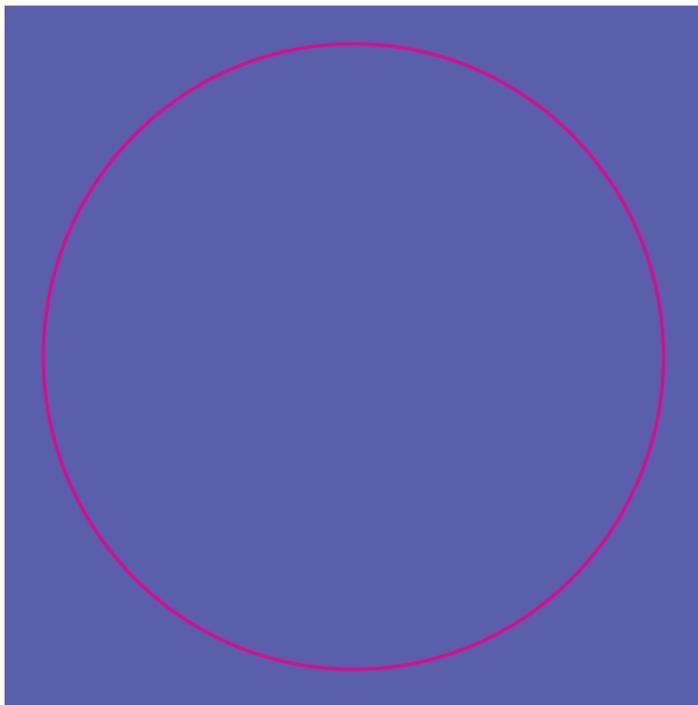


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CLASSICS

London Chamber Orchestra
Beethoven | Mendelssohn



Conductor
Christopher Warren-Green

Soloist | Director
Melvyn Tan

LCO Live

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Beethoven | Mendelssohn

Ludwig van Beethoven

1. Egmont Overture Op.84

Christopher Warren-Green conductor

[8.08]

Ludwig van Beethoven

Piano Concerto No.2 in B flat major Op.19

2. Allegro con brio

3. Adagio

4. Rondo: Molto allegro

Melvyn Tan soloist/director

[28.33]

[14.06]

[8.14]

[6.13]

Mendelssohn

Symphony No.4 in A major Op.90 'Italian'

5. Allegro vivace

6. Andante con moto

7. Con moto moderato

8. Saltarello: Presto

Christopher Warren-Green conductor

[30.06]

[11.03]

[6.20]

[6.29]

[6.16]

Total time

[67.01]

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Egmont Overture Op.84

Beethoven was asked in 1809 for music to accompany a Viennese production of Goethe's eponymous play. He complied, fired with enthusiasm for its themes of national liberation and personal heroism, though not so much so that he could meet the deadline: the overture was only ready for the play's fourth night in June 1810. The story is set in 16th-century Flanders. Egmont, a Flemish nobleman, is in love with Clärchen. His attempts to moderate tyrannical rule of the Duke of Alba meet only with arrest and execution; grief-stricken, Clärchen poisons herself. Egmont's death becomes both tragedy and triumph because his spirit lives on to inspire the successful uprising of his people against their oppressors.

Beethoven's response is inspired both by his love for Goethe and his enthusiasm for the post-Revolutionary wave of French composers, which lent to his works around this time (notably the 'Emperor' Piano Concerto and Fifth Symphony) their temperament and sometimes even their ideas. Beethoven owned a copy of Cherubini's opera *Medée*, for example, and his overture owes more than its key to the Frenchman's.

