

THE DULWICH ORCHESTRA

ST. FAITH'S CHURCH, RED POST HILL, DULWICH

SATURDAY, 30TH MARCH, 1985, 7.45 p.m.

Rhapsody in Blue
Jonathan Higgins

Gershwin

Enigma Variations

Elgar

INTERVAL

Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor
Robert Bridge

Rachmaninov

Right from early times, there has been a tendency for the worlds of so-called 'serious' and 'light' music to drift apart, and George Dyson was one of the very few composers who has brought jazz into the concert-hall with any degree of success. Theopold in Blue was originally written for 'John Sand and Pinau' and first performed by Germaine in tremendous applause. Later it was arranged for orchestra by Ferde Grofé, and it is this version that is usually heard today, and will indeed be heard tonight.

Elgar composed his famous Enigma Variations in 1899, after he had been supervising on the piano for his wife, and showing how their various friends might play the tune. However, Elgar refused to reveal the source of the opening theme, saying only that against this theme could be fitted another theme which would also fit against this theme or be fitted another theme as to the name of this theme (Elgar no doubt intended to tease us). Perhaps it is a musical theme, perhaps it is the theme of friendship, but perhaps, also, we will be the poorer if we ever know the answer to the Enigma.

Variation 1 - C.A.E.

This is a portrait of the composer's wife, Caroline Alice, whose life, as he said, was 'a romantic and delicate inspiration.'

Variation 2 - W.D.S.P.

New David Stewart-Fowell was an amateur pianist who played in trios with Elgar and Basil Reville. It has been suggested that the rushing arpeggiators, represent the pianist's sight-reading problems.

Variation 3 - B.B.T.

Richard Baxter Townshend appeared in local amateur theatricals; he was a mimic and his voice would unexpectedly jump up an octave - so idiosyncrasy reflected in the music.

Variation 4 - W.W.B.

William Heath Baker was a country squire whose somewhat forceful manner - he had just slammed the door - is clearly detected in this brass variation.

Variation 5 - R.P.A.

Richard P. Arnold was a son of Matthew Arnold and a lover of serious conversation, which he constantly interrupted by unexpected witty remarks.

Variation 6 - Tachei

Isabel Fitton was one of Elgar's viola pupils from Malvern, hence the prominence given to that instrument.

Variation 7 - Troysie

Arthur Troyte Griffith was a Malvern architect; the typical and lower strings suggest, according to Elgar, Griffith's 'maladroit essays to play the pianoforte the final departing aim records that the effort proved to be in vain.'

Variation 8 - W.S.

The music was suggested by the house and family of Miss Winifred Morbury, who lived near Worcester, and who is identified by a musical laugh on the woodwind. This variation leads straight into

Variation 9 - Elmer

Elmer was the eight number of the Bible, and Elgar, in best crossword style, has connected this with his friend and musical adviser A.J. Jaeger - Jaeger being German for hunter. Jaeger and he had been talking about the works of Beethoven's slow movements, and this variation is a tribute to that occasion.

Variation 10 - Intermesso Dorabella

Miss Dora Penny, who had a slight hesitation in speech which Elgar carefully introduces into the music.

Variation 11 - G.S.S.

George P. Sinclair was organist at Hereford Cathedral, but this entertaining variation is about his bullock, Sam, who is depicted as slipping down the steep bank of the River Wye, appearing along to a landing place, and joyfully returning to his master with a triumphant bark.

Variation 12 - B.W.W.

Basil W. Revillon, the other member of the trio referred to above, was a cellist and 'a serious and devoted friend'. Elgar has provided a supremely lyrical solo for this instrument - a foresta of the Cello Concerto that appeared 25 years later.

Variation 13 - ***

The identity concealed by the asterisks is Lady Mary Trefusis who, it has been suggested, was on a sea voyage at the time of the composition. Cruise suggest the liner's engine, and the solo clarinet quotes from Mendelssohn's 'Cala Sea and Prosperous Voyage'

Variation 14 - E.D.U.

This finale is Elgar's portrait of himself - 'Ed' was a private nickname. In it he makes reference musically to two great influences on his life by quoting C.A.E. and Elmer again. Then the work concludes with a broad presentation of the original theme, which retains its enigma.

In October 1908 Sergel Rachmetov arrived in New York for his first tour of America, bringing with him his newly composed Third Piano Concerto. He was modest about the work declaring that he 'had no faith in himself', but the work has become one of the most popular concertos in the repertoire. The beautiful, nostalgic opening theme is unmistakably Russian in character, whilst the whole work seems to evoke a picture of a bygone Russia before the Revolution.

There are three movements: Allegro non tanto - Intermesso:Adagio - Alla Breve.

Born in 1929, Robert Bridge studied as a Foundation Scholar at the Royal College of Music where he won the Joy Scott prize and gained a first class honours in the London B.Mus. Degree. Subsequent scholarships from the Leverhulme and Countess of Munster Trusts enabled him to further his studies with Niel Imslow in London and Margulis in Freiburg. More recently he was selected by Murray Perahia to participate in Mieczyslaw Horowitz's master class at the 1984 Aldeburgh Festival.

His South Bank solo debut in 1982 received outstanding reviews and he has since given numerous recitals and concerto performances here and abroad, notably for the Manchester Midway Concerts series and at the Greenwich and Montpelier Festivals. As a chamber musician he has performed Schubert with David Wilson-Johnson, Messiaen with Jeanne Loriod, accompanied master classes for Ruggiero Ricci and Schwarzkopf, and as a regular member of the Koenig Ensemble has broadcast live for the BBC from St. John's, Smith Square.

Jonathan Higgins read music at Cambridge University and pursued his performing career as an Exhibitioner at the Royal College of Music where he won numerous major piano prizes. Whilst a student he performed extensively in this country and abroad including Mozart and Donizetti concertos in France and with CMC and the solo part in Messiaen's 'Oiseaux Exotiques' with the Royal College of Music 20th Century Ensemble in London. He was subsequently awarded postgraduate bursaries to study chamber music with Peter Pattinger at the International Musician Seminar at Prussia Cove and solo recitals with Tams Tomasi at Burlington.

In 1983 he made his London debut at the Purcell Room and later that year gave recitals at the Wigmore Hall, and at St. John's, Smith Square with the violinist Krystofz Szusterman. During 1984 he toured Italy, Germany, and Spain as solo pianist with the Basel Ballet Company performing works by Stravinsky, Liszt and Rachmaninov.