



Dulwich Symphony Orchestra
CONCERT




Saturday, 7th July 2001
at 7.45 pm

Julian Williamson
[conductor]


Paula Tysall
[leader]

Patrick Savage
[violin]

St. Barnabas' Church
Calton Avenue, Dulwich SE21



Programmes : 50p



Overture: The Merry Wives of Windsor

Singer, scholar, conductor, virtuoso, composer. Nicolai was so multi-talented that he packed more into his tragically short life of 38 years than many others have done in one double its length. His legacy to ensuing generations was a standard of performance unheard of in the many centres in which he worked, a standard which has reached down to us today through a new orchestra of excellence which he founded - the Vienna Philharmonic. As a composer, however, in spite of a considerable repertoire including two symphonies, a string of sacred and secular vocal works as well as five operas, he is remembered now for one short piece only, and when you hear this overture to his last opera (he suffered a fatal stroke within two months of its premiere) it is not difficult to understand why it has remained so popular. It is packed with delightful melodic ideas which, with its very atmospheric orchestration, offer us a delicious soupçon of the stage action to follow. The haunting slow introduction paints a gentle picture of a quiet night in Windsor Park. The tempo suddenly picks up as jolly music (with just a hint of Mendelssohn) announces the arrival of the masked jokers who dance around the trees in the shadowy moonlight, after which the remainder of the Overture is sheer fun and jollity as this merry band exact their elfish revenge on poor, debauched Falstaff who never stands a chance.

Violin Concerto No 1 in D [Op 6]

(1) Allegro maestoso

Paganini is one of those characters around whom history has wrapped more legend than fact - something which the artist, in his lifetime, did little to discourage. In many ways it is a miracle he became a violinist at all. His father, a none too likeable character, made his six year old son practice at all hours of the day and night and would beat him if he deviated from his orders. Fortunately, his loving mother proved a useful buffer and the boy made amazing progress on his chosen instrument, to the extent that he was playing in public by the age of twelve. But what changed him from a talented youngster into a phenomenon was a chance meeting with a touring violinist, August Daranovsky. This brilliant showman, whose lifestyle had more than a whiff of the bohemian about it, specialised in technical "tours de force" which he used to display to his audiences in a shamelessly flagrant way. So intrigued was young Paganini by these circus "high-wire" acts that he set about imitating and developing them and he readily admitted many years later that the innovative tricks which became so much a part of his style were largely sparked by his encounter with this strange, vagrant magician. The difference between the two is that Paganini lacked his technical wizardry into music of a quality far greater than Daranovsky could ever accomplish. In fact, if you look at the history of Italian music in the nineteenth century, Paganini is one of the few figures who produced purely instrumental music which could stand alongside that emanating from Northern Europe in an age when his compatriots were concentrating almost exclusively on stage works. That is not to say that the theatre was not an influence on him as this concerto [originally in E flat] demonstrates. He was a great friend of Rossini and the hand of this master can be heard clearly in the lengthy opening tutti which has the feel of an operatic scene preparing the stage for the lead artist. Following this the three movements are musically self-explanatory and treat us to Paganini's gift of flowing Italian melody [particularly in the second movement which is designed like a recitative and aria] and a dazzling array of violinistic virtuosity ranging from fast running double stops and multiple harmonics to what is probably the most famous example of "ricochet" bowing which forms a central part of the *tremolo* finale.

-----INTERVAL-----

Symphony No 5 in E minor

- (1) *Andante - Allegro con animo*
- (2) *Andante cantabile*
- (3) *Valse; allegro moderato*
- (4) *Fine!*

One of Tchaikovsky's goals in life was to write the perfect symphony. If one takes into account the "Mantel" he completed seven which cover a period of some twenty-seven years - the majority of his working life - during which time he wrestled with the structural and technical problems, gradually tuning them to his own wish with ever increasing skill. Of these seven Nos 4, 5, and 6 were undoubtedly the most successful and have remained popular to this day, and of this trio the middle one is judged the favourite of many a Tchaikovsky lover. Written on the most expansive scale it contains many of the elements which make Tchaikovsky so appealing to audiences; inherent drama, huge mood swings from the darkest case of despair to serene and glowing sunlight, and an inexhaustible fund of hypnotic melodies, all wrapped in a brilliantly individual orchestral sound which has the composer's fingerprints on every page.

