

**HELIX**

**ENSEMBLE**

[www.helixensemble.co.uk](http://www.helixensemble.co.uk)

Musical Director: David Murphy

All Saints with Holy Trinity Church  
Loughborough

Saturday 17th May 2008

7.30 pm

**Sphere of Influence**



**Mozart** Overture to Idomeneo  
**Corelli** Concerto Grosso Op 6 no 2  
**Salieri** Overture La Grotta di Trofonio  
**Tippett** Fantasia Concertante on a Theme of Corelli

----- Interval -----

Short talk on the “*Sphere of Influence*” by David Murphy

**Beethoven:** Symphony No. 8 Op 93 in F major



Formed in 1992, the Helix Ensemble is a flexible group of experienced players from the East Midlands. Programmes aim to explore rarely performed chamber or small orchestral works alongside more traditional items for this combination. The Helix Ensemble also aims to introduce a variety of contemporary works and has given a number of first performances by composers in the region. In recognition of their innovative programming policy, the Performing Right Society has twice awarded Helix an Enterprise Award.

The Helix Ensemble would like to thank All Saints with Holy Trinity Church, Loughborough for their support in making this concert possible.

If you would like any further information about the Helix Ensemble, and future concerts, please visit our regularly updated website at:

[www.helixensemble.co.uk](http://www.helixensemble.co.uk)

You can also join our mailing list by leaving your address with one of the members of the Helix Ensemble, or e-mail: [helixensemble@supaworld.com](mailto:helixensemble@supaworld.com).

## David Murphy – Musical Director



David Murphy began his musical studies as a violinist at the age of eleven, determined to learn a musical instrument after having been inspired by his first encounter with live classical music. Within a few months of study he had won a local music competition performing the Tchaikovsky violin concerto, and was subsequently awarded a full scholarship to the Purcell School Britain's specialist school for the musically gifted.

David went on to win competitions and prizes whilst at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, where he studied violin, viola and chamber music with members of the Amadeus Quartet.

During this time, David performed throughout Britain and Europe

His conducting debut occurred at a moment's notice: a conductor was suddenly indisposed and David was the only musician present with a baton in his case! The experience was a revelation. A Welsh Arts Council Scholarship for Advanced Studies in Music followed, which enabled him to study conducting in the United States.

David completed his studies with the legendary Leon Barzin in Paris. He was Barzin's last pupil, studying intensively with him for five years until Barzin died at the age of 98. He thus has a direct line to the great conductors of the early Twentieth Century, notably Toscanini, Monteux and Furtwangler. David's conducting combines the musical philosophy of the "golden age" of conducting with cutting edge research into original manuscript sources.

After completing his studies, David assisted Sir Charles Mackerras, working on a number of projects, and focussing particularly on Janacek, Mozart and the Beethoven Symphonies.

Away from music, a particular fascination is yoga and Eastern philosophy and as a result Indian music is also a significant part of his repertoire. This has led to performances with the Bombay Chamber Orchestra, and collaborations with leading Indian musicians. David has a particularly close association with sarod virtuoso Wajahat Khan, and with the legendary sitar maestro Ravi Shankar.

As a guest-conductor, David has performed on four continents, and has been re-invited by all of the orchestras he has worked with. He has recently been a frequent guest in South Africa, working with the Kwa-Zulu Natal Philharmonic Orchestra, Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra and Johannesburg Music Initiative

## **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

## **Overture to Idomeneo K366**

Mozart's opera "*Idomeneo, King of Crete*" was written in 1781, when Mozart was 24 years old. It was commissioned by the Elector of Bavaria, for performance in Munich, and is the first of Mozart's mature operas. It is also his earliest to have kept a place in the regular repertoire. The plot comes from an ancient Greek tale, set shortly after the Trojan War. Idomeneo was one of the Greek kings supporting Agamemnon in besieging Troy – an adventure that resulted in many tragedies documented in Greek Legend and Myth. It is a complex tale of love and revenge, involving gods, oracles and sacrifices

