



Pirates enchant audience with *Bootleg Baroque*

'Beautifully eccentric', 'colourful', 'brimming with virtuosity and originality' and 'absorbing'

... are just a few superlatives that one could apply to the concert given by Red Priest in the Memorial Hall as the second concert in the series of the 2012/13 Marlborough College Concert Series season.

The change of harpsichordist to David Wright has in no way affected the equilibrium of the group. In fact the ensemble was delivered to perfection, rubato was carefully crafted and musical lines sensitively constructed and when you match that with the technical proficiency on display, the net result was an intoxicating brew of consummate musicianship and artistry.



Tom Edwards' (our new Graduate Drama Assistant) lighting further added to the spectacle and with a packed audience to create that special atmosphere, it was an evening to remember.

Philip Dukes (Artistic Director)

Ticket Hotline

Tickets for the remaining concerts can be purchased from the Box Office.

Call 01672 892566 or email mccstickets@btinternet.com for more information.

SbS to close 71st season with Tchaikovsky double bill

Southbank Sinfonia (SbS), Orchestra in Partnership with Marlborough College will bring the series to a close next February in a concert that features two great works by Tchaikovsky – the *Capriccio Italien* and the perennially popular *Symphony No. 5*.

Aiming to put the disastrous experience behind him, he travelled extensively through Switzerland, France, Italy and Austria.

In the Spring of 1878, he returned to Russia to fulfil teaching commitments in Moscow – though a generous award



Also on the programme will be Mozart's Clarinet Concerto. It all promises to be a thrilling spectacle at the end of another wonderful season of world class music in Marlborough.

The **Capriccio Italien** (Op. 45) in A Major by Tchaikovsky is reminiscent of Italian folk music and was possibly inspired by the composer's visit to Rome – though Glinka's Spanish overtures are also cited as a possible influence. It was composed between January and May 1880, and premièred the same year in Moscow on December, 18th under the direction of Tchaikovsky's close friend, pianist and conductor Nikolai Rubinstein.

The piece was one of several major works completed by the composer during the so called 'wandering' years (from late 1877). Following the breakdown of his relationship just a few months into his marriage, Tchaikovsky took flight with his younger brothers – first Anatolli and later Modest across Europe.

from his patron Nadezhda von Meck (a wealthy Russian businesswoman born into a land owning family) enabled him to resign his position from the Conservatory and resume his travels.

Thereafter, he remained abroad or in the depths of rural Russia for several years, avoiding Moscow and Saint Petersburg as much as possible. During this 'wandering' period, he rarely stayed long in any location and shunned social contact. He finished the opera 'Eugene Onegin,' orchestrated the Fourth Symphony, and composed the Violin Concerto in D as well as the Piano Concerto No. 2 and the Serenade for Strings.

The **Symphony No. 5** (Op. 64) in E minor, composed in 1888 is a much later work. In the Spring of that year, he wrote to von Meck with much enthusiasm: "... I want to spend all Summer and

Review

King's Singers delight first night audience

Sunday 16th September 2012
Marlborough College Chapel



It's always important to start a new season with a major triumph and in engaging The King's Singers to open the 71st MCCS Season, that was very much the hope.

Needless to say, they didn't disappoint – far from it. This was consummate artistry in abundance performed by a world class ensemble in the ever inspiring surroundings of the College Chapel.

The programme was a sort of historical musical journey: music from King Henry VIII's manuscript, The Golden Age of English Madrigals, music from the reign of Queen Victoria, and thereafter 20th century music from Benjamin Britten, Paul Drayton and 'Best of British' popular songs to round things off.

What was perhaps most striking about the performance was The King's Singers' ability to sound so utterly accomplished whatever the era or style, and with it to so eloquently introduce each work as the evening progressed.

If you add to that the humour lavished on the programme throughout, this was a memorable evening indeed and every bit the triumph needed to set the scene for the season ahead.

Philip Dukes (Artistic Director)

Season 71 ~ still to come

London Mozart Players 04-Nov12

Songs from a Threepenny Opera (Kurt Weill) plus music by Barber and Dvorak

Joanna MacGregor 13-Jan-13

Piano works by Beethoven, Bartók and Brahms

Southbank Sinfonia 03-Feb-13

Tchaikovsky – Capriccio Italien and Symphony no. 5 plus Mozart Clarinet Concerto (soloist: Julian Bliss).

Tchaikovsky [from Page 1, Column 3]

Autumn at Frolovskoe [a small village in the Klin district of Moscow] ... I am giving thought to a new symphony." But just a month later, he revealed in a letter to Liliia Shpazhinskaia [a Russian pianist and confidante] that the urge to write a symphony had deserted him.

Although he had written the Manfred Symphony two years earlier, ten years had elapsed since the Fourth. And while the Manfred was based on a literary programme, Tchaikovsky was desperate to prove to himself and others that he was not 'written out' or 'expired' with no original ideas of his own.

By June, he was established at Frolovskoe, working diligently on the new piece despite frequent interruptions taking him away on other matters and falling ill during the same month. It was a productive period and illness does not seem to have impeded his progress.

In early July he again wrote to von Meck: "I have been working well the whole time; I have already prepared in rough a symphony and an overture to the tragedy Hamlet ... In the coming weeks I shall set about the instrumentation of both works ..."

And by mid August he was able to share with her more good news: "Now, as the Symphony nears its end, I can view it objectively, and at the culmination of the work I must say that, thank God, it is no worse than my previous ones. This accomplishment means a great deal to me!"

Then a month later, in a letter to his brother Anatolii, he wrote: "The symphony has received unanimous approval from all my friends – some even say that it's my best work."

According to the composer's notebook, the subject of the Fifth Symphony is 'Providence,' which he describes as "... a complete resignation before fate."

It has a recurring theme which can be heard in all four movements. In the first, the theme has a rather funereal tone, but by the fourth it is transformed, achieving a triumphal marching quality.

Tchaikovsky himself conducted the first performance on November 5th, in a concert given to the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Society. He repeated the Symphony a week later also in Saint Petersburg, this time for the Russian Musical Society.

After the second performance, he concluded it was a failure: "With each day that passes, I am increasingly certain that my last symphony is not a successful work ... too colourful, massive, insincere, drawn out and on the whole very unsympathetic ..."

While after a performance in Hamburg some months later, he changed his mind again: "At rehearsals there was general enthusiasm, flourishes, etc. The concert also went excellently ... [It] was again performed magnificently, and I have started to love it again ... my earlier judgment was undeservedly harsh ..."

It is curious to audiences of today that Tchaikovsky should be so undecided on the merits of the Symphony. It has come to be one of the composer's most cherished and adored orchestral works.

Commentators have suggested that the composer's anxieties might be attributed to the challenge of matching his musical heritage to the constraints of the symphony form. Russian music culture, it has been observed, has a bias towards repetitive short motifs and melodies, not so easily extrapolated into large scale works.



Julian Bliss - Photo © Nick White

To complete the programme, soloist Julian Bliss will accompany the orchestra in a performance of **Mozart's Clarinet Concerto** in A Major (K. 622).

Written for the clarinetist Anton Stadler, the piece is notable for numerous passages in which the notes exceed the range of a conventional clarinet. From this, we can infer that Mozart intended the Concerto to be performed using a 'basset clarinet,' an instrument championed by Stadler with an extended range.

Here we are in good company – as Julian is something of a pioneer himself in clarinet design. He has collaborated with Leblanc Clarinets to develop a new instrument using an innovative synthetic compound that is stronger, lighter and yields a fuller, richer sound.

Look out for the distinctive black keys when he takes the stage in Marlborough!