



A SEA SYMPHONY

Friday 24 May 2024

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FRIDAY 24 MAY, 2024

7.30pm, BARBICAN HALL

OLIVER KNUSSEN Cleveland Pictures *London premiere* 16'

BENJAMIN BRITTEN Double Concerto for Violin and Viola 22'

INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS A Sea Symphony (Symphony No. 1) 66'

Silja Aalto soprano

Morgan Pearse baritone

Vilde Frang violin

Lawrence Power viola

BBC Symphony Chorus

Sakari Oramo conductor

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This concert is being recorded for broadcast on Tuesday 11 June in *Radio 3 in Concert*. It will be available for 30 days after broadcast via BBC Sounds, where you can also find podcasts and music mixes.

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'Behold, the sea itself!' Vaughan Williams was inspired by the mystical poetry of Walt Whitman in creating his magnificent choral-orchestral work *A Sea Symphony*, which opens with a ringing fanfare and a mighty choral shout. Tonight the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus under Chief Conductor Sakari Oramo are joined in this prophetic masterpiece by rising young soloists Silja Aalto and Morgan Pearse.

The concert also sees the belated London premiere of *Cleveland Pictures*, which contains some of the last music composed by Oliver Knussen (1952–2018). And in between, another work that was only heard years after its composer's death: Britten's ultimately abandoned Double Concerto. The orchestra is joined by Norwegian violinist Vilde Frang and British violist Lawrence Power to reveal the promise shown by this rediscovered piece from early in the composer's career.

As we close our Barbican season we remember Sir Andrew Davis, our much-loved Conductor Laureate and President of the BBC Symphony Chorus, who died last month. Tonight's programme by Sakari Oramo, although planned many months ago, forms a particularly fitting reflection of Sir Andrew's legacy as a specialist in British music and an unstinting advocate of works by contemporary composers.

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Tonight's concert will be available on BBC Sounds from 11 June until 11 July.

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Sir Andrew Davis

1944–2024



Sir Andrew Davis: loved and admired throughout the world of classical music

Last month the musical world was shaken by the loss of Sir Andrew Davis, who died, aged 80, after being diagnosed with leukaemia. As Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra from 1989 to 2000 he defined an era for the ensemble, displaying supreme musical versatility whether performing Mozart or Messiaen, great choral classics, operas or the newest scores. He is also remembered for his constantly supportive spirit and unfailing good humour. He was a much-loved figure at the BBC Proms, where his 132 appearances included 12 Last Nights. This summer the BBC SO will dedicate one of its 12 Proms to Sir Andrew's memory, with Martyn Brabbins conducting.

“ Sir Andrew's significance for the wider music world, musical life in Britain and specifically the BBC Symphony Orchestra has been immeasurable. He was appreciated as a genuinely kind, graceful and charming person, one of the very best human beings in the classical music business. Everyone in the BBC SO family is in mourning.

Sakari Oramo, Chief Conductor, BBC Symphony Orchestra

“ The loss of Sir Andrew is deeply felt here at the BBC SO. His charm and wit endeared him to many, and his love and support of the orchestra is something we will always treasure. Together we created many wonderful performances and recordings which will live long in the memory.

Natalie Taylor, BBC SO Viola & Committee Chair

“ Sir Andrew was the BBC Symphony Chorus's President and had been conducting us for over 50 years. We will all remember him very fondly as an inspiring and brilliant conductor and the warmest, wittiest and kindest person you could meet. He will be sorely missed.

Mary Hardy, Honorary Chair, BBC Symphony Chorus

OLIVER KNUSSEN (1952–2018)
Cleveland Pictures (2003–9)

London premiere

- 1 Portail avec Penseur (Façades and lake with Rodin) –**
- 2 Calabazas (Velázquez)**
- 3 Dans les vagues (Gauguin) [a fragment]**
- 4 Two Clocks (Tiffany/Fabergé)**
- 5 St Ambrose (Goya)**
- [6] Don Quixote (Masson) [sketch only – not performed]**
- 7 The Burning of the Houses of Parliament (Turner) [a fragment]**

Composer and conductor Oliver Knussen combined incredible skill with warmth, modesty and humour, his scores characterised by precise, crystalline colours. When Knussen died in 2018, the loss was felt – is still felt keenly – across the world of music.

