



FRIDAY 8TH FEBRUARY 2019
ST. JAMES'S PICCADILLY, LONDON

Conductor
Chris Hopkins

Beethoven
Violin Concerto
Violin - Janice Graham

Interval – 15 minutes

Schubert
Symphony No. 8 'Unfinished'

Programme Notes

Good evening and a very warm welcome to 2019 from all of us at the Orchestra of the City.

Beethoven: Violin Concerto, Op. 61

Allegro ma non troppo

Larghetto

Rondo

I am delighted that we are able to welcome back Janice Graham (those of you who were here this time last year will remember her staggering performance of the Berg Violin Concerto) to play one of the great pillars of the concerto canon, **Beethoven's Violin Concerto**. It is now, rightly, regarded as one of the great and most important achievements not just in the violin repertoire but also in the evolution of the concerto form itself. It wasn't always this way though; indeed following mixed reactions to the premiere in 1806 (no doubt partly thanks to Beethoven's completion of the piece just two days before the performance, leaving soloist and original dedicatee Franz Clement partly sight-reading this fiendish beast in concert) it would be another 30 years or so before the concerto really started to gain traction. Perhaps most notably this began with the then 12-year old virtuoso Joseph Joachim's London Philharmonic debut in 1844, conducted by no less than Felix Mendelssohn.

Beethoven himself had spent some time in his youth as an orchestral violinist before he moved to Vienna in the 1790s. He even had a stab at a violin concerto in his early 20s, which he left incomplete but which did spawn two lovely Romances for violin and orchestra. In his prime a decade or so later and with nine genre-defining violin sonatas under his belt, the 'real' Violin Concerto was written in a period including the Fourth Piano Concerto, the 'Razumovsky' string quartets, the Fourth and Fifth symphonies and so on. Here is a composer writing ground-breaking music in every category and with a consummate understanding of the instrument he is writing for. The combination of these two factors have ensured the enduring charm and popularity of this piece.

Not one to knowingly start a piece conventionally, Beethoven starts the Violin Concerto with five notes alone in the timpani, an auspicious and perhaps unsteady beginning which, simple as it is, becomes something of a recurring theme in the expansive first movement, like a gentle but persistent heartbeat. A long orchestral introduction sets the tone; this is a concerto in which the orchestra's purpose is to provide dramatic thrust and

not simply to underscore a fantastic (or 'phantasie' perhaps) solo. When the solo violin does eventually rise out of the orchestra we are treated at last to what we have subconsciously been waiting for and hitherto denied; the beautifully lyrical melody played, simply, in full. These building blocks now established, the first movement takes us on a wonderful journey in which Beethoven draws us through engaging drama, quiet reflection, threatening power and serene reminiscence.

In contrast to the enigmatic first movement, the second movement is relatively short and consistently lyrical. It is a set of variations (I count 6 and a half, but by all means count your own!) in which Janice takes centre stage, with extended cadenzas, arabesques and a graceful abandon over a minimal accompaniment; it's the perfect complement to the first movement. I've made the mistake several times of scheduling the third and final movement at the end of our Tuesday evening rehearsals, meaning this catchy rondo tune is all I can hear on loop until the following week. It's 'brilliant' in every sense; fun to play and listen to, with a great ending and plenty of striking moments for soloist and orchestra alike, unquestionably happy and full of life.

Interval

Schubert: Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, '(Un)finished'

Allegro moderato

Andante con moto

Scherzo (completed and orchestrated by Brian Newbould)

Allegro molto moderato (Entr'acte No. 1 in B minor from Rosamunde)

Few pieces have provoked more puzzlement or (generally) polite musicological disagreement than **Schubert's** unfinished **Symphony in B Minor**. We can only really speculate as to why it was left incomplete in late 1822, seemingly consisting of two complete movements and 130 bars more of a third movement: was it that he became too busy with other music; that after the first pains of ill health he felt unable to come back to the piece; that he felt the piece had gone as far as it could in two movements; that his Scherzo bore similarities to one in Beethoven's Second Symphony and presented him with 'writer's block'; that, having completed six symphonies fairly quickly in the 1810s, he no longer felt satisfied that his symphonic output would match up to Beethoven? None of these points really sate the curious mind, but in any case we can certainly enjoy the piece for what it is; dark, turbulent,

beautiful, melodic, illusory. Tonight, in addition, we offer you a 'finishing' of this great work, more on this later...

