

HALLÉ

CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

AT THE BRIDGEWATER HALL

2011-12 SEASON

Friday 30 December 2011, 7.30pm

Sounds of the '70s

Roderick Dunk conductor

Capital Voices:

Annie Skates

Emma Kershaw

Mick Wilson

Andrew Playfoot

Programme notes
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Please turn off all mobile phones, pagers and watch alarms. The use of cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly forbidden.

The Hallé Concerts Society gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of Arts Council England, Manchester City Council, the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Sounds of the '70s

Manhattan Skyline

Can't Stop the Music

Sounds of the '70s medley

I Can't Give You Anything (But My Love)
When Will I See You Again
Just the Way You Are
Don't Go Breaking My Heart
I Will Survive
The Tears of a Clown
Love Is In the Air
You're the First, The Last, My Everything
Y.M.C.A

Love's Theme

Sir Duke

Salute to the '70s Divas medley

No More Tears
Emotion
Wishing On a Star
Street Life
If I Can't Have You
Can't Take My Eyes Off You
Enough Is Enough

Copacabana

The Hustle

Romantic '70s medley

Touch Me in the Morning
You Make Me Feel Brand New
Sad Sweet Dreamer
If You Leave Me Now
You to Me Are Everything
So You Win Again
Take Good Care of Yourself
Heaven Must Be Missing an Angel

MacArthur Park

Earth Wind & Fire selection

Fantasy
After the Love Has Gone
September
Boogie Wonderland

ABBA selection

Super Trouper
Money, Money, Money
Dancing Queen
Knowing Me, Knowing You
Mamma Mia
Waterloo
Thank You for the Music

INTERVAL

About the music

Tonight Roderick Dunk and the Hallé, along with the fabulous Capital Voices, don pointy collars, copious flares and towering platform shoes (well, maybe not!) and take us back to a golden age of funk, soul and disco, a time when cheese ruled the air waves and discothèques everywhere shook to the sounds of ABBA, Queen and Boney M. Whether or not you remember those halcyon days when pop was top, the next couple of hours are certain to take you there hustling, bumping and boogying all the way.

First up is the classic **Manhattan Skyline** from the 1977 blockbuster movie *Saturday Night Fever*. In the picture a bored Brooklyn youth (John Travolta) realises his only chance to get somewhere is to become king of the disco floor. Though much of the movie's then-best-selling soundtrack was penned by Manchester-reared trio the Bee Gees (Barry, Robin and Maurice Gibb), the talented David Shire wrote this evocative instrumental number.

A golden age of funk, soul and disco, a time when cheese ruled the air waves and discothèques everywhere shook to the sounds of ABBA, Queen and Boney M

Village People was a concept disco group formed in the US in 1977. It soon became as famous for its on-stage costumes depicting gay fantasy figures like policemen and construction workers as for its likeable tunes and double entendres. **Can't Stop the Music** is the title track for the People's movie of the same name. While the film was a flop everywhere (apart from in Australia), the song reached number 10 in the US charts and 11 in the UK.

The **Sounds of the Seventies** medley opens with a timeless favourite by the Philadelphia soul group, The Stylistics. Like all their ballads, *I Can't Give You Anything (But My Love)* was lusciously produced and expressively crooned by the soaring falsetto of Russell Thomkins Jr. Another smash hit of the so-called 'Philly Soul' era was Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff's *When Will I See You Again*, a song originally released by the pure-voiced vocal trio The Three Degrees in 1974. 'The Prince of Pillow Talk' Barry White's *Just the Way You Are* became a hit again in the '80s for Billy Joel, while Elton John and Kiki Dee's catchy duet *Don't Go Breaking My Heart* was an affectionate pastiche of the Tamla Motown style. Gradually building in confidence after its hesitant opening ('First I was afraid, I was petrified'), Gloria Gaynor's stirring *I Will Survive* remains a popular disco anthem, though it was originally released as a B-side that soon eclipsed its 'better half'. *The Tears of a Clown* was a UK number 1 hit for Smokey Robinson & The Miracles in 1970 and *Love Is In the Air* was John Paul Young's only worldwide hit, peaking at number 5 in the UK chart. After Barry White's disco classic *You're the First, The Last, My Everything*, our first medley rounds off with Village People's iconic Y.M.C.A. Feel free to spell out those letters!

