

27 JUL

Segunda / Monday

16:00 Igreja de São Tiago / São Tiago Church

RETRATO DE COMPOSITOR / COMPOSER PORTRAIT

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-76)

50.º Aniversário da Sua Morte / 50th Anniversary of His Death

Carla Isabel, soprano

Martin Mitterrutzner, tenor

Ruifeng Lin, violino

Aleksandar Madžar, piano

GOLDMUND QUARTET

Florian Schötz, violino

Pinchas Adt, violino

Christoph Vandory, viola

Raphael Paratore, violoncelo

Florian Poppen, contrabaixo

Benjamin Britten

On This Island, Op. 11

Let the florid music praise!

Now the leaves are falling fast

Seascape

Nocturne

As it is, plenty

Suíte para Violino e Piano, Op. 6

Andante maestoso

March. Allegro alla marcia

Moto perpetuo. Allegro molto e con fuoco

Lullaby. Lento tranquillo

Waltz. Alla Valse: Vivace e rubato

"The Red Cockatoo & Outras Canções"

A Poison Tree

When You're Feeling Like Expressing Your Affection

Not Even Summer Yet

The Red Cockatoo

Wild With Passion (Song on the Water)

If Thou Wilt Ease Thine Heart

Cradle Song (Sleep, My Darling, Sleep)
Birthday Song for Erwin
Um Mitternacht

Sinfonia Simples, Op. 4 (versão para quinteto de cordas)

I. Boisterous Bourrée
II. Playful Pizzicato
III. Sentimental Sarabande
IV. Frolicsome Finale

Este ano assinalamos o 50.º aniversário da morte de Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), um dos compositores mais influentes da Grã-Bretanha e do século XX. Britten, tal como o seu colega e amigo Shostakovich, resistiu à pressão dos compositores seus contemporâneos para abandonar o uso de formas, técnicas e tonalidade consagradas pelo tempo. Embora estivesse aberto à influência de figuras como Schoenberg, Berg ou Boulez, as suas experiências foram pontuais e irregulares. O tempo deu-lhe razão. Isto não significa que os modernistas estivessem do lado errado da história, mas apenas sublinha que a música de Britten não perdeu o seu brilho. Pelo contrário, as suas obras poderão ser hoje mais populares do que nunca. E, no mundo beligerante em que actualmente vivemos, a sua escolha fundamental pela paz - foi objector de consciência - continua a dar tanto que pensar como sempre.

Para muitas pessoas, Britten será recordado sobretudo como compositor para voz. Escreveu nada menos do que quinze ciclos de canções e catorze óperas. Nenhuma homenagem ficaria completa sem uma obra vocal. Este concerto abre com as cinco canções de *On This Island*. A ilha do título é, sem surpresa, a Grã-Bretanha. O amor de Britten pelo seu país natal e a saudade que dele sentia tornaram-se particularmente evidentes quando, em plena Segunda Guerra Mundial, regressou a Inglaterra vindo dos Estados Unidos, onde vivia desde 1939 com o seu companheiro de vida e de trabalho, o tenor Peter Pears. As canções, sobre poemas de W. H. Auden, falam das paisagens rurais e marítimas inglesas, e a música, de 1937, revela por vezes a sua admiração por Purcell.

Britten começou a trabalhar na Suite para Violino e Piano quando se encontrava em Viena. A influência de Schoenberg é evidente. Alguns musicólogos vêem no pequeno conjunto recorrente de notas - E-F-B-C - um traço dodecafónico, e o compositor Anton Webern comparou a *Marcha à Phantasy* de Schoenberg. O trabalho posterior na composição revelou-se difícil. No entanto, depois de concluída,

a obra foi rapidamente considerada a primeira obra madura de Britten. Enquanto peça de virtuosismo para qualquer violinista, o Moto perpetuo poderá deixá-lo sem fôlego. Embora a contrastante Lullaby possa trazer algum alívio e faça aquilo que uma canção de embalar deve fazer - embalá-lo até um estado de paz feliz -, a Valsa final leva-o novamente num rodopio por vezes exaltante.

