



The Da Capo Concert Band

Conducted by Alan Danson

Presents

“Round the World in Eighty Minutes!”

Trinity Church
Saturday 7th July 2007



CONCERT PROGRAMME

Da Capo Concert Band: "Round the World in Eighty Minutes!"

Programme Notes

- 1) Bavarian March *Joe Wright*
 - 2) Yiddish Dances *Adam Gorb*
 - 3) Serenade in E-flat Major for Wind Instruments, Op. 7 *Richard Strauss*
 - 4) English Folk Song Suite *Ralph Vaughan Williams*
 - I. March I
 - II. Intermezzo
 - III. March II
- ** INTERVAL **
- 5) Czechen-Polka (Czech Polka) *Johann Strauss II*
 - 6) Symphonic Dances No. 1 (Non allegro), Op. 45 *Sergei Rachmaninov*
 - 7) Mediterranean Suite *Thomas Legrady*
 - I. Monte Carlo Casino
 - II. Mykonos Island
 - III. St. Tropez Beach
 - 8) Second Suite for Band (Latino Mexicana) *Alfred Reed*
 - I. Son Montuno
 - II. Tango ("Sargasso Serenade")
 - III. Guaracha
 - IV. Paso Doble ("A la Corrida")

**The Da Capo Concert Band functions under the auspices
of the Barnet Education Authority**

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Bavarian March

Joe Wright

We start our journey round the world with a cheeky Bavarian march. Picture this – a small German town snuggled in a valley, surrounded by high snow-capped mountains. In the town square people are laughing, dancing and drinking. Enjoy!

Yiddish Dances (1997)

Khosidl; Terkische; Doina; Hora; Freylachs

Adam Gorb (b.1958)

Adam Gorb was born in England. Two generations previously, at the start of the 20th century, his family (then Gorbalewsky) had left Russia, first for Germany and then dispersing to Belgium, America and England. He started composing at the age of ten and at the age of fifteen a set of his piano pieces (*A Pianist's Alphabet*) were performed on BBC Radio 3. He is currently Head of the School of Music at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

Yiddish Dances is very much a party piece, bringing together two of Gorb's abiding passions: the Symphonic Wind Orchestra and *Klezmer* - the folk music of the Yiddish-speaking people. As Gorb explained, "The Yiddish culture is about traveling and picking up influences, it's about a certain sense of irony, comedy and tragedy at the same time. The thing that interests me about trying to write comedy is the proximity of tragedy, they go together hand in hand. In the film, *Schindler's List*, I think some of the most wonderful scenes were in the ghetto, people who were doomed who were making the best of it, telling jokes. I found this incredibly moving, and I wanted to have a sense of this in this piece."

The five movements are all based on set Klezmer dances: *Khosidl* – a medium tempo 2/4 in which the music moves between satire, sentimentality and pathos; *Terkische* – an up-tempo Jewish tango; *Doina* – a free recitative in which various instruments in the band get a chance to show off; *Hora* – slow 3/8 time with a characteristic rocking rhythm; and *Freylachs* – very fast 2/4 time in which themes from the previous movements are recalled, ending in a riotous 'booze-up' for all concerned.

Serenade in E-flat Major for Wind Instruments, Op.7 (1882)

Richard Strauss (1864 - 1949)

Richard Strauss, a German composer, was a musical Romantic and a composer given to sweeping and colorful sonic invention. But in his youthful *Serenade for Wind Instruments*, he looked back to music's Classical period, updating the Classical wind serenade with the harmonic palette of the nineteenth century.

Haydn and Beethoven had written serenades for wind instruments, and those of Mozart crown the literature for wind ensembles. As the son of a professional horn player, Strauss was undoubtedly familiar with the compositions and learned from them how to blend and contrast wind sonorities effectively. This work was the first Strauss piece mature enough to withstand regular performance and features jaunty themes and a relatively simple form.

English Folk Song Suite (1923)

March I; Intermezzo; March II

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)

Ralph Vaughan Williams was born in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, in 1872. He was educated at Cambridge and at the Royal College of Music and studied in Berlin with Max Bruch. He also worked briefly under Ravel in Paris.

From the earliest years of his life he showed an interest in English folk music and the folk dance movement. He was an avid collector of English folk song and also of Tudor church music, both of which influenced his essentially fresh English idiom. Without his devotion to this kind of music, many beautiful tunes would have long since slipped into oblivion. The *English Folk Song Suite* was composed in 1923 as a commission from the Royal Military School of Music and was later scored for full orchestra. It is divided into three sections. The first is a military march that uses three traditional melodies: *Seventeen come Sunday*, *Pretty Caroline* and *Dives and Lazarus*. The slow second movement, an intermezzo, is based on the folk songs *My Bonny Boy* and *Green Bushes*. The final movement, a second march, is more like a sea shanty and features four more familiar folk songs *Blow away the Morning Dew*, *High Germany*, *The Tree so High* and *John Barleycorn*.

**** INTERVAL ****

Czechen-Polka (Czech Polka) (1846)

Johann Strauss II (1825 - 1899), arr. Norman Richardson

Son of the composer Johann Strauss I, and brother of composers Josef Strauss and Eduard Strauss, Johann II is the most famous of the Austrian family. Known in his lifetime as "the waltz king" he also composed many Polkas.

The Polka is characterized by three quick steps and a hop, danced to music in 2/4, or duple, time. It originated in the middle of the nineteenth century in Bohemia, and is still a common genre of Czech, Polish, Croatian and Slovenian folk music. The name comes from Czech word *půlka*, which means a half. Due to its name it is often mistakenly attributed to Poland.

