

GORTON
PHILHARMONIC
SOCIETY

131st Year



CONCERT

STOCKPORT TOWN HALL

FRIDAY 26TH JULY, 1985

7.30 p.m.

Conductor Colin Touchin
 Leader Ros Wood
 Soloist Murray McLachlan
 Guests King Edward Musical Society
 (Choir & orchestra)

PROGRAMME

Overture 'The Thievish Magpie' Gioacchino Rossini
 (1792-1868)

This sparkling overture is for most of us the only sign of this opera since it has fallen pretty well into oblivion. Written in 1817, and first performed at La Scala, Milan, the overture bears structural and tonal resemblance to that for 'The Barber of Seville' two years earlier. The individual themes and many short motives all create a sound-painting of the strutting and thieving manner of the magpie.

Concerto for piano and orchestra Frederic Chopin
No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11 (1810-1849)

Allegro maestoso: Romanze (Larghetto): Rondo (Vivace)

Composed in 1830, this work displays remarkable maturity in the piano writing and thematic construction; however it lacks any real ability to handle these graceful melodies with the full orchestral resources employed (it shares with the Rossini the curiosity of a sole bass trombone, and the third and fourth horns only play in the first movement), and Chopin relies on the piano to do almost all the talking. Against this nevertheless, the opening for the orchestra is highly promising, and shows what the composer could do at his best. The middle movement is truly inspired, full of those hauntingly beautiful pianistic effects which made Chopin's fame; and the last ends brilliantly. (Incidentally, the second concerto was written a year earlier despite its later opus number - 21 - so this is the most mature orchestral work of Chopin's that we can appreciate)

INTERVAL (15 minutes)

Tocatta and Fugue in D minor Johann Sebastian Bach
 (1685-1750)
 arr. Colin Touchin

Written in the years he worked as court organist and chamber musician to Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Saxe-Weimar (1708-1717) this most popular piece has some similarity to works of the North German organ school, whose leading exponent was Dietrich Buxtehude, the organist and composer whom Bach heard only by walking 200 miles to his recital! There has even been doubt raised as to the true authorship of the work, but it is so well balanced, and the virtuosic organ writing is so idiomatic, that Bach seems a very difficult claimant to budge.

Sailor's Garland Alec Rowley
 (1892-1958)

(A Sea-Cycle for mixed voices - words by C. Fox Smith)
 Deep Water Jack: The Blue Peter:
 Sacramento: The Green Thicket:
 Rathlin Head.

One of the most familiar names amongst choral societies and young musicians for many years, Rowley has written for almost every combination of voices and instruments: this sample of his work is skilfully written for unaccompanied four part choir. There are seven songs in the full cycle, but any number may be performed, separately or in other combinations. The music is melodic, rhythmically varied, and full of vocal colour.

Polovtsian Dances from 'Prince Igor' Alexander Borodin
 (1834-1887)

Like Mussorgsky, Borodin was not a full time composer - he was a Professor of Chemistry at St. Petersburg. Nevertheless, he wrote a substantial amount of music, most of it being played fairly frequently - not bad for an amateur! Work on the opera 'Prince Igor' (based on a 12th century prose epic - 'The Story of Igor's Army') was interrupted after only a year when the second symphony became his prime objective: although most of the music was written by 1870, the work was first performed after his death, in 1890.

In Act II of the opera, Khan Kontchak, ruler of the Polovtsy, captures Igor and his followers. To entertain his royal captive the Khan arranges a feast with singing and dancing. It commences with the Slave girls song wistfully dreaming of their homeland beyond the sea briefly interrupted by shouts of praise to the warrior Khan, the girls then dance for him and their dancing becomes more frenzied as the music reaches its climax.

Tonight we are pleased to welcome members of several local societies who have joined the King Edward Society for a rousing finale to our summer concert.

MURRAY McLACHLAN whose home is in Aberdeen began to compose and play the piano at the age of seven. He also learned guitar and clarinet. He entered Chetham's in 1979 and decided to specialise in piano. In 1982 he was awarded the L.R.A.M. performers diploma and won the Scotland and Northern final of the B.B.C. 'Young Musician of the Year' contest. In 1983 he toured Scotland with the Scottish National Youth Orchestra and performed a Rachmaninov concerto at the Halle Proms.

This summer, he will be performing at fifteen concerts including one at the Purcell Room on the South Bank, London. Murray is at present reading music at Cambridge University.

We welcome him this evening for what is his second visit to the 'Gorton'.

KING EDWARD MUSICAL SOCIETY will be celebrating its Thirtieth anniversary next year. The Society was formed by a group of masters and ex-pupils of the King Edward Grammar School in Macclesfield and has both a choral section and orchestra. A list of the works they have performed in recent years ranges from Palestrina through Beethoven to Bernstein and we hope they enjoy their visit to Stockport to sing the Borodin.

As you will have gathered, the two Societies have a common bond in that Colin Touchin is the conductor of both.