

Eastbourne
CONCERT :
ORCHESTRA

SPRING CONCERT

JOURNEY TO BOHEMIA

PROGRAMME



WELCOME

Welcome to our Spring concert which continues our 73rd Orchestral Season and my 10th as Musical Director.

We begin our concert with the Overture to Zampa, an opera-comique from the early 19th. This concert sees us journeying through Bohemia on a musical voyage following three of the Czech giants of the romantic era, and an Austrian.

Considering Mozart visited Prague only four times, he left quite an impression on the city and its people.

Don Giovanni is sometimes referred to as Mozart's 'Czech Opera' as it was commissioned and first performed in Prague in 1787. His 38th Symphony, dubbed 'Prague', and his operas the Marriage of Figaro and La Clemenza di Tito, all found overwhelming success in Prague, more so than any other European city.

The Prager love affair saw a resurgence following the filming of the 1984 film Amadeus in the city. If you walk around Prague today you will see any number of concerts advertising Czech music with Mozart as top billing. He is very much seen as an adopted Bohemian so what better way to begin our spring concert than with the overture to this beloved operatic masterpiece.

Janáček's musical success came much later in his life, despite composing throughout his formative years it was his operatic output in the 1920s that truly built his reputation. He is now regarded as a Czech master, ranked with Smetana and Dvořák but this was not always the case with a lot of Janáček's music being unheard outside of Brno where he lived and worked. This piece, The Adagio (VI/5), is a lesser known orchestral piece which features a hauntingly beautiful opening melody in the bassoons, followed by strong rhythmic and harmonic work inspired by folk music from his native Moravia. Written in 1890, it didn't receive its first performance until 1930, two years after the composer's death.

Vltava, also known by its English title 'The Moldau', is a symphonic tone poem composed in late 1874 to evoke the sounds of one of Bohemia's great rivers and is one of Smetana's most beloved works.

In the composer's own words:

The music describes the course of the Vltava, starting from the two small springs, the Studená and Teplá Vltava, to the unification of both streams into a single current, the course of the Vltava through woods and meadows, through landscapes where a farmer's wedding is celebrated, the round dance of the mermaids in the night's moonshine: on the nearby rocks loom proud castles, palaces and ruins aloft. The Vltava swirls into the St John's Rapids; then it widens and flows toward Prague, past the Vyšehrad, and then majestically vanishes into the distance, ending at the Elbe

The second half of the concert features Dvořák's Eighth Symphony in which the influence of Czech and Slavic folk music is heard clearly. Written in 1899 at the height of his 'second Slavic period' Dvořák hoped to write something 'different from his other symphonies and shape the musical content of his ideas in a new manner'.

The pastoral and dance-like melodies, the natural 'bird calls' and the suggestion of a funeral march, fanfares and an almost chorale-like quality to the movements helps to showcase the versatility and beauty of Bohemian folk music.

The first movement is a 'powerful and glowing exposition'. It opens with a lyrical G minor theme which, rather unusually, is reprised throughout the movement. The opening is followed by a series of 'Bird call' motifs heard in the woodwind before building to a crescendo where we get a real sense of the fun, adventurous spirit which underlies so much of this Symphony.

The second movement contains elements akin to two of Beethoven's great symphonies which had a profound effect on Dvořák. Echoes of the funeral march from the Eroica Symphony, filled with mystery and nostalgia, and the rising tension of an approaching storm reflect the Pastoral Symphony. Both help to create a chilling image of doubt in the centre of the symphony.

Most of the third movement is a melancholy waltz based on Bohemian folk themes. Despite this, it is not the typical minuet or scherzo third movement of a romantic symphony, but an "intermezzo" akin to the third movements in early Brahms symphonic writing.

The finale heralds its arrival with a fanfare of trumpets - "in Bohemia the trumpets never call to battle – they always call to the dance!" The tension is masterfully built through a beautiful melody finally released with a cascade of instruments triumphantly playing the initial theme followed by a series of tempestuous and joyous variations leading to a celebratory ending.