Schubert sent the score of the first two movements (ripped from their binding, with the first page of the third movement on the back of the last page of the second) to the Styrian Musical Society in Graz (they had just awarded him a Diploma of Honour) via Joseph Hüttenbrenner, in whose brother's closet it remained until 1865. It received its premiere in Vienna in December that year (Schubert had died, aged 31, in 1828) conducted by Johann von Herbeck who had rescued the score from its dusty resting place, with the out-of-character last movement of Schubert's Third symphony tacked on the end as an entirely inadequate finale!

The first movement to me tells a very vivid tale, not programmatic in any sense, but full of Schubertian pathos and emotional depth which recalls the composer's own words: "My music is the product of my genius and my misery and that which I have written in my greatest distress is that which the world seems to like best". It opens ominously, the cellos and basses offering only shadows, perhaps the dark troubled voice in the back of his mind which quietly pervades his every move. Opening nervously into something of a melody, the violins bustle away while Collin and Antonia (oboe and clarinet) intone a nervous but poignant duet. This, to me, is personal; naked, simple but in its own way terrifyingly psychological music. The interruptions of 'real life' become increasingly violent, until we break into the third main theme; a beautiful melody which starts in the cellos. In many composers' hands this would call for a rich, expressive tone, but Schubert writes 'pp' (very quietly) each time this melody begins and its fragility is the defining feature; as if the notion of happiness, of contentment, is there but unattainable; it's trapped in a glass jar just out of reach. This theme too is interrupted by rude outbursts which in their increasing violence destroy any sense of repose. The struggle between simple private satisfaction and earth-shattering ferocity is the overarching 'story' of this movement which ends, exhausted, haunted by that first quiet menace.

The second movement starts as an antidote to the first; tentatively hopeful. For me, it echoes the second movement of his Fifth Symphony and it's almost as if he is saying "I've got this, I know how to write a second movement". The melody stalls though, gets stuck, and in self-doubt is all but obliterated by what I see as the shadow of Beethoven. Perhaps this is too literal a reading, and I would encourage you to find your own, but in any case this is not a conventional second movement; its lurching from calm melody to aggressive interruption mirrors the tribulations of the first movement.

And that, in most cases, is the end of it. However, in the spirit of investigation and interest, we have decided to forge ahead with some trepidation to look

for a symphonic conclusion to these existing movements. I should be clear; we recognise of course that Schubert all but left the symphony there and so anything following these two incredible movements is no reflection necessarily of his vision for the piece. Indeed some commentators will be aghast that such an endeavour to add more musical flesh to this symphony takes place at all; there is a charge of sacrilege sometimes levied at those who tinker with the great composer's interrupted vision. If that is to be the case though, perhaps we had best leave the symphony alone entirely, since having sent it to Hüttenbrenner Schubert never saw the piece again, let alone sanctioned performance of it. This would patently be a great loss to the repertoire though and so we allow ourselves a modicum of experimentation, acknowledging that which exists in Schubert's hand is untouchably brilliant, and imagining for our own amusement what the missing parts might have felt like had he come round to completing the symphony to offer a symphonic experience based on 'educated guesswork'.

We are indebted to Professor Brian Newbould for providing us with his excellent completion of the third movement Scherzo. The first twenty bars exist in full score in Schubert's hand, from there we have the rest of the Scherzo as a piano sketch and the first melody of the trio. Professor Newbould has therefore painstakingly orchestrated the remaining 120 or so bars of the scherzo, delicately put together a trio with a second section melody based on the existing first and in doing so left us with a thoroughly satisfying approximation of where this movement might have ended up.

No final movement exists in any form, and only by conjecture and approximation in pursuit of an experience we land on the B minor Entr'acte from Schubert's incidental music to *Rosamunde* as a suitable contender to satisfy our curiosity for a fourth movement. Why this piece? There is no definitive evidence that it started life as the finale to this symphony, but nevertheless there are several features which give us good grounds to utilise it in this way: it is in the same key; it uses, unusually, the same orchestration as the first two movements (including trombones); it was written around the same time; it has a dramatic thrust which is reflective of the first movement. Regardless of its provenance, it is a brilliant movement; energetic, melodic, yearning for light over darkness and offers us, if we suspend our concerns for desecration, a satisfying end to the evening!