Begun in 2003, *Cleveland Pictures* is a set of responses to a selection of artworks housed in the Cleveland Museum of Art. Knussen planned seven movements and finished four, plus two fully orchestrated fragments and one 10-bar sketch (for a sixth movement, inspired by André Masson’s *Don Quixote and the Chariot of Death*, not included in the published score or in tonight’s performance); he revised the first and fourth movements in 2009. In an interview with Tom Service on BBC Radio 3, he explained: ‘Making a rough sketch from beginning to end and then elaborating it isn’t something I can do. I can make a rough sketch of a chunk,

and then I’m immediately into the tiniest little details.’

Cleveland Pictures opens with Rodin’s sinewy sculpture *The Thinker* (possibly representing Dante), Knussen’s music shifting between rich, introspective chords and muscular gestures.

Velázquez’s *Calabazas* is a tribute to a jester whose disabilities were treated with condescension at the court of Philip IV of Spain. Knussen’s portrayal (into which the first movement flows seamlessly) moves between the *misterioso* and the *giocos*, *ironico* facets of the jester’s character, with fleeting sonorities reminiscent of Knussen’s children’s opera *Higglety Pigglety Pop!*.

Next comes Knussen’s shimmering response to Gauguin’s vivid, sensuous figure frolicking *In the Waves*; then ‘Two Clocks’ by Tiffany and Fabergé – a perfect vehicle for Knussen’s witty, sparkling, exquisitely detailed music. *St Ambrose* (Goya) veers between string-writing redolent of Vaughan Williams’s *Tallis Fantasia* and more quintessentially Knussenesque colours – as though representing the tensions between old and new orders that surfaced during the saint’s life. Those colours glimmer and ignite as they evoke Turner’s blazing *The Burning of the Houses of Parliament*; this fragment ends with a whip sounding like wood snapping as it burns and disintegrates.

Sonya Knussen, the composer’s daughter, said of *Cleveland Pictures*: ‘I spent months, possibly longer, talking to many of OK’s

closest friends and family, figuring out if the piece should be performed at all and what would feel comfortable in the circumstances. After all, they aren't ever going to be the same as they were for OK. It turns out that he had said to a close friend that he hated the idea of someone else completing it. So that gave me the answer: many of us felt that his music is so magical that it wouldn't be his magic if someone else did it.'

Programme note © Joanna Wyld

Joanna Wyld regularly writes for the Edinburgh, Salzburg and Cambridge festivals, the Barbican, Southbank Centre and Wigmore Hall and many of the major UK orchestras. She has given pre-concert talks at the Queen Elizabeth and Royal Festival halls, and wrote the libretto for Robert Huggill's opera *The Gardeners*, premiered in 2019.

OLIVER KNUSSEN

Oliver Knussen, composer, conductor, teacher and staunch advocate of new music, died in July 2018 at the age of 66, leaving a vast and seemingly irreparable gap in British musical life.

Born in Glasgow into a family of professional musicians, Knussen went to the Purcell School and studied composition with John Lambert. He made a spectacular double debut in 1968 at the age of 15, conducting the London Symphony Orchestra in his own (now withdrawn) First Symphony in London and New York. In 1970 he was awarded the first of three fellowships at the Tanglewood summer school in Massachusetts, which inaugurated a period of study with

Gunther Schuller and launched his career in the USA. Later he taught at Tanglewood, holding the post of Co-ordinator of Contemporary Music Activities there from 1986 to 1993. Meanwhile, in the UK he was co-Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival from 1983 to 1998 and joint founder in 1992 of the Contemporary Composition and Performance courses at the Britten–Pears School at Snape. In the last years of his life he was the inaugural Richard Rodney Bennett Professor of Music at the Royal Academy of Music, which awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Knussen was well known as a conductor – mostly but not exclusively of new and 20th-century music – and performed with major orchestras in Britain, continental Europe, the USA and Japan. He was appointed Music Director of the London Sinfonietta in 1998, becoming its Conductor Laureate in 2002; for some years he was also Artist-in-Association with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. He won the 2009 Royal Philharmonic Society Award for conducting and the 2012 Critics' Circle Outstanding Musician Award. Through his administrative, teaching and conducting activities, and as a more informal mentor, he had an enormous influence on successive generations of British composers. It was surely, in part, in recognition of this that he was appointed CBE in 1994 and awarded the Queen's Medal for Music in 2016.