Symphonic Dances No. 1 (Non allegro), Op.45 (1940)

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873 - 1943), trans. by James Andrews

All through his career, Rachmaninov drew virtually nothing from the work of his more advanced contemporaries. His style remained rooted in the Russian soil that nurtured Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. Though in the context of his times his music was old-fashioned, it was never derivative and its strength lay in its vitality, invention and depth of emotional expression.

When he left Russia in 1917 following the Russian Revolution, Rachmaninov had to take on the role of touring piano virtuoso in order to support himself, ultimately settling in the US with his wife. The demands of this new phase in his career, begun at the age of 45, left little time for composition. Only in his last decade did Rachmaninov produce works to compare with those of his Russian period. They include the *Third Symphony*, the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* and the *Symphonic Dances*. These dances were his last completed composition, written in 1940 and first performed in 1941. Although the composer originally envisaged the work as the basis for a ballet, the music does not obviously suggest this treatment, and for the listener the emphasis is clearly on the word 'symphonic'.

The first of the three dances, this dance in C minor opens with a march-like theme developed at some length. This gives way to a slower middle section featuring a saxophone solo, whose melody is taken up by the other winds. After this the march-like music returns, leading to a delicately scored coda in C major, in which can be heard the main theme of the composer's *First Symphony*.

Mediterranean Suite (1991)

Monte Carlo Casino; Mykonos Island; St. Tropez Beach

Thomas Legrady (b.1920)

Thomas Legrady was born in Budapest, but in 1956 emigrated to Canada. He has taught, conducted and composed for woodwind and brass for many years. This suite takes the listener to three famous locations in the Mediterranean.

Monte Carlo Casino – Built in 1863 in the Principality of Monaco, and with its ornate frescoes, bas-reliefs, sculptures and an astonishing gold and marble atrium, the Casino has been the scene of Monte-Carlo's finest hours.

Mykonos Island – According to mythology, Hercules, in one of his twelve tasks, killed the Giants and threw them into the Aegean Sea where they petrified and turned into huge rocks, forming the dry, arid Greek island of Mykonos.

St. Tropez Beach – Legend speaks of St. Torpes, a religious martyr whose body was thrown into a boat that drifted into what is now the Golfe de St. Tropez on the French Riviera. In the 1920s, St. Tropez attracted stars from the world of fashion and after 1945 it became the French existentialists' summer retreat, receiving international recognition in the 1950s, thanks in part to Brigitte Bardot.

Second Suite for Band (Latino Mexicana) (1978)

Son Montuno; Tango (“Sargasso Serenade”); Guaracha;

Paso Doble (“A la Corrida”)

Alfred Reed (1921 - 2005)

Alfred Reed was born on Manhattan Island, New York City, on 25 January 1921. His formal music training began at the age of 10, when he studied the trumpet, but his interests soon shifted from performing to arranging and composition. He composed an immense body of works, and at the time of his death, aged 84, he had composition commissions that would have taken him to the age of 115.

Reed composed a number of works based upon indigenous music, including two of his most famous pieces *Russian Christmas Music* and *Armenian Dances*. This Suite is inspired by the local styles of South American music.

Son is derived from Spanish, African, French Creole and native musical influences, arising first in the eastern Cuban province of Oriente and reaching Havana around the 1880s. In the 1940s Arsenio Rodríguez became the most influential player of *son*, introducing a *montuno* (or mambo) section for melodic solos. His style became known as *son montuno* and formed the basis of the mambo craze in the 40's. Its Spanish and African musical elements shaped today's salsa, as well as urban dance music in French-speaking areas of West and Central Africa and the Caribbean, and Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador.

The second movement, *Sargasso Serenade*, is a subtle, little-known Tango from Brazil. Dreamy and soft, its style is free and lilting, evoking an image of the Sargasso Sea in the North Atlantic Ocean. These very salty waters, first discovered by Portuguese sailors in the fifteenth century, are often regarded as being lifeless, although seaweed floats en masse on the surface. Situated in the Bermuda Triangle, the sea is credited with some of the infamous disappearances there. That stigma is further enforced by the sometimes total lack of wind over the sea, and the possibility for modern engines to become entangled in the seaweed. Thus, it is sometimes called the "graveyard of ships".

Originating in Spain as a dance in two sections, the *Guaracha* came to Puerto Rico from Cuba in the 1850s, and developed into its current modern jazz, salsa style that can be found across South America. This version is an Argentinean joking drinking song that ends with a rumba.

The jubilant Spanish-Mexican *Paso Doble* is based on music played at bullfights during the bullfighters' entrance (*paseo*) or during the passes (*faena*) just before the kill. The leader of this dance plays the part of the matador. The follower generally plays the part of the matador's cape, but can also represent the bull or a flamenco dancer. *La corrida de toros* (running of the bulls) takes place before crowds of enthusiasts, often numbering many thousands.

Programme Notes by Adam Jobson (English Folk Song Suite notes and Symphonic Dances No.1 notes supplied through the Programme Note Bank of Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies)

A Few Words About Da Capo Concert Band's Musical Director...

Alan Danson has conducted The Da Capo Band since 2005, during which time the band has performed a wide range of repertoire.

Alan's background as a professional musician has brought a rich variety of musical experience to the band. In tonight's concert, Alan's last with Da Capo, the listener is transported "Round the World in Eighty Minutes!", beginning in Bavaria and ending in Latin America.

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