



Overture: Don Giovanni

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)

Although Vienna rather shunned Mozart's music towards the end of his life, Prague received it with unbounded enthusiasm. There, the reception of the Marriage of Figaro was rapturous and Mozart quickly decided to follow this success with a further opera. The result was Don Giovanni, the story of a dissolute Spanish nobleman whose life of seduction and murder is brought to an abrupt end when the victim of his homicide visits him in the form of a ghoulish statue, and drags him down to a burning hell.

This seemingly dark plot is treated as a tragic-comedy and the ostensibly opposing elements provide the basis of the overture, written in Mozart's usual rush the day before the curtain went up. The opening slow introduction uses the dramatic music of the opera's final scene when the Don, confronted by the apparition of stone, feels the hand of vengeance upon him. Then we are whisked into a jaunty allegro which reminds us that there are pantomime forces at work here, and that this old fable should not be taken too seriously.

Programme notes by Julian Williamson

Violin Concerto in D major

Johannes Brahms  
(1833-1897)

Allegro non troppo  
Adagio  
Allegro giocoso

During the composition of this concerto, Brahms, who lacked the technical expertise of a violinist, frequently consulted his famous friend, Joachim, though it is not known how far his suggestions were taken up. At its first performance, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1879, Joachim played the solo part and Brahms himself conducted. This is his only concerto in which Brahms allowed for a free cadenza, one that is at the performer's choice. Joachim's cadenza is the one usually heard today.

The first movement follows the classical practice of introducing the main thematic material in the orchestra before the solo instrument enters. Violas, cellos and bassoons, with support from the horns, state the serene first theme, energetically continued by full orchestra, then oboe and horn introduce the flowing second subject for strings and this exposition is vigorously completed as it leads to a " feeble appearance. The second movement, disparagingly described by Brahms as " a feeble adagio" is surprising in that the beautiful main theme is given not to the soloist but to the oboe. The finale is a vigorous rondo with a strong Hungarian flavour, its two contrasting sections lead to the coda, a somewhat military march, driving the concerto to its exuberant conclusion.

Symphony no. 3 in E flat major

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

Allegro con brio  
Marcia funebre: Adagio assai  
Scherzo: Allegro vivace  
Finale: Allegro molto

Completed in 1803, Beethoven gave this work the title "Sinfonia eroica, composta per festeggiare il sovvenire d'un grand uomo", the "grand uomo" being Napoleon Bonaparte. When, soon afterwards, Bonaparte declared himself Emperor, Beethoven was so enraged by this assumption of power that he tore the title page from the manuscript and renamed the work "Heroic Symphony to celebrate the memory of a "at man".

A feature of this symphony is its length. The first movement is larger in scale and duration than any previous symphonic movement, and especially rich in themes. It is followed by the unusual Marcia Funebre, and then a vigorous Scherzo and Trio with its jovial burst of horns. The finale makes use of a contradance tune that Beethoven wrote for the ballet score of Prometheus; it moves through a set of variations to its final section, poco andante, with solo oboe, expressive and majestic.

Programme notes by Paul Burnett

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

Apart from directing the standard repertoire, he has always been keen to promote contemporary music. In recent years he has been involved with the work of various 20<sup>th</sup> century composers including Ernest Krenek, Alun Hoddinot, John Gardner, Sir at Maxwell Davies and Iain Hamilton

**Corina Belean** was born in Romania in 1975 and began playing the violin at the age of six. A former pupil of the Yehudi Menuhin School, she is currently a foundation scholar at the Royal College of Music where she studies with Felix Andreyevsky. She has won numerous prizes both at the RCM and internationally, and has travelled widely as a soloist and chamber musician throughout Europe and Malaysia.

Corina is a founder member and leader of the Heleca Quartet, and in 1997 they won third prize in the London International String Quartet Competition. The quartet is currently under YCAT concert management and has recorded for BBC Radio 3.

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Dulwich Orchestral Society gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the London Borough of Southwark, and Walter Saunders.

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