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SUNDAY 15 JANUARY 3.00PM

Rachmaninov and Lyatoshinsky

SERGEY RACHMANINOV
Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor

BORIS LYATOSHINSKY
Symphony No. 3 in B minor

Kirill Karabits *conductor*
Anna Fedorova *piano*

FRIDAY 20 JANUARY 7.30PM

MAHLER Symphony No. 5

RYAN WIGGLESWORTH
Till Dawning *UK premiere*

GUSTAV MAHLER Symphony No. 5 in C sharp minor

Ryan Wigglesworth *conductor*
Sophie Bevan *soprano*

SATURDAY 28 JANUARY 5.00PM

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FRIDAY 3 FEBRUARY 7.30PM

Oramo conducts Dvořák and Bacewicz

GRAŻYNA BACEWICZ
Overture for Symphony Orchestra

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOART
Bassoon Concerto in B flat major, K191

EDWARD ELGAR
Romance for bassoon and orchestra

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK
Symphony No. 8 in G major

Sakari Oramo *conductor*
Julie Price *bassoon*

FRIDAY 10 FEBRUARY 7.30PM

Johan Dalene and Timothy Ridout perform Mozart

GRAŻYNA BACEWICZ
Symphony No. 4

WOLFGANG AMADEUS C Sinfonia Concertante in E flat major for violin, viola and orchestra

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI
Symphony No. 3, 'The Song of the Night'

BBC Symphony Orchestra
Sakari Oramo *conductor*
Johan Dalene *violin*
Timothy Ridout *viola*
Nicky Spence *tenor*
BBC Symphony Chorus

FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY 7.30PM

Rachmaninov's Rhapsody and Stravinsky's Petrushka

MAGNUS LINDBERG
Serenades *UK premiere*

SERGEY RACHMANINOV
Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini

GALINA USTVOLSKAYA
Symphony No. 1

IGOR STRAVINSKY Petrushka (1947 version)

Hannu Lintu *conductor*
Denis Kozhukhin *piano*

FRIDAY 24 FEBRUARY 7.30PM

New conducts American dreams and sonic fireworks

JOHN ADAMS
The Chairman Dances

GEORGE GERSHWIN
Piano Concerto in F major

VALERIE COLEMAN Umoja (Anthem of Unity) *UK premiere*

SAMUEL BARBER Symphony No. 1

Gemma New *conductor*
Lise de la Salle *piano*

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RADIO 3 SOUNDS

FRIDAY 9 DECEMBER, 2022

7.30pm, BARBICAN HALL

BENJAMIN BRITTEN Sinfonia da Requiem 21′
RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS The Lark Ascending 16′

INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

DEBORAH PRITCHARD Calandra *BBC commission: world premiere* *c*15′
RICHARD STRAUSS Death and Transfiguration 23′

Jennifer Pike violin
Clemens Schuldt conductor

RADIO 3 SOUNDS

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Tonight the BBC Symphony Orchestra is joined by Clemens Schuldt for a richly colourful programme looking back over the past 100 years.

Written while the composer had decamped to America during the Second World War, Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem* was commissioned by the Japanese government to celebrate the 2,600th anniversary of the Mikado dynasty. A deeply felt, personal work, it was rejected by the Japanese authorities for not being sufficiently celebratory in tone, and – with movement titles taken from the Requiem Mass – for reflecting the composer's Christian faith.

Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* is blissfully uncomplicated by comparison – a magical reimagining of a poem by George Herbert infused with the spirit of English folk music, and widely loved for its freely soaring solo violin part – with which tonight's soloist Jennifer Pike has had a long association.

The lark also glides into tonight's newest piece – which again features soloist Jennifer Pike. Deborah Pritchard's *Calandra* is a work of light and hope, named after the calandra lark, native to Eastern Europe and symbolic of freedom across borders. Pritchard is a composer for whom music has strong associations with colour, and few composers have succeeded in painting scenes with such vividness as Richard Strauss, who tackled the ideas of Death and Transfiguration early on in his series of 10 astonishing tone-poems, composed over a period of almost 30 years.

BENJAMIN BRITTEN
(1913–76)

Sinfonia da Requiem, Op. 20
(1939–40)

1 Lacrymosa (Andante ben misurato) –
2 Dies irae (Allegro con fuoco) –
3 Requiem aeternam (Andante molto tranquillo)

'To me it is so personal and intimate a piece that it is rather like those awful dreams where one parades about the place naked – slightly embarrassing!' In a letter following the first performance of the *Sinfonia da Requiem* in New York in 1941, Benjamin Britten expressed what many listeners have since recognised – the peculiarly private, almost confessional emotions contained within its three brief movements.