But really the differences are much more striking than the similarities. Where Cherubini is all bustle, a domestic scale for a domestic tragedy, the huge, slashing chords of Beethoven's opening, the painful chromaticism of its introduction, groping for resolution, and the sledgehammer chords that punctuate its harried Allegro theme: these are universal in ambition. The sledgehammers don't even let up from the second theme in the woodwinds, shapely but never without the sense of fate pressing close on its heels. It is those chords that finally overwhelm all lyrical impulse: the execution is graphically achieved. And at the moment of lowest despair is the highest suspense, where a new tonic is found, C after the F minor darkness, and the 'Victory Symphony' rings out with unstoppable ebullience. This is music of the barricades.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Concerto No.2 in B flat major Op.19

- I Allegro con brio
 - II Adagio
 - III Rondo: Molto allegro
-

Mozart was still alive when, in 1787, Beethoven started work on a piano concerto in B flat: only 13 years later would it finally be played in the form we hear it today. During that time Beethoven's life and work had undergone a sea-change: a concerto in C major had been written and published (which is why the B flat is known as No.2) and he had travelled miles, physically and emotionally, from an eager-to-please lad in Bonn to a young turk in Vienna. It would take a novelist to trace this journey through the concerto, but we can hear clearly enough the sophistication of the finale's repartee in comparison with the more abrupt turns of event of the first movement. Off the piano runs and the orchestra chase after, before apparently offering more weighty second thoughts. Nothing loth, the piano proposes an even more skittish idea – and later twirls the orchestra round its finger still further with loopy jumps and stamping accents on the wrong beat of the bar. We're even left to think that the concerto will sign off with a shrug before good order is finally restored.

But more quietly original still is the tiny

recitative for the piano at the end of the slow movement. This has proceeded in a gently contained, almost Mozartian fashion from its hymn-like opening (though without the older composer's concentration on the wind instruments: here, everyone is subordinate to the composer/keyboards), elaborating and decorating, and moving into some unexpected keys, the last of which brings the orchestra to a head. In response, the pianist explores a return to the theme, third by third, helped by the orchestra. When fully appreciated by both performers and audience, it is a moment of true, Beethovenian communion.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Symphony No.4 in A major Op.90 'Italian'

- I Allegro vivace
 - II Andante con moto
 - III Con moto moderato
 - IV Saltarello. Presto
-

The climate of Mendelssohn's home town of Leipzig was hardly different to our own, and when he toured Italy in 1831 he seems to have been struck by the same burst of light that meets modern-day travellers as they step off the plane. The symphony's opening bars and fanfare-like melody radiate with solar energy. Only at the start of the development does a

pause for breath present itself, but a theme of definite military character enters, at first almost unnoticed on the violins, but it soon gains vigour and strength, and it competes with the main melody until the end of the movement.

Mendelssohn's thorough-going but liberal education is everywhere evident in this symphony. Just as the first movement translates his painter's eye into musical light and shade, his literary accomplishments lend the second its gravitas. His letters and drawings while on tour attest to his awe at finally laying eyes upon the ruins of Rome's imperial glory, after his years as an avid classical scholar. His account of the Holy Week processions through Rome also fits the steady, sombre tread of the theme in the bass. Two flutes wind their way around each other at one point like trails of incense, before dissonant clarinets add a sharper tang to the harmony. There may also be a personal inspiration in the form of a memorial to his childhood composition teacher Carl Friedrich Zelter, who died in 1832, before Mendelssohn revised the symphony for publication.

If anything it is the third movement which performs more of the traditional functions of a slow movement, though the minuet flows easily enough. The brightness of its soundworld is partly due to the (relatively rare for the time) 'high' key of A major, which the symphony shares with Mozart's 29th – and

more importantly with Beethoven's Seventh. Beethoven's work seems to have provided Mendelssohn a structural template for the 'Italian' Symphony, and the furious, dance-inspired finale is only the most obvious correspondence. Saltarello does not imply a specific dance metre in its own right – it comes from the Latin saltare, meaning simply to dance – but Mendelssohn seems to have associated it with the wild and whirling tarantella of Naples. Taken at a true presto, the music seems to hang on for dear life – or for grim death. There is no resolution here, for the movement stays in the minor key until its final brusque send-off. As so often, Mendelssohn's reputation for geniality is belied by a tension that here brilliantly reflects the intensity of Mediterranean life.

