



Midnight Sun

Kingston Philharmonia

Clare Howick *Violin*
Levon Parikian *Conductor*

Saturday 11 July 2009

7.30pm

All Saints Church
Kingston Upon Thames

PROGRAMME

www.kingstonphil.co.uk

KINGSTON PHILHARMONIA

Kingston Parish Church
Saturday 11th July 2009
7.30pm

Conductor – Levon Parikian
Leader – Adrian Charlesworth
Violin – Clare Howick

Grieg – Peer Gynt Suite
Tchaikovsky – Violin Concerto

INTERVAL & RAFFLE
(Refreshments available)

Sibelius – Symphony No 1

LEVON PARIKIAN – CONDUCTOR

Levon Parikian studied conducting with George Hurst and Ilya Musin. Since completing his studies, he has pursued a freelance conducting career, and is much in demand as Guest Conductor with orchestras in Britain. He currently holds Principal Conductor posts with several London-based orchestras, and is Principal Conductor of the City of Oxford Orchestra and Artistic Director of the Rehearsal Orchestra. He works extensively with students and youth orchestras, including the Royal College of Music Junior Sinfonia, the National Youth Strings Academy, and Royal Holloway University of London, where he also teaches conducting.



Levon lives in South London and his hobbies include making retaliatory hoax calls to call centres, cycling headlong into bendy buses, and wondering why he came upstairs.

CLARE HOWICK – VIOLIN



Clare Howick has been leader of the KPO since the early 90s when Walter Wurtzburger, the orchestra's founder was conductor. Clare has established herself as one of the leading violinists of her generation. She has performed most of the violin concerto repertoire with various orchestras including the Philharmonia Orchestra, and has collaborated as soloist and chamber musician with many outstanding artists including Maxim Vengerov, Lynn Harrell, Philip Dukes,

Leon Bosch and Sophia Rahman. She has appeared at major festivals in the UK including the Cheltenham International Festival, which was broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

Clare combines solo and chamber performances with an orchestral career, appearing as guest leader of many orchestras, including the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Ulster Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, and the Orchestra of English National Opera.

She began her musical studies as a Junior Exhibitioner at the Royal College of Music with Dona Lee Croft and subsequently went on to study at the Royal Academy of Music with Maurice Hasson, where she was awarded the DipRAM, the highest accolade given for performance. She has also studied with Anne-Sophie Mutter, Dorothy DeLay and Zahkar Bron. Clare was first prizewinner in the Jellinek Competition and has received several major awards.

A special interest in 20th century British violin repertoire has resulted in Clare premiering a number of contemporary works and the recording of a CD for the Dutton Epoch label of works for violin and piano by Cyril Scott. Clare's first disc was Editor's Choice in the March 2008 issue of Gramophone magazine.

ADRIAN CHARLESWORTH - LEADER

Adrian, tonight's guest leader in the first half of the concert, was appointed to his first Leader's position aged 8 when the Kingston-upon-Thames Music Director, George Steven, invited him to lead the Kingston-upon-Thames Junior Orchestra.

He is now a freelance violinist working with a range of ensembles from The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to chamber groups, opera, musicals, Big Bands, and film backing tracks. He played for The Queen during her 80th Birthday Luncheon. The diversity of the music industry enables him to have played on Kylie Minogue's T.V. Special and on Monday of just this very week (last year) in The Rat Pack cabaret put on specially for David Cameron at The Roundhouse!

Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907)

Peer Gynt: Suite No 1 Op 45 (1876)

- Morning Mood
- Ases' Death
- Anitra's Dance
- In the Hall of the Mountain King

You might think that Grieg and Ibsen's Peer Gynt could hardly be further from the recent torrid goings-on at Westminster. But it turns out that the Griegs (then Greig) were immigrant merchants from Scotland in the 1740s, and that both Grieg's father and grandfather were British and also had a representational function - they became successive British Consuls in Bergen, the Norwegian town where Grieg was born! I wonder how they might be feeling about the behaviour of their mainland counterparts today!

When he set about writing Peer Gynt, Grieg was in his early thirties and had relatively few major works to his name. Probably best known were two collections of songs which had attracted attention because of the intense love they expressed for Norwegian life and countryside; and the set of Lyric Pieces he wrote for piano. These, and his hectic concert activity (often including works based on Norwegian folk-songs and poetry), combined to win him a reputation as a leading proponent of the then emerging 'Romantic Nationalist' movement.

