on 14 May 1805 when his C-minor Symphony was performed. In 1807, he was elected to the Swedish Royal Academy of Music and made a most impressive debut as a conductor with an ambitious concert of his own works that included two symphonies. In 1808 following Haeffner's dismissal, Eggert was designated as one of the two Kapellmeisters of the Swedish Royal Court Orchestra and its nominal conductor.

Over the next four years, he was a central figure in Stockholm's music life, conducting one or two public concerts per week during the concert seasons, reaping rave reviews with innovative programs. Throughout this period, Eggert arranged frequent performances of his four completed symphonies and staged both of his musical dramas: *Mohrerne i Spanien* (The Moors in Spain) in 1809 and *Svante Sture* in 1812. Eggert brought Viennese Classicism to Sweden when he conducted the Swedish premieres of Beethoven's First and Second Symphonies in 1808, and Haydn's *Die Jahreszeiten* (The Seasons) in 1810. In adherence to a previously signed contract, Eggert was obliged to stand down as conductor of the Royal Court Orchestra in favor of Johann Heinrich Kuester in 1810; nonetheless, it was Eggert who was called upon to conduct the Swedish premiere of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute) in 1812.

From 1811 to 1812, Eggert was active as a teacher; his pupils included the Swedish composers Erik Drake, Ludwig Passy, Johann Martin de Ron, and Bernhard Henrik Crusell. He also participated, with Erik Drake and Leonard Fredrik Raaf, in a project to collect Swedish folksongs and native folk instruments for use in the Swedish National Opera. In 1812, Eggert had planned to travel to Germany, France, and Italy to further his musical development, but once again his frail health prevented him. He remained in Follingsö (Östergötland, Sweden) at the home of his pupil Drake, and later in Thomestorp, Sweden at the home of Raaf where he succumbed to tuberculosis on 14 April 1813 at the age of 34.

Eggert never gained the international recognition that he so rightly deserved due to his short-lived music career (a mere decade) and his failing health that confined him to live and work in Stockholm, far from the

musical mainstreams of Europe. In retrospect, this was a blessing in disguise for Eggert because Sweden fostered an environment that stimulated his originality and his individuality. He studied the models of his European counterparts but did not mimic them. As a consequence, Eggert was a radical in comparison to his contemporaries, some 20-30 years ahead of the rest of Europe. Unfortunately after his untimely death, Eggert's music fell into undeserved oblivion and was seldom performed.

With four well-written symphonies in his œuvre, Eggert was Sweden's foremost classical symphonist at the turn of the nineteenth century. He was a masterful and imaginative orchestrator. His symphonic style was uniquely brazen and dynamic. It was no wonder because at his disposal was the Swedish Royal Court Orchestra, then numbering 60 musicians including 4 horns, 3 trombones, and a full percussion section. With such a vast range of instrumental sonority, Eggert could display his powerful and innovative musical imagination.

The E-flat major Symphony, Eggert's third, was composed in the month of April 1807. On 4 May 1807, Eggert presented and dedicated it to the Swedish Royal Academy of music as a token of his esteem to the Academy for electing him as a member. The score calls for the following instrumentation:

2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, and a full string section.

Of the four symphonies that Eggert completed, only the E-flat Symphony has three movements, requires trombones, and lacks the large percussion section of the others. The tempi of the movements are as follows:

- i. Adagio maestoso—Allegro spiritoso (sonata form).
- ii. Marche: Grave.
- iii. Fugue: "Adagio" maestoso—Allegro.

The second movement, a "Trauermarsch," and the third movement, a "Double Fugue," were taken from Eggert's Funeral Cantata for Duke Fredrik Adolf from 1804.

Although Beethoven has long been credited with introducing the trombone section to the symphony orchestra with his Fifth Symphony (on 22 December 1808), in reality Eggert preceded him in this accomplishment by 18 months. Eggert conducted the premiere performance of his E-flat major Symphony in his conducting debut on 14 May 1807 at the Riddarhussalen in Stockholm, Sweden and most likely marked the symphonic birth of the trombone section.

There are three authentic manuscripts for Eggert's E-flat major Symphony, all now located at the Statens Musiksamlingar in Stockholm. The first is Eggert's autograph, which was once in the possession of his pupil Drake; the second is the dedicatory copy made especially for the Swedish Royal Academy of Music; and the third is on deposit from the collection of the Kungliga Teaternbibliotek and represents the official performance copy. The latter two scores are in the hand of the Royal Opera's chief copyist, Gottlob Friedrich Ficker, and contain emendations and corrections by Eggert himself. All three scores are virtually identical in terms of notes, articulations, dynamics, and so on.

Eggert demonstrates his masterful compositional skills and originality as he opens the short and slow introduction of the first movement with a series of majestic ff chords in full orchestra, which abate to abridging section that features a chromatic horn and two bassoons. A swift Allegro spiritoso follows with the principal subject appearing in the bassoons, violas, and cellos, giving the theme a dark hue. The first violins take the thread of melody and elaborate upon it, leading to a small climax prior to the restatement of the opening theme. Here the accompaniment quickens from eighths to triplets, a motion that extends into the full tutti. The secondary subject stays mainly in the strings, with occasional wind accompaniment. The motion of the opening is subdued, and the melody has a lyrical character. A series of abrupt sforzandi announces the closing section, which, far from being a raucous tutti with a strong cadence, wanes through a series of chords alternating between the winds and strings. The development is based largely upon the secondary theme, with various melodic motifs appearing in different instruments. A return of the triplet rhythm heralds the recapitulation. In the coda, a furious climax in the entire orchestra suddenly, and without warning, collapses inward on itself, and the movement closes with a ppp sustained chord. Eggert endows this movement with many unusual features. J *ku'wug'qh'f { pco leu'htqo 'hh'vq'r r r r . 'j g'o wnkwf g'qh*

crescendi and diminuendi, and the precise articulations give the effect of a Romantic tone poem. The impression is like a restless sea, now calm and reflective, then stormy and wild. These mood changes are enhanced by Eggert's orchestration. The trombones are fully integrated into the instrumental texture, and the horns totally chromatic. The use of winds to highlight the small peaks of musical intensity and the darker use of lower strings anticipates Wagner, an association that becomes all the more clear through Eggert's incorporation of small leitmotifs taken from fragments of the main theme.

The second movement is a short episode in the form of solemn march. Unlike Beethoven, who spins an intricate movement around the Marche funebre in his Eroica, Eggert contents himself with a non-developed statement of twenty-four measures. Here too are abrupt dynamic changes, although of a much milder sort than in the tempestuous first movement.

In the finale, the composer reveals his mastery of counterpoint with an elaborate and complex fugue, a most unusual choice of form for a symphony at that time. The main section proper is preceded by a slow introduction, which begins with a powerful unison bass statement of the principal fugal subject. The introduction is a short miniature fugue in itself, concentrated primarily in the strings and highlighted by motivic fragments in the winds. As in the first movement, Eggert varies his orchestral texture in the Allegro section, always making sure that the forward movement is maintained. However, there is no real climax to the fugue, only several peaks punctuated by high horns in C. Eggert stabilizes the end of the fugue with a dominant pedal. The coda concludes in an unusual manner: the motion diminishes as the note values lengthen, and the number of instruments declines until only the dark colors of the bassoons, violas, 'cellos, and basses are left. Their pianissimo close is a sharp contrast to the power that Eggert exhibits throughout the rest of the movement.

This symphony is far ahead of its time. Certain tone qualities and orchestral effects would not be out of place even as late as the end of the nineteenth century, and the orchestration is as skillful and innovative as Beethoven's.

Avishai Kallai