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Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/Thomas Dausgaard – Schubert's Great C-major Symphony

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Reviewed by Colin Anderson

Dausgaard conducted from memory and opted to observe *every* repeat (the exposition of the first movement neatly returned to, it's tricky to align), a stratagem that he brought off with aplomb and conviction, even the arguably superfluous one in the finale and its perfunctory lead-back bars. With well-made balances – horns less intrusive, timpani with greater flair, and the trombones gratefully embedded into the texture yet lucid – Dausgaard revelled in the music's vitality and detailing, crisply delivered. From the off there was nothing ponderous but plenty that was expressive, and given with light and shade and an emotional opening out that avoided any sense of being merely metronomic, although a sense of relentlessness was only just avoided in the second movement (it is though *Andante con moto*), in which greater otherworldliness would have been welcome in those moments of repose, save that the climax was thrillingly cathartic and in its aftermath there was a pathos and a 'distance' that really made its mark – Dausgaard playing the long game, successfully. With a propulsive Scherzo, zesty and folksy, and a lyrical Trio blessed with superlative woodwinds, then a finale that leapt of the page with pert rhythms but with no lack of variety, this very complete performance was over, resolutely. Spare a thought though for the violinists in the last movement who have so much to do (even more with that rarely-taken repeat), and if there was no doubting the relish with which Dausgaard conducted, then the RPO brought resilience and enjoyment as well as undoubted connection to its guest.



As a 'by the way', it is great news to read in Dausgaard's biography that he is recording a disc of Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's music for Dacapo with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, hopefully including *Incontri*, which made such a great impression from these forces at Proms 2012