

Autumn Concert

From Tragedy to Triumph

Tchaikovsky: Symphony no 5
Mendelssohn: Ruy Blas Overture
Rachmaninoff: Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini
Soloist: Mario Mora

Kindly supported by Making Music's Philip & Dorothy Green Award for
Young Concert Artists Scheme

Saturday 30 November 2013
7.30pm

Programme
£1.00

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PROGRAMME

FELIX MENDELSSOHN
OVERTURE 'RUY BLAS'

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF
RHAPSODY ON A THEME OF PAGANINI

INTERVAL – 20 MINUTES
REFRESHMENTS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE REAR OF THE CHURCH

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY
SYMPHONY NO. 5



Formed in 2009, Harmony Sinfonia is a vibrant symphony orchestra based in Brockley, performing three concerts a year and promoting classical music to audiences within the borough of Lewisham and its neighbouring boroughs. Offering a performance platform for both local amateur players of a high standard and music students from local universities, the orchestra aims to work with local music services to provide performance opportunities to school pupils of an advanced standard, and launched its outreach programme in June 2010.

Our Patron is Cllr Darren Johnson, Green Party Councillor for Brockley Ward.

"The creativity and innovation of local residents is one of the real joys of living in Brockley. Nowhere is that more apparent than with Harmony Sinfonia, the Brockley-based community orchestra who continue to delight local residents and those from further afield with their wonderful music."



LINDSAY RYAN – MUSICAL DIRECTOR



Lindsay has a Bachelor of Music (French Horn) and a Bachelor of Teaching (Honours) gained from the University of Melbourne, Australia. She also has an Associate of Music, Australia performance diploma (Horn) from the Australian Music Examinations Board.

Lindsay has a passion for conducting that commenced prior to her arrival in London in 2006, including the completion of her Australian Choral Conductors Education and Training qualification in 2000 under the tutelage of Graham Abbott and Faye Dumont, and studies at the University of Melbourne in 2001 with Professor John Hopkins. More recently Lindsay has participated in workshops with Mark Elder, Mark Heron and Timothy Reynish, masterclasses with Lior Shambadal and Romolo Gessi, and international masterclasses in Vicenza (Italy) and Weiz (Austria).

Her experience in London has included the position of Associate Conductor of Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra alongside Adrian Brown, Musical Director of the London Classical Consort, and performing with the Bromley Symphony Orchestra, Orpington and Sevenoaks Orchestras, Lewisham Concert Band and established chamber groups as well as freelancing.

Lindsay's expertise includes the establishment of ensembles in various schools, enabling young people to experience creative music-making in choirs, bands, orchestras and world music ensembles. She has provided performance opportunities to young people in venues such as the Churchill Theatre, Fairfield Halls and the O2 Arena. Community outreach is a particular passion, and through successful funding from Making Music and the Mayor's Fund of Lewisham, Lindsay has initiated orchestral music workshops and performance opportunities for children at primary and secondary levels.

Lindsay's newest project is Harmony Tots, providing progressive music lessons for babies and pre-schoolers in Surrey.

MARIO MORA - PIANO



Originally from Spain, Mario Mora made his debut aged 15 as soloist with the Cuenca Youth Orchestra. Since then he has performed in his native country with the Madrid Youth Orchestra (JORCAM) and the Spanish National Youth Orchestra (JONDE) and performed extensively throughout the world, playing in prestigious halls such as Wigmore Hall, St.-Martin-in-the-Fields, the Steinway Hall in London, Palau de la Música in Valencia and Auditorium of Zaragoza, and participating in tours with AIE and “Juventudes Musicales” among others. He has also recorded extensively, and his performances have been recorded by Classic Radio of

RNE who dedicated various programmes to his performances and his career. He also collaborates with the music producer *Eurodelta Music*, making recordings for TV.

Mario completed his studies in the Conservatory of Music in Cuenca with Prof. José M. Martínez Toledo achieving, with the highest qualifications, the Extraordinary Piano Prize. He then studied at the RCSMM (Royal Conservatoire of Music of Madrid) with Dr. Elena Orobio, achieving the undergraduate degree in Piano and Piano Pedagogy with honours. He then came to the Royal Academy of Music in London, studying with Pascal Nemirovski and supported by Santander Universities UK. He was awarded a Master of Arts degree and graduated with the Diploma of the Royal Academy of Music (DipRAM) for an outstanding final recital, as well as the Examination Prize for the best overall final recital.

Mario has been the recipient of many prizes, including First Prize in the *Permanent Competition of Juventudes Musicales of Spain, Gerona (2012)*, First Prize in the *III International Piano Competition of Lagny, France (2011)*, First Prize in the *Infanta Cristina Piano Competition, Spain (2010)*.