While such intensity seems only natural in the composer of such later works as *Peter Grimes* and the *War Requiem*, it was a startling new colour in the work of a 27-year-old composer whom Auden had so recently accused of 'playing the talented little boy'. This juvenile brilliance had been on full show in Britten's first large-scale orchestral work, the brittle, virtuoso Piano Concerto, premiered at the Proms just three years before the first performance of the *Sinfonia da Requiem*.

Yet much had changed in three years. In 1939 Britten – a committed pacifist – had left England together with the tenor Peter Pears, pre-empting the declaration of war by just a few months. Life in America, though filled with friends and professional opportunities, proved hard for the young composer, who yearned for home and suffered the censure of British critics and audiences (a scandal the music critic Ernest Newman punningly christened the 'Battle of Britten') for what they perceived as a clear dereliction of duty.

When a commission arrived in April 1940 from the Japanese government, requesting a piece to mark the 2,600th anniversary of their Mikado dynasty, Britten had little time to respond. 'I now find myself with the proposition of writing a Symphony in about 3 weeks,' he wrote to his sister. In the resulting *Sinfonia da Requiem*, perhaps owing to this unusually swift, instinctive composition process, the composer exposed himself to an unprecedented personal degree, revealing not only his private pacifist convictions but also his Christian faith.

With its three movements taking their titles – Lacrymosa, Dies irae, Requiem aeternam – from the Catholic Requiem Mass and its charged moods of fury and struggle, the *Sinfonia da Requiem* was rejected by the Japanese government as a musical and cultural insult. It was premiered instead on 29 March 1941 at Carnegie Hall by the New York Philharmonic under John Barbirolli, by which point all mention of the original commission had disappeared, leaving only a dedication: 'In memory of my parents'.

The work was described by the composer as 'a kind of requiem', and its musical gestures are intensified by its duality – private mourning for Britten's own parents (who had both died in the mid-1930s) cradled within a larger public mourning for the violence and loss of war. Yet, if this is indeed a requiem, it is one painted in abstract, taking on the spirit of the form but not its liturgy. A work of social conscience, the *Sinfonia da Requiem* also rejects any explicitly political affiliations, content to be, as the composer himself expressed it, 'just as anti-war as possible'.

The Lacrymosa is a 'slow marching lament' (according to Britten) of Mahlerian stature. It opens with a fretful theme in the cellos, a distortion of the traditional *Dies irae* plainchant with a nagging tritone at its core. Grasping upwards in ever wider and more desperate intervals, it is eventually taken up by the whole orchestra in a series of convulsive repetitions – the rituals of mourning that refuse to be fulfilled, refuse to be satisfied. This same unresolved tension also breathes through the second theme, which introduces the D minor/D major conflict on which the whole work hinges – the same key in which Britten would find redemption two decades later at the close of the *War Requiem*.

The central Dies irae movement offers Britten's hellish vision of a dance of death. Flutter-tongued flutes summon desperately beating wings, crushed underfoot by mechanistic percussion whirrings, while a lyrical saxophone theme – surely the 'voice' of intercession in this voiceless requiem – batters itself into oblivion against the pitiless advance of the brass.

The Requiem aeternam, Britten's 'final resolution', sees a return of the original plainchant, barely recognisable in its new D major guise. Few composers can endow a major key with more anguish than Britten (nor a minor with more hopefulness), and here, as two flutes wring their hands in an elegant musical dance, we find the *Sinfonia*'s first promise of hope. The doubting tritones and sevenths of the start are still present but transfigured, their blades dulled by the certainty of the movement's ground bass.

Programme note © Alexandra Coghlan

Alexandra Coghlan writes regularly for *Prospect*, *The Spectator*, *Gramophone* and *Opera* magazine; she is the author of *Carols from King's* (Ebury, 2016).

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

In June 1976, at the beginning of the 29th Aldeburgh Festival, Benjamin Britten hosted a party in the gardens of the Red House, his home since 1957. He was desperately ill (he would die six months later) but *The Times* had announced that morning that he was now Baron Britten of Aldeburgh, in the County of Suffolk, and celebrations were in order. He was grateful for the recognition, feeling himself eclipsed by a vibrant, emerging generation of British composers.

