

The forty-first concert in the Enterprising series

Guildford
Philharmonic
Orchestra

Guildford Borough Council Concerts 1975-76

Page Review

GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Director of Music/Conductor: Vernon Handley

First Violins

Leader:

John Ludlow
Diane Booth
Patricia Cassidy
Bradley Creswick
Vito Gambazza
Marilyn Germaines
Beatrice Harper
Robert Lewcock
Kathleen Malet
Paul Manley
Robert St. John Wright
Julie Taylor
Nina Whitehouse

Second Violins

Nicholas Maxted Jones
Rosemary Roberts
Marie Louise Amberg
Constance Ames
Ruth Dawson
Cynthia Dunn
David Greed
Eileen Malone
Graham Pyatt
Michael Spencer
Yvonne Wooldridge

Violas

John Meek
Stephen Gorringe
Robin Grice
Rosemary Sanderson
Robert Duncan
Leonard Lock
Nigel Bielby
Juliet Walters

Cellos

Eldon Fox
Jack Holmes

John Stilwell
Pauline Sadgrove
Christina Macrae
Claire Deniz
Gwen Cassidy

Basses

Keith Marjoram
Sally Rowe
Douglas Lees
Anthony Moore
Charles Cudmore

Flutes

Henry Messent
Jane Parry

Piccolo

Christopher Nicholls

Clarinets

Pauline Drain
Philip Todd

E flat clarinet

Paul Harvey

Bass Clarinet

Andrew McCulloch

Oboes

Sara Barrington
Moyra Tomey

Cor Anglais

Deirdre Lind

Bassoons

Nicholas Hunka
David Nissen

Contra Bassoon

Nicholas Reader

Horns

Peter Clack
Dennis Scard
Charles Bloomfield
George Woodcock
Anthony Gray

Trumpets

Michael Hinton
Ted Hobart
Nick Bomford

Trombones

David Purser
Leon Taylor

Bass Trombone

Martin Nicholls

Tuba

John Elliott

Timpani

Roger Blair

Percussion

John Jeffery
Peter Chrippes
David Johnson
Jack Lees

Harp

Fiona Hibbert
Miriam Keogh

Pianoforte

John Forster

Concerts Manager

Kathleen Atkins

The audience may be interested to know that the violin sections are listed in alphabetical order after the first desk, because a rotation of desks is adopted in this orchestra, so that all players have the opportunity of playing in all positions in the section.

Philharmonic Choir

The Philharmonic Choir is the larger of the two choirs under the conductorship of the Music Director, who acknowledges with thanks the help he has received in training the choir from Mr. Kenneth Lank, and accompanists Mary Rivers, Patricia Finch and Prudence Smith. In 1973 the choir made its first recording with the orchestra: 'Intimations of Immortality' by Gerald Finzi.

PROGRAMME

Symphony in Three Movements (1945) **Igor Stravinsky 1882-1971**

Crotchet = 160

Andante

Con moto

Throughout an active career of nearly 60 years, Igor Stravinsky sprang a surprise with almost every new work. He composed in a wider variety of forms and styles than any other composer of this century, and each reflected some fresh and often unsuspected facet of his creative imagination. Early in 1946 the 'Symphony in Three Movements', commissioned by the New York Philharmonic Society and completed the previous year, was given its first performance. Its full-blooded symphonic character seemed in striking contrast to the sparse textures typical of Stravinsky's music in the preceding years. For all its eloquence, however, and its reminiscences of his earliest, pre-1914 music, the orchestra is almost Mozartian in its ensemble (with piano and harp added), and the conception of the Symphony is essentially a classical one in an up-to-date guise.

Like many of his contemporaries, Stravinsky had shown little enthusiasm for expressing his ideas in terms of the conventional symphony. His earliest orchestral work was a Symphony in E-flat, written in 1905-7 while studying with Rimsky-Korsakov, but thereafter he avoided writing another until the 'Symphony in C' appeared in 1940. This was an adaptation of the earlier classical idiom of his Piano Sonata (1924) to an orchestra used in almost

chamber-music fashion. The 'Symphony in Three Movements', five years later, was an extension of this conception. It partly grew from the composer's declared admiration for the Second, Fourth and Eighth Symphonies of Beethoven, and is infused with the dynamic rhythmic energy that has been a dominant factor throughout Stravinsky's music. In a programme-note written for its first performance, the composer emphasised that it should not be regarded as having any kind of 'programme', but went further than was his wont by admitting that there might be found in it traces of impressions affected by 'this our arduous time of sharp and shifting events, of despair and hope, of continual torments and at last, cessation and relief'.

