



EDINBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
60th Anniversary Series of Concerts
Conductor: Gerard Doherty
Leader: Sheena Jardine

Winter Concert

Saturday 3rd December 2022
7.30pm Greyfriars Kirk

Programme Notes

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Edinburgh Symphony Orchestra



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Forthcoming Concert – date for your diary

Saturday 4th March 2023, 7.30pm, Greyfriars Kirk

Conductor: Gerard Doherty

Canteloube – Songs of the Auvergne (Soprano – Irene
Drummond)

Ravel – Rhapsody Espagnole

Saint-Saëns – Piano Concerto No. 2 (Solo piano – Liana Storey)

Debussy - Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune

ESOteric Concert Fanfare - Fairbairn

Kindertotenlieder - Mahler

INTERVAL

Symphony No. 5 in C# Minor - Mahler

ESOteric Concert Fanfare – Euan Fairbairn

When the opportunity to write an orchestral fanfare appeared, it posed a conundrum: fanfares are usually written for brass and percussion, so how to include woodwind and strings? My eventual solution was to devise a *motif* and use it in various ways to give all the players a shot at it. The result was a three-note *motif* derived from the letters ESO, and the piece opens with a fanfare for three trumpets, starting with these three notes. This leads to a gentle section for the strings, followed by a *chorale*, mainly using brass instruments. An *interlude* culminates in a restatement of the *motif* on a solo trumpet, answered somewhat sardonically by a trombone. This leads to the jolliest section of the fanfare, a slightly cheeky *polka*, after which solos for less common instruments lead to a *cadenza*. This section is in memory of the late Ruth Logie, cellist in ESO for many years, and is a quote from one of the most famous cello concertos ever written. An *elegy* on orchestral bells then leads to a reprise of the opening fanfare and an energetic *coda* to end the piece, using the three-note *motif* to the end.

My heartfelt thanks to ESO, an orchestra that I have enjoyed playing in and writing music for during the last thirty-odd years, and to all the players for their support and encouragement over that period.

Euan Fairbairn

Die Kindertotenlieder – Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

- 1 **'Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n'** D minor
(Now the sun wants to rise as brightly)
2. **'Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen'** (C Minor)
(Now I see why, with such dark flames)
3. **Wenn dein Mütterlein** (C minor)
(When your Mother)
4. **'Off Denk' ich, sie sind nut ausgegangen'** (E-flat major)
(I often think they have just stepped out)
- 5 **'In diesem Wetter'** (D minor – D Major)
(In this weather)

The poet Rückert (1788-1866) was an early Oriental scholar, whose poems inspired many composers, such as Schubert and Schumann to set them to music. In the year 1833 two of his daughters died of scarlet fever and this inspired Rückert to write over 400 poems expressing his grief at his loss, these poems were published posthumously. Mahler selected five of them to form a cycle. Alma was appalled and claims that he was tempting fate, which given that one of his daughters later died of scarlet fever, could be said to be true.

The orchestral setting is quite unusual being for a chamber orchestra, but includes some exotic percussion instruments, such as the glockenspiel and the celeste. Apart from the last song the orchestral setting is sparse usually consisting of a few instruments. It was composed at about the same time as the Fifth symphony, during the years 1901 -1904. The first performance took place in the Vienna Court Opera on 29 January 1905 sung by the baritone Friedrich Weldermann with members of the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Mahler.

In the first song in D minor, a single oboe in duet with a solo horn introduces a mournful counterpoint. The father laments the fact that despite his loss, the sun still rises as if nothing had happened. The glockenspiel is heard, reminiscent of the children playing. He consoles himself with the fact that the sun is there for everyone and he must not let his grief overwhelm him. The key changes to D major as he welcomes the sun.

The second song is set in C minor, the protagonist remembers the intense look in his child's eyes. He now understands that his child was trying to tell him that she would not be with him much longer and that her eyes will become stars in the heavens. The instrumentation of strings and a harp is reminiscent of the adagietto of the Fifth symphony.

In the third song again in C minor the father hears the approaching footsteps of the grieving mother and looks to see if the child is there who always used to follow her mother. The candle the mother holds reminds the father that the child's light was all too soon extinguished. The aimless footsteps of the mother are represented by a walking bass line played by pizzicato cellos.

The fourth song starts with the father optimistically telling himself that the children have only gone out for a walk in the hills and will be back soon. The music begins in the key of E flat major the melody being presented by the violins and horns, accompanied by syncopation in the cellos. He realises later, that they have gone to the hills from which no one returns, ahead of their parents who will meet them there, and the song ends in the key of E minor.

