
MUSIC AT ST. JOHN'S

DULWICH ORCHESTRA

Conductor

STEPHEN WHITTAKER

Leader

LYNN COOK

Soprano

ANNE OSBORNE

Saturday July 1st 1995 at 7.45 p.m.

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

PROGRAMME

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797 - 1828): OVERTURE IN THE ITALIAN STYLE IN D

Rossini produced an amazing series of operatic masterpieces while still in his twenties, and was a sensation on his visits to Vienna. As an impressionist twenty years later wrote overtures "in the Italian style", and while this one does parody some of the features of the sparkling Italian overtures we are used to - tramping rhythms, crescendos and florid ornamentation - it is by and large a tuneful piece of Viennese charm typical of Schubert in his "Rosemunde" manner.

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803 - 1869): LES NUITS D'ÉTÉ

Berlioz was the very archetype of the passionate romantic artist and cultivated this image assiduously. His music reflects this, being amazingly original, unpredictable and by turns violently impulsive and ardently lyrical.

The six songs called "Summer Nights", written in 1834, are very much of the same kind of dream and elegiac, responding perfectly to the sensuous words by the French poet Gautier.

The first "Villanelle", is a charming portrayal of lovers in springtime, delighting in awakening nature:

Quand viendra la saison nouvelle,
Quand auront disparu les froids,
Tous les deux nous irons, belle,
Pour cueillir le muguet aux bois.

When the new season comes,
When the cold disappears,
The two of us will go, my love,
And gather lilies in the woods.

The second, "The Rose's Ghost", reminds one of Berlioz's gorgeous love music in the Romeo and Juliet Symphony:

Souleve ta paupière close
Qu'effleure un songe virginal;
Je suis le spectre d'un rose
Que tu portait hier au bal.

Open your sleeping eyes
Where my ghost softly dwells,
I am the spectre of a rose
That you wore to the ball
last night.

Obviously a death to be envied!

Third by contrast is "On the Lagoons", a bitterly tragic lament for a dead lover:

Ma belle amie est morte
Je pleurerai toujours
Sous la tombe elle emporte
Mon âme et mes amours.

My beautiful love is dead,
I shall weep for evermore:
To the grave she takes with her
My soul and all my love.

"Absence", the fourth song, is perhaps the most beautiful of the six, and describes the loneliness of one whose love is far away:

Reviens, reviens, ma bien aimée!
La fleur m'a fait loin de soleil!
La fleur m'a fait loin de soleil!
Loin de ton sourcil vermeil.

Return, my most beloved!
Like a flower away from the sun
My life's flower closed
Far from your ruby smile.

"IN The Cemetery", where the dove's sweet song is fast the sad, fading song of those who lie there:
Comptez-vous la blanche tombe
Ou flotte avec son plaintif
L'ombre d'un if?

Lastly "The Unknown Isle", which beautifully portrays a boat sailing away to a land of true love and happiness. But the wistful end reminds us that this is all make-believe:

Dites, la jeune belle!
Ou voulez-vous aller?
La voilà enfie son aile,
La brise va souffler!

Tell me, pretty maid,
Where would you like to go?
There she is winged like a wing,
The breeze is about to blow!

INTERVAL

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770 - 1826): SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN E FLAT OPUS 95 "EROICA"

I. Allegro con brio: II. Marcia Funebre - adagio assai: III. Scherzo - allegro vivace: IV. Finale - allegro molto.

This, one of the greatest of all symphonies, is so familiar now that one can forget what an epoch-making work it was. It was the first symphony up to 1804 by Haydn, Mozart or even Beethoven himself. 21 minutes of classically regular in form, with elegant melodies, symmetrical phrases, dance-like rhythms and well-behaved orchestration.

And then this - fifty minutes long: the majestic first movement breaking all conventions with its driving rhythm, the second movement, a haunting climax: the second, a desolate, almost unbearably poignant funeral march; the third a brilliantly rapid and witty scherzo, the first of its kind ever written; and the fourth, not the jolly rondo of convention, but a full-scale set of symphonic variations, bringing this huge work to a fittingly triumphant end.

This was truly music of a kind that had never been written before, and could never have been anticipated even by those contemporaries who knew Beethoven well. Not just in its "heroic" proportions or originality of design, but in the spirit in which it was composed - the personal utterance of a visionary idealist, celebrating a hero's life, and creating a new, romantic musical language in doing so.

The famous story is that the "hero" who inspired the work was Napoleon, but when Beethoven heard his hero had proclaimed himself emperor he disgustingly ripped out the title page. Fortunately for us he didn't rip out any of the other pages!

For those hearing the Eroica Symphony for the first time, the appeal is instantaneous, all the many themes pliny and memorable so that the argument can easily be followed even at such great length. One subtlety among so many that one might point to is the characteristic joke that begins the last movement. After an imposing flourish (which sets the disposition in motion) the orchestra picks up only when we reach the third variation is indicated. But Beethoven has pulled our legs - the opening theme is just the bass of the delightful tune on which the movement is based.

That humour can be found interwoven with drama, tragedy and triumph is typical of this extraordinary man, and of this wonderful work.

OUR SOLOIST ANNE OSBORNE - SOPRANO

Anne was born in Southampton, she joined the Royal Opera Chorus in 1986, and also works with their Education Department taking opera workshops to schools all over the country.

In 1992 Anne sang the role of "Pamina" in an arrangement of Mozart's Magic Flute for Brass Band with the Hampshire Youth Band. Other concert work includes Mahler's 4th Symphony with the Kingston Philharmonia and Les Nuits Ete with the Barnet Orchestra in 1992, Elgar's Coronation Ode March 1994, and Messiah for the Enfield Choral Society in March 1995. Anne performed the Villa Lobos Bachianas Brasileiras with the Cello Section of the Royal Opera Orchestra for the Friends of Covent Garden in a concert in March 1995.

MEMBERS OF THE ORCHESTRA.

1st Violins.

Lynn Cook (leader)
Barry Mawer
Emma Robson
Yvonne Lewis
Lina Timini
Chris Martin
Alan Thompson
Susanna Allen

Cellos.

Katharine Badger
Marion Wootton
Julian Barber
Andrew Brabin
Double Bass.
Arthur Pennie
Christine Bond

Trumpets.

Eric Milner
Matt Bauman

Horns.

Peter Brown
Giles Brindley
Joe Wright

2nd Violins.

Nigel Stevens
Kate Jones
Frank D'Alquen
Isla Mulligan
Dinah Hyams
Dennis Reynolds
Katherine Ayre

Flutes.

Jim Colby
Barbara Langford
Sam Morris

Tympani.

John Tilzey

Harp.

Kezia Thomas

Violas.

Philip MacKenna
Roger Mundy
Maureen Montrose
George Fuller
Barbara Mattner

Oboes.

Graham Ruffell
Hilary Gould

Clarinets.

Sue Best
Duncan McInnes

Bassoons.

Jeremy Crump
Stephen Preston

Programme Notes - Lynn Cook