



DULWICH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

NEWSLETTER April '07

Review of our last Concert

I find myself in a new role now as a member of the DSO audience. After over 50 years facing many different conductors, it is a quite different sensation to face the back of them (and judge whether they have polished the back of their shoes !). Seriously though, I would prefer to still be able to join my colleagues and play. I think I could almost get used to just listening (and enjoying) the music and not having to keep the place, count empty bars and then hopefully come in appropriately. I therefore approached the concert on 24 February, looking forward to a “mystery programme”.

The Nielson Helios Overture is not a work that either George or I know, but Julian’s notes were most comprehensive and made it fairly easy to follow the progress of the music. I found it interesting to listen to Nielson’s Overture of 1903, and to hear what changes in style emerged since the Great War, for example, his Symphony No 4 (1914-1916) and Symphony No 5 (1920). From the ‘cellos’ wonderful creeping in at the opening through Nielson’s use of Nordic folk and pastoral themes we were transported. The Overture then grew in excitement until gradually it relaxed and returned to “where we came in”, with ‘cellos gently settling down as at the beginning to bring the Overture to a close. It was good to be given the opportunity to hear Helios. The whole orchestra really rose to the occasion, and I must particularly mention the quality of the horns. The orchestra managed to portray, through strings, wind and brass, a picture of Helios with his horses, fire and light and all that the programme notes had led us to expect. All in all, a glittering and stunning performance.

The Dvorak Violin Concerto is a particular favourite of mine ever since I first played viola in the Sevenoaks Orchestra in 1970 with, believe it or not, Julian conducting and Frances Mason as soloist. When Dvorak wrote it in 1879, he sent it to Joseph Joachim, the dedicatee. The great violinist did some revision of the solo part, and Dvorak worked to make it acceptable to him. Joachim did nothing for 2 years other than saying that “some passages are too difficult to perform”. Joachim had said that he looked forward to playing the concerto, but did not think “in its present shape to be right for public performance”. I must say Naoko Miyamoto, with her absolutely phenomenal technique, found no such problems and her understanding of the work, together with her sensitivity and musicianship, contributed hugely to the evening’s performance as a whole, and the orchestra responded in their usual sympathetic way to her great artistry.

Brahms gave a great deal of encouragement to Dvorak and he in fact sat on a jury which awarded Dvorak the prestigious “Austrian State Prize” for several consecutive years. The two composers admired each other’s work and Dvorak has sometimes been called the Bohemian Brahms. It was Brahms who introduced Dvorak to Joachim. So it certainly seemed fitting to end the programme with a work of Brahms. We all realize that Brahms was influenced by Beethoven and of course by both Robert and Clara Schumann. At one time Brahms said “I shall never compose a symphony. You have no idea how someone like me feels when he hears such a giant marching behind him all the time.” After the 22 years of struggle Brahms had with his great Symphony No 1, his second symphony was achieved quickly afterwards. I listened for the three note turn at the beginning and then the three note horn figure. The first movement has quite complex rhythmic patterns and what sounded to me like a real two against three conflict, despite the generally peaceful mood. The second movement

immediately launches us into lots of offbeat tunes and continues the same way throughout, but Julian and the orchestra managed heroically all the complex changes of time, syncopation, silences and rhythmic sophistication. The third movement begins with delightful simple tunes, but “hold on to your hats” for once more it is interspersed with two against three! However I did find that the finale had a general happy feeling - and that the orchestra itself was also beginning to feel relaxed and happy, - maybe that was because it was nearly all over ! An enjoyable concert, which in parts reached dizzy heights, if not absolute perfection.

At the first performance given by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in 1877, conducted by Hans Richter, the third movement had to be repeated !

Mo Montrose, 11 March 2007

Dates for your diary

Our next rehearsal is the 17th April. All the dates are on our notice board on the music table and it's a good idea to write them in your diary. As we have next Tuesday, 10th April, off if anyone would like to meet for a drink then please contact Frances. Contact details at the back of this Newsletter.

Our next concert

12th May, All Saints, West Dulwich (entrance Lovelace Road).

Here are two very important pieces of information about this concert.

- in the afternoon rehearsal 2.30 – 5.30pm we will all be required to **wear our concert clothes** in order that professional photographs of the orchestra can be taken

- The concert will start at **7.30pm**. Please note that this is 15mins earlier than usual.
- Tim has the list of necessary jobs that will make the day run smoothly for us all. **That's three!**

Future concert dates –

Our last concert this season is on July 21st. Next season's concert dates are **November 24th 2007, March 8th 2008 and June 21st 2008**. It would be a good idea to put these dates in your diary now.

Committee Member Vacancy

After a few years on the committee Chris Burns has decided to leave. If any one is interested in joining then please speak to a member of the committee. A full list of members appears at the back of this Newsletter with their contact details.

Librarian vacancy

Louise Simon has been our librarian for 6 or more years now. When asked to describe the job Louise wrote the following –

"As the DSO doesn't have its own library, the purpose of the Librarian role is obtain the music for each forthcoming programme and then to ensure that it is returned to the lending library afterwards. The programmes are decided by the committee with guidance from Julian and Paula. The role entails:

1. *Checking availability and obtaining the orchestral sets from participating public libraries (there's a handy orchestral set online database to help with this) or from the publisher if the music is still in copyright.*
2. *Arranging payment (either an invoice for Ian or by re-imburement).*
3. *Producing the 'sign-out' sheets for each orchestral set and bringing the music to the first rehearsal.*
4. *Collecting the music at the end of the concert and ensuring that all parts have been returned (I usually do the detailed checking at home and follow up from there rather than hanging around after the concert).*
5. *Returning the music to the library, usually by post.*

Other aspects of the job include giving Paula a set of string parts to bow and photocopying music to send to extra players (percussion, harp etc).

I'm happy to help out over the transition period and also happy to answer any questions you have."

Marketing

The marketing sub-committee meet regularly to find more effective ways of promoting the orchestra. It is essential that the committee have feed-back from you the members. We particularly need to know how many concerts you would like to play in future seasons. So grab a questionnaire from the red music box and fill it in – even if you just answer that one question it would be very useful to the committee!

Charity

Our February concert interval collection for St Christopher's raised £151.40. It's really good that the amount collected has been steadily increasing.

Good News

Annabel (flute) writes -

"I am very well. The baby is due on 27 April. I will be spending the whole summer out in Granada, Spain and then will be coming back to play with the orchestra in September. I have been really missing it! Good luck in the Dulwich Festival and the summer concert. Say hi to everyone."

Mike (doublebass) writes -

"I was yo-yo-ing back and forth in and out of Kings; I did, indeed, have three admissions over some six weeks. I'm home now and attended for follow-up yesterday. I'd got to know the registrar quite well during my stay, and he put a spring in my step with his greeting; "Strewth! You're looking well!" So, I think I may be turning a corner. I haven't touched my bass for many weeks, but plan to start. It would be a delight to join up with the DSO again, and to play in the next concert if there's a place for me - but can I at least start practicing again and generally push myself. The last thing I'd wish to do is to keep you "swinging in the wind" as regards player availability, but let me see how I get on for a bit. Please give greetings to all, particularly those who toil in the lower depths".