
**Havering
Concert
Orchestra**

Programme



HAVERING CONCERT ORCHESTRA

Ghosts & Spirits

Leader Donna Schooling

Conductor Michael Axtell

Sunday 23rd November 2003, 7.30pm

At

The Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch

[Supported by Havering Arts Council]

www.hcweb.co.uk

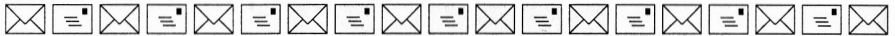
About the HCO



HCO Mailing List

The Havering Concert Orchestra operates a regular mailing list giving details of forthcoming concerts with application forms for tickets and a choice of seat allocation.

To be added to the list please contact Karen Williams, 01708 706795 or secretary@hcoweb.co.uk.



Are you a keen musician?

Under the direction of our current conductor, Michael Axtell, we continue to expand our membership and our repertoire. We always look forward to welcoming new members.

Rehearsals are held at Upminster Infants School, St Mary's Lane, Upminster on Wednesdays at 7.30pm, during term time.

How to Contact the HCO

If you are interested in being added to the mailing list, joining the orchestra or just giving us your valued opinion

Either...



Contact Karen Williams on 01708 706795, or secretary@hcoweb.co.uk or



Speak to any member of the orchestra during the interval, or



Visit our website at www.hcoweb.co.uk



Our Next Concert will be held at...

The New Windmill Hall, Hornchurch

On

14th March 2003

at 7.30pm...

Programme includes...

Haydn - Trumpet Concerto

Mozart - Symphony 40

Handel - Water Music

We look forward to seeing you then!



The Orchestra

1st Violins

Donna Schooling
Pam France
Brian Thorogood
Karen Williams
Yvonne Simmons
Kathryn Andrews
Diana Lynch
Vera Pieper

2nd Violins

Paul Kelly
Glenn Somerville
Dorothy Todd
Stan Vanlint
Jenny Robinson
Bruno Handel

Violas

Francis Hider
Jo Foot
Vic Bradnam

Cellos

Graeme Wright
Brendan O'Connor
Alan Musgrove
Mark Rallis
Catherine Irving
Jeannie Bevan
Bill Brooks
Denise Watson

Double Bass

Robert Veale
Chris Reeve

Flutes

Gillian Foan
Joan Luck
Ankie Postma

Oboes

Leigh Thomas
Rita Finnis

Clarinets

Jacqueline Howlett
Mike Youings

Bassoons

Jane Chivers
Sarah Head

Horns

Jamie Merrick
Julie Amphlett
Andy Coombe
John Ward

Trumpets

Ashley Buxton
Guest

Trombones

Guest
Guest
Guest

Tuba

Guest

Timpani

Xylophone

Percussion

Georgina Thomas
Amanda Foan

The orchestra would like to thank the guest players who have joined us tonight and welcome all the new members that have joined the orchestra this term – Enjoy yourselves tonight!

The Havering Concert Orchestra was originally known as the Upminster Philharmonic Orchestra during the 1930s. After the Second World War it became the Hornchurch Orchestra and, following a concert coinciding with the formation of the Greater London Council the name was finally changed to the Havering Concert Orchestra.

Goodbye & Good Luck to Ruth Tyler who has moved to Wiltshire. We all wish her well.

Tonight's Programme



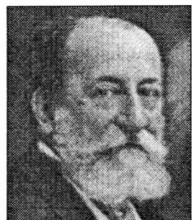
Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880)

Overture from Orpheus in the Underworld

Offenbach, a German-born French composer and cellist, ranks as one of the three greatest operetta composers. His music is unfailingly tuneful, with sparkling orchestration, and is often marked by his exuberant high spirits.

In Greek mythology Orpheus was the greatest human musician, he was so great that two and a half centuries ago he was worshipped as a God in the religion named after him - *Orphism*. Composers have always been attracted to his story, and the oldest opera score extant is based on it (*L'Euridice*, by Jacopo Peri, 1600). In the legend Orpheus journeys to the underworld of hell to bring back his beloved Eurydice but must first tame the Furies and face Love's challenge.

The music in this overture from Offenbach's version of the story is known the world over. It opens with a bristling fanfare, which is followed by a tender love song and an "infernal" passage. The finale, after a fairly complex waltz, is the renowned can-can; a fast and energetic dance involving much high kicking that came into vogue in the music halls of Paris in the 1830's.