Britten could not have predicted either the highs or the perceived lows of his remarkable career. Born in 1913 into an upper-middle-class family in Lowestoft, he wrote works throughout childhood of great commitment if not startling originality. Yet studies with Frank Bridge from 1927 exposed him to the techniques of Continental modernism and instilled real discipline in his music – ideas and qualities he thought lacking in his studies at the Royal College of Music from 1930 to 1933.

After graduation Britten wrote incidental music for film, stage and radio, which served as his apprenticeship as an opera composer. For the film *Coal Face* (1935) he collaborated with the poet W. H. Auden, who broadened his literary taste and political engagement, as evinced by their orchestral song-cycle *Our Hunting Fathers* (1936). Disenchanted by the critical response to his serious music, in early 1939 he followed Auden and Christopher Isherwood to America. There he hit his stride in works such as the Violin Concerto (1938–9), *Sinfonia da Requiem* (1939–40) and *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo* (1940), written for his partner, the tenor Peter Pears.

America helped define him as a person and a composer but his roots remained in Suffolk, the county to which he returned in 1942 and in which he spent the rest of his life. There, registered as a conscientious objector, he wrote the opera *Peter Grimes*, which in 1945 launched his international career. There was no ingrained operatic culture in mid-20th-century Britain, a fact that made the dozen or so stage works that followed – from *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946) to *Death in Venice* (1973) – all the more remarkable.

As a peerless pianist and conductor Britten engaged with the music of his heroes – Schubert, Mozart and Mahler – and as a composer he explored the deep, destructive currents of humanity. 'I feel … with Mozart,' he said in 1960, 'that he is writing about Figaro and his relationship with Susanna and the Countess, and is not always quite clear of the tremendous moral significance that these pieces are going to have for us.' The same applies to Britten's own works, the moral significance and popularity of which have only increased in the years since his death.

Profile © Paul Kildea

Paul Kildea is a conductor and author whose books include *Selling Britten* (2002) and, as editor, *Britten on Music* (2003). His biography *Benjamin Britten: A Life in the Twentieth Century* was published in 2013.

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)

The Lark Ascending – romance for violin and orchestra (1914, rev. 1920)

Jennifer Pike violin

The title seems to say it all. Without question Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* is a supremely poetic evocation of the song and flight of one of this country's most popular birds. The inspiration came partly from a poem by the once-famous English writer George Meredith (1828–1909). In fact there are times when the music of Vaughan Williams's 'romance' seems to spring directly from the words of Meredith's *The Lark Ascending.* After the hushed opening harmonies from muted strings and wind, the violin evokes Meredith's first lines with a vitality and refined sweetness that might have surprised the poet himself:

> *He rises and begins to round,*
> *He drops the silver chain of sound,*
> *Of many links without a break,*
> *In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake.*

Unmistakably English pastoral imagery abounds in the central section, especially the folk-like melody introduced by solo flute (and continued by clarinet) at the heart of the work. This sounds as though it must be an original folk song – perhaps one from the composer's own collection – but it turns out to be pure Vaughan Williams. Then, at the end, the lark's soaring cadenzas return, now spiralling upwards into silence, just as in the poem the bird is slowly 'lost on his aerial rings / In light …'

But there is another possible strand of meaning to *The Lark Ascending.* The violin's free-floating birdsong, the exquisite swaying 6/8 melody that emerges from it and the flute-led folk song at the heart of the piece are all formed from the same basic musical material. The violin's very first notes – gradually spelling out a rising figure D–E–A–B–D – are seminal; equally important is the tiny two-note 'dying fall' with which the violin's first ethereal outpouring comes to rest, and on which the work ultimately fades into nothingness. For many listeners there is something intensely poignant at the core of all this, as though Vaughan Williams were saying that the songs of both men and birds are expressions of the same thing: of the joy and terrible sadness of life – of the glory of natural beauty and, equally, its painful fragility.

The date of composition has to be significant. *The Lark Ascending* was written in 1914, on the eve of the catastrophe of the First World War. The centuries-old folk-song tradition and the rural way of life it enshrined would soon be gone, along with many thousands of the young men who sang those ancient songs. Did Vaughan Williams sense this, like his friend Gustav Holst, who at the same time was working on the terrifyingly prophetic 'Mars' movement from *The Planets*? On one level *The Lark Ascending* is unequivocally a

celebration of life; yet in the end it can sound uncannily like an elegy.

