
MUSIC AT ST.LUKE'S

DULWICH ORCHESTRA

Conductor

JULIAN WILLIAMSON

Leader

PAULA TYSALL

Soloist

FLORIAN UHLIG

(Piano)

Saturday March 28th 1998 at 7.45 p.m.

Entrance by Programme:

Adults £5 Concessions £3 Family Ticket (2 adults + 2 children) £10.

Overture: Die Meistersinger.

Richard Wagner
(1813 – 1883)

"Die Meistersinger" is one of the few operas of Wagner to deal in real life. Banished to the pews, magicians, and demons as we are launched into the streets of 16th century Nuremberg and the activities of a brotherhood of artisan tradesmen. Although the plot is fictional many of the characters, including Hans Sachs (the leader of the Mastersingers' Guild) are based on historical fact, and a very traditional love story is given sharper focus by having, as a backdrop, the colourful atmosphere of a bustling city in the late Middle Ages. From the first splendid chord of C major the overture gives us a liberal taste of the pomp and ceremony in which the Mastersingers wrapped themselves and their closely guarded traditions of music making. Intertwined with this music are the themes associated with the lovers, and Wagner cleverly wraps it all in an antique cloak of imitation Baroque counterpoint so that a strong sense of period is present in the music to complement that in the story.

Piano Concerto No 1 in E flat major.....

Frantz Liszt
(1811-1886)

- (1) Allegro maestoso
 - (2) Quasi adagio
 - (3) Allegretto vivace –
 - (4) Allegretto animato
- Florian Uhlig (Piano)

Liszt's musical career can be divided into two sharply contrasting periods. Until his mid-thirties he was known exclusively as a travelling virtuoso – possibly the most brilliant pianist in the world whose flamboyant style was almost designed to produce the most vehement fanfare fits on the part of young ladies present. While touring in Russia, however, he fell in love with a lady who persuaded him that there was more to his art than pretentious salon music. He therefore gave up the life of a keyboard troubadour and settled down, devoting his remaining 40 years to serious composition. All his important orchestral and large-scale works date from this period and one of the first exercises he attempted in the field still quite novel for him was the Piano Concerto in E flat.

Given his liking for free-flowing sound combined with a natural Romantic desire for unfettered forms of expression, it is not surprising that this concerto leans less on the classical models of Mozart and Beethoven than the fantasia-like ideas of Paganini and Chopin. The work is built around a series of mini-cantrips which sweep through all four movements (played virtually without a break). These are linked by themes which recur throughout the piece (sometimes slightly disguised) and which help to sew the loose-knit fabric together. The whole is imbued with a wonderful mixture of both energy and lyricism which is present, not only in the piano writing, but in the many effective orchestral touches which Liszt introduced. Listen to some of the beautiful woodwind solos which often indulge in chamber music-like conversations with the soloist, and to the famous solo triangle part in the third movement scherzo section. Although the challenge is comparatively slight this concerto is one of the most fearsome in the repertoire given the technical demands of the most adventurous pianist, and its dazzling array of technical light-rapier walking will keep most audiences on the edge of their seats right to the end.

Pellaeas et Melisande (excerpts).....

Jean Sibelius
(1865-1957)

- (1) Entracte
- (2) Melting in the park
- (3) Melting in the spinning wheel
- (4) At the castle-gate

Maurice Maeterlinck's play about the doomed love of two hapless young people caught the imagination of a number of composers. Debussy wrote an opera. Schoenberg a tone poem and both Faure and Sibelius produced incidental music. The latter wrote this music for a production in 1905, shortly after completing his violin concerto. The series of short movements show Sibelius to be an adroit miniaturist, concentrating on the scenery rather than on the brooding drama unfolding before it. Tonight, we are performing four segments, ending with one which devotees of astronomy will instantly recognise.

Symphony No 1 in E minor (Op. 39).....

- (1) Andante, ma non troppo – Allegro energico
- (2) Andante (ma non troppo lento)
- (3) Scherzo (allegro)
- (4) Finale (Quasi una Fantasia). Andante – Allegro molto

Jean Sibelius
(1865-1957)

Sibelius was the first Finnish composer to gain international recognition, and none of his countrymen since has matched his achievements. As we heard in part one of this concert, some of his music has been commandeered by television, and his violin concerto, tone poems and his seven symphonies are played in concert halls the world over. In a way which is difficult to describe his music seems to encapsulate the vast space and awesome ruggedness of a Scandinavian landscape, speaking to us through rock-like strokes of brass, lyrical woodwind and sweeping waves of string sound.

