

# CBSO PROMS 1973

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

Saturday 7 July 1973 at 7.30 p.m.,

Town Hall Birmingham



Programme 10p



**HARRY BLECH** was born in London in 1910. He first studied the violin with Sarah Fennings at the Trinity College of Music and appeared in public as a soloist at a very early age. On leaving school at sixteen, he went to Czechoslovakia where he studied for a time with Professor Sevcik and later with Arthur Catterall at the Royal Manchester College of Music.

He played in both the Hallé and BBC Symphony Orchestras before forming the Blech Quartet which was for fifteen years one of the most celebrated string quartets in this country. During the war, he joined the R.A.F. It was at this time that he first appeared as a conductor at Dame Myra Hess's lunchtime concerts at the National Gallery. Due to the success which he had at these concerts, he decided to launch upon a conducting career.

Harry Blech first formed the London Wind Players, followed shortly by the London Symphonic Players — an orchestra composed mainly of talented students. This ultimately

led to the formation in 1949 of the London Mozart Players as it is today. As a guest conductor, Harry Blech has appeared with all the major symphony orchestras and with many other orchestras in the United Kingdom and abroad. In 1962 he was awarded the OBE for his services to music.

**GERVASE DE PEYER** was born in London and studied there with Frederick Thurston at the Royal College of Music, and also in Paris with Louis Cahuzac.

After touring in England and abroad as both soloist and with chamber groups, he worked with many of the London orchestras before joining the London Symphony Orchestra as principal clarinet in 1956 — a position he still holds.

Concerto playing with the orchestra and his playing with the Melos Ensemble, of which he is a founder member, has taken him all over the world, and he has gained wide-spread recognition as a soloist.

Two of his many successful recordings have been awarded the Charles Gros Grand Prix du Disque and an award from the American National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

His many distinguished recital partners include Benjamin Britten, Rostropovitch, Yehudi Menuhin, Daniel Barenboim, Janet Baker and Gerald Moore, and he was recently invited to join leading American instrumentalists in a chamber music group at the Lincoln Centre in New York.



The CBSO has pleasure in presenting  
**London Mozart Players**  
Leader: Roland Stanbridge

**Conductor : HARRY BLECH**  
**Soloist : GERVASE DE PEYER**

**Mozart**  
Symphony No. 40 in G minor, (K.550)  
Clarinet Concerto in A, K.622

**INTERVAL**

Refreshments are available in the Basement Hall 6.45-10.30 p.m.  
Licensed Bar  
Light refreshments are available in the Lower Gallery during the interval

Symphony No. 41 in C (Jupiter)

**Patrons are asked not to enter or leave the auditorium while the Orchestra is playing. It would be appreciated if patrons would refrain as far as possible from coughing during the performance**

**CBSO records and publications are available at the CBSO information desk in the right-hand box office during the interval and after the concert, where CBSO Society membership subscriptions may also be paid**

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra receives financial assistance from the Arts Council of Great Britain, the City of Birmingham and the Midlands Authorities Orchestral Association

**The CBSO is away this weekend, giving open-air concerts in the Abbey Gardens, Bury St. Edmunds and Woburn Park**

The LONDON MOZART PLAYERS are now in their twenty-fourth season under their conductor and founder, Harry Blech. The first group he formed was the London Wind Players, then a Students' Symphony Orchestra, from which eventually evolved the London Mozart Players, which made its debut in 1949. Success was immediate and during the first two years, audiences flocked to hear their concerts at the Wigmore Hall and Chelsea Town Hall.

In 1951, the Players, with their conductor, were invited to take part in the inaugural week of the newly-built Royal Festival Hall, which is now their principal home, and where they give a regular series of concerts. They also broadcast and visit the continent frequently, having toured in Italy, Switzerland, Holland, and Germany. A concert at the Berlin Festival was unanimously acclaimed as the highlight of the Festival. They have also played frequently at the Edinburgh Festival. In 1968 the orchestra visited Schloss Elmau in Germany at the invitation of Antal Dorati, who conducted them; they also visited Sweden for the first time and played to packed halls everywhere they went. In 1971 they returned to Italy and Germany.

In 1969, in addition to the first London Mozart Festival, a new series at the Queen Elizabeth Hall — 5 Styles — celebrated the orchestra's 21st anniversary. This series, presenting the five main periods of orchestral composition with each concert under a guest conductor, was so successful that it is now established in the concert calendar.

