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Robert Dick (Conductor)



Robert Dick was born in Edinburgh in 1975. On leaving school, Robert entered the Royal College of Music in London studying violin with Grigori Zhislin and Madeleine Mitchell and piano with Yonty Solomon. He graduated with Honours in 1997 and also gained the Associateship Diploma of the Royal College of Music in Violin Performance.

Robert has been conducting since he was 11. In 1993 he conducted the Royal Scottish National Orchestra at the invitation of its then Musical Director, Walter Weller, appearing with them again three years later and in 1995 Robert co-founded the reconstituted Orchestra of Old St Paul's in Edinburgh. He has also conducted all the youth orchestras of which he was a member including the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and the Royal College of Music Symphony Orchestra. Robert is a regular guest conductor with the East Lothian Players and the Scottish Borders Community Orchestra, the latter with whom he performed a highly successful concert with internationally-renowned cellist, Steven Isserlis. He has conducted much of the great symphonic repertoire including symphonies by Schumann, Dvorak, Sibelius, Mahler and the Fourth and Eighth by Bruckner. Robert conducted the inaugural concert in March 2002 of the Edinburgh Philharmonic Orchestra and in the same year's Edinburgh Festival appeared with the Kelvin Ensemble and the Orchestra of the Canongait, with both of whom he will be doing further concerts. He had a highly successful debut with the Edinburgh Symphony Orchestra in a concert in 2000 and was immediately invited back for further appearances.

Robert has also been the musical director of the Dunfermline Gilbert and Sullivan Society with whom he conducted their successful Spring 2002 production of *The Yeomen of the Guard*. In 2001, Robert was one of only a few conductors who were invited to conduct the Plovdiv Philharmonic Orchestra in the final concert of the Vienna International Mastercourse Series. He was also awarded the Diploma of that organisation. He had a similar success in 2002 at the International Summer Academy at the Mozarteum in Salzburg where he was invited to conduct the Varna Symphony Orchestra in concert as well as being awarded the Diploma. In the same year, he also went to Germany to work with the Camerata Academica of Freiburg. Robert has also enjoyed some success in competitions. In November 2001, he came second in the final of the British Reserve Insurance Conducting Competition in Cardiff.

2004 was a particularly busy year for Robert which saw further concerts with the Edinburgh Philharmonic, with whom he did a highly acclaimed performance of Richard Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* during the Edinburgh Festival, the Edinburgh University Chamber Orchestra and of course the Dundee Symphony Orchestra, of whom he has been appointed Musical Director. He visited the United States to work with the Council Rock High School Symphony Orchestra in Philadelphia and also Bulgaria where he worked with the Vidin State Philharmonic Orchestra.

As a violin and viola soloist, Robert has performed concertos by Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Bruch and Brahms and has extensively toured Europe as an orchestral player in venues including the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, the Hofburg Palace, Vienna and at the Henry Wood Proms in the Royal Albert Hall, London. In addition, he has freelanced with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Concert Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra of Scotland. Robert also works as a pianist both in chamber music, orchestras and as an accompanist.

Alan Torrance (Leader 2003-2005)

Alan Torrance studied violin with Winifred Gavine in Edinburgh until the age of eighteen, when he completed his performer's ARCM. Over the following four years he studied with David Martin of the Royal Academy of Music in London, before receiving further lessons from Max Rostal in a Master Course at the Klagenfurt Conservatoire in Austria aided by a Scottish Arts Council Award.

In 1975, while playing with the Scottish Ballet Orchestra (and also for Bing Crosby!) he became a member of the Scottish Baroque Ensemble (now the Scottish Ensemble) with which he toured widely and made recordings.

On moving to New Zealand in 1987, he combined teaching theology in the University of Otago with being leader of the Dunedin Sinfonia - a part-time professional orchestra which attracted international soloists and conductors and broadcast regularly on New Zealand's Concert FM.

After a further five years' academic teaching and playing in London, Alan has returned to his homeland where he is professor of systematic theology in the University of St Andrews. This allows him time to lead both the NSPO and the DSO as well as enjoying chamber music, playing on an Italian violin made by Camillus Camilli in 1737. He also performs with his four sons, who constitute their own string quartet, when he is not kayaking and making the most of the Scottish mountains!

Julian Cann (Violin Soloist)



Our violin soloist this evening, Julian Cann, comes from the North West of England, where his collaboration with the cellist Andrew Taylor began. Originally a student of French at London University, it was there that he studied the violin under the Scottish tutelage of Linda McLaren, later returning north and taking lessons with Reginald Stead, former leader of the BBC Northern Symphony (now Philharmonic) Orchestra.

In 1996 Julian became founder-leader of the Serafin String Quartet which in 1998 gave the world premiere of Arthur Butterworth's quartet op. 100, written with the Serafin in mind. The Serafin became known especially for their championship of British 20th and 21st century music, as well as playing a wide standard repertoire; Julian particularly enjoys the chamber music aspect of tonight's paradoxically symphonic concerto.

