

# philharmonia orchestra

## **March 2009 – Podcast Transcription**

### **Christian Jones – Principal Bass Trombone, Philharmonia Orchestra**

Welcome to the podcast, brought to you from Symphony Hall in Birmingham where we'll be playing *Gurrelieder* tonight as part of our series, *City of Dreams*. First, we travel to Watford with Gustavo Dudamel where he's been working with three young conductors as part of the Allianz Conductors' Academy.

### **Gustavo Dudamel – conductor**

Ok, we'll try one more time from the very beginning.

*Extract from Mahler's Symphony No. 5*

It's a little bit late, horns...

### **Matthew Coorey – Student conductor**

We've spent one week observing the London Philharmonic; we had one session with them a couple of months ago and now we're all back in London for March to spend the bulk of the week with the Philharmonia this time. This includes two sessions: one which we're about to have in about one hour with Gustavo Dudamel working on Mahler's 5th Symphony. Our next session is on Sunday and that's with Esa-Pekka Salonen. What we're leading to is a concert in March at the Royal Festival Hall with the Philharmonia Orchestra.

### **Anna-Marie Helsing – Student conductor**

Well today has been exciting because almost the whole day has been about Mahler 5. We have followed the rehearsal since the morning and seen how he works on that piece.

### **Gustavo Dudamel**

I love this. [To cellos] Give a little bit more in bar 3, but a little. It's only about the intensity, not about the dynamic because otherwise it would be *forte*. Ok, from the upbeat.

### **Matthew Coorey**

For me this evening is about three very exciting things. First of all we're getting to conduct Mahler. Secondly we're working for the first time with one of world's great orchestras, the Philharmonia. Thirdly the fact that we've got someone as brilliant and inspirational as Gustavo Dudamel looking over our shoulders makes this evening rather special – I think daunting is the word.

### **Gustavo Dudamel**

[To Coorey] Good, and the glissandos? [Pointing to violins] they are still playing. If you have two girlfriends you have to take care of both, not only one.

### **Matthew Coorey**

[Laughs] Ok. [To cellos and violins] I think that makes you both my girlfriends, I hope that's ok. Roll on 6 please.

### **Christian Schumann – Student conductor**

My heart beats like crazy because if you are able to deal with that kind of pressure, with that situation you learn so much.

### **Christian Schumann**

[To the orchestra] That was better.

### **Gustavo Dudamel**

[To Schumann] Before they go to rest, try number 2 one more time. Look at this very important thing: where you start, here [points at score] this is very *cantabile*, there's a lot of movement. Have the control because when you are in 2/2 it's like this [makes well-defined conducting gestures.]

### **Christian Schumann**

It was wonderful, it was kind of hard to get into the material but as soon as you feel comfortable with what is going on it is just amazing.

### **Anna-Marie Helsing**

He is such a positive person and it feels like the way he conducts, he's also like a human being. Very energetic, positive – and encouraging, of course.

### **Gustavo Dudamel**

[To Helsing] There are a lot of beautiful things you can do. Our instrument is not the baton, this is not true. Our instrument is all of our body. You can jump, you can move, you can dance, you can do whatever and the orchestra will follow. If you do this [makes a gesture] they will play staccato, or if you do it like this, it's legato. [To orchestra] Last time, sorry.

*Helsing conducts*

### **Gustavo Dudamel**

[To Helsing] Good. And *conforto*, the feeling that you have all the sound in your hands. Here, on the left it's important. Good, give the crescendo to the violas and the cellis. This crescendo, yes. Perfect. Because there were a lot of things here [makes broad conducting gestures] but you have to turn (to the orchestra).

### **Matthew Coorey** (later that day)

It was very exciting, I enjoyed it. It's a great thing to do for the first time. I certainly feel very happy having had a test run with a Rolls Royce Orchestra on music like this.

### **Anna-Marie Helsing**

If we learn anything here it's probably that we have so much to learn.

### **Gustavo Dudamel**

I was part of this academy and this was something very important not for my career, for my life.

### **Christian Jones**

The Allianz Conductors' Academy culminates in a performance with the Philharmonia Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall on the 26th March. Don't miss this chance to hear the next generation of conductors.

The Philharmonia's series, *City of Dreams* is now underway and continues with concerts in London and across Europe. As part of our series of films about *City of Dreams* Esa-Pekka Salonen went to meet the family of Arnold Schoenberg to find out what it was like growing up with the father of serialism.

### **Esa-Pekka Salonen – Principal Conductor, Philharmonia Orchestra**

So, we are at 116 North Rockingham Avenue. This is the house where Arnold Schoenberg lived since 50-something. Or was it even earlier than that?

### **Ronald Schoenberg**

It was earlier, he moved here in 1936 I believe, right?

### **Laurence Schoenberg**

First he was in New York and Boston...

### **Ronald Schoenberg**

And then Hollywood for a very short while – West Hollywood I think it was – and then he got this house where he lived until he died in 1951.

We, like all children thought it was normal, right? But we had parents that spoke to us in German mostly, we answered in English mostly, and we developed what my father called “Schönster Language” which was a mixture of English and German. Really, I think it was relatively normal, other than we had a father who was very old.

### **Laurence Schoenberg**

Actually I would have liked to have said we grew up here and we had to learn every one of his works, we had to study twelve-tone. That’s probably what most people would have expected but in fact, it was quite the opposite, as you’ll find out. We grew up as American children growing up in Los Angeles of all places.

### **Esa-Pekka Salonen**

But there was maybe not a large, but quite an important circle of emigrants from Germany and Austria after the war so did the families have a lot to do with each other?

