

HAVERING CONCERT ORCHESTRA

Autumn Classics



23rd November 2013

Frances Bardsley School, Romford

Friends of the Havering Concert Orchestra

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The Havering Concert Orchestra is a registered charity (No. 1076663). We are most grateful to the Friends of the Havering Concert Orchestra, who help to support the orchestra and its activities. Friends of the HCO receive advance notice of concert booking periods, priority seating and regular newsletters. Annual subscriptions are £10 (joint) and £7 (single).

If you would like to become a Friend of the Orchestra, please e-mail: haveringconcertorchestra@gmail.com.

Our Conductor



BILL BROOKS was born in Hornchurch, making his early conducting debut at the age of 7 when he conducted the Suttons Infant School Percussion Band at the Hornchurch Infant Schools Music Festival. After primary school he attended Hornchurch Grammar School and the Royal College of Music, where he studied under Joan Dickson and Anna Shuttleworth. Graduating in 1970, after a postgraduate teaching course at Bretton Hall he had a lengthy teaching career in Oxford, Havering and Essex. He conducted the Havering Youth Training Orchestra for 5 years, and from 1981-92 conducted the Upminster Bach Society, performing many of the major works of the choral repertoire, including Verdi's Requiem and The

Dream of Gerontius. He has conducted the Havering Concert Orchestra since 2005 and was Musical Director of St Andrew's Church, Hornchurch for 12 years.

Tonight's Programme

RICHARD WAGNER (1813-83)

Overture Die Meistersinger

Tonight we are marking the bicentenaries of the births of both Richard Wagner and Giuseppe Verdi.

Wagner, born on 22nd May 1813, was a German composer primarily known for his operas. He wrote both the libretto and the music for each of his stage works. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* was one of his last few stage works and he re-introduced some traditional forms. Interestingly it is the only comic opera from Wagner's mature years.

The orchestral prelude sets an appropriate tone of pageantry and celebration. The young nobleman Walther von Stolzing and Eva Pogner, daughter of one of the members of the Mastersingers' guild, have fallen in love. However, Eva's father has promised her hand to the winner of the guild's song contest. The lovers' only hope is for Walther to gain admission to the guild as a Mastersinger, and win the song contest. (Apologies to those who have come out hoping to get away from Saturday evening talent shows!)

The prelude introduces some of the most important musical themes that recur throughout the opera. The stately hymn-like opening evokes the shared civic and national pride of the guilds. The expressive phrases symbolize the passion of Walther and Eva. The fanfare represents the grand entrance of the Mastersingers during the song contest. We also hear the warm lyrical strains of Walther's prize song. Another theme, a comic one, represents the apprentices mocking the Mastersingers and parodying their grand entrance theme. Wagner then develops and varies these themes, even cleverly presenting them simultaneously. As the prelude draws to a close traces of all of the themes mingle together in one last brilliant display.

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)

Overture Sicilian Vespers

Giuseppe Verdi, born on 10th October 1813, was an Italian romantic composer mainly known for his operas. His opera *I Vespri Siciliani* (Sicilian Vespers) premiered at the Paris Opera in June 1855 and, indeed, the original version was in French. It was the first of his two operas composed specifically for Paris. The opera was in five acts, requiring three to four hours of music, spectacular scenery and choral effects, and a ballet. The opera is set in the city of Palermo on the Italian island of Sicily in 1282, a time when the territory was occupied by the French. There are revolutionary plots, and lovers become entangled by plots of deceit. It ends with a massacre of the French at the hands of the Sicilians, the revolt being triggered by the ringing of the vespers bell at the wedding of the lovers Elena and Arrigo.

After a brooding introduction, a lilting cello tune establishes a peaceful mood, which soon gives way to more dramatic music. The original melody eventually returns, but in a more insistent form. In its turn, the agitation becomes more and more frenzied, leading to a presto ending, which requires considerable virtuosity in the strings.

AMILCARE PONCHIELLI (1834-86)

Dance of the Hours

The *Dance of the Hours* comes from an opera *La Gioconda* by the Italian composer Amilcare Ponchielli. He was as famous in his day as Verdi, and had great success at La Scala opera house in Milan during the 1870s and 1880s. This piece represents different times of the day from morning, through daytime and the evening, to the night. It has particularly lovely woodwind writing and beautiful melodies for the cellos. The *Dance of the Hours* is one of the most frequently parodied pieces of classical music. The ballet was used in the Walt Disney animated film *Fantasia* in 1940 with ballet-dancing hippos, ostriches, alligators and elephants. Segments of the piece formed the basis for a hit song of 1963 called *Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh*, which many of you may recognise.

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)

Grand March from Aida

Aida was written at the height of Verdi's career. He had already established himself as the colossus of the Italian Opera, and his renown was not restricted to Italy, nor even to Europe. In Egypt, on the orders of the Khedive Ismail, an opera house was built to honour the opening of the Suez Canal. The first work to be performed in the Khedivial Opera House, in 1869, was Verdi's *Rigoletto*. This was followed by the far more ambitious commissioning of perhaps the grandest of all operas, on an Egyptian theme. *Aida* was first performed in Cairo in December 1871, having been delayed for almost two years, not only because of Verdi's stringent demands on himself, his librettist and the producers, but also because of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. This made it impossible to ship the sumptuous costumes and sets to Cairo from Paris, where they had been constructed.

