



Forest Philharmonic

TEN PENCE

4 February 1973

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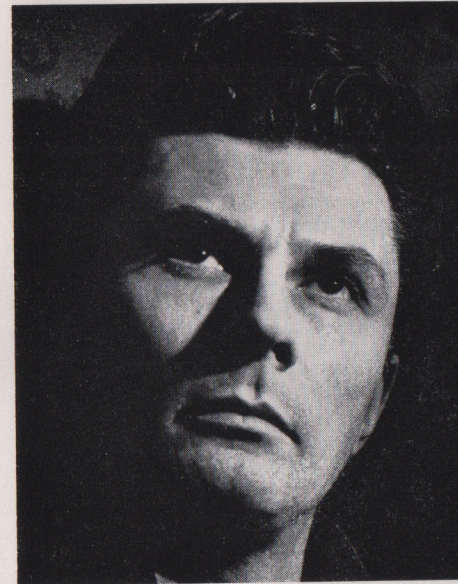
in association with

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present

FOREST PHILHARMONIC
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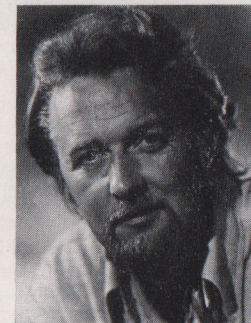
FRANK SHIPWAY
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NORTH EAST LONDON POLYTECHNIC CHORUS

Chorusmaster MICHAEL KIBBLEWHITE



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ALAN CIVIL

Concert Notes

Horn Concerto No. 3 in E-flat major K447

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1781)

Allegro
Romanza | *Larghetto*
Allegro

The four horn concertos credited to Mozart are the jewels of every horn virtuoso's repertoire. The instrument lends added charm to Mozart's cantabile melodies and the composer includes a dazzling bag of skips, runs and even trills which offer the soloist a real hurdle course.

This *E flat major Concerto* is, however, more than a mere showpiece—it is Mozart at his happiest and sunniest. Delightfully proportioned, it sparkles from first bar to last and ingeniously solves the obvious difficulties involved in the achievement of the correct balance between soloist and orchestra.

I N T E R V A L

Ein Deutsches Requiem Opus 45

Johannes Brahms
1833-1897

Brahms' late development as a composer in some ways parallels that of Elgar. Both were provincials—Brahms in Hamburg and Elgar in Worcester were born in musical backwaters and both were inhibited in youth. Brahms by the critical rejection of his *D minor Piano Concerto* and Elgar by his social circumstances as a non-academic provincial musician. Both finally 'broke through' with choral masterpieces—Brahms with *A German Requiem*, composed when he was 35 and Elgar with *Gerontius* when he was a mature 42.

In rounding off the similarity we have to acknowledge that 30 years separate the two works which brought their respective composer's fame—but each presents the paradox of an agnostic writing a great religious work clothed in the rich musical tapestry of the High Romantic idiom.

Why *A German Requiem*? The answer is simple—Brahms opted to use passages from the Luther Bible rather than the traditional Latin liturgy. In this he was being true to his North German Protestant background—and in the texts he selected he was being equally true to the inner melancholy which was to afflict him all his life, even during his years of success in the lighter atmosphere of Vienna.

For Brahms the success of the *Requiem* was a critical turning point. Musical Germany was expecting much of him and even the 'failure' of the *D minor Concerto* had not really affected the widespread acceptance of Schumann's opinion that Beethoven's successor was on the scene. The first performance of the *Requiem* in Bremen Cathedral in March, 1868 was a triumph. Not only was a truly sublime work added to the choral canon but Brahms himself was liberated—another 8 years were to elapse before the arrival of the *First Symphony* but Brahms had convinced himself that nothing was beyond him.

How had Brahms prepared himself for his great task? From the orchestral point of view he was already well prepared—the essential Brahmsian *timbre* was forged in the two *Serenades* and the score of the *Piano Concerto*. Chorally Brahms had enjoyed considerable conducting experience with the Hamburg Ladies Choir and the Lippe-Detmold Choir. It has been suggested, too, that his mother's death gave him the final impulse for this outpouring of deeply felt emotion.

A final question—why is the *Requiem* such a landmark in choral composition? In a very real sense it is because the work achieves a totality in which the chorus, the two soloists and the orchestra create a unity in which the words echo the music and the music the words. Brahms had finally built a bridge across the gap from the classical choral structure. Haydn in *The Creation* and Beethoven in the Finale of the *Ninth Symphony* had pointed the way but Mendelssohn for all the glorious moments of *The Song Of Praise* and *Eljah* had missed the boat. The audience in Bremen Cathedral—and countless audiences since—spotted the difference. Brahms' choral wring is powerful and profound—never *bland*. The 'new' musical language had expanded its boundaries.

If there is a fault in the *Requiem* it is that at times the rhythms are too four square—but this is but a trifling blemish upon a masterpiece.

The *Requiem* contains seven movements and the texts are all familiar ones.

1. Chorus

Selig sind, die da Leid tragen . . . Blessed are they that mourn . . .
Brahms opens the work with this section from the Beatitudes—an inspired choice for a vernacular Requiem—and the treatment is sombre but tender.

2. Chorus

Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras . . . All flesh is like the grass . . .
To the measured tread of timpani an impressive orchestral introduction leads to this superb choral meditation on the passing of all things mortal.

3. Chorus and baritone solo

Herr, lehre doch mich, dass es ein Ende mit mir haben muss . . . Lord, teach me that there must be an end to my life . . .
A superb declamatory line from the soloist enhances the choral writing of this movement.

4. Chorus

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen . . . How lovely is Your dwelling place, O Lord of Hosts!
A typically Brahmsian melodic informs a piece long familiar to all churchgoers—it figures in almost every Hymnal.

5. Chorus and soprano solo

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit . . . You are now sorrowful . . .
Lovingly phrased for the soprano voice, the text speaks of the comfort which God will vouchsafe.

6. Chorus with baritone solo

Denn wir haben hier keine bleibende Statt . . . Here we have no permanent place, but we look for the one to come. Behold I tell you a mystery . . .
This movement with its exultant C major fugue displays Brahms enormous gift for attaining dramatic climax. It is, indeed, the "flashpoint" of the *Requiem*.

7. Chorus

Selig sind die Toten . . . Blessed are the dead who died in the Lord henceforth . . .
Another carefully chosen text provides a fitting end to a profound work and the perfect 'dying fall' after the splendours of the preceding movement.

Alan Everson.

F. P. S. International Series

in association with

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APRIL 8 Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major, Op. 15 BEETHOVEN
AT 8.0 Symphony No. 7 in D minor DVORAK
STEPHEN BISHOP PIANO
FRANK SHIPWAY CONDUCTOR

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AT 8.0

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Tony Clarke
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Jayne Charlton
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Geoffrey Short
Trevor Snoad
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Stephanie Tromans

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Simon Priestley

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Leigh Thomas principal
Catherine Scott
John Esaias

Cor Anglais
Catherine Scott principal

Oboe D'amore
Mary Mathieson

Flagelette
Norman Lindop

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David Johnston
Stephen Pierce

E flat Clarinet
Mark Tromans

Bass Clarinets
Mark Tromans principal
Nigel Keats

Alto Saxophone
Robert Bramley

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Graham Knight principal
Ann Bentley
Mark Gooding
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