## **Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)**

## **Concerto Grosso Op. 6 No. 2 in F**

1. Vivace, Allegro, Adagio, Vivace, Allegro, Largo andante
2. Allegro
3. Grave, Andante Largo, Allegro

Born in 1653, Arcangelo Corelli was an Italian violinist and composer of the generation before J S Bach. He worked most of his life in Rome, where he was highly honoured and paid as a star performer. In Rome he was supported by influential patrons, including two cardinals of the Vatican and the Queen of Sweden. (What was she doing in Rome? She had abdicated the Swedish throne, and lived in Rome as a wealthy patron of the arts). Corelli was hugely influential both as performer and teacher – though a contemporary described him playing "*with a distorted countenance, his eyes as red as fire, and his eyeballs roiling as if in agony*". I hope we can spare you that tonight, at least! All his compositions are for the violin in various ensembles, such as sonatas and trio sonatas. The concerti grossi Op.6 are his only works for larger forces, and were published in 1714, the year after he died. They have been played and enjoyed by violinists regularly ever since - for nearly 300 years.

## **Antonio Salieri (1750-1825)**

## **Overture to La Grotta di Trofonio**

Salieri is famous today largely because of the unfounded legend that he was connected to Mozart's death. However he is a very important figure in musical history in his own right. Extremely influential in the musical life of Vienna at the end of the eighteenth century, he was famous as both a composer and composition teacher. His pupils included Beethoven, Schubert and the young Liszt. Having written his first opera at the age of eighteen, he continued to compose mainly for the stage, producing a stream of successful operas for Vienna, Italy and Paris. His greatest success, *Tarare*, produced for the Paris

Opera in 1787 sealed his reputation as the heir to Gluck, and the leading operatic composer of his day. It is not surprising therefore that Mozart's rapid ascent at this time led to rumours of jealousy on the part of Salieri.

*La Grotta di Trofonio* is a comic opera in two acts, which was written to a libretto by Giambattista Casti. It was a huge success at its premiere at the Burgtheater in Vienna in October 1785. Much of the comic appeal of the work lies in Salieri's musical treatment of the humour found in Casti's libretto, which is full of puns, alliteration and onomatopoeia.

The overture begins in the key of C minor, with an atmosphere and orchestral colour that foreshadows Beethoven. However this brooding opening is all part of the humour, we have just become accustomed to a sense of impending tragedy when suddenly the atmosphere is completely dispelled and we find ourselves in the middle of a riotous comic overture.

### **Sir Michael Tippett (1905-1998)**

### **Fantasia Concertante on a theme of Corelli**

Like the other composers in tonight's programme, Sir Michael Tippett was no stranger to the concert platform. From the mid- 1960s into the early 1970s he also had strong links with the local area through a close relationship with the Leicester Schools Symphony Orchestra. He conducted a wide range of twentieth-century repertoire with the orchestra, conducted them on tour and on commercial recordings and broadcasts all the time setting new standards for music making within the context of mainstream education.

His *Fantasia Concertante on a theme of Corelli* was composed during the decade before his involvement with the LSSO and was premiered at the Edinburgh Festival in 1953. Tippett conducted this performance as Sir Malcolm Sargent refused the work because of its harmonic and contrapuntal complexity. A theme of the 1953 Edinburgh Festival, which celebrated the tercentenary of Corelli's birth, was "Four Centuries of the Violin". Corelli's mastery of the violin had a profound influence on the development of Western music, and it is this influence that Tippett explores. He uses a concertino group of three soloists (two violins and cello) in the centre of the stage, with the orchestra divided into a *concerto grosso* (seated on the conductor's left) and a *concerto terzo* (on the right). Whilst there is no improvisation as such in the piece, Tippett explores the concept of Baroque improvisation through brilliantly florid passages, reminiscent of the written out "improvisations" Corelli provided for his students.

The work is constructed in five main sections: the presentation of the Corelli theme and two variations is followed by a dark andante coupled with a bright vivace. A romantic Puccini-like variation on the Corelli theme is next, which then melts into a fugue that quotes from Bach's own double fugue on themes of Corelli (BWV 579). The fugue reaches an intense climax before subsiding into a gentle pastorale reminiscent of the pastorales of Corelli and Handel that Tippett adored. A brief recap of the Corelli material closes the work.

