



BROMLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTOR - ADRIAN BROWN

LEADER - BERNARD BROOK

PROGRAMME

This concert is sponsored by Allied Irish Bank

SATURDAY 17TH MAY 2003 AT 7.45PM

THE GREAT HALL, RAVENSBORNE SCHOOL, BROMLEY

£1.00

www.bromleysymphony.org.uk

PROGRAMME

WALTON – OVERTURE ‘ORB AND SCEPTRE’

SHOSTAKOVICH - JAZZ SUITE No. 2

GERSHWIN - AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

INTERVAL - 20 MINUTES

TCHAIKOVSKY - SYMPHONY No. 5

ADRIAN BROWN – CONDUCTOR



After graduating from the Royal Academy of Music in London, Adrian Brown studied with Sir Adrian Boult with whom he worked for several years. He remains the only British conductor to have reached the finals of the Karajan Conductors' Competition and the Berlin Philharmonic was the first professional orchestra he conducted.

In 1992 he was engaged to conduct one of the great orchestras of the world, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra and was immediately invited to return. In

1998 he was invited to work with the Camerata Salzburg, one of Europe's foremost chamber orchestras and again he was invited back. Adrian works regularly with many leading British orchestras including the City of Birmingham Symphony, the BBC Symphony, the BBC Scottish Symphony and the London Sinfonietta. He is also a great proponent of contemporary music and has several first performances to his credit

Working with young musicians has been an area where Adrian has made a singular contribution to the musical life of Britain and also further afield. He has been a frequent visitor to conduct both the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, working closely with Sir Colin Davis and Sir Roger Norrington, and the National Youth Wind Orchestra. He regularly runs courses for young musicians and his success in this general area was recognised when he was given the Novello Award for Youth Orchestras at the 1989 Edinburgh Festival conducting Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra with whom he has been Musical Director for thirty years.

He recently returned to the Royal Academy of Music on a number of occasions, to work with their Senior Orchestra. He has been a regular chairman of the jury for the National Association of Youth Orchestras' Conducting Competition. In 1996 he went to Japan to work with the Toyama Academy Orchestra, a visit that was received with much acclaim from all those with whom he worked.

Recent engagements have included a Millennium performance of Tippett's "Child of our Time", "Die Fledermaus" and he received rave reviews in The Guardian for a performance of Strauss's "Feuersnot". He has performed successful concerts with the Salomon Orchestra and Goldsmith's Sinfonia and Chorus.

In June Adrian was presented with a prestigious Classic FM Award at their Tenth Birthday Honours Celebration.

WILLIAM WALTON (1830-1901) – OVERTURE 'ORB AND SCEPTRE'

I am a King that find thee, and I know
'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The intertissued robe of gold and pearl....
...Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave...

(Henry V: Act IV Scene i)

When Walton was commissioned to write a march for the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, someone pointed him in the direction of Shakespeare: "You know the speech in Henry V? There's a whole line of titles for Coronation Marches"; and it was these lines which would provide the inspiration he needed. Walton proceeded to write an acknowledged masterpiece, Crown Imperial, which was played for the entry into Westminster Abbey on 12th May 1937. For the present Queen's Coronation on 2nd June 1953 Walton chose the title Orb and Sceptre, saying with a wry smile that Bed Majestical would be reserved for Prince Charles.

The jaunty opening of the new march certainly reflected the prevalent mood of post-war optimism. The jazz-influenced writing of much of the piece no doubt caused a few raised eyebrows at the ceremony whilst the quiet dignity of the main central tune (one of Walton's finest) is a worthy and heartfelt tribute to the new Sovereign. Dedicated by permission to Her Majesty, the march was first performed by the Coronation Orchestra (an ad hoc group of Britain's finest musicians) and conducted by Sir Adrian Boult who was once again in charge of the orchestral contributions before and after the service (as he had been in 1937).

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975) – JAZZ SUITE NO. 2

March – Lyric Waltz – Dance No. 2 – Waltz No. 1 – Finale

The second Jazz Suite is clearly not jazz at all and it is tempting to conclude that Soviet musicians knew nothing about such music. In fact, foreign jazz musicians had visited the Soviet Union from the twenties onwards. Shostakovich himself wrote of his enthusiasm for a jazz band he heard in 1925, and a Russian saxophonist played in Duke Ellington's Orchestra.

In 1934 Shostakovich agreed to participate in a jazz-commission whose declared aim was to raise the level of Soviet jazz from popular 'café' music to music with a professional status. A competition was organised in Leningrad, and to encourage others Shostakovich wrote his three movement Jazz Suite No. 1. This was followed in 1938 by his Second Jazz Suite, written at the request of the newly formed State Orchestra for Jazz. Both suites reveal Shostakovich's brilliance and wit in orchestration, but the music hardly corresponds to the accepted understanding of jazz. Rather the composer utilises a light music idiom which he used extensively in his film and theatre music.

The Russian title of the Second Jazz Suite is actually Suite for Variety Orchestra. These variety orchestras, popular from the twenties right through to the early sixties played in parks and in the foyers of cinemas and theatres. Their repertoire consisted of marches, waltzes, fox-trots and tangos. The division between popular and serious music has never been as clear in Russia as it is in the West. Many 'popular' musicians are academically trained and many popular songs were written by 'serious' composers (including Tchaikovsky as well as Shostakovich).

