



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA

ROBERT COHEN
cello/director

Saturday 4 May 2019, 8.00pm
West Road Concert Hall



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Cambridge University Orchestra

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Rossini Overture from *'L'Italiana in Algeri'*

Haydn Cello Concerto in D

Bloch 'From Jewish Life'

Mozart Symphony No.41, 'Jupiter' K.551

Robert Cohen cello/director

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PROGRAMME NOTES

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)**Overture from 'L'Italiana in Algeri'**

With a career at the onset of the Romantic period, Gioachino Rossini's work was crucial in shaping the landscape of Italian opera of the 19th century. In 1813, the spirited 21 year old premiered his *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Venice, only three months after the premiere of his *Tancredi*; these were amongst the fruits of his early career that earned him his reputation as a composer of opera. The comic opera has a Mediterranean setting, and tells the tale of the crafty, attractive Isabella, who rescues Lindoro, the slave of Mustafá, the Bey of Algiers. Isabella turns into the heroine, granting Lindoro his freedom and bidding Mustafá stay faithful to his wife.

The inviting pizzicato that opens the overture - and indeed, the entire opera - paired with the surprising burst of sound the listener receives soon after, forebodes the comic element of Rossini's interpretation of the narrative of Angelo Anelli's libretto. The overture is filled with colour and flamboyance, beckoning the listener on an emotional journey of a dramatic nature; Rossini's characteristic use of what came to be known as the "Rossini crescendo" aids his build of excitement. His attention to lyricism is seen in the manner he pairs different instrumental timbres with different thematic material of varying character within a long melody, in order to give his orchestration a conversational voice of sorts.

Ellissa Sayampanathan

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)**Cello Concerto in D**

The precise authorship of Haydn's *Cello Concerto in D* has been a hotly disputed topic since 1837. Although it was first thought to have been composed by Joseph Haydn, Gustav Schilling attributed the work to Anton Kraft in his *Lexikon der Tonkunst* and the lack of an autographed copy meant that either could have written it. Like Haydn, Anton Kraft worked Prince Nikolaus Esterházy's orchestra and the work was composed for him to play. His talent as a cellist meant that, when the orchestra dissolved in 1790, he travelled to Vienna and became renowned for his skill there. Kraft had been taught composition by Haydn and, having played so much of his music, it's not unlikely that they would have a similar style.

As with most concertos, the work is in three movements, assuming the format of fast-slow-fast. This is not to say that the rest of the work is entirely conventional, however. In the first movement, the soloist takes an abnormally long time to come in. There is actually no introduction, but the orchestra play both the first and second subject before the cello enters. To contrast this, the second movement opens with the cello right away in sixths with the

violins, so that it melds into the texture. The third movement is a lively rondo with a dance-like theme. As was common at the time, Haydn provided no cadenzas, as improvisation was seen as a key skill expected of a soloist and, here especially, it would allow Kraft to fully display his flair for the instrument.

The dispute over the composer was solved in 1951, when a signed and dated autograph of the concerto was found in Austria's National Library. In Haydn's time, any cello concerto at all was something of an innovation, as it had previously been tied to the double bass and continuo lines. Few were familiar with the possibilities available on the cello and the second cello concerto in D contains many extended techniques and specialised markings that weren't found in the first cello concerto in C. At the very least, it is likely that Kraft advised Haydn on these matters. As such, the mystery as to the work's composer is solved, but authorship is a slippery concept and, we may never know how much Kraft really did for Haydn's concerto.

Vicky Starling

Ernest Bloch (1880–1959)

From Jewish Life

- I. *Prayer*
- II. *Supplication*
- III. *Jewish Song*

It is not enough for a composer to merely appropriate the folk idioms of a people. To be known as a truly great exponent of a culture, they should be saturated with its history and meaning. And so it was with Ernest Bloch. Born in Geneva (becoming an American citizen in 1924), the young Ernest, not only had a thorough musical training, but also gained a strong religious education from a father who had once expressed a desire to become a rabbi. As a mature composer he realised the only way to “produce a music of vitality and significance” was by combining the two.