Programme note © Stephen Johnson

Stephen Johnson is the author of books on Bruckner, Mahler, Wagner and Shostakovich, and a regular contributor to *BBC Music Magazine*. For 14 years he was a presenter of BBC Radio 3's *Discovering Music*. He now works both as a freelance writer and as a composer.

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Ralph Vaughan Williams was the leading composer in the renaissance of English music of the early 20th century, directly inspired – unlike Elgar before him – by English music of the past and English folk song. By the time of his death at the age of 85, he had come to seem to many commentators an outmoded figure, overtaken by successive waves of innovation and internationalism. But he was mourned by countless ordinary music-lovers whose lives he had touched as choral conductor, author, composer for amateurs of all abilities and, not least, arranger and composer of many favourite hymns. And, in the years since his death, his finest works have increasingly been recognised as anything but comfortably conservative, and instead imbued with a profound and deeply personal vision.

Vaughan Williams was born on 12 October 1872 in a Cotswolds vicarage into a well-to-do, cultured family and lived for most of his life in London and Surrey. His extensive studies – at the Royal College of Music with Hubert Parry and later with Charles Stanford, at Trinity College, Cambridge, with Charles Wood, privately with Max Bruch in Berlin and (as late as 1907–8) with Ravel in Paris – gave him a technical facility at odds with the amateurism of which he was often accused. But equally important were his friendships with colleagues, notably Gustav Holst and George Butterworth, and his experience of collecting English folk songs in the field. Folk music influenced not only the modal melodies and flexible rhythms of his mature compositions but also their harmonies, which chiefly rely on traditional major and minor chords in untraditional juxtapositions.

Vaughan Williams's long apprenticeship produced not only some well-known songs, including *Linden Lea*, but also a number of accomplished chamber works. His breakthrough came in the years before the First World War with the choral *A Sea Symphony* (1903–9, rev. 1923), the chamber song-cycle *On Wenlock Edge* (1908–9), the evocative *A London Symphony* (1911–13) and above all the resonant *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910) for strings. He served in the First World War as a medical orderly and later an artillery officer; his harrowing experiences on the Western Front provided the inspiration for the haunting *Pastoral Symphony* (No. 3), first performed in 1922, his 50th-birthday year.

In the following decades Vaughan Williams, now teaching at the Royal College of

Music, was at the centre of British musical life. His next three symphonies were interpreted by manyas relating to world affairs – the Fourth (1931–4) a prophecy of war, the Fifth (1938–43) a wartime vision of peace, the Sixth (1944–7) a post-war meditation on the threat of nuclear destruction – though he himself disclaimed such intentions. Many of his other major works of the period were inspired by his (agnostic) love of the Bible and the English religious tradition: they include the oratorios *Sancta civitas* (1923–5) and *Dona nobis pacem* (1936) and the 'masque for dancing' *Job* (1927–30), as well as his operatic masterpiece, the 'morality' based on Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* – more than 30 years in the making – which reached the stage in 1951.

By this time Vaughan Williams had begun to write film music, including a score for *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948), which he later adapted as his *Sinfonia antartica*, completed in 1952. Two further symphonies followed, the divertimento-like Eighth (1953–6) and the deeply serious Ninth (1956–8), to crown a lifetime of rich productivity and continued musical exploration.

Profile © Anthony Burton

A n

DEBORAH PRITCHARD
(born 1977)

Calandra (2022)

BBC commission: world premiere

Jennifer Pike violin

Calandra is a work about light. Written for solo violin and string orchestra as war broke out in Ukraine, it depicts the freedom and flight of the calandra lark native to Eastern Europe: symbolic of hope across borders in post-pandemic times. A solo violin begins in serene stillness with a cadenza-like song against upper strings, as if high above the earth, but this only makes momentary reference to Vaughan Williams's lark, before descending in chromaticism towards a different narrative, written in a 21st-century context.

A through-composed work, *Calandra* opens with a dense, golden light that sweeps upwards and pierces the cerulean blue sky in a luminous dance-like melody. The solo violin soars above layered, bell-like textures that build in tension as soloist and ensemble separate into more densely orchestrated, aggressive statements, surging downwards to meet with darkness. Expressive echoes of the opening cadenza then reach out from the solo violin against rich, earth-like lower strings in a moment of deep reflection. This darker landscape is eventually illuminated by gleaming light as the solo violin lyrically descends to create a dream-like horizon against which a solo string quartet emerges, like many birds in flight. The soloist then sings unaccompanied, perhaps (in the words of George Meredith) 'giving their one spirit voice' to reach a brief silence. This heralds the return of the opening landscape, now transposed and resolved. There is a sense of hope as divided strings evoke bells once more and the solo violin soars onwards in resonant string crossings, peacefully gliding towards more heavenly spheres, like distant light.

