

1984



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The POLYTECHNIC
WOLVERHAMPTON

PolyArts

MAIN HALL

Jeremy Ballard played his first professional music as a violinist with the Royal Marines String Orchestra. His duties included service on the Royal Yacht. Whilst in the Royal Marines he was taking lessons in London from Sascha Lasserson and in 1962 he left the service to join the CBSO where he is now a Principal. He is well known in Birmingham and the West Midlands as a soloist and also as 1st violin in the Arioso String Quartet which he formed in 1971. The Arioso Quarter play regular lunchtime concerts in the Birmingham Midland Institute.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTOR : Mark Finch

1st Violins

Ralph Allin
Jim Hyslop
Philippa Mitchell
Connie King
Colin Elton
Penny Shaw
Martyn Blythe
Hilary Hurd
Christine Wilkinson
Elizabeth Such
Barbara Barker
Lynn Russell

2nd Violins

Louise McCarthy
Rita Lakeland
Jo Wootton
Christine Butler
Ken Hawkins
Katalin Beke
Tracey Jeavons
Jenny Lewis
Philip Ward
Jim Chugg

Violas

Cyril Love
Paul Westwood
Paul Jarvis
Hilary Dewar
Philip Turley
Ruth Hewitt
Jennie Chugg
Janet Thomas

Cellos

Sheila Freeman
Glynne Davis
Sheila Moore
Richard Painter
Ginny Whinyates
Sarah Fry
Andrew Bound
Darren Turner
Alison Pye

Double Basses

Robert Bunting
Brother Godric
Dominic Dudley

Flutes: Diana Manasseh
Doug Servant

Oboes: Richard Anderson
Anh Stubbley

Clarinets: Diana Cotterell
Susan Gray

Bassoons: Bettina Byng
Michael Servant
Maggie Rowlands

Horns: Percy Cotterell
David Dewar
Julia Burton
David Cotterell
Nicola Ellis

Trumpets: Mike Garbatt
Claire McCardle

Trombones: Mike Cummings
Ray Downes

Percussion: Gary Griffiths

Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra

soloist, Jeremy Ballard

*Beethoven Violin Concerto
Brahms Symphony No.3*

Saturday March 3rd 1984 7.30pm

OVERTURE "LEONORA" No 3 - BEETHOVEN

Of the four overtures which Beethoven wrote for various performances of "Fidelio", (Leonora Nos 1, 2 and 3, named after the opera's heroine, and the one entitled "Fidelio") the third "Leonora" is the one most often heard on the concert platform. The longest and most symphonic of the overtures, it contains most of the opera's main themes, thus fortelling the story, which has moralistic implications. For this reason, the shorter "Fidelio" overture is now usually played at the beginning of the opera.

The elaborate slow introduction describes the sadness of the wrongly imprisoned Florestan, sharply contrasting with the pulsating allegro which follows. The height of the drama is interrupted by a distant trumpet call from the prison tower, signifying a last-minute reprieve, and the overture ends triumphantly with the hero's release.

Violin Concerto in D major

L van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Jeremy Ballard : Violin

- (i) Allegro, ma non troppo
- (ii) Larghetto
- (iii) Rondo

Beethoven wrote his violin concerto in 1806 soon after the 4th Piano Concerto at a time when he was becoming reconciled to the tragedy of his deafness. It was first performed by Clement, the twenty six year old Viennese violinist and Konzertmeister, who had helped the composer with some details in laying out the solo part.

All the leading themes of the Allegro ma non troppo are first introduced by the orchestra, which having warmed to an expansive tutti, withdraws in a sudden reverential hush for the imposing, ascending octave entry of the soloist. Both main first and second subjects are benignly lyrical, born for the violin to sing, yet inviting infinite embroidery when handed back to the orchestra as the argument unfolds. Of the several subsidiary motifs none is more important than the opening four drum beats which, as early as the tenth bar, Beethoven transforms with great effect as it recurs on a daring D sharp in direct contradiction of the music's D major tonality.

The Larghetto conceals not only profound intensity but also an extremely subtle adaptation of variation form beneath its outward simplicity. The main 10-bar theme in G, introduced by muted strings, is repeated in different instrumental colourings under delicate violin embroidery. The soloist then introduces a second theme which comes near to speech in its intimate eloquence. Both themes return in yet new guises before an unexpected fortissimo outburst derived from the first seems to presage a stormy finale. However, the soloist is now up and away with one of the most good-humoured and virile rondo themes in all music. A totally unpredictable coda recalls the main theme in the remote key of A flat before Beethoven invites the oboe to share in its re-establishment in D before the rollicking home-coming.

Symphony No 3 in F major

J Brahms (1833-97)

- (i) Allegro con brio
- (ii) Andante
- (iii) Poco Allegretto
- (iv) Allegro

The third symphony of Brahms was written in 1883 and first performed in Vienna that December under Hans Richter. It is in a form very characteristic of Brahms - two small middle movements flanked by two large outer ones. It is the shortest of his four symphonies, though certainly not the smallest in substance. Indeed, it is of the four, the most personally concentrated, for it is unified by a motto theme, which appears at the outset. The motto of Brahms' youth was "Frei aber Froh" (F-A-F in musical terms). Typically, he had discovered from Schumann that Joachim had adopted for himself the more melancholy motto "Frei aber Finsam". One of the central ideas to the symphony is, therefore, derived from whether or not freedom is necessarily accompanied by loneliness or happiness. The rising statement, F-Ab-F, is resolved in the final melodic strands falling F-A-F. The motto is not used in a programmatic sense for, as Elgar pointed out, this is not Brahms' "Eroica" symphony - all the movements end quietly or very quietly. However, the complex musical structure and logic built upon these foundations is endlessly absorbing, constituting perhaps his most characteristic piece of symphonic thinking. Nowhere, in particular, is the musical discussion of the interval of a 3rd (F-A or F-Ab) more fully worked out than here.

The motto subject pervades the whole of the first movement and provides a kind of cement between the units of sonata form. It is constantly being varied and developed not in the Beethoven sense of fragmentation but rather by using varied textures, registers, accompaniments, orchestrations and harmonisations. Hence the formal development section is extremely short. The second subject in A major, 9/8, is one of those reflectively lyrical tunes of folk-song derivation so dear to the heart of Brahms.

Similar processes are at work in the slow movement, whose chorale-like opening for woodwinds and horns is built up from motifs laid out in the first three bars. These bars are themselves derived from material in the first movement. The traditional roles of the orchestral sections are here reversed with the winds carrying the bulk of the musical fabric while the strings interject, shadow and then fully accompany their partners for the return of the chorale.

The third movement is the only one not thematically related to the other three. It is in a clear-cut minuet and trio form in which the formal processes work like clockwork. Each successive repetition of the opening section is more fully orchestrated than the previous appearance without a note of harmony being altered. It forms a true intermezzo.

The finale returns to the heroic mould of the first movement. It begins with a running unison theme in G minor, then moves to a sombre one in A flat, announced by the trombones and given quietly by the strings and woodwind. There are in fact many themes as Brahms whips up excitement, calms it, recharges it again throughout a movement of great complexity and variety, the shiftings of mood and colour no less so. At the end the violins return to the main theme of the first movement, and the symphony ends in finally won peace and beatitude.