
MUSIC AT ST. JOHN'S

DULWICH ORCHESTRA

Conductor

STEPHEN WHITTAKER

Leader

LYNN COOK

Solo Violin

JULIAN SAXL

Saturday March 18th 1995 at 7.45 p.m.

Admission by Programme £4.00 • Concession £2.50 • Family £10

BELA BARTOK (1881 - 1945) Seven Romanian Dances

At the beginning of this century, as if in reaction to 150 momentous years of development in the classical and romantic traditions, many composers looked for inspiration elsewhere and became eager collectors of folk music. Vaughan Williams in England, Mussorgsky in Russia, Grieg in Norway, Kodaly and Bartok in Hungary, were just a few of those who created their highly individual styles from close study of their nation's musical roots and the traditions of the countryside.

By 1917, when these seven Romanian dances were arranged for orchestra, Bartok was said to have collected 2,700 Hungarian, 2,500 Slovak and 3,500 Romanian folk tunes! He ought to be in the Guinness Book of Records for it. The first of the dances has an exquisite character of its own. The second is a rather lively dance, the second "Balu" especially catchy (the sort of tune you feel you've known all your life even if you've never heard it); the third "Pe Loc" ethereal; the fourth "Mioriara" a beautiful haunting melancholy. Then the fifth "Ponars" the sixth "Mioriara" (both called "Maruntele") increase in speed and rhythmic intensity, bringing this highly satisfying little suite to an exciting conclusion.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756 - 1791) Violin Concerto NO.5 in A K.219

1. Allegro aperto 2. Adagio 3. Tempo di Menuetto

If George Orwell had been a music critic he might have said "All Mozart's concertos are perfect, but some are more perfect than others."

So, while the great series of piano concertos is vastly more mature and profound, the five early ones for violin, written when Mozart was still a teenager, had all the inevitable perfection that we are told maddened his rivals!

Number five has the usual three movements. The first one opens normally with the orchestra introducing us to all the themes - or so we think, but then Mozart has a surprise for us! Quite unexpectedly the soloist enters with a completely new theme of its own, very slow and with a beautiful running accompaniment. Thereafter matters proceed conventionally enough (though, being Mozart, with a wonderful melodic freshness throughout), until the solo cadenza and the orchestra's wittily abrupt end.

In the second movement the violin sings a stream of gorgeous melody, wonderfully easy to listen to and surprisingly hard to play. The rondo finale is another surprise, for while it begins and ends as a graceful minuet the middle episode is a violent contrast in the minor key - fast and furious, rather badly behaved dance music with swirling chromatic effects. Mozart thoroughly enjoys pulling our legs for a little while, before returning to the minuet for a perfectly serene conclusion, as if nothing naughty had happened.

Soloist - Julian Saxl Violin.

INTERVAL

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833 - 1897) Serenade No. 1 in D Opus 11

1. Allegro Molto 2. Scherzo and Trio: Allegro non troppo
 3. Adagio non troppo 4. Menuetto 5. Scherzo: Allegro 6. Rondo: Allegro
- The word "Serenade" suggests a light-hearted, generally amorous song, and so it is in lieder and songs like Don Giovanni and The Barber of Seville. But the classical masters Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert developed the orchestral serenade into a large-scale, almost symphonic form, albeit genial and relaxed in style.

Brahms composed his two early serenades with these examples in mind. This one is, in fact, his first published work for orchestra, written when he was 24. Even so, it has all the mastery of his later, more familiar symphonies, and is intricately classical in form.

The first of the six movements begins with a "drone" bass (like bagpipes), setting the pastoral mood, and pervades the whole work. Though it is a big and sophisticated structure, it is framed at his most affable, and finally dies away with a sweet quiet coda.

Then there is the first of two scherzos, whose opening theme gently anticipates that of the titanic scherzo of the great second piano Concerto years later. This movement has the character of a rather serious sad waiter, as does the Trio middle section.

There follows a broad flowing slow movement, reminding one vividly of the famous texture of the "Slow" movement of Beethoven's Symphony: (the word for "brook" in German is "Bach" - but that's another story!)

After this long idyll there is a succession of shorter, quicker movements: a charming minuet, with a rocking bassoon bass that continues the rustic good-nature; a bolsters second scherzo with a star part for horn, almost every note of which could have come from the pen of Beethoven in one of his more cheerful moods; and a splendid Rondo finale with a bouncy and very catchy main theme and some delightful sequels. We end, happily and furally, in a triumph of trumpets and drums.

Our Soloists.

Julian Saxl was born in Bristol and is of English and Czech descent. He began playing the violin at the age of seven, studying with the late Leonard Hirsch and subsequently with Lydia Rodkovich at the Royal Northern College of Music.

He was a member of the Ulster Orchestra for four years and now plays in the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, which he joined in January 1991. He has appeared in numerous solo recitals and string quartet concerts, as well as being involved in educational projects and sessions for young people. He has an interest in a variety of styles of music, he also studied and has conducted folk-rock band in 1992, which performs regularly in the Bournemouth area.

MEMBERS OF THE ORCHESTRA.

1st Violins.

Lynn Cook (leader)
Maisie Hipperson
Barry Mawer
Emma Robson
Don MacGown
Lina Timini
Chris Martin
Eric Croston
Dennis Reynolds

2nd Violins.

Nigel Stevens
Kate Jones
Frank D'Alquen
Elizabeth Cleary
Philip Bailey
Christine Bailey
Elanor Abdelnoor
Toby Hawkes
Elaine Galloway

Viola.

Philip MacKenna
Roger Mundy
Maureen Montrose
George Fuller
Madelaine Coelho
Barbara Mattner

Cellos.

Sara Heathcote-Holmes
Katharine Badger
Marion Wootton
Julian Barber
Alex Galloway
Alison Rose

Double Bass

Arthur Pennie
Christine Bond

Flutes.

Jim Colby
Barbara Langford
Sam Morris (piccolo)

Oboes.

Graham Ruffell
Hilary Gould

Clarinets.

Sue Best
Duncan McInnes

Bassoons.

Jeremy Crump
Stephen Preston

Trumpets.

Luke Williams
Eric Milner

Horns.

Peter Brown
Giles Brindley
Joe Wright
Hilary Brindley

Tympani.

Mike Grant

Programme Notes - Lynn Cook