University of Florida Performing Arts

presents

BBC Concert Orchestra
Keith Lockhart, Principal Conductor
Ilya Yakushev, Piano

Sunday, November 21, 2010, 3 p.m.
Phillips Center for the Performing Arts

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PROGRAM

The Marriage of Figaro — Overture
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

A Midsummer Night’s Dream
Scherzo
Nocturne
Wedding March
Felix Mendelssohn

Piano Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 25
Felix Mendelssohn
Ilya Yakushev, Piano Soloist

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 5 in D Major
Ralph Vaughan Williams

PROGRAM NOTES

The Marriage of Figaro – Overture (1786)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Le nozze di Figaro – The Marriage of Figaro, or, rather more colloquially, Figaro’s Wedding – was one of Mozart’s greatest operatic successes, first in Vienna in the spring of 1786, and even more so in Prague at the start of the following year. It is an opera buffa, a comic opera with an Italian text. But its comedy is deepened by its extraordinary insight into human nature, and by its undertones of revolution against a corrupt aristocracy – a central theme of the French play by Beaumarchais on which Lorenzo da Ponte based his Italian libretto.

The overture to Figaro – composed last, as was Mozart’s habit – is not the customary full-length Sinfonia in several sections (with a slow introduction or a slow interlude, or both), but a single unflagging Presto in D major. It makes use of the full resources of the orchestra assembled for the opera (two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets, with timpani and strings) in a wonderfully inventive double sequence of melodies. At the beginning, quiet strings and bassoons create an atmosphere of suppressed excitement; at the end, the full orchestra joins in cheerful celebration.

— Program note courtesy of the BBC Concert Orchestra © Anthony Burton

Composer profile: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

In the figure of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, supreme natural genius, complex personality and unusual upbringing united to create one of the most admired composers in the history of music. He was born in Salzburg in 1756, the son of a violinist at the court of the local Prince-Archbishop. His father, recognising early the boy’s extraordinary musical talents, proceeded to take him on performing tours throughout Europe so that he could be exposed to as wide a range of musical styles and cultural milieus as possible. By the age of 16 Mozart had visited England, Italy, France and Germany, met many important musical and political figures, and had had three operas performed in Milan. It was the sort of education he could never have gained in provincial Salzburg; and, while the constant travelling may
have contributed to his lifelong poor health, it was doubtless also a major factor in the formation of his cosmopolitan musical style.

Throughout the 1770s, however, Mozart was a member of the Salzburg orchestra. Despite a handful of opera commissions, his compositional activities were mainly directed towards the court in the form of symphonies, serenades and church music. Growing frustration with his position led him to try his luck in Mannheim and Paris in 1777–8, but the trip brought only disappointment and within a few months he was back in Salzburg. A breakthrough of sorts came when a commission from Munich led to his first great opera, *Idomeneo* (1781), a work into which he poured all of the musical experience he had so far gained. The year 1781 finally saw him break with Salzburg and move to the musically more sophisticated Vienna, where he embarked on the life of a freelance composer, pianist and teacher. At first he enjoyed considerable success, particularly as a pianist in his own concertos and with his lively comic opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782). There followed three of his greatest operatic masterpieces – *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787) and *Cosi fan tutte* (1790) – but by the time of the last his popularity had waned and he found himself seriously in debt. He died in December 1791, not long after the successful premiere of his final opera, *The Magic Flute*, and was buried in an unmarked grave.

Mozart left more than 600 works, excelling in almost every form he turned his hand to, from operas, piano concertos and chamber music to Masses, symphonies and wind serenades. From the outset his music was characterized by formal and melodic fluency, but the works of his last decade took this to new heights, adding a textural richness and an emotional profundity far beyond the reach of his rivals. One of the defining figures of the High Classical style as well as an inspiration (through his more demonic side) to the Romantics, he is today perhaps the best-loved of all classical composers. But, more than that, with his Shakespearean ability to combine tragedy and comedy, confidence and vulnerability, beauty and truth, he ranks as one of the most enriching presences in Western art.

