

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS
SEASON 2007-2008

Michael Bochmann (violin)
Grace Shortland (violin)
and
Michael Blackmore (piano)

Wednesday, December 5th 2007

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS: COMING NEXT

Wednesday, January 9th 2008
7.30pm

Royal College of Music String Orchestra

conducted by **Mark Messenger**

Programme to include:

Serenade Elgar
Souvenir de Florence Tchaikovsky

The RCM Strings make their third visit to Burford under the College's Head of Strings, Mark Messenger, with an only slightly belated nod to Elgar's centenary year.

WITNEY WINTER CONCERTS

Friday, December 14th 7.30pm

Wood Green School, Witney

Oxford Waits

'Hey for Christmas'

The Oxford Waits take their name from a real-life band of city musicians, known as 'waits', who flourished in Oxford during the 17th century

Tickets £9/£7.50 (Children/WOC students £1)
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C Greenway (Antiques), Corn Street; or at the door
Lenthall Members receive a further concession of £1.00.

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS

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Programme

Violin Sonata no.5 in F op.24 "Spring"

Ludwig von Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Allegro
Adagio molto espressivo
Scherzo: Allegro ma non troppo
Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

It is somehow comforting to find one's own clumsiness in matters of IT reflected in the works of the mighty. Beethoven's Spring Sonata, op.24, was one of two sonatas which Beethoven intended to be published under the same opus number, possibly for performance as a pair; but the engraver made the mistake of producing one in the format that we know as landscape, and the other as portrait, making them impossible to bind as one volume. So the second sonata of op.23 became op.24. It was written in 1801 and dedicated to Count Moritz von Fries, one of Beethoven's greatest patrons, head of a notable Viennese banking firm and treasurer to the imperial court.

The nickname 'Spring' seems to have arisen from the warm and easy nature of the piece and was certainly not of Beethoven's invention. The first movement does, indeed, start with a sunny enough tune, stated first by the violin and immediately repeated by the piano, but we are soon into a forceful second subject and some serious development. The initial melody returns in a comprehensive recapitulation and there is a good deal of playful treatment in the coda to finish the movement.

The adagio is as dreamy as Beethoven gets, the violin floating almost absentmindedly above the piano's undulations. The scherzo, the first such movement that Beethoven included in a violin sonata, is charming and surprisingly brief, and the rondo finale has a breezy menuet-like tune that gets a good going-over, much as in a set of variations

Violin Sonata no.3 in C minor op.45

Edvard Grieg
(1843-1907)

Allegro molto ed appassionato
Allegretto espressivo alla Romanza
Allegro animato — Prestissimo

Grieg wrote very little chamber music, and the three violin sonatas constitute the largest part of his output in the genre. The first two were written comparatively early in his career



MEMORIAL OF THE AGE OF BEETHOVEN
Painting by J. Hall, (see Beethoven's Profile)

Beethoven in 1801

— no.2 was written on Grieg's honeymoon — and have much of the lyricism of his songs, but twenty years later he set out for "a wider horizon" as he put it, and though there are still echoes of the folk tradition which so characterises his music the work sits pretty squarely in the late romantic mainstream. Grieg was very fond of all the sonatas and, excellent pianist as he was, gave many performances of them.

There is no equivocation in the full-blooded opening of the first movement: a determined first subject that reappears in various forms throughout the movement. The second subject sounds a bit more like the Grieg we know and love, but gets caught up in the drama of the opening theme, and though the two themes alternate throughout the movement, the more lyrical one seems always to be setting the music up for another show of force. There's no doubt as to the winner as the movement ends.

But all is calm as the second movement starts, with an extended piano introduction and a gorgeous tune, which gives way to a swirling dance before returning in a higher register, even more passionate than before.

The urgency of the first movement reappears in the finale, with the violin setting a cracking marching pace above the piano's broken chords. Eventually a soulful slow melody emerges, but it is not long before its brisk partner usurps it; and although it reasserts itself briefly it is swept away in the excitement of the last few bars, which hurtle into an exultant C major close.



Grieg

Interval

Duets for two violins

Pillow Dance
Soldier's Song
Burlesque
New Year's Song

These four pieces are from a set of 44 which Bartók based on folk melodies collected by himself in Hungary and Romania between 1907 and 1913. They were written in 1931 and have, like much of Bartók's instrumental music, a strong educational element. Nevertheless they have an assured place in the professionals' repertoire, and show the composer's genius for transforming what were in the main vocal melodies into spare but quite complex instrumental miniatures.