... its sumptuous string sound and wah-wah guitar, it was a huge influence on the disco sound ...

Love's Theme was recorded by Barry White's Love Unlimited Orchestra in 1973 and is one of a very few purely orchestral singles to have reached number 1 in the US Billboard Hot 100. With its sumptuous string sound and wah-wah guitar, it was a huge influence on the disco sound that was soon to emerge. Though he was undoubtedly a highly talented singer, writer and producer, judging by film of White 'conducting' his piece (and it's well-worth checking out on You Tube), the Hallé will be mightily relieved that Mr Dunk is on the podium and not the late 'Dr Love' himself!

With its punchy horn interjections, Stevie Wonder's 1977 hit **Sir Duke** was a tribute to the great jazz pianist and composer Duke Ellington who had passed away in 1974 – though the song also pays homage to Count Basie, Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald. Basically a paean to the power of music, the lyrics of its oft-repeated refrain

About the music

are 'You can feel it all over' and not, as some have quipped in the light of Wonder's questionable diction, 'bacon feeling all over'!

Salute to the '70s Divas medley is a glorious reminder that the '70s was a decade of great songstresses, among them Babra Streisand and Donna Summer. The duo's *No More Tears (Enough is Enough)* – the two sections of which open and close this selection – was their first disco hit and earned them a vaunted Platinum Disc. *Emotion* gave smooth-toned Australian singer Samantha Sang her one major success. Written by Bee Gees members Barry and Robin Gibb, it was originally written for *Saturday Night Fever* but ended up adorning the otherwise dreadful 1978 sex drama *The Stud* starring Joan Collins. *Wishing On a Star* was a slow ballad written by Billie Rae Calvin for the Rolls-Royce voice of Rose Royce. In March 1978 it reached number 3 in the UK charts and has since been covered by an unusually wide variety of artists including Beyoncé, the mysterious Catman Cohen and ex-Jam man Paul Weller. Next is Randy Crawford and The Crusaders' *Street Life*. In 1979 Crawford joined the R&B veterans for this jazz/funk classic, a transatlantic hit that remained at the top of the US jazz chart for twenty weeks. Yvonne Elliman was originally to have sung *How Deep is Your Love* in *Saturday Night Fever*, but in the event the Bee Gees – the composers of the song – did it themselves. Instead Elliman performed another Gibbs-brother creation *If I Can't Have You*, the fourth number 1 hit from the *Night Fever* soundtrack. Gloria Gaynor's version of *Can't Take My Eyes Off You* is one of over 200 covers of Frankie Valli's 1967 hit, a love song that is also a staple of film and TV soundtracks. Our '70s diva tribute then rounds off in rousing fashion with Streisand and Summer's *Enough is Enough*.

The composer-crooner Barry Manilow still receives adulation and scorn in equal measure.

The composer-crooner Barry Manilow still receives adulation and scorn in equal measure. Derided by his critics as a 'peroxide puppet' and 'stuffed dummy', since the mid-'70s he has nonetheless been for many the uncrowned king of middle-of-the-road popular music (his more passionate followers call themselves 'Faniilows'). The title of 'Big-Nosed Baz's' **Copacabana** refers to the well-known New York nightclub. The song tells the story of Lola, a showgirl, and her lover Tony, a bartender at the club, who is murdered by Rico, a mafia boss who takes a shine to Lola. With its catchy Latino rhythms, the song featured in the 1978 movie *Foul Play* and has also appeared in more than twenty other films.

interval

Usually dance crazes start with a song, but with the Hustle it was the other way round. In the early '70s solo freestyle dancing was all the rage and so the composer Van McCoy was intrigued when friends told him about a new kind of touch dancing then coming into fashion. He asked his friends to perform the steps in the studio and then penned this infectious instrumental. Thanks to McCoy's **The Hustle**, in 1976 what had been an emerging dance trend in just a handful of small New York discos exploded into nothing less than a mass movement.