As a composer, Knussen drew on a wide range of influences and stimuli in music of taut, compact organisation, concentrated expression, immense colouristic imagination and jewelled precision. His perfectionism and the conflicting demands of his performing career and persistent health problems restricted him to a small output. Some 'works in progress' fell by the wayside altogether; others took several years to achieve their final form. But those compositions that did see the light of day have been treasured by performers and listeners, given numerous repeat performances and rapidly elevated to the status of contemporary classics. They include his Second and Third Symphonies (1970–71 and 1973–9); two funny and touching fantasy operas based on children's books by Maurice Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are* (1979–83) and *Higglety Pigglety Pop!* (1984–5, rev. 1999); the ensemble pieces *Ophelia Dances* (1975), *Coursing* (1979) and *Songs without Voices* (1991–2); a cycle of *Whitman Settings* for soprano and piano or orchestra (also 1991–2); highly successful concertos for horn (1994) and violin (2002); and a moving memorial to his wife, *Requiem (Songs for Sue)* for soprano and ensemble (2005–6).

Profile © Anthony Burton

Anthony Burton is a former BBC Radio 3 music producer and presenter, now a freelance writer. He edited the Associated Board Performer's Guides, contributes regularly to *BBC Music Magazine* and has written notes for CDs and concert programmes on thousands of works.

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913–76), orch. COLIN MATTHEWS **Double Concerto in B minor for** **Violin, Viola and Orchestra (1932)**

- 1 Allegro non troppo**
- 2 Rhapsody: Poco lento –**
- 3 Allegro scherzando**

Vilde Frang violin
Lawrence Power viola

Britten's Double Concerto is one of his 'cusp' works. In 1932 he was still only 18, midway through his time at the Royal College of Music and composing at a furious rate. He wrote the concerto just before his Op. 1 (the Sinfonietta), and it is his first attempt at a large-scale orchestral work – his next on this scale would not appear until *Our Hunting Fathers* in 1936. Throughout the piece we can hear Britten trying out a variety of musical styles and textures – some he would retain in later life, others he would discard – as he refines his compositional voice.

It is not entirely clear why Britten wrote the concerto, nor why he discarded it before scoring it (it was fully orchestrated by Colin Matthews before its premiere in 1997). The choice of solo instruments indicates that he may have intended the work as a vehicle for himself (the viola was his own instrument) and his friend the violinist Remo Lauricella, for whom he had already written several pieces. Probably he abandoned it because he simply didn't like it. His diaries record his somewhat

lugubrious self-criticism. In early March 1932 he writes: 'spend practically the whole day writing a fatuous slow movement for my concerto'; 'Write more of last mov. of Concerto this morning – I shall tear that up soon'. And finally in May: 'I expect I shall scrap it all.' His teacher John Ireland was reportedly quite happy with it, and it is somewhat startling that this precocious teenager was so dissatisfied with his piece. It bristles with confidence and expressiveness, and demonstrates the kind of distinctive writing for both ensemble and individual instruments (especially timpani and horn) that he would retain and develop throughout his career.

...

The first movement opens with shuddering chords over which a solo horn plays the principal theme – an assertive fanfare. The soloists enter and gradually take on the fanfare, which later travels to the trumpet and timpani. The fanfares slow down in a more expressive central section that borders on romantic, the luscious scoring appearing to lull itself briefly to sleep. After reviving with a brief burst of energy, the movement ends quietly.

The second movement is marked 'Rhapsody', although trudging repeated quavers perpetually undermine any attempts by the music to soar rhapsodically. It opens in surprisingly dark territory, with mysterious, organ-like chords. After extended solo passages for violin and viola and a chamber-like

interlude, the strings begin to march, their relentless quavers gathering in force and intensity. Like the other two movements, the Rhapsody ends quietly, the chords from the beginning lingering into the start of the third movement.

As the Rhapsody was dominated by quavers, the finale is a celebration of repeated semiquavers, first heard on the timpani and given a somewhat military flavour by the use of hard side-drum sticks. Against this insistent background is a catchy, brilliantly syncopated section for the soloists, foreshadowing the tricky rhythms Britten would frequently throw at his players in years to come (there is a touch of the 'Old Joe has gone fishing' chorus from *Peter Grimes* here). The soloists, heroically double-stopping at times, launch into this rhythm or join the timpani for frantic semiquavers. The music builds, then reduces to an atmospherically chamber-like section and a return of the first movement's fanfares. The closing passage is exquisite: soft chords, sinuous melodies from the soloists and a hushed conclusion.

Programme note © Lucy Walker

Lucy Walker is a musicologist, writer and public speaker. She studied the operas of Francis Poulenc for her PhD and has edited two books on Benjamin Britten. She is currently co-editing a book of essays on Elizabeth Maconchy.

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 (12 June) that he was to become 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, throughout his childhood he wrote works of great commitment if not startling originality. 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 his studies at the Royal College of Music from 1930 to 1933 lacked.