## PROGRAMME NOTES

### Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

#### Symphony No. 40, in G minor (K.550)

allegro molto

andante

menuetto: allegro

allegro assai

More words have been lavished on the G minor than on any other symphony before the *Eroica*. The fact that we say 'the G minor', much as we say 'the Fifth' and 'the Choral', is itself an indication of the work's commanding stature. Nowhere, not even in the later concertos and string quintets, is Mozart's instrumental genius more powerfully affirmed. Not surprisingly, this music is Mozart at his most original, his furthest-removed from Haydn; as Einstein remarks, 'not only is there no model, there is not even a "springboard", except in Mozart himself'.

Originality, intensity, oneness — these are the qualities which have impressed the work on every generation. The nature of the impression has, however, varied greatly, from 'Grecian lightness and grace' (Schumann) to the 'demoniac' in Mozart. Such extremes may seem irreconcilable, yet each of them contains an important part-truth. The G minor symphony is an expression of intense, anguished emotion — demoniac, if you must! — but it is also a structure of classical poise and lucidity. Mozart's own words, from a letter written in 1781, may help us here: 'Passions, whether violent or not, should never be expressed when they reach an unpleasant stage; and music, even in the most terrible situations, should never offend the ear, but should charm it and always remain music'. From an eighteenth-century point of view, there are moments in the G minor which stretch this artistic *credo* to its limits and even beyond: Mozart was widely regarded as an extravagant, over-rich composer, an affront to good taste! To those who found him so, classicism was surely synonymous with convention and formality; to Mozart himself, at least in his works in minor keys, it was a way of transmuting human pain into aesthetic pleasure, of bringing the chaos of experience within the bounds of his perfect sense of form — or, to adapt A. E. Housman's splendid phrase, a way of harmonizing the sorrows of the world.

Of the world, be it noted, not merely his own private sorrows. To try to interpret the G minor symphony by reference to the composer's life-story — for instance, his penury in the summer of 1788, when the work was written — is to launch out in quite the wrong direction. The classical artist universalizes; he draws on the richness of his own experience, but what he achieves is an objective statement — in this case 'about' suffering — not an expression of his own condition. The particularity of the G minor is musical, not personal, and is definable only in terms of rhythms, themes, harmonies, etc.

Three of the four movements (1, 3 and 4) are in G minor, and three (1, 2 and 4) are sonata forms. This insistence on the minor mode, especially in the finale, is most unusual in a classical symphony. Even the contrasting major keys intensify the prevailing current rather than provide relief: particularly striking in the outer movements is Mozart's 'agonizing reappraisal' when the second subject (B $\flat$  major) is recapitulated in G minor; similarly, the idyllic G major of the trio — 'Grecian lightness and grace' without a doubt — heightens the intensity of the returning minuet. The E $\flat$  major of the slow movement proves to be a region of unease rather than repose: 'brooding restlessness' is Eric Blom's description, an effect achieved by 'semitonal clashes as well as a cross-rhythm of 3/4 against the prescribed 6/8' (Mozart, Dent, 1952). The semitone, whether clashing harmonically as in the minuet, or falling melodically as in the opening movement, is a prominent feature throughout the work and one of the sources of unity. The question of musical and expressive unity is too complex to be more than touched on in a note of this kind. Listeners who wish to take it further should refer to the analysis in Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (O.U.P., 1959), pp. 232-51.



City of Birmingham Polytechnic

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Finally, a word about the scoring. The original version, seldom heard to-day, is for flute, a pair each of oboes, bassoons and horns, and the usual strings. Mozart later added two clarinets, which required some revision of the oboe parts. There are no trumpets and drums.

Hugh Ottoway ©

#### Clarinet Concerto in A K.622

**allegro**

**adagio**

**rondo**

**allegro**

Mozart's acquaintanceship with the clarinet begins much earlier than the inspired use of it in the Symphony No. 39 in E<sub>b</sub>, or the very late Köchel catalogue numbers of the Quintet (581) and the Concerto might suggest. In a letter from Mannheim, in 1778, he wrote to his father, "Alas, if only we also had clarinets, you cannot imagine the wonderful effect of a symphony with flutes, oboes and clarinets". When used by Mozart in opera it becomes the accompanist of the lovers in *Così* and the same is true of *Figaro*. Cherubino's first aria and the wonderful E<sub>b</sub> opening of the Act IV finale will serve as examples of Mozart's appreciation of the tone colour of the *new* instrument. However, all lovers of music owe a debt to Anton Stadler, that fine woodwind player and maker of clarinets, who so impressed Mozart with his virtuosity, and showed the composer how versatile the clarinet could be. Both masterpieces were written for him, and, most probably for an instrument known as a basset clarinet, which was not the same as our bass clarinet. Although the manuscripts of both works have been lost, the sudden elevation of certain passages to an octave higher, when the whole character of the music suggests a scale-like downward plunge to a register below the limits of the A clarinet, point to the truth of the existence of Stadler's basset clarinet. Even allowing for the practice of orcas-fingering, which is rarely used nowadays, one must marvel that Stadler could play these works on the primitive instruments (minus the Boehm system of keys) of the late eighteenth century.