— Program note courtesy of the BBC Concert Orchestra © Lindsay Kem

**A Midsummer Night’s Dream – excerpts (1843)**

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47)

In 1840 the Crown Prince of Prussia ascended the throne as King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, and set out to re-establish Berlin as a major cultural centre. One of his coups was to persuade Mendelssohn to accept the post of director of the music section of the city’s Academy of Arts. In 1842, the King commissioned Mendelssohn to write incidental music for productions of three plays, including *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Having composed his popular concert overture on the same subject 17 years earlier, Mendelssohn now added another 12 numbers: entr’actes, songs for women’s (or children’s) voices, shorter cues for entrances and exits, and melodramas to underscore key speeches. In some of the numbers he quoted ideas from the overture; and in all of them he re-entered the magical world he had created earlier. The production took place at the New Palace in Potsdam in October 1843, with the music under the composer’s direction (and after no fewer than 12 orchestral rehearsals); the first concert performance was given in one of Mendelssohn’s London concerts the following May. While full performances of the score remain rare treats, especially in the theatre, the more substantial entr’actes are familiar in the concert hall and on disc; and the main section of the last entr’acte is known everywhere simply as the *Wedding March*.

The Scherzo precedes Act 2, in which the play first moves to the ‘wood near Athens’ and enters the domain of the fairies. It is in G minor, which is also the key of the quicksilver scherzo of Mendelssohn’s
string Octet of 1825 (subsequently orchestrated); and, like that movement, it is in a through-composed sonata form. There is a second subject for strings in octaves, quiet yet firm, and a development section including some sudden, menacing crescendos to fortissimo. The piece audibly belongs to the same world as the fairy dance of the overture, though there is no direct quotation, and the emphasis this time is as much on the woodwind as on the strings — especially, in the closing stages, on the first flute. The Nocturne comes after the end of Act 3, when the lovers have all fallen asleep, and the fairy Puck has put right the havoc he has previously wrought among them by a second application of his magic potion. Although the middle section hints at past agitation, the serene main melody, for solo horn with bassoons, clarinet and double basses, reflects Puck’s closing words, ‘all shall be well.’

The Wedding March introduces the scene of the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta in Act 5. It is in the key of C major, though the harmony of the main theme initially feints towards the ‘fairy’ E minor; there is a strenuous first trio section in G major, and a soaring second trio in F major which leads back to the last return of the march. The scoring adds to the orchestra of the overture a third trumpet, essential for the triadic build-up of the opening; a pair of cymbals, tactfully employed; and three trombones, which come into their own in the coda.

— Program note courtesy of the BBC Concert Orchestra © Anthony Burton

Anthony Burton is a former BBC Radio 3 music producer, now a writer, editor and broadcaster. He contributes regularly to BBC Music Magazine and edited the Associated Board’s Performer’s Guide series on the Baroque, Classical and Romantic periods.

Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25 (1831)
Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47)

Sometimes Mendelssohn worked fast; at other times composing cost him long and laborious effort. The E minor Violin Concerto and the Hebrides overture — two of his greatest and most popular achievements — needed a great deal of reworking and refining before Mendelssohn was satisfied with them. On the other hand, the equally fine and much-loved A Midsummer Night’s Dream overture emerged rapidly and, apparently, painlessly. In a letter to his father, Mendelssohn announced that his First Piano Concerto was ‘a thing quickly thrown off.’ Evidence confirms that it was indeed produced at lightning speed, but again that’s no reflection on the quality of the music.

In fact this brilliant, beguiling and compact concerto is also highly original. And it did a lot to stabilize the conception of the Romantic concerto at a time when the medium was in a state of flux. Inspired by the innovations of Beethoven in his great concertos, composers had begun to push the Classical formal boundaries still further. For example, Carl Maria von Weber fused the traditional three movements into one continuous structure in his Konzertstück (1821) and added an explanatory literary programme; while in 1816 Louis Spohr had produced a one-movement Violin Concerto (his eighth) subtitled Gesangszene (Song-scene or dramatic cantata). Interesting and appealing as these works are, however, few would claim that they were the equals of the great Classical era concertos of Mozart and Beethoven, whose premises they purported to challenge.

Consciously or not, Mendelssohn opted for a process of consolidation in his First Piano Concerto, and in doing so he pointed the way for other composers of the Romantic concerto — Schumann and Brahms are the most striking examples. The concerto is continuous: the three movements are beautifully dovetailed, with an arresting brass fanfare playing a key role in each transition. Still, it is quite clear that the concerto is in three distinct movements: each has its own sound-world and expressive
character, and the music has no need of literary or quasi-dramatic props to explain itself; the energy and ingenuity of the writing are quite enough to hold the listener’s attention.

