

ENO KOÇO: Press Excerpts, England, 1991-2007

Eno Koço proved to be a very positive influence on the playing of the orchestra . . . The response to the enthusiastic direction of Eno Koço was very evident.

Denis Weatherley, *The Northern Echo*,
Tuesday, August 6, 1991

Albanian conductor Eno Koço and his violinist wife Raimonda made their Leeds Town Hall debuts last night with the City of Leeds Youth Orchestra. . . . Mendelssohn violin concerto was well controlled and delivered with a listening ear, thus balancing the soloist sensitively even in the *allegro molto vivace* of the final movement proved somewhat taxing.

Brenda Hawer, *Yorkshire Post*,
November 1992

To its credit the University Orchestra scored highly in the exuberant Commedia Dell'arte spirit of work (Stravinsky, *Pulcinella*).

Howard Smith, *Yorkshire Post*,
November 12, 1993

First of all, it is quite clear that Eno Koço, in only his second concert at the helm of this orchestra, has done much more than merely win his players' confidence. There is a new confidence abroad, in particular a much keener sense of ensemble in the string sections.

Martyn Dreyer, *Evening Press*,
June 28, 1994

Maxim Philippov, winner of the Rachmaninov Prize in Last year's Harveys Leeds International Pianoforte Competition, once again showed, his understanding of, and technical prowess in, one of the concerti, this time, the *Second*. . . . The orchestra and their conductor, Eno Koço, also produced some splendidly spirited playing by all departments.

Donald Webster, *Yorkshire Post*,
June 28, 1994

Debussy's *Petite Suite* contained beautifully wrought, musically phrased, sweetened playing. From finely balanced textures, clear detail emerged. Rhythms were lively and strings well in tune . . . the many things in this interestingly diverse programme were attributable to conductor Eno Koço's superb training, and to much devoted individual effort.

Donald Webster, *Yorkshire Post*,
February 13 1995

Visually, it is true, there may not be a lot to distinguish him from any number of others in his profession. But behind the scenes – in rehearsal – he has been working wonders. What YSO needed when he took over was a firm hand on its tiller rather than flashy colours on its sails. On Saturday's evidence, that is exactly what has provided. Shostakovich's Ninth Symphony would not have been everyone's choice of vehicle for the task. But it proved exceedingly inspired. It was immediately clear that the orchestra had taken its wealth of witty detail right to his heart. There was a clever comic irony behind the crisp, perky approach to the first movement, where the duo involving trombone and piccolo (Edwina Smith in sparkling form) was expertly handled. The whimsical slow movement set up an appealing contrast with the gusty scherzo, not to mention the open buffoonery of the finale.

Martyn Dreyer, *Yorkshire Evening Press*,
April 3, 1995

During their residency in Leeds over the last three years, the Albanian conductor Eno Koço and his violinist wife Raimonda have made a significant impact on music making in the region, and particularly in the university's Department of Music. . . . At the heart of the evening was a strong graceful and beautifully shaped performance of Bach's *Double Violin Concerto* by Raimonda Koço and one of her clearly talented pupils Alex Afia. On either side of this Eno Koço inspired exciting performances of two Scandinavian splendours. Nilsen's incidental music to *Aladdin*, full of strange and occasionally unexpected Eastern promise, danced in fine spirits, with lush strings for the dreams in morning mists, and some impressive brass and percussion playing. Sibelius *Symphony No 5* is an architectural challenge for any orchestra and conductor . . . the audience was left appropriately elated and well impressed by a thoroughly competent and well disciplined young orchestra.

Patric Stanford, *Yorkshire Post*,
May 18, 1995

Then there was Eno Koço, the day's mystery man, whose stylish, musicianly conducting of Rhodian Brass made a huge impression. It turns out he is an Albanian violinist who conducts at Leeds University. That itself is a new one for the brass band history books. It is to be hoped he can be persuaded to work again with bands, his finely judged interpretation indicates a musicianship which would enhance our contest stages.

The British Bandsman,
3 June 1995

There was much to admire in the Harrogate Philharmonic's account of Brahms's Third . . . the first movement's recapitulation was thrilling, and the remaining movements were given a power cogency, suggesting curious parallels with Elgar's *Second Symphony*.

Donald Webster, *Yorkshire Post*,
July 3 1995

Inspired and guided by its expert conductor Eno Koço, the Harrogate Philharmonic orchestra gave an excellent concert on Saturday. . . . It became evident that with this tremendous sound the orchestra should have been playing in the Royal Hall.

