

Programme

Academic Festival Overture

Johannes Brahms

Trombone Concerto in E-flat

Ferdinand David

Soloist: Nicolas Kent

~ Interval ~

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

About tonight's music

Academic Festival Overture Op. 80 – Johannes Brahms

For the **Academic Festival Overture** the programme is derived from its Genesis, which originated from the occasion of Brahms being awarded with an honorary doctorate from the Universität Breslau (today known as the University of Wrocław in Poland) on 11th March 1879. Only seven days after this event, Brahms's friend Bernhard Scholz, who was also the Musical Director in Breslau, encouraged the composer to thank the University with a "Doctoral-Symphony". But it wasn't until August of the next year that Brahms replied: "In order to spare you any further embarrassment at the hands of your Guest, I have written an *Academic Festival Overture*."

Four "Studentenlieder" (or student songs) shape the thematic material in this Sonata-form Overture. However, Brahms doesn't merely quote these melodies, he exposes and functionalises each song individually. A definite change of structure and unusual instrumentation marks the first of the songs to be quoted: *Wir hatten gebauet ein stattliches Haus*. It is first introduced by three trumpets near the end of the introduction and almost seems to anticipate Mahler's orchestration of folk music. Interestingly, Mahler in fact uses the same melody as his main subject for the first movement of his third symphony. The muted sentimentality of this phrase tempts one to interpret it as a nostalgic memory of the bygone happy youth. Brahms rewrites this melody so strikingly that it almost seems to be the opening melody of the actual C major Sonata form, especially as the rest of the introduction, in C minor, has been relatively insubstantial in terms of melodic material so far. Instead by steadily increasing in strength and

volume, it acts as a bridge between the introduction and the main exposition.

The second of the student songs to be quoted, *Alles schweige*, is heavily altered and transformed from a closed song form into an expansive secondary theme initially performed by the second Violins. For this reason Brahms only quotes the refrain of the song: "*Hört, ich sing das Lied der Lieder!*" and alters its structure so as to counteract the natural close the song's melody would normally take.

After this act of musical mimicry the next quoted song, *Was kommt dort von der Höh*, also known as the *Fuchslied* (Fox Song), is allowed to step out of the structural formality of the exposition. This mocking Burlesque, first stated in full by the Bassoons, also acts as a transition into the development which erupts almost unexpectedly after a final shortened rendition of the song played by the full of the orchestra.

The fourth and final song to be used is arguably the most famous one. After a brief recapitulation of the *Fuchslied*, *Gaudeamus Igitur* makes a triumphant and stirring entry. Played by the winds and brass and accompanied by Brahms's heaviest use of percussion, it is underscored with a lively descant in the strings, which provides added majesty to the occasion. The way in which Brahms orchestrated this final theme is akin to that of Wagner's, in such works as *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Given the historic feud between the two composers and their followers, it is possible to assume that Brahms sought to parody Wagner's compositional style with this over-the-top finale to an otherwise modest composition.

Written by Leon Reimer

Trombone Concerto in E-flat – Ferdinand David

Ferdinand David's Trombone Concertino is probably the most played and well known trombone concerto ever written. David wasn't a trombonist himself, but in fact concert master of the Gewandhaus, Leipzig. More surprisingly, the Concertino wasn't actually written for a full time trombonist of the orchestra but instead for principal violist, Carl Traugott Queisser. As a *Stadt-pfeifer* (a town musician) Queisser received his first musical training at the age of 11. As an apprentice, he wished to learn all instruments of the orchestra but concentrated primarily on trombone and violin. As a solo trombonist, he made his debut performance with the Gewandhaus orchestra in 1820.

The conductor of the Gewandhaus at the time was Felix Mendelssohn who enjoyed playing string quartets with Queisser. He had promised to write Queisser a concerto for trombone. However, years went by and essentially Mendelssohn passed the responsibility of writing a

trombone concerto onto David.

