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London Evening Standard

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Eastbourne

SUNDAY 11th JUNE 1989

Eastbourne
 Sinfonia

LEADER: LISA WIGMORE
CONDUCTOR: GRAHAM JONES

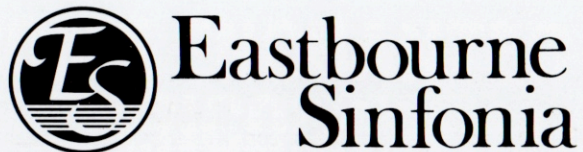
TENTH ANNIVERSARY GALA CHORAL CONCERT

BLEST PAIR OF SIRENS - PARRY

DANCE CANTICLES - KENNETH PLATTS

A SEA SYMPHONY - VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME



Eastbourne Sinfonia

If you had been a musician in Eastbourne in 1979 and looking for a good orchestra in which to play, you would have been glad to know that a small group of people were meeting together to discuss the setting up of Eastbourne's own symphony orchestra.

A playthrough with potential members received very positive feedback from both the players and the public; a concert was planned - and Eastbourne Sinfonia was born. Its musical director was to be Graham Jones, a member of the music staff at Eastbourne College, and he has continued in this position ever since.

The first concert took place on January 27th 1980 in the Town Hall, Eastbourne and consisted of Brahms's Academic Festival, Sibelius's Karelia Suite and Dvorak's Eighth Symphony. The novelty value of the concert appealed to the public and was very well received.

The Eastbourne Sinfonia continued to perform three concerts a year in the Town Hall, but as audiences grew and a piano concerto was planned, a larger venue was clearly needed and the Winter Garden was hired in June 1981. For this concert a local pianist of international fame, John York, was invited to play Grieg's A Minor concerto.

The Winter Garden was full to capacity and the concert made front page headlines.

From then on a standard concert pattern emerged of overture, concerto and symphony. In 1983 a choral element was introduced into a concert of English music given in St. Saviour's Church in Eastbourne; the Eastbourne Tudor Singers (trained by Graham Jones) and the Southbourne Choir were invited to sing Parry's Blest Pair of Sirens. This led to the insertion of a full choral programme in subsequent seasons.

1984 saw the publishing of the first brochure detailing all Sinfonia concerts for the 1984-85 season, membership of the NFMS, and the decision to mount a children's concert to be sponsored by Ansvar Insurance, a locally based company. Johnny Morris was invited to come and perform his operetta, Delilah the Sensitive Cow. This was a great success, attracting children from all over the area.

In 1985 the Duke of Devonshire agreed to join John York and Jane Gow as a patron and Eastbourne Mutual Building Society, Anglia Building Society and Private Patients Plan generously sponsored certain concerts. This year also saw the introduction of a now annual Christmas Concert, which is aimed at attracting whole families, with a competition for children, tea and an appearance by Father Christmas.

1986 marked a milestone in the orchestra's history seeing a Gala 21st Concert at which patrons John York and Jane Gow each performed with the orchestra, and a strings masterclass was mounted over a weekend, with some distinguished soloists taking part. The season also saw the orchestra making its debut in the prestigious Congress Theatre, with John York performing Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto on this auspicious occasion.

By now plans were well in hand for a more ambitious choral concert, and Verdi's Requiem was performed in the Congress Theatre in 1987, involving 90 orchestral players and nearly 400 singers drawn from nine local choirs. The concert was rapturously received by an audience of over 1100, and the Choral Concert was thus firmly established in the Sinfonia season.

Recent innovations have included the inauguration of the Sinfonia Duke of Devonshire Award for a Young Musician; the Duke of Devonshire offered a financial prize for such an award, and with additional sponsorship from Private Patients Plan, the 1989 award was divided into two age groups, thus enabling younger students to enter, as well as those already at college. In the two years of the award's existence, there has been widespread interest throughout the South East and entrants have been of a particularly high standard. Entrants who reach the Final are required to play a movement from two concertos, and the winner of the senior award has the opportunity to play one movement with the orchestra at the Congress Theatre.

The orchestra now enjoys generous sponsorship and donations from many local companies, and the Eastbourne Borough Council, in addition to allowing us the use of the Congress Theatre and the Winter Gardens on very favourable terms, allots a substantial annual grant in recognition of the orchestra's contribution to the life of the community. There is also a thriving Friends organisation, which helps the orchestra in many practical ways, as well as financially.

In celebration of its ten years in existence, the Eastbourne Sinfonia is to be renamed the EASTBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA with effect from the beginning of the 1989-90 season. A Tenth Birthday Appeal is also being launched along with various events to raise £5000 in order to maintain the orchestra's high standards. Donations may be sent to the Treasurer, Mount View, Butchers Lane, Three Oaks, Nr. Hastings.

The Sinfonia enjoys the patronage of South East Arts and in 1987 registered as a charity in order to continue to realise its original aim - namely, to promote interest in music in and around Eastbourne and to encourage musicians - particularly the young just embarking on their careers - to advance musical education through live performance. All those who have followed the progress of the Eastbourne Sinfonia over the last ten years would agree that this aim has been splendidly achieved, and would wish the orchestra every success in the future.

At this evening's concert we are delighted to welcome Kenneth Platts, composer of our commissioned work, and also soloists Helen Charnock and Mark Pancek.

Thanks must go to South East Arts and Private Patients Plan for their sponsorship of the commissioned work, and also to Beckett Newspapers for their financial support of the concert as a whole.

The Sinfonia wishes you a very pleasant evening and hopes you will continue to support it when it becomes the Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Registered Charity No: 296902

HELEN CHARNOCK - SOPRANO

Helen studied at the University of East Anglia and at the Guildhall School of Music with Laura Sarti. She won various awards including the English Singers and speakers Prize and two from the Royal Society of Arts, as well as the ISM Young Artist award and the Ian Fleming bursary.

