



London Symphony Orchestra
Living Music



Tuesday 6 November 2012 7.30pm
Barbican Hall

Schoenberg Verklärte Nacht
Hartmann Concerto funèbre

INTERVAL

Strauss Metamorphosen

Roman Simovic violin/director
LSO String Orchestra

Concert ends approx 9.20pm

Welcome
from Kathryn McDowell



Welcome to this evening's concert at the Barbican. Tonight, LSO Leader Roman Simovic directs the LSO String Orchestra for the first time in Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and Strauss' war-torn *Metamorphosen*, stepping out as soloist for Hartmann's *Concerto funèbre*. Roman has led many significant projects, including performing

Sibelius' Violin Concerto with the LSO in April last year at just a few hours' notice which led *The Independent* to state, 'Simovic is nothing if not an assertive, uninhibited presence and his reading of this most elemental of concertos was big on trenchancy and a smouldering intensity in the chest register of the instrument. It was, in a word, masculine'.

The LSO String Orchestra features in two UBS Soundscapes: Eclectica concerts at LSO St Luke's in the new year, one featuring the music of John Adams, the other of Mark-Anthony Turnage; be sure to join us again then. I hope you enjoy tonight's performance.

Kathryn McDowell

Kathryn McDowell LSO Managing Director

Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951)

Verklärte Nacht Op 4 (Transfigured Night) (1899)

- 1 *Sehr Langsam* –
- 2 *Breiter* –
- 3 *Schwer betont* –
- 4 *Sehr breit und langsam* –
- 5 *Sehr ruhig*

The year of Arnold Schoenberg's birth, 1874, was not the best time to come into the world. The once-thriving Vienna was experiencing economic gloom having suffered a severe credit crisis the previous year, brought on by Austria's shaky financial institutions crashing down in ways that are all too familiar today, swiftly followed by a cholera epidemic; it took two decades before Vienna regained its lost glory. With little money, Schoenberg was forced to work as a clerk rather than be a conservatoire student. He was, however, encouraged by Brahms' protégé Alexander Zemlinsky, who discovered him playing the cello in an amateur orchestra, 'fervently ill-treating his instrument'.

To a certain extent, Schoenberg's personal life and artistic career paralleled the revival of his native city, which was fast becoming a hub of the erotically-charged artistic Sezession movement. In 1899 he married Zemlinsky's sister Mathilde, and he earned notoriety with his string sextet *Verklärte Nacht*, which was denounced for its post-Wagnerian chromatic intensity and for using a chord that defied conventional harmonic analysis. One disgruntled commentator remarked, 'It sounds as if someone had smeared the score of *Tristan* while it was still wet!' It is the earliest major chamber work to have a literary programme as its *raison d'être*, and is effectively a full-length symphonic poem scored for small forces. The ecstatic language of Richard Dehmel's poem *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night), which prefaces Schoenberg's score, tells of reconciliation through love, after a woman confesses to her companion during a moonlit walk that her unborn child is not his. Throughout his life, Schoenberg warned against thinking of music too much in terms of language and meaning, and was scathing about 'the limited intelligence of the intellectual bourgeoisie who assume that 'music has to convey some sort of idea.' Such caveats notwithstanding, *Verklärte Nacht* consists of five interlinked sections that match the poem's narrative structure. Egon Wellesz, one of Schoenberg's pupils, wrote that the first, third and fifth sections of the sextet 'are of more epic nature and so portray the deep feelings of the people wandering about in the cold moonlit night. The second contains the passionate plaint of the woman, the fourth the sustained answer of the man, which shows much depth and warmth of understanding.'