This profound connection with Jewish identity permeates Bloch's output. His most notable works, such as the Israel Symphony and the *Rhapsodie Hébraïque* for 'Cello and Orchestra ('Schelomo') are born of an extended period of engagement with his heritage which began in 1913 and lasted for the rest of his life. But as he states: “it is neither my purpose nor desire to attempt a reconstruction of Jewish music, nor to base my work on more or less authentic melodies...I am not an archaeologist; for me the most important thing is to write good and sincere music.” And so it is that Bloch's music is not mere arrangement or quotation but a unique melding of Jewish traditional technique with a thorough knowledge of twentieth century western-art practices.

Paradigmatic of this are his three pieces *From Jewish Life*, a work infused with the intense pathos implicit in Ashkenazi Jewish modes, with which he constructs his melodies. Written during a holiday in Santa Fe, New Mexico, just before the end of his Directorship of the Cleveland Institute of Music, *From Jewish Life* was originally scored for 'cello and piano, but is heard

tonight in an arrangement for strings by Peter Purich. The piece is dedicated to Hans Kindler (1892-1942), then solo 'cellist of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and dedicatee and premiere performer of *Schelomo*.

Prayer, a threnody of sorts in Ternary form, is built on the *Magen Avot* and *S'lichá* modes. The opening, *Andante moderato*, presents an expansive and plaintive melody with chordal accompaniment. This is echoed an octave higher in the orchestra, with the soloist providing a counterpoint. The pace quickens in the second section, *Poco più mosso*, but still *dolente* ("sorrowful") and presents a more fragmented and questioning theme. The opening melody returns, this time with the orchestra providing the counterpoint, and the movement ends with a *Più vivo* coda, which employs the *Ahava Rabba*, also known as the *Freigish*, mode.

Supplication (or humbly begging), cycles through various developments of a single theme, constructed of two parts, whose second part's syncopations are reminiscent of Hassidic dance. This dance accelerates to a frenetic climax, but the revelry subsides as soon as it began. The melodies' modality combines elements of the *Av Harachamim (Mi Shebeirach)*, *Adonay Malach*, and *Ahava Rabba* modes, and an E minor tonality pervades, but rapid key modulations orbit this tonal centre.

The 'cello and orchestra sing to each other in the final movement, *Jewish Song*. Seemingly the simplest of the movements; a plaintive, chromatic melody, in the *Ahava Rabba* mode on C, is passed back and forth between soloist and orchestra. The 'cello sings above open fifths, and the orchestra replies above lilting semi-tones in the solo 'cello which echo the opening motif, to give an impression of two old friends recounting old times.

Benjamin Graves

INTERVAL

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Symphony No.41, 'Jupiter' K.551

It is remarkable that, given Mozart's inestimable status among the very 'greatest' composers of the canon, there are so many questions about his life and work that remain unanswered. Almost nothing is known of the composition of Mozart's forty-first (and final) symphony – a situation that is symptomatic of modern Mozart scholarship's increasing tendency to define itself by the things that it does not know, rather than what it can say with certainty.

One such unknown is why, by 1788, Mozart had lost much of the popularity he had at one time enjoyed with his Viennese audiences. Mozart's personal life at this time was certainly in turmoil – not only did he and his wife, Costanze, lose three of their children between 1786-88, but financially they were struggling too, their lavish lifestyle gradually proving to cost well beyond their means. Mozart secured the position of "Kammer-Kompositeur" at the Imperial Court, but the very modest salary did little to alleviate the family's hardship; successes in Prague with *Don Giovanni* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*

were not taken for granted, but they did little to help the struggling Mozarts back at home.