The Grand March comes from the second act of the *Aida*. It announces the celebration of the return of Radames following his victory with the Egyptian army over the Ethiopians. Verdi was terrified of sea voyages, and refused to attend the brilliant premiere in Cairo, but supervised the first Italian performances at Milan's La Scala six weeks later. *Aida* continues to be a staple of the operatic repertoire.

ANTONIN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

Symphony No. 8 in G Major

I. *Allegro con brio*; II. *Adagio*; III. *Allegretto grazioso*;
IV. *Allegro ma non troppo*

Dvořák composed his eighth symphony between August and November 1889, and conducted the first performance in Prague in February 1890. In the summer of 1889 Dvořák had retired to his country home at Vysoka, away from the pressures of urban life and the demands of performers and publishers. He was eager to compose something "different from other symphonies with individual thoughts worked out in a new way". Composition came easily to him. Dvořák said at the time "Melodies simply pour out of me". The whole symphony was completed in less than three months. It remains an essentially personal composition, sometimes referred to as Dvořák's

“Pastoral” because of its prevailing open-air and sunny nature, although the outer movements are also exhilarating and energetic.

The work opens in G minor with melodies stated by the cellos, horns and lower woodwind, before the real first subject appears brightly in the major on the flute. Both the development and recapitulation are introduced by new material, and the whole movement is a masterly example of Dvořák’s ability to combine melodies and counter melodies in a cloak of colourful, but always clear, orchestration. The second movement, an adagio, alternates between C major and C minor, sombre and gently merry music, and passages for strings and wind. The third movement is not a conventional Scherzo, but a lilting, radiant waltz marked *Allegretto grazioso*. The main theme of the trio was rescued from Dvořák’s comic opera *The Stubborn Lovers*. The finale begins with a trumpet fanfare and continues with a theme and variations. For this theme alone, Dvořák made ten sketches before deciding that he had it right. It is introduced by the cellos, and is deceptively simple. The variations, which range from a sunny flute solo to a determined march in the minor, eventually fade to a gentle farewell, before the sudden final outburst of jollity, driving on to conclude with an even more rumbustious Coda.

HAVERING CONCERT ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN 1

Donna Schooling
Sharon Durant
Ed Caines
Colin Foan
Gabrielle Scott
Edward Lubbock
Josephine Amos

VIOLIN 2

Paul Kelly
Jane-May Cross
Henry Webster
Jenny Sheppard
Stan Vanlint
Kathryn Andrews
Jenny Robinson

VIOLA

John Hawkins
Jenny Reckless
Jenny Meakin
Karen Williams

CELLO

Graeme Wright
Catherine Hill
Alan Musgrove
Mark Rallis
Malcolm Inman
Roly Peck

DOUBLE BASS

Bob Veale
Angelo Tsocos
Tom Marshall

FLUTE

Gillian Foan
Jennifer Goldsmith

OBOE

Leigh Thomas
Rita Finnis

CLARINET

Jacky Howlett
Carole Mann

BASSOON

Jane Chivers
Katy Kelly

HORN

Jamie Merrick
Vicky Jones
Brian Jack
Andy Coombe

TRUMPET

Andy Pearson
Eric Forder

TROMBONE

Sam Shiell
Andy Bearman
Andy Mckay

PERCUSSION

Suzanne Michalkiewicz
Georgina Thomas

TIMPANI

Amanda Foan

HARP

Hilary Barkwith

About the HCO

Are you a keen musician?

Under the direction of our conductor, Bill Brooks, we continue to expand our membership and our repertoire. We always look forward to welcoming new members. Rehearsals are held on Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m., at North Street Halls, Hornchurch, during term time.

The orchestra is a member of, and is grateful for support received from, the Havering Arts Council.



How to contact the HCO

If you are interested in being added to the mailing list, or joining the orchestra:

- Contact Karen Williams on 0208 950 5742 or karenjwilliams@ntlworld.com
- Speak to any member of the orchestra during the interval, or
- Visit our website at www.hcoweb.co.uk

We look forward to seeing you at our next concert. The Orchestra has been invited to perform as part of a series of concerts being presented by Havering Council's Arts team. Please note the different day of the week, time and venue!

SUNDAY 23rd March 2014

New Windmill Hall, St Mary's Lane, Upminster, RM14 2QH
3.00 p.m.

Strauss - Overture Die Fledermaus
Bruch - Kol Nidrei (soloist Matthew Stover)
Grieg - Peer Gynt Suite No 1
Mozart/Verdi - Wind Decets
Haydn - Double Horn Concerto
Saint-Saens - Danse Macabre

For this concert only, advance tickets (£8.50 and £6.50 concessions) are available from Fairkytes Arts Centre, Billet Lane, Hornchurch (telephone 01708 456308). Tickets can also be ordered online by going to our website (www.hcoweb.co.uk) and clicking on the We Got Tickets link.