
MUSIC AT ST BARNABAS'

DULWICH ORCHESTRA

'INSPIRED BY SHAKESPEARE'

Conductor

Stuart Dunlop

Leader

Julia Atkinson

1991/1992
Saturday 9th March 1991 at 7:45

Coriolan, Rome's greatest soldier, stands at the city's very gates as an enemy, intent on razing it to the ground. Slighted by his native people, he is implacable in his resolution to destroy them. All embassies to him are turned away unheard until his wife, his son and most important of all, his mother are sent to plead with him. His obstinacy crumbles but his mercy towards Rome is construed as treachery by the Volscians and he is murdered on the way to the conclusion of peace.

So runs the fifth act of Shakespeare's "Coriolanus". Beethoven's overture was written to precede the 1808 production of H.J. Collins drama "Coriolan", but Wagner, in his analysis of the piece, ignores the Viennese poet laureate and insists on Shakespeare, which it is probable that Beethoven knew well. Whatever the literary correspondences, Beethoven responded in only the way he could - contrasts are ferocious and the internal and external strife of the characters vividly mirrored in one of his starkest C minor structures.

BERLIOZ : LOVE SCENE FROM ROMEO AND JULIET opus 17

"Shakespeare, coming upon me unawares, struck me like a Thunderbolt. The lightning flash of that discovery revealed to me at a stroke the whole heaven of art, illuminating it to its remotest corners"

(BERLIOZ)

"My dear friend,

Beethoven being dead, only Berlioz can make him live again; and I who have heard your divine compositions, so worthy of your genius, humbly beg you to accept, as a token of my homage, twenty thousand francs...."

(NICOLÒ PAGANINI)

"My debts paid, I still had a handsome sum of money. My one idea was to put it to a musical purpose..."

In the end... I settled on the idea of a symphony with chorus.... on the sublime and perennial theme of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet"

(BERLIOZ)

"If you ask me which of my pieces I prefer, my answer will be that I share the view of most artists: I prefer the Adagio (the Love Scene) in Romeo and Juliet. Once, at the end of this Adagio, when I was conducting it in Hannover, I felt something of somebody pulling me from behind. I turned round: it was the players nearest to my desk; they were kissing my coat tails. However, before certain audiences (and in certain halls) I would be careful not to perform the piece."

"Love or music - which power can uplift man to the sublimest heights? It is a large question, yet it seems to me that one should answer it in this way: Love cannot give an idea of music; music can give an idea of love. But why separate them? They are the two wings of the soul."

"What could they possibly understand of the storm raging in the composer's heart; of his vague but potent memories of childhood and early loves and the blue Italian sky, in imagination revived and flowering again in the glow of Shakespeare's genius; of the vision of a Juliet ever dreamed of, ever sought, never attained; of the revelation of an unbounded love, infinite grief; and of the joy that his music had caught a few far off echoes of the music of the spheres?"

(BERLIOZ)

MENDELSSOHN : A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

OVERTURE

opus 21

INCIDENTAL MUSIC

opus 51

(Intermezzo, Dance of the Clowns, Nocturne, Wedding March)

Mendelssohn and Berlioz met several times, the first being in 1831 in Rome, where Berlioz let slip his idea that the Queen had speech from Romeo and Juliet would make an ideal subject for a scherzo (some years before the dramatic symphony came to be written). Ever afterwards he dreaded to hear that Mendelssohn had used the idea. By that time, however, the latter composer had already completed (in 1826) the Midsummer Night's Dream overture as a concert piece. Commissioned years later to provide incidental music for the play, Mendelssohn did include a scherzo (not presented tonight), but did not renege on Berlioz.

The incidental music was commissioned by Frederick William IV of Prussia for what must have been an extremely long production of the play. Nothing in the later music, however, surpasses the overture, though the Nocturne is certainly on a par with it.

(Programme notes by Stuart Dunlop)

MEMBERS OF THE ORCHESTRA

Violin

Julia Atkinson (leader)
Heather Bennie
Elizabeth Cleary
Debra Coote
Elaine Galloway
Maisie Hipperson
Don McGown
Judith Morrey
Caroline Perkins
David Stevenson
Dennis Sullivan
Lesley Unsworth
Lynn Willis

Viola

Richard Dubeck
Sara Lodge
Philip McKenna
Eileen Moon
Roger Mundy

Cello

Katharine Badger
Nick Coote
Hugh Henzig
David Maloney
Nick Markson
Sara Skinner
Marion Wootton
Helen Worsley

Double Bass

John Hutchings
Arthur Pennie
Keith Scarr

Flute

Helen Williams
Julia Wilson

Oboe

Stephen Gates
Graham Ruffell

Clarinet

Sue Best
Duncan McInnes
Steven Preston

Bassoon

Philip Grey
Janice Kingston
Roy Middleton
John O'Neil

Horn

Cindy Bishop
Hilary Brindley
Oliver Hogg
Nigel Putt
Joe Wright

Trumpet

Matthew Redfearn
Dave Stanford

Timpani

John Tilzey

THE DULWICH ORCHESTRA was formed in 1950. Its members vary greatly in age and background; for many players it provides an opportunity to complement the demands of work or raising a family with some satisfying music-making. The orchestra has been supported as an evening class by the Southwark Institute of Adult Education, but with the current financial cuts it faces an uncertain future.

STUART DUNLOP began conducting at York University, leaving in 1983 with an M.A. He has played in a number of ensembles (eg the Hanover Band) as a bassonist, and has conducted the Parke Ensemble in recordings for the BBC. He is now in the final year of the Conductor's Course at the Royal Academy of Music. He also conducts orchestras in Hayes and Blackheath, and is the holder of the Bob Harding bursary for 1990-1 with the Havant Symphony Orchestra.