Borrowing the idea he had already tried in Symphony No 4 [and probably influenced by Beethoven and Liszt] he employs a motto theme which make appearances in each of the four movements thus providing an element of thematic unity. We hear it first on clarinets as a somber introduction, during which we have ample opportunity to lock the sound in our memory bank. The music then launches itself into a jaunty allegro based on typically Tchaikovskyian dance rhythms which even creep into the broad second tone and take us down roads of many sharp contrasts in sound and mood before fading into the depths whence it came.

The static chord beginning of the second movement so impressed Dvorak and Bachmannov that the idea resurfaced in the "New World" symphony and the latter's second piano concerto. After it we hear a ravishing horn solo leading us back to the world of Rossini and Juliet after which we are treated to a succession of powerful melodies which combine together to build an ever increasing emotive tension which is released by two explosive statements of the symphonic motto theme. Then, after all passion has been spent the movement - possibly the finest symphonic entry the composer ever penned - relaxes into a tranquil conclusion.

Tchaikovsky rightly concluded that a rumbustious scherzo would not be the best sequel to this intense andante, so he treats us to a charming and light-hearted waltz, a dance with which he had fallen in love following the famous visits to Russia of Johann Strauss and whose sound so liberally adorns his ballets. It is worth noting that, apart from Berlioz, Tchaikovsky is one of the first composers to make the waltz a believable symphonic entity. The movement trips merrily along and seems to be moving towards its end when, almost as an after-thought, we are treated to a soft variation of the motto. The same theme then has a much more extensive part to play in the opening pages of the finale. Here its brooding fanfare-like quality is developed as a curtain-raiser to a vigorous allegro vivace launching the listener on a rollercoaster which, as it progresses, bends neck and more to the motto material until the tension is ultimately broken by a sudden shift into the major key after which the music moves to a triumphant conclusion, throwing in a reprise of the first movement dance theme as a parting surprise.

Programme notes by Julia Williamson.

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The **Dalwisch Symphony Orchestra** gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the London Borough of Southwark. The Dalwisch Symphony Orchestra is a member of the National Federation of Music Societies.

DULWICH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Paula Tysall [Leader]
Tom Brockbank
Chris Burns
Ariela Cravitz
Maisie Hipperson
Sarah Milnes
Nerys Richards
Nigel Stephens
Gill Tarlton
Alan Thompson

Violin II

Eric Croston
Adrian Chen
Elizabeth Cleary
Frank D'Alquen
Stuart Dearnley
Ann Earle
Ceri Evans
George Fuller
Jane Howard
Naomi Sills

Viola

Frances Barratt
Sarah Guthrie
Frances Lee
Claire McKenna
Philip McKenna
Sophie McKenna
Maureen Montrose

Cello

Nicky Jackson
Kate Anderson
Caroline Annesley
Katherine Croston
Sarah Toyn
Brian Tunnicliffe

Double Bass

Matthew Berry
Mike Lasserson
Mick Mortimer

Piccolo

Helen Dasley

Flute

Sam Purser
Alison White

Oboe

Anna Davis
Louise Simon

Clarinet

Sue Best
Duncan McInnes

Bassoon

Martin Bament
Jill Blakey

Horn

Peter Ramage
Joanna Thirsk
Sarah Tuakli
Graham Vernon

Trumpet

Tim Collett
Eric Milner

Trombone

Michael Brooks
Helen Reilly
Brenda Rohweder

Tuba

Martin Humphrey

Percussion

Michael Grimes
Alan Taylor

Timpani

Helen Tipper

Over the last twenty years, **Julian Williamson** has been associated with a large number of orchestras and choirs. He has performed regularly at the South Bank, at 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 Germany, Holland, Zimbabwe and the USA.

Paula Tysall studied the violin at the Royal College of Music and the National Centre for Orchestral Studies. She won the Associated Board Silver Medal for Grade 7. As a member of the New London Orchestra she has taken part in many acclaimed recordings for Hyperion Records, Radio 3 and Classic FM and Adventures in Motion Pictures' production of Swan Lake. She also plays in the Ashington String Quartet.

Patrick Savage was born in Australia in 1976 and began violin lessons at the age of four with Elizabeth Dommatt in Canberra. In 1993 he was awarded a scholarship to study at the Tanglewood Music Centre in Massachusetts, USA, and in 1994 a fellowship from the Winston Churchill Memorial Fund enabled him to continue his studies at the Royal College of Music under Dr. Felix Andrievsky. Whilst at the RCM he won numerous awards and scholarships and graduated with first class honours in 1997. He is leader of the Tippett String Quartet.