The musical material of the Symphony had part of its origin in some ideas first sketched in 1942 and intended to form part of a piano concerto, which explains the significant presence of the piano (and its cousin the harp) in the work as finally completed. The piano has several important passages as a concertante element in the first movement, the harp comes into prominence in the second and, in the finale, both are used together. The Symphony has a tonal basis which is subject to constant harmonic tension between major and minor—a prominent feature in much of Stravinsky's music before his later use of serial technique.

A conflict of opposing tonalities runs through the Symphony, the first movement stressing D-flat at the start but ending in a decided C major, and the finale reversing the process. The central Andante holds a symmetrical balance by being in D major with a constant pull towards D minor—a result of the simple germinal idea from which the entire work grows. This fundamental feature is simply a conflict of major and minor chords on the same root. If you imagine the plain chord of C-E flat-C played ascending on the piano, and its inversion of G-E natural-G played descending, you have the nature of the organic germ of the Symphony. It provides the harmonic, tonal and melodic core of the music, the source of its character and the feature which gives underlying unity to the musical development.

The first movement follows the general outline of the sonata principle, in which

contrasting themes are first stated and then developed before being re-presented and followed by a coda. Stravinsky gives no direction for tempo, but simply a metronome marking—an indication that the musical effect is very much dependent on firmness of rhythm. There is, for instance, a famous passage near the start where a succession of 60 staccato chords falling on irregular beats are gauged to a hair's breadth in their cumulative impact. The elegiac slow movement had its origin in film music: it was first composed as a suggested accompaniment for the Apparition of the Virgin scene in the film of Franz Werfel's 'Song of Bernadette', but the project fell through so far as Stravinsky's contribution was concerned. The movement is in three sections, the third being a repeat of the first, and each section separated by a passage for harp, heard against the upper strings the first time and woodwind the second. An interlude of seven bars links the Andante to the final Con moto—energetically as powerful as the first movement and more vivid in harmonic contrasts, its themes continuously developed to the vigorously assertive ending.

So far as Stravinsky was concerned, the Symphony had no successors in the same style. It was the end of a phase in the composer's creative progress, and a summing-up of experience before he passed to a new sphere of musical exploration, but it remains a major testimony to his achievement. © Noël Goodwin

INTERVAL

Refreshments will be served in the Surrey Room by members of the Philharmonic Society during the interval.

A Sea Symphony

Ralph Vaughan Williams 1872-1958

With the production his cantata *Toward the Unknown Region* at the Leeds Festival in 1907, Vaughan Williams, hitherto known chiefly as a song writer, drew attention to himself as one of whom great things might be expected. Three years later, at the same Festival, he introduced his first symphony, *A Sea Symphony*, which made an even stronger impression and established him as a figure of real significance in English music.

As in the earlier work, Vaughan Williams went for his text to the American poet Walt Whitman, choosing sections of the poem 'Sea Drift', from *Leaves of Grass*, for his first three movements and parts of 'Passage to India' for his finale. (It was the first of the 11 poems which make up 'Sea Drift' that Delius set.)

The voices—soloists and chorus—play the leading part throughout; there is no purely orchestral movement. The symphony is memorable for its wealth of broad, noble melodies, the feature above all which makes a hearing such an uplifting inspiring experience.

1. A SONG OF ALL SEAS, ALL SHIPS

Baritone, Soprano, Chorus

Behold, the sea itself,
And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships;
See, where their white sails, bellying in the
wind, speckle the green and blue,
See, the steamers coming and going, steaming
in or out of port
See, dusky and undulating, the long pennants
of smoke.
Behold, the sea itself,
And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships.