Mendelssohn played the concerto for the first time at a concert of his own works in Munich in October 1831, in the presence of King Ludwig I of Bavaria. He was 22, and judging from the solo writing he must have been a phenomenal young pianist. Both the outer movements are very fast (Mendelssohn had a particular flair for rapid, brilliant music), but on top of that they also demand clarity of articulation and rhythmic tautness – simply storming through this music isn’t enough. Mendelssohn begins with a dramatic coup. He dispenses with the still-customary long, expectant orchestral prelude. Instead there’s a brief orchestral surge; then, after a mere seven bars, the piano storms in, building rapidly to the main theme (heralded by a brief timpani flourish) in pounding right-hand chords and running left-hand octaves. A gentler second theme offers contrast, but before long the driving energy is back again, leading excitingly to a highly compressed recapitulation of the two main themes.

Just as the movement seems to be reaching an emphatic conclusion, repeated-note fanfares on trumpets and horns usher in a change of harmony, and a short but very poetic solo piano cadenza leads seamlessly into the slow movement. Here all is calm, tender, and lyrically reflective. Mendelssohn also pare...
he founded the influential conservatory. He was outstanding as a pianist, organist, conductor and organizer, and tireless in promoting other composers’ music, both old and new – famously reviving Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829 and giving the posthumous first performance of Schubert’s Ninth Symphony in 1839.

Although he composed prolifically up to the end of his life in almost all forms (he never found the right opera libretto), he was rarely satisfied with his own facility, often keeping aside his major scores for a long period before presenting them to the public: the Violin Concerto (1844) was six years in the making and the oratorio *Elijah* (1846) nearly eight. Mendelssohn was very conscious of his part in an unbroken tradition of German music deriving from Bach and the great classics of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and in each of his major works searched for means of infusing this tradition with his own modern Romantic sensibility.

If his reputation suffered from the heavier performing styles of the later 19th century, which tended to sentimentalize his music, and also from the current of anti-Semitism that led to his music being banned by the Nazis, a modern perspective can appreciate his freshness and directness of expression, as well as the perfect ear for colour and texture that places him among the greatest composers of any age.

— Program note courtesy of the BBC Concert Orchestra © Andrew Huth

**Symphony No. 5 in D major (1938–43, rev. 1951)**

**Ralph Vaughan Williams**

Throughout his unusually long career, Ralph Vaughan Williams never lost his ability to surprise. Just when everyone had him safely pigeonholed as a romantic English pastoralist, the 62-year-old composer astonished the British musical scene with his abrasively dissonant and ferociously concise Fourth Symphony (1931–4); who would have thought the composer of *The Lark Ascending* could have learnt so much from the Continental modernists? As he entered his seventies, Vaughan Williams discovered an unexpected aptitude for writing film music. Even in his last symphony, the Ninth (written when he was well into his eighties), we find him using flugelhorn and a trio of saxophones to create sonorities and textures unlike anything in his music before.

The premiere of Vaughan Williams’ Fifth Symphony, at the Proms in 1943, also came as a surprise for many, but for a rather different reason. After the Symphony No. 4, and the somber choral work *Dona nobis pacem* (1936), there was some speculation as to whether Vaughan Williams had left the contemplative, folk-inflected language of the *Tallis Fantasia* and *The Lark Ascending* behind him. This new Vaughan Williams seemed to be less the nature visionary, creator of musical landscapes in the spirit of Constable, Turner or Samuel Palmer, and more the kind of artist who held a mirror up to increasingly troubled times. What the Fifth Symphony embodied, however, was not so much a return to the old ways as an enrichment and development of them. The pastoral tone is unmistakable: in the quiet horn calls at the opening of the Preludio, in the cor anglais solo haloed by ethereal string chords that begins the Romanza. But these beautifully evocative passages acquire extra power through the way Vaughan Williams expertly places them within a subtle and cogently worked-out symphonic argument; the experience of concentrating his thoughts in the Fourth Symphony had had a lasting, beneficial effect. No wonder this was the symphony Vaughan Williams dedicated to Sibelius – for many British composers at that time the embodiment of organic logic in symphonic music.