Enquanto três peças deste concerto podem ser consideradas obras de juventude, *The Red Cockatoo and Other Songs* oferece a oportunidade de sentir o Britten mais adulto. O ciclo foi reunido e publicado em 1994, quase duas décadas depois da morte do compositor. As canções, criadas entre 1935 e 1962, destinavam-se inicialmente a integrar outros ciclos, mas foram retiradas pelo compositor. Por isso, os textos são de vários poetas. O ciclo pode ser eclético, mas as canções individuais são pequenas jóias de humor inglês, amor, raiva, frustração, ternura e, naturalmente, belas melodias.

Britten tinha não só uma grande afeição por Inglaterra, e em particular pela região costeira de Suffolk, onde nasceu, mas também por jovens rapazes. Com alguns deles manteve relações íntimas, embora platónicas. Com toda a probabilidade, foram as memórias afectuosas da sua própria infância despreocupada - foi um bom aluno, um hábil jogador de críquete e o seu pai era dentista - que lhe deixaram uma eterna nostalgia dos tempos antigos. Esta condição poderá estar reflectida na sua *Simple Symphony*, que escreveu aos 20 anos, durante o seu último ano no Royal College of Music. De forma incrível, recorreu a composições suas escritas entre os 9 e os 12 anos, como o próprio Britten indicou na partitura. Cada andamento recicla dois temas de obras anteriores. Além disso, há influências transversais da era barroca, mas cada andamento tem o seu próprio carácter. Como sugere o título do primeiro andamento, a dança é viva e animada. O segundo andamento, em pizzicato, poderá recordar o terceiro andamento da Quarta Sinfonia de Tchaikovsky. O longo e introvertido terceiro andamento poderá ser um pouco sentimental, mas oferece um momento de introspecção, antes de a peça - e o concerto - se concluir com o andamento final, dinâmico, lúdico e, de facto, brincalhão.

This year we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976), one of Great Britain's and one of the twentieth century's most influential composers. Britten, just like his colleague and friend Shostakovich, withstood the pressure from contemporary composers to drop the use of time-tested forms and techniques and tonality. Although Britten was open to the influence from the likes of Schoenberg, Berg or Boulez, his experiments were sparse and inconsistent. Time has proven him right. That is not to say that the modernists were

on the wrong side of history, but only to underscore that Britten's music hasn't lost its luster. On the contrary, his works may be more popular than ever. And in the belligerent world that we currently live in, his fundamental choice for peace – he was a conscientious objector – is as thought-provoking as ever.

For many people, Britten will be primarily remembered as a composer for voice. He wrote no less than fifteen song cycles and fourteen operas. No tribute would be complete without a vocal work. This concert opens with the five songs of *On This Island*. The island of the title is, unsurprisingly, Britain. Britten's love of and longing for his home country became most evident when, in the midst of the Second World War, he returned to England from the USA, where he had been living since 1939 with his partner in work and life, the tenor Peter Pears. The songs, on poems by W.H. Auden, relate of the English land- and seascapes, and the music (from 1937) reveals, at times, his admiration for Purcell.

Britten started work on the Suite for Violin and Piano while he was in Vienna. The influence of Schoenberg is apparent. Some musicologists perceive the recurring small set of notes (E-F-B-C) as a dodecaphonic feature and the composer Anton Webern likened the 'March' to Schoenberg's *Phantasy*. The subsequent work on the composition turned out to be a struggle. However, after completion it was soon considered to be Britten's first mature work. As a showpiece for any violinist, the 'Moto perpetuo', may leave you exasperated. Although the contrasting 'Lullaby' may bring some relief and does what a lullaby must do – rock you into a state of blissful peace –, the final 'Waltz' takes you once again on an occasionally exhilarating spin.

While three pieces in this concert can be considered early works, the *Red Cockatoo and Other Songs* give the opportunity to get a feel for the more grown-up Britten. The cycle was put together and published in 1994, almost two decades after the composer had passed away. The songs, created between 1935 and 1962, were initially meant to be part of other cycles but were edited out by the composer. Hence the texts are from several poets. The cycle may be eclectic, but the individual songs are little gems with English wit, love, anger, frustration, endearment and, obviously, beautiful melodies.

