

SCOTTISH SINFONIA

Conductor: Neil Mantle
Leader: Michael Rigg
Chair Endowed by Edinburgh Plastics Ltd.

1985/86 Season

TCHAIKOVSKY FAVOURITES

FANTASY-OVERTURE 'ROMEO AND JULIET'

The programme was suggested to Tchaikovsky by Balakirev, who laid down in some considerable detail the exact form the work should take. Tchaikovsky began work in 1869 and it was published two years later - dutifully dedicated to Balakirev. The composer was however dissatisfied with it and it was considerably revised ten years later. It is in this revised form that the work is always now heard.

The solemn opening on clarinets and bassoons depicts Friar Lawrence. The ensuing Allegro giusto depicts the conflict between the two houses of Montague and Capulet. A transition brings us to the famous love theme, imaginatively scored for cor anglais and muted violas. The conflict is soon renewed, and eventually we hear Friar Lawrence's theme again (now fortissimo in the brass), warning the lovers of approaching tragedy. Their theme is repeated in a wonderfully expanded version, rising to the sort of agonised ecstasy of climax of which Tchaikovsky was such a master. The music comes to a shuddering halt and we hear Romeo and Juliet's theme now changed into a funeral lament. The fortissimo ending was a revision somewhat forced on Tchaikovsky by Balakirev, and it is interesting to note that Leopold Stokowski for one preferred the quiet original ending.

VIOLIN CONCERTO IN D MAJOR (OPUS 35)

Allegro moderato

Canzonetta - Andante

Finale - Allegro vivacissimo

soloist MILES BASTER

'The violin is no longer played, it is yanked about and torn asunder; beaten black and blue. Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto brings us for the first time to the horrid idea that there may be music that stinks to the ear.' Thus read Eduard Hanslik's critique of the premiere of what is now one of the world's most popular concertos in December 1881. This performance, given in Vienna, was played by Adolf Brodsky. Like the celebrated First Piano Concerto Tchaikovsky's only Violin Concerto had a troubled birth. It was originally requested by and dedicated to Leopold Auer, whom Tchaikovsky had met in 1875. When Auer saw the manuscript three years later he pronounced it unplayable. It was not for a further three years that Tchaikovsky found someone prepared to risk his reputation by performing it. (It is pleasing to record that the world premiere was Brodsky's debut in Vienna and he scored a great personal triumph with it.)

The slow movement we know today was not the original. Modeste Tchaikovsky, the composer's brother, felt the original to be too severe for a concerto. It is linked to the Finale by a particularly magical transition. Leopold Auer finally came to terms with the Concerto in 1893, unfortunately after the composer's death.

If tonight you hear some sections you do not recognise, it is because we are paying the composer the compliment of performing his Concerto complete and not with the cuts which are nearly always made.

----- INTERVAL -----

SUITE FROM 'THE NUTCRACKER' BALLET (OPUS 71A)

Miniature Overture

Characteristic Dances

March

Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy

Trepak (Russian Dance)

Arab Dance

Chinese Dance

Dance of the Mirlitons

Waltz of the Flowers

This was one of Tchaikovsky's last works and the last of his three great ballet scores. It was first performed the year before he died. The source for the scenario was E.T.A Hoffmann's Christmas story 'The Nutcracker and the Mouse King' of 1816. It was adapted by Marius Petipa, an excellent choreographer who had worked with Tchaikovsky before.

He gave the composer detailed instructions as to the length of many of the dances, even the metre to be used. Tchaikovsky's first reaction to the scenario was negative, and work progressed slowly. In fact he had given it up completely when inspiration came from a somewhat unexpected source. He was in Paris on his way back from a concert tour when he heard Mustel's newly invented celesta and fell in love with its 'divinely beautiful' tone. He had his publisher order one to be dispatched in great secrecy to Russia. He realised he had the perfect instrument to depict the Sugar-Plum Fairy, and the work was speedily completed.

The ballet was not a success at first although the music was liked. However several of the dances were played in concert form in March 1892 and much to Tchaikovsky's relief were enormously popular. Very soon after Tchaikovsky's death the ballet began to achieve the world-wide popularity which it now enjoys.

OVERTURE SOLENNELLE '1812' (OPUS 49)

In 1880 Tchaikovsky was approached by his friend Nicholas Rubinstein, the head of the Moscow Conservatoire, who suggested that he should compose a new work to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Tsar Alexander's accession to the throne, which was to occur two years later. This was also to be honoured by a big exhibition of arts and crafts in Moscow. Both men were of course well aware that 1882 would also be the seventieth anniversary of the war with Napoleon. As if all this were not enough, the new cathedral of Christ the Redeemer was also expected to be completed in time for the anniversary.

Tchaikovsky was unenthusiastic: he disliked the Tsar and cared little for organised religion. The original plan was for the work to be premiered in the open, including not only the bells of the new cathedral but also those of the Kremlin towers, the orchestra to be reinforced by a brass band and cannons. This plan however failed to materialise, and the work was performed in a concert hall at an all-Tchaikovsky programme. The work begins and ends with the hymn 'God preserve thy people'. Although Tchaikovsky had a poor opinion of the work, it is of course enormously popular, and no popular all-Tchaikovsky concert would be complete without it.

