

Podcast 4 – December 2007 – Transcription

Dominic Worsley (Double Bass):

Hello and welcome to the Philharmonia Orchestra video podcast. This week we will be hearing from pianist and conductor András Schiff, we will be following percussionist Pete Fry, and I'll be having a look at the new online Philharmonia shop.

In December we welcome back pianist and conductor András Schiff for the second part of his Schubert series, but this is more than just a series of concerts for the maestro his connection with Schubert runs much deeper.

András Schiff:

What we have here is a song without words. It is not called *song without words* that was invented by Mendelssohn later; but it's the result of a great song composer who wrote for a singing voice with a piano part and putting the two together and played by one and the same instrument. We have the melodic line, and again we have again something connected with water. We have the bass that is played by *celli* and *double bass*, and together they form a really wonderful unity.

In my opinion, he was a fantastic writer for the piano. Composition does not come from inspiration alone it's very hard work and discipline, you have to do it regularly, and Schubert composed every single day of his life, all morning until two o'clock in the afternoon. He spent the rest of the day taking walks in the Vienna woods or in the surroundings, and spending regularly a lot of time with his friends. Sitting in taverns, and having a very good time with artists who would have had a mutual interest and understanding. Indeed they were the first ones and the only ones in his lifetime who appreciated him.

Of all the great composers, Schubert touches me the most, it just makes me cry most of the time, and other music seldom achieves that.

Dominic Worsley:

You can see András Schiff in London on the 6th and 9th of December at the Royal Festival Hall. You can also find recordings of András Schiff from the first part of his Schubert series in our newly opened online shop.

The online shop allows you to download recordings of live Philharmonia Orchestra concerts to your mp3 player or to burn to a CD. We have got some fabulous performances available; Sir Charles Mackerras's Beethoven Symphony No 9, Christoph von Dohnányi conducting Brahms and Dvorák, and a whole series of Elgar recordings conducted by Sir Andrew Davis. Not only are these fabulous recordings but they are also higher than CD recordings, and available for only £1 per track or movement. So a four movement symphony is only £4. So why not visit the new shop at www.philharmonia.co.uk/shop and try it out. If you are new to downloading then we have quick start guides to help you and our box office team will be on the end of the phone if you are really stuck.

You can also buy gift vouchers for your friends and family, I am buying one for percussionist Pete Fry after he lets us barge into his house and follow him around for the day!

Pete Fry (percussionist):

Well, I have been a south Londoner all my life I was just born over there and I went to school just over there, but because it was docklands it was a no-go area. When people used to say to me they used to live in Rotherhithe, I have a really good friend who lives down the road, I went why do you want to live there for! What I can remember as a kid, is literally that it was big industrial docklands. The big ships were coming in and there were always foghorns on the Thames all the time, because I was just down in Greenwich there, you could hear the foghorns on the river all the time. To look at it now it's all been planted out with trees, you can walk into London, cycle into London, and you have got this fantastic fresh air, trees and water. I absolutely love it!

When I first started playing I joined the English National Opera, I sort of thought "well I can't spend the rest of my life here" so I decided to freelance, so I left and I freelanced; and I started going to the Philharmonia and David Corkhill said to me "would you like to come and do a trial for the Philharmonia," well I said "I'd love to." So I did and I had a great time, I had a great few weeks. I went to Japan and played some fantastic repertoire and then they offered me the job, so I thought, "well yeah, if the jobs going to be like the trial I'll take it!" that was about twenty odd years ago, no twenty-two years ago; I have been there ever since.

(In Bedford):

Ok, I am on my way to the Bedford Corn exchange now, walking down from the station; we should be there in about five minutes. Plenty of time to get the instruments out and then maybe have time for a cup of tea?

Dominic Worsley (in Bedford Corn Exchange):

It's all dark!

Pete Fry (in Bedford Corn Exchange):

It's ok though, you are alright you won't trip over anything. There must be some lights somewhere, oh no the boxes must be in the other room, I think they must have put the boxes somewhere else, they'll be outside.

...overture, which is the bass drum and side drum, actually hang on a minute. No, sorry we don't need the side drum today! It's just the cymbals and triangle and glockenspiel, which is already up there.

(At home):

Usually speaking you have got to not to fall in the gap there, between keeping strict time and bending with everybody else, going with the flow.

Sometimes the least you have got to play the more you really have to be on the ball, because if you miss it then you really look silly. People may turn around and say "well that's all he has got to do!" but after a while you know what to do, you know how pieces go, you know your cues, you know when to come in. so if it's

during a rehearsal, you can surreptitiously read your book or do a cross-word or something, and then, "oh it's my cue" get up, play, sit down and carry on where you were. But the first few times I would have played a piece with say a couple of cymbal crashes in, I would have just counted every bar until I knew exactly where I was going to come in, or listened to the piece at home and made sure I knew it well.

Being a percussion player you are always at the back of the orchestra as well, so you have to anticipate quite a lot sometimes because your sound will be slightly later.

Percussion is usually just used as a colour; you come in during various bits of the piece but not throughout usually, unless its contemporary music quite often we will be playing much, much more. It's much more of a percussion feature.

Going to get train home.

You have got to listen and keep with what you hear most of the time and you should be ok, but there are other times when you have to push it, because if you see that the conductor wants to push it on you have to go with him. So you have to imagine you are down there with him and try and work out what is going on down at the front of the orchestra and stick with them.

It's a great orchestra that is the thing about a great orchestra everyone listens to everyone else, so it all gels.

Dominic Worsley:

You can see Pete Fry and myself performing at some of the following concerts: the Philharmonia Orchestra and András Schiff perform the second part of our Schubert series at the Royal Festival Hall on 6 and 9 December with a further date at the Bedford Corn Exchange on the 8 December. The programmes include Schubert Symphony No 3, Piano Sonata in A minor and Symphony No 6, as well as the famous unfinished symphony. Also in December we would like to invite you to the dance on Thursday 13 December at the Royal Festival Hall with an evening of Strauss family waltzes including the suite from Der Rosenkavalier. Looking a bit further ahead we have got some fantastic concerts in January with Vladimir Ashkenazy; and in February the start of our Messiaen celebrations with performances of the incredible Turangalila Symphonie and Oiseaux exotiques, conducted by our principal conductor designate Esa-Pekka Salonen.

We hope you have enjoyed this podcast, you can see longer versions of some of the features of this podcast at www.philharmonia.co.uk where you can also book tickets online and find out more about the Philharmonia Orchestra. Our next podcast will be released in the New Year and you can subscribe to the series by visiting the Philharmonia website or iTunes. We look forward to seeing you all very soon.