



B S O

BROMLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Conductor – Adrian Brown

Leader – Andrew Laing

Soloist – Mathieu van Bellen



Photo: Alex Romford

Saturday 23rd January 2016

Langley Park Centre for the Performing Arts

£ 1 . 50

www.bromleysymphony.org

Box office: 020 3627 2974

Registered Charity N^o 1112117

PROGRAMME

Beethoven
Overture: The Creatures of Prometheus

Sibelius
Symphony No.4

INTERVAL - 20 MINUTES

Refreshments are available in the dining hall.

Beethoven
Violin Concerto in D major
Soloist: Mathieu van Bellen

Unauthorised audio or video recording of this concert is not permitted

Our next concert is on March 19th
at the Langley Park Centre for the Performing Arts:

Schubert Symphony No.5,

Bruckner Symphony No.9

ADRIAN BROWN – CONDUCTOR

John Carmichael



Adrian Brown comes from a distinguished line of pupils of Sir Adrian Boult. After graduating from the Royal Academy of Music in London, he studied intensively with Sir Adrian for some 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. Sir Adrian said of his work: "He has always impressed me as a musician of exceptional attainments who has all the right gifts and ideas to make him a first class conductor".

In 1992 Adrian Brown was engaged to conduct one of the great orchestras of the world, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1998 he was invited to work with the Camerata Salzburg, one of Europe's foremost chamber orchestras at the invitation of Sir Roger Norrington. Adrian has also conducted many leading British orchestras including the City of Birmingham Symphony, the BBC Symphony, the BBC Scottish Symphony and the London Sinfonietta.

In his 60th Birthday Year, 2009, Adrian had a major success conducting the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra in Vilnius. In 2010 he conducted Elgar's 'The Dream of Gerontius' in Ely Cathedral, his Enigma Variations in Girona Cathedral, a stunning debut with the Corinthian Orchestra in London, and Mahler's Fifth Symphony in Bromley.

His concerts with the Corinthian Chamber Orchestra in 2011 were met with critical acclaim, and Adrian was appointed their joint principal conductor.

Britten centenary celebrations included a triumphant return to the Salomon Orchestra in February 2013 conducting Sinfonia da Requiem.

2013 saw Adrian retire from Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra and honoured with being one of three national figures nominated for a Lifetime Achievement Award by 'Music Teacher' and Classic FM. In the summer of 2013 he was awarded the 'Making Music' NFMS Lady Hilary Groves Prize for services to Community Music, a much appreciated and admired honour.

The 2014-15 season included a return to the Royal Orchestral Society after a much praised concert in 2014, and two concerts with the Corinthian Orchestra in St James' Piccadilly. Adrian also gave a lecture to the Berlioz Society and another on the subject of his teacher, Adrian Boult, to the Elgar Society. He also completed his project of performing Berlioz 'Les Troyens'.

Adrian Brown was one of a hundred musicians presented with a prestigious Classic FM Award at their Tenth Birthday Honours Celebration in June 2002.

Mathieu van Bellen – Violin Soloist

We are delighted to welcome back Mathieu van Bellen, born in the Netherlands in 1988, and a violin student from the age of 4. He studied in Belgium with Nico Baltussen, at the Amsterdam Conservatoire and Chethams School of Music, Manchester with Jan Repko (on scholarship from the VandenEnde Foundation); Royal College of Music with Itzhak Rashkovsky and Hochschule für Musik, Berlin with Ulf Wallin. He had masterclasses with Ida Haendel, Shlomo Mintz, Pinchas Zukerman and Maxim Vengerov.

Laureate of Yehudi Menuhin Competition, Wieniawski Competition, Prinses Christina Competition and Oskar Back Competition he is also a recipient of RPS Emily Anderson Prize, Philharmonia Martin Scholarship Fund and Making Music Awards. He has given concerts in Europe, Asia and the USA, playing in the Royal Festival Hall London, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, and Tel Aviv Opera House.

Co-Founder of the Busch Ensemble, where he plays the ‘ex-Adolf Busch’ Guaragnini violin, Mathieu also plays a violin by Allesandro Gagliano, sponsored by Delta N.V.

Beethoven – Overture: The Creatures of Prometheus.

The overture to Beethoven’s sole ballet begins with several powerful chords immediately followed by a woodwind chorale. The resulting Allegro, which has been compared to the overture of *Così fan tutte*, is certainly Mozartian in feel: electrically light and bright, whimsical and unexpectedly tender by turns, featuring spurred off-beats and an irresistible exuberance.

Jean Sibelius – Symphony No.4 in A minor.