Programme note © Deborah Pritchard

DEBORAH PRITCHARD

For Deborah Pritchard, image and sound are synonymous. She hears music in colour, and sees colour in music. 'I learnt to paint as a small child, before I had any music lessons,' she explains. 'I began to realise that not everybody experienced such a strong connection between these two disciplines.' Over time her synaesthesia evolved into a compositional language, further developed as research for her doctorate at Worcester College, Oxford. Drawing upon her instinctive sense that certain combinations of sounds are 'cold' and others 'warm', she creates immersive soundscapes that resonate deeply with the world around us. 'When I engage with colour, light and darkness in my work, I become aware of a broader emotional content and hope to illuminate beauty to the listener,' she says. This has led to her music being performed by the London Symphony Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, BBC Singers and Choir of New College, Oxford.

Often, Pritchard maps out new ideas visually, plotting a new score through shapes and colour before transforming this into notation. Sometimes, as with her London Sinfonietta commission *Colour Circle* (2020), she leaves the score in this graphic form, the art of interpretation left to the performers. In other cases, as with her British Composer Award-winning solo violin piece *Inside Colour* (2016), she paints her music retrospectively, her illustrations serving both as a listening guide and as a synaesthetic visualisation to open up new ways of understanding contemporary music. Her images have been exhibited at the Royal Academy of Music and the Purbeck International Chamber Music Festival, and are due to be exhibited at Keble College, Oxford, where she is currently Visiting Fellow in Music.

But this process also works the other way around, with her composing several new works inspired by pieces of visual art. Her violin concerto *Wall of Water* (2014) is the first of several pieces Pritchard has written in response to the North Sea paintings of Maggi Hambling, its cool, muted colours etched with sudden shafts of light, mirroring the intricacy and luminous textures of Hambling's canvases. 'The sea is my favourite sound,' says Pritchard, remembering with fondness the transformative moment when, as a teenager, she heard Debussy's *La mer* for the first time. Little wonder then that she cites Debussy among her greatest influences, alongside Messiaen, Kandinsky and her former composition teachers, Robert Saxton (at Oxford University) and Simon Bainbridge (at the Royal Academy of Music).

Profile © Jo Kirkbride

Jo Kirkbride is Chief Executive of the Edinburgh-based Dunedin Consort and a freelance writer on classical music. She studied Beethoven's slow movements for her PhD and writes regularly for the London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and Snape Proms.

RICHARD STRAUSS
(1864–1949)

Death and Transfiguration, Op. 24
(1888–9)

The late 19th century is usually portrayed as an age of emotional repression – an age when well brought-up children were 'seen and not heard' and polite conversation steered clear of any subject that had the remotest connection with sex. But there were subjects late 19th-century Europeans approached far more readily than we do: death, for instance. The famous 'Death of Little Nell' sequence in Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop* was one of the great popular hits of the Victorian era while, in Richard Strauss's Germany, death had been a favourite subject for Romantic artists since Goethe's novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and Schubert's 'Death and the Maiden' String Quartet. So, while it may be hard for us today to imagine a young artist following up his or her first big public success with a work about the experiences of a dying man, we shouldn't be too surprised to find the 24-year-old Strauss doing exactly that.

It was not long after completing his tone-poem *Don Juan* in 1888 that he set to work on a successor entitled *Tod und Verklärung* ('Death and Transfiguration'). *Don Juan* had ended with the death of its hero; now, in *Death and Transfiguration*, Strauss set out to depict the thoughts and feelings of a man struggling with, and finally yielding to, death.

Commentators often have difficulty believing that an artist might simply imagine the states of mind he depicts, and one of Strauss's contemporaries, the writer Richard Specht, found an element of autobiography even in this extreme subject matter. The music, Specht said, 'was created in the year 1889 after a severe illness, an echo of the time when treacherous fever smote the young tone-poet, and in which the will to live and the dissolving of earthly shackles into eternity fought for predominance'. In fact Specht got his dates wrong. The 'severe illness' he referred to occurred two years after *Death and Transfiguration* was completed and a year after its triumphant first performance. But the legend stuck fast, which is in itself a testimony to the dramatic and expressive power of Strauss's music.