Charles Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 - 1921)

Danse Macabre, Op. 40

The most popular of Saint-Saëns' works, the "*Carnaval des animaux*", was one for which he had no serious intentions at all – it was written purely as a joke to entertain some musical friends. *Danse Macabre* doesn't quite fall into this category but certainly displays the composer's ability to paint musical pictures and craft good tunes. Originally written as a song to a Halloween poem by Henri Cazali,

Saint-Saëns turned it into a purely orchestral work in 1874, taking advantage of the opportunities for instrumental colour suggested by the poem. Death is represented by a major solo violin part. The player is asked to tune the top string, the E string, down a semitone to E flat, in order to give a devilish discordance to the music. "Moonbeams break fitfully through the ragged clouds. Twelve heavy strokes sound from the church bell. (*Harp and strings*.) As the last stroke fades, strange sounds are heard from the graveyard, and the moonlight falls on a ghastly figure; it is Death, sitting on a tombstone and tuning his fiddle (*Violin solo*)...The sinister notes of Death's mistuned violin call the dead forth from their graves; they flutter around in a demoniacal dance. (*A sweeping, chromatic waltz-tune*.) Wilder and wilder race the rattling skeletons round the figure of Death as he beats time with his clattering skeleton foot. (*The Xylophone joins the orchestra*.) Suddenly, as if seized by a terrible suspicion, they stop. In the icy wind, (*Rushing scale passages in the strings*) Death's notes cannot be heard. A tremor runs through the ranks of the dead. But Death's goading notes once more shatter the silence and once again the dead hurl themselves into the dance, wilder than before. Suddenly Death stops his playing...the sound of a cockcrow is heard. (*Oboe solo*.) The dead scurry back to their graves and the weird vision fades away in the light of dawn".



Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787)
Dance of the Blessed Spirits (Orpheus) from the opera
Orfeo ed Euridice

Based on the same Greek legend as the overture that opened tonight's concert, the opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Orpheus and Eurydice), surpassed in grandeur, dignity, dramatic quality, and naturalness anything he had written before, and was produced in Vienna in 1762 with great success.



Charles Gounod (1818 – 1893)
Funeral March of a Marionette (1873)

From the opera Faust. More popularly known as the "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" theme.



Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)
Valse Triste, Op. 44

It was largely due to two works that Finnish composer Jean Sibelius became a household name. The ever-enduring Finlandia is the most obvious one, but how could he ever have guessed that a simple theatre piece would become a popular tune heard in café and teahouses all over Europe played with every imaginable combination of instruments. Sibelius, always short of money must have regretted selling the score of Valse triste (Sad Waltz) to his publisher outright. Gaining royalties on innumerable performances and arrangements would certainly have kept the cash flowing. Written in 1903 to accompany the play "Kuolema" ("Death") by Sibelius' relative-by-marriage Arvid Järnefelt, it portrays a dance of death between a dying woman and the grim reaper. The Valse triste accompanies an early scene: the central character is at the bedside of his dying mother who tells him of her dream of having gone to a ball and danced with death. The dark, haunting, theme, contrasted with a brighter tune effectively portrays the stage action, but also comprises a charming miniature tone poem.



Geoffrey Toye (1889-1942)
The Haunted Ballroom

As well as being a major conductor, Geoffrey Toye, was engaged by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company as musical director for three seasons. Toye arranged a new overture for Ruddigore, based on the songs remaining in the opera at the time of its 1920 revival. The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company for the rest of its existence used Toye's overture. He also composed two ballets, the best known of which is *The Haunted Ballroom* from which this charming waltz depicting the romantic dances of sweethearts long passed on, is the best known piece.



Programme, continued



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

**Symphony No.6 in F major, Op.68 "Pastoral"
Or a recollection of Country Life**

(More an expression of feeling than a painting)

Awakening of happy feelings upon arriving in the country: Allegro ma non troppo.

Scene by the brook: Andante molto mosso.

Peasants' merry-making: Allegro –

Thunderstorm: Allegro –

Shepherds' song, happiness and thanksgiving after the storm: Allegretto.

What a strange choice for a Ghosts and Spirits concert? So, you may think...

However, most of the music you have heard so far tonight falls within the genre of "programme" music i.e. music in which sound is used to depict the concrete elements of a story or image. Beethoven affirmed that this symphony was "More an expression of feeling than a painting (målerey)"; nevertheless the fourth movement, like all storm scenes in music, is programme music (and it's scary!)

"I love a tree more than a man." - Beethoven

His servant Michael Krenn tells of him roaming the fields from 6 in the morning to 10 at night "sketch book in hand, waving his arms, completely carried away by inspiration". Beethoven was always most at ease when vacationing in the countryside, where he could take long solitary walks through the fields and the woods. As he wrote once to a friend, "How glad I am to be able to roam in wood and thicket, among the trees and flowers and rocks. No one can love the country as I do ... my bad hearing does not trouble me here. In the country, every tree seems to speak to me, saying 'Holy! Holy!' In the woods, there is enchantment which expresses all things." Although this love of nature is heard in several Beethoven works, no piece is more clearly in that spirit than the Symphony no. 6.

