



August 2009 – Thoughts from the Podium Lionel Friend, conductor

Thoughts from the Podium is a semi-regular update on the work being undertaken by the UK-based conductor, Lionel Friend, accompanied by an assortment of comments, reflections and opinions. Summer in the northern hemisphere is an exciting time, offering opportunities to visit, participate and enjoy many of the world's largest and most established performing arts festivals. Earlier this year, Friend had the pleasure of conducting the Nash Ensemble at Washington DC's prestigious Kennedy Centre as part of *Contemporary Music Week*.

"No complaints, though, about the superb musicianship of conductor Lionel Friend and the musicians of the Nash Ensemble (with special kudos to pianist Ian Brown and the astonishing harpist Lucy Wakeford): They dug into this thorny program with tremendous vigor and technical command." - *The Washington Post*

Some recent projects in 2009

4 February 09: Sir John Soane Museum, London, UK

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

"Lionel Friend had not conducted many bars before it became evident that he was in full control of the material and all the details of the scores. He shaped the music fluidly and with nuance, and was able to make the demanding tonal language alive and engaging. This is an especially sympathetic characteristic, and he is a conductor we would welcome again with pleasure at the podium in Stavanger." - *Stavanger Aftenblad*

25 March 09: Nash Ensemble, Wigmore Hall, London, UK

Elliott Carter birthday concert

2 April 09: Wagner Society, London, UK

Interview by Dr Paul Dawson-Bowling

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: Aldeburgh, Suffolk, UK

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

18, 19, 26 June 09: Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham, UK

Two concerts of excerpts from operas by Mozart, Bizet, Tchaikovsky and Puccini, followed a week later by a symphony concert of music by Berlioz, Tchaikovsky and Bartók. Principal George Caird congratulated Friend afterwards in saying

"The Conservatoire has never put on any finer events." - *George Caird*

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July 09

In Berlin for intense coaching for forthcoming production of Berg's *Lulu*.

"Wagner continues to occupy my thoughts and time as a practising musician. I spend many happy hours coaching singers on their roles, especially Wagnerian, and I recently also had the particular pleasure of working with the Hallé Orchestra at the request of Sir Mark Elder in preparation for their much-praised account of Götterdämmerung." - Lionel Friend

Upcoming projects for 2009 include

13 Oct 09: Nash Ensemble, Wigmore Hall, London, UK

75th birthday programme for Peter Maxwell Davies

23 Oct 09: Birmingham Conservatoire Repertoire Orchestra, UK

Programme of Martinu and Elgar

18 December 09: Birmingham Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra

Programme of Wagner

Projects for 2010 include

4, 5 & 6 March: Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham, UK

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

9 - 18 March: Guest Lecturer, Dresden, Germany

Lecturing on Wagner's *Ring* to coincide with performances at the Semperoper, Dresden

24 March: Nash Ensemble, Wigmore Hall, London, UK

75th birthday concert for Sir Harrison Birtwistle

May - June: New Zealand Opera, Auckland and Wellington

Le nozze di Figaro

25 June: Birmingham Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra, Birmingham, UK

Mahler's 6th Symphony

6-13 November: South Australian Opera, Adelaide, Australia

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

"I consider myself most fortunate to be conducting new music by Maxwell Davies and Harrison Birtwistle in the same season as a new production of Mozart's glorious masterpiece, The Marriage of Figaro." - Lionel Friend

"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*



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