In spite of his attachment to Norway, Grieg felt the need to broaden his cultural horizons, and with the help of a State Bursary he visited Rome (where he was welcomed and encouraged by Liszt, who played his piano concerto through at sight!). He also spent time in Denmark where he began to write music for the stage and collaborate with a number of writers, setting their texts to music. This led to the invitation from Ibsen to write incidental music for his nationalist verse drama Peer Gynt – a sort of 'Pilgrim's Progress' in which Peer, a part legendary and part fictional character, has a series of adventures which Ibsen felt would go some way to illuminating the nature of Man. Grieg completed his score in September 1875, and the first performance took place on 24 February 1876. The whole work generated some 90 minutes of music and consisted of 23 numbers, but Grieg chose only eight for his two concert suites – Op 46 and 55. The four pieces you will hear this evening make up the first suite. They include the gorgeous 'Morgenstemning' (Morning Mood), which I feel confident will not be displaced in public affection by Norway's entry for this year's Eurovision Song Contest, even though it won!

Piotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

Concerto in D for violin and orchestra Op 35 (1878)

- I. Allegro Moderato
- II. Canzonetta (Andante)
- III. Finale: Allegro Vivacissimo

If there was one piece of advice I might have given a composer in the second half of the 19th century, it would have been to think twice about having a new work premiered in Vienna. The reason? Because it might be pawed over by a certain Eduard Hanslick, the self-important critic and arbiter of musical taste there. He was so notorious for offensive and gratuitously hurtful reviews that Wagner was prompted to model the carping critic, Beckmesser, in the Meistersinger, on him!

Tchaikovsky made the mistake of having his violin concerto premiered there. Even by his own standards Hanslick was appallingly offensive. He wrote: 'The violin is no longer played; it is torn apart and beaten black and blue. We see wild and vulgar faces; we smell bad brandy. Friedrich Fischer [an art critic] once said that there existed pictures one could see stink; Tchaikovsky's violin concerto brings for the first time the revolting thought: might there not be music that stinks to the ear?'

Unsurprisingly for someone with Tchaikovsky's sensitive nature, the barb caused great pain, but he was comforted by the enthusiastic reception of the work in London soon afterwards, which in effect set the seal on its success.

The concerto is in three movements. The first – Allegro Moderato – is full of grace and charm, and is permeated by a dignified lyricism. But there are moments of stormy emotional turbulence, perhaps indicating how precarious was the relative calm Tchaikovsky had attained after the chaos of his disastrous marriage and narrowly avoided nervous breakdown. The extravert cadenza (written by Tchaikovsky) skilfully interlaces the themes of the movement with a tracery of arpeggios and chromatic scales, and then merges with the recapitulation with the flute stating the main theme against the trilling of the soloist.

The second movement – Andante Cantabile 'Canzonetta' is one of tender melancholy, only briefly lightened by a central section when the violins remove their mutes and one senses the warmth of the sun behind the clouds.

The Finale – Allegro Vivacissimo – literally bursts upon the musical stage, and the soloist leads the orchestra into an energetic Russian dance full of twists and turns, and unexpected accents. The second theme is introduced by the winds and seems to intimate a switch to a more plodding, peasant environment. Only briefly, however. The pace is soon ratcheted up and we are once again caught up in a heady rush for the finish. There is no let up this time, and the movement ends with a spectacular flourish.

Jean Sibelius (1865 – 1957)

Symphony No 1 in E minor Op 39 (1899/1900)

- I. Allegro, ma non troppo – Allegro Energico
- II. Andante (ma non troppo lento)
- III. Scherzo (Allegro)
- IV. Finale: Quasi una Fantasia (Andante – Allegro Molto)

Just as Tchaikovsky fell foul of Hanslick, Sibelius was frequently picked on by critics the world over who accused him of conservatism and wilfully ignoring new directions in music. And like Tchaikovsky, Sibelius found it difficult to ignore the pressure even though he was convinced that he was doing the right thing. What sustained him was the belief embodied in a comment he once made to a student of his: ‘Pay no attention to what critics say; no statue has ever been put up to a critic.’