Béla Bartók
 (1881-1945)

Nigun



Bloch

Ernest Bloch
 (1880-1959)

Bloch lived for most of his professional life in the United States, and became firmly associated with music which has strongly Jewish characteristics - indeed, his publisher, Schirmer, conceived a logo for his works which incorporated the Star of David. *Nigun* ("Improvisation" in Hebrew) is the central piece of a triptych for violin and piano entitled "Baal Shem". It was written in 1923 and was inspired by Jewish spiritual life, celebrating the Hassidim sect who wanted to reach God through the joy of singing and dancing.

La Capricieuse

Edward Elgar
 (1857-1934)

With *La Capricieuse* we find Elgar firmly in the salon, or perhaps the Palm Court. The piece belongs in the same genre as a number of early works such as *Salut d'Amour* and the *Chansons de Matin* and *Nuit*. There is no doubting their fitness for purpose: melodic and in perfect harmony with their time.

Shepherd's Madrigal Liebesfreud

Fritz Kreisler
 (1875-1962)

Two pieces by the World Champion of the encore: an arrangement of a charming old German tune, and a full-blooded waltz as befits a native-born Viennese. These were only two of the amazing range of styles that Kreisler could compose in, and one remembers his genius for passing off his own compositions as those of others.

Fritz Kreisler



The Dancing Doll (La Poupée Valsante)

Ede Poldini arr. Kreisler
 (1869-1957)

Ede (or Edouard) Poldini was a Hungarian composer whose works were mainly for the stage, but he wrote a great deal of piano music. He had a gift for melody and an engaging

lightness of touch. *The Dancing Doll* would have made a delightful (second or subsequent) encore for recitalists like Fritz Kreisler, and filled up one side of a 10" 78rpm record to perfection.

The Girl from Ipanema

*Antonio Carlos Jobim arr Michael Bochmann
(1927-1994)*

The most famous song of the most famous Brazilian composer of the twentieth century, and a reminder of the extraordinary eruption of that country's music on to the world stage at that time.

La Ronde des Lutins (Goblins' Dance)

*Antonio Bazzini
(1818-1897)*

Bazzini was an Italian violinist, teacher and composer. He had a successful concert career, during which he wrote for himself what musicologists called "character-pieces" like *La Ronde des Lutins*, but gave this up at the age of 46 to concentrate on more serious composing, most notably of chamber works. He became composition professor and later Director of the Milan Conservatory.



Bazzini

Michael Bochmann

Brought up in Turkey and England, **Michael Bochmann** comes from a family of professional musicians. At 16, he entered the Royal Academy of Music on a scholarship to study the violin with Frederick Grinke. While still a student, he was the winner of the British Prize in the 1972 Carl Flesch International Violin Competition and a year later, prizewinner in the Jacques Thibaud Competition in Paris. He received lessons at this time also from Sandor Vegh and Henryk Szeryng. Shortly after he made his first solo broadcasts for the BBC. He was appointed concertmaster of the English String and Symphony Orchestras in 1988. Two years later he partnered Yehudi Menuhin in Bach's Double Violin Concerto in a tour of eighteen concerts in the USA and Britain. He frequently visits Germany to perform and teach and in other spare moments promotes 10 chamber music series through his new enterprise "Opus 2000". He holds courses for young professional ensembles and soloists at his home in Gloucestershire.



Michael Blackmore

Michael Blackmore studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with James Gibb and later in Hanover with Hans Leygraf. He has played recitals in Europe and in most of the major halls in England as soloist, lieder accompanist and chamber music player. Although his extensive repertoire embraces the Viennese classics, Romantics and early 20th century, he gave the UK premiere of 'Through a glass' by the young Italian composer Massimo di Gesu at Warwick University in November 2002.

For a number of years he taught at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, teaching a number of fine musicians, the most notable being Thomas Ades

Grace Shortland

Grace Shortland graduated this year with a degree in Music from St Catherine's College, Oxford. She studies violin with Sue Lynn and has completed the ABRSM Performance Diploma. During her time as an undergraduate Grace led the Oxfordshire County Youth Orchestra and performed with various ensembles, including the Oxford University Orchestra and New Chamber Opera. She hopes to continue her studies at a music college.

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