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MAY _____ '86

Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra

Conductor **MARK FINCH**

Symphony No 94 in G "Surprise" Haydn

Das Lied von der Erde Mahler

GLORIA FINCH **PATRICK BRIDDON**

Contralto Tenor

Saturday 17th. May 7.30p.m. £2.00 (£1.00)

TSB
BANK
SEASON

May '86

£2.00 (£1.00)

Symphony no 94 in G, "Surprise"

F.J. Haydn
(1732 - 1809)

- (i) Adagio : Vivace Assai
- (ii) Andante
- (iii) Menuet and Trio : Allegro Molto
- (iv) Finale : Allegro di molto

This symphony, perhaps the most popular work composed by the "Father of the Symphony", was written for the second season organised by the impresario, Salomon, at the Hanover Square Rooms, London in 1792. Haydn conducted from the keyboard as was his custom. It was extremely well received; the public's enduring affection for it has occasionally obscured what a beautiful work of art it really is.

The warm cantabile sound of the double reeds opens a slow introduction in which a certain ambiguity between 3/4 and 6/8 is contrived. The pregnant chord at its conclusion heralds a slight, unbalanced, lead-in figure at the start of the main part of the movement. Haydn constantly refers back to this idea during the movement and it is not until midway through the recapitulation that the figure is finally "sorted out". Haydn's concern with resolving the implications inherent in such a thematic motif shows him to be the forebear of Beethoven and Brahms. Another interesting feature of this movement is the fact that it is the first in which the kettledrums should be retuned in mid course.

Of the second movement, recent research shows that the Surprise, a whacking ff chord after the theme's double announcement, was an afterthought. Still, Haydn mischievously noted that "it will make the ladies scream". The listener is lured into this attack on his senses by the violins contrasting tenuto (held) crotchets and delicate staccato quavers. In the superb set of variations which ensues Haydn demonstrates his control over contrasting elements of grace and power, simplicity and ornamentation.

Having established the symphonic mould in the earlier part of his career, Haydn, with his captive audiences at Esterhazy and London, set about tinkering with the expectations that such a vast output had brought about. There have been earlier hints in the first two movements of unexpected twists of harmony and phrasing. Now, in the third movement, gaps in the texture begin to appear and it is left to the cellos and bassoons to fill in the empty spaces in mock embarrassment. However, the minuet serves mainly as a diversion before the brilliant finale, a sonata-rondo of great elan and an intellectual "tour de force". No wonder it brought the house down one spring evening nearly two hundred years ago.

----- INTERVAL -----

"Das Lied von der Erde"
(The Song of the Earth)

Gustav Mahler
(1860 - 1911)

Gloria Finch contralto
Patrick Briddon tenor

The tragic strokes of fortune which occurred to Mahler after the completion of his eighth symphony in 1907, the death of his eldest daughter at the age of five, his retirement from the directorship of the Vienna Court Opera and the diagnosis of a terminal heart disease, changed the nature of his long held fixation with death. If his earlier works had been full of "images" of mortality, this one is permeated with the bitter "taste" of mortality. It was in 1907 that a friend sent him a recently published volume of poetry called "The Chinese Flute" and these ancient poems in the translation of Hans Bethges are used to give moving expression to the farewell from this world.

Although Mahler did not expressly include the work in the canon of his symphonies, he did, however, call it a "symphony for alto and tenor soloists and large orchestra". Thus the six movements (Mahler never held to the four movement scheme) show distinct symphonic characteristics despite the song-like forms necessitated by the text. The normally constituted orchestra displays an extraordinarily colourful palette in expressing the manifold characters given in the text. Compared with his earlier works there is often here a unique chamber-like delicacy. It is a mature art which is capable of attaining the most sublime and moving effects often with few notes and colours. A melodic series is built from the final chord (c-e-g-a) which is met in every movement in the most varying guises (also in minor and reverse movement), and which gives the work an inner unity in its musical portrayal.

Despite this fact, there are several layers of feeling in this work, which sometimes appear separately but often fuse together inextricably. There is the loneliness which dominates the second movement (The Lonely One in Autumn) and the three 'recitatives' in the finale; also the sensuous, hedonistic ecstasy of living, pervasive throughout, and especially prominent in the orchestral section of the first movement, in the fifth movement (The Drunkard in Spring) and in the passage leading up to the funeral march in the finale ('I long, O my friend...'). Again, we find a wistful and half amused delight in remembered friendship and beauty, particularly in the third movement (Youth) and the fourth (Beauty); then a sense of the infinite sadness of mortality, again pervasive throughout, notably in the quicker parts of the first movement and finale. Finally, at the very end, there is the naked fusion of sadness and ecstasy which is fundamental to the whole work: despite the almost unbearable poignancy of the coda ('The dear earth'), it is at the same time a passionate praise of earthly life in all its overpowering beauty.

The first performance of the work was on November 20th, 1911 in Munich under Bruno Walter.

Gloria Finch was trained initially in drama and verse, and then studied singing under the guidance of Herbert Sumsion, former organist of Gloucester cathedral. She has won a number of competitions in oratorio, vocal solo, operatic and recital classes, including three distinctions for lieder singing. She has appeared with many choral societies as soloist.

Patrick Briddon first studied singing in Bristol with Nellie Moody and subsequently worked with the Bristol Intimate Opera Company specialising in the performance of small scale and unusual operas throughout the South West. Since moving to Gloucester he has enjoyed a growing reputation as a concert soloist and recitalist. He has performed with many local choral societies and is a member of the International Award winning chamber choir, the Aldwyn Consort of Voices.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Conductor Mark Finch

Leader Martin Blythe

1st Violin	Cello	Flute
Kati Beke	Richard Painter	Diana Manasseh
Jim Hyslop	Sheila Moore	Douglas Servant
Colin Elton	Lesley Hinton	Allison Birch
Hilary Hurd	Julia Smith	Sophie Robertson
Cyril Love	Gerry Campbell	
Sarah Willis		Oboe
Richard Lane	Double Bass	
		Richard Anderson
2nd Violin	Robert Crawford	Anne Stubley
	Malcolm Miles	Tony Evans
Philippa Mitchell	Antony Eagle	
Rita Lakeland		Clarinet
Jennie Lewis	Trumpet	
Ken Hawkins		Diana Cotterell
Philip Ward	David Knock	Monica Walker
Violetta Burnell	Mike Garbutt	Julia Hones
Gill Henderson		Ron Strang
Gillian Aldington	Horn	
		Bassoon
Viola	Percy Cotterell	
	Julia Burton	Michael Servant
Stephen McNamara	Gillian Jones	Maggi Rowland
Mark Ward	David Dewar	
Paul Westwood		Percussion
Dilys Lane	Trombone	
		Tim Stoke
	Gail Brand	
	Garth Young	