Much has been written about Sibelius’s musical antecedents – the sonorous chorale-like brass passages favoured by Bruckner; the sound world bequeathed by Tchaikovsky; the use of something akin to the leitmotif technique developed by Wagner; so it is good to be reminded by Eugene Ormandy – who did a lot to introduce Sibelius to audiences in the States – that ‘it is a healthy thing for a first symphony to recall the past, and Sibelius does so gloriously’. With the benefit of hindsight we can now see that far from being backward-looking, this first symphony is an important step in the development of continuously evolving cells and fragments which became the kernel of his composing technique. For example, the long clarinet cantilena which opens the symphony contains many of the elements which are going to be developed throughout the entire symphony, and if you chopped it into sections you would find the basis of themes which appear in different rhythmical and orchestral guises – sometimes in micro format (clusters of notes repeated very quickly), and sometimes on a scale reminiscent of the galaxy – constellations that are almost imperceptible because of the distances

between the component stars. Different ways of composing may require different ways of listening, and if Sibelius sometimes seems inaccessible, it is worth really trying to focus on the detail of what is happening, because that is often where salvation lies. That is not to say that Sibelius is bereft of big tunes – several of his symphonies end with no less, but, like the flower on a plant, they are the crowning glory to a long process of growth.

Those who are familiar with Sibelius’s symphonies will know that one distinguishing feature of this symphony is that, once written, it was not subjected to the make-overs that nearly every other one was. It was as though Sibelius did not fall victim to self-doubt until he began to explore the medium more deeply and then found it increasingly difficult to express what he needed to within the framework he had chosen to work in.

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RAFFLE

The raffle is an important source of much needed income for the orchestra, so please buy plenty of tickets from the table by the main door. The orchestra acknowledges with thanks all those who have so generously contributed to tonight's raffle, in particular:

Bachmann's Patisserie and Chocolate Creations	Portsmouth Road Thames Ditton
Chessington Garden Centre	Leatherhead Road Chessington
Garsons Farm	West End Esher
Mrs Julie Scotty	
Tesco Metro	East Molesey

Mr Zhao Chaoyang

Table arrangement by
Margaret Pattenden
Ardfinnan Crafts,
45 Station Road Thames Ditton
Tel: 020 8398 7659

The orchestra would like to acknowledge the support of **Kingston Arts Council, Mail Boxes Etc.** and would like to thank **AKP Chartered Accountants** for their support in auditing our accounts. They provide continual encouragement and guidance to the orchestra.



OUR NEXT CONCERT

Kingston Parish Church
Saturday 17th October 2009
7.30pm

Rimsky-Korsakov – May Night Overture

Shostakovich – Cello Concerto No 1

Dvorak – Symphony No 7

FUTURE DATES

5th December 2009 (to be confirmed)

13th March 2010 (to be confirmed)

10th July 2010 Kingston Parish Church

Full details available soon on
www.kingstonphil.org.uk

1st Violins

Adrian Charlesworth
Chris Spiers
Pauline Waghorn
Dorothea Klinge
Dom Steinitz
Sheila Cochrane
Jill Holingbery
Jean Gilmour
Robert Beattie
Sonja Nagle

2nd Violins

Chris Smith
Catherine Deere
Jane Hicks
Maggie Pattenden
John Asher
Sarah Bruce
Jackie Steinitz
Chris Johns

Violas

Liz Allard
Helen Currah
Richard Dorrington
Susannah Rang
Philip Thorne

Cellos

Philip Austin
Charlie Shore
Sue Dunne
Marguerite Pocock
Hilary Willis
Celia Allaker
Catherine Joseph
Samantha King

Double Bass

Terry Gibbs
Akeo Tsuruhara

Flutes

Catherine Black
Chris Gould
Ami Lodge

Oboes

Linda Marley
Jo Houghton

Clarinet

Sheena Mackenzie
Ros Preston

Bassoons

Jeff Cox
Liz Boyden

Horns

Andrew Osborne
Robin Livermore
Chris Pocock
Steve Thomas

Trumpets

Jeremy Neep
Rachelle Bradley

Trombones

Gordon Faultless
Steve Clarke
Lee Woodward

Timpani

Chris Kimber

Percussion

tba

Harp

Anna Wynne