



BROMLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

GUEST CONDUCTOR - MARK FITZ-GERALD

LEADER - BERNARD BROOK

PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 9TH MARCH 2002 AT 7.45PM

THE GREAT HALL, RAVENSBOURNE SCHOOL, BROMLEY

£1.00

www.bromleysymphony.org.uk

PROGRAMME

SCHUMANN — KONZERTSTÜCK FOR FOUR HORNS

SOLOISTS — GILLIAN JONES, OLIVER TUNSTALL,
MARY BANKS & ROY BANKS

JANÁČEK - RHAPSODY 'TARAS BULBA'

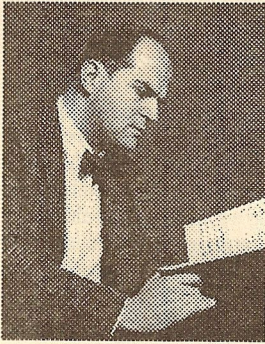
INTERVAL - 20 MINUTES

DVOŘÁK - SYMPHONY NO 5 IN F

FRED COLE — 1911-2002

Tonight's concert is dedicated to the memory of Fred Cole, a former long-standing Bromley Symphony Orchestra member and patron. He played the violin with the Orchestra for some 60 years. He was also formerly leader of the Orpington Symphony Orchestra as well as being active on many other local musical fronts.

MARK FITZ-GERALD - GUEST CONDUCTOR



Mark Fitz-Gerald completed his studies at the Royal College of Music in 1977, where his professors included Norman Del Mar and where he won all the major prizes for both orchestral and operatic conducting.

Hans Werner Henze had already invited him, in 1976, to take part in the first "Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte" in Montepulciano, Italy. As a result of his work there, he was invited regularly as Guest Conductor of the Basel Sinfonietta in Switzerland.

From 1983 to 1987 he was Artistic Director of the RIAS Jugendorchester (West Berlin) where his innovative Filmharmonic Concerts received much acclaim and were later made available on CD. He returned there to continue the series with the Berlin Rundfunkorchester in 1992.

In 1986 he was appointed Music Director of Kentish Opera and had many successful productions with them. He has collaborated with Annetta Hoffnung in many major "Hoffnung" concerts in London and throughout Europe and Japan.

With much success in many countries and festivals throughout the world, he has performed the very specialised task of accompanying Leonid Trauberg's classic film of 1929 'New Babylon', using a live orchestra playing the original score composed by Shostakovich. He conducted the Japanese premiere of the work in 2000 at the opening concert of the Tokyo Summer Music Festival, as well as at the Rotterdam Gergiev Festival in 2001.

His guest appearances with various orchestras have included the RTE Concert Orchestra (Dublin), the Philharmonia Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Mitteldeutscher Rundfunkorchester (Leipzig), Radio-Sinfonieorchester (Stuttgart), Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra, Limburgs Symphony Orchestra (Holland), New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra. From 1989 to 1993 he was Associate Conductor of the Orquestra do Porto, Portugal.

He has assisted regularly on productions at the Vienna Staatsoper, as well as the Vienna Kammeroper and, in 1992, made his debut at the Volksoper conducting several performances of Janáček's "The Cunning Little Vixen". In 1994 he conducted the World Premiere of an opera by the Mexican composer Victor Razgado at Spoleto (Italy) in conjunction with the Italian producer, Luca Ronconi. He also conducted ballet for the first time in 1994 with several performances of "The Nutcracker" for the Vienna Festival Ballet.

He has worked regularly as Guest Conductor with Het Brabants Orkest (Holland), Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bayerischer Rundfunk Orchestra and Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz. He has been assistant conductor in Strasbourg both at the Philharmonic Orchestra and at the Opéra du Rhin since 1997.

In conjunction with the Dutch film historian Theodore van Houten, he is currently restoring the full music to another Trauberg/Shostakovich silent film "Odná" (Alone), for performances in 2003.