Britten not only had a fondness for England, and in particular the coastal area of Suffolk where he was born, but also for young boys. With a number of them he maintained intimate but platonic relationships. In all likelihood, it was his fond memories of his own carefree childhood – he was a good student, an able cricketer and his father was a dentist – that left him with an eternal longing for the olden days. This condition may well be reflected in his *Simple Symphony*, which he wrote as a 20-year-old while in his last year at the Royal College of Music. Incredibly so, he borrowed from his own compositions that he wrote between the age of 9 and 12, as Britten himself mentioned in the score. Each movement recycles two themes from his earlier works. Furthermore, there are overarching influences from the Baroque

era, but each movement has its own character. As the title of the first movement implies, the dance is upbeat. The plucked second movement may remind you of the third movement of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. The long, introverted, third movement may be a bit sentimental but provides a moment of introspection, before the piece (and the concert) is wrapped up with the dynamic, playful, indeed frolicsome, final movement.

[Bart de Vries](#)

ON THIS ISLAND, lyrics

Poems by W.H. Auden, lyrics reprinted with the permission from the LiederNet Archive

Let The Florid Music Praise

Let the florid music praise,
The flute and the trumpet,
Beauty's conquest of your face:
In that land of flesh and bone,
Where from citadels on high
Her imperial standards fly,
Let the hot sun
Shine on, shine on.

O but the unlov'd have had power,
The weeping and striking,
Always; time will bring their hour:
Their secretive children walk
Through your vigilance of breath
To unpardonable death,
And my vows break
Before his look.

Now the leaves are falling fast

Now the leaves are falling fast,
Nurse's flowers will not last;
Nurses to the graves are gone,
And the prams go rolling on.

Whisp'ring neighbours, left and right,
Pluck us from the real delight;
And the active hands must freeze

Lonely on the sep'rate knees.

Dead in hundreds at the back
Follow wooden in our track,
Arms raised stiffly to reprove
In false attitudes of love.

Starving through the leafless wood
Trolls run scolding for their food;
And the nightingale is dumb,
And the angel will not come.

Cold, impossible, ahead
Lifts the mountain's lovely head
Whose white waterfall could bless
Travellers in their last distress.

Seascape

Look, stranger, at this island now
The leaping light for your delight discovers,
Stand stable here
And silent be,
That through the channels of the ear
May wander like a river
The swaying sound of the sea.

Here at the small field's ending pause
Where the chalk wall falls to the foam, and its tall ledges
Oppose the pluck
And knock of the tide,
And the shingle scrambles after the suck-
ing surf,
and the gull lodges
A moment on its sheer side.

Far off like floating seeds the ships
Diverge on urgent voluntary errands;
And the full view
Indeed may enter
And move in memory as now these clouds do,
That pass the harbour mirror
And all the summer through the water saunter.

Nocturne

Now through night's caressing grip
Earth and all her oceans slip,
Capes of China slide away
From her fingers into day
And th'Americas incline
Coasts towards her shadow line.

Now the ragged vagrants creep
Into crooked holes to sleep:
Just and unjust, worst and best,
Change their places as they rest:
Awkward lovers like in fields
Where disdainful beauty yields:

While the splendid and the proud
Naked stand before the crowd
And the losing gambler gains
And the beggar entertains:
May sleep's healing power extend
Through these hours to our friend.
Unpursued by hostile force,
Traction engine, bull or horse
Or revolting succubus;
Calmly till the morning break
Let him lie, then gently wake.

As it is, plenty

As it is, plenty;
As it's admitted
The children happy
And the car, the car
That goes so far
And the wife devoted:
To this as it is,
To the work and the banks
Let his thinning hair
And his hauteur
Give thanks, give thanks.

All that was thought
As like as not, is not
When nothing was enough
But love, but love
And the rough future
Of an intransigent nature
And the betraying smile,
Betraying, but a smile:
That that is not, is not;
Forget, Forget.

Let him not cease to praise
Then his spacious days;
Yes, and the success
Let him bless, let him bless:
Let him see in this
The profits larger
And the sins venal,
Lest he see as it is
The loss as major
And final, final.