As a busy freelance orchestral violinist, Julian has played with the National Concert Orchestra, the Manchester Concert Orchestra and the Northern Chamber Orchestra, and recently performed at the royal wedding in Chester Cathedral. He leads Lancaster's Haffner Orchestra, with whom he has also appeared as soloist, and in recent years has branched out into the concerto repertoire with performances of Bruch, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky and Brahms' Double Concerto.

In a lighter vein, Julian enjoys playing with the Pictish Players Scottish Country Dance Band with whom he will be recording a CD in August 2005. His current Munro count stands at 164.

Andrew Taylor (Cello Soloist)



Our cello soloist, Andrew Taylor, was born in Durham and educated at St Mary's Music School Edinburgh, Lancaster University, and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. His cello teachers included Ruth Beauchamp, David Fletcher and Professor Leonard Stehn.

Andrew has taken part in public masterclasses with Steven Isserlis and Raphael Wallfisch, and has played under distinguished conductors including Sir Colin Davis, Pierre Boulez and Kurt Masur. He has wide experience of solo and ensemble performance, having worked in such contrasting settings as the Albert Hall (BBC Proms), on a boat in the Lakes, and at the Riverside Stadium in Middlesbrough.

Andrew has performed many of the great solo works for cello and orchestra, including Elgar, Lalo, Saint-Saens, Schumann, Tchaikovsky and Haydn. He enjoys a busy life teaching the cello in Surrey, as well as performing. He plays a cello by Fabrizio Portanti, made in 1990.

Programme Notes

Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

Leonora Overture No. 1, op. 138

Born in Bonn in 1770, the eldest son of a singer in the Kapelle of the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne and grandson of the Archbishop's Kapellmeister, Beethoven moved in 1792 to Vienna, where he had some lessons from Haydn and others, quickly establishing himself as a remarkable keyboard-player and original composer. By 1815 increasing deafness made public performance impossible and accentuated existing eccentricities of character, patiently tolerated by a series of rich patrons and his royal pupil the Archduke Rudolph.

Beethoven wrote only one opera, eventually called “Fidelio” after the name assumed by the heroine Leonora, who disguises herself as a boy and takes employment at the prison in which her husband has been unjustly incarcerated. This escape opera, for which there was precedent in contemporary France, ends with the defeat of the evil prison governor and the rescue of Florestan, testimony to the love and constancy of his wife Leonora.

Fidelio was first produced in Vienna, 1805, under the title of “Leonora”, with the overture now known as “Leonora No. 2”. Subsequently the opera was shortened with a new overture, the “Leonora No. 3”. After a few performances it was withdrawn, but in 1806 he wrote a third overture called “Leonora No. 1”. The performance did not take place however, but in 1814 a revision of the opera was given in its present form as “Fidelio”, with an entirely new overture.

The “Leonora Overture No. 1” is a posthumous work. After its completion Beethoven had doubts of its effectiveness, and

accordingly tested it with a small orchestra. It was too light for the opera, and in consequence it was laid aside and was not played in public during the composer's lifetime, its first performance having taken place in Vienna in 1828, and Beethoven died in 1827. The composer gave it the title of "Characteristic Overture in C". In its general construction it resembles the Fidelio Overture in E, op. 72.

Music With Ease, 2005

Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897)

Double Concerto for violin and violincello, in A minor, op. 102

I Allegro

II Andante

III Vivace non troppo - poco meno allegro

Born in Hamburg, the son of a double-bass player and his seamstress wife, Brahms attracted the attention of Schumann to whom he was introduced by the violinist Joachim, and after Schumann's death he maintained a long friendship with his widow, the pianist Clara Schumann, whose advice he always valued. Brahms eventually settled in Vienna, where to some he seemed the awaited successor to Beethoven. In Vienna he came to occupy a position similar to that once held by Beethoven, his gruff idiosyncrasies tolerated by those who valued his genius.

This was Brahms's last major orchestral work and he saw it as the answer to two challenges, the one technical and the other very personal. The technical dilemma was how to reconcile the entirely different ranges and tonal weights of the two solo instruments. In chamber music, the piano can act as an adaptable go between, but a full orchestra, including four horns, has a voice of its own, and so Brahms tried to score the work lightly. The personal dilemma was the estrangement between himself and his lifelong friend Joseph Joachim, which had been brought to a head when Brahms sided with Amelie Joachim in the divorce action which the virtuoso violinist was bringing. When Brahms sketched out the concerto, he wrote to Joachim to ask him if "his honoured friend would like news of an artistic nature", and when the violinist replied, Brahms was clearly relieved, and made "his confession more cheerfully" about the unusual nature of the work that he was writing. The rift was healed (on a professional though not really on a personal level), and Joachim and Hausmann, the

cellist from the Joachim quartet, gave the work its first performance in Cologne in October 1887.