The last song was written on the day of the funeral, where the weather is stormy. The full orchestra is used to generate a turbulent atmosphere. The father says he would not have allowed his children to go out in such bad weather. But what does it matter now, they are finally at rest in their mother's house protected by

the hand of God. The music ends in a peaceful mood in the key of D major and Mahler would quote this in his Ninth symphony. The use of the key of D major provides a close link between this cycle and the Fifth symphony.

The German text along with a paraphrase of the English translation by Wikipedia is inserted as a separate sheet.

Symphony No 5 in C# minor – Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

1 **Trauermarsch: Wie ein Kondukt** ("Death March: Like a Funeral Procession")

2 **Sturmisch bewegt. Mit größter Vehemenz** ("Turbulently Rough with Greatest Vehemence")

3 **Scherzo.**

4 **Adagietto.**

5 **Rondo Finale.**

Mahler composed his Fifth symphony during the years 1901 and 1902. After the concert season finished he would retire to the country in the summer months to concentrate on composition. He had a small cabin in the woods of Maiernigg where he would compose. It is likely that he composed the first two movements in the summer of 1901 and the last three in the summer of 1902. In between the summer of 1901 and 1902, he met and married Alma Schindler and this influenced the famous Adagietto. The symphony is divided into three parts, the first part comprising the first two movements. The second consisting of the third movement, with the final two movements forming the third part.

The work is composed for a large orchestra and received its first performance in Cologne on the 18th of October 1904 by the Cologne Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Mahler where it had a mixed reception. The symphony represents a transition from darkness to light and makes use of many contrapuntal techniques

and the use of chorales, reflecting Mahler's intensive study of Bach during this period.

Harmonically the symphony is unusual: whereas in a large number of symphonies, the first movement establishes the key of the piece which after a few changes returns to the original key in the last movement, in this symphony, the first movement is in C# minor, and it ends in D major, which is the tonal centre of the piece, first established at the end of the second movement.

The first movement takes the form of a funeral march interspersed with two episodes **ABA'CA"**. Its structure is influenced by the second movement of Beethoven's Eroica symphony. The movement begins in the key of C# minor with a solo fanfare by the trumpet, which has the same rhythm as the opening motif of Beethoven's fifth symphony. After a climax, the funeral march is ushered in by the violins and soon taken up by the whole orchestra. An elegiac section follows, then the fanfares return and the march is heard again ending with a chromatic descending scale closing the first section of the movement. The first episode is in the key of B flat minor and is described as passionate and wild, it is as if the personal grief of the mourners has broken through the formality of the initial march. Suddenly the fanfares return and a condensed version of the first section is repeated with modifications. The second episode is in the key of A minor and introduces a new 'sighing' motif. A major climax is reached, after which the fanfares return, then just as in the Eroica symphony, the music disintegrates, a loud pizzicato chord ending the movement.

The second movement continues the tempestuous mood of the first episode of the previous movement. It is in broad sonata form starting in A minor. In the first part of the exposition, numerous motifs are tossed around the orchestra. A contrasting waltz-like theme in F minor ensues, this can be seen as the dance of death. In the development section, material from the first movement makes an appearance. Mahler also makes use of the tri-tone (or Devil's chord) emphasising the infernal nature of the music.

Towards the end of the exposition hints of a chorale tune are heard. The recapitulation ends with a triumphant statement of the chorale theme in D major which then dies away. The symphony has reached its tonal centre.

The third movement is a Scherzo with two trios, it starts with a jaunty tune played on the horns in D major, followed by a lively contrapuntal section led by the strings. This section is ended by a solo horn which introduces the first trio, a waltz in B flat major played by the strings and then taken up by the rest of the orchestra. The contrapuntal texture of the opening returns, the music becoming more intense and making use of the glockenspiel and other percussion instruments, the waltz turning into another dance of death. Then the tempo slows right down and a solo horn introduces a homophonic texture, this is the second trio in D minor. The strings play a waltz theme in pizzicato and the woodwind and brass make various interjections. The relative calmness is shortly dispelled and the music of the first section makes its reappearance. A short brief period of calm is introduced with the solo horn predominating, then a final frenetic section closes the movement.

The Adagietto is probably Mahler's most well known piece and is often played separately on its own. It was made famous by Visconti's film *A Death in Venice* and Leonard Bernstein conducted a performance of it at Robert Kennedy's funeral in 1968. It is a song without words and represents Mahler's love for Alma (a theme that would recur in many of his later works). It is scored simply for harp and strings and is in the key of F major. Over a series of arpeggios on the harps, a lyrical theme is played by the strings. During the middle of the movement, the harmony becomes more chromatic and a quote from *Tristan and Isolde* (the so called *Blick* (gaze) motif) is heard. The peaceful mood of the first section returns and without a break the final movement starts.