In a curious turn of fate, our next concert is entirely Finnish. After a stirring 'Finlandia', our superstar principal clarinettist Antonia Stoneman performs Crusell's Clarinet Concerto No. 2, before we take on Sibelius' glorious Third Symphony. Do join us again for this beautiful and rousing programme back here in St. James' Piccadilly on Friday April 12th.

Programme notes by Chris Hopkins



Chris Hopkins – Conductor

Conductor and pianist Chris Hopkins is enjoying a busy season working on a wide range of projects, with opera and symphony concerts alongside concertos, solo and chamber recitals. Following from the success of his ENO debut last season conducting Cal McCrystal's *Iolanthe*, this season he returns to conduct Simon McBurney's production of *Magic Flute* and again in 2019/20 at the London Coliseum, alongside work at Garsington Opera, other ENO productions and concerts at Cadogan Hall, St Martin-in-the-Fields, St. John's Smith Square and others. Previously he has worked with WNO, NI Opera, Holland Park Opera, Wide Open Opera, Opera Danube, OTC Ireland, and performed at venues including the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Wigmore Hall, in the US, Asia and extensively in Europe as well as live and recorded appearances on BBC 1, Radio 3 and Radio 4.

Chris is Music Director of Hampstead Garden Opera, with whom he conducted Cimarosa's *The Secret Marriage* last November to great critical acclaim. He also continues into an tenth season as Musical Director of Orchestra of the City with whom he has conducted a vast array of works from standard symphonic repertoire to world premiere commissions, with soloists including Guy Johnston, Min Kym, Mary Bevan, Ivana Gavric, Josef Spacek, Daniel Hope, Thomas Gould and Charlie Siem, this season continuing their residency at St James Piccadilly alongside appearances in Tribe International Art Festival and elsewhere. He continues to be in demand with a wide range of ensembles including at Presteigne Festival, London Mozart Orchestra, Royal Ballet Sinfonia, Blaze Ensemble and has had the pleasure of premiering works by composers including Colin Matthews, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, David Matthews, Thomas Hyde, Detlev Glanert, Gilad Hochman and the Pet Shop Boys.

Chris is currently a member of the permanent music staff at English National Opera and with this company and others has been assistant conductor to Mark Wigglesworth, David Parry, Sir Charles Mackerras, Ryan Wigglesworth, Trevor Pinnock, William Lacey, Jane Glover, Christian Curnyn and Dominic Wheeler on a wide range of productions.

As a pianist, Chris has played for audiences around the world, performing solo and chamber music in New York, Japan, Singapore, Europe and London as well working with orchestras in a range of concertos, from Bach to Mozart, Rachmaninoff, Beethoven (complete), Shostakovich and Gershwin; recently

he has performed Mozart 15, 16, 19, 22, 23 and 24, Brahms 1, Rachmaninoff 2 and Prokofiev 3.

Chris was honoured in 2013 to be made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

Rebecca Saunders – Leader



Rebecca began learning the violin at the age of four and won a specialist music scholarship to Wells Cathedral School three years later. She subsequently studied at the Junior Department at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where she was leader of the Junior Guildhall String Ensemble, winner of the Principal's Prize, and a finalist in the Lutine Prize competition. She also performed with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and the National Youth Chamber Orchestra.

Rebecca studied Economics at Cambridge University, where she led Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra and performed Wieniawski's Concerto No.1 with Cambridge University Symphony Orchestra. Following university, she joined Orchestra of the City as a founder member and co-Leader.

In 2006, Rebecca moved to New York to pursue an MBA at Columbia University and became Principal Second Violin in the Musica Bella Orchestra of New York, with whom she performed the Bruch Violin Concerto. She has been the leader of Orchestra of the City since returning to London in 2008. Rebecca works as a retail consultant and is a Trustee of Orchestras Live.



Janice Graham - Violin

Janice Graham is Leader of the English National Opera Orchestra and Leader/Artistic Director of English Sinfonia. She studied at the Purcell School, the Guildhall School with David Takeno and at the Juilliard with Glen Dicterow.

From 1996-2002 Janice was Leader of BBC National Orchestra of Wales and performed many concertos with them including the Nielson and Britten. From 1993-2000 she was Assistant Leader of the London Symphony Orchestra participating in its Barbican Chamber series with Bashmet and Previn. She has appeared as guest leader of most of the UK's symphony and opera orchestras.