Although early sketches for this symphony date from 1802, its actual composition waited until the summers of 1807 and 1808. Beethoven spent these months in the town of Heiligenstadt. The peace and solitude he found amidst nature gave him a blessed escape from the worries and conflicts of his life in the city, from awareness of his declining hearing, and, of course, from the political turmoil of the time – Vienna was bombarded and captured by Napoleon in November 1805, and again in May 1809. Beethoven felt no reluctance in revealing the sources of his ideas; the title "Pastoral" is one of the few titles that Beethoven himself is known actually to have given to one of his works. He even gave titles to the individual movements, cheekily lifted from a forgotten work by the equally forgotten 18th century composer, J.H. Knecht.

"Awakening of Cheerful Feelings on Arriving in the Country"

From the first four measures, the drone bass and simple melody of the violins, we discern peace, joy and country life. Through innumerable repetitions and permutations of that one simple theme, we are carried through the first movement, just as nature peacefully hands

us countless repetitions through flowers with identical petals, trees full of identical leaves, and stone-filled streams. But the lively rhythms and bright scoring of the themes give the character of folk music, while the long-held pedal notes that underlie so much of the movement not only evoke rustic instruments such as the hurdy-gurdy but give the whole movement a sense of tremendous spaciousness and freedom.

"Scene by the Brook"

Nothing disturbs the tranquility of this scene by the brook, borne gently on by the flow of the stream (two muted cellos). One of his sketchbooks, from 1803, shows him trying to write down the sound of a stream near Heiligenstadt in musical notation, and the three-bar fragment of music that resulted bears an unmistakable resemblance to the flowing figure for two cellos that runs through the Andante of the "Pastoral" Symphony. "The broader the stream", he observed, "the deeper the note". Near the end of the movement, a moment of silence calls attention to a trio of birds: a nightingale (flute) sings, then is joined by a quail (oboe) and cuckoos (clarinets). Beethoven wrote the birds' names in the score, but his later claim that he'd also incorporated the song of a yellowhammer elsewhere in the movement turned out to be a practical joke.

The final 3 movements are played without pause...

"Merry Gathering of the Country Folk"

The festive Scherzo movement reminds us that there are people living in and enjoying the countryside. Years later, a friend of the composer's claimed that it was meant to depict a village band, valiantly playing through a haze of alcohol. The composer pokes gentle fun at the wind-players of a village band – oboe and horn enter off the beat and the bassoonist is so sure he's right that he belts out his utterly unimportant bass part at a ridiculous volume. Like all merry-making, this party too comes to an end, in this case, with a change in the weather...

"Thunderstorm"

A sudden hush, a rumble of bass thunder and a shattering cloudburst, one of the most powerful descriptions of a storm in all music. Lightning and raindrops with strings and thunder rolls from the timpani, the wind shrieks (piccolo) and roars (brass), but as with summer storms, it soon passes and with an ascending scale on the flute, the sun reappears and a lovely, arcing phrase for oboe shines like a rainbow over the final rolls of thunder. The clarinet and horn in turn introduce a shepherd's "yodelling" tune, which grows into the "hymn," the main theme of the final movement.

"Shepherd's Song --- Happy, Thankful Feelings after the Storm."

Moving, like the first movement, in such broad, leisurely paragraphs that every key-change seems like the opening-out of a new and more beautiful vista – "glorious as the fields refreshed by rain" (Tovey). Beethoven thought of this movement as a hymn, and as the symphony draws to a close the music actually becomes more hymn-like, with sotto voce strings and wind answering each other like a prayer and responses. The flow of the music resumes, and, with a final, muted horn-call, winds off into the blue distance.

Listen particularly for variations where the theme seems as if it were there but is really not. Also listen for Beethoven's seeming reluctance to leave the country for the city and the work's gentle conclusion.

So, sit back and enjoy the glorious scenery of the first, and greatest Symphonic Poem ever written.

Biographies

DONNA SCHOOLING (Leader) has spent the majority of her musical career helping to create music in Havering. Initially leading her school orchestras, she then joined and led both the Havering Youth Sinfonia and the Havering Youth Orchestra, after this she joined the Havering Concert Orchestra. Donna is an active leader having helped oversee the website, as well as writing and producing the concert programmes. Her leadership style is very much 'open door' and she is also happy to tackle solo parts that other leaders have shied away from e.g. Scheherazade (Nov 2000).



MICHAEL AXTELL (Conductor) was principal flute and piccolo with the English National Opera for 18 years, and has also played with the Ballet Rambert and the Festival Ballet (now the English National Ballet). He has performed solo concerto works for BBC Welsh, Swansea Sounds Sinfonia and the BBC Bandstand Programme together with solo performances on TV and radio. He is woodwind coach for various London boroughs, and has tutored the Master Class at North Carolina University, and at the Orlando Festival, Holland.

Michael also conducts the London Medical Orchestra.



A Reminder . . .



Our next concert will be as follows...
Sunday March 14th
"Classics Evening"
at
The New Windmill Hall, Upminster
[Free Glass of Wine included in ticket price]

