

PROGRAMME 2023

Welcome

Welcome to our spring concert as we continue our 72nd Orchestral Season. Tonight's concert will showcase the orchestra through the characterful Rossini overture, romantic Petite Suite and powerful symphony.

Rossini was one of the most successful composers of opera in the early nineteenth century. His operas covered a wide range of subjects from the comic, to the serious and tragic but it is his comic operas that have stood the test of time and remain firmly in the repertoire.

L'Italinana in Algeri came about in unexpected, and rather rushed circumstances. The crisis-laden impresario at the San Benedetto theatre in Venice, was at a loss after an unexpected flop, a slightly more successful 'mash-up' of two operas by very different composers and a premiere that failed to materialise and so called upon Rossini to bail him out. An existing libretto was chosen, the contracts signed and the music written within twenty seven days!

Despite the short time-frame the opera was a huge success with reports of 'deafening, continuous general applause' for a work which had 'greatly enthused a demanding, intelligent public' and it being declared as 'among the finest works of genius and art'.

Rossini's advice about writing overtures reveals much of his own comedic wit: 'Wait until the evening before opening night. Nothing primes inspiration more than necessity, whether it be the presence of a copyist waiting for your work or the prodding of an impresario tearing his hair. In my time all the impresarios in Italy were bald at thirty.'

One of Mozart's best-known melodies, the 'Rondo alla Turca' is actually the third and final movement from his Piano Sonata No.11 K331 heard here transcribed for orchestra. At this time, around 1783, anything Ottoman was very much in vogue in Austria. Mozart intended it to evoke the sounds of Turkish Janissary bands, noted for their jangling percussion instruments and was entitled 'Alla Turca' by Mozart himself. It is perhaps more popularly known as the Turkish March.

Though lamentably little-remembered today, in his time Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was a transatlantic sensation fêted by the likes of President Theodore Roosevelt and the Royal family. The Petite Suite de concert was composed in 1911 but comparatively little is known about its genesis, given that it became one of Coleridge-Taylor's best-loved works following his death, especially in British "light music" circles. Some of its material was harvested from a discarded student score, The Clown and Columbine, which was based on a commedia dell'arte adaptation by Hans Christian Andersen. Divided into four contrasting movements, the suite showcases the composer's penchant for writing memorable melodies.

The opening movement, a playful caprice, sets the scene for the rest of the suite. The use of the whole orchestra creates excitement as well as poignancy.

The second movement, perhaps the most well-known of the four, Demande et Réponse, opens with a graceful string theme. A cheeky central section sees a call and response sequence between the strings and woodwind play out.

The lyrical serenade that is the third movement is full of rich textures and memorable melodies. The slow-moving string motif grows and develops and the nuanced sway of this movement adds to its charm and dance-like roots.

The final tarantella is full of energy and life as the orchestra works together to create a sequence of different themes as the melody bounces around. The orchestra unite for the final three chords bringing our first half to a thrilling close.

Mendelssohn's 5th Symphony is actually more likely to have been his third full orchestral symphony, and his first true foray into the genre. It was published after his death and given the number five. Mendelssohn intended this work to form part of the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, one of the most important moments in the Lutheran Reformation in Germany, however due to ill health the work was not completed in time to be included. As such it was all but forgotten, with only one performance conducted by Mendelssohn two years later. He declared the work to be a piece of 'youthful juvenilia' and never performed it again. It was published in 1868, 21 years after the composer's death.

As Mendelssohn intended this work to be included in the Church's celebration of the Reformation there are several links and hints to music of the Lutheran Church. During the slow introduction of the opening movement Mendelssohn cites the 'Dresden Amen' in the strings. This rising six-note figure has been used by choirs during church services in the city of Dresden for over two hundred years and has also been used by composers including Wagner, Brückner and Mahler.

Whilst the inner two movements do not include clear links to the church. and indeed, are very different in style to the first and fourth movements, they do provide a sense of lyricism and lightness with Mendelssohn's quintessential penchant for melody writing and motivic development heard clearly.

The final movement is wholly based on Martin Luther's Lutheran Hymn 'Ein feste Burg ist Unser Gott' (A mighty Fortress is our God), which JS Bach also made use of in his cantata of the same name. The strong chorale melody is heard weaving between the orchestral sections before it is heard played by the full orchestra in the final moments in the Coda.

The Reformation Symphony evokes a particular strength and power alongside a mastery of melodic writing which, in my opinion, places this far beyond the realms of Mendelssohn's idea of 'youthful juvenilia'.

Tonight marks the final contribution of one of our long-standing members of the orchestra. We say goodbye to Mike, who has been playing violin in the orchestra since 1987! Thank you for your outstanding contribution to the Eastbourne Concert Orchestra.

Simon Gower **Conductor & Musical Director** **Brian Waters** Chairman

Upcoming Events



Eastbourne Town Hall, Tuesday 4th July 2023

Christmas Concert

Tuesday 5th December 2023, All Saints' Church

Programme

ROSSINI Overture: L'italiana in Algeri

Rondo Alla Turca MOZART

COLERIDGE-TAYLOR

• La Caprice de Nannette

- Demande et Réponse
- Un Sonnet D'Amour

Petite Suite de Concert

La Tarantelle Frétillante

INTERVAL

MENDELSSOHN

Symphony No. 5 in D Major op. 107 'The Reformation'

- Andante Allegro con fuoco
- Allegro vivace
- Andante
- Andante con moto Allegro vivace - Allegro maestoso

The Orchestra

STRINGS

FIRST VIOLIN

Simon Smith Hazel Brewer Liz Bux Lindsey Cook Roz Hall Sara Sage Jill Vaughan Rachel Williams Tessa Younger

SECOND VIOLIN

Will Oastler Sheila Bellamy Paula Burr John Caroe Lynn Leppard Alicia Newell

DOUBLE BASS Julian Baker

VIOLA

Sophie Bayman Ann-Marie Brooke Valmai Crane Sándor Végh

CELLO

Jonathan Bruce Kathryn Anderson Karen Sinstadt Ruth Stirton Roger Wintle

WOODWIND, BRASS & PERCUSSION

FLUTE & PICCOLO

Gill Willis Sarah Thomson Elizabeth Winch

BASSOONS

Kate Denny Charlotte Willis Theresa Keysell Jan Townsend

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Gail Taylor Barbara Ashby

FRENCH HORNS

Chris Willard Bob Turner Mike Sarna Andy Trowhill

TROMBONES

Will Roberts Ian Lawrence Chris Thompson

CLARINETS

Dave Bottom Jason Carbonell-Ferrer Stephanie Bond Sally Donegani

TRUMPETS

Andy Trowhill Stuart Welford

PERCUSSION & TIMPANI

Edward Bond Patricia Golds

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