Sticking to true classical form, the concertino consists of 3 movements. The upbeat first movement features a cadenza, which leads straight into a slower second movement. This then segues straight into the third movement; the theme of which is the same as the first. It's worth bearing in mind that after the US premier in 1923, the orchestral parts were lost. As a result, the orchestral parts, which can be heard this evening, are relatively modern. It was virtuoso trombonist, Christian Lindberg who took the piano reduction and re-orchestrated it for symphony orchestra.

Written by Nicolas Kent

Symphony No.5 in E Minor Op.64 - Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

It should come as no surprise that Tchaikovsky approached his **Symphony No. 5** from a position of extreme self-doubt, since that was nearly always his posture vis-à-vis his incident creations. In May 1888 he confessed in a letter to his brother Modest that he feared his imagination had dried up, that he had nothing more to express in music. Still, there was a glimmer of optimism: "I am hoping to collect, little by little, material for a symphony," he wrote.

Tchaikovsky spent the summer of 1888 at a vacation home he had built on a forested hillside at Frolovskoe, not far from his home base in Moscow. The idyllic locale apparently played a major role in his managing to complete this symphony in the short span of four months. Tchaikovsky made a habit of keeping his principal patron, Nadezhda von Meck, informed about his compositions through detailed letters, and correspondence with his eccentric benefactor, who based her philanthropy on the stipulation that they should avoid any personal contact whatsoever. The letters offer a good deal of information about how the Fifth Symphony progressed during that summer. Tchaikovsky's work on the symphony was already well along when he broached the subject with von Meck on June 22:

"I shall work my hardest. I am exceedingly anxious to prove to myself, as to others, that I am not played out as a composer. Have I told you that I intend to write a symphony? The beginning was difficult, but now inspiration seems to have come. We shall see..."

His correspondence on the subject brims with allusions to the emotional background to this piece, which involved resignation to fate, the designs of providence, murmurs of doubt, and similarly dark thoughts. Critics blasted the symphony at its premiere, due in part to the composer's limited skill on the podium; and yet the audience was enthusiastic.

The Fifth Symphony's four movements are unified through common reference to a "motto theme," which is announced by sombre clarinets at the piece's outset. This would seem to represent the idea of Fate to which Tchaikovsky referred in his early writings about the piece. The theme reappears often in this symphony, sometimes reworked considerably. It causes a brutal interruption in the middle of the slow movement (a languid elegy spotlighting the solo horn); it appears in a subdued statement by clarinets and bassoons near the end of the graceful third movement; and in the finale this "Fate" motif is transposed from the minor mode into the major in a gesture that sounds at least temporarily triumphant.

Written by Leon Reimer

Tonight's Soloist: Nicolas Kent



Nicolas Kent started learning trombone at primary school under Pam Harris and then later with Graham Harris. He is currently a 4th year trombonist studying at the Royal College of Music, London, studying under Byron Fulcher, Lindsay Shilling and Amos Miller.

Prior to studying at RCM he was a junior at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where he won the 2012 Concerto competition.

In his first year at RCM, he formed the Prince Consort Trombone Quartet which won the RCM Chamber Brass Ensemble Music Prize in 2015. A feat which was repeated a year later. He has performed as a soloist at the Musiikkitalo, Helsinki, St Mary Abbots, Kensington, and as part of the RCM Rush hour recital series. He has performed in masterclasses to Christian Lindberg, Ian Bousfield, Ricardo Casero, Mike Buchanan and Denis Wick. In 2015, he was awarded a scholarship to study sackbut at the Dartington International Summer School. Most recently, he has been awarded a place on the English National Opera's Evolve scheme which allows young, aspiring professionals to sit alongside working professionals of the ENO. Nicolas is looking forward to pursuing his masters at the RCM with a scholarship in September.