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Christopher Warren-Green

Music Director & Principal Conductor



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Christopher Warren-Green is also Music Director of the London Chamber Orchestra, and makes regular guest appearances with the Royal Philharmonic, Philharmonia and BBC Concert orchestras. He has worked with the London Philharmonic and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic orchestras, and has conducted the Royal Scottish National Orchestra to high critical acclaim. He also makes frequent visits to orchestras within Europe and the Far East, including the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, and has made several tours of Japan with the NHK Symphony.

In 1980, by personal invitation of HRH The Prince of Wales, Mr Warren-Green was honoured to conduct the first concert to be given in modern times, in the Throne Room of Buckingham Palace; since then, he has conducted numerous concerts at Buckingham Palace, as well as Highgrove House and St James's Palace. To mark the occasion of HM The Queen's 80th birthday at Kew Palace, he conducted a private concert for the entire Royal family; he also directed the Philharmonia Orchestra for the Service of Dedication and Prayer, celebrating the marriage of TRHs The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, and again in the 60th birthday celebration concert for HRH The Prince of Wales.

Christopher Warren-Green has recorded extensively for BMG, Philips, Virgin, Chandos and most recently for Deutsche Grammophon and EMI.

A highly experienced musician, Christopher Warren-Green's wide knowledge of the repertoire and poised command of an orchestra has earned him great respect throughout the music-making world.

From September 2010, Mr Warren-Green takes up the post of Music Director of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, an appointment which further strengthens the connections he has established in the USA through his engagements with the Philadelphia and Minnesota Orchestras, the St Louis and Seattle Symphony Orchestras and National Symphony Washington DC.

Melvyn Tan

Piano



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Melvyn Tan has been living in London since leaving his native Singapore at an early age to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School and the Royal College of Music. His teachers have included Nadia Boulanger, Marcel Ciampi and Vlado Perlemuter.

He built a formidable international reputation during a long exploration of the precursors of the modern piano. This culminated in a series of groundbreaking performances and recordings on the fortepiano including the complete Beethoven Concertos and Sonatas and Schubert Impromptus.

Melvyn has given complete cycles of the Beethoven Concertos and Sonatas, Mozart Sonatas, Debussy Préludes and Chopin Préludes in New York, Tokyo and London. He has performed at many leading concert halls around the world, including London's Wigmore Hall and Royal Festival Hall, New York's Lincoln Centre, Théâtre du Châtelet and Cité de la Musique in Paris, Vienna's Musikverein and Konzerthaus; Salzburg's Mozarteum, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and Cologne's Philharmonie. His festival appearances include Salzburg, Edinburgh, La Roque d'Anthéron, City of London, Spitalfields, and Bath's Mozartfest. He has worked with orchestras such as the London Philharmonic and Netherlands Symphony orchestras, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Academy of St Martin's in the Fields, Stuttgart Radio, Salzburg's Camerata and Mozarteum orchestras, New World and Melbourne symphonies and has toured Australia regularly with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. In 2007 he began his association with the London Chamber Orchestra and Christopher Warren-Green, performing concerti by Beethoven, Mozart and Hummel in London and Italy.

Chamber music and Lieder hold an important place in Melvyn's repertoire. Partners include cellist Steven Isserlis, with whom he has recorded the complete

Mendelssohn works for cello, cellist Patrick Demenga, clarinetist Dimitri Ashkenazy, tenor Keith Lewis, the Skampa String Quartet and the Dutch pianist Ronald Brautigam. He is the founder of the New Mozart Ensemble, a flexible chamber ensemble / orchestra which he has directed in many major festivals and music centres worldwide.

In addition to the Beethoven Sonatas, Concertos and Schubert Impromptus, Melvyn Tan's recordings for EMI Classics include discs of Mozart concertos and Weber's Konzertstück with the London Classical Players and Sir Roger Norrington. Further recordings of Mozart concertos are on Harmonia Mundi (with Philharmonia Baroque and Nicholas McGegan) and Virgin Classics, this time with Tan's own group, the New Mozart Ensemble.

