



BROMLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

GUEST CONDUCTOR - GERRY CORNELIUS

LEADER - BERNARD BROOK

PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 18TH MAY 2002 AT 7.45PM

THE GREAT HALL, RAVENSBORNE SCHOOL, BROMLEY

£1.00

www.bromleysymphony.org.uk

PROGRAMME

CONNELL – 'THE FLOWER WILL BLOOM'

(BSO COMMISSION – FIRST PERFORMANCE)

NIELSEN - VIOLIN CONCERTO

SOLOIST – NATASHA ELVIN

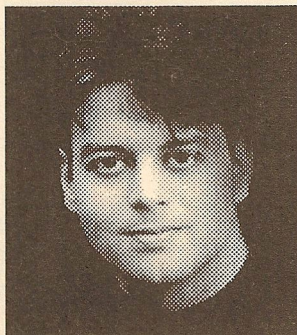
INTERVAL - 20 MINUTES

MAHLER - SYMPHONY No 1

For today's concert, we are pleased to be giving the premiere of a BSO commission by a local composer, Adrian Connell. Adrian studied with David Carhart, producing a substantial number of works for orchestra, many of which have been publicly performed.

Since graduating, he has worked as an editor for Faber Music Ltd while also pursuing a freelance career as a composer and conductor. His music has continued to receive performances throughout the South East including the London String Orchestra, Southampton Concert Orchestra and Harrow Symphony Orchestra. He first made links with Bromley in 1990 with a performance by the Bromley Ecumenical Singers, resulting in further performances by the choir and other local choirs and orchestras. He has now lived in the Borough for some eight years.

GERRY CORNELIUS - GUEST CONDUCTOR



Gerry Cornelius was born in London and graduated from Durham University before studying conducting at the Royal Academy of Music, with Colin Metters, George Hurst and Sir Colin Davis. On leaving the Academy he continued his study for two years at the St Petersburg State Conservatory with Ilya Musin. He is winner of the Henry Wood, August Manns and Philharmonia Chorus scholarships for conducting.

On his return to the UK he was appointed to several posts with orchestras and opera companies and succeeded Lawrence Leonard as conductor of the Chamber Orchestra at Morley College, London where he directed the first Tippett Memorial Festival. Most recently he has been working on the music staff of the Almeida Opera Festival & Hoxton New Music Days and in 2001 assisted Ronald Zollmann for the world première of John Casken's opera "God's Liar".

He has ongoing appointments with Hertford Symphony Orchestra, Goldsmiths Sinfonia & Chorus. His guest appearances include ENO Studio, Oxford Sinfonia, Nottingham Composers Forum, The Composers' Orchestral Project, Hertfordshire Chamber Orchestra, and Opera-Inside-Out. He otherwise divides his time between conducting and coaching both in the UK and Russia.

NATASHA ELVIN - VIOLIN



Natasha was born in London in 1976, but grew up in Switzerland. She began her professional violin studies at the age of 15 at the Lucerne Conservatoire where she graduated in 1994 receiving a "Teaching Diploma with Special Distinction" and the "Dr. Walter Strehni Memorial Prize".

From 1994 to 2000 she studied with Professor Yfrah Neaman at London's Guildhall School of Music & Drama where she was awarded the prestigious Concert Recital Diploma "Premier Prix" in 1997. In 1998 to 1999, she won first prizes at the Croydon Symphony Orchestra Soloist Award, the Eastbourne Symphony

Orchestra Young Soloist Competition and the Maisie Lewis Young Artists' Award. In 2001, she was selected for "Live Music Now" in Germany and as a "Making Music Recommended Artist" (National Federation of Music Societies) in London.

Natasha has wide repertoire. She has performed with orchestras in famous halls across Europe including concertos by Bach, Beethoven, Bruch, Elgar (at a gala concert in Palma de Mallorca alongside Sir Peter Ustinov), Glazunov, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky, Vivaldi as well as Massenet's "Méditation" from "Thaïs" and Waxman's "Carmen Fantasy". She has also given several recitals, including at the City of London Festival 2000, St. Ives Music & Arts Festival 2001. She has made recordings for Swiss and German radio and television as well as for BBC Radio 3.