Although the first symphony is in no sense programmatic, much of the music has a picturesque feel to it. The mysterious C minor solo which floats in, accompanied only by a dark, tritone roll, is one of the most evocative of symphonic openings. Shimmering violins then broaden the scene before the energy of the first movement proper, with its myriad themes, surges through and draws into the wide open spaces. The woodwinds following Andante, with its beautiful orchestral subtleties, is interrupted by a more vigorous, dissonant, following Allegro, as though a snow storm suddenly drives over a calm landscape before vanishing, leaving the music in a peaceful mood. The scherzo has a faint hint of Brahms about it, while the finale abandons any pretence of tradition, and is a virtuoso's dream. The music is so free that it begins with a reprise of the clarinet theme, but with its chords and textures it was a real surprise. It has given way to passionate intensity as the whole string section forced the double bass to play with every ounce of sound they can muster. This links with the main portion of the movement in which two contrasting sections – one fast and rhythmic, the other slow and richly lyrical – are thrown against one another before blending into a single texture in the coda, producing a conclusion which is both satisfying and surprising. The power of the Scandinavian countryside is still there.

Programme notes by Julian Williamson

Over the last 20 years, Julian Williamson has been associated with a large number of orchestras and choirs. He has performed regularly at the South Bank, St Johns Smith Square and the Barbican Hall, where, apart from his many concerts with the Camden Choir, he has appeared with the London Sinfonia Orchestra and the English Festival Choir. His work has taken him not only to many parts of Great Britain, but so Germany, Holland, Zimbabwe and USA.

Apart from directing the standard repertoire, he has always been keen to promote contemporary music. In recent years he has been associated with the work of various 20th Century composers including, Ernest Krens, Alun Hoddnett, John Gardner, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and Iain Hamilton.

Florian Uhlig was born in Dusseldorf on 28th October 1974. He had lessons as a junior student at the "Muskhochschule" in Dortmund and gave his first solo recital at the age of 12.

Florian has been awarded numerous prizes, including an award into Yehudi Menuhin's Live Music Now! Scheme, the Audience Prize in the Continuum Ensemble Competition for improvisation, and an Erasmus Scholarship for an exchange programme at the Hochschule der Kunst in Berlin. He also participated in masterclasses, such as with teachers, Davignon, Fraus, and in chamber music with Igor Oistrach. In 1995 he had an exchange scholarship to the Royal College of Music to study with Bernard Roberts, while continuing his private studies with Peter Feuchtwanger.

Florian performs extensively throughout Europe and Asia. Major London venues include St. Martin-in-the-Fields, the Steinway Hall of Fame, the German Embassy and St. James's Hall. In 1997 he premiered the Clara Schumann Piano Concerto in the Barbican with Southern Pro Arte under the baton of Julian Williamson. He now appears regularly with Hermann Frey.

In 1997 Florian accepted an invitation to a visiting professorship in piano at the Kwangju Art University in South Korea for three months. During his stay he played several concerts throughout the country.

VIOLIN I

Paula Tysall
Chris Burns
Alan Thompson
Ivor Cox
Eric Croston
Maisie Hipperson
Fran Haas
Richard Jones
Mick Russell
Jessica Rittstieg

VIOLIN II

Nigel Stephens
Julian Saxl
Jane Howard
Tom Brockbank
Ken Brace

George Fuller
Adrien Chen
Denis Reynolds

VIOLA

Bing James
Bernadette Benati
Francis Barrett
Philip McKenna
Maureen Montrose

CELLO

Sarah Heathcote-Holmes
Marion Wootton
Katharine Badger
Kate Anderson
Catherine Johnson
Sarah Toyn
Philip Myers

DOUBLE BASS

Arthur Pennie
Phil Reynolds
Jim Hodges

FLUTE

Kate Morris
Mary Anne Reynolds
Helen Hopkins

PICCOLO

Helen Hopkins

OBOE

Graham Ruffell
Louise Simon

CLARINET

Sue Best
Duncan McInnes

BASSOON

Jenny Ayres
Jill Blakey

HORN

Graham Vernon
Jenny Davies
Joe Wright
Gerry Brassell

TRUMPET

Tim Collett
Eric Milner
Aaron Gridden

TROMBONE

Richard Tighe
Siobhan Leary
Nick Ford

TUBA

Paul Goodwin

TIMPANI

Mike Grant

PERCUSSION

Adam Payn

HARP

Ruby Aspinall

Dulwich Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the London Borough of Southwark.

Dulwich Orchestra is a Member of the National Federation of Music Societies.