One can understand why audiences were ready to believe Specht. Given that Strauss was a young man when he wrote *Death and Transfiguration* – an ambitious young man, moreover, with everything to live for – its urgency and vividness are striking. Strauss describes the unnamed hero of his musical narrative as an 'idealist'. As the fever intensifies, he is racked by memories of childhood, of youthful loves and, worst of all, by the sense that he has failed to fulfil his ideals. But after death comes 'transfiguration', in which the soul 'finds gloriously achieved in eternal space those things which could not be achieved here below'.

The musical storyline is easy to follow – a vindication of the young Strauss's belief that the 'poetic idea' could be the guiding, formative principle for symphonic music. The quietly pulsing, slightly erratic rhythms at the opening (second violins and violas, followed by timpani) suggest the uneven beat of the failing heart, or the throbbing beat of deadly fever. The hero's struggles with death can be heard in the explosive, agitated Allegro that follows. Calmer, sweetly sad music (solo flute above gently rippling strings) clearly represents nostalgic memories of childhood and youth. Then the struggles begin again, with the quietly pulsing rhythm from the opening now blaring threateningly on trombones and timpani (in Strauss's words, 'death seems to knock at the door'). The moment of death is unmistakable: a sweeping upward glissando ending in hush, with quiet gong strokes and a *pianissimo* low C sustained in the depths of the orchestra. Then the transfiguration begins.

An aspiring theme heard earlier rises slowly and majestically (starting on horns), leading to the grand, ultimately serene affirmation of the coda – the vision of the soul's fulfilment in 'eternal space'.

Nearly 60 years after he wrote *Death and Transfiguration*, the elderly Richard Strauss was to quote the slow aspiring 'transfiguration' motif in the last of his *Four Last Songs*, at the point where the singer asks, 'Is this perhaps death?' In the song, the quotation seems to have a wistful, slightly ironic twist. But on his deathbed, the following year, Strauss told his daughter-in-law: 'Dying is just as I composed it in *Death and Transfiguration*.'

Programme note © Stephen Johnson

RICHARD STRAUSS

'Modern? What does "modern" mean?' asked Richard Strauss in the prime of his long creative life. 'Give the word another significance! Have ideas like Beethoven's, write contrapuntally like Bach, orchestrate as well as Mozart and be true and genuine children of your own time, then you will be modern!' Over a century and a half on from Strauss's birth into a comfortable middle-class, musical Munich family, and at a time when the 12-tone system devised by Schoenberg is no longer hailed as the last word among musical movements, this once-excoriated late-Romantic sounds fresher than ever. *Der Rosenkavalier*, the sophisticated 'comedy for music' he composed in 1909–10 with the poet and playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal, is really as modern as its immediate predecessor, a violent operatic adaptation of Hofmannsthal's tribute to Sophocles's *Electra*.

Strauss's earliest works were composed under the shadow of his musically conservative father Franz, a Wagner-hating horn player in the Munich Court Orchestra. But, following his discovery of Brahms and the true revelation of Wagner, the younger Strauss quickly established his

independence with the Italianate light and German darkness of *Don Juan* (1888–9), composed in the heat of his passion for Pauline de Ahna, an inspirational soprano who in 1894 became his wife. In each of the ensuing symphonic poems he evoked a different world, contrasting, for example, the compact rondo humour of *Till Eulenspiegel* (1894–5) with the opulent musical poetry of his homage to Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1895–6).

His interest in Nietzsche may have encouraged his break from the Wagner circle and prompted the somewhat individual choice of his first operatic protagonist, *Guntram*, in 1892–3: as he recalled in 1945, 'my path was clear at last for uninhibitedly independent creation'. His operatic path moved from a very personal vein of self-styled 'parody and persiflage' in the Munich fable *Feuersnot* (1900–01) through to the acme of glittering modernism in *Salome* (1903–5) and *Elektra* (1906–8). After *Der Rosenkavalier*, the contrasts persisted: between the 34-piece orchestra of the 'pretty hybrid' *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1911–12, rev. 1916) and the 'massive and artificial' fairy tale *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1914–17).

