

BANBURY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

(Leader: Geoffrey Kent)

Solo oboe: NICHOLAS DANIEL

Conductor: PHILIP SHAW

on Thursday 28th March 1985

at 7.30 p.m.

in St. Mary's Church, Banbury

LEONORE OVERTURE NO. 3. C MAJOR

Beethoven

If Beethoven were alive today he would almost certainly be regarded as a dangerous radical - or at best, as a naïve political crackpot, to be tolerated because of his genius as a composer. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity was a subversive slogan which had sparked the greatest political explosion of modern history. To Beethoven and to many another idealist of his age, these words were passions which could help shape the fate of mankind. They also helped shape some of Beethoven's greatest music, the two most obvious examples being his "*Eroica Symphony*" and his opera "*Fidelio*."

The passions also met defeats. There were leaders who persisted in viewing the French Revolution as an overgrown riot. Order was restored with a "whiff of grapeshot". Yet the ideas smouldered and from time to time they exploded. Those 18th century passions have become passions again in our time; and the impact of Beethoven's music should warn us, if our intelligence does not, that we ignore these passions at our peril.

The stature of this Overture grows. Or so it seems today. Of course we cannot really know how it affected the first audience when it burst from the pit of the little Viennese Theater an der Wien on the night of March 29th, 1806. At that first hearing it introduced Beethoven's revision, of the opera he always wished to have called "*Leonore*" and which always has been known as "*Fidelio*".

"*Fidelio*" is a "rescue opera" with a plot of a kind which first became popular in France during the Revolution of 1789. It glorifies defiance of tyranny and the heroic devotion of married lovers. In its final triumph of virtue and freedom Beethoven celebrated something greater than the deliverance of one individual victim of injustice.

It was characteristic of Beethoven that he wrote four overtures for "*Fidelio*" before he was satisfied. The "*Leonore*" Overture No.1 was composed for the first version of the opera, but was discarded, even before the premiere, as too simple for such a powerful work. In the "*Leonore*" No. 2, performed at the premiere on November 20th, 1805, in the Theater an der Wien, the music proved too difficult technically for the orchestra of Beethoven's day. Thus when Beethoven was persuaded to revise his opera for a revival the following March, he revised the Overture once more.

Once caught up in his revision, he ended by writing a virtually new overture on the same themes: the "*Leonore*" No.3. To most listeners the "*Leonore*" No. 3 had such stunning emotional effect that Beethoven later realised that it tended to dwarf his entire opera. The result was that he eventually wrote a fourth overture, a lighter piece, better adapted to its function in the theatre, and known today as the "*Fidelio Overture*". This fourth overture was performed for the 1814 revision of *Fidelio* and is the one that generally precedes the opera today.

"L'Horloge de Flore - The Flower Clock"
for solo Oboe and orchestra

Jean Francaix
Solo Oboe: - NICOLAS DANIEL

Jean Francaix, who was born in Le Mans in 1912, studied at the conservatories of Le Mans and Paris, and privately with Nadia Boulanger. His First Suite for piano was published when he was nine; since then he has produced a steady stream of operas, ballets, concertos, and concertos for various instruments, and chamber music. Very French in its elegance, concise and witty, his music has its roots in the suave neoclassicism of Poulenc and Stravinsky.

With the exception of this work, his music seems unaccountably neglected; at its best, it has irrepressible charm and high spirits, night-club exuberance, and a general air of carefree gaiety which at times recall Milhaud, although the scoring is usually lighter than in many of the latter's works.

The Swedish botanist Linné named a series of flowers according to the hour of the day at which each one blooms.

3 a.m.	Galant-de-Jour	Poisonberry
5 a.m.	Cupidone bleue	Blue Catananche
10 a.m.	Cierge à grandes fleurs	Torch Thistle
12 noon	Nyctanthe du Malabar	Malabar Jasmine
5 p.m.	Belle-de-Nuit	Deadly Nightshade
7 p.m.	Geranium triste	Mourning Geranium
9 p.m.	Silène noctiflore	Night flowering catchfly

SYMPHONY No. 9 in C MAJOR (The Great C Major) Schubert

Andante: Allegro ma non troppo; Andante con moto;
Scherzo: Allegro vivace; Finale; Allegro vivace

If ever a city had a right to consider itself the capital of the musical world, it would have been Vienna in the era which embraced Schubert's lifetime: the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Yet one wonders how deep or widespread the famous Viennese musicality really was. Mozart's neglect in Vienna was well known. His last three and greatest symphonies do not seem to have been performed at all during his lifetime. Nor did Schubert ever hear either of his two C Major Symphonies performed. There is a tradition that Schubert offered the "Great C Major" to the Vienna Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in the last spring before his death and that the society turned it down as being too long and too difficult to perform. The same illustrious society did refuse the work twice again on these grounds - once, a month after Schubert's death, and again in 1839 - after it had already been performed on March 21, 1839 by the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig!

Not until eleven years after Schubert's death, when Schumann "discovered" the manuscript of the Schubert Ninth (in the possession of the composer's brother Ferdinand) and persuaded Mendelssohn to perform it at the Gewandhaus concerts in Leipzig, was a Viennese orchestra found to follow the Leipzig example. The Symphony reached Leipzig, where it was performed, its greatness recognised, performed again and received with delighted and almost universal admiration.

Mendelssohn did more. He tried to persuade the London Philharmonic to perform the Symphony. But in rehearsal, the players, were laughingly and openly contemptuous of the music, and so once more Schubert's masterpiece was shelved.

Parisian musicians were not much better. Two years earlier in Paris the Concerts du Conservatoire had refused, in rehearsal, to go beyond the first movement of the Ninth Symphony. However, the still young New York Philharmonic did perform the work in 1851. But it was nearly fifty years (1897) before it was heard again in France. Londoners first heard it in 1856.

The Symphony is long, yet its inspiration never flags, from the foursquare theme that opens the first movement to the overwhelming coda of the *Finale*. When Schumann coined his famous phrase of the 'heavenly lengths' of the Symphony, his accent was on the first word. And he added: "How refreshing is this feeling of overflowing wealth

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NICHOLAS DANIEL was born in 1962 and first took up music singing in a church choir. He was a chorister at Salisbury Cathedral before going to the Purcell School, the specialist music school, in 1975. In 1980 he won the BBC Television Young Musician of the Year competition, since when he has given recitals and appeared as soloist, playing with many of the most famous British orchestras. There then followed three years at the Royal Academy of Music, studying under the late Janet Craxton, and Celia Nicklin. In 1982 Nicholas Daniel performed Michael Berkeley's Oboe Concerto at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London and gave the first performance of Robert Spearling's Oboe Concert, which was written for him. His recording of Michael Berkeley's Oboe Concerto is due to be released shortly.

He played Lutoslawski's Oboe and Harp Concerto at the Aldeburgh Festival in 1983 and at Dublin's 20th Century Music Festival; other Festivals performances include Cheltenham, Chichester and Salisbury.

An invitation to Hungary to appear in their international young Musicians platform Interforum has led to engagements in many European countries, for example Holland, where he recently performed a concerto on television.

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The Orchestra thanks the Rector and Church Wardens of St. Mary's Church.

The orchestra acknowledges the assistance of Banbury School in preparing and promoting this concert.

OUR NEXT CONCERT WILL BE ON SATURDAY 6th JULY in BLOXHAM PARISH CHURCH.

Orchestra Chairman

Orchestra Secretary