Natasha has a scholarship from the Ernst Göhner Stiftung. She has participated in Masterclasses with Professors Rosa Fain, Yfrah Neaman, Franco Gulli, Igor Ozim, Ana Chumachenko, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Isaac Stern, Viktor Tretjakov, Zvi Zeitlin, Lydia Mordkovich, Erick Friedman, Michael Davis and Rudolf Baumgartner. In 1996, Natasha founded the Davidoff Quartet with whom she has won several prizes. They were also selected for the BBC Radio 3 "Young Artists' Forum".

Although remaining based in London, since October 2000 Natasha has been studying in the soloist class of Professor Rosa Fain at the Robert Schumann Musikhochschule in Düsseldorf, Germany.

ADRIAN CONNELL (b. 1964) – ‘THE FLOWER WILL BLOOM’

“The Flower will Bloom” was originally a small song cycle written for mezzo-soprano, piano and violin based on the poetry of John Keats. The whole cycle centred on the idea of growth from seedling to a full-blown flowering of life. However, the poetry always hinted at the darker side that while the seed reached maturity, the flower was also nearer to death. In the last song of the cycle where the flower reached its final mature form, the vocal line is written above a ground bass, which uses the ‘Dies Irae’ plainchant as its basis. Today’s symphonic scherzo for orchestra, lasting nearly fourteen minutes, has been developed from that 30-second song.

The main scherzo part of the movement is based on the ‘Dies Irae’. This appears as both a foundation, over which other material is presented, and in places the chant becomes the main melodic focus of the material. The rest of the scherzo material is drawn from the vocal line of the song. This material is fragmented and only appears in small melodic cells of five to six notes. During the scherzo these cells (seeds) gradually draw together to form an ever-increasing web of sound. The ideas of death are portrayed further in the orchestral writing with flutter-tongued piccolos, trombone glissandos, cross rhythms and demonic fanfare trumpets and timpani solos.

At the end of the scherzo, the trio presents the material of the vocal line of the song in full. Here the demonic elements from the scherzo have vanished and the orchestration thins, becoming more like chamber music. The main melodic material is first heard in full on two clarinets over a pizzicato cello line. This melody is repeated and the seeds from the scherzo bloom into a fully-fledged flower as the whole orchestra slowly takes up the theme. The flower continues blooming with an added countermelody sung by a solo violin. However, as in the original song, elements of the scherzo and the ‘Dies Irae’ reappear to remind us that this beauty is only temporary. Before long the scherzo hits us again with renewed force, taking the work to an explosive ending.

CARL NIELSEN (1865-1931) – VIOLIN CONCERTO OP.33

1. Largo - Allegro cavallaresco

2. Poco adagio - Rondo allegretto scherzando

In 1911, when he had just finished his third symphony, Nielsen was invited by Nina Grieg to spend part of the summer at Trolldhaugen near Bergen. And thus it was in Edvard Grieg’s little lakeside hut that Nielsen began the first of what were to be three instrumental concertos, a violin concerto written for the Danish violinist Peder Møller.

Nielsen described the process as follows: *“The task is essentially difficult and therefore a lot of fun. The point is, it has to be good music and yet always show regard for the development of the solo instrument, putting it in the best possible light. The piece must have substance and be popular and showy without being superficial. These conflicting elements must and shall meet and form a higher unity.”*

Nielsen himself conducted premiere in 1912 with the Royal Danish Orchestra and Møller as soloist. They subsequently performed the concerto together in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Oslo, Berlin, Paris and elsewhere.

Nielsen was himself a professional violinist, and the solo part contains much virtuoso writing as well as expressive passages. The work is genial and optimistic, with a variety of style and texture. Its form is unusual, four movements linked in pairs, so that each half of the work has a long slow introduction followed by a faster movement.