----- Interval -----

**Short talk on the "Sphere of Influence" by David Murphy**

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)      Symphony No. 8 in F major Op 93**

1. Allegro vivace e con brio
2. Allegretto scherzando
3. Tempo di menuetto
4. Allegro vivace

After Helix's recent performance of Beethoven's 7th symphony, we move to its companion work, the eighth. As he had done before, Beethoven worked on the two symphonies, of very different character, simultaneously. It is as if he wanted a choice of compositions to work on, depending on his mood of the day. However both the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> symphonies are optimistic works, while Beethoven's circumstances and letters of the time reveal him to have been suffering emotional turmoil. It was about this time that Beethoven wrote an astonishingly passionate love letter to his "immortal beloved". It reveals a love that was returned, but one whose future course is in serious doubt. It is still not known who this lady was, nor indeed whether he even sent the letter, for it was found among his papers after he died.

The manuscript of the eighth is dated "*October 1812, at Linz on the Danube*". The eighth symphony was first performed in February 1814, along with a repeat of the seventh symphony and "*Wellington's Victory*". The concert was a great success, though when a friend pointed out that the new symphony had received less applause than the other two works, Beethoven is said to have growled back "*That's because it's so much better!*"

A newspaper of the time perceptively remarked "*The applause that it received was not accompanied by the enthusiasm which distinguishes a work that gives universal delight. ... the reason does not lie by any means in weaker or less*

*artistic workmanship (for here as in all of Beethoven's work of this kind there breathes that peculiar spirit by which his originality always asserts itself); but in the faulty judgment which permitted this symphony to immediately follow the seventh in A major. ... If this symphony should be performed alone hereafter, we have no doubt of its success."* Let's hope so tonight!

The first movement is dominated by its opening theme, presented with no introduction and complete in itself. A second, related, theme follows immediately. Later the themes are dissected into their component parts. The whole movement is very concentrated – a symphonic equivalent of the equally concise Op.95 string quartet. Instead of a triumphant close the movement fades out, and the last bar is the same as the first – a witty touch, such as Haydn might have done, and very typical of Beethoven himself in his late quartets.

There is no “proper” slow movement, but two central dance-like movements – a format Mahler was to make use of 80 years later. In the second movement Beethoven seems to delight in the recent invention of the metronome by his friend Johann Maelzel (who apparently also made various hearing aids for Beethoven). The ticking of wind instruments sets the pace, and again reminds us of Haydn – a speeded-up version of his “clock” symphony? The ending is abrupt.

The third movement is a minuet, though it is more like an Austrian peasant Ländler dance. To my ears the heavily accented beats move it half way towards the world of Mahler.

The finale is more substantial, and is very original. The music buffs will doubtless notice that it is a very unusual combination of sonata form and rondo. The rest of us can at least notice that the first tune, in two distinct sections, drives most of the fun of the movement, and can pick out a lyrical tune on the violins that provides a calming contrast. We can all enjoy the vitality, high spirits, and astonishing inventiveness of the movement – as well as the wrong notes that Beethoven throws in to keep us on our toes!

# HELIX

## ENSEMBLE

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### **Musical Director – David Murphy**

<b>Violin</b>	Andrew Chadwick Jayne Cooper Sarah Cresswell Lance Eames Karen Eveson Sarah Mozley Jenny North Ulrike Redfearn Claire Seedhouse George Sutcliff Morag Thomson Pauline Toone Becky Tooth	<b>Flute</b>	Jo Conquest Annette Negus
		<b>Clarinet</b>	Susan Lansdale Wendy Boswell
		<b>Oboe</b>	Anne Allcock Linda Backhouse
		<b>Bassoon</b>	Sarah Brookman Shelagh Thomson
		<b>Horn</b>	Julian Haslam Roger Swann
<b>Viola</b>	Elsbeth Brien Pete Johnston Mark Lansdale Sally Smith	<b>Trumpet</b>	Alex Coleman Andy Connell-Smith
<b>‘Cello</b>	Pete Brien Margaret Chadwick Sue Tordoff Christina Warner	<b>Timpani</b>	Kieran O’Riordan
<b>Bass</b>	Andrew Dickenson Peter Smith		



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