

CONCERT IN MEMORY OF MIKE WALKER

Aeolian Sinfonia of North London - Thursday 8th December 2022, 8pm

Don Bosco Hall, Our Lady Help of Christians Parish Centre, Falkland Road, Kentish Town, London NW5 2XT

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791): *The Magic Flute, Overture, K 620*

Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute* was written in 1791, the last year of his short life. It's in the form of Singspiel, a popular and innovative form combining singing and spoken dialogue. The libretto was by Emanuel Schikaneder. Mozart had been collaborating with his theatrical troupe for some years. Both men were Freemasons. The masonic significance of the number three is reflected in the overture by its key of E flat (containing three flats) and three striking chords played on the brass at the beginning and in the middle of the Overture.

The opera was premiered in September at Schikaneder's theatre in Vienna two months before Mozart's death. Mozart conducted, Schikaneder played Papageno and Mozart's sister-in-law, the Queen of the Night. It was hugely successful, attracting large audiences and many performances. Mozart went to hear it often, with friends and relatives. It has remained popular, being the most frequently performed opera today.

It contains a typical instrumental overture in classical three-section sonata form: exposition, development and recapitulation. The slow sombre opening with tutti 'hammer blows' leads to the first theme of the Allegro introduced by the strings, soon joined by the winds. The second theme in the dominant key of B flat major is introduced by ascending scales, followed by interchanges between the woodwinds. Most of the overture is a merry fugal romp, incorporating light-hearted folk songs and popular idioms from the German Singspiel but every now and again the more serious sombre fanfares intrude.

Gustav Holst (1874–1934): *A Somerset Rhapsody, Op 21*

This piece, dedicated to Cecil Sharp, is based on three folk tunes from his collection, and tells a story. It was premiered in 1910 in the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, London's prime concert venue at the time and home to the 'Proms', but destroyed in the Second World War. Holst regarded it as his first major success and the work has remained popular.

In the first tune, a sheep-shearing song, 'It's a Rosebud in June', a youth and a girl are courting in a quiet country scene. The oboe melody, accompanied by strings, is then developed by the violins. A military arch with timpani and trumpets heralds the arrival of soldiers, who persuade the youth to enlist and go to war. The oboe is heard again but the main melody of the second tune, 'High Germany', is played by brass and lower strings, with winds and upper strings joining later. In the final tune, 'the Lover's Farewell', the lovers part. The soldiers are heard marching into the distance, leaving the girl alone. There is a recapitulation of all three tunes before the return of the opening oboe melody and the original pastoral calm.

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826): *Clarinet Concerto No 1 in F minor, Op 73*

Allegro; Adagio ma non troppo; Rondo: Allegretto

Weber, Mozart's cousin by marriage, wrote this concerto for his friend, the virtuoso clarinetist, Heinrich Baermann. Composed in 1811 when he was 24 years of age, it was commissioned by King Maximilian I Joseph of Bavaria, who attended the premiere in Munich. Weber, who had a great gift for melody and a complete understanding of the capabilities of the clarinet, composed only a sparse solo line, leaving the performer to interpret and embellish it. Four decades later, Baermann's son Carl published a more elaborate edition based on his father's interpretation. Today various editions exist, ranging from Weber's simple original to Carl Baermann's more elaborate 1868 score.

The first movement is innovative for its time. It opens with the cellos playing the main theme. After a tutti chord, the violins continue the melody until the soloist enters with a 'con duolo' passage, ending with a run. After a general pause, the cellos restate the main theme in D flat major. There follow more interchanges between soloist and orchestra. Triplets on the clarinet lead into Baermann's virtuosic cadenza and fast demi-semi quavers. The orchestra returns in the home key of F minor. More triplets from the clarinet lead into a virtuosic semi-quaver passage. Next the horn enters. There are dotted rhythms in the orchestra and a chromatic scale in the clarinet before the movement ends.

The second movement in C major starts in the style of an early romantic opera. It is distinguished by an unusual horn trio in the central section – in this evening's performance played by horn, clarinet and bassoon. The movement begins in C major, modulates to C minor and its relative major E flat, before returning to C major. The contrasting third movement is a rondo, a typical ending to a three-movement concerto.

The music should finish just after 9pm. At the end of the concert, please stay for refreshments.

We ask you, before you leave, to please donate generously to the **SanKTus Welfare Project**, which provides help to homeless and vulnerable people, the elderly and those with support needs in the local community. The cost of providing these valuable services is currently rising sharply. You can make a cash donation in the hall before you leave, which we will forward, or send a donation using the instructions found on the website sanktus.org

Mike Walker (born on 24 April 1935, died on 11 September 2022, aged 87) played saxophone with tonight's orchestra for several decades, transposing horn and other parts as needed. He also played in a sax quartet and in other orchestras, taught maths and physics, wrote erudite articles about politics and cosmology, one of which proposed a 'Cosmic Omniverse Hypothesis' as a replacement for the Big Bang theory, and in a previous life worked in the film and TV industry in the UK and USA.

Aeolian Sinfonia of North London, active for many years, was conducted for most of these by the late Roy Budden, who founded the orchestra at least thirty-five years ago as the Kensington Sinfonia. Known as one of North London's friendliest orchestras, we rehearse on Thursday evenings during school term time. If you know of anyone who would like to join us, we always need string players, and often extra woodwind and brass. Future concerts will be listed at aeoliansinfonia.com - send us a message via the site and ask to be added to our mailing list.

Violin 1

Elizabeth Ann Binks (leader)
Pamela White
Mariko Yamamoto
Peng Nian

Violin 2

Donna Chapman
Gita Croft
Sophie Croft
Piyarat Martin

Viola

Chris Norden

Cello

Andrew Williams
Ruth Williams
Priscilla Eyles

Bass

Paul Martin

Conductor

Keith Bramich

Flute

Liz Valentine
Sim Murray

Oboe

David Williamson
Victoria Ward

Clarinet

Nick Charles
Nigel Brockmann

Bassoon

Bryan Ogilvie

Horn

Luke Stevens

Trumpet

Ben Wong

Timpani

Ankie Postma

Nick Charles has worked as a professional saxophonist doubling clarinet and flute in the Big Band and Dance Band field. On the side, he studied classical clarinet privately, taking some lessons from Leslie Craven, Jack Brymer and Andrew Marriner. He plays First Solo Clarinet in the Paddington Station Wind Band, which appears on Friday evenings. He also plays First Clarinet in Blackfriars Sinfonia.

Elizabeth Ann Binks studied at the Guildhall School of Music and was awarded the AGSM and the Salzmann Scholarship. She has worked with the Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic, Scottish Opera, BBC Concert Orchestra and D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, and has led the Virtuosi of London.

Keith Bramich studied conducting with Lawrence Leonard, Rodolfo Saglimbeni, George Hurst, Paul Sarcich and Mary Mogil. He joined the orchestra in 2008, and is also a regular guest conductor of other ensembles.

We are grateful to Father John Deehan and Our Lady Help of Christians Church, to Rose and Richard from Sanktus for extra refreshments and publicity, to Liz Valentine for writing programme notes and to various members of other local orchestras and the wider music community for their help in putting on this concert.