(Baritone)

Today a rude brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special
flag or ship-signal,
Of unnamed heroes in the ships—of waves
spreading and spreading far as the eye can
reach,
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and
blowing,
And out of these a chant for the sailors of all
nations,
Fitful like a surge.
Of sea-captains young and old, and the mates,
and of all intrepid sailors,
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate
can never surprise nor death dismay,
Picked sparingly, without noise by thee, old
ocean, chosen by thee,
Thou sea that pickets and cullest the race in
time, and unitest nations,
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying
thee,
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

(Soprano)

Flaunt out, O sea, your separate flags of
nations!
Flaunt out visible as ever the various flags and
ship-signals!
But do you reserve especially for yourself and
for the soul of man one flag above all the
rest,
A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem
of man elate above death,
Token of all brave captains and of all intrepid
sailors and mates,
And to all that went down doing their duty,

Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid
captains young and old.

(*Baritone*)

A pennant universal, subtly waving all time,
o'er all brave sailors,
All sea, all ships.

2. ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT ALONE

Baritone, Chorus

On the beach at night alone,
As the old mother sways her to and fro singing
her husky song,
As I watch the bright stars shining, I think a
thought of the clef of the universe and of
the future.
A vast similitude interlocks all,
All distances of space however wide,
All distances of time,
All souls, all living bodies though they be ever
so different,
All nations, all identities that have existed or
may exist,
All lives and deaths, all of the past, present,
future,
This vast similitude spans them, and always has
spanned,
And shall forever span them and shall
completely hold and enclose them.

3. (SCHERZO) THE WAVES

Chorus

After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,
After the white-gray sails taut to their whistling
spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad, myriad waves hastening,
lifting up their necks
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of
the ship,
Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling,
blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven,
emulous waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and
buoyant with curves,
Where the great vessel sailing and tacking
displaced the surface,
Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the
ocean yearnfully flowing,
The wake of the sea-ship after she passes,
flashing and frolicsome under the sun,
A motley procession with many a fleck of foam
and many fragments,
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the
wake following.

4. THE EXPLORERS

Baritone, Soprano, Chorus

O vast Rondure, swimming in space,
Covered all over with visible power and beauty,
Alternate light and day and the teeming
spiritual darkness,
Unspeaking high processions of sun and moon
and countless stars above,
Below, the manifold grass and waters,
With inscrutable purpose, some hidden
prophetic intention,
Now first it seems my thought begins to span
thee.

Down from the gardens of Asia descending,
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad
progeny after them,
Wandering, yearning, with restless explorations,
questioning, baffled, formless, feverish,
with never-happy hearts that sad
incessant refrain,—
'Wherefore unsatisfied soul? Whither O
mocking life?'

Ah who shall soothe these feverish children?
Who justify these restless explorations?
Who speak the secret of impassive earth?

Yet soul be sure the first intent remains, and
shall be carried out,
Perhaps even now the time has arrived.
After the seas are all crossed,
After the great captains and engineers have
accomplished their work,
After the noble inventors,
Finally shall come the poet worthy that name,
The true son of God shall come singing his
songs.

O we can wait no longer,
We too take ship O Soul,
Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas,
Fearless for unknown shores on waves of
ecstasy to sail,
Amid the wafting winds (thou pressing me to
thee, I thee to me, O Soul),
Caroling free, singing our song of God,
Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

O Soul thou pleasest me, I thee,
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or walking in
the night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space
and Death, like waters flowing,
Bear me indeed as through the regions infinite,
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave
me all over,
Bathe me, O God, in thee, mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universes,
thou centre of them.
Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space
and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee O Soul, thou
actual me,
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.
Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding O Soul thou journeyest forth;

Away O Soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
Cut the hawsers—haul out—shake out every
sail!
Reckless O Soul, exploring, I with thee, and
thou with me,
For we are bound where mariner has not yet
dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.
O my brave Soul!
A farther, farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas
of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail!

Walt Whitman

SATURDAY 16 MAY at 7.30 p.m.

University of Surrey Chamber Orchestra

Overture 'William Tell'—Rossini

**Essay for Clarinet and Orchestra—
Sebastian Forbes**

Piano Concerto in A minor—Schumann

Symphony No. 5—Sibelius

John Denman—Clarinet

David Angus—Pianoforte

**Robert Hughes }
Sebastian Forbes }**

Conductors

Tickets **80p** (Students and OAPs **45p**)
obtainable at A & N Guildford,
University of Surrey Music Dept. and at
the door on the night.

**Guildford Borough Council would like to
express its thanks to the Red Cross organisation
and the Guildford Philharmonic Society for
their services at all the concerts throughout the
season.**