Fortunately for the listener there is no need to analyze the workings of the symphonic argument to appreciate it – in any case, Vaughan Williams hated the idea of writing for the cognoscenti alone. Still,
it is worth pointing out how he plants the musical seed in the symphony’s magical opening. Almost the first thing we hear are soft horn calls in the home key, D major; but, underneath, cellos and basses play a C – a note foreign to the scale of D, and thus slightly clashing with the horns. This sets up a gentle but pervasive tension, an ambiguity which is worked through in a variety of ways and only finds its full resolution in the serene ending. The Preludio has its more shadowy moments, especially the faster build-up at the heart of the movement, with its nervous tremolando strings. However, the return of the opening horn calls leads to a climax of magnificent affirmation, based on a figure very like the Alleluia from Vaughan Williams’s hymn tune Sine nomine – best known from its opening line, “For all the saints.” But the splendour fades, and the movement gradually returns to the hushed ambiguity of the opening.

A flowing, ghostly Scherzo follows, scored with great delicacy in its outer sections – though brass and timpani manage to suggest something more heavy-footed in the central Trio section. At the end the muted opening string figures disappear deliciously into a single pianissimo timpani stroke, like a candle being snuffed out.

Then comes the Romanza, unmistakably the heart of the symphony. Some of the ideas of this movement stem from Vaughan Williams’s major ongoing operatic project The Pilgrim’s Progress (composed between 1925 and 1951). Vaughan Williams was no conventional believer, but he turned repeatedly to religious themes in his music. It is said that he was pleased when a friend described him as “The Christian Agnostic.” Clearly he found some kind of transcendent meaning in John Bunyan’s famous tale of the Christian “Pilgrim” and his spiritual journey, and he distils its essence movingly in this movement – offering it, perhaps, as a word of comfort and encouragement to a country then in the midst of war.

The final movement is described as a Passacaglia, i.e. a movement built up over a constantly repeated theme, here first presented in the cellos. This builds eventually to a grand climax at which the symphony’s opening horn calls return played by full orchestra in great waves of sound. As in the great visionary climax in the first movement, the splendour fades, but this time it is followed by radiant, tranquil counterpoint led by strings – one may be reminded of a choir singing an Elizabethan anthem in an English cathedral. From here on there is no more ambiguity: the key is unmistakably D major. The serene final cadence comes as near to perfect peace as in any 20th-century symphony.

— Program note courtesy of the BBC Concert Orchestra © Stephen Johnson

Composer profile: Ralph Vaughan Williams

Up to a point, Vaughan Williams’ background and upbringing were typical for an upper middle-class English boy: birth in a grand country rectory (12 October 1872), followed by education at Charterhouse and a degree at Cambridge. But the family had strong intellectual inclinations (ancestors included Erasmus Darwin and Josiah Wedgwood). Young Ralph began to compose at 6, then spent two years at the Royal College of Music before going to university, and continued studies in composition with Stanford (again at the RCM), then with Bruch in Berlin.

It was while he was at the Royal College that Vaughan Williams met Gustav Holst. The two formed a lasting friendship and shared many enthusiasms, including collecting folk song. Vaughan Williams’ folk-song researches convinced him that traditional folk tunes could reach heights comparable with the greatest ‘art’ music, and that they provided a pathway to a truly national style. Vaughan Williams’ response in his own work went way beyond the picturesque or nostalgic, drawing praise from Ravel (with whom he had lessons in 1908) and later from the folk-inspired modernist Bartók.
Vaughan Williams took time to reach his first maturity: the two breakthrough pieces were *A Sea Symphony* (1903–9) and the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910). Despite his age and privileged background, he volunteered as a private in the First World War and experienced some of its most notorious horrors at first hand: musical echoes can be detected in several works, including the strangely ambiguous ‘Pastoral’ Symphony (1922), the impassioned cantata *Dona nobis pacem* (1936) and the turbulent Sixth Symphony (1944–7). After the Armistice in 1918, Vaughan Williams joined the staff of the Royal College of Music and became conductor of the Bach Choir. While his conducting technique had its limitations, he was a powerful interpreter of his own music, as recordings of the Fourth (1931–4) and Fifth (1938–43) symphonies and *Dona nobis pacem* testify. As he entered his seventies he developed a new strand to his career: film music.