Wolfgang also developed a serious (and expensive) gambling addiction, possibly as a result of the personal tragedy he was experiencing at home, damaging his once-resplendent public image. It is also well-documented that Costanze did not have the wherewithal responsibly to manage the household while Wolfgang burned most of the family income. Almost certainly in the spirit of admission to serious financial misjudgment, Wolfgang wrote several times over the summer of 1788 to Michael Puchberg, a friend and Freemason (like himself), pleading for significant sums of money. One such request (worth “a hundred gulden”) was to last for one week, to see Mozart through to the start of his “Casino concerts”. It is not known where or what the ‘Casino’ was, but it is known that a number of Mozart’s Piano Concerti had been performed there – and given that Mozart was working on a trio of symphonies at the time of writing to Puchberg (which would turn out to be his last, and of which the ‘Jupiter’ would be the ultimate), it had been assumed that they too were to be performed at the same venue.

It has long been believed that Mozart never heard any of these three symphonies performed during his lifetime (on account of the absence of any documentation pertaining to such performances). However, in recent years this view has been challenged – partly due to the discovery of the Puchberg correspondence – several potential opportunities for performance have been identified, both in Vienna and in Germany. It has been argued by several individuals, including Nikolaus Harnoncourt, that the three final symphonies (Nos. 39–41) were conceived as a large, unified work, citing in particular the fact that No. 41 has no introduction (unlike No. 39) but instead has a finale of significantly more epic proportions than either of its companions. Whether or not this is true, the final symphony quickly earned a reputation for being one of the greatest symphonies of its age. Even by the end of the nineteenth-century, more than a century after Mozart’s death, it retained its place, with Johannes Brahms claiming that the last three symphonies by Mozart were “much more important” even than Ludwig van Beethoven’s ground-breaking first Symphony.

Equally open to contention is the origin of the popular nickname for the final symphony, ‘Jupiter’. One theory (supported by Mozart’s son, Franz) attributes it to Johann Peter Salomon, the English impresario responsible perhaps most famously for his musically prosperous friendship with Joseph Haydn, bringing him to London in 1791–92 and 1794–95. Salomon died in 1815 – yet, the earliest documented use of the ‘Jupiter’ nickname does not appear until at least 1817 (possibly later), casting doubt on this theory. In fact, the finale of the ‘Jupiter’ is considered to be a re-working of the opening movement of Carl Ditters’s (1739–1799) *Symphony in D, Der Sturz Phaëton* (The Fall of *Phaëton*) – *Phaëton* being the Greek name for the same planet that the Romans referred to as ‘Jupiter’. It has been suggested that this may more plausibly account for the origins of the nickname.

In terms of its music, the final symphony stands as one of Mozart's most triumphant achievements in instrumental drama, melody and counterpoint. The first movement can be heard very much in the vein of *Don Giovanni*, characterised by three distinctly prevailing themes: first, the opening music – strong, imperial and subtly militaristic (perhaps a reflection on the ongoing Austro-Turkish struggles); second, a more tender, lyrical theme sounded by the violins and woodwinds; and third, a humorous violin melody in which Mozart self-quotes from his comic aria, *Il bacio di mano* (A Kiss of the Hand). The development section of the opening movement, imitative in nature, foretells of the spectacular counterpoint to come in the finale.

The second movement takes on the guise of a *Sarabande* – an old (possibly 16th-century) Spanish dance, betrayed by its slow, triple meter, and possibly reflective of the cosmopolitan side of Mozart's personality. Lyrical at the outset, this movement soon twists into an agitated working out of its theme, struggling with painful dissonances as it winds back to the more sedate sound of its opening. The third movement returns to Austria – but this time, the dance is a *Ländler*, a quicker, more spritely folk-dance.

But, of course – what makes the 'Jupiter' symphony so famous is its finale. Here is a movement that epitomizes Mozart's adoration of J.S. Bach (and is perhaps a culmination of his almost life-long study of Bach's music). The four-note motif (C-D-F-E) that opens the movement – but that was also heard very brazenly in the third movement – is a common plainchant motif (thought to originate in the Latin hymn, *Lucis Creator*), and had been in common currency with composers since at least the time of Josquin de Prez's *Missa Pange Lingua*. More significantly, it can be found in numerous other works by Mozart, including (perhaps in a bitter case of accidental irony) his very first symphony, from 1764.