Subsequent operas were sweeter, more radiant, though Strauss's later years were darkened by his accommodations with the Nazi regime, arguably more a question of naivety and a desire to protect his Jewish daughter-in-law and half-Jewish grandsons than any cold opportunism. Even before full clearance by the denazification tribunal, Strauss made a triumphant return to London in 1947 and spent his last years looking back to Mozart, his ideal of Austro-German civilisation, in gentle, happy music tinged with his own brand of rich harmony and chromaticism. A believer in effective quiet curtains, he staged his own with the *Four Last Songs*, first performed at the Royal Albert Hall on 22 May 1950, less than a year after his death and only nine days after that of Pauline.

Profile © David Nice

David Nice is a writer, lecturer and broadcaster who has contributed regularly to BBC Radio 3's *Record Review* and *BBC Music Magazine*. He is also the classical/opera editor for theartsdesk.com. The first volume of his Prokofiev biography was published in 2003.

CLEMENS SCHULDT
CONDUCTOR

Born in Bremen, Clemens Schuldt began his career as a violinist before winning the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition in London in 2010 and then completing his conducting studies in Düsseldorf, Vienna and Weimar.

He has performed and recorded with the Munich Chamber Orcestra, of which he was Chief Conductor (2016–22). Elsewhere he has worked with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the Kyoto, Oregon, Quebec, Stavanger, SWR Radio, Tasmanian, Trondheim, WDR Radio and Yomiuri Nippon Symphony orchestras and the BBC, Copenhagen, New Japan and Turku Philharmonic orchestras. This season he makes his debuts with the Aarhus Symphony and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic orchestras.

Among the soloists with whom he has appeared are Khatia Buniatishvili, Colin Currie, Vilde Frang, Ilya Gringolts, Håkan Hardenberger, Steven Isserlis, Igor Levit, Baiba Skride, Christian Tetzlaff, Daniel Trifonov and Alisa Weilerstein.

He conducted operas by composers ranging from Gluck to Wagner during his two years as Conductor in Residence at the Mainz State Theatre. This month he conducts *The Magic Flute* for the Karlsruhe State Theatre, to be followed next spring by *Mitridate, re di Ponto*.

JENNIFER PIKE
VIOLIN

Jennifer Pike came to international attention in 2002 as the youngest ever winner of the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition, before studying at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and at Oxford University. A former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist (2008–10), she has appeared with the major UK orchestras as well as with the Dresden, Royal Stockholm and Strasbourg Philharmonic orchestras, Czech National, Malmö, Prague, St Louis, St Petersburg, Singapore and Tokyo Symphony orchestras, Auckland Philharmonia, Aurora Orchestra and Zurich Chamber Orchestra. Among the conductors with whom she has worked are Jiří Bělohlávek, Sir Mark Elder, James Gaffigan, Andris Nelsons, Sir Roger Norrington, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Tugan Sokhiev and Mark Wigglesworth.

She has appeared widely as a recitalist and chamber musician. As an enthusiastic promoter of new music she has had works written for her by composers including Charlotte Bray, Hafliði Hallgrímsson and Andrew Schultz. Her discography features concertos by Mendelssohn, Rósza and Sibelius, as well as sonatas by Elgar and Vaughan Williams.

She was appointed MBE in 2020, is an Ambassador for both the Prince's Trust and the Foundation for Children and the Arts, and is Patron of the Lord Mayor's City Music Foundation.

BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The BBC Symphony Orchestra has been at the heart of British musical life since it was founded in 1930. It plays a central role in the BBC Proms, including appearances at the First and Last Night, and is an Associate Orchestra at the Barbican in London. Its commitment to contemporary music is demonstrated by a range of premieres each season, as well as Total Immersion days devoted to specific composers or themes.

Highlights of this season at the Barbican include Total Immersion days exploring the music of George Walker, Kaija Saariaho and Jean Sibelius, the last two led by Chief Conductor Sakari Oramo, who also conducts concerts showcasing the music of Grażyna Bacewicz.

A literary theme runs through the season, which includes Neil Brand's new version of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and the world premiere of Iain Bell's *Beowulf*, with the BBC Symphony Chorus and featuring tenor Stuart Skelton. Ian McEwan joins the orchestra to read from his own works, with music curated around his readings.

The BBC Symphony Chorus joins the BBC SO for Michael Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, under Conductor Laureate Sir Andrew Davis, with soloists including Pumeza Matshikiza and Dame Sarah Connolly.