Mary Perrin, *Classified Advertiser*,
July 7 1995

This followed by soprano Teuta Koço singing Four Urban Songs from Southern Albania. Her expressive clarity caught every facet of their modal style and Eno Koço's imaginative orchestration completed the picture. . . . Teuta Koço sang Mozart's Exultate Jubilate. She gave a classical interpretation which reached a final climax as she soared effortlessly into the high register for the cadenza bars of the Alleluya. The Harrogate Philharmonic Orchestra led by Edmond Jones ended the programme with an excellent performance of Dvorak's Symphony No 8. All the character, Bohemian melodies and orchestral colour came into focus. Conductor Eno Koço with his expertise and experience, inspired the orchestra to produce technical discipline, wonderful sounds and the indefinable touch of magic.

Mary Parrin, *Weekender*,
July 12, 1996

The conductor, the Albanian Eno Koço, showed himself equally at ease with the central piece of the concert and the undoubted highlight of an exciting and satisfying evening's music making, Shostakovich's *Cello Concerto No 1*. This was thrilling and Koço managed to convey a fine sense of the cogency of the whole piece, with a clear structure holding together the music. . . . The concert concluded with Sibelius' Symphony No 1 which contrasted well with the unease and darkness of the Shostakovich concerto, bringing a romantic fullness of sound, culminating in the stirring lyricism of the final *andante*.

David Zulck, *Classified Advertiser*,
October 18, 1996

The Harrogate Philharmonic Orchestra's string section, led by Edmund Jones and conducted by Eno Koço gave a technically accomplished performance together with two fine soloists. They were mother and son Raimonda and Gent Koço who played brilliantly. . . . This was followed by Gent Koço, aged 16, playing Sarasate's famous concert piece for violin, *Zigeunerweisen*. The intonation and technique were amazing as was emotional maturity. . . . Conductor Eno Koço, who has personal insight into the music of Shostakovich, brought together sensitivity and breadth of orchestral colour with his dramatic account of *Symphony No 5*. There were many opportunities for the orchestra including the solo instrumental passages, which were excellent. Dark and forbidding, it reflected the fear and oppression of the Soviet regime, particularly for its artists. The concert was very much appreciated by the large audience.

Mary Perrin, *Harrogate Advertiser Weekender*,
February 14, 1997

Grieg's *Symphonic Dances* Op. 64 were performed with truly nationalistic flavour. The mood of the Norwegian folk music was well conveyed, most notably in the woodwind. . . . Conductor Eno Koço directed with vibrance and charisma, maintaining a clear sense of ensemble . . . dynamics were varied and climaxes resonated around the church, producing some magical moments. Brahms's *Fourth Symphony* also had its delightful moments . . . the variations of the last movement all had an individual character and the dramatic conclusion was solemn and emotional. It was a most enjoyable evening with a magnificent setting, and music to match.

James Macdonald, *Harrogate Advertiser*,
July 11, 1997

Dr. David Fanning, the author of *The Breath of the Symphonist* and other writings on Shostakovich attended the performance of the Tenth Symphony and asked me to pass this message on to all concerned; he says he was "genuinely impressed by the standard of the orchestra – the performances had excellent character and discipline. Please pass my congratulations to Eno Koço and the students" (and I agree with every word of it),

Julian Rushton,
15 December, 1997

The orchestra provided superb accompaniments for Ravel's *Sheherezade*. *Asie* had an air of mystery. Its exotic colours and veiled hints were captured splendidly. . . . The quality of Eno Koço's conducting was also apparent in Tippett's *Concerto for Orchestra* (1963).

Donald Webster, *Yorkshire Post*,
November 16 1998

However, the neo-Dvorakian idioms of Janacek's early Suite give little hint of the later, gloom-laden operas. Its positive rhythms and rich scoring were strongly projected by Eno Koco, with sonorous woodwind and horns. Bach's A Minor Violin Concerto was played robustly by a large complement of strings, showing in its romantic treatment the composer as truly a man for all seasons.

Soloist Raimonda Koco gave the work a delightful East European ambience, showing full expressive tone, secure technique and impeccable intonation, supported by transparent orchestral textures. A carefully-crafted performance of Sibelius's *Valse Triste* was one of which any professional orchestra would have been proud. Schubert's sunny Fifth Symphony had charm and buoyancy, with alert dovetailing of strings and wind, beautifully-shaped modulations and delightful nuances. Its heart-easing andante and elegant minuet gave further

evidence of the conductor and orchestra's outstanding quality, and their entitlement to a capacity audience.

Donald Webster, *Yorkshire Post*,
February 17, 1998

John Adam's *Shaker Loops* is often highly repetitive over a limited stretch of notes, yet Eno Koço's direction of highly responsive players created well fashioned climaxes and avoided a sense of boredom and monotony which bedevils so many minimalist performances. . . . Hints of Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* and *El Salon Mexico* gave the Third Symphony an authentic all-American brashness. Horns and trumpets were excellent and the scherzo's cross rhythms were delineated strongly.