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 tastes 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 Britten followed Auden and Christopher Isherwood to America. There he hit his stride in works such as the Violin Concerto (1938–9), the *Sinfonia da Requiem* (1939–40) and the *Seven Sonnets*

of *Michelangelo* (1940), which was written for his partner, the tenor Peter Pears.

America helped define Britten as a person and as 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.

INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

**RALPH VAUGHAN
WILLIAMS (1872–1958)**
A Sea Symphony (Symphony No. 1)
(1903–9, rev. 1923)

- 1 A Song for All Seas, All Ships**
(Moderato maestoso)
- 2 On the Beach at Night, Alone**
(Largo sostenuto)
- 3 Scherzo: The Waves (Allegro brillante)**
- 4 The Explorers (Grave e molto adagio)**

Silja Aalto soprano
Morgan Pearse baritone
BBC Symphony Chorus

A Sea Symphony was Vaughan Williams's breakthrough work, and all the evidence suggests that he meant it to be. Like Brahms, preparing anxiously for his own symphonic debut in his 40s, Vaughan Williams took a lot of time and trouble over what was eventually to become his official First Symphony. The earliest sketches date from 1903, when he was 30, but the score wasn't finished until 1909, six years later. It was a highly original conception: few composers had dared to challenge the titanic example of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, whose four-movement structure culminates in a huge choral 'Ode to Joy'; and even those who had, such as Mahler, had entrusted most of their musical drama to the orchestra alone. True, Mahler's entirely choral Symphony No. 8 (the so-called 'Symphony of a Thousand') had its premiere in the same year as *A Sea Symphony* – 1910 – but Mahler hadn't started work on that until

1906 – three years after Vaughan Williams began writing.

Still more daring was Vaughan Williams's choice of texts. The American mystical humanist poet Walt Whitman wasn't well known in Britain at that time, and his free verses were very different from the kind of metrical poetry normally preferred by British choral composers. The fluidity of Whitman's writing was a liberating inspiration for Vaughan Williams, freeing him from conventional symmetrical melodic patterns and allowing him to develop the kind of long, quasi-improvisatory melodic lines that were to be such a feature of his mature style.

In choosing poetry about the sea Vaughan Williams was, of course, playing to one of his country's great obsessions. Not only do the art and literature of this island nation abound in sea imagery but the English language itself, even today, is full of nautical expressions – people who may never have been to sea still talk about a 'sea change' and 'tides in the affairs of men', or perhaps describe incautious revellers as 'three sheets to the wind'. But there is much more to *A Sea Symphony* than pictorialism, however striking or seductive his use of it is. For Whitman and, it would appear, for the mystically inclined agnostic Vaughan Williams, the sea also stood for the great unknown: an alluring but perilous dimension, apparently without limit, in which adventurers might – if they

kept courage – find deep truths about themselves and even encounter something approximating to ‘God’.

...

Whitman’s nautical imagery sets Vaughan Williams’s musical imagination working at full stretch right from the start. After a brief fanfare and a shout from the chorus, ‘Behold, the sea itself’, comes a stunning musical depiction of a huge wave breaking. Later we hear jaunty hornpipe music, celebrating the many often nameless heroic sailors who have embodied the ‘emblem of man elate above [joyfully indifferent to] death’. Any suggestion of narrow nationalism – self-celebration by the pre-eminent seafaring power of the age – is repeatedly quashed by Whitman’s insistence on hailing the ‘separate flags of nations’ and his vision of how the sea unifies all in its elemental, quasi-maternal embrace – ideas eloquently underlined by Vaughan Williams’s word-setting.

The image of the sea as mother returns more explicitly in ‘On the Beach at Night, Alone’, reflected in the almost voluptuous evocation of a calm but powerful seaswell at the opening. The lonely figure reflecting on the ocean is granted an almost Buddhist understanding that ‘a vast similitude interlocks all’: individuals like the spectator – people from all nations, those who have lived and those yet to live – are all part of that immense ‘similitude’.

Philosophy is temporarily sidelined in the Scherzo, ‘The Waves’, in which Whitman’s dazzling word-magic inspires a brilliant

display of watery tone-painting from Vaughan Williams (‘Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling’, the ship’s wake ‘flashing and frolicsome under the sun’).

A Sea Symphony’s musical and philosophical weight falls on the finale, the longest of the four movements. Whitman’s poem was entitled ‘Passage to India’, but Vaughan Williams’s feelings about British imperialism were far from jingoistic, and it is surely significant that he chose to universalise the message here with his own title, ‘The Explorers’.