A man of great integrity and generosity, Vaughan Williams did much to help young composers and performers, worked to help musical refugees from Germany during the Second World War and stood up against injustice whenever he could. During WW2 he testified on behalf of Michael Tippett, who was a pacifist, and protested against the banning of music by the communist Alan Bush despite disagreeing strongly with both composers’ politics. At home he stayed to care for his crippled wife, Adeline, even after he had met the woman who was to become his second wife, Ursula (née Lock), in 1938. He refused all honours apart from the Order of Merit, and even came to regret accepting that.

Vaughan Williams’ output was large, including operas (notably *Riders to the Sea*, 1925–32, and *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, 1925–52), chamber and instrumental works. At the core of his output, however, are the nine symphonies, the concertos for oboe (1943–4) and tuba (1954) and the concerto-like *The Lark Ascending* (1914), the *Tallis Fantasia*, the ballet *Job* (1927–30), and such vocal masterpieces as *On Wenlock Edge* (1908–9), *Five Mystical Songs* (1911), *Serenade to Music* (1938) and the *Three Shakespeare Songs* (1951). The pastoral element in his music is only one side of a multi-faceted musical personality. In many of his works the imprint of troubled times is as clearly discernible as in the music of Shostakovich. At his finest, he is one of the few British composers who genuinely deserves to be called ‘visionary.’

— Program note courtesy of the BBC Concert Orchestra © Stephen Johnson

**BIOGRAPHIES**

**Keith Lockhart, Conductor**

In August 2010, Keith Lockhart was appointed seventh Principal Conductor of the BBC Concert Orchestra and will lead the BBC CO through to its 60th year in 2012 and beyond. Meanwhile, across the pond, he celebrates his fifteenth anniversary season as Conductor of the Boston Pops and continues to serve as Artistic Director of the Brevard Music Center Summer Institute and Festival and Music Director Emeritus of the Utah Symphony. During the 2010-2011 season, Keith Lockhart will lead the BBC Concert Orchestra during its 15-city tour across America and will make his Atlanta Opera debut.

Keith Lockhart has conducted the Symphony Orchestras of Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Houston,
Minnesota, Montreal, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Baltimore, Atlanta, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Singapore, Toronto and Vancouver as well as the Los Angeles and St. Paul Chamber Orchestras, the National Arts Centre Orchestra (Canada), and the Philharmonics of New York and Los Angeles. Moreover, he has conducted the New York Chamber Symphony, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (Amsterdam), and the Deutsche Symphony. Recent engagements include performances with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and debuts with the BBC Concert Orchestra and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In the 2009-2010 season, Maestro Lockhart returned to the Boston Lyric Opera for performances of Bizet’s Carmen and traveled to Japan for performances with the NHK Symphony.

His leadership of the Utah Symphony from 1998-2009 allowed him to stand at the front of that organization’s historic merger with the Utah Opera to create the first-ever joint administrative arts entity of the Utah Symphony and Opera. Since the merger, arts institutions nationally and internationally have looked to Maestro Lockhart as an example of an innovative thinker on and off the podium. Moreover, Keith Lockhart revived the orchestra’s Mahler tradition, presenting the entire cycle of the composer’s major symphonic works. Maestro Lockhart conducted three Salute to the Symphony television specials broadcast regionally, one of which received an Emmy award, and, in December 2001, he conducted the orchestra and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in a national PBS broadcast of Vaughan Williams’ oratorio Hodie. Maestro Lockhart led the Utah Symphony during Opening Ceremonies of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games and conducted two programs for the 2002 Olympic Arts Festival. In April 2005, the Symphony embarked on its first European tour in 19 years. That was followed by the release of the Symphony’s first recording in two decades, Symphonic Dances, in April 2006.

