

June 22nd, 2008

Richard Strauss

AN ALPINE SYMPHONY



BROMLEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Conductor: Adrian Brown

Strauss takes us on a lifetime's journey through ambition, effort, adversity and fulfillment, compressed into one day's Alpine ascent. Man must conquer the summit and weather the storm on the way down, before looking back on what he has achieved. These notes guide you through the signposts that Strauss included in the score.

Night: muted strings set the scene; a sombre chorale of lower brass depicts the brooding presence of the mountain. The tone brightens with the approaching dawn.

Sunrise: trumpets pierce through the violins as day breaks and the landscape is revealed in bright hues.

The lower strings introduce a more purposeful theme as the mountaineer embarks on his *Ascent*. Hunting horns call from up ahead (off-stage) as we approach the forest.

A darkly lyrical theme on trombones marks the *Entry into the Forest*. We ascend through sunnier glades where birds sing and find ourselves on a peaceful path *beside the Brook*, with flowing strings.

The *Ascent* theme is heard again as the path steepens and we clamber up to a dramatic view of *the Waterfall* (cascading flutes and violins). Rainbow colours in the spray are displayed in a brief *Apparition*.

The journey leads on into *flowering meadows* - a joyful melody sweeps through the strings with a bouncing accompaniment, before we hear the calls of shepherds' pipes and the clangour of cowbells *on the mountain Pasture*.

The music becomes more intricately woven as the climber loses his way *in undergrowth and thicket on the wrong path*.

Strident trumpets signal the climber's emergence onto *the Glacier*.

The way ahead is beset with *dangerous moments*, so the climber's progress is hesitant, but the view of the summit inspires him.

A growing heroic fanfare from the horns expresses the final effort needed to reach *the Summit*, where trombones declare the moment of triumph with a strong rising arpeggio.

At this point, a solo oboe turns and views the scene, as if awed by the spectacle. This moment of quiet reverence is overtaken by a rapturous outpouring from the orchestra – the climax of the work – man glorifying nature.

There is an intricate reworking of earlier material as the descent starts, with trumpets and horns picking their way through a rugged landscape of strings.

We witness a *Vision* of the mountain peak (blazing brass chorale beneath vertiginous violins) before *the fog rises* and *the sun is gradually obscured* (subdued winds).

The plaintive tone continues in the violins through the long melodic arch that introduces the *Elegy*, passing to oboes and descending to the lower strings.

Nature seems to hold its breath in *the Calm before the Storm*.

Distant flashes and rumbles preface the approaching *Thunder and Storm*, suddenly upon us with full orchestra joined by full organ. Wind machine and Thunder sheet are heard at the peak of the storm.

As the clamour subsides, the mountain theme appears again in the brass. The descent continues as *the sun sets* (tremolo strings beneath descending violins).

Solo horn and trumpet introduce the *Epilogue*, as the events of the journey are reviewed with serene composure – a contemplative afterglow that finally descends back to the opening chords, the mountain unchanged and the surrounding *Night*.



2008-2009 concert season

15th November 2008:

- Tchaikovsky:** Hamlet fantasy overture
Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No.2 (*soloist, Masa Tayama*)
Rimsky Korsakov: Scheherazade

24th January 2009:

- Berlioz:** Roman Carnival
Rodrigo: Concierto de Aranjuez
(*Guitar soloist: Eurico Pereira*)
Ravel: Rapsodie Espagnole
Respighi: Roman Festivals

21st March 2009:

- Mahler:** Symphony No.9

16th May 2009:

- Strauss:** Till Eulenspiegel
Mozart: Flute Concerto No.1 (*soloist, Philip Rowson*)
Schumann: Symphony No.3

Seat prices:

£8.00 (stalls). Season tickets £24.00 (stalls), £28.50 (balcony, sold out!).

Cheques should be made payable to Bromley Symphony Orchestra, and sent with a self-addressed envelope to

Ticket Manager, 2 Scotts Avenue, Bromley BR2 0LQ,
or phone (020) 8464 5869 for availability.