A fugal texture soon ensues, with up to five different motifs heard sounding at once at any point in the music. To make matters more complicated, Mozart arranges his fugal sections in an overarching 'sonata' model, creating a kaleidoscopic musical world in which the rigorous contrapuntal tradition of the late Renaissance and Baroque is fused with the Galant style of the Enlightenment. In this sense, the work came very close to achieving the status of 'sublime' – a term that 18th-century philosophers used to define an experience that was simultaneously humbling and uplifting, and most importantly transcended and evaded capture by human media (i.e. words or pictures).

Little did Mozart know that in just 26 years' time, in 1824, Beethoven would turn the world of instrumental music on its head with his *Ninth Symphony* – a symphony that would include words, and therefore validate the skepticisms of thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, who had denigrated instrumental genres to the realm of 'low' art on the basis that, without words, they were not an adequate vehicle for ideas. Perhaps this explains the enduring popularity of the 'Jupiter' symphony – not just in the nineteenth century, but also today.

Toby Hession

BIOGRAPHIES

Robert Cohen

Robert Cohen made his concerto debut at the age of twelve at the Royal Festival Hall London and throughout the following forty years of his distinguished international career, has been hailed as one of the foremost cellists of our time. "It is easy to hear what the fuss is about, he plays like a God" (New York Stereo Review).



Invited to perform concertos world-wide by conductors Claudio Abbado, Antal Dorati, Sir Mark Elder, Mariss Jansons, Sir Charles Mackerras, Jerzy Maksymiuk, Kurt Masur, Riccardo Muti, Sir Roger Norrington, Tadaaki Otaka, Sir Simon Rattle, Stanisław Skrowaczewski, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Osmo Vanska, Robert Cohen has also collaborated in chamber music with many renowned soloists and ensembles such as Yehudi Menuhin and the Amadeus String Quartet (including their CD of Schubert Quintet on Deutsche Grammophon), Menahem Pressler, Leonidas Kavakos and Krystian Zimerman.

Robert Cohen made his recording debut at age 19 with the Elgar Cello Concerto and London Philharmonic (EMI), which earned a silver disc for sales of more than 1/4 million, since when he has recorded extensively for BIS, BeArTon, EMI, Deutsche Grammophon, Naxos, Sony and under long term contract to Decca.

Cohen studied with William Pleeth, Jacqueline du Pré, André Navarra and Mstislav Rostropovich. Cohen became an inspirational teacher, giving masterclasses at Conservatoires throughout the world. In 2010 he became Professor at the Royal Academy of Music, London and in 2014 they launched the Cohen Music Lectures; a series in which Cohen explains a fundamental basis of how to approach all aspects of the musician's life, from entering the practice room to performing on the concert stage. Cohen has been invited to lecture at the University of Cambridge, American String Teachers Association Washington DC and at music festivals in Canada, China, Finland, Poland Sweden, Slovakia and the USA.

In addition to Cohen's solo career, he directed the Charleston Manor Festival 1989-2012, was Cellist of the legendary Fine Arts Quartet 2011-2018, has a monthly radio show in the USA on WUWM entitled 'On That Note' and runs Cello Clinic - resolving musicians' physical and physiological performing issues.

Among the many chamber orchestras Cohen has conducted and directed are the Ruse Festival Orchestra, I Musici de Montréal, European Union Chamber

Orchestra, London Mozart Players, London Virtuosi, Bournemouth Sinfonietta and Youth Orchestras in Bulgaria, Italy, France, Finland, Switzerland and the UK.

