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August 9, 2006 5:31 pm

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BBC Proms, Royal Albert Hall, London

By Richard Fairman

One concert last week stood out for the number of attractions on offer. It was as if a card-player who had been having a poor run suddenly found himself dealt four aces in one hand.

Top of the list was the first performance of a new Pomp and Circumstance March No 6 by Edward Elgar. Being dead does not stop a composer getting a premiere at the Proms: Elgar's Third Symphony appeared a few years ago and this march has similarly been put together from surviving sketches by the skilful Anthony Payne. The result certainly sounds like Elgar, starting off with the quizzical warmth of his *Falstaff* and ending with a brief flash of the orchestral fireworks found in the *Enigma Variations*, although the big tune is not big enough to win it a place in the infamous line-up for the Last Night.



Before that, the fast-rising American soprano Nicole Cabell, winner of the 2005 Cardiff Singer of the World, made her debut. Cabell is impressive for the technical ease of her lyric voice and her aptitude in a variety of musical styles. In Britten's *Les illuminations* she sang in good French, projecting enough of the underlying emotional ambiguities to make the songs come alive in this large hall.

The concert also featured two established youthful Proms' favourites, the pianist Evgeny Kissin and the trumpeter Sergei Nakariakov, in an ill- balanced performance of Shostakovich's Concerto for Piano,

Trumpet and Strings. Kissin was his usual self, dazzling with the up-front ferocity and speed of his playing, while Nakariakov was buried among the first violins, invisible (to me) and fairly inaudible, too.

Every item on the programme was lifted by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under its former chief conductor Andrew Davis. Sparkling in Prokofiev's Symphony No 1, bristling with detail in the Britten, full of colour in Davis's own orchestration of Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, they afforded one of the main pleasures in this generously stuffed Proms pudding.

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