Now the sea represents life’s existential challenge. What is the world’s ‘inscrutable purpose’, its ‘hidden prophetic intention’? From the time of the mythical Adam and Eve, human beings have journeyed and quested, ‘with restless explorations, / With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish, with never-happy hearts’. For a long time the music is hushed: awestruck at first, then increasingly troubled. A long crescendo now begins, culminating in the radiant choral vision of ‘the poet worthy [of] that name, / The true son of God [who] shall come singing his songs’. The tempo quickens, and soprano and baritone soloists, half ecstatic, half impatient, urge us onwards as the mystical-maritime message finally comes into focus: ‘O we can wait no longer, / We too take ship O soul, / Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas.’ To memories of the first movement’s rousing hornpipe music the chorus adds its command: ‘Sail forth – steer for the deep waters only.’ A massive

climax is reached, employing the full force of Vaughan Williams's expanded orchestra. Then stillness descends; the outcome continues to be uncertain, yet turning back is unthinkable: 'O my brave soul! / O farther farther sail! / O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas of God?' No symphony before this had ever had a less conclusive ending: two chords oscillate high on violins, alternating with ambiguous harmonies deep below on cellos and basses. There is little sense of having reached a 'home key'. 'O farther sail ...'

Programme note © Stephen Johnson

Stephen Johnson is the author of books on Bruckner, Wagner, Mahler and Shostakovich, and is 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 amateur musicians of all abilities

and, not least, arranger and composer of many favourite hymns. In the years since his death, his finest works have increasingly been recognised as anything but comfortably conservative and imbued instead 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 Maurice 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, rev. 1918, 1933) and above all the resonant *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910) for strings. He served in the war as a medical orderly and later as 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 many as 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 – although 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 the 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

SAKARI ORAMO

CONDUCTOR

Finnish conductor Sakari Oramo is Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Conductor Laureate of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, following 13 years as Chief Conductor. He was Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (1998–2008), Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra (2003–12; now Honorary Conductor), Principal Conductor of Kokkola Opera (2004–18) and Principal Conductor of the Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra (2013–19).

Engagements during the current season include his debut with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and returns to the Czech Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, City of Birmingham Symphony and Finnish Radio Symphony orchestras and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

Sakari Oramo's award-winning recordings include Nielsen's First and Third symphonies with the RSPO (winner of a *BBC Music Magazine* Award in 2016), Langgaard's Second and Sixth symphonies (*Gramophone* Award, 2019) and Busoni's Piano Concerto with Kirill Gerstein and the Boston Symphony Orchestra (ICMA Award, 2020). Other recent recordings include music by Sibelius with the BBC SO, Rachmaninov piano concertos with Yevgeny Sudbin and Florent Schmitt's Second Symphony.

SILJA AALTO

SOPRANO

Finnish soprano Silja Aalto studied with Eeva-Liisa Saarinen at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, graduating in 2018. She made her operatic debut with Estonian National Opera in April 2018 as the Countess (*The Marriage of Figaro*).

She is now a regular guest of Estonian National Opera, where her roles include Mimi (*La bohème*), Leonora (*Il trovatore*) and Elsa (*Lohengrin*). Last October she made her debut with Finnish National Opera as soprano soloist in Christian Spuck's choreographed production of Verdi's *Requiem*.

Her operatic repertoire also includes Leonore (*Fidelio*), Sieglinde (*Die Walküre*), Alice Ford (*Falstaff*), Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), First Lady (Kokkonen's *The Last Temptations*) and Minna (Rautavaara's *The Gift of the Magi*). Future engagements include her role debut as Elisabetta di Valois (*Don Carlo*) with Finnish National Opera and Riitta (*The Last Temptations*) with Tampere Opera.

This summer Silja Aalto makes her BBC Proms debut performing Saariaho's *Mirage* alongside cellist Anssi Karttunen with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sakari Oramo.

VILDE FRANG

VIOLIN

Norwegian violinist Vilde Frang was engaged by Mariss Jansons at the age of 12 to make her debut with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra. She studied at the Barratt Due Institute of Music in Oslo, with Kolja Blacher at the Hamburg Musikhochschule and with Ana Chumachenco at the Kronberg Academy. In 2012 she received the Credit Suisse Young Artist Award, which led to her debut with the Vienna Philharmonic under Bernard Haitink at the Lucerne Festival.

She continues to appear regularly with the world's leading orchestras and in concert and recital at venues and festivals internationally. Highlights this season include performances with the Bavarian Radio Symphony, Zurich Tonhalle, Royal Concertgebouw and Berlin Philharmonic orchestras and her debut with the Orchestra of the Academy of Santa Cecilia, Rome. She also embarks on tours with the Bavarian State Orchestra and B'Rock Orchestra, and is Artist-in-Residence with Radio France, appearing in Paris throughout the season with the Orchestre National de France and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

Vilde Frang's recordings have received numerous accolades, including two *Gramophone* Awards. She performs on a 1734 Guarneri del Gesù, loaned to her by a European benefactor.