Conductor: Leon Reimer



After graduating from the University of Glasgow with a degree in Music in 2013, **Leon Reimer** went on to study orchestral conducting under the guidance of Professors Alasdair Mitchell and Garry Walker at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. During his time at the Conservatoire Leon was able to benefit from frequent masterclasses lead by, amongst others, Sian Edwards, Martyn Brabbins, Christopher Seaman and Jean Claude Picard. Since graduating from the Royal Conservatoire in 2015, Leon has engaged himself heavily within the youth and community music scene in Scotland.

Professional engagements include working for the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Highland Regional Youth Orchestra, the National Youth Choir of Scotland, Cumbria Youth Orchestra and Scottish Opera Connect Company.

Having been brought up as a singer, Leon also enjoys frequent choral conducting opportunities, most notably as the Associate Conductor of the University of Glasgow Chapel Choir and Glasgow Chamber Choir. In 2017, Leon made his debut with the University of Glasgow Choral Society and invited back to lead a performance of Brahms's German Requiem in 2018. Leon has lead groups of singers at several major festivals, including the Edinburgh International Festival, the Celtic Connections Festival as well as Glasgow's West End Festival. Eager to embrace the challenges and rewards of working with groups of all backgrounds and experiences, Leon has been heavily involved in the community scene across Scotland and the UK. Notable engagements include the City of Carlisle Orchestra, the Saint James Orchestra, the Perth Community Orchestra, the Lomond and Clyde Community Orchestra, Edinburgh Grand Opera and the Lanark and Carluke Choral Union.

Thank You from Chrysalis



The proceeds from the refreshments at tonight's event will go to Chrysalis, a local independent charity helping to enrich and support the lives of individuals with disabilities.

The players - City of Carlisle Orchestra

1st Violin

Robert Charlesworth
Joan Masters
Sarah Wilson
Rachael Cosslett
Henry Pyne
Lorna Strong
Graham Barke

2nd Violin

Katharine Bowness
Isobel Fenton
Catherine Swarbrick
Ruben Burt
Hilary Lawrence
Philippa Hall
Alice Reid
Benjamin Budzynski

Cello

Kenneth Wilson
Linda Forsyth
Mary Lawler
Lee Willis
Steven Thompson
Lawrence Smith
Roger Cooke

Viola

Peter Wood
Hannah Borlaise

Double Bass

Ben imThurn
Emma Gray

Oboe

Glenys Braithwaite
Jennifer Slee

Clarinets

Jane Bell
Rebecca Raven
Lucy Irving

Flute/Piccolo

Lyn Young
Terry Mullett
Samantha Willis

Bassoon

Andrew Smith
Ann Bishop

Trombone

Graham Harris
Giles Wilson
Ruth Wood
Cliff Atwood

Horn

David Logie
Julie Ratcliffe
Justin Borlaise
Pam Harris

Percussion

Sue Roe
Jamie Hoyle
David Birkett

Trumpet

Emma James
Gordon Kydd

Tuba

Jacob Gallagher

Timpani

Toby Cass
David Birkett

Special thanks to Steven Thompson for organising logistics and transport for this seasons concerts

Border Offset Advert

Other classical concerts coming up soon

3 July City of Carlisle Orchestra – St.John’s Church Ambleside Rd, Keswick
Repeat programme of July 30th Concert

14 July Cumbria Festival Chorus and orchestra - Kendal Parish Church
Parry, Brahms

21 July Wordsworth Singers

Please see www.wordsworthsingers.org.uk for further details

27 Sept Carlisle Music Society -St Cuthbert’s Church, Carlisle
Clair de Lune Duo (violin, piano)

25 Oct Carlisle Music Society - St Cuthbert’s Church, Carlisle
James Willshire (piano)

15 Nov Carlisle Music Society St Cuthbert’s Church, Carlisle
Trio Martinu (piano, ‘cello, violin)

1 Dec City of Carlisle Orchestra - St Johns Church, London Rd, Carlisle
Programme to be confirmed

15 Dec Wigton Choral Society - St. Mary’s Church, Wigton
Saint Saens, Oratorio de Noel (check web for date)

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