Programme Note © Anthony Short

Karl Amadeus Hartmann (1905–63)

Concerto funèbre (1939, rev 1959)

- 1 *Introduction: Largo* –
- 2 *Adagio* –
- 3 *Allegro di molto* –
- 4 *Choral: Langsamer Marsch*

By 1939, the year in which he composed the *Concerto funèbre*, the many influences that had fed into the receptive vessel that was Karl Amadeus Hartmann included his teacher Joseph Haas, Haas' teacher Max Reger, expressionism, jazz, Bach, Bruckner, Mahler, Bartók, Stravinsky and oriental music. (Yet to come were a period of study with Webern and a post-war interest in the variable metre techniques of Boris Blacher and Elliott Carter.) The result of this heartening eclecticism is music that is broad, meticulously made, searchingly and sophisticatedly tonal, and often passionately expressive. Another strong influence, however, was the mentorship in the pre-war years of the conductor Hermann Scherchen, a broad-minded musician and committed socialist, and the rise of the Nazis saw the determinedly uncooperative Hartmann withdraw completely from German musical life. By the time of the *Concerto funèbre* he was already the acclaimed author of a symphony, a Requiem and an opera, yet no work of his had been performed in Germany for six years, and the Concerto's

premiere had to take place in St Gall, Switzerland, in 1940. At this stage it was called *Musik der Trauer* (Music of Mourning), but when Hartmann revised it in 1959 he changed the title to the one it has now.

Needless to say, the emotional tenor of the *Concerto funèbre* was profoundly affected by the onset of World War II, in particular the German annexation of Czechoslovakia, but the form of the work was also shaped by it. 'The date indicates the underlying character of the work and the reason I wrote it', Hartmann later recalled. 'The chorales at the beginning and end are intended to offer a sign of hope against the desperate situation of thinking people ... I wanted to write down everything I thought and felt, and that gave me the form and the melodic style'. The Concerto is cast in four movements, played without a break. As Hartmann noted, the outer movements are based on chorales, which serve respectively as introduction and epilogue. The first is spare, short (less than two minutes) and derived from the Hussite hymn 'You who are God's warriors', and the finale is a bleakly elegiac slow march making use of a Russian song known under two names, 'For the fallen revolutionaries' and 'You fell in battle'. In between come an intense, brooding and lyrical Adagio, also with a pervading processional feel, and a savage Allegro di molto whose rage eventually blows over into a slow and sombre coda.

Programme Note © Lindsay Kemp

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

Metamorphosen (1944–45)

In the spring of 1945, with World War II approaching its conclusion, the devastation of Germany's cities was almost complete. For the 80-year-old Strauss it was almost too much to bear. The bombing in 1943 of the Munich National Theatre, where several of his operas had been premiered, had hit him as 'the greatest catastrophe which has ever been brought into my life', and since then the destruction of the opera houses in Weimar, Dresden and Vienna had reduced him to even greater depths of depression and despair. To him, it seemed as if German civilisation itself was coming to an end. Not that this gloomy mood stopped him from composing. The previous summer he had begun work on a setting for male voice choir of a poem by Goethe, 'Niemand wird sich selber kennen': 'No one can know himself ... yet daily he must put to the test what he can see clearly and objectively ... what he is and what he was, what he can do and what he may. What goes on in the world, no-one really understands correctly, and until today no-one gladly wishes to understand it'. A commission from the Swiss conductor and patron Paul Sacher, however, caused him to re-divert the material of this setting into a 'study for 23 solo strings', which he completed on 12 April 1945. By this time it had a new title as well: *Metamorphosen* (Metamorphoses).

The use of the word tells us two things. First of all, this single-movement adagio, lasting nearly 30 minutes, is one in which the melodic material is subjected to constantly unfolding and intricate development. There are four main themes, of which the drooping, grief-stricken second, heard on a pair of violas immediately after the cellos and basses have given out the chordal first, is the most naggingly obstinate. Its origins lay in a theme Strauss had noted down after the loss of the Munich Opera House, and just before the end of the piece we hear it in its final metamorphosis, transformed by cellos and basses into the theme from the Funeral March of Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony. Strauss maintained that the allusion had not been a planned one, but he nevertheless wrote the words 'In Memoriam!' underneath it in the score, and the implication seems clear – that *Metamorphosen* is a threnody for German musical life. But there is another resonance in the work's title, this time to do with the Goethe connection. Strauss had recently embarked on a project to read Goethe's complete works, and would have been fully aware that towards the end of his own life the great poet had used the word 'Metamorphosen' to describe his own mental development, especially when applied to works which had taken form over a number of years. Seen in this light, and bearing in mind both its genesis and the text originally associated with it, Strauss' work clearly embodies a much more personal message about self-knowledge and the passing of time. The result is one of his most searching and emotionally intense utterances.