MORGAN PEARSE

BARITONE

Winner of first prize at the Cesti Competition in 2016, Sydney-born baritone Morgan Pearse is also the winner of the Lies Askonas Prize from the Royal College of Music in 2014 and the Gold Medal of the Royal Over-Seas League's Music Competition in 2013.

Recent debuts include the title-roles in *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Zurich Opera House, *The Barber of Seville* for English National Opera and *Don Giovanni* at the Verbier Festival. He has also sung Valens (Handel's *Theodora*) and Araspe (*Tolomeo*) at the Karlsruhe Handel Festival, Papageno (*The Magic Flute*) and Mozart's Figaro at the Baden State Theatre in Karlsruhe, Masetto (*Don Giovanni*) and Belcore (*L'elisir d'amore*) for New Zealand Opera, the title-role in *Billy Budd* at the Bolshoi Theatre, and Nero (Kaiser's *Octavia*) and Almiro (Pasquini's *L'Idalma*) at the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music.

Morgan Pearse performs on the Academy of Ancient Music's recordings of Dussek's *Messe solennelle* and Handel's *Brookes Passion* and on the world-premiere recording of Eleanor Alberga's *The Soul's Expression*. Most recently he has recorded the world premiere of Ethel Smyth's *Der Wald* with the BBC Singers and BBC Concert Orchestra under John Andrews, and a recording of music by Stanford is due out next month.

LAWRENCE POWER

VIOLA

Lawrence Power has advanced the cause of the viola through his performances in recitals, chamber music and concertos, and with the creation of the Viola Commissioning Circle, which has led to a substantial body of fresh repertoire for the instrument. He has premiered concertos by Sir James MacMillan, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Julian Anderson and Alexander Goehr, and has commissioned works from Anders Hillborg, Thomas Adès, Gerald Barry, Cassandra Miller and Magnus Lindberg. He has performed with orchestras around the world, working with conductors such as Nicholas Collon, Edward Gardner, Paavo Järvi, Vladimir Jurowski, Andrew Manze, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Lahav Shani, Osmo Vänskä and Ilan Volkov, and has made 12 appearances at the BBC Proms.

Highlights of the current season include the world premiere of Magnus Lindberg's Viola Concerto with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, concerts with the Hallé and the Frankfurt and Bavarian Radio Symphony orchestras and his debut with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra.

Lawrence Power is founder and Artistic Director of the West Wycombe Chamber Music Festival, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2021. He plays a viola made in Bologna in 1590 by Antonio Brenzi and a Brothers Amati viola from 1580 on loan from the Karolina Blaberg Foundation.

BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

For over 90 years the BBC Symphony Orchestra has been a driving force in the British musical landscape, championing contemporary music in its performances of newly commissioned works and giving voice to rarely performed and neglected composers. It plays a central role in the BBC Proms, performing regularly throughout each season, including the First and Last Nights. The BBC SO is Associate Orchestra at the Barbican, where it presents a distinctive annual season of concerts.

Chief Conductor Sakari Oramo opened this season, which features themes of voyaging and storytelling, including Stravinsky's *The Firebird* and Ravel's *Shéhérazade* and an evening of words and music with author Kate Atkinson. There are world and UK premieres from Detlev Glanert, Tebogo Monnakgotla, Outi Tarkiainen and Lotta Wennäkoski, and the BBC SO takes a deep dive into the musical worlds of American composer Missy Mazzoli, including a concert with Principal Guest Conductor Dalia Stasevska, and 'Italian Radicals' Luciano Berio, Luigi Dallapiccola, Bruno Maderna and Luigi Nono in two Total Immersion days. Performances with

the BBC Symphony Chorus include José Maurício Nunes Garcia's *Missa de Santa Cecilia* (1826).

In addition to its Barbican concerts, the BBC SO makes appearances across the UK and beyond and gives regular free concerts at its Maida Vale studios.

You can hear the vast majority of the BBC SO's performances on BBC Radio 3 and BBC Sounds, with all 2023 Proms currently available on BBC Sounds, and a number of Proms, including the First and Last Nights, available to watch on BBC iPlayer.

The BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus – alongside the BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Singers and BBC Proms – offer innovative education and community activities and take a lead role in the BBC Ten Pieces and BBC Young Composer programmes, including work with schools, young people and families in East London ahead of the BBC SO's move in 2025 to its new home at London's East Bank cultural quarter in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford.