Allowing for the unfinished *Requiem*, this is Mozart's last composition, although it had been sketched in 1789. Like the piano concerto in the same key, K.488, the orchestral opening is alive with ideas, but the composer saves some for the soloist to introduce. One is immediately aware of a craftsman handling a treasured tool, for all facets are here. The low register the wide leaps, the long *legato* melody line and the rather impertinent flow of quavers in accompaniment to themes from the orchestra. The usual development and re-statement of material occurs. The slow movement, in B major, is in A:B:A: form, plus a coda. Section A consists of two eight-bar tunes announced by the soloist and then repeated by the orchestra. Section B allows the soloist to display his skill in rich ornamentation, which is used again in the coda.

The last movement is a Sonata Rondo on the pattern A:B:A:C:A:B:A. Tune A gurgles and chortles and the episodes contain some of the best examples of Mozart's skill as a melodist. The chortle of tune A is allowed to grow into full-bellied laughter for the last appearance, and brings the work to a triumphant close.

Harry Jones ©

#### Symphony No. 41, in C (Jupiter)

**allegro vivace**

**andante cantabile**

**menuetto: allegretto**

**finale: molto allegro**

Programme-notes on the major classics are all very well. But what do we look for when reading them? The usual facts and dates, which we probably know already? The possibility of fresh insights? Ideally, every programme-

# ANTONY HOPKINS



Antony Hopkins, eminent musician and broadcaster, writes: "Playing a musical instrument is one of the most complex acts that mankind can perform, involving superb co-ordination of nerves, muscles, mind and human spirit. But like machines, the body can begin to wear out, become less efficient; illness can cause a deterioration of any one of the faculties involved. For the musician this can be a tragedy. If you have enjoyed music as one of the worthwhile things in life, spare a thought (and a little money) for the musicians who have, through no fault of their own, fallen on hard times."

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Sir Thomas Armstrong, Chairman,  
Dept. A.H., Musicians' Benevolent Fund,  
16 Ogle Street, London, W1P 7LG.

note should help us to hear something new, or at least to respond in new ways. That's *my* problem. Yours is to make the response, with or without any help you may find here. The arch-enemy is routine, be it yours, mine, or the players'. . . . Now for the *Jupiter*.

This happens to be Mozart's last symphony. More important, it is the first true 'finale-symphony'. A shifting of the centre of gravity to the last movement has several implications, but Mozart shows us that a slimming-down of the first movement is not one of them. As so often, he makes a great deal out of very little - this holds for the finale, too - and the choice of very little has nothing to do with weight or profundity; it is simply Mozart's way of composing. The material of the 'first subject' is entirely stock-in-trade: a well-worn call to attention, a familiar little sequence, and some commonplace cadence-making chords! (Anyone who tries to tell you *why* it sounds so marvellously fresh is either a fraud or a reincarnation.) In the counter-statement, or bridge, a typical scalic embellishment is added by woodwinds and much is made of the sequence. The 'second subject' (strings alone) is all Mozartian elegance and grace: this must have been the sort of writing Richard Strauss had in mind when he said that Mozart's melody 'hovers like Plato's Eros between heaven and earth, between mortality and immortality - set free from "the Will"'. One of the 'secrets' of its sound is the gap between the singing first violins and the accompanying seconds. The original sequence motive is heard in the bass. The closing theme was composed originally as an additional aria for someone else's *opera buffa*, and its cheerful unconcern is nicely pointed at the beginning of the development, where it blandly resumes in E<sub>7</sub> instead of G. This innocent E<sub>7</sub> is very much 'up the garden'; what follows is a thrusting contrapuntal passage, a 'false reprise', and a further bout of strenuous development. The recapitulation springs no real surprises, but the counter-statement is now in the minor.

The *andante*: another sonata form (F major); no trumpets and drums; a model of Mozartian refinement, truly *cantabile*, but with a climax that is Beethovenian. The deepest thoughts are in the 'bridge', which seems almost to have strayed from the G minor Symphony: instinct with suffering, yet classically poised, this is inevitably matter for the short development. Elsewhere Strauss's words are brought to mind again.