Donald Webster, *Yorkshire Post*,
March 21, 2000

The University has every right to feel proud to have put together an orchestra capable of providing a highly charged account of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. Although at times the Albanian conductor, Eno Koço, allowed the tempo to sag in the second part of the work, he made no concessions to his student musicians, driving forward the final pages to a thrilling conclusion. Every department provided playing of outstanding quality, but special mention must be made of the horns, their red-blooded power contributing so much to the climatic moments.

David Denton, *Yorkshire Post*,
March 13, 2001

In contrast, Stravinsky's astonishingly economic and invigorating account of a Russian wedding brought together the university's robust chorus, taxed with both rhythm and language, a percussion ensemble and four lively pianists in an exhilarating and polished performance under the direction of Eno Koço. The soloists all commanded authority, Teuta Koço giving an exciting account of the demanding soprano part.

Patric Stanford, *Yorkshire Post*,
April 30, 2001

The University of Leeds Philharmonia is now an ensemble of the highest class, whose strings, woodwind and brass, singularly and collectively, produce consistently exquisite sounds. . . . Ravel's *Mother Goose* Suite is not a score of the complexity of *La Valse*, but thanks to their splendid training the students penetrated Ravel's stylistic subtleties in more searching fashion.

Donald Webster, *Yorkshire Post*,
November 27, 2001

The orchestra – conducted by Eno Koço – adding a neat accompaniment [Beethoven's Choral Fantasy] that was crowned by a fresh and invigorating chorus from the School of Music Project Choir. . . . The second half was devoted to Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and . . . the whole added up to one of the most exciting performances you would ever have the pleasure of hearing.

David Denton, *Yorkshire Post*,
March 12, 2002

The programme, conducted by Eno Koço, opened with a vigorous account of Sibelius's *Karelia Suite*, some lovely moments including the quiet cellos in the central ballade. Beethoven's *Third Symphony* was far more accomplished.

David Denton, *Yorkshire Post*,
December 3, 2002

Leeds University's latest discovery – is the third of Dvorak's 11 operas, the comic one-acter *Tvrde palice*, first performed in Prague in 1881. . . . Eno Koço preserved exemplary discipline in his youthful orchestra.

Martyn Dreyer, *Opera*,
May 2003

Shqiptari që mahniti auditorin muzikor të Rumanisë

“Ateneu Rumun”, i ngritur në vitin 1888, është një nga godinat më të bukura dhe më të vjetra të Bukureshtit. Kontribut për ndërtimin e tij kadhënë para një shekulli edhe multimilionari shqiptar, Vangjel Zhapa. Janari i këtij viti do të mbetet në kujtesë të publikut bukureshtar dhe komunitetit shqiptar të Rumanisë. Në sallën e madhe të kësaj godine, dy mbrëmje me radhë (15 dhe 16 janar), dirigjoi me Orkestrën më të madhe të Rumanisë, ylli i botës muzikore shqiptare, korçari me banim në Angli, Eno Koço – Artist i Merituar. Lajmin e parë për arritjen e tij në Rumani na e dha i biri i një rilindasi, Z. Thanas Kristo Rëmbeci.

Pos publikut artdashës rumun, morën pjesë në koncert ambasadori i Shqipërisë, disa veteranë të komunitetit dhe veprimtarë të Bashkësisë Kulturore të Shqiptarëve të Rumanisë. Filharmonia “George Enescu” interpretoi nën drejtimin e shkopit magjik të Eno Koços dy koncerte për violinë dhe orkestër, të kompozitorëve Mihnea Brumariu dhe Kabalevski, Simfoninë e 5-të të Çajkovskit si dhe Uverturën Festive (op. 96) të Shostakoviçit.

Baki Ymeri, Bukuresht, “Trepça”,
7 shkurt 2004

Music Department's development served also to celebrate the centenary of Sir Michael Tippett's birth with a performance of *A Child of Our Time*. . . . The conductor Eno Koço has a fine student orchestra under his command, again well trained not only to sound well, but to tune and deliver admirable performance discipline. The accompaniment they provided for James Gourlay's lively and polished performance of Vaughan Williams's *Tuba Concerto*—a work with which he has a long acquaintance—deserved much praise, the strings especially delivering breadth and warmth with impressive confidence. Performances at this level are certain evidence of a music department that has been encouraged to aspire to high standards and know how to achieve them.

Patric Stanford, *Yorkshire Post*,
March 18, 2005

Critical Reviews (on Opera)

In March [2007] Barry Collett reported back from a recent rare outing for *Caractacus* at Leeds. The University Chorus and orchestra performed it “for all it was worth”. The choir's young singers sang with fresh, vital tone and the colourful orchestral accompaniment was admirably achieved. The whole was conducted by the Albanian Eno Koço, and again the splendour of the work left one wondering why it is so rarely performed.

The Elgar Society News, No. 32,
July 2007