During the 2010 season, Keith Lockhart celebrated his fifteenth anniversary as Conductor of the Boston Pops. In February 1995, he was named the 20th conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra since its founding in 1885. Over the last 15 years, he has conducted over 1,200 concerts and made over 70 television shows, including 38 new programs for PBS’s Evening at Pops; the annual July Fourth spectacular, produced by Boston’s WBZ-TV and shown nationally on CBS Television; and the orchestra’s annual holiday special, produced and aired in Boston on WBZ-TV and nationally on PBS. The Boston Pops’ 2002 July Fourth broadcast was Emmy-nominated, and the Evening at Pops telecast of Fiddlers Three won the 2002 ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award. Keith Lockhart was the 2006 recipient of the Bob Hope Patriot Award from the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. He has led the Boston Pops on 33 national tours, four overseas tours of Japan and Korea, and in performances at Carnegie Hall and Radio City Music Hall. Under his direction, the orchestra has performed to enthusiastic audiences in concert halls and sports arenas across the country. In September 2004, they appeared live on national television with Sir Elton John during the NFL Season Kickoff special. In February 2002, Maestro Lockhart led the Boston Pops in the pre-game show of Super Bowl XXXVI at the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans. Since November 2004, he and the Boston Pops have released four self-produced recordings: Sleigh Ride, America, Oscar & Tony, and The Red Sox Album, all available online through www.bostonpops.org. Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops Orchestra recorded eight albums with RCA Victor — Runnin’ Wild: Keith Lockhart and The Boston Pops Orchestra Play Glenn Miller, American Visions, the Grammy-nominated The Celtic Album, Holiday Pops, A Splash of Pops, Encore!, the Latin Grammy-nominated The Latin Album, and My Favorite Things: A Richard Rodgers Celebration.

In October 2007, Lockhart succeeded David Effron as Artistic Advisor and Principal Conductor of the Brevard Music Center summer institute and festival. The Brevard Music Center (BMC) has established itself as one of this nation’s leading summer institutes for gifted young musicians, preparing them to perform great musical works at a high artistic level, Lockhart’s appointment solidifies an already special
relationship with BMC; having attended as a teenager for two summers (1974, 1975), Lockhart was first featured as a guest conductor in 1996 and has since returned numerous times.

Keith Lockhart served as Music Director of the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra for seven years, completing his tenure in 1999. During his leadership, the Orchestra doubled its number of performances, released recordings, and developed a reputation for innovative and accessible programming. Maestro Lockhart also served as Associate Conductor of both the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra from 1990 to 1995.

Born in Poughkeepsie, NY, Maestro Lockhart began his musical studies on piano at the age of 7, and holds degrees from Furman University and Carnegie Mellon University. He also holds honorary doctorates from the Boston Conservatory, Boston University, Northeastern University, Furman University, and Carnegie Mellon University, among others.


**Ilya Yakushev, Piano**

Russian pianist Ilya Yakushev, with many awards and honors to his credit, continues to astound and mesmerize audiences at major venues on three continents. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut in 2007 with Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas, performing Prokofiev's First and Fourth Piano Concertos as part of the Symphony's “Prokofiev Festival.” His performances were included in the top ten classical music events of the year by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and prompted a return to the symphony in September 2009 with Maestro Tilson Thomas performing Prokofiev's 3rd Piano Concerto. The 2009-2010 season also included tour performances with the Syracuse Symphony, an engagement with the Fairbanks Symphony, and in recital at Chicago's Ravinia, Cincinnati's Matinée Musicale, and Fresno's prestigious Phillip Lorenz Keyboard series.

In November 2010, Mr. Yakushev performed Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto with the BBC Concert Orchestra and Keith Lockhart in London, prior to touring the Rachmaninoff – along with Mendelssohn’s 1st Concerto – to fifteen American cities with the Orchestra and Maestro Lockhart. He will return to Cincinnati to perform a recital at Xavier University’s Piano Series in the spring of 2011, prior to embarking on an 18-city recital tour through the Midwest. He will also perform the Rachmaninoff II with the Des Moines Symphony and Joseph Giunta in May 2011.

Recital performances in the 2008-2009 season included New York's Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, San Juan, Jacksonville, Oakland, and an 8-city recital tour through the central states. Mr. Yakushev was also guest artist with the Utah, Arkansas, and Beaumont Symphonies.

Mr. Yakushev attracted international attention in December 2006 while presenting solo recitals at such venues as the Bechstein Center in Berlin and Vienna's Musikverein. He also toured Southeast Asia, performing in Singapore and Malaysia. In past seasons, he performed in various prestigious venues worldwide, including Glinka Philharmonic Hall (St. Petersburg), Victoria Hall (Singapore), Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall (New York), Davies Symphony Hall (San Francisco), and the Sejong Performing
Arts Center (Seoul, Korea). His performances with orchestra include the Kirov Orchestra, Las Vegas Philharmonic, Eastern Connecticut Symphony, and others.