Mario Mora is kindly supported by Making Music’s Philip and Dorothy Green Award for Young Concert Artists Scheme. Making Music is the UK’s leading organisation for voluntary music, with over 3,000 music groups in its membership. Its Philip and Dorothy Green Award for Young Concert Artists (AYCA) has helped to launch the careers of dozens of young musicians since its creation in 1961, including Steven Isserlis, Elizabeth Watts and Ian Bostridge. In 2002, the Philip and Dorothy Green Music Trust secured the

future of AYCA with the largest single donation Making Music has ever received. www.makingmusic.org.uk/ayca.

We would like to thank the following for kindly donating raffle prizes this evening:

Bohemia Hair • The Brockley Jack • Brockley Yoga • Dish and Spoon Café
Gently Elephant • The Orchard

FELIX MENDELSSOHN – OVERTURE 'RUY BLAS'

Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg in 1809 but was taken by his family to live in Berlin in 1811. He showed early musical talent, was sent to excellent teachers and gave his first public performance aged nine. The following year he entered the Singakademie in Berlin and began to compose. In his early twenties he travelled widely in Europe, including nine visits to England, which were of particular importance to the musical life of that country.

The *Overture: Ruy Blas* was written in 1839, the year after Victor Hugo's play of the same name had been produced. Mendelssohn apparently disliked the play and wrote his overture purely as incidental music with no dramatic connection. He would, in fact, have preferred to have given it the title of the pension fund for whose benefit it was written.

The *Overture* opens with dramatic chords followed by a flowing *allegro* theme. A violent transitional theme leads to a second subject, first played *staccato* and then repeated in a low-pitched *cantabile*. An energetic theme brings the overture to a brilliant triumphant end.

This programme note was supplied through Making Music's programme note service.

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF – RHAPSODY ON A THEME OF PAGANINI

Rachmaninoff's music for piano and orchestra spans his lifetime; the *First Concerto* appeared in 1891 when he was 17, and the *Paganini Rhapsody* in 1934 when he was over 60. The composer wore his heart on his sleeve in the concerti, especially the second; but after he had left Russia for ever in 1917 for the United States, his music became drier and less obviously emotional.

The *Rhapsody* is really a set of 24 variations on Paganini's A minor *Caprice* for solo violin, heard in full after the introduction. Rachmaninoff puts the tune, already the basis of music by Liszt, Schumann and Brahms, through its paces with immense ingenuity. In the 18th variation, the old heartthrob makes a welcome reappearance; not every listener may notice that he achieves the effect by 'inversion and augmentation of the theme in the major mode' – turning the tune upside down and playing it slowly in D flat. Three times the *Dies Irae* theme is heard, looming up menacingly in the seventh and tenth variations and casting a dark shadow on the sardonic ending.

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PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY – SYMPHONY NO. 5

- *Andante – Allegro con anima*
- *Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza – Moderato con anima*
- *Valse (allegro moderato)*
- *Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace*

In 1888, 10 years after composing his *Fourth Symphony*, Tchaikovsky felt himself able at last to return to the form of the symphony as a medium for his compositional gifts. The intervening period had

been one of much soul-searching and self-doubt. It is true that he had composed *Manfred* in 1885, but, although designated a symphony, it hardly counts as a true example of the genre, and posterity has not accepted it as such. However, *Manfred* may have helped to hasten his return to symphonic composition if only because he felt that he had something to prove. Just as he was starting work on the *Fifth Symphony*, Tchaikovsky, who had lost confidence in his own reputation and abilities, wrote to his benefactress Mme. Nadyezhda von Meck: "I am exceedingly anxious to prove to myself and to others that I am not played out as a composer".

Tchaikovsky worked on the symphony through the summer of 1888 in the congenial, wooded surroundings of his house at Maidanovo, between Moscow and the nearby town of Klin. He was just back from a strenuous but successful foreign tour of France and England and was tired. Aged just 48, he already had the physical appearance of a man in his 60s. Nevertheless, he threw himself into the symphony, completing the score with a sense of relief and renewed energy by the end of August. Tchaikovsky conducted the first two performances of the new symphony the following November. The public loved it, but the critics were less enthusiastic. Because of their reaction, Tchaikovsky again became beset by fears of failure and of having been misunderstood. In the end, as he told his nephew "Bob" Davydov, he came to like the piece, but in the meantime his confidence had taken another blow it did not need.