Dvořák conducted the premiere performance in Prague in February 1890 and again in London in April. The symphony was a resounding success, in the eyes of both the public and the critics. Dvořák was portrayed in the British press as the only living composer who could rightfully be named as Beethoven's successor.

Dvořák described his experiences of the London premiere: "The concert came off wonderfully, perhaps more so than at any time in the past. After the first movement there was universal applause, after the second it was even louder, after the third it was so thunderous that I had to turn round several times and thank the audience, but, after the finale, the applause was tempestuous – from the audience in the auditorium, in the galleries, from the orchestra itself, and from the people sitting behind it by the organ – they all clapped so hard, it was almost unbearable.'

We hope you enjoy this concert as much as we have enjoyed preparing it for you and we very much hope you will join us again in our upcoming concerts.

To celebrate the 10 year anniversary of my role as Musical Director, conducting this magnificent community orchestra, we will be performing a 'Classical Bangers' concert this summer. The music will include some of our favourite pieces from the last ten years and pieces specifically chosen by the orchestra, our ECO Friends and you, our audience.

You can have your say by voting for your favourite piece from the list below:

- Star Wars
- Jurassic Park
- Pirates of the Caribbean

Please see our front of house team for more information and to vote for your favourite!

Simon Gower

Conductor & Musical Director

PROGRAMME

MOZART

Don Giovanni - Overture

JANÁČEK

Adagio for Orchestra

SMETANA

Ma Vlast: Vltava

INTERVAL

DVOŘÁK

Symphony No. 8 In G Major Op.88

I - Allegro con brio

II - Adagio

III - Allegretto grazioso - Molto vivace

IV - Allegro ma non troppo

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER CONCERT - CLASSICAL BANGERS

Tuesday 2nd July 2024 - Eastbourne Town Hall

A celebration of Classical, film and musicals including The Phantom of the Opera, Bizet's Carmen and Mussorgsky's Night on a Bare Mountain

EASTBOURNE GALA CONCERT

TBA September 2024 - Winter Garden, Celebrating 150 years of the Devonshire Park

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Tuesday 3rd December 2024 - All Saints Church

THE ORCHESTRA

FIRST VIOLIN

Simon Smith
Nigel Bland
Hazel Brewer
Liz Bux
Lindsey Cook
Roz Hall
Jill Vaughan
Tessa Younger

FLUTE & PICCOLO

Gill Willis
Sarah Thomson
Elizabeth Winch

CLARINET

Dave Bottom
Jason Carbonell-Ferrer
Stephanie Bond
Sally Donegani

OBOE & COR ANGLAIS

Gail Taylor
Barbara Ashby

SECOND VIOLIN

Will Oastler
Lucy Blyth
Paula Burr
Julia Carlton-Lowe
John Caroe
Lynn Leppard
Alicia Newell
Yvonne Spear

DOUBLE BASS

Julian Baker
Kaye Colier

FRENCH HORN

Chris Willard
Aussie Pepper
Bob Turner
Mike Sarna

PERCUSSION & TIMPANI

Edward Bond
Patricia Golds

VIOLA

Sophie Bayman
Elizabeth Cotton
Valmai Crane
Vieda Mercer

CELLO

Jonathan Bruce
Kathryn Anderson
Miranda Buser
Fran Collins
Penny Phillips
Karen Sinstadt
Matthew Wakefield
Roger Wintle

BASSOON

Charlotte Willis
Kate Denny
Theresa Keysell
Jan Townsend

TRUMPET

Andy Trowhill
Stuart Welford

TROMBONE

Roger Dibbens
Ian Lawrence
Chris Thompson

FRIENDS OF THE ORCHESTRA

CHAIRMAN

Dr John Caroe

PRESIDENT

The Worshipful, The Mayor of Eastbourne

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Andy Anderson

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Nigel Cole

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Bert Leggett

Z. Luck

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Mia Neupauerova-Shepherd

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Brian Waters Esq MBE

D.P. Wood

Jane Worsley

Names correct at time of print.

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- » The opportunity to sponsor a piece through purchasing music for the orchestra.

Please email friends.eastbourneorchestra@gmail.com or complete a Friends membership form, available from our front of house team, to sign up for your Subscription starting in September 2024.

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