The last movement is a rondo, interspersed with fugal episodes. The mood of the adagietto is broken, first by a solo horn, echoed by the first violins, A bassoon quotes from one of Mahler's early Wunderhorn Lieder *Lob des hohen Verstandes* (In praise of high understanding) which is a satirical song mocking critics who prefer the song of a cuckoo, to that of a nightingale. The principal theme marked *Allegro giocoso* is heard, followed by the first fugal section introduced by the cellos. The main theme is heard again followed by another fugal section. A third theme based on the Adagietto is heard followed by yet another fugal session. The first theme is heard again followed by a final fugal episode. Then in the coda, the chorale from the second movement is heard in full splendour, played by the brass in the key of D major, the tonal centre of the symphony. A brief flourish ends the symphony, the gloom of the first two movements having completely vanished.

After Mahler's death, it took quite a while for his symphonies to be regularly performed, probably due to their length and complexity. However this changed in the 1960's led by conductors such as Leonard Bernstein and Georg Solti. Also recordings started to appear, so that people could get to know the pieces really well. Mahler symphonies are now performed regularly. Just as any budding actor must prove their credentials by playing Hamlet, so these days, any conductor and orchestra must prove their worth by performing Mahler.

Chris Finlay November 2022.

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

At the start of the last century,
Fear there was a plenty.
That the world would descend,
Into madness without end.

The dance of death was always near,
Captured in your music loud and clear.
But above this deathly ball,
Is a love that conquers all.



EMILY MITCHELL



Scottish soprano Emily Mitchell, graduated with honours from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (nee Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama), later achieving her Masters in Music from the RCS. She sings with Dunedin, Opera North and the chorus of Scottish Opera.

Emily has appeared with the RSNCO in Poulenc's *Les dialogues des Carmelites*, Weil's *The Rise and Fall of Mahagonny* and most recently in Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise*. She made her debut in the BBC Proms with the BBC SSO under Donald Runnicles in Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music*. Orchestral engagements include Mahler's *Symphony No.4* and Berlioz *Les Nuits d'été*. Emily performed the Scottish premiere of Thea Musgrave's *Voices of our Ancestors* (Red Note Ensemble). Her European performances have included Versailles Palace, Antwerp, Rouen, Spain, Weimar, Halle and Heilbronn. She recently returned to Württemberg performing Handel's *Gloria* and Vivaldi's *In Furore Iustissimae Irae*. She has also been a guest soloist at the Victoria Arts Festival in Gozo performing contemporary works by Scottish composer Jennifer Barker. Along with contemporary repertoire, Mitchell regularly sings baroque in historically informed performances. She

has often appeared as a soloist with Dunedin Consort; Handel *Samson*, Bach *St Matthew Passion*, *Wachet Auf*, *Tilge Hochste Meine Sunden*, Vivaldi *Infurore Iustissimae Irae*, and Handel's *Messiah*. She has also been a soloist with Ludus Baroque. Mitchell has broadcast on BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Radio 3, and on radio in Germany, Belgium and France. Notably in the radio series *Mendelssohn Rediscovered* airing unknown and newly discovered songs by the composer.

Her operatic roles include: Lauretta/Gianni Schicchi; Countess Almaviva/Marriage of Figaro; Mélisande/Pelleas et Mélisande; Marzelline/Fidelio; Elsa/Lohengrin; Liu/Turandot.
www.emilymitchellsoprano.com

GERARD DOHERTY



Gerard Doherty studied violin and conducting at the Royal Scottish Academy. He studied conducting at post graduate level with Martin Brabbins at the Royal Scottish Conservatoire and also won a scholarship to study for two seasons at the American Academy

of Conducting, Aspen, with Murry Sidlin, David Zinman, Jorma Panula and James Levine.

Gerard's natural gift as a conductor first came to prominence when he conducted the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) in Debussy's *La Mer* in the presence of Walter Weller. With Weller's highest recommendation, Gerard made his debut as a conductor, which led him to conduct the RSNO on numerous occasions, including when he had to step in during a recording session, as the conductor was indisposed, to complete a recording of opera arias, which were highly acclaimed.

His conducting has taken him to the United States, Europe and the Middle East. Gerard is currently Principal Conductor of the Glasgow Sinfonia and the Edinburgh Symphony Orchestra and also guest conducts a number of other Scottish ensembles.

