

Southwell u3a Music Lovers Group – 19 February 2020

YouTube Playlist

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0qau_1CNxY&list=PLQHiO9b3DnltcB4qPnvSQhcSabRNoDUW7

Gioachino Rossini (1792 – 1868) William Tell Overture

11:49

President's Own United States Marine Band

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZF4xHhPtRc>

William Tell was the last of Rossini's 39 operas and the overture consists of four parts. Most people are familiar with the Lone Ranger theme tune of the Finale. This "March of the Swiss Soldiers" alludes to the final act, which recounts the Swiss soldiers' victorious battle to liberate their homeland from Austrian repression. It is often arranged, as here, for wind bands. The other parts are less familiar and include the slow Prelude: Dawn, followed by the Storm, then comes Ranz des vaches or "Call to the Cows", featuring the cor anglais (English horn).

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 1847) Symphony No 3 in A Minor Op 56 “The Scottish” 39.51
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Conductor Roger Norrington

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoS3ENUSRDM&t=2032s>

Andante con moto 16:43 Vivace non troppo (4:11) Adagio (9:38) Allegro vivacissimo 13:00

Mendelssohn enjoyed early success in Germany, and revived interest in the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. He became well received in his travels throughout Europe as a composer, conductor and soloist; his ten visits to Britain – during which many of his major works were premiered – form an important part of his adult career. His essentially conservative musical tastes set him apart from more adventurous musical contemporaries such as Franz Liszt, Richard Wagner and Hector Berlioz. After a long period of relative denigration due to changing musical tastes and antisemitism (he converted to Christianity), he is now among the most popular composers of the Romantic era.

Mendelssohn was initially inspired to compose this symphony during his first visit to Britain in 1829. After a series of successful performances in London, Mendelssohn embarked on a walking tour of Scotland. Mendelssohn visited the ruins of Holyrood Chapel at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh, where, as he related to his family in a letter, he received his initial inspiration for the piece: "In the deep twilight we went today to the palace where Queen Mary lived and loved...The chapel below is now roofless. Grass and ivy thrive there and at the broken altar where Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland. Everything is ruined, decayed, and the clear heavens pour in. I think I have found there the beginning of my 'Scottish' Symphony." Alongside this description, Mendelssohn enclosed in his letter a scrap of paper with the opening bars of what would become the symphony's opening theme. A few days later Mendelssohn and his companion visited the western coast of Scotland and the island of Staffa, which in turn inspired the composer to start the Hebrides. After completing the first version of the Hebrides, Mendelssohn continued to work on his initial sketches of what would become Symphony No. 3 while touring Italy. However, he struggled to make progress, and after 1831 set the piece aside. He completed the symphony in Berlin in 1842. Although it was the fifth and final of Mendelssohn's symphonies to be completed, it was the third to be published, and has subsequently been known as Symphony No. 3. Intriguingly, despite describing the work as his 'Scottish Symphony' to his family in 1829, by the time the work was published in 1842

Mendelssohn never publicly called attention to the symphony's Scottish inspiration, and it is debatable whether he intended the finished work to be considered 'Scottish'. Ever since the Scottish provenance became known following the composer's death, however, audiences have found it hard not to hear the piece as evoking the wild Romantic landscapes of Scotland.

Eric Coates (1886 - 1957) Knightsbridge March

4:28

President's Own United States Marine Band

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jT7gGW1_vmc

"Knightsbridge March" is the concluding section of the "London Suite"

Mendelssohn Piano Concerto No 1 in G Minor Op 25

21:02

Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Conductor David Robertson, Piano Stephen Hough

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrvPf4yiEuA&t=371s>

(BBC Proms version played on Queen Victoria's Piano is not now available on YouTube.)

Molto allegro con fuoco

The piano enters after only a few bars of orchestral introduction. It was standard procedure in the classical-era concerto to precede the solo's entrance by a tutti, for various reasons - the length and purpose of these introductions differed, some offering a hint of what was to follow and some giving out almost all the movement's material, but none was so brief as this: in this sense, this was one of the first concertos of the Romantic age. (The obvious exceptions – Mozart's Jeunehomme concerto and Beethoven's fourth and fifth piano concertos – allowed the piano to enter very briefly just at the start, but then proceeded as usual, the soloist silent.) The rest of the movement is typical of concertos in its use of a modified sonata form, with a second, contrasting lyrical theme first heard from the piano over repeated accompaniment, and later by the wind. As the movement closes a transition takes the movement not to a full close, but instead, with a brass fanfare and a piano continuation of the same, on to the Andante.

Andante: This opens with a melody in the lower strings, in E major, soon taken up by the piano. This is drawn out with breadth, and a middle section in B provides contrast. The original melody, somewhat varied, returns to close the movement.

Presto—Molto allegro e vivace: Opens with a fanfare in A minor (Presto). The piano joins in, at which point the mood lightens, and the closing rondo - Molto allegro e vivace - begins. This is regular in form, and the returns of the refrain are varied. Several themes from the first movement return towards the finale.

Queen Victoria's 'Erard' piano

Queen Victoria's 'Erard' piano, loaned from the Royal Collection by Her Majesty the Queen, was heard for the first time outside Buckingham Palace at the BBC Proms 2019. The Prom is a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the births of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

The piano was built in 1856 by the firm S & P Erard.

For Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, the piano was the centre of music-making at home and they installed pianos in the private apartments of all their residences. Together they played arrangements of overtures and symphonies, and accompanied each other in song. This elaborately decorated instrument by Erard was intended as a showpiece for the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace.

The gilded case is decorated in the French early eighteenth-century style with cherubs and singeries – (Singerie is the name given to a visual arts genre depicting monkeys imitating human behaviour, often fashionably attired, intended as a diverting sight, always with a gentle cast of mild satire. The term is derived from the French word for "Monkey Trick".) Queen Victoria had owned a piano decorated in a similar manner almost twenty years earlier. In her diary of 5 March 1839, she wrote, 'Lord Melbourne admired the new painted piano I have in the drawing-room, and said, 'I like those monkeys on it.

Encore - Frédéric Chopin (1810 – 1849) Nocturne in E Flat Major Op 9 No 2 4:07
Stephen Hough on Queen Victoria's piano as an encore at the BBC Proms 2019.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDDI8yJJY-c>

Mendelssohn - Song Without Words - Op 30, No 1 - Streeton Trio 4:42
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RORVhh1wVQM>

Mendelssohn - Song Without Words - Venetianisches Gondellied - Streeton Trio 3:51
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzcizYZKmPU>

Felix Mendelssohn's Songs without Words, Op 19: No 3, No 4 & No 5 6:20
Pianist Alexandra Joan
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXix_bzZDGq