Mark Fitz-Gerald has also worked as assistant and deputy conductor at the Rome Opera House, Teatro Carlo Felice (Genova), National Opera House Sao Carlos (Lisbon), Bastille (Paris), Royal Opera House (Copenhagen), Royal Opera House (London), Zarzeula Theatre (Madrid), Deutsche Oper (Berlin), National Opera House of Chile (Santiago) and the Ukrainian National Opera House (Kiev).

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856) – KONZERTSTÜCK FOR FOUR HORNS

The “Konzertstück” (Concert piece) in F major was written in 1848 as something of a celebration of the recently invented valved French horn. Hitherto, orchestral and soloist horn players had only the natural or hand horn on which to ply their precarious trade. This instrument – just a coiled brass tube about 12 feet long, stretching from a conical mouthpiece and gradually widening to a flared bell – was a particularly difficult beast to master as only the basic harmonic series (as heard in bugle calls) could be played on it. The discovery that by placing the right hand in the bell at differing depths would produce some, but not all, of the in-between notes (to the detriment of the sound quality) enabled composers, notably Mozart, to show off the horn as a solo instrument although it was still limited to some degree. The introduction of three valves to the instrument was to change horn writing for ever, although some composers, including Schumann’s own disciple Brahms, continued to write for the hand horn for several decades.

This piece opens with *‘Lebhaft’* (lively) and after the opening two orchestra chords, the soloists play a brilliant nine-note fanfare in a style and notation that could have been played on four natural horns. From there on, however, the quartet, and particularly the first horn, embark on a piece of writing, which over the three movements, fully tax hornists playing even on today’s modern instruments (the range alone covered between first and fourth horns stretches to almost four octaves!). The first movement has the soloists occasionally playing passages that recall memories of the horn’s ‘hunting’ past. After a minimal break, the second movement is a beautifully lyrical, ternary-form *‘Romanza’* which offers the soloists something of a brief respite after the exertions of the first movement before moving without any break at all into the breathtaking, and even more physically exhausting, *‘Finale’*.

LEOŠ JANÁČEK (1854-1928) – RHAPSODY ‘TARAS BULBA’

1. *The Death of Andri* 2. *The Death of Ostap* 3. *The Prophecy and Death of Taras Bulba*

Janáček first encountered Gogol’s short story ‘Taras Bulba’ in 1904-1905 as a member of the Russian Circle he had helped to found in Brno. He returned to it in 1915 when, against the background of the First World War, the ruling Hapsburgs banned the Russian Circle, he wrote what he at first called his ‘Slavonic’ Rhapsody as an act of patriotic defiance. In 1918, with the end of the war and the establishment of Czechoslovakia as an independent republic, he revised the hymn-like melody in the coda, removed the word ‘Slavonic’ from the description of the work and added a dedication to ‘our Czechoslovak armed forces’. The first performance was given in 1921.

The tale of Taras Bulba has its roots in the folk legend of Ukraine. Taras, the chief of the Zaporozhye Cossacks rides off to join his followers with his two sons, Ostap and Andri, who have been studying in Kiev. The Cossacks are soon again engaged in furious battle with their neighbours, the Poles. Plans to take the Polish town of Dubno fail, but they encircle it forcing the inhabitants into starvation. A servant-girl of the daughter of the Polish chief makes her way into the Cossack camp by means of an underground passage and finds Andri, who remembers meeting her mistress two years earlier. The girl persuades him to return with her through the passage to Dubno. This is the starting-point for Janáček’s work.

In the calm of the opening bars the cor anglais solo depicts Andri’s thoughts of the Polish girl. The syncopated cello rhythm soon shows that he is troubled at having deserted his own people. Organ and bells describe the prayers and anguish of the besieged town-dwellers and a stuttering rhythm in the woodwind reflects Andri’s mounting concern. An agitated version of the first bar gathers pace to sweep all cares aside, and in the following interlude, the pair express their love. But tension is never far away: suddenly trombones, cellos and basses punch out a fortissimo triplet figure, the motif of Taras’s challenge. He is enraged by his son’s betrayal and a furious battle ensues. At its climax a silent bar heralds the

moment when father and son come face to face. Andri dismounts, accepts his fate and is shot by his father. In the ultimate act of betrayal, expressed by the violin solo in the final two bars, he dies with the name of the Polish girl on his lips. Taras and his troops ride off.