As the **Romantic '70s** medley highlights, no one did love songs quite like the divas and divos of the disco decade. Released on the Motown label, Diana Ross's album *Touch Me in the Morning* placed her alongside the likes of Barbra Streisand and The Carpenters in the easy-listening pantheon. The success of the record, and particularly its title track, was considerable and it remained in the US charts for no less than 21 weeks. *You Make Me Feel*

About the music

Brand New by The Stylistics was a wholly heart-on-sleeve love ballad that earned the R&B vocal group their fifth Gold Disc. Very much modelled on The Stylistics, Sweet Sensation was an eight-piece soul band formed here in Manchester in 1973. After appearing on the ITV talent show 'New Faces' they enjoyed a degree of success and their soaring soul ballad *Sad Sweet Dreamer* reached number one in October 1974. *If You Leave Me Now* was the biggest hit of US rock band Chicago, while *You to Me Are Everything* was the only chart topper for British soul band The Real Thing – it peaked the UK hit parade for three weeks during the scorching summer of '76. Exactly a year later the sugary Hot Chocolate's *So You Win Again* did precisely the same for the same length of time. The tempo then picks up with The Three Degrees' 1975 love song *Take Good Care of Yourself* before *Heaven Must Be Missing an Angel* by The New England soul band The Tavares rounds off this unashamedly amorous medley in an emphatically up-beat style.

**'Someone left the cake out in the rain,
I don't think that I can take it ,
'Cause it took so long to make it,
And I'll never have that recipe again'**

Jimmy Webb's **MacArthur Park** was written after his break-up from Susan Ronstadt, cousin of singer Linda Ronstadt. MacArthur Park was a place where the couple sometimes met for lunch and where they enjoyed some of their best times together. It contains the memorable (and much parodied) refrain: 'Someone left the cake out in the rain / I don't think that I can take it / 'Cause it took so long to make it / And I'll never have that recipe again, oh no'. Though the song was first recorded in 1968 by Richard Harris, Donna Summer's disco version from a decade later became a multi-million selling single.

Now for a medley of hits by one of the most successful American pop/soul bands of the era and well beyond, **Earth Wind & Fire**. Unlike the standard funk sound of the '70s, Earth Wind & Fire skilfully blended jazz, blues, soul and rock – as well as African and Latin American elements – into a highly imaginative and distinctive musical mix. The band is also famous for the vibrant sound of its horn section and the effective interplay between the contrasting vocal styles of Philip Bailey's falsetto and Maurice White's tenor. This selection opens with *Fantasy*, a 1978 song inspired by the film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and one that received a Grammy Award nomination for Best R&B Song. We now hear three of the four massive hits the band enjoyed within a period of just twelve months. *After the Love Has Gone* is a mellifluous Bailey-sung ballad that reached number two in the US charts in 1979. Then come the million-selling *September* and the disco classic *Boogie Wonderland* – though band-member Verdine White denied they were a disco group, claiming 'I guess you could say we were at the party but didn't get on the dance floor.' Right!

**'I guess you could say we were
at the party but didn't get on the
dance floor.'** Verdine White

It just wouldn't be a true evening of '70s music without a tribute to legendary Swedish songsters **ABBA**, the most commercially successful group of the decade and, behind only Elvis Presley, The Beatles and Michael Jackson, the fourth best-selling music artists of all time. The group's members were Anni-Frid 'Frida' Lyngstad, Björn Ulvaeus, Benny Andersson and Agnetha Fältskog (the initial letters of their first names spelling ABBA). After the massive success of their self-assured, exuberant *Waterloo* in 1974, their distinctive re-workings of classic pop themes, all delivered in perfect English, beguiled record buyers and live audiences the world over for nearly a decade. Proceedings are rounded off with a string of classic songs from the suave Scandinavian superstars: *Super Trouper*; *Money, Money, Money*; *Dancing Queen*; *Knowing Me, Knowing You*; *Mama Mia*; *Waterloo*; and last but certainly not least, *Thank You for the Music*.