

ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

STANBRIDGE HALL, BANBURY SCHOOL

TUESDAY 28th OCTOBER 1975

BANBURY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Leader: LAWRENCE FARBROTHER

CONDUCTOR

DONALD SIMPSON

JOHN MELVIN Clarinet

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PROGRAMME 8p

JOHANN STRAUSS THE YOUNGER, 1825 - 1899

Last Saturday was the 150th anniversary of the birth of Johann Strauss the Younger, and this concert, mainly of his works, is given in his honour. Vienna at the time was a city of optimism, despite political intrigue and a failing economy which eventually collapsed in the summer of 1873. Life was one long round of colourful and sophisticated balls where the infectious triple-time music of the Strauss family reigned supreme. Discouraged by his father from taking up any form of musical career, the young Johann nevertheless formed his own orchestra, giving his first concert a few days before his 19th birthday. He was an immediate success. When his father died five years later, he amalgamated the two orchestras and took them on a triumphant tour of Austria, Poland and Germany, returning the uncrowned King of Vienna.

OVERTURE: DIE FLEDERMAUS

Strauss

When *Die Fledermaus* (The Bat) was given its first performance on April 5th, 1874, at the Theater an der Wien, it was not a success, being withdrawn after only 16 performances. Perhaps it was too near the bone for the Viennese to stomach. The Stock Exchange had just collapsed. Life had suddenly become serious in Vienna; and the operetta's story was of the legendary Vienna and its crumbling. When it was revived in Berlin two months later, it was a great success. Although the libretto is weak, Strauss clothed it in some of his most enchanting music, and it has remained in the repertoire of opera houses ever since.

BALLETTMUSIK II: ROSAMUNDE

Franz Schubert, 1797-1828

Like Strauss, Schubert was not particularly clever at choosing suitable libretti. *Rosamunde* was his last work for the theatre, written for Helmina von Chezy's play. It had its first performance at the Theater an der Wien on December 20th, 1823; and had the music not been mainly instrumental, it must surely have been entombed with the incredibly poor libretto. The melodies of the ballets and entr'actes, and their poetic orchestration, so completely individual, are additional revelations of the Schubert of the B minor Symphony.

CONCERTO FOR CLARINET AND
ORCHESTRA IN A major KV622

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 1756-1791

Allegro

Adagio

Rondo (allegro)

Mozart was born in Salzburg, but spent much of his life in Vienna. The clarinet concerto, completed in the last year of his life, began to be composed as a work for the basset-horn - the clarinet was very much a new-fangled instrument. At the request of his friend Anton Stadler, the leading clarinettist of the day, Mozart recast it for the clarinet soon after he had completed the quintet for clarinet and strings. In the first movement the orchestra sets the scene in an extended introduction. The solo part exploits the clarinet's ability to cope with wide leaps between its highest and lowest registers - Mozart was alone among composers of his day in fully comprehending the character and possibilities of the instrument. The Adagio, in D major, stresses the singing qualities of the solo instrument against a rich orchestral background, with permutations of wind and strings. The third movement, a 6/8 rondo, returns to the original key. The first two of the three most important themes abound with Mozartian good humour, while the third has a tinge of sadness. Finally, the soloist races away in a series of brilliant coloratura passages.

INTERVAL

The Orchestra is grateful to Messrs. Haydn Heard for Box Office facilities.

MORGENBLATTER-WALZER Op. 279

Strauss

Morning Papers, a set of 5 waltzes, was composed in 1864 at the request of the Vienna Press Association (Concordia) for its annual ball. The introduction is a short 2/4 allegro and the extended coda recalls some of the waltz themes.

UNTER DONNER UND BLITZ - GALOP Op. 324

Strauss

Thunder and Lightning is a rousing piece calling to mind the circus ring, where indeed it is often played as acrobatic riders performing dare-devil feats while their horses gallop relentlessly round the ring.