In the first four bars the orchestra firmly states the opening of a vigorous first subject, but leaves it incomplete so that the 'cello can pick up its conclusion with a rising scale marked "in the manner of a recitative". The violin then announces its presence and an unaccompanied dialogue between the soloists allows each voice to establish its identity. After a fuller orchestral version of the assertive opening, and a syncopated bridge passage, the 'cello offers us the gently rocking song-like second subject. The two contrasting themes are developed, and when they are repeated the instrumental roles are reversed, the second subject now being transferred to the violin in its upper registers.

A rising fourth on the horns, echoed by the woodwind, opens the slow movement and the soloists in unison offer us a calm, expansive theme whose inversions and decorations form the basis of this contemplative interlude. The finale is in sharp contrast, for without any preliminary flourishes the 'cellist offers us a staccato, dancing motif with a Hungarian flavour. This is picked up by the fiddle and then replaced by a solemn tune, announced in double-stopping by the 'cello. The dance tune keeps reappearing, giving the movement a rondo form, and it closes with a vigorous coda in the major key.

Tony Mitchell, 1987

Interval

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)

Symphony No. 3 in A minor, op. 56, “Scottish”

I Andante con moto - Allegro agitato

II Scherzo assai vivace

III Adagio cantabile

IV Allegro guerriero - Finale maestoso

At the age of twenty, Felix Mendelssohn was one of Europe's best composers, an excellent pianist, a path-breaking conductor, and a visual artist of nearly professional stature, as well as a man of immense charm and personality. It is not surprising that his first appearances in London in the spring and summer of 1829 were a smashing success.

Both to relax from his hectic London schedule and to temporarily sate his obsession with travel, he reserved time in late summer, following his appearances, to tour the British countryside. He and his travelling companion, Karl Klingemann, the secretary of the Hanover Legation in London, settled on a walking tour through the Scottish Highlands; they arrived in Edinburgh on July 28.

Two days later, Mendelssohn reported on his visit to Mary Stuart's castle, Holyrood: "In the evening twilight we went today to the palace where Mary lived and loved. A little room is shown there with a winding staircase leading up to the door. This is the staircase the murderers ascended, and, finding Rizzio (Mary's Italian advisor and, probably, lover, whom the Scots mistrusted), drew him out. About three chambers away is a small corner where they killed him. The chapel close to it is now roofless, grass and ivy grow there, and at the broken altar Mary was crowned Queen of England. Everything around is broken and mouldering and the bright sky shines in. I believe I have found today in that old chapel the beginning of my

Scottish Symphony". The letter continues with ten measures of music that were to become the introductory melody of the Third Symphony.

Mendelssohn's Scottish adventure continued for most of August. He and Klingemann travelled on foot, stopping at whatever vista caught their fancy so that Felix could make a quick pencil sketch of the scene. Mendelssohn was most impressed by one particularly stormy prospect on the gnarled Isle of Staffa off the western coast of Scotland. This was the experience that gave rise to the superb *Hebrides Overture*. The travellers completed their strenuous journey and returned to London.

Mendelssohn occupied himself immediately with the Overture and completed it the following year. The Symphony, however, did not come so easily. Some preliminary sketches for it were done in 1830-1831 while Mendelssohn was touring Italy, but he admitted that he found it impossible to evoke the "misty mood" of Scotland while in sun-splashed Rome and put the work aside; it was not finished until January 1842 in Berlin. He conducted the premiere on March 3 with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, and he included the new symphony in his London concerts that summer. Its success only added to the great acclaim already accorded Mendelssohn by the English, a phenomenon that was royally recognized when Queen Victoria granted the composer permission to dedicate the work to her.

Mendelssohn wrote of the inspiration for his "Scottish" Symphony, "It is in pictures, ruins, and natural surroundings that I find the most music." Rather than a tonal travelogue, this is a work of deep sensibility and manly melancholy that grew from the emotions the stern Scottish landscape and history engendered in the young Mendelssohn; it is music "more of feeling than of painting," as Beethoven said of his own Sixth Symphony.

The symphony's four movements, Mendelssohn's greatest work in the genre, are directed to be played without pause. The long, brooding introduction opens with a grave harmonization of the melody that Mendelssohn conceived at Holyrood. The sonata form proper begins with a flowing theme, graceful yet filled with vigour. Other melodic inspirations follow. A stormy, thoroughly worked-out development utilizes most of the exposition's thematic material. After the recapitulation, a coda with the force of a second development section is concluded by a return of the brooding theme of the introduction. The second movement is the only one that consistently shows sunlight and high spirits. It is built around two melodies: one, skipping and animated, is introduced by the clarinet; the other, brisk and martial, is presented in the strings.

The wonderful third movement is unsurpassed in Mendelssohn's orchestral *oeuvre*. In melody, structure, orchestration and mood it belongs among the masterworks of the Romantic era. Cast in sonata form, its first theme is a lyrical melody of noble gait that is perfectly balanced by the elegiac second theme, characterized by its heroic, dotted rhythms. The finale is a vivacious and well-developed dance in an atmospheric minor key. The symphony concludes with a majestic coda in a broad, swinging metre.

Dr. Richard E. Rodda

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