Keep up to date with the BBC Symphony Orchestra

To find out more about upcoming events and broadcasts, and for the latest BBC SO news, visit bbc.co.uk/symphonyorchestra.

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Chief Conductor
Sakari Oramo

Principal Guest Conductor
Dalia Stasevska

Günter Wand Conducting Chair
Semyon Bychkov

Creative Artist in Association
Jules Buckley

First Violins
Igor Yuzefovich *Leader*
Cellerina Park
Philip Brett
Jeremy Martin
Jenny King
Celia Waterhouse
Colin Huber
Shirley Turner
Molly Cockburn
James Wicks
Stuart McDonald
Ruth Schulten
Sarah Thornett
Lulu Fuller
Charlotte Reid

Second Violins
Heather Hohmann
Rose Hinton
Iona McDonald
Patrick Wastnage
Danny Fajardo
Lucy Curnow
Tammy Se
Caroline Cooper
Victoria Hodgson
Nihat Agdach
Alice Hall
Non Peters
Dania Alzapiedi
Peter Graham

Violas
Fiona Bonds
Philip Hall
Nikos Zarb
Natalie Taylor
Michael Leaver
Carolyn Scott
Mary Whittle
Peter Mallinson
Alistair Scahill
Linda Kidwell
Claire Maynard
Raquel Bolivar

Cellos
Tim Hugh
Tamsy Kaner
Graham Bradshaw
Mark Sheridan
Clare Hinton
Michael Atkinson
Morwenna Del Mar
Jane Lindsay
Gilly McMullin
Sophie Gledhill

Double Basses
Nicholas Bayley
Gareth Sheppard
Richard Alsop
Anita Langridge
Josie Ellis
Beverley Jones
Elen Pan
Alice Kent

Flutes
Daniel Pailthorpe
Tomoka Mukai

Piccolos
Rebecca Larsen
Taylor MacLennan

Oboes
Tom Blomfield
Imogen Smith

Cor anglais
Will Oinn

Clarinets
Richard Hosford
Jonathan Parkin

E flat Clarinet
Harry Cameron-Penny

Bass Clarinet
Thomas Lessels

Bassoons
Julie Price
Graham Hobbs

Contrabassoon
Steven Magee

Horns
Martin Owen
Michael Murray
James Pillai
Nicholas Hougham
Mark Wood

Trumpets
Niall Keatley
Joseph Atkins
Martin Hurrell

Trombones
Byron Fulcher
Dan Jenkins

Bass Trombone
Robert O'Neill

Tuba
Sam Elliott

Timpani
Tom Edwards

Percussion
David Hockings
Alex Neal
Fiona Ritchie
Joe Cooper
Rachel Gledhill

Harps
Elizabeth Bass
Tamara Young

Piano
Elizabeth Burley

Celesta
Joanna Smith

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

Director
Bill Chandler

Head of Artistic Planning
Emma Gait

Orchestra Manager
Susanna Simmons

Orchestra Personnel Manager
Murray Richmond

Orchestras and Tours Assistant
Indira Sills-Toomey

Concerts Manager
Marelle McCallum

Tours Manager
Kathryn Aldersea

Music Libraries Manager
Mark Millidge

Orchestral Librarian
Julia Simpson

Planning Co-ordinator
Anna Schauder

Chorus Manager
Brodie Smith

Chief Producer
Ann McKay

Assistant Producer
Ben Warren

Senior Stage Manager
Rupert Casey

Stage Manager
Michael Officer

Commercial, Rights and Business Affairs Executive
Geraint Heap

Business Accountant
Nimisha Ladwa

BBC London Orchestras Marketing and Learning

Head of Marketing, Publications and Learning
Kate Finch

Communications Manager
Jo Hawkins

Publicist
Freya Edgeworth

Marketing Manager
Sarah Hirons

Marketing Executives
Jenny Barrett
Alice White

Senior Learning Project Managers (job share)
Lauren Creed
Ellara Wakely

Learning Project Managers
Melanie Fryer
Laura Mitchell
Chloe Shrimpton

Assistant Learning Project Managers
Sián Bateman
Deborah Fether

Learning Trainee
Dylan Barrett-Chambers

BBC SYMPHONY CHORUS

Founded in 1928, the BBC Symphony Chorus is one of the UK's leading choirs. It performs, records and broadcasts a distinctive range of large-scale choral music with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and internationally acclaimed conductors and soloists.