KAISER-WALZER Op. 437

Strauss

In 1888 Strauss celebrated the 40th anniversary of the accession to the throne of the ageing, unfortunate Emperor Franz Joseph by writing this set of 4 waltzes. The work is remarkable for its delicate Mozartian introduction, written out of respect for the old Emperor's predilection for that composer's music. In his actual waltzes, intended for ballroom use, Strauss orchestrated on safety-first principles - any instruments except strings can be omitted without much loss, so that a small dance-band can cope; but in the introductions he often showed what an accomplished orchestrator he was.

TRITSCH-TRATSCH POLKA Op. 214

Strauss

The polka is a Bohemian dance which originated early in the nineteenth century, and by the 1840's it had spread over Europe like an epidemic, so that even streets and public houses were named after it. There are two fairly quick beats to the bar, with steps on the first three half-beats, and a sort of hesitation on the fourth. This polka, written in 1858, is typical of the dozens that Strauss wrote.

The Blue Danube is probably the best-known of his waltzes. It was composed in 1867 for the Vienna Male-Voice Choir, but in its choral form was not a great success. As an orchestral piece it became the sensation of the Austrian Gala Evening at the Paris Exhibition later in the year, and from Paris it went all round the world as a veritable Viennese National Anthem. The introduction states the theme of the first waltz on the horns in a slow 6/8 before breaking into waltz time, and is very much a mood-picture of the river's banks. There are 5 waltzes followed by an extended coda, which ends on the original theme.

RADETSKY MARCH Op. 229

Johann Strauss the Elder, 1804-1849

In the midst of the political upheavals of 1848, the elder Strauss a loyal supporter of his Emperor and of Austrian arms, celebrated the army's victories under its commander Radetsky by composing 'the march of all marches', which in fact sounds not so much fierce and sabre-rattling as exuberant and almost jolly. It had the unfortunate effect of setting popular feeling against the composer for his reactionary politics, and as his life drew to its close his reputation declined as his son's increased.

OUR CONDUCTOR

Donald Simpson is no stranger to the orchestra, having been a member for some eight years. Until our last concert he played 1st horn.

Born in Australia in 1929, he studied at the North Queensland Conservatorium of Music, at Queensland University, and at Queensland Teachers' College. He has been playing in orchestra and bands from the age of eight. While at University he became interested in singing and choral conducting, and sang as a lay clerk in Brisbane Cathedral for four years. He formed his first choir in 1947, and has been regularly conducting choirs ever since.

He came to England in 1962, and took up a teaching post in Winchester House School, Brackley, where he is now Director of Music and Joint Headmaster. He is well-known in the area as both a horn player and a conductor, especially of operatic productions at Winchester House.

1ST VIOLINS

Lawrence Farbrother (Leader)
Harry Wilks (Deputy Leader)
Geoffrey Kent
Max Ford
Joyce Higgins
Elizabeth Pollard
Ray Port

2ND VIOLINS

Gillian Walker
Deborah Pollard
Winifred Dodwell
John Ladlow
Christine Thomas
Marguerite Lykiard
Ann Bond
Sharon Grey
David Martin
Timothy Robinson

VIOLAS

Trevor Kilby
Harry Larder
Mariette Sele
Christopher Cadd

CELLOS

Phyllis Travis
Alister Thom
Walter Cheney
Julia Lykiard
Stephen Jakeman

BASS

William Kiddle

FLUTES

Sophie Matthews
Watson Harris

OBOES

Sheila Holmes
Lynda Manley
Debbie Pole

CLARINETS

Graham Pargeter
Louisa Mock

BASSOONS

Robert Eccles
Karen Ward

HORNS

Nigel Taylor
John Barnett

TRUMPETS

Robert Auld
Ronald Barnett
Philip Lord

TROMBONES

Malcolm Saunders
Raymond Martin
Nicholas Brion

TYMPANI

Nicholas Dickinson

PERCUSSION

Tony Sagers

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There are vacancies in most departments of the orchestra.
Inquiries may be made to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. H. Wilks,
17 Oakland Road, Banbury, telephone 3966.