Programme Note © Lindsay Kemp

Roman Simovic

Director / Violin



Roman Simovic was born in 1981 and began his music education in Lvov, Ukraine. After continuing studies with his father, conductor Igor Simovic, he attended the Cetinje Music Academy and later the Academy of Music and Arts in Novi Sad, and Moscow State Conservatorium where he gained his Masters degree. In 2010 he became

Leader of the London Symphony Orchestra, having previously been Leader of Camerata Salzburg. Acclaimed for his playing worldwide, Simovic's performances have taken him across Europe, Russia, Asia, Canada, the US and South America, at venues such as the Bolshoi Theatre (Moscow), Grand Opera House (Tel Aviv), and Prague National Theatre to name but a few.

Roman performs regularly as a soloist with orchestras including the Amadeus Chamber Orchestra (Russia), Bohemian Symphony Orchestra (Czech Republic), Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra (Hungary), Kamerata Bern (Switzerland), Kiev Philharmonia (Russia), Prague Philharmonia (Czech Republic) and Seoul Sinfonietta (Korea), among many others. He has been awarded prizes at numerous international competitions including the Premio Rodolfo Lipizer International Violin Competition (Italy), Sion-Valais International Violin Competition (Switzerland), International Yampolsky Violin Competition (Russia) and the Henryk Wieniawski Violin Competition (Poland), placing him among the foremost violinists of his generation.

A sought-after artist, Simovic has been invited to perform at various distinguished festivals such as the Dubrovnik Summer Festival (Croatia), Kotor Art Festival (Montenegro), the BEMUS and NOMUS Festivals (Serbia), Sion Valais Festival (Switzerland), Bergen Festival (Norway), Campus de Jordao (Brazil) and the Portogruaro Festival (Italy), collaborating with renowned artists such as Schlomo Mintz, François Leleux, Janine Jansen, Julian Rachlin, Itamar Golan, Rohan de Silva and Edward Grach.

In addition to being an active soloist, recitalist and orchestral player, Roman Simovic is an avid chamber musician and is a founding member of the Rubicon String Quartet with which he continues to record and tour. Simovic has recorded extensively for numerous radio and television networks, and as an educator has presented masterclasses in the UK, US, South Korea, Serbia and Montenegro. Roman plays a 'J B Guadagnini' violin which was generously loaned to him by Jonathan Moulds.

LSO String Orchestra

First Violins

Roman Simovic *Leader*
Carmine Lauri
Laurent Quenelle
Harriet Rayfield
Sylvain Vasseur
Rhys Watkins

Violas

Paul Silverthorne
Gillianne Haddow
Anna Green
Richard Holttum
Robert Turner
Heather Wallington

Cellos

Timothy Hugh
Jennifer Brown
Noel Bradshaw
Amanda Truelove
Eve-Marie Caravassilis
Judith Herbert

Second Violins

David Alberman
Thomas Norris
Sarah Quinn
Iwona Muszynska
Philip Nolte

Double Basses

Rinat Ibragimov
Colin Paris
Patrick Laurence



Kieron Moore
1963–2012

The LSO is greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Principal Oboe Kieron Moore on 22 October after a long illness. Born in 1963, Kieron studied with Lady Barbirolli from the age of 16, going on to gain a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music where he won all the prizes for wind playing. Kieron spent short periods as a member of the Hallé and the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra before 1989, when at the age of 25, he was appointed joint Principal Oboe of the LSO. The LSO wishes to express its deepest sympathy to Kieron's wife Nicky Holland, also an oboe player. He will be greatly missed.