



February 2009 – Thoughts from the Podium **Lionel Friend, conductor**

We are delighted to launch **Thoughts from the Podium**, a biannual update (February/July) on the work being undertaken by UK conductor, Lionel Friend, accompanied by an assortment of comments, reflections and opinions. We are pleased to announce the re-launch of his website www.lionelfriend.com which provides an overview of Friend's distinguished career-to-date. Interestingly, 2009 also marks 75yrs since the deaths of English composers Frederick Delius, Edward Elgar and Gustav Holst, all composers Friend holds in high regard, lamenting 'It's particularly a shame that Delius is not performed more frequently in the UK.'

"To hear modern music played live to a high standard can be revealing: in this situation, listeners may feel a genuine contact with the composers' art." - Lionel Friend

Some recent projects in 2008

February-May 2008: Three and a half months in Sydney and Melbourne conducting Strauss's *Arabella* for the first time, with the excitement of a debut in the remarkable Sydney Opera House, was a genuine highlight.

June 2008: A programme of major works by Messiaen by the Symphony Orchestra of the Birmingham Conservatoire in celebration of the centenary of his birth was a special thrill, bringing students into close contact with this exciting, other-worldly composer for the first time in their lives.

November 2008: Months of meticulous research by Friend provided audiences with the rare opportunity to hear Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* uncut and in the original keys, played as specified and with a full orchestra. This concert performance was presented by the London Lyric Opera at the Barbican Hall, London and featured the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Philharmonia Chorus.

'This performance was conducted with the requisite sweep and attention to detail by Lionel Friend, colleague of the great Goodall, and able to infuse orchestral tone with similar saturation, while maintaining the grand line.' - Michael Tanner: *The Spectator*

Upcoming Projects in 2009

4 February 09: Sir John Soane Museum, London

A private performance featuring Strauss's melodrama *Enoch Arden* narrated by Eleanor Bron

12 March 09: Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Norway

Programme of Viennese Music from 1920's: works by Berg, Webern and Zemlinsky

25 March 09: Nash Ensemble, Wigmore Hall, London

Elliott Carter birthday concert

2 April 09: Wagner Society, London

Interview by Dr Paul Dawson-Bowling

www.lionelfriend.com

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“Two concerts I am undertaking which I am particularly passionate about are one of classic 20th-century masterpieces and one of music by America’s greatest living composer, Elliott Carter, the first being in some ways a preparation for the second. Working contact with living composers has been an important, stimulating feature of my professional life.”

- Lionel Friend

Projects in 2009 continued...

6 May 09: Nash Ensemble, Kennedy Centre Washington DC, USA
Programme of Contemporary Music (Elliott Carter, Harrison Birtwistle, Nicholas Maw and Colin Matthews)

16-17 May 09

Guest speaker at Aldeburgh weekend on postwar productions of Wagner’s *Ring* in London.

13 Oct 09: Nash Ensemble, Wigmore Hall, London
75th birthday programme for Peter Maxwell Davies

“Opera is a major part of my life, and its particular challenges bring their own rewards. Familiarity with the operatic repertoire feeds into my work in the concert hall; and vice versa.” - Lionel Friend



Projects for 2010 include

March 10: Birmingham Conservatoire

World premiere production by students of the Birmingham Conservatoire of *Scoring a Century* by David Blake and Keith Warner, directed by Keith Warner

24 March 10: Nash Ensemble, Wigmore Hall, London

75th birthday concert for Harrison Birtwistle

6-13 Nov 10: South Australian Opera, Adelaide, Australia

Friend is thrilled to be conducting Humperdinck’s gorgeous fairy-tale opera *Hansel & Gretel* again



*“In its majestic but lyrical sweep, its text-responsive handling of texture, not to mention its exemplary pacing and structural grasp, this is one of the best-conducted performances of *Götterdämmerung* to come my way for a long time.”*

- Barry Millington: *Opera*

*“A truly inspiring performance of Beethoven’s *Eroica* Symphony was given on Saturday by the Philharmonia conducted by Lionel Friend. It was a performance, the nobility and eloquence of which were calculated to arouse in the listener a deep sense of awe and wonderment.”*

- Croydon Advertiser

*“A dream is finally to conduct my own production of Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen*; and, as always, the symphonies of Sibelius.”* - Lionel Friend

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