

ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

Aeolian Sinfonia of North London - Thursday 21st March 2024, 8pm

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

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791): Overture to *Idomeneo*, K 366

The ending of this concert version of the overture is by Carl Reinecke (1824-1910)

Mozart and his librettist Giambattista Varesco were commissioned to write this opera by Karl Theodor, Elector of Bavaria, for a court carnival. Based on a French opera of the period, it was first performed in Munich in 1781, with another version performed in Vienna five years later. It was not published until 1797 and was not a great success at the time, though Mozart thought highly of it. Modern critics concur with Mozart, proclaiming it as a masterpiece of astonishing maturity, written when he was only 24. Albert Einstein considered it a work that even a genius like Mozart could only write once in a lifetime. The first British performances were given in Glasgow in 1934 and at Glyndebourne in 1951.

In the *Iliad*, King Idomeneo was returning to Crete after his victory in the Trojan War when his ship was destroyed in a storm. The price of appeasing Neptune, god of the sea, was that Idomeneo should sacrifice the first living creature he met on shore. Tragically this was his son, Idamante, who became involved in a love triangle with Princess Illia, daughter of the Trojan king Priam, and Electra, daughter of Agamemnon, king of Mycenae. The powerful emotions experienced by the characters are reflected in the opera and foreshadowed in the overture, notably the conflict between moral duty and deep desire, and tenderness and hope in the delicate diminuendo passages.

The overture is in sonata form in D major. Bombastic military chords alternate with themes of foreboding and more delicate passages. The themes undergo various modulations in the recapitulation to arrive in the final tonic key.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921): *Havanaise* in E major for Violin and Orchestra, Op 83

Saint-Saëns is said to have conceived the original idea for this piece while listening to the crackling fire in his Brest hotel room, while on a tour of Northern Europe in autumn 1885 with his friend, the Cuban violinist Rafael Diaz Albertini, to whom the final work was dedicated. It is based on the habañera (French havanaise), a dance in 2/4 time with a strong repeated rhythm of a triplet followed by a duplet, which originated in nineteenth century Havana, the most famous example of which is the aria in Bizet's *Carmen*. Composed in 1887 for violin and piano and published the following year in Paris, an orchestral version soon followed, encouraged by the publisher Durand. Its first performance was given in Paris in 1894 by a Belgian violinist, Martin Pierre Marsick, but Albertini gave the world premiere, leading to its immediate popularity. Written in rondo form, lyrical Afro-Cuban melodies alternate with fiery, virtuosic sections for the soloist. The piece ends in a peaceful reflective mood on a high E from the soloist.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), *Symphony No 2 in A minor*, Op 55

Allegro marcato - Allegro appassionato; Adagio; Scherzo – Presto; Prestissimo.

Written before Saint-Saëns was 24 years old, this youthful, exuberant symphony received its world premiere in Leipzig in 1859 and was first performed in Paris the following year, conducted by Jules Pasdeloup, to whom the work was dedicated. It was not published until 1878 and Saint-Saëns did not write another symphony for 25 years.

The first movement opens with thunderous chords, followed by a falling and rising theme. After a prelude in which different instruments take centre stage, a fugue on the same material follows, such an unusual practice apparently shocking its first audience. The movement swings along in exuberant style.

The second movement in E major and triple time is exceedingly short. Scored for muted strings and sparse wind, it has the air of a stately dance.

The contrasting fiery, rumbustuous Scherzo is full of surprises and interruptions. The trio section in the A major contains tricky syncopation. There is a sudden surprise bang at the end.

The Finale is a *tarantella*, a vigorous folk dance from southern Italy. It races along in an unrelenting romp, which is quite fun until it reaches what one reviewer described as developmental hell. Material from the previous two movements is reprised. A calmer section precedes the final bustling coda.

The music should finish around 9pm. At the end of the concert, please stay for refreshments. We are grateful to Father John Deehan, Liliana and Our Lady Help of Christians Church, to Richard and Rose from SankTus for publicity and refreshments, to Nigel Brockmann for managing the orchestra's finances, to Liz Valentine for writing programme notes, to Ben Wong and the Croft family for helping to fix extra instrumentalists and to various members of other local orchestras and the wider music community for their help in putting on this concert. Please, before you leave, 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, or send a donation using the instructions found on the website sanktus.org

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. She regularly plays violin concertos with Blackfriars Sinfonia and at Morley College.

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 sixty 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.

Keith Bramich studied conducting with Mary Mogil, Paul Sarcich, Lawrence Leonard, George Hurst, Rodolfo Saglimbeni and Simon Johnson. He joined what's now the Aeolian Sinfonia of North London in 2008. He is also editor of the online magazine classicalmusicdaily.com which celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary on 1 January 2024.

Violin 1

Elizabeth Ann Binks
(leader)
Pamela White
(leader - *Havanaise*)
Donna Chapman
Casey Jo Grosso
Fumiko Mihara
Peng Nian

Violin 2

Rohan Arambepola
Gita Croft
Sophie Croft
Sophie Davies
Piyarat Martin

Viola

Richard Clarembaux
Chris Ebulu
Segun Adetunji
John Rokos
Bronwen Taylor

Cello

Ruth Williams
Emily Jane Smith
Erik Andreoli
Jude Olabanji

Bass

Brendan Goldberg
Clarissa Dann

Flute

Liz Valentine
Katri Yates

Oboe

Sara Ho

Clarinet

Ian Baker
Alan Fairburn

Bassoon

Bryan Ogilvie
Naomi Perry

Horn

Armen Boldy
David Claydon

Trumpet

Ben Wong
Chrissie Perrin

Timpani

Ankie Postma

Conductor

Keith Bramich