Helen is a regular member of Opera Factory/ London Sinfonietta, where among other performances, she took the leading role in the world premiere of Birtwistle's *Yan Tan Tethera*. She has a very wide operatic repertoire and has given performances of *Semele*, *First Lady*, *Pamina*, *Titania*, *Michaela*, *Butterfly*, *Gretel*, *Adela* and *Musetta*. Helen made her Australian debut in 1986 at the Adelaide Festival with *Clytemnestra* in *Iphigenia*. Her European debut came in 1988 at the Munich Biennale where she took a leading role in the highly acclaimed world premiere performances of Mark-Anthony Turnage's "Greek".

Future plans include Debussy's opera *Fall of the House of Usher* at the South Bank and in Lisbon, and her English National Opera debut.

This is Helen's third appearance with the Sinfonia.

MARK PANCEK - BARITONE

Mark Pancek was born in Louth, Lincolnshire. He entered the Royal Academy of Music in 1983, studying singing with Mark Wildman and coaching with Iain Leddingham, and David Owen Norris.

Whilst at the RAM Mark has gained a GRSM (HONS) degree, as well as winning many prizes for singing, including; *The Arthur Bircher*, *Parapa Rosa*, *J Mewburn Leveau*, and *The Blyth Buesst* Operatic prize.

At the RAM, Mark has also taken part in many masterclasses with distinguished singers such as Eileen Augur, Janet Baker, and Robert Tear.

Mark's solo career has taken him to many different countries, including; The USA, Sweden, East and West Germany, and Spain. His repertoire is extensive from operatic roles such as *Bartolo* (the Barber of Seville), the Father (*Hansel and Gretel*), and *Somorone* (*Beatrice and Benedict*), to performances of all the major Oratorios, as well as recitals throughout the country. Future engagements include; *Sea Symphony*, *Brahms Requiem*, and *The Rape of Lucretia*.

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Madelaine Berkow	Mary Jago
Anthea Birch	Sam Jones
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Rebekah Blyth	Claire-Louise Lemmens
Andrew Bott	Joyce Li
Shirley Burgoyne	Joan Mann
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Philip Caroe	Sheila Markwick
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Yvonne Collins	Jean Munn
Molly Cooper	Charlotte Nicola
Jane Cornford	Sarah Nurcombe
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Margaret Jackson	
Eve Kenny	

THIS EVENING'S PROGRAMME

The National Anthem

PARRY

Blest Pair of Sirens

The English musical "renaissance" that followed the dilettantism of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries owes much to the work of Hubert Parry, both as a composer and teacher. Besides Symphonic composition Parry sought to revitalise the English choral tradition, partly by the use of native literature. The "Blest Pair of Sirens" of 1887 continues this tradition begun with Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" in 1880. Here Milton's words are given a strong noble setting that reflects the influence of Brahms, particularly in the contrapuntal writing for the eight part choir.

KENNETH PLATTS

Dance Canticles

Work commissioned by the Eastbourne Sinfonia as part of its Tenth Anniversary Celebrations with funds made available by South East Arts and Private Patients Plan.

Kenneth Platts was born in India in 1946. He studied composition at the London College of Music and later privately with Sir Lennox Berkeley. Since his earliest published works in 1971, Kenneth Platts has achieved an international reputation, with work performed in Norway, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, Australia and Hong Kong.

Composer's Note

The idea behind this short suite for orchestra is the Canticle of the Sun by St. Francis of Assisi. In this great poem of inspired simplicity, St. Francis views the whole universe as a family.

There are four movements:

SIR BROTHER SUN a brilliant prelude depicting the sun as a knight in shining armour

SISTER MOON a tranquil slow movement

BROTHER FIRE a sparkling scherzo

MOTHER EARTH a slow, warm-hearted epilogue



Private Patients Plan

INTERVAL

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

A Sea Symphony

- I. A Song for all Seas, all Ships
- II. On the Beach at Night, Alone
- III. The Waves (Scherzo)
- IV. The Explorers

Soloists: Helen Charnock - Soprano
Mark Pancek - Baritone

Ralph Vaughan Williams, born in Gloucestershire in 1872, studied composition at the Royal College of Music with Hubert Parry. It may well have been this influence that aroused his interest in choral music.

The tradition of the choral symphony can be traced back to the Finale of Beethoven's Ninth and Mahler's Eighth symphonies; Vaughan Williams was doubtless inspired by these two works.

The poems from Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass", "Song of Expectation" and "Passage to India", seek to divulge the secret of the Universe in deep waters. The scale is grand and yet the texture is clear, and there is even a hint of sea shanty to add a sense of lightheartedness.

The first movement opens with a short fanfare, heralding emotionally dramatic intensity. The message of the music is a celebration of the life of the mariner and the "universal flag of heroism".

The second movement is a meditation based on the feeling of unity of all men and all nations.

The Scherzo movement is a feat of virtuosity by both choir and orchestra, depicting a raging sea. A short snatch of the folksong "The Golden Vanity" is heard before the broad and flowing tune of the Trio following the path of a great ship ploughing through the waves.

The final movement bears the Vaughan Williams "rubber stamp"; the choral part-writing could have been written by no-one else. (In his autobiography Vaughan Williams admits that this passage was influenced by the music of Elgar.)

The Sea Symphony is possibly the greatest tribute to Parry's "English style", and it was Parry himself who described it as "big stuff, but full of impertinences as well as noble movements".

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Contra Bassoon
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Graham Hills
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Tuba
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Harp
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