The violin launches straight away into a cadenza in G minor over long held notes, and when the soloist stops, the strings introduce a calm phrase in G major. The music fluctuates in mood, but eventually reaches a peaceful D major. The Allegro is a full-scale sonata form movement in G, beginning with a sturdy theme on full orchestra. Later the oboe has the second theme, a more flowing melody in D. There is a cadenza just before the recapitulation, and a faster coda with some violin fireworks.

The second half of the work begins with the notes B A C H (the German equivalent of B flat, A, C and B) on the oboe, but the Nielsen scholar, Robert Simpson, suggests that this was probably by accident rather than design. He also says, however, “*This section is perhaps the best in the work and it is a good example of how Nielsen can indulge in chromaticism without ever falling into sentimentality.*” The music certainly shifts through many keys, but the violin eventually introduces a tranquil tune in A major which passes to the cellos. A mysterious passage establishes the note A in the bass and soon leads to the final Rondo in D major, on a cheerful tune presented by the soloist. A cadenza introduces the final full version of the rondo theme, and there is a whimsical ending.

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911) – SYMPHONY NO 1 IN D MAJOR

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 <i>Langsam Schleppend - sehr gemächlich</i> | 2 <i>Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell</i> |
| 3 <i>Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen</i> | 4 <i>Stürmisch bewegt</i> |

Mahler had, at twenty, written one large-scale work, the cantata *Das Klagende Lied*, and in 1888 he launched his first symphony on a Budapest audience. It had a chequered start. Mahler originally gave it five movements and called it *Titan* - not because of its length or because he put it forward as a portrayal of some heroic figure, but because he had recently read a novel of that title and felt its influence on him. All the same, it is tempting to listen to the symphony as a self-portrait of the composer as a young man.

The first performance had the Budapest audience puzzled - the music was nothing like the symphonies of Brahms or the early tone-poems of Strauss. Mahler later took out the middle movement (*Blumine*, a short andante sometimes played on its own now) and the title. Even so, the First had to wait until Mahler's reputation had been established by his immense Second (*Resurrection*) Symphony of 1892 before it was accepted.

The first movement begins with a great spread of sound (Mahler called it ‘a sound of nature’), a moment of creation on a pedal A, from which all his symphonies would evolve. The movement gets under way with a contrapuntal treatment of a lilting, folk-like tune from the song-cycle. A cheerful, open-air mood is the essence of this movement.

Next comes the first of Mahler's folk-tune-inspired scherzos, not all that fast, in which he looks back to Bruckner in his galumphing rhythms and to Schubert in his long-flowing melodies untroubled here by any doubts or despair.

Hans Redlich in his biography refers to ‘the psychological collapse in the eerie, self-lacerating slow movement’, a phrase which perfectly sums up its haunted atmosphere. Over soft drum taps, a solo double-bass spells out the tune of *Frère Jacques*, but in the minor key, and a scarecrow procession grows in canon underneath a lurching theme. There is a furious eruption of tavern music, full of squawking woodwind, as disconcerting to the Budapest audience as if Walton or Vaughan Williams had flung some Heavy Metal music into one of their symphonies. A delicate and pastoral section, based on one of the Wayfarer songs, contrasts strikingly with the surrounding nightmare which returns with renewed force on menacing horns.

The finale starts with a blistering discord, perhaps a reminder of Beethoven's start to the finale of his Ninth Symphony. But whereas Beethoven recalls themes from his earlier movements and dismisses them, Mahler plunges into a sprawling fantasia which bears out his remark to Sibelius that ‘symphony must contain everything’. And so this movement does - gusty marches, mighty fanfares, brass chorales, powerful climaxes, quiet withdrawals and a long lyrical tune in D flat. There is a moment halfway through which Redlich calls ‘a false dawn’, which may convince some listeners that the symphony is over, but there is more to come, ending in a grand D major fanfare for the whole, huge orchestra.

Notes on Connell by the composer. The notes on Nielsen and Mahler are based on those supplied through the Programme Note Bank of Making Music, to which this society is affiliated.

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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