The *Fifth* is in fact the most unified and one of the most straightforward of all Tchaikovsky symphonies. But it also contains elements of intensity that look forward to the emotionally draining *Sixth Symphony*. It opens with a solemn and forbidding, theme, presented by the clarinets in low register and by bassoons. Tchaikovsky described this slow introduction as "complete resignation before Fate, or ... the inscrutable predestination of Providence". The material presented in this introduction – the Fate motif – is the unifying factor in the E minor symphony: it crops up in several guises throughout the piece. The *allegro con anima* that follows contains four distinctive themes. The first starts out as a kind of *danse macabre*, jig-like in rhythm but with a boiling intensity. The second, in B minor, is full of Tchaikovskyan pessimism. The harmonies blossom outwards from a unison F sharp into a yearning melody. The third theme, prefaced by a playful *pizzicato* arpeggio, is a rustic "call and response" passage for woodwinds and strings that forms a natural link into the fourth theme, a luscious, passionate melody, sunny in mood, but the feeling is surely that of a wistful memory. The four themes just described undergo extended development, and after the recapitulation there is a long coda based on the first theme. The first movement descends into the bass section of the orchestra as the strains of the *danse macabre* die away.

The slow movement opens with a series of chords in the low strings. Then comes one of Tchaikovsky's most familiar tunes, a love-song like theme in D major given to the principal horn. A second melody, a theme of airy lightness, is presented by the oboe in F sharp and echoed by the horn. After a link passage, lower strings take up the horn's first theme, and the music builds in intensity before subsiding again. The violins pick up the slow movement's first theme, and then the haunting sound of clarinet and bassoon present a third theme upon which the strings begin to build. Emotional intensity rises to a climax, to be interrupted by a brass passage based on the Fate motif from the first movement. This passage ends with a *pizzicato* figure that generates the accompaniment for a return of the original horn theme, heard this time in the violins. Once more the emotion builds to an exultant mood with the recapitulation of the slow movement's second theme. Again the brass crash in with their statement of the Fate motif. The movement subsides with a final reference to the horn theme and at last falls silent.

In place of a scherzo, Tchaikovsky presents us with one of his most beautiful waltzes, lyrical and lilting. The tune, in A major and marked *con grazia*, is launched immediately by the first violins, then is passed around the orchestra and developed. The trio section, in F minor, ensues, more texture than melody, for it is made up of a delicate tracery of semiquavers. The first waltz theme returns, but the movement closes with a reminder of the Fate motif. But if we think this reference is an ominous one, Tchaikovsky has a surprise for us.

For the finale of the *Fifth Symphony* opens with a majestic statement of the Fate motif in E major announced by the lower strings, an amazing transformation. The Fate theme is fully developed in this metamorphosis into something transcendent. Out of its final cadence emerges a brisk, bold and very Russian dance, the music of which presents four main melodic ideas, each distinctive and highly idiomatic. In the course of the movement, which is thoroughly nationalistic in character and contains much contrapuntal interest and some interesting tempo changes, the Fate motif makes two returns, the first time being presented by brass supported by a swirling string accompaniment, the second – after a pause following the recapitulation – in the form of a triumphant march heard in brass and wind over tripletized string figures. In a final fast and furious passage, a reminder of the start of the Russian dance closes the work on a real "high".

This programme note was written by William Gould and supplied through Making Music's programme note service.

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The orchestra

1ST VIOLINS

Paul Weymont (leader)
Aimee Baker
Sarah Lebrecht
Des Moorhouse
Benjamin Hebbert
Rosalind Hedley-Miller

2ND VIOLINS

Theresa Freeburn
Hannah Bromley
Kevin Cody
Edward Ellis
Jo Lappin
John Moorhouse

VIOLAS

Marijke Welch
Nim DiRicci
Andrea Wardrop
Philippa Kent
Richard Longman
Kathy Reed

CELLOS

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Christine Berry
Paul Harvey
Gillian Wood
Nicola Jackson
Angie Laycock

DOUBLE BASS

Martin Jones
Sam Wise

FLUTES & PICCOLOS

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Pippa Fotheringham
Emma Penketh

OBOES & COR ANGLAIS

Isobel Williams
Helen Raggatt
Richard Whitehouse

CLARINETS

Alex Fleming
Kate Quarry

BASSOONS

Eloise Carpenter
Diane Da'Costa

HORNS

Jon Cooley
Daniel Heanes
Julia MacDonnell
Kjarten Olafsson
Andy Robinson

TRUMPETS & CORNETS

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Ella Vickers

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TIMPANI

David Coronel

PERCUSSION

Catherine Herriott
John Holland
Adam Payn

HARP

Fontane Liang

Join us

We are currently recruiting in all brass and string sections. Please contact us on

harmonysinfonia@gmail.com if you would like to join!

We have a waiting list for all wind sections.