He has conducted a wide range of choral and symphonic works and is much admired for his natural musicianship, clear understanding, integrity and breadth of repertoire, which spans baroque to contemporary. His reviews have described his music making as "thrilling", "exhilarating", "triumphant" and "vibrant". He is also a well established conductor of choral music having spent 20 years as conductor of the Ayr Choral, conducting many major symphonic and sacred choral works as well as 'A Capella' repertoire.

His wide experience and in-depth knowledge of orchestral technique and repertoire are also in demand with the next generation of musicians. He was for 10 years Principal Conductor of the Strathclyde University Symphony Orchestra. He has been course director and conductor of the NYOS repertoire course on three occasions and has also conducted the Symphony Orchestra of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music, the Orchestra of the University of Castel Branco, Edinburgh University Chamber Orchestra, Renfrewshire Schools Symphony Orchestra, West of Scotland Independent Schools Orchestra and Glasgow Schools

Symphony Orchestra, the National Youth String Orchestra of Scotland. He is at present conductor of the East Renfrewshire Schools Symphony and Senior String Orchestras, winning numerous awards.

He played violin for all of the major orchestras in the country, including 23 years as first violin in the RSNNO. He is also a renowned violin teacher.

THE EDINBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Edinburgh Symphony Orchestra was the brainchild of its first conductor, Donald James – then the Head of Music at Edinburgh Academy – and gave its first concert in aid of Oxfam at the Reid Concert Hall in June 1963. Since then, for over 50 years, it has given amateur players the opportunity to perform a symphonic repertoire to a high standard under the batons of Donald James (1963-67), Henry McGlone (1967-72), Neil Butterworth (1972-73), Leon Coates (1973-85), Alasdair Mitchell (1985-2004) and Gerard Doherty, the present conductor.

Many young soloists in the early stages of their professional careers have been given the opportunity to play with the ESO, and the work of local composers has been commissioned. The repertoire includes not only the best-known pieces, but also music which is not so regularly performed. The Orchestra has, on occasion, combined with choral societies and in May 2005 was invited to accompany a huge choir of volunteers from all of Scotland in a charity performance of Verdi's Requiem in the Usher Hall. There are usually 3 or 4 performances each year: November, February and May – normally in Greyfriars Kirk. ESO is a subscription

orchestra managed by an elected committee. The orchestra is always pleased to hear from amateur musicians who would like to play. Anyone interested in joining the orchestra should contact esoenquiries@gmail.com

ORCHESTRAL PLAYERS

Violin 1

Sheena Jardine
Sheila Beattie
Jessica Brown
Cath Cormie
Una Fairley
Silas Leung
Claire McLean
Ian McLennan
Caroline Mortimer
Verena Schwarze
Iain Scott
John Strainge
Aimee Truesdale

Violin 2

Nigel Hambly
Daisy Andrews
Morven Baker
Barbara Bell
Kaye Brewster
Henry Buckley
Song Su Dewar
Helen Downes
Miriam Duncumb
Melissa English
Alasdair Marnoch
Malcolm McKitterick
David Scott

Viola

Kay Smith
Catriona Baker
Marena Collins
Vanessa Fisher
John Halliday
Gabrielle Kuhn
Eleanor Merton
Jennifer Meakin
Anne Parker

Cello

Gerard Delaney
David Beattie
Dianne Beattie
Mike Evans
Emily Hanover
Murdo Homewood
Alison McMillan
Robin Nelson
Jennifer Orr
John Tanner
Emma Veitch

Double Bass

John Wilkinson
Margaret Christie
Angela Dimmock
Ian Towson
David Wilson

Flute

Stella Henzell
Catriona Crosby
Alan Ross
Rachel White

Piccolo

Stella Henzell
Catriona Crosby

Oboe

Jo Watts
Sheila Hyde
Anne Wilson

Cor Anglais

Anne Wilson

Timpani

Euan Fairbairn

Percussion

Ian James Munro
George Croudace
Matthew Elliott

Clarinet

Vaughan Townhill
Hilary Saunders
Nadine Thompson

E♭ Clarinet

Nadine Thompson

Bass Clarinet

Hilary Saunders

Bassoon

Rainer Thönnies
Andrew Hazard
Kathy Humphry

Contrabassoon

Kathy Humphry

Harp

Esther Swift

French Horn

Marian Kirton
Stephen Bradley
John Chick
John Forbes
Hamish McRitchie
Gary Nichol
Victoria North

Trumpet

Elliot Longworth
Pam Brown
Cameron Sutherland
Ruari Wilson

Trombone

Adrian Sulston
Murray Campbell

Bass Trombone

Ruth Andrew

Tuba

Arnold Myers