London Chamber Orchestra

'The concerts of Warren-Green and the London Chamber Orchestra at St. John's, Smith Square aren't often noticed in the press, but their large regular audience knows that they are some of the most exciting in London.' The Sunday Times

The London Chamber Orchestra, the UK's oldest chamber orchestra, has nurtured the new and paid homage to the traditional since 1921. Since 1988 Principal Conductor and

Music Director Christopher Warren-Green has brought together the inspirational musicians and repertoire for which LCO is renowned. The remarkable acoustic and intimate ambience of St. John's, Smith Square, its London home, enable LCO – the only chamber orchestra resident in London – to give vibrant performances and establish a close rapport with its audiences. The recordings on the LCO Live label, in partnership with Signum Classics, are the result of this happy marriage of orchestra and venue.

'...everyone on stage seems to be having a whale of a time and this feeds into a performance in which the music sounds new-minted' The Guardian

By restricting the number of its UK performances, LCO retains a sense of enthusiasm and energy as it communicates its passion for superlative music-making to the audience. It continues to perform internationally, building relationships worldwide in prestigious venues such as La Scala, Milan, Vienna's Musikverein, Hong Kong City Hall,

Teatro Real, Madrid, and on critically acclaimed tours of the USA, Far East and Europe.

As well as producing some of the finest performances of well-loved works, LCO holds innovation close to its heart and has given more than 100 UK premières of works by composers ranging from Mozart to Graham Fitkin. In 2006 LCO premiered Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's *The Golden Rule*, written to mark The Queen's 80th birthday, and in 2008 gave the London première of Hess's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra commissioned by The Prince of Wales. LCO's 09/10 season will include its commission and world première performance of a Piano Concerto by Graham Fitkin.

'It is an exciting experience hearing musicians of this calibre playing as if their lives depended on it.' Hi-Fi News

It is LCO's philosophy, as an elite ensemble with an enviable reputation, to share its excellence in a socially aware environment – this it achieves through its education work and many important charitable associations.

LCO continues to develop its pioneering initiatives: LCO Kids reaches out to the young in partnership with Barnardo's; LCO New approaches contemporary music from a fresh perspective and LCO Live captures the ambience, interaction and exhilaration of LCO performances through recordings of live concerts at St. John's, Smith Square.

'Utterly ravishing...gloriously unforgettable...This is my recording of the year, some of the greatest of all British music given performances that are unforgettably inspirational.' Gramophone

LCO continues to enjoy significant support from private donors, enthusiastic audiences and corporate sponsors. Priding itself on independence from public subsidy, LCO relies on impeccable performance credentials to attract its advocates. Christopher Warren-Green, LCO's musicians and management aim to uphold LCO's world class stature and its mission to educate, enlighten and entertain.



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Rosemary Furniss
Sophie Barber
Mark Butler
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Matthew Elston
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John Mills
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Kate Musker
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Robert Max
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Pierre Doumenge
John Heley
Louisa Tuck

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Mary Scully
Stacey Watton
Tim Amherst
Roger Linley

Flute

Jonathan Snowden
Monica McCarron
Christine Hankin

Oboe

David Theodore
Philip Harmer
Alison Alty

Clarinet

Mark van de Wiel
Laurent Ben Slimane
Douglas Mitchell

Bassoon

Meyrick Alexander
Richard Skinner
Graham Hobbs

Horn

Pip Eastop
Tim Thorpe
Michaela Betts
Clare Lintott
Beth Randell

Trumpet

Alison Balsom*
Ross Brown
Adam Wright

Timpani

Tristan Fry

*Appears courtesy
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Recorded at St. John's, Smith Square, London on
23rd May 2007 (Beethoven Egmont Overture),
28th February 2007 (Beethoven Piano Concerto No.2),
19th September 2007 (Mendelssohn).

Producer & Editor - Raphaël Mouterde

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Mendelssohn - Mike Cox

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Programme notes - Peter Quantrill

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