



Viola Sonata tests the full range of emotions

Thursday 17 March 2011
Memorial Hall – 7.30 pm

The final recital of the Marlborough College Concert Series saw Artistic Director, Philip Dukes display his world class talent as a performer. The repertoire was challenging to the performers as well as the large audience.



Philip Dukes

Arthur Benjamin's Viola Sonata is an extraordinary large-scale composition that works its way through the entire

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The 70th Anniversary Season

The Sixteen

18 September 2011 at 7:30pm

Jack Liebeck

9 October 2011 at 7:30pm

Chilingirian Quartet

6 November 2011 at 7:30pm

East Meets West

15 January 2012 at 3:00pm

BBC National Orchestra of Wales

5 February 2012 at 3:00pm

Classical BRIT Award winner, Jack Liebeck to perform in the 70th season

Emerging talent, solo violinist Jack Liebeck will perform works by Brahms, Bloch, Franck and Tchaikovsky this autumn, in the second of five concerts marking the 70th anniversary season of the Marlborough College Series.

Since making his concerto debut with the Hallé Orchestra aged fifteen, Jack Liebeck has established himself as one of the most compelling young violinists of his generation – performing with internationally acclaimed orchestras throughout Europe and the British Isles.

He will be accompanied by guest pianist, Ana-Maria Vera. Vera began her musical studies with her mother at the tender age of three, made her professional debut aged eight, and has been performing across the world ever since.

She has appeared as guest soloist with many of the world's leading orchestras, and has performed under the direction of revered conductors such as Riccardo Muti, Maximiano Valdes, and Ken-Ichiro Kobayashi.

The concert in the Memorial Hall, will open with the Violin Sonata No. 1 in G major by Brahms, followed by Bloch's Baal Shem Suite.

Brahms composed the sonata during the summers of 1878 and 1879, two periods falling either side of the premature death of his 24 year old godson Felix – violinist, poet and youngest child of Robert and Clara Schumann.

Although Brahms remained a bachelor throughout, his devotion to Clara is well documented. So too is his strong affinity with her children. Much of Brahms's sadness is therefore reflected in this piece, but the overall impression of the music is one of tenderness rather than melancholy.



Photo © Tim Meara

Jack Liebeck

Upon viewing the manuscript, Clara is quoted as saying "[I] could not help bursting into tears of joy over it. ... I wish the last movement could accompany me to the next world."

For a preview of this recital, listen to Liebeck's latest CD release.

The second half of the programme continues with Franck's Violin Sonata in A. Written towards the end of his life as a gift for the young violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, he presented the work to Ysaÿe on the morning of his wedding, on 26 September 1886. After a somewhat hurried rehearsal, Ysaÿe and the pianist Léontine Bordes-Pène performed the sonata for the other guests.

The work received its first public

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performance later the same year at the Musée Moderne de Peinture in Brussels, when Ysaÿe and Bordes-Pène were again the performers. On this occasion, it was the final item of an afternoon recital, and by the time it came to play the piece, the gallery was cloaked in the dusk of winter light.

It seemed the sonata would have to be abandoned, as the gallery did not permit the use of artificial light. But in the end, the performers decided to press on regardless, playing the last three movements from memory, in virtual darkness.

To conclude the recital, the duo will perform a short piece by Tchaikovski – the Valse Scherzo.

Still only 31, Liebeck is Professor of Violin at the Royal Academy of Music, the college from which he himself graduated under the tutelage of Professor Mateja Marinkovic.

Two years ago, he signed with SONY Classical and has subsequently released two recordings – the recent and critically acclaimed complete collection of violin sonatas by Brahms, and an earlier disc devoted to Dvorak.

It was this latter disc, with works including the violin concerto performed with Garry Walker and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and the sonata and sonatina with Katya Apekisheva that secured him the 2010 Classical BRIT Award for “Young British Performer of the Year”.

It also led the Daily Telegraph to declare: “the young British violinist Jack Liebeck has in recent years been coming to the fore as a musician of exceptional gifts, blessed as he is with a glorious, mellifluous tone and interpretative insight.”

A further CD – soundtrack for the forthcoming motion picture “Jane Eyre,” scheduled for September release, heavily features solo violin performed by Jack Liebeck. ■

Southern Sinfonia

Music lovers may also be interested to follow Southern Sinfonia – the chamber orchestra of Southern England. Based in Newbury, the orchestra performs regularly throughout the region.

More information about them at – www.southernsinfonia.co.uk

Reviews

Welcome back Southbank Sinfonia!

For the third year running, this vibrant ensemble returned to delight a packed Memorial Hall in the penultimate concert of the 2010/11 series. As in previous years, this was a fresh, polished, lively and exuberant performance with a superbly balanced and diverse programme.



The overture by Glinka (Ruslan and Ludmilla) was the perfect sparkling curtain raiser, beautifully complemented by the magical trumpet concerto by Haydn. The soloist here was Crispian Steele-Perkins (Old Marlburian, 1957-1962) who not only gave a thoroughly memorable performance of this gem of a concerto, but preceded it with an often witty and highly informative introduction to the evolution of the trumpet.

As a bonus item before the break, the Southbank Sinfonia treated us to Shostakovich's miniature masterpiece, the Gadfly Suite, which featured the excellent, expressive violin playing of Southbank Sinfonia member Tanya Sweiry.

Then came the second half and Brahms' Second Symphony. Is there a more beautiful symphony than this masterpiece? Maybe as good as, but certainly not better. Majestic and radiant in its lyricism, harmony and depth of emotion throughout, these characteristics all flourished under the uncomplicated but sincere direction of conductor and Southbank Sinfonia Musical Director Simon Over.

The Southbank Sinfonia players enjoy

a one year contract which runs from the end of January each year to the end of November, and this was one of their first concerts together of the 2011 membership. On this hearing, the year ahead promises to be a vintage one for this wholly impressive organisation.

Philip Dukes (Artistic Director)

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range of emotions.

Philip was joined on stage by the cellist, Julian Lloyd Webber for an intimate performance of a Brahms Trio. For me, the slow movement was the highlight of the concert.

The second half saw a performance of a transcription of *Harold in Italy* by Berlioz. Here, the pianist, Piers Lane was put through his paces doing a superb job in imitating the various colours and textures of the original symphonic work.



The concert finished with Philip leaving the stage while the pianist launched into the final moments of the piece and playing the viola off-stage for the final refrain.

A few days after this concert, Philip repeated the programme at the Purcell Room to mark the 20th anniversary of his debut recital there.

On behalf of the College, I would like to congratulate him on his outstanding musical career so far, and for everything that it holds in the future.

Simon Taranczuk (Director of Chapel Music)