Among this season's world and UK premieres are Victoria Borisova-Ollas's *A Portrait of a Lady by Swan Lake*, Kaija Saariaho's *Saarikoski Songs* and Valerie Coleman's *Umoja (Anthem of Unity)*, and the season comes to a close with the UK premiere of Joby Talbot's opera *Everest*.

The vast majority of the BBC SO's performances are broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and a number of studio recordings each season are free to attend. These often feature up-and-coming talent, including members of BBC Radio 3's New Generation Artists scheme. All broadcasts are available for 30 days on BBC Sounds, and the BBC SO can also be seen on BBC TV and BBC iPlayer, and heard on the BBC's online archive, Experience Classical.

The BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus – alongside the BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Singers and BBC Proms – also offer innovative education and community activities and take a lead role in the BBC Ten Pieces and BBC Young Composer programmes.

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Chief Conductor
Sakari Oramo

Principal Guest Conductor
Dalia Stasevska

Günter Wand Conducting Chair
Semyon Bychkov

Conductor Laureate
Sir Andrew Davis

Creative Artist in Association
Jules Buckley

First Violins
Stephen Bryant *leader*
Jeremy Martin
Celia Waterhouse
Colin Huber
Ni Do
Molly Cockburn
James Wicks
Stuart McDonald
Kate Cole
Zanete Uskane
Cassandra Hamilton
Elizabeth Partridge
Naoko Keatley
Joanne Chen
Iain Gibbs

Second Violins
Heather Hohmann
Daniel Meyer
Patrick Wastnage
Danny Fajardo
Lucy Curnow
Rachel Samuel
Tammy Se
Caroline Cooper
Victoria Hodgson
Lucica Trita
Lyrit Milgram
Aysen Ulucan
Julian Trafford
Maya Bickel

Violas
Amélie Roussel
Philip Hall
Joshua Hayward
Nikos Zarb
Audrey Henning
Natalie Taylor
Michael Leaver
Carolyn Scott
Mary Whittle
Peter Mallinson
Matthias Wiesner
Lowri Thomas

Cellos
Tim Gill
Tamsy Kaner
Mark Sheridan
Clare Hinton
Sarah Hedley-Miller
Michael Atkinson
Augusta Antcliff
George Hoult
Ben Chappell
Alba Merchant

Double Basses
Nicholas Bayley
Richard Alsop
Anita Langridge
Michael Clarke
Beverley Jones
Josie Ellis
Cathy Colwell
Lucy Hare

Flutes
Daniel Pailthorpe
Tomoka Mukai

Oboes
Alison Teale
Imogen Smith

Cor Anglais
Helen Vigurs

Clarinets
Peter Sparks
Jonathan Parkin

Bass Clarinet
Thomas Lessels

Alto Saxophone
Martin Robertson

Bassoons
Julie Price
Charlotte Cox

Contrabassoon
Steven Magee

Horns
Martin Owen
Nicholas Korth
Michael Murray
Andrew Antcliff
Nicholas Hougham
Mark Wood

Trumpets
Niall Keatley
Martin Hurrell
Joseph Atkins

Trombones
Richard Watkin
Dan Jenkins

Bass Trombone
Robert O'Neill

Tuba
Sam Elliott

Timpani
Erika Ohman

Percussion
David Hockings
Fiona Ritchie
Joe Cooper
Rachel Gledhill

Harp
Manon Morris

The list of players was correct at the time of going to press

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Team Assistant
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Benjamin

Team Assistant
Sharni Edmonson
Joey Williams

Programme produced by BBC Proms Publications

SUNDAY 15 JANUARY, 3.00pm

Rachmaninov and Lyatoshinsky

RACHMANINOV Piano Concerto No. 3
LYATOSHINSKY Symphony No. 3

Anna Fedorova piano
Kirill Karabits conductor

'Delicacy and passion in every phrase' was how one critic described the playing of the young Ukrainian pianist Anna Fedorova. She'll bring all her powers into play when she joins Kirill Karabits and the BBC Symphony Orchestra in the mightiest of all Romantic piano concertos – an imposing upbeat to Boris Lyatoshinsky's tempestuous Third Symphony of 1951.

It's still something of a rarity in the UK, but Kirill Karabits has been an outspoken champion of neglected Soviet-era composers, and he's convinced that the music of this major Ukrainain symphonist is powerful enough to speak on its own terms. 'If only Lyatoshinsky had lived in Moscow during Soviet times, instead of staying in Kyiv, his name would stand next to Shostakovich,' he says. 'It's just great music. Really great music.'

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