The chorus's early performances included Mahler's Symphony No. 8, Stravinsky's *Persephone* and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and, under Chorus Director Neil Ferris, this commitment to contemporary music remains at the heart of its performances today.

The BBC Symphony Chorus makes regular appearances at the BBC Proms, with performances last summer including the First and Last Nights plus *Belshazzar's Feast* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Klaus Mäkelä and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Ryan Wigglesworth. In addition to tonight's concert, highlights of the current BBC SO season at the Barbican have included Sir James MacMillan's *Fiat Lux*, conducted by the composer, and Brahms's *A German Requiem*. The chorus has also taken part

in a performance at Hackney Empire featuring the BBC Singers and community choirs from across East London.

Most of the chorus's performances are broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and, with Neil Ferris, it recently performed music by composers including Jonathan Dove and Reena Esmail in Maida Vale Studios. The chorus has also made a number of commercial recordings, including a Grammy-nominated release of Holst's *First Choral Symphony* and a *Gramophone* Award-winning disc of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* conducted by the late Sir Andrew Davis.

Recent releases include premiere recordings of Vaughan Williams's *The Future* and *The Steersman* conducted by Martin Yates and Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* conducted by Sir Andrew Davis.

Chorus Director

Neil Ferris

Chorus Manager

Brodie Smith

Accompanist

Michael Higgins

Vocal Coach

Katie Thomas

Sopranos

Katharine Allenby
Anna Bailey
Helena Ballard
Elizabeth Bird
Asia Bonuccelli
Kate Chudakova
Louise Clegg
Erin Cowburn
Tanya Cutts
Rebecca Daltry
Josceline Dunne
Rebecca Eckley
Christine Evans
Bev Howard
Karan Humphries
Jackie Hunt
Valerie Isitt
Helen Jeffries
Margaret Jones
Helen Jorgensen
Mackenzie Kavanagh
Rei Kozaki
Christine Leslie
Sarah Mainwaring
Louisa Martin
Katie Masters
Olivia Middleton
Francesca Mosely
Julia Neate
Claire Parry
Kaja Pecnik
Francesca Richards
Rebecca Rimmington
Madelon Shaw
Maxine Shearer
Roseanna Skikun
Elizabeth Ullstein
Rachel Wilson
Sheila Wood

Altos

Sarah Barr
Stella Baylis
Hannah Bishay
Sophie Bishton
Theresa Browne
Rachael Curtis
Sue Daniels
Danniella Downs
Jule Eckert
Alison Grant
Kate Hampshire
Jane Heath
Rosie Hopkins
Teresa Howard
Pat Howell
Helen Hughson
Matilda Jackson
Carolyn Nicholls
Melanie Sanders
Charlotte Senior
Hilary Sillis
Jayne Swindin
Helen Tierney
Deborah Tiffany
Charlotte Tomlinson

Tenors

Justin Althaus
Christopher Ashton
Mark Bonney
John Bowen
Jefferson Feerick
Jamie Foye
Stephen Horsman
Simon Lowe
Sam Lyons
James Murphy
Simon Naylor
Philip Rayner
Fionn Robertson
Richard Salmon
Greg Satchell
Tobias Schneider
Jonathan Williams

Basses

Mike Abrams
David Allenby
James Barker
Laurence Beard
Tim Bird
Paul Bodiam
Sam Brown
Tony de Rivaz
Tom Fullwood
Tim Gillott
Mark Graver
Richard Green
Alex Hardy
Michael Harman
Kevin Hollands
Alan Jones
Andrew Lay
Robert Little
Christopher MacKay
Michael Martin
Andrew Money
Nigel Montagu
Amos Paran
Andrew Parkin
Mark Parrett
Simon Pottter
Richard Steedman
Joshua Taylor
William Thompson-Hare
Robin Wicks

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St
Martin
in the
Fields

ACADEMY
of ST MARTIN
IN THE FIELDS

ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS



with **HÅKAN
HARDENBERGER**

24 MAY 2024, 7.30PM

Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London

Academy of St Martin in the Fields is joined by **Håkan Hardenberger** – “the best trumpet player in the galaxy” *The Times* – who will perform a programme celebrating his history with the orchestra, including **Haydn’s Trumpet Concerto** and a selection from his album *Both Sides Now*, both recorded with ASMF.

with **FEDERICO COLLI**

25 JULY 2024, 7.30PM

Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London

Programme to include **Mozart’s Piano Concerto No.21 in C Major**, filled with exuberant and joyous music alongside beautiful and poignant moments such as the nocturnal second movement. In the hands of Italian pianist and imaginative Mozart-interpreter **Federico Colli**, expect fireworks in the finale of this great concerto!



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