



Southbank Sinfonia's new talent to close the season

Once again, we welcome Southbank Sinfonia to Marlborough to bring our current season to a glorious conclusion.

Each year, the Orchestra returns with a new cohort of young musicians, carefully and thoroughly prepared by their Musical Director Simon Over.

Under his excellent stewardship, we can anticipate a polished performance even though our concert will be among their first public appearances as an ensemble.

Opening proceedings is the **Tragic Overture (Op.81) by Johannes Brahms**. Composed in the summer of 1880, the work premièred on December 26th. The piece is essentially a stand-alone symphonic movement, in contrast with the Academic Festival Overture (Op.80), also written in 1880.

Then, the centre-piece of the programme – the **Concerto for Clarinet, Viola, and Orchestra in E Minor (Op.88) by Max Bruch** with Sacha Rattle (Clarinet) and Philip Dukes (Viola) performing as soloists.

Bruch was inspired to write this piece for his son Max Felix Bruch, an unusually gifted clarinettist, aged 25, just beginning his professional music career. Completed in Berlin in December 1911, the concerto premièred the following year in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, with Max Felix as soloist accompanied by Professor Willy Hess on viola.

Very much in the style of the G minor Concerto for Violin (Op.26), first performed in 1866, the double concerto was composed some 45 years later, when Bruch was 73. Still composing in the romantic style, Bruch was out of step with the emerging musical trends of the new century, and the reviews were predictably unenthusiastic, some describing the piece as unoriginal and unexciting.

The concerto was not published until 1942, 22 years after the composer's death. Following the end of the war, it was difficult to rent manuscripts for the orchestral parts or for the full score, as
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Virtuosi recitalists to resume series with sonata selection

Season 74 returns this month with a recital for violin and piano featuring two of Britain's foremost concerto soloists – **Tasmin Little and Martin Roscoe**.

During a career spanning three decades, Tasmin has established herself as a leading international soloist. Her work encompasses concerto and recital performances, masterclasses, workshops and community outreach.

Empire (OBE) in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Birthday Honours List, for Services to Music. She is a Fellow of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and plays a 1757 Giovanni Battista Guadagnini violin.

Martin's professional career is equally extraordinary, spanning four decades during which he has become one of the UK's most popular and renowned



Photo © Benjamin Ealovega

She has performed in some of the most prestigious venues across the world, including Carnegie Hall, Concertgebouw, Vienna Konzerthaus, Royal Albert Hall and Barbican Centre.

Her recording credits and performance schedule reflect her wide-ranging repertoire alongside numerous World Première performances, including concerti by Willem Jeths, Robin de Raaf, Stuart MacRae, Robert Saxton and Dominic Muldowney.

Her acclaimed recording of the Elgar Violin Concerto with Sir Andrew Davis and the Royal National Scottish Orchestra won her the Critic's Choice prize in the 2011 *Classic BRIT Awards*.

In June 2012, Tasmin was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British

pianists. His repertoire exceeds 100 concertos, in addition to a large body of chamber works.

He has performed and recorded with many of the UK's leading orchestras, particularly the BBC orchestras, the Hallé, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, with whom he has made in excess of ninety performances.

His chamber music partnerships include long-standing associations with Peter Donohoe, the Endellion and Maggini Quartets, and of course with Tasmin.

He can point to more than 500 broadcast credits and has made seven appearances with the BBC Promenade series. He is a Professor of Piano at the

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Sonata Selection:

Guildhall School of Music in London, where he was recently awarded a Fellowship.

They open their recital with the **Sonatina in D Major, D384, No.1, by Schubert.**

One of three sonatas for violin and piano written in 1816, it was published posthumously as the Op.137 collection. The diminutive 'sonatina' appears to have been introduced by the publisher, Anton Diabelli, with a view to widening the appeal of the music to amateur musicians, by suggesting a less demanding technique.

The collection as a whole demonstrates Schubert's early appreciation for the two instruments, in which he conveys a sense of conversation between violin and piano – a device he previously developed in other genres, including chamber music for strings.