Mr. Yakushev received his first award at age 12 as a prizewinner of the Young Artists Concerto Competition in his native St. Petersburg. In 1997, he received the Mayor of St. Petersburg’s Young Talents award and, in both 1997 and 1998, he won First Prize at the Donostia Hiria International Piano Competition in San Sebastian, Spain. In 1998, he received a national honor, The Award for Excellence in Performance, presented to him by the Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation in Moscow. Most recently, Mr. Yakushev became a recipient of the prestigious Gawon International Music Society’s Award in Seoul, Korea.

Mr. Yakushev attended the Rimsky-Korsakov College of Music in his native St. Petersburg, Russia, and subsequently came to New York City to attend Mannes College of Music where he studied with legendary pianist Vladimir Feltsman.

In addition to his performing career, Mr. Yakushev is presently serving as Executive Director of the International Keyboard Institute and Festival at Mannes, founded and directed by Jerome Rose, a position he has held since 2002.

BBC Concert Orchestra

There are orchestras who will tell you that they were born to play Beethoven. And there are ensembles that mix it with modern music. But there’s nothing quite like the BBC Concert Orchestra. All the Bs are in its repertoire, from Bach to Bernstein and Bassey – Shirley, that is, whom the orchestra recently partnered for BBC Two and Radio 2 at the BBC Electric Proms. (Soul legend Smokey Robinson was the other guest during the series.) If light music from G&S to Eric Coates shines brightly in this orchestra’s firmament, then graver ancients and moderns glitter in its programmes too, and in its recordings – which embrace Haydn, Mozart, Rossini and Elgar alongside Ives, Stravinsky, John Adams and Colin Matthews.

‘Versatility’ and ‘flexibility’ are the BBC Concert Orchestra’s bywords. Its standard 56-strong membership can expand or contract according to what’s on the programme. Bring in a saxophone section and it’s an up-front big band, perfect for accompanying top-drawer West End artists for Radio 2. Increase the strings and they’re ready to play Elgar’s Violin Concerto with Nigel Kennedy at the Proms. And if melody is the orchestra’s ‘magnetic north,’ who’s complaining? It may be stretching a metaphor a bar too far, but melody can be a welcoming port in the midst of many modern musical storms.

Not that these musicians aren’t seasoned artistic travelers, happy to take on some unexpected crew-members. Sailing with Radio 3, they have played Elgar’s The Starlight Express and worked with the South African pianist, bandleader and composer Abdullah Ibrahim. Then there was Sigh at the White Cube Gallery, a collaboration between the photographer and film-maker Sam Taylor-Wood and composer Anne Dudley. Each section of the orchestra was filmed in everyday clothes in a dilapidated studio, miming without instruments to its own pre-recorded soundtrack. The images were projected onto multiple screens, giving the gallery-goer an impression of a ‘surround-sound’ orchestra playing on the platform. ‘Compelling, uplifting and, yes, perhaps a tiny bit daft’ was one critical response.

The BBC Concert Orchestra has been described as a band of ‘serious musicians with a sense of humour’. But one look at its hectic schedule and burgeoning repertoire, and most of us would curl up and die before we found our sense of humour. Friday Night is Music Night, the orchestra’s best-known radio showcase, which catches the ears of over 750,000 listeners every week, is usually polished for broadcasting in just one three-and-a-half hour session on the day itself. Off-air there’s a fine catalogue
of CDs with award-winning soundtracks for TV and the movies. Most recently there’s the continuing series of British music recordings on the Dutton Epoch label, as well as scores for Stephen Poliakoff’s *Glorious 39* and the BBC’s *Nature’s Great Events*.

The orchestra is also central to Radio 3’s *Discovering Music* series. Here, new commissions from Tansy Davies, Fung Lam and Graham Fitkin rub shoulders with classical favourites by Schumann, Liszt and Richard Strauss. And it’s Charles Hazlewood’s enthusiasm for reaching out to new audiences that keeps the program on the boil.