RED COCKATOO and OTHER SONGS, lyrics

A Poison Tree *(text: William Blake)*

I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I water'd it in fears,
Night & morning with my tears;
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright.
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole
When the night had veil'd the pole,
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretch'd beneath the tree.

When you're feeling like expressing your affection *(text: W.H. Auden)*

When you're feeling like expressing your affection
For someone night and day,
Take up the 'phone and ask for your connection,
We'll give it right away.
Eve or Adam, anyone you ask for
We'll find somehow.
Sir or Madam, if you get a taste for
Paris, Berlin, Moscow,
Enter any telephone kiosk O,
Have your say,
Press button A,
Here's your number now.

Not even summer yet *(text: Peter Burra)*

Not even summer yet
Can make my quite forget
That still most blessed thing,
The early spring.

I watch'd the red-tipped trees
Burst into greeneries;
Saw the swift blossom come
Like sea dissolv'd in foam.

But in the lover's ways,
The summer of his days
Is come from such a spring
As poets cannot sing.

Red Cockatoo *(text: Arthur Waley)*

Sent as a present from Annam --
A red cockatoo.
Coloured like the peach-tree blossom,
Speaking with the speech of men.
And they did to it what is always done
To the learned and eloquent.
They took a cage with stout bars
And shut it up inside.

Wild with passion *(text: Thomas Lovell Beddoes)*

Wild with passion, sorrow beladen,

Bend the thought of thy stormy soul
On its home, on its heaven, the loved maiden;
And peace shall come at her eyes' control.
Even so night's starry rest possesses
With its gentle spirit these tamed waters,
And bids the wave with weedy tresses
Embower the ocean's pavement stilly
Where the sea-girls lie, the mermaid-daughters,
Whose eyes, not born to weep,
More palely-lidded sleep
Than in our fields the lily;
And sighing in their rest
More sweet than is their breath;
And quiet as its death
Upon a lady's breast.

If thou wilt ease thine heart *(text: Thomas Lovell Beddoes)*

If thou wilt ease thine heart
Of love and all its smart,
Then sleep, dear, sleep;
And not a sorrow
Hang any tear on your eyelashes;
Lie still and deep,
With folded eye;
Sad soul, until the sea-wave washes
The rim o' th' sun tomorrow,
In eastern sky.

But wilt thou cure thine heart
Of love and all its smart,
Then die, dear, die;
'Tis deeper, sweeter,
Than on a rose bank to lie dreaming

And then alone, amid the beaming
Of love's stars, thou'lt meet her
In eastern sky.

Cradle Song *(text: Louis MacNeice)*

Sleep, sleep
Sleep, my darling sleep;

Sleep, my darling, sleep;
The pity of it all is all we compass if
We watch disaster fall.
Put off your twenty odd
Encumbered years and creep
Into the only heaven,
The robbers cave of sleep.

Sleep, sleep, sleep.

The wild grass will whisper,
Lights of passing cars
Will streak across your dreams
And fumble at the stars;
Life will tap the window

Only to soon again
Life will have her answer
Do not ask her when.

When the winsome bubble
Shivers, when the bough Braks,
will be the moment But not here of now.
Sleep and [a]sleep, forget,
The watchers on the wall Awake all night
who know The pity of it all.

Sleep, sleep, sleep,
sleep, my darling, sleep.

Birthday Song for Erwin *(text: Ronald Duncan)*
Text not available for publication.

Um Mitternacht *(Text: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)*
Um Mitternacht ging ich, nicht eben gerne,
Klein kleiner Knabe, jenen Kirchhof hin
Zu Vaters Haus, des Pfarrers; Stern an Sterne
Sie leuchteten doch alle gar zu schön;
 Um Mitternacht.

Wenn ich dann ferner in des Lebens Weite
Zur Liebsten mußte, mußte, weil sie zog,
Gestirn und Nordschein über mir im Streite,
Ich gehend, kommend Seligkeiten sog;
 Um Mitternacht.

Bis dann zu letzt des vollen Mondes Helle
So klar und deutlich mir ins Finstere drang,
Auch der Gedanke willig, sinnig, schnelle
Sich ums Vergangne wie ums Künftige schlang;
 Um Mitternacht.