

SPRING ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

Aeolian Sinfonia of North London - Thursday 23rd March 2023, 8pm

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

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826): *Euryanthe, Overture* (Op 81, J 291)

Weber's opera *Euryanthe* is a German grand heroic-romantic opera, composed during his time as music director at Dresden, and premiered in Vienna in 1823. Weber's parents were members of a theatrical troupe. However, this opera marked a departure from the *Singspiel* tradition, in which the music was interspersed with spoken dialogue, and heralded the more musical approach developed by Wagner. Based on a thirteenth-century French romance, the libretto was by Helmina von Chézy. Although the initial reception was enthusiastic, its success did not last, the libretto being considered weak, and it is now rarely performed.

The lively and varied overture draws on thematic material occurring later in the opera. Motifs represent specific characters or situations, a technique later made famous by Wagner. The movement opens with a burst of energy, introducing two themes associated with the hero of the opera. The strings rise up and down in triplets; the woodwinds play a military dotted rhythm in the dominant key. These two patterns recur throughout the piece. There is a brief pause – for recovery? – before a more lyrical section begins. But soon the music speeds up again with a return to the fiery vivacity of the opening. Another pause heralds the much slower, meditative central section symbolising the ghost of the hero's dead sister. Finally, speed and intensity increase to a lively ending.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847): *Allegro agitato* (First movement of Symphony No 3 in A minor, Op 56) *Introduction: Andante con moto – Allegro un poco agitato*

This is actually the last of Mendelssohn's five symphonies but was the third to be published (hence No 3). Mendelssohn records that the initial inspiration for the symphony and the opening theme came to him on a visit to the ruined chapel of Holyrood House (once inhabited by Mary Queen of Scots), during a walking tour of Scotland in 1829 when he was twenty years old - hence its being dubbed the 'Scottish' symphony. Mendelssohn continued working on these initial sketches while touring Italy but, unable to make progress, set it aside after 1831. He seems to have returned to the first movement in the late 1830s, finally completing the symphony in 1842. It was premiered in the Leipzig Gewandhaus in March that year and later performed in England in the presence of Queen Victoria, who gave permission for its dedication to her.

The dark and stormy first movement is in A minor and, like all the other movements of the symphony, is in sonata form. The slow introduction is unusually scored for woodwinds and divided violas. The *Allegro* introduces the first main theme – a variation on the introduction – played *pianissimo* by violins and clarinet. The second subject is a plaintive melody in the dominant key. The orchestration is dense with curious and exhilarating modulations introducing the development section and the coda. At the end of the concise but effective development section, the cellos have a striking counter-melody that continues in the recapitulation of the main theme and the return of the introduction in the coda, which latter also contains the famous chromatic 'wave'.

Adrian Rumson (born 2000): *Violin Concerto No 2 in G Minor / D Major* (2019; first performance) *Praeludium; Menuet & Trio; Arietta; Rondo Finale*

Dedicated to Keith Bramich, Elizabeth Ann Binks, and the Aeolian Sinfonia of North London, *Violin Concerto No 2 in G Minor / D Major* is a work for solo violin and orchestra written by young Canadian composer Adrian Rumson. The piece is the spiritual sequel to *Violin Concerto in F*, written in 2016 and premiered by the Mornington Sinfonia in 2018.

The first movement, *Praeludium*, is a slow, dramatic expression culminating in a massive climax. Filled with impressionistic gestures and textures, this movement stands out as a unique beginning to the work as a whole. Following the end of the *Praeludium*, in classical style, is a dance; a *Menuet and Trio* that evokes form and simplicity in contrast to the previous movement. Continuing the theme of simplicity and grace is the *Arietta*, in which the soloist creates an expressive line over a gentle, pulsing harmony. The final movement is an energetic *Rondo-Finale*, and, in true *Rondo-Finale* fashion, this movement is filled with references to the other movements in reshaped and unexpected forms. The soloist leads the orchestra in both lyrical moments and virtuosic flourishes, leading to one final cadenza from the soloist and a bright cadence from the orchestra.

Adrian Rumson is a young Canadian composer and tuba player from Calgary, Alberta, born in 2000. He began composing during his secondary education and has written works for everything ranging from massive orchestras to small chamber groups, inspired sometimes by Beethoven and his contemporaries, but more often by late Romantic and early twentieth century composers.

Elizabeth Ann Binks studied violin at the Guildhall School of Music and was awarded the AGSM and the Salzman 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. As a soloist she has violin concertos by J S Bach, Beethoven, Bruch, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Adrian Rumson, Saint-Saëns and Vivaldi in her repertoire.

Keith Bramich studied conducting with Mary Mogil, Paul Sarcich, Lawrence Leonard, George Hurst, Rodolfo Saglimbeni and Simon Johnson. He joined what's now Aeolian Sinfonia of North London in 2008.

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 (leader, concerto)
Fumiko Mihara
Lydia Hirst
Mariko Yamamoto
Peng Nian

Violin 2

Donna Chapman
Chris Gundry
Gita Croft
Piyarat Martin

Viola

Richard Clarembaux
Segun Victor

Cello

Andrew Williams
Priscilla Eyles
Anthony Gamage
Simon Hewitt

Bass

Clarissa Dann

Flute

Liz Valentine
Katri Yates

Oboe

David Williamson
Sara Ho

Clarinet

Nick Charles
Nigel Brockmann

Bassoon

Bryan Ogilvie

Horn

Henryk Sienkiewicz

Trumpet

Nick Smith

Timpani and percussion

Ankie Postma

Conductor

Keith Bramich

The music should finish by 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

We are grateful to Father John Deehan, Lilliana and Our Lady Help of Christians Church, to Richard and Rose from SanKTus for publicity and refreshments, to Liz Valentine and Adrian Rumson 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.