His symphonic conducting includes performances with the Izmir State Symphony Orchestra, Slovak Philharmonic, Sofia Philharmonic, Murcia Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana and Orchestra Filarmonica di Torino.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I

James Jones *HO*
 Hanna Lee *EM*
 Ludwig Cheng *CTH*
 Louie McIver *G*
 Hermione Kellow *Q*
 Roy Navid *T*
 Sophie Westbrooke *EM*
 Jim Tse *SID*

VIOLIN II

Esme Lewis *PET*
 Henrietta McFarlane *EM*
 Susanna Alsey *N*
 Alice Beardmore *CAI*
 Emily Newlyn *CHR*

VIOLA

Claire Watters *CHR*

Alex Gunasekera *CC*

Isabel Cocker *F*
 Francine Maas*

CELLO

Dominic Martens *CL*
 Sam Weinstein *PEM*
 Dan Gilchrist *CAI*
 Judy Sayers *T*

DOUBLE BASS

Alex Jones *SE*
 James Kiln *TH*

FLUTE

Jenny Whitby *PEM*

OBOE

Katrina Mulheran *F*
 Thomas Hammond *R*

CLARINET

Thomas McFarlane *HH*
 Maddy Morris *G*

BASSOON

Francis Bushell *R*
 Jack Stebbing *CTH*

HORN

William Jones *J*
 Aiden Chan *J*

TRUMPET

Ed Liebrecht *J*
 Martin Dibb-Fuller *CTH*

TIMPANI

Daniel Watt*

*Guest players

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The Society has played a pivotal role in British musical life for over 170 years. It has educated Sir Andrew Davis, Sir Mark Elder, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Edward Gardner, Christopher Hogwood and Robin Ticciati, has premiered works by Brahms, Holloway, Lutoslawski, Rutter, Saxton and Vaughan Williams, and has given generations of Cambridge musicians the experience of performing alongside visiting conductors and soloists including Britten, Dvořák, Kodaly, Menuhin and Tchaikovsky. Since the 1870s, CUMS has enjoyed the leadership of several of Britain's finest musicians, including Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, Sir David Willcocks, Sir Philip Ledger, and, from 1983 to 2009, Stephen Cleobury.

In 2009, Stephen Cleobury assumed a new role as Principal Conductor of the CUMS Symphony Chorus, Sir Roger Norrington was appointed as Principal Guest Conductor and a series was launched to expose CUMS members to a succession of world-class visiting conductors.

In 2010, CUMS entered another new phase when it merged with the Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra and Cambridge University Music Club. In October 2010, the Society launched the Cambridge University Lunchtime Concerts – a new series of weekly chamber recitals at West Road Concert Hall showcasing our finest musical talent. In 2011 it welcomed the Cambridge University Chamber Choir, which is directed by Martin Ennis and David Lowe and Nicholas Mulroy. In 2014, the Cambridge University Jazz Orchestra and the Cambridge University New Music Ensemble joined CUMS as associate ensembles. Most recently, in 2017, CUMS Orchestras undertook a restructure, forming two ensembles (Cambridge University Orchestra and Cambridge University Sinfonia) as opposed to three, with the aim of creating a greater number of opportunities for students to play under some of the best professional conductors.

CUMS continues to provide opportunities for our finest student soloists and conductors by awarding conducting scholarships and concerto prizes, and it encourages new music by running a composition competition and premiering at least one new work each year. Recent highlights have included a recording of *The Epic of Everest's* original score for the British Film Institute, Verdi's *Otello* (Act I) conducted by Richard Farnes, J.S. Bach's *Mass in B minor* conducted by Sir Roger Norrington and Brahms' *Symphony No.1* conducted by Sir Mark Elder.

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Each year, 500 students — reading everything from Music and Maths to Medicine and Modern Languages — take part in up to 40 concerts, as conductors, instrumentalists, singers and composers. CUMS offers these students opportunities to work with world-class conductors and soloists, tackle ambitious repertoire and develop as musicians.

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Principal Guest Conductor
Sir Roger Norrington CBE

CUMS Conductor Laureate
Stephen Cleobury CBE

Artistic Advisor
Sian Edwards

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