The Minuet grows entirely from its first, chromatically-descending phrase. This reaches fulfilment, through a use of sequence and contrapuntal imitation, in the superb little *stretto* for the woodwinds just before the end. The trio juxtaposes naivete and self-awareness in a way that is dramatic and in the context quite extraordinary.

It is no extravagance to describe the finale as one of the marvels of classical music: a superbly-wrought sonata form, saturated with imitative counterpoint and carried off with an incomparable lightness and ease. 'Classical', said Holst, 'means something that sings and dances through sheer joy of existence.' It is often stated that there are five themes or motives; four is more realistic, the so-called fifth being a prefix of four notes (oboe) acquired by the third. None of these ideas is remarkable in itself, and the first - C-D-F-E, heard at the beginning (violins) and already foreshadowed in the trio - is nothing more than an old baroque tag. The Idea transcends the ideas, the overall conception the material that defines it: if this reads like mere rhetoric, consider the great coda in which all four motives are worked together in fugal style - and in which the Idea emerges in its most concentrated form. The controlled ecstasy of this coda is splendidly highlighted by the tense, chunky-textured development section where the Idea is threatened with fragmentation. Such long-term connections come naturally and inevitably in a movement as unified as this one, a movement that insists on being heard as a single entity, complete and indivisible.

Hugh Ottaway ©



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 TWO 388 — Offenbach Overtures/Frémaux  
 TWO 404 — Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony/Frémaux  
 ASD 2753 — Carnival of Animals etc/Frémaux, Ogdon/Lucas  
 TWO 319 — David Hughes/Frémaux  
 ASD 2878 — Arnold Symphony 5 etc/Arnold  
 ASD 2612 — Concertos for Phyllis & Cyril/Arnold  
 CSD 3713 — Sullivan/Sir Vivian Dunn  
 TWO 361 — Eric Coates/Kilbey  
 SRCS 33 — Bliss/Rignold

also

Prom Prospectus — Annual Prospectus (published mid-July) —  
 Music Stand — The First Fifty Years — An Orchestra Abroad.

Full details may be obtained from the CBSO Staff, who will be pleased to accept CBSO Society and Junior CBSO subscriptions for 1973-4.

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City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

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 9 July

**HUGO RIGNOLD**  
**RALPH HOLMES**  
**Tchaikovsky**  
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Tuesday  
 10 July

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**Beethoven Piano Recital**  
 Polonaise in C  
 Sonata in C minor (Pathétique)  
 Sonata in C# minor (Moonlight)  
 Sonata in A#b, opus 110  
 Sonata in E#b (Les Adieux)  
 Sonata in C (Waldstein)

Wednesday  
 11 July

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**HAROLD GRAY**  
**Young Person's Guide**  
 Overture, Cinderella .. .. . Rossini  
 Nutcracker Suite .. .. . Tchaikovsky  
 Suite, Jeux d'enfants .. .. . Bizet  
 Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra .. .. . Britten

*This concert is designed to finish at approximately 9 p.m.*

Thursday  
 12 July

**A Night in Vienna**  
**MAURICE HANDFORD**  
 Overture, The Gipsy Baron .. } Johann Strauss II  
 Waltz, Roses from the South .. }  
 Eine kleine Nachtmusik .. .. . Mozart  
 Emperor Waltzes .. .. . Johann Strauss II  
 Overture, Pique Dame .. .. . Suppé  
 Waltz, An Artist's Life .. }  
 Artist's Quadrille .. .. . Johann Strauss II  
 Tritsch-Tratsch Polka .. }  
 Annen Polka .. .. .  
 Bahn frei .. .. . Eduard Strauss  
 Austrian Peasant Dances .. .. . arr. Schönherr

**All concerts begin 7.30 p.m., Birmingham Town Hall**  
 Tickets available from the Town Hall Box Office which remains open during the interval of all CBSO concerts

**presents**    **LONDON MOZART PLAYERS****Leader:**     Roland Stanbridge**Conductor:**   HARRY BLECH

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Margot Macgibbon  
Adrian Levine  
Felicity Notariello  
Geoffrey Trabichoff  
David Edwards  
Sergei Bezkorvany  
Susan Fisher**Second Violins**Pan Hon Lee  
Philip Saudek  
Graham Cracknell  
Elizabeth Edwards  
Robert Clark  
Edward Roberts**Violas**John Meek  
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