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898 -1937) – AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

In 1928 Gershwin, aged 30 and already famous, visited Paris. Aside from his success with his brother Ira as writers of popular songs, he had produced works in which he used a more "classical" format: *Rhapsody in Blue* and his *Piano Concerto*. The visit gave him the opportunity to meet some of the leading European composers of the day including Milhaud, Ravel, Stravinsky and Prokofiev. While there, clearly taken with the city, he began to write *An American in Paris*. Completed first in piano score and later orchestrated (in Vienna), it received its first performance in New York on his return to his native USA.

Gershwin said of the work prior to the premiere: "*This new piece, really a rhapsodic ballet, is written very freely and is the most modern music I've yet attempted. My purpose here is to portray the impression of an American visitor in Paris, as he strolls about the city, listens to the various street noises, and absorbs the French atmosphere. As in my other orchestral compositions I've not endeavored to represent any definite scenes ... the individual listener can read into the music such episodes as his imagination pictures for him.*"

There are two main parts, each contrasting two aspects of the city. "Paris by Day" alternates episodes of bustling urban activity punctuated by the stereophonic squabbling of motor horns, with brief, hazy visions of peaceful, perfumed gardens. In "Paris by Night", the setting of the sun is signalled by a solo violin cadenza, leading into a trumpet "blues" passage, at once evoking the romance of the Parisian night. We are drawn into a jazz club, smoky and sleazy with saxophones. Finally, in the "Postlude: Memories" the earlier street music stirs in the dawn light, but soon music from both parts bubbles up irrepressibly as the visitor reflects on his experiences.

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893) – SYMPHONY NO 5 IN E MINOR OP 64

Andante, Allegro con anima - Andante cantabile - Valse, Allegro moderato - Finale, Andante maestoso

Ten years after composing his fourth symphony, Tchaikovsky felt able at last to return to the form of the symphony as a medium for his compositional gifts. The intervening period had been one of much soul-searching and self-doubt. In 1888, as he was starting work on the fifth, Tchaikovsky wrote to his benefactress Nadyezhda von Meck: "*I am exceedingly anxious to prove to myself and to others that I am not played out as a composer. Have I already told you that I intend to write a symphony? The beginning was very difficult but now inspiration seems to come. We shall see!*"

The fourth, fifth and sixth symphonies, written between 1878 and 1893, re-enact the tragic drama of Tchaikovsky's emotional life over these years - his bitter struggle with, and eventual defeat by what he called "fate" - what we now know to be his homosexuality. It has become clear in the last 20 years that Tchaikovsky's early death was not of cholera, as the Tsarist and later Soviet regimes insisted, but suicide, forced upon him by a bizarre "honour-court" when his relationship with a young nobleman threatened to become public knowledge. The slow finale of the Sixth Symphony, premièred just days before his death, is one of the most uncanny examples of prescience in all music.

In each of these symphonies, a distinctive motto theme portrays "fate" - presented at the outset in the Fifth by the clarinets in low register and bassoons. The outer movements of the Fifth Symphony chart the emotional voyage from gloom to celebration, the first ending quietly, the last with a grandiose statement of the motto theme and a brilliant coda for full orchestra. In between comes the ardent *Andante cantabile*, opening with a magnificent romantic melody for solo horn and building to two surging climaxes, shattered each time by the "fate" theme in its most violent aspect. A graceful waltz, deliciously scored, takes the place of a scherzo - a moment of relaxation, darkened only in its final bars where the motto theme appears briefly and ominously.

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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The Orchestra is most appreciative of the help kindly given by many other individuals in the provision of such services as stewards, interval refreshments, ticket and programme sales, etc.

Finally, you will realize that putting on quality concerts with attractive programmes while trying to keep down ticket prices is a problem faced by all symphony orchestras. If you are able to identify or open up any opportunities for corporate sponsorship arrangements, however modest, we would be very pleased to hear from you. Likewise we would welcome any offers of more direct help, eg serving interval drinks, selling programmes, etc.

MAILING LIST

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BROMLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Guest Principal
Guest Principal
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Sarah Cross
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Sheila Robertson
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John Alderson
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Celia Osbourne
Massimo Roman

BASS CLARINET

Celia Osbourne

ALTO SAXOPHONE

Alison Sutton
Marie Chalkley

TENOR SAXOPHONE

Marie Chalkley
Steve Hill

BARITONE SAXOPHONE

Steve Hill

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*John Carmichael

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TUBA

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CONCERT MANAGERS

*Helen Connell
Colin Barrett

* denotes a member of the organising committee

Programme Notes by Andrew Condon (Walton), Derek Cozens (Shostakovich), Stephen Fuller (Gershwin), and Mike Ibbott (Tchaikovsky)

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Bromley Symphony Orchestra

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- **24 Jan 2004**
SIBELIUS, NIELSEN, BEETHOVEN
- **20 Mar 2004**
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- **15 May 2004**
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