### **Laurence Schoenberg**

I remember the cellist, Feuerman coming here, but that’s because his name was ‘Feuerman’. What could be better for a child than the ‘fireman’ coming? So did I appreciate the people that were here? Well, we knew the Kolisch Quartet but not because it was the Kolisch Quartet but because it was Uncle Rudy. I think with Klemperer who was here we always commented on how tall he was and how he had to bend down to get through the arch over here [points].

### **Ronald Schoenberg**

Klemperer was here a lot. Klemperer was, in a sense, a good friend when they weren’t fighting, and as Larry said, he always had to stoop to get through the arch. But I always had a feeling that as tall as he was and as short as my father was, that he was actually looking up at my father.

### **Laurence Schoenberg**

Again, from our perspective, things I remember vis-à-vis people coming over would have been his students. He would bring his composition students here for a performance. Later on, in this very room we’re sitting in – and this I do remember quite well – is that every Sunday he would have his classes here. Those would be the private classes where there would be ten or twelve people and he would prepare those lessons. I remember clearly him preparing lessons because he did his preparation on large-sized butcher paper and then had it all on an easel. And he had designed a staff maker with crayons. I remember being able to draw the lines – that was my musical contribution!

### **Esa-Pekka Salonen**

Did you have any kind of idea of your father’s position in the world? How famous he was and how important he was?

### **Ronald Schoenberg**

Really, very little because of course, here he was not recognised very much at all. Once in a while we would be told that. And at least my feeling was, “Well, yes” but you know, we were California kids.

### **Laurence Schoenberg**

Fame here has been defined by wealth and popularity, neither of which he had so there’s definitely a contradiction when someone tells you that your father’s very famous in Los Angeles. That wouldn’t be defined as being famous.

### **Esa-Pekka Salonen**

But you didn’t see him as a bitter man?

### **Ronald Schoenberg**

I wouldn’t say he wasn’t bitter at times. He certainly was bitter at times; you can see that from his writings and the things he’s known to have said, but he was willing to teach. I mean, if you can imagine somebody whose pupils in Europe were Webern and Berg and then he’s teaching music appreciation to people who are basically in school

because they're athletes, it's quite a different thing. He did have a love of teaching, though and he wanted to give something to everyone he taught, to the extent that when he taught his composition classes he would give separate examinations to each student based on what that person could or should know. He was a great believer that people should know the basics. There's a story of someone coming to study with him and wanting to learn his tricks – the tricks of the trade – and he took him into his study behind us and said, "First, you have to learn everything that's in here. I know every note that's in here," and it was the complete works of Beethoven, "And then we go on from there."

The music we heard was the music on the radio and he would listen to that religiously and see if they would play Schoenberg. They would have a programme of all their coming concerts and Larry would get paid 10 cents if he could find a piece by our father that was being played. It happened very infrequently.

### **Laurence Schoenberg**

Either way, I didn't get wealthy on that!

### **Ronald Schoenberg**

That was the music behind you. We had stacks of records they used to play, and that was my father's music, some of it.

### **Laurence Schoenberg**

One of the first things they did on 70 recordings, one of the early things, believe it or not, was *Gurrelieder*. Now, can you imagine *Gurrelieder* on less than three minutes a side? Imagine how big this thing is and how you're constantly flipping them. I certainly heard more Strauss music than I heard Schoenberg music, growing up so we would have heard an awful lot of Strauss waltzes. We must have had little records of those.

### **Esa-Pekka Salonen**

So this was a mind that was almost never completely at rest, there was something going on all the time. Did you experience this?

### **Laurence Schoenberg**

A hundred years ago in 1909 I think he got a patent for a music typewriter where he actually designed the technology that one would need to type out a score. So he was always looking for, quote: "A better way to solution."

### **Ronald Schoenberg**

Everything turned into an invention for him or turned into some project for him.

### **Esa-Pekka Salonen**

So it's not a coincidence that this man was one of great inventors in all history of music.

### **Christian Jones – Principal Bass Trombone, Philharmonia Orchestra**

Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and Zemlinsky's *Lyrical Symphony* in London on 12<sup>th</sup> March. Esa-Pekka returns to London on the 22<sup>nd</sup> for Berg's *Kammerkonzert* with Mitsuko Uchida and Christian Tetzlaff and Mahler's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony.

Other concerts this month include a Classic Relief special in aid of Comic Relief on the 7<sup>th</sup>. For one night only, classical stars and the Philharmonia Orchestra present an extraordinary evening of laughter and great music with presenter and conductor, Rainer Hirsch. Juraj Valcuha leads the Haydn and Mendelssohn anniversary celebrations in Leicester with a performance including Haydn's Cello Concerto in D and Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony*. The Music of Today series continues with three works from composer, Oliver Knussen. Presented by Tom Service, in conversation with the composer this free concert is a great way to hear new music. The Philharmonia joins the Guildford International Music Festival on the 21<sup>st</sup>, performing Mozart's Requiem and Symphony No. 40. Benjamin Zander conducts a one-off performance of Mahler's 2<sup>nd</sup> Symphony at Westminster Cathedral on the 24<sup>th</sup> with the Bach Choir and Martyn Brabbins conducts Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and Copland's *Appalachian Spring* in Bedford on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The Philharmonia's virtual café will be at the Royal Festival Hall for the next month. Do join us here to find out more about Vienna, listen to live music on concert days and even enjoy some authentic Viennese treats.

Join us next month for interviews with Nicola Benedetti and Lorin Maazel and a guided tour through Rachmaninov's Second Piano concerto with the pianist Nikolai Lugansky.