



Eastbourne
CONCERT :
ORCHESTRA

Spring Concert

Celebrating 252 years of Beethoven

Welcome

Welcome to the Eastbourne Concert Orchestra's Spring Concert 2022, celebrating 252 years since the birth of Beethoven, with one of his best known overtures and a symphonic favourite.

This programme was originally planned for March 2020 but had to be cancelled the week before it was due to take place due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We have been looking forward to performing this programme for the last two years, and whilst it might seem a little odd to celebrate a 252nd birthday, secretly I think Beethoven would have enjoyed the unusual celebration!

Before our Beethoven filled second half, we begin tonight's concert with two other romantic German composers, Brahms and Bruch. The Academic Festival Overture was composed as a tribute to university life, and specifically to the University of Breslau. The work contains a number of themes from songs heard at the students' drinking parties including "Der Landesvater" (The Father of His Country) and the ever famous refrain associated with college life, "Gaudeamus Igitur". The Overture received its first performance on January 4, 1881, with Brahms conducting.

Bruch wrote his orchestral Suite on Russian Themes, Op. 79b in 1903, a further testimony to his interest in folk-music after the Scottish Fantasia and the Swedish Dances. The work is based on the Songs and Dances on Russian and Swedish Folk-Melodies, Op. 79, for violin and piano, written in the same year. The strongest impression is made by the dance-like second piece, the ceremonial funeral march of the fourth and the unusual rhythmic fascination of the last.

Beethoven, born in Bonn, Germany in December 1770, bridged the gap between the Classical and Romantic eras. He was a musical innovator, developing the classical form of Mozart and Haydn to encompass 'humanity and emotion' and widening the scope of sonata, symphony, concerto and quartet composition forms. His personal life was marked by a heroic struggle against encroaching deafness, and some of his most important works were composed during the last 10 years of his life when he was quite unable to hear.

The overture to Egmont, written for a play by Goethe about the Count of Egmont, beheaded for his campaign to liberate the Netherlands from Spanish control, opens with a short slow sombre introduction, which moves into a stormy minor key allegro describing the struggle against oppression. Even the moment of execution is vividly portrayed with the march to the scaffold and the fall of the guillotine in the violins followed by a moment of silence. There is a short mournful chorale before the key changes and the music takes on a triumphant character.

Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C minor, from 1808, has gone down in music

history as the Symphony of Fate - when asked about the opening motif of the Fifth Symphony, the composer is said to have replied: "This is the sound of fate knocking at the door."

The symphony was written at a time when Beethoven was already hard of hearing and suffering from tinnitus. His condition began in 1798, and it took 16 years until he was completely deaf. During treatment in 1802, he wrote in his will: "There is little holding me back from ending my own life. It is only art that is keeping me going."

Even though at the time there were sketches of notes that were later used in the Fifth Symphony, there is no real evidence that this crisis had any direct influence on the piece. Instead it is often argued that the French Revolution was the inspiration for this work. Beethoven was enthusiastic about the Revolution and shared its ideals of freedom, equality and brotherhood. He often incorporated rhythms and motifs from revolutionary music in his works, including, most likely, the four most famous notes in classical music - the opening motif of this symphony.

This core motif, or 'fate theme', forms the rhythmic and melodic anchor of the entire composition. It takes on various characters in the first movement, sometimes foreboding, sometimes triumphant and moves from one section of the orchestra to another. The more lyrical second movement consists of two alternating themes in variation form. The general rhythm of the "fate" motif is noticeable in the second theme.

The third movement, scherzo, begins gently, with a theme that uses the "fate" rhythm. That rhythm soon explodes before shifting to a busy fugal climax. The first moods of the scherzo then return very softly before the symphony plunges without pause into the fourth and final movement. The finale concludes with a high-energy coda that increases in tempo and volume as it races toward the closing cadence.

Although not overly popular at its premiere, it wasn't until subsequent performances that audiences really felt this piece was something special. In 1810, E.T.A. Hoffmann published an extraordinary review of the Symphony including the phrase: 'Beethoven's music sets in motion the machinery of awe, of fear, of terror, of pain and awakens that infinite yearning which is the essence of romanticism.' We hope you get a sense of some of these emotions as we perform this evening.

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Simon Gower

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MUSICAL DIRECTOR**

Brian Waters

CHAIRMAN

Programme

BRAHMS

Academic Festival Overture Op. 80

BRUCH

Suite on Russian Folk Melodies Op. 79b

Part 1: Andante Sostenuto - Adagio, ma non troppo lento - Vivace

Part 2 Dance: Vivace ma non troppo

Part 3: Adagio Sostenuto - Andante Sostenuto (Funeral March) -

Allegro energico, ma non troppo

- Interval -

BEETHOVEN

Egmont Overture Op. 84

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 5 in C minor Op. 67

I. Allegro con brio

II. Andante con moto

III. Scherzo: Allegro

IV. Allegro - Presto

The Orchestra

FIRST VIOLINS

Simon Smith
Carl Bradford
Hazel Brewer
Mike Goss
Yosi Mckenzie
Amelia Powell
Sara Sage
Jill Vaughan

SECOND VIOLINS

Liz Bux
Shelia Bellamy
John Caroe
Will Oastler
Yvonne Spear

VIOLAS

Sophie Bayman
Ann-Marie Brooke
Valmai Crane
Sandor Vegh

CELLOS

Jonathan Bruce
Kathryn Anderson
Ruth Bosworth
Piaf Knight
Karen Sinstadt
Ruth Stirton
Roger Wintle

DOUBLE BASS

Julian Baker

FLUTES

Christina Clay
Sarah Thomson

OBOE & COR ANGLAIS

Gail Taylor
Sian Russell

FRENCH HORNS

Chris Willard
Bob Turner
Andy Trowhill

TRUMPETS

Andy Trowhill
Stuart Welford

TROMBONES

Drew Smith
Ian Lawrence
Chris Thompson

CLARINETS

Nigel Allen
Jason Carbonell-Ferrer

BASSOONS

Kate Denny
Theresa Keysell
Jan Townsend

PERCUSSION & TIMPANI

Patricia Golds
Avril Vegh

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Elgar

Handel

Walton

Tuesday 5th July 2022

Eastbourne Town Hall

Concert starts at 7.30pm

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