Bringing the first half to a close is the **Sonata No. 1 in A Major (Op.13) by Gabriel Fauré.**

Set in four movements, the sonata is considered one of Fauré's finest pieces from his early period. Written between 1875 and 1876, it is dedicated to the French violinist and musicologist, Paul Viardot, who premièred the work a year later in Paris, with Fauré at the piano.

After the interval, we resume with the **Violin Sonata No. 9 (Op.47) by Beethoven.**

This is a lengthy and challenging piece in three movements, typically playing for 40 minutes or more.

Generally referred to as the 'Kreutzer' Sonata, the piece was originally dedicated to George Bridgetower, a leading violinist in turn of the century Vienna.

Bridgetower and Beethoven shared the stage for the première, which took place at the Augarten Theatre on the morning of May 24th, 1803 at the unusual hour of 8:00 am. Bridgetower sight-read the piece having not seen the manuscript prior to performing.

Sometime later, the two fell out over differing views about a woman whom Beethoven held in high regard. When the manuscript was subsequently published in 1805, it carried a new dedication for Rodolphe Kreutzer, possibly the finest violinist of the day.

Kreutzer, however, was not an admirer of Beethoven and never performed the work describing it as "outrageously unintelligible".

For Tasmin and Martin, this will be the first of three performances of the 'Kreutzer' this spring with follow-on programmes at Wigmore Hall (London) and Sheldonian Theatre (Oxford). We wish them well. ■

Southbank Sinfonia:

few copies were thought to have been published.

Circulation of manuscripts was further impeded by the transfer of rights between publishing houses, until a full copy of the score miraculously surfaced at Christie's auction house in London, in 1991, and was bought by the Cologne Max-Bruch-Archiv.

After the interval, we will hear the **Symphony No. 6 in D Major (Op.60) by Antonín Dvořák.** Composed in October of 1880, it is dedicated to Hans Richter, then Principle Conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Symphony was in fact composed at the request of Richter following a performance of the Slavonic Rhapsody No.3 (Op.45), by the Orchestra, a year earlier in Vienna.

Accounts vary as to how well the piece was received. Certainly, Richter's reception at the dress rehearsal was enthusiastic, but the audience reaction in the actual performance was less so.

After completing the Symphony, Dvořák expected to see the work performed by the Vienna Philharmonic before the year was out. Richter however, repeatedly postponed the performance on grounds that the Orchestra was over-worked.

Dvořák learned later that some of the orchestra objected to performing works by a relatively new Czech composer in two consecutive seasons.

The Symphony eventually premièred in the spring of 1881, in a performance given by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Adolf Čech. And Richter later conducted the work in London, in 1882, though he never

performed it in Vienna.

One curiosity concerns the numbering of Dvořák's symphonies. The No.6 was originally issued as the No.1 by Simrock, the German music publisher, on the basis that it was the composer's first published work in the genre. They subsequently ordered later symphonies by date of publication.



Dvořák, on the other hand catalogued his symphonies from 1 to 8 according to their date of composition, omitting his actual No.1 which he believed to have been lost. When the first symphony was rediscovered, he adjusted the number sequence accordingly.

It is Dvořák's numbering sequence that prevails today. ■

Review

**Sunday 8th November 2015
Marlborough College, Memorial Hall**

Charles Owen and Katya Apekisheva are two pianists who over their careers have become critically acclaimed, as both soloists and ensemble players. With a plethora of international experience as pianists, their virtuosic skill and dexterity was apparent in their choice of repertoire.

Opening the concert, they played *Sonata for Four Hands* by a young Poulenc. The composition itself bears little resemblance to the harmonic and melodic style that is so easily recognis-

able as Poulenc, but Charles and Katya characterised each movement with beautifully varying colour, and developed rhythmic passages with great energy.

The ballet *Petrushka* by Stravinsky was performed with an abundance of vibrant intensity and incredible care. The unusual spacing of chords in the piano and imitative moving lines made the instrument speak as though it was an entire orchestra. The story of *Petrushka* is a dark tale of the love and jealousies of three puppets brought to life by a Charlatan during a Shrovetide fair in Saint Petersburg, in which both Charles and Katya found befitting timbres in the piano to tell such a tale.

Adam Staines

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