MILES BASTER was educated at the King's School, Canterbury and received his early violin training from Albert Sammons. Later at the Royal Academy of Music, as a pupil of Frederick Grinke, he won all the awards in solo violin playing, including the coveted Love Prize. In 1958 he won the Boise Scholarship, which enabled him to study in New York with Louis Persinger, Menuhin's former teacher. In 1956 he was a finalist in the Carl Flesch Competition, and he is also a silver medallist of the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

Since 1960 he has been completely engrossed in his work with the Edinburgh Quartet, with whom he has played literally all over the world. His solo playing, which he regards as a hobby, embraces a large repertoire, and in recent years he has performed all the major concertos, including the Elgar, the Brahms and the Tchaikovsky. He also gave the first performances of concertos by David Dorward and Edward Harper, and broadcast these works with the BBC Scottish Synchrony Orchestra.

Miles Baster has appeared many times with Scottish Sinfonia. His performances have included concertos by Beethoven, Brahms, Bruch, Elgar and Mozart (Sinfonia Concertante) and as solo violin in the Sinfonia's performance of the six Brandenburg Concertos. His last appearance with the orchestra was in 1984.

SCOTTISH SINFONIA was formed in 1970 by Neil Mantle. It was originally a chamber orchestra but was expanded to its present size of some 85 players six years later. Although the orchestra is basically amateur, it receives valuable stiffening from several professional and semi-professional players. In recent years they have given, in addition to the Scottish premiere of Strauss's Alpine Symphony, highly acclaimed performances of most of the Mahler and Bruckner symphonies. Other works normally considered outwith the scope of a non-professional orchestra have included Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra, Webern's Passacaglia and Janacek's Sinfonietta. The orchestra's joint performances with Sinfonia Opera, which Neil Mantle runs with his singer wife, also form an important part of the orchestral schedule.

SCOTTISH SINFONIA

leader Michael Rigg
conductor Neil Mantle

Violins I

Michael Rigg
Jan Kouwenhoven
Daya Basaratnam
Moray Rumney
Helen Kemp
Julia Fowler
Morvyth Davis
Robert Roy
Kenneth Donaldson
Kirsteen McLean
Valerie Jackson
Carolyn Dyson
Irene Horne
Alexa Butterworth

Violins II

Elizabeth Clement
Sonya Baxter
Robert Saunders
Aline Watson
Stephen Slebarski
Anne Stephen
Lynda Cochrane
Helen Busbridge
Jenny Gardner
Sophie Hay
Graham Ritchie
Angela Bell
Elaine Warren
Donald Milligan

Violas

Hilary Turbayne
Alison Lucas
Anne Parker
Alison Montgomery
Elizabeth Mathison
Karen Ross
Ian Walker
Catherine Moore
Sandra Hollingdale

Cellos

David Edwards
John Busbridge
Sam Coe
George Reid
Angela Griffiths
Jane Houchin
Dorothy Macmillan
Debbie McCoy
David Sadler
Rachel Dean
Andrea McLaughlin

Double Basses

Fiona Donaldson
Walter Carlton
Bobby Millar
Jennifer Sharp
Eric Jeffrey

Flutes

Barbara Richerby
Heather Guild

Piccolo

Alan Bell

Oboes

Margot Cruft
Amanda Mallows

Cor Anglais

Iain Thompson

Clarinets

John Peacock
Mark Casson

Bass Clarinet

Hilary Saunders

Bassoons

Barbara Mooney
Colin Skinner

Horns

James Brock
Clare Richmond
Paul Sellers
Lance Whitehead
Donald Ferguson

Trumpets

Lawrence Haigh
David Wright
Gavin Reid
Pamela Walker

Trombones

Bill Giles
James Bertram
Ian Burness

Tuba

Peter Clements

Timpani

Debbie Garden

Percussion

Gillian McDonagh
John Willmett
Nicholas Russell
Mary Robertson

Celesta

Stephanie Hughes

Harp

Judith Peacock

Additional Brass

Trumpets

James Gray
Alexander Poots
Janet Robertson
Euan Drysdale

Trombones

Kirsty McBain
Evelyn Carlton
Daniel Richards

Tuba

Paul Drury

Orchestral Managers

Ian Walker
David Wright

Secretary

Margot Cruft

Concert Administration

Inga Mantle
Judith George

SCOTTISH SINFONIA SEASON 1986/7 OPENING CONCERTS

Sunday 17 August Cathedral Church of St Mary 5pm

J.S.BACH PROGRAMME: Suite No.2 in B Minor
Violin Concerto in A Minor
Brandenburg Concerto No.4
Suite No.3 in D

Sunday 24 August Cathedral Church of St Mary 5pm

RICHARD STRAUSS Also Sprach Zarathustra
SAINT-SAENS Organ Symphony

Date for your diary: MOZART The Marriage of Figaro 9-13 September Church Hill Theatre