‘*As harsh as fate*’, Sibelius wrote of his fourth symphony some decades after the premiere: ‘*Even today I cannot find a single note in it that I would change, nor can I find anything to add. This symphony represents a very important part of me.*’

Sibelius – who had long struggled with alcoholism – endured several operations for throat cancer in the years leading up to his fourth symphony. His state of mind is revealed in a letter to Strindberg – ‘*being human is misery*’ he wrote, requesting that the third movement of the symphony be played at his funeral.

Musically, the work is spare, arresting and intense. In a letter to his biographer, Sibelius wrote: ‘*It is a protest against the music of today.*’ Certainly its stripped-down, sinewy muscularity has nothing in common with the lush late romanticism so prevalent in the early 1900s. In Finland it was even nicknamed Barkbröd (‘Bark-bread’), a reference to that country’s 19th-century famines, when the poor ate tree bark in order to survive. Yet it remains uncompromisingly real, honest and immensely rewarding: in fact, many consider it Sibelius’ masterpiece.

The ambiguous tritone dominates from the very outset, when out of Finland’s frozen wastes and aching horizons emerges a single, mournful cello. Then storm clouds rise, the brass and timpani are summoned. A more liquid, consolatory theme eventually surfaces in the strings, after which solo winds confer above

string pulsation. The solo cello, and then violins, aspire upwards, resolutely off the beat. A nervy section intervenes, featuring string tremolo and skittish woodwind. A sense of utter disintegration and despair prevails, even when the clouds break: the brass chorale, the upper strings recalling the second theme. Amid uncertainty of texture and dissolving harmonies, the violins are left, completely stranded.

The second movement opens with a sprightly solo oboe, igniting what feels like a normal scherzo – for a while. Spiccato spreads like a virus through the strings, undercut by grumbling brass. A lopsided, rather jerky theme gives way to the oboe frivolity again, gossiping pairs of flutes stroll past. Eventually the violins assume priority with trill-infested menace, rising to cries of warning, along with objections from the brass, and nerves from the strings. Amid a general sense of agitation, the music fragments and falters, evaporating uneasily into Finnish mists, all sense of scherzo – or indeed of anything – lost.

The stunning slow movement opens with solo flute accompanied only by the deepest instruments, leaving a great chasm between. We are instantly in a landscape of desolation, grandeur and emptiness. A slow, deep-rising theme attempts to manifest, only to dissipate into more unsettling off-beats. Amid general doubt and lack of direction, solo woodwinds meditate. Eventually, above tremolo violins, the celli take on the theme's challenge, only to fade, disconsolate. Impelled by solo winds, tutti strings summon sufficient courage for some kind of breakthrough, featuring richer harmonies: some catharsis is achieved, only to falter and slip away in fog . . . the violins unite, defying fate, but this too dissipates – yet again, off the beat – amid pulsing strings and doubting horn.

The finale starts with a new positivity: violins shiver, glockenspiel glitters like snow. Solo strings take turns to polish a feverish figuration, then all the strings get 'stuck' in Sibelian passagework, as if in a groove, over which the woodwinds tussle. Another 'stuck' passage emerges, over which distant horns and woodwinds comment. Eventually the brass rebels, the violins reject the beat and the strings are stripped back to pizzicato snippets of the first theme amid queries from winds and brass. Violins, very high, finally begin to agitate and then to panic, until renewed quavers kick-start another 'stuck' string section, over which the brass blare stern warnings. There is a climactic offbeat surge, powerful yet curiously featureless, with the brass contending against the strings for the lost beat . . . (at some points, the beat is nowhere but inside the listener's mind). Final disintegration then occurs, leaving despairing strings and woodwinds, rejected by the brass.

Erik Tawaststjerna, Sibelius's biographer, reveals that this movement is based on sketches Sibelius made for a setting of 'The Raven' by Edgar Allen Poe. Solo flute and oboe lines in the epilogue fit the famous: '*Quoth the Raven: "Nevermore"*'. It is in this spirit that the solo flute finally yields to steely string chords, which continue, relentless, to the end.

Noting the completion of the symphony in his diary on April 2, 1911, Sibelius commented: '*It calls for much courage to look life straight in the eye*'. Dominated by the tritone – that homeless, rootless interval – Sibelius' fourth hovers on the

edge of atonality, but refuses to tip over. Uncompromisingly spartan, it flirts with formlessness as well. Yet like any truly great work of art, it remains uplifting. Sibelius himself called his composition ‘*a psychological symphony*’. It is an emotional exploration, Sibelius’ personal ‘take’ on the human condition. It is also transformative, like reading Dostoevsky or seeing Hamlet. I guarantee that you won’t emerge from Langley Park tonight humming the themes, but I defy you to go out exactly the same person that you were when you came in.

