

GORTON
PHILHARMONIC
SOCIETY

130TH YEAR



CONCERT

STOCKPORT TOWN HALL

FRIDAY 23RD MARCH 1984

7.30 p.m.

Leader Morris Saleh
Conductor Colin Touchin
Soloist Joanna Hulme
(Chetham's School of Music)

PROGRAMME

SCHERZO CAPRICCIOSO, Op. 66

Antonin DVORAK
(1841 - 1904)

Born in Czechoslovakia, Dvorak learnt violin, viola, organ, and piano as a child, as well as studying counterpoint. His career began as a viola player in an orchestra under Smetana, a fellow Czech. His first successful composition was the cantata 'Hymnus' (1873) which enabled him to give up his orchestral playing.

The 'Scherzo Capriccioso' was written just before his first trip to England, in April and May 1883. It is one of the greatest short orchestral works, belonging to a period in his life which was overshadowed by his mother's death, a time of 'doubt, defiance, silent grief, and resignation' which often produced his best music.

It was first performed in Prague at the New Czech Theatre, conducted by Adolf Cech in 1883, and performed again in London at Crystal Palace the following year, conducted by the composer.

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 in E flat

Franz LISZT
(1811 - 1886)

Allegro maestoso
Quasi Adagio - Allegretto vivace - Allegro animato
Allegro marziale animato

Liszt was born in Hungary and gave his first recital at the age of 9; the following year he went to Vienna to study with Salieri and Czerny, and, having performed in Paris and London, he settled in Paris in 1823 until 1835, where he met Berlioz and Chopin. Following his years in Paris he toured widely until 1847, including Russia in his travels. Although his fame as the flamboyant virtuoso pianist was at its height, he now gave up his life as a concert artist in order to concentrate on composition, and to create an important musical centre at Weimar, where he became Kapellmeister in 1848.

It was in 1849 that Liszt finished writing the first Piano Concerto, started twenty years previously. Although continuous, it falls into four distinct sections, Liszt's aim being to create a satisfactory one-movement concerto. At the end of the second 'section', which serves as a slow movement, there is a controversial triangle part; however, despite the criticism it received, Liszt kept the part as it was. This triangle part anticipates admirably the mood of the impish Allegretto vivace. The final section knits together all the material previously heard.

INTERVAL (15 minutes)

SYMPHONY NO. 4 in E minor, Op. 98

Johannes BRAHMS
(1833 - 1897)

Allegro non troppo
Andante moderato
Allegro giocoso - Poco meno presto - Tempo
Allegro energico e passionato - Piu Allegro

Brahms was born into a relatively poor family in Hamburg, his father being a court musician; however, this did not stop him from taking piano lessons. At the age of 19 he went on tour as the accompanist for Remenyi, a violinist, although by then Brahms knew that he wanted to be a composer.

The summers of 1884 and 1885 were spent at Murzschlag and it was here that he wrote his fourth and last symphony. The first movement has a very long first subject which consists of three main sections or sub-themes. Brahms develops them all in great detail making very economic use of all of the material and concentrating a lot of his energies on the diminished and augmented intervals. These intervals also play an important part in the second subject and are used to create terrific tension.

The second movement in E major is no less unusual: it displays constant juxtapositions of E major and the Phrygian mode; and still further key changes occur when a beautiful 'cello solo appears in B major.

The third movement is in C major and is almost Scherzo-like. It stands out in this symphony of deeply profound and personal feelings as being extremely extrovert. Again the main theme is divided into three subdivisions and is given the most vigorous rhythmical treatment.

The Finale, a passacaglia, is founded on a 'chaconne' bass which Bach used in his Cantata No. 150 (although, Brahms does add one chromatic note of his own). The theme is stated by brass and woodwind, the trombones making their first entry in the symphony. This is followed by thirty variations and magnificent coda which rounds off the whole work, as well as the last movement, admirably. As the critic Hanslick put it, this symphony 'is like a dark well: the longer we look into it, the more brightly the stars shine back.'

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Notes compiled by Sally Dredge (Chetham's School of Music).

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Joanna Hulme was born in Bowden, Cheshire in 1965 and had piano lessons from the age of seven. In September 1982 she entered Chetham's School of Music and has now been a pupil of David Hartigan for four years. She has won first prizes at several local festivals and has recently given a recital at Gordonstoun School. Joanna has been chosen to play Beethoven's first piano concerto with Chetham's orchestra as part of the Halle Proux, in July.

From September Joanna will continue her studies at the Royal Northern College of Music.