You could argue that this is something that the BBC Concert Orchestra has always done. Who else would take Malcolm Arnold’s Concerto for Flute and Strings on the road with *The Lord of the Dance* and samba dancing in the aisles? That was the 2009 MusicMix tour, which one Northamptonshire school reported as having an ‘amazing’ atmosphere. The orchestra always keeps an eye on its younger audiences. As well as MusicMix there are the Family Music Days – and look out for *ZingZillas*, a new CBeebies series of 20-minute music programmes for under-6s. (Since you ask, a ZingZilla is ‘a musical sound produced by infusing music with a primate twist’.)

New composers have been zinging for their supper with the BBC Concert Orchestra for a while now. Jonny Greenwood, from the band Radiohead, is the group’s most recent Composer-in-Residence. The orchestra gave the premiere of his *Popcorn Superhet Receiver* in 2005, and more recently *Doghouse*. In 2007 Will Gregory, one half of the electronica duo Goldfrapp, wrote a score for Victor Sjöström’s 1924 silent-movie classic *He Who Gets Slapped*, starring Lon Chaney and Norma Shearer, which the orchestra performed live in London and Bristol and broadcast on Radio 3. Now there’s the promise of a new music-theatre piece from Gregory.

Watford Colosseum has been the BBC Concert Orchestra’s temporary home venue, but from April 2010 it closed for a year undergoing a major facelift. So the players will be on the road more than ever. There are tours to Abu Dhabi and North America, another year of residency at Chichester Festival Theatre, and lots of one-off concerts around the UK. In December 2011 you can also hear the BBC CO in the pit at the Royal Opera House playing Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker* with Barry Wordsworth – its former Principal Conductor, reborn as Conductor Laureate and now also Music Director for the Royal Ballet. Is there any other orchestra in these islands that can dance a samba as stylishly as a classical pas de deux? And who else, pray, is rehearsing their ZingZillas!

— Profile © Christopher Cook

*Broadcaster Christopher Cook has written for BBC Music Magazine, Gramophone and International Record Review. He teaches Cultural Studies at the University of Syracuse in London.*
BBC CONCERT ORCHESTRA
Conductor: KEITH LOCKHART

1ST VIOLINS
Cynthia Fleming
Charles Mutter
Rebecca Turner
Peter Bussereau
Helena Casey
Freddie August
Gwyneth Barkham
Helen Cooper
Hayley Pomfrett
Jo Watts

2ND VIOLINS
Michael Gray
Matthew Elston
David Beaman
Daniel Mullin
Sarah Freestone
Rustom Pomeroy
Emil Chakalov
Patrick Roberts

VIOLAS
Timothy Welch
Robin Del Mar
Nigel Goodwin
Helen Knief
Jacqueline Lloyd
Judith Webberley

CELLOS
Benjamin Hughes
Matthew Lee
Nigel Pinkett
Matthew Forbes
Jonathan Kitchen
Tae-Mi Song

DOUBLE BASSES
Dominic Worsley
Richard Watson
Stacey-Ann Miller
Andrew Wood

FLUTES
Ileana Ruhemann
Chris Bain

OBOES
John Crossman
Victoria Walpole

CLARINETS
Michael Pearce
Derek Hannigan

BASSOONS
Margaret Pollock
Jane Sibley

HOMS
Mark Johnson
Tom Rumsby
Phil Woods
David Wythe
Richard Berry

TRUMPETS
Catherine Moore
John Blackshaw
Dan Newell

TROMBONES
James Casey
Mike Lloyd
Andrew Ross

TUBA
Martin Knowles

TIMPANI
Stephen Webberley

PERCUSSION
Stephen Whibley
Tim Gunnell
John McCutcheon

HARP
Andrew Knight

PIANO/CELESTE
Roderick Elms

General Manager
Andrew Connolly
Administrative Assistant
Darren Kimpton
Senior Producer
Neil Varley
Artistic Manager
Louise Allen
Concerts & Planning Administrator
Carolyn Hendry
Concerts & Planning Assistant
Isabella Kernot
Marketing Manager
Lisa Owen-Jones
Marketing Officer
Victoria Peet
Learning Manager
Patrick Bailey
Production Accountant
Jagdeep Gill
Orchestra Manager
Alex Walden
Assistant Orchestra Manager
Claire Barnes
Orchestra Assistant
Cath Welsby
Orchestral Production Manager
Brian Grogan
Music Associates
Eunice Brushfield-Hodges
Jenny Ricotti
Senior Studio Manager
Paul Waton
Transport
Michael Cousins
Scott Jones