

EDO – called to the dance!

because of the reduced workload and better staff ratios, as they are able to devote more time to commissioning.

With radical reforms of the NHS, the introduction of these healthcare professionals has the potential to improve health outcomes and free up GP time to focus on commissioning.

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The European Doctors Orchestra (EDO) came away from the vertiginous heights of last summer's achievement in Poznan where, with sublime impudence, the orchestra performed Beethoven's Ninth on 3 days' rehearsal, returning to London for its November concert in the Duke's Hall of the Royal Academy. The programme there also stretched it, but without that acute sense of striving for the greatest of all musical summits; in comparison, it was almost a 'pop' programme but one which showed off its strengths. The William Tell Overture was played with a lovely opening cello choir, an almost filigree delicacy of string playing in the overture's mid-section, and a huge hurtling excitement in the coda. The orchestra moved next into Mahler's world of anguish and lost love, *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* — by far the most difficult piece in the programme — and managed beautifully this sudden emotional switch, as evidenced by the tactful and sympathetic accompaniment of the baritone soloist John Ward. After that, it was glorious extroversion all the way, with EDO revelling in the technicolour travelogues of Scheherazade.

This summer, EDO went north to Edinburgh; we played to a packed house, in Greyfriars Kirk and between times were able to soak up the atmosphere of tourist tat and broad avenues and that wonderful weathered yellow sandstone. Some of us touched the hem of history by eating in the very restaurant where JK Rowling, then a single parent with a very young baby, would sit for hours over one cup of coffee as she worked on the first of the Harry Potter books.

As we played Hamish MacCunn's overture 'Land of Mountain and the Flood'; we were joined by the brilliant Josephine Robertson, a natural sciences student at Cambridge, as our soloist in Bruch's G Minor Violin Concerto, and our symphony was Dvorak's Eighth — on which we fell delightedly as one would an old friend. The work is a total joy, in contrast to the tragedy-inspired music produced by so many of Dvorak's contemporaries. The great trumpet calls at the start of the last

movement recall Raphael Kubelik's comment at a rehearsal: 'Gentlemen, in Bohemia the trumpets call not to battle but to the dance!'. And that, indeed, was where we were called — to a céilidh, in the hallowed halls of the Royal College of Physicians. For some it was the first taste of Haggis and for many more it was the first time on a Scottish country dance floor, persuaded by the driving rhythms of an excellent band. We scrambled round the floor in the Gay Gordons, the Eightsome Reel, the Dashing White Sergeant, and many others, with hosts of willing hands pushing and pulling us through their snaking intricacies — after which any residual social ice was well and truly cracked!

And next? We play, again in the Duke's Hall in November. Our programme is something of a departure in that it is entirely English ... Elgar Cockaigne, Walton Viola Concerto, and Vaughan Williams 'London Symphony': 21st November, at 3.00pm. We will be supporting Save the Children, and hope to see you there.

Michael Lasserson

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