Ludwig van Beethoven – Violin Concerto in D major.

Despite his growing deafness, the latter half of 1806 saw the first version of Beethoven’s Fourth Symphony and the stunning Fourth Piano Concerto, as well as his iconic violin concerto. The latter was completed in a fever of activity only a day or two before the premiere, which was – unsurprisingly – rather less than successful, despite the sight-reading skills of Franz Clement, its dedicatee. (It was not until twenty years after Beethoven’s death that the concerto was truly recognised as one of the very greatest for the instrument, when the 13-year-old Joachim started performing it under Mendelssohn’s baton.) It is also one of the most difficult to play: a combination of fiery energy and restrained lyricism.

The first movement begins with five significant timpani strokes: a motive that recurs throughout. As Marc Mantel wrote: ‘*The length of the movement grows from its duality of character: on the one hand we have those rhythmic drumbeats, which provide a sense of pulse and of an occasionally martial atmosphere, on the other the tuneful, melodic flow of the thematic ideas, against which the drumbeat figure can stand in dark relief.*’

Within the plangent set of variations that comprise the slow movement, the soloist essays a lovely *obbligato* in the first variation, and, in the second, over one of the most lustrous solos in the entire bassoon repertoire. A more passionate interpretation from the strings follows, stirring the soloist into a subtle and intimate introversion before launching yet again into decoration above delicate, pizzicato strings. Yet when the horns propose yet another version, the strings overrule. The soloist responds by tossing all sentiment to the winds and creating a virtuosic bridge into the freewheeling rondo that closes the work.

In the finale Beethoven is in celebratory mood. The theme has a rustic swagger, and, despite excursions into unexpected keys and some serious pyrotechnics from the soloist we are never far from uninhibited joy. There is yet another eloquent solo for bassoon, seconded generously by the soloist, but even in the more serious transition sections there remains an undercurrent of dance. The cadenza starts in virtuosic exuberance but ends with a wistful filigree over the theme and finally in a stylish flourish of farewell.

BROMLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

VIOLINS

Andrew Laing (Leader)
Clare Wiberley
(Associate Leader)
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Bernard Brook
Ruth Brook
Judy Brown
Andrew Condon
Mark Cousins
Rosie Cousins
Elizabeth Cromb
Claire Dillon
Rosanna Dowlen
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Andrew Harber
Eleanor Harber
Mike Ibbott
Amy Jordan
Penny Longman
* Phil McKerracher
Richard Miscampbell
Monika Molnar
Sarah Norman
* David Rodker

VIOLAS

David Griffiths (Principal)
Jenny Carter
Catriona Cooper
Richard Longman
* Alan Magrath
Maria Staines
Vanessa Townsend

CELLOS

* Alice McVeigh (Principal)
* Helen Griffiths
Helen McDonald
Jane Broadbent
Anne Curry
Becky Fage
Andrew Garton
Marion Hitchcock
Mandy Selby
Amanda Stephen

DOUBLE BASSES

Adrian Ball (Principal)
Thomas Dignum
Barrie Pantrey
Tony Saunders

FLUTES & PICCOLO

Mark Esmonde
Catherine Borner

OBOES & COR ANGLAIS

* Caroline Marwood
Philip Knight

CLARINETS

Hale Hambleton
Shelley Phillips

BASSOONS & CONTRA

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Julian Farrel
Chris Richardson

HORNS

Roy Banks
Mary Banks
Frank Cottee
Brian Newman

TRUMPETS

Martin Bunce
Derek Cozens
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David Coronel

GLOCKENSPIEL

Adam Payn

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

Simon McVeigh

CONCERT MANAGER

Neil Selby

* committee member

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. Internationally renowned soloists who have performed with the orchestra include Paul Tortelier, John Lill, Dennis Brain, Kathleen Ferrier, Ralph Holmes, Hugh Bean, Emma Johnson, Leslie Howard and Sir Donald McIntyre.

President	Anthony Payne
Vice-Presidents	Shirley & Geoff Griffiths John & Riet Carmichael
Chairman	Helen Griffiths

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The BSO gratefully acknowledges the generosity of its Patrons, who provide the orchestra with an important and much valued source of funding.

If you are able to support the orchestra in this way, please send your donation (we suggest a minimum of £25 for individuals and £40 for couples) to:
The Treasurer, Bromley Symphony Orchestra, PO Box 1065, Bromley, BR1 9QD

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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, stage management and publicity.

For information on our concerts, visit www.bromleysymphony.org
or leave your name & address or email address at the ticket desk.