Her recordings include Dohnanyi's *2nd violin concerto* (ASV) Holst solo violin works (Naxos) Walton *Sonata* and Delius *Sonatas 1 and 2* (EMI)

Janice was a Professor at the Royal College of Music from 1995 and became a professor at the Guildhall School in 2010.

Orchestra of the City

Orchestra of the City was founded in April 2003 by Benjamin Bayl and made its debut at St John's Smith Square in July of that year. In June 2010 Classical Music Magazine listed the Orchestra of the City as one of the top five non-professional orchestras in London. The Orchestra gives talented and enthusiastic voluntary musicians the opportunity to play in an orchestra of the highest standard with challenging repertoire, and is noted for its active and friendly social culture.

When Benjamin Bayl was appointed Assistant Conductor of the Budapest Festival Orchestra in September 2006, the orchestra worked with a number of guest conductors, including Nicholas Collon, Robert Tuohy, Dominic Grier and Sam Laughton. Chris Hopkins was then appointed as the new Music Director of Orchestra of the City, taking up the role in September 2008.

Performing up to 6 concerts per year at London venues including St. John's Smith Square, St John's Waterloo and its regular home, St James's Piccadilly, the orchestra thrives on a diverse range of challenging repertoire including Mahler's Symphony No.5, Walton Symphony No.1, Holst's The Planets, Shostakovich's Symphonies 5 & 10, Bartok's 2nd Violin Concerto, Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet, Beethoven's 7th Symphony and Haydn's The Creation.

Committed to the advocacy of contemporary classical music, in April 2014 the orchestra performed the world premiere of Nedudim ("wanderings") Fantasia-Concertante for mandolin and string orchestra by emerging Israeli composer Gilad Hochman, with mandolin-player Alon Sariel.

Over its formative decade, the orchestra has developed a policy of working with exciting young soloists at the outset of their careers, including Benjamin Grosvenor, Oliver Coates, Gweneth-Ann Jeffers and Charlie Siem, as well as established artists such as Piers Lane, Simon Preston, Guy Johnston and Craig Ogden.

In July 2013, Orchestra of the City celebrated its 10th Birthday at St James's, Piccadilly, with a thrilling programme including Bernstein's Overture from Candide and Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 3. The celebrations continued into their tenth season, which saw an exciting collaboration with Opera Danube - a semi-staged production of Lehar's The Merry Widow at St John's, Smith Square – and a succession of orchestral greats including Brahms's Symphony No. 2, Smetana's Ma Vlast and Strauss's Death and Transfiguration. Orchestra of the City is now 15 years old and still going strong.

We would like to thank the following for their continued support of Orchestra of the City:
Our helpers on the door and everyone at St. James's Piccadilly



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Orchestra of the City

First Violins

Rebecca Saunders
Matthew Pay
Pete Davies
Gretel Scott
Harriette Foster
Racem Triki
Eglantine Grego
Eve Rahmani
Patrick Brennan

Second Violins

Louise Quick
Tom Claydon
Catherine Gilfedder
Mary Gough
Alice Turrell
Ashleena Deike
Briony Turner
Sam Lambert
Daniel Murphy
Isobel Smith

Violas

Edward Shaw
Maeve Lynch
Emily Symmons
Johanna Thomas
Richard Skone-James
Melissa Danny

Cellos

Tom Parker
Andrew Skone James
Maddy Cundall
Lottie McVicker
Ellie Fletcher
Peter Woods
Larissa KoehlerLottie

Double Basses

Alex Verster

Flutes

Chris Gould
Deborah Fether

Oboes

Collin Beynon
Nancy Johnston

Clarinets

Antonia Stoneman
Rosemary Anthony

Bassoons

Peter Lyndley
Alex Platt

Horns

Matthew Sackman
Kevin Daly

Trumpets

Evan Champion
Anna Hughes

Trombones

Merin Rhyad
Gemma Riley
Andrew Ross

Timpani

Andrew Barnard

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UPCOMING CONCERTS

Friday 12th April 2019

Sibelius Finlandia

Crusell Clarinet Concerto

Soloist - Antonia Stoneman

Sibelius Symphony No. 3

Thursday 6th June 2019

Both at St James's Church Piccadilly