The second movement opens with a short introduction with harp punctuated by an angular fortissimo figure in the strings. A fierce battle on horseback ensues and Taras's elder son, Ostap, is taken prisoner. Bassoons and lower strings take up figure of the opening bars and underpin the portrayal by clarinets and upper strings of Ostap being led away to Warsaw for execution. The Poles are jubilant and dance a wild mazurka. In the closing section piercingly high outbursts in the solo E flat clarinet represent the cries of Ostap to his father in the final stages of his torture. Taras who has managed to join the onlookers, makes his escape and disappears.

Taras too is then captured. In his flight from Warsaw he drops his favourite pipe, stops to search for it in the grass and is taken prisoner. At the start of the third movement, the Poles have tied him to a tree and sentenced him to burn to death. As the flames rise, his thoughts turn to his defeated warriors while the Poles this time dance in celebration. The pace slackens and Taras's warriors are in desperate retreat. The trombones recall the Taras motif as he shouts directions and his followers escape by leaping into boats on the river. Fanfares sound in the distance and the spotlight returns to Taras. The flames are now much more insistent but in the coda that follows, the tension that has been so prevalent throughout the work gradually gives way to an unmistakable affirmation of peace and liberation. Taras proclaims his faith in the indomitable strength and spirit of his people and the final five bars, marked *grave*, bring the work to a majestic and dignified end.

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904) – SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN F

1. *Allegro non troppo* 2. *Andante con moto* 3. *Scherzo - Allegro scherzando* 4. *Finale. Allegro molto*

Without reservation, Dvořák was Janáček's favourite Czech composer. The two men met in Prague during Janáček's year of study at the Prague Organ School in 1874-75. On his return to Brno, Janáček began to give regular performances of Dvořák's works and a close friendship developed. In the summer of 1877 they set off on a tour of Bohemia and this was just the first of several such excursions.

Dvořák's fifth symphony dates from this period. Written in the summer of 1875, it marked the climax of an intensely creative six months that had already produced the B flat major piano trio, the D major piano quartet, the Serenade for Strings, the string quintet in G, an operatic overture and the first set of Moravian Duets. Later in the year the Dvořáks suffered great sadness with the birth and immediate death of daughter Josefa, their second child, but the compositions from the first half of the year radiate a sense of warmth and happiness. The year is notable too for the award to Dvořák of his first Austrian State Stipendium.

Overwhelmingly pastoral in character, the fifth symphony is vintage Dvořák in the making, and demonstrates great strides in the composer's mastery of the symphonic form. From its opening bars it is clear that we are in the country surrounded by the spontaneous freshness and hope of a new spring. The reflective second movement is unmistakably Slavonic in its tone and mood. After a short andante introduction, the third movement breaks into the infectious rhythm of the furiant. This was the first time the furiant had made its appearance in a symphony, and it is one of the Dvořák's most successful uses of what was one of his favourite Czech dance forms. The trio is calmer but continues the mood of the Scherzo. The last movement provides a reminder, however, that life in the country is not always carefree. Unexpected storm-clouds gather at its opening. These gradually recede and give way to an episode of alluring lyricism but the unsettled mood returns and it is really only in the final section of the movement that it is banished. The symphony ends with the jubilation and optimism that is so typical of the composer.

Programme notes produced by Roy Banks (Schumann) and Penny Steer (Janáček and Dvořák).

BROMLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Bromley Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1918 by Miss Beatrice Fowle and Miss Gwynne Kimpton, teachers at Bromley High School for Girls. Over the years, it has earned a high reputation for concerts of professional standard and has worked with many famous soloists and conductors. Sir Adrian Boult conducted regularly in the 1940s and in 1952 Norman Del Mar took over. Soloists who have performed with the orchestra include Paul Tortelier, John Lill, Ralph Holmes, Hugh Bean, Emma Johnson and Leslie Howard.

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