

## About The Orchestra

The Solihull Symphony Orchestra is a welcoming and friendly group that enjoys taking on the challenge of a varied repertoire. Formerly Knowle Sinfonia, our members span an age range from under 18 to over 90. We are always open to new members, especially string players – commitment and willingness to learn are more important to us than exam qualifications. We aim to perform in different venues throughout the Borough, and welcome invitations to play at special events.



Rehearsals are held every Tuesday evening from 19.30 until 21.45 during term time, with at least three concert performances each year. We are grateful to the Head and Governors of Solihull School for the use of the David Turnbull Music School as our regular rehearsal venue.



Join us on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter  
@solsymphony

## Our Next Concert

### Rising Stars 2012

A showcase for talented young musicians – Mozart, Beethoven and Weber and more on piano, clarinet and saxophone.

The concert will also include Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony* performed by the orchestra.



**Saturday 24  
March 2012, 18:00**

Shirley Methodist Church

## Supporting the Orchestra

If you enjoyed the concert, why not join our mailing list to receive advance notice of future events? You can also support us by buying season tickets which offer a 10% discount over normal ticket prices for a season.

[mailinglist@solihullsymphony.org.uk](mailto:mailinglist@solihullsymphony.org.uk)

If you would like to sponsor or help the orchestra in any way, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Business sponsors receive complimentary tickets to all events, and are mentioned prominently in programmes, on our website and in press releases.

[sponsors@solihullsymphony.org.uk](mailto:sponsors@solihullsymphony.org.uk)

# Solihull Symphony Orchestra



**Mahler** – Symphony No 1

**Rachmaninov** – Piano Concerto No 3

19:30, Saturday 12 November 2011,  
Bushell Hall, Solihull School

Programme £1

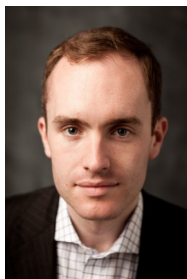
## Simon Callaghan

British pianist Simon Callaghan's intelligent and compelling performances both on the concert platform and in the recording studio are quickly earning him a reputation as an exciting and versatile artist of the new generation.

Performance highlights include Rachmaninov's Second Concerto at Birmingham's Symphony Hall, Liszt's First Concerto with the RLPO, a duo recital at Wigmore Hall, a chamber music tour of South Korea and a gala concert with ENO principals.

The 2011/12 season sees Simon give numerous solo and chamber music recitals throughout the UK and abroad, including three weeks at the Banff Centre in Canada and collaborations with the Barbirolli Quartet, Giovanni Guzzo and Samuel and Timothy West. A recording of Delius's orchestral works in arrangements for two pianos (with Hiro Takenouchi) will be released by SOMM in January 2012 to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth.

[www.simoncallaghan.com](http://www.simoncallaghan.com)



## Martin Leigh

Martin Leigh has conducted more than 50 symphonies, including major works by Mahler and Bruckner and Beethoven's ninth; major symphonic works by Bartok, Lutoslawski, Stravinsky, and Webern; and operas by Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Bizet, Handel, and Verdi.

He is music director of the Birmingham Chamber Orchestra, the Solihull Symphony Orchestra, and the Halesowen Orchestra. As a guest he has conducted the Shrewsbury Symphony Orchestra and the Oxford Sinfonia.

As assistant conductor to the late Sir Charles Mackerras, he participated in concerts in the Edinburgh International Festival, and recordings for Telarc, Erato, and EMI. He has received advice and tuition from Marin Alsop, Sir Roger Norrington, Neil Thomson, and Libor Pesek,

He studied at the Universities of Cambridge and Nottingham, and holds a doctorate in music.

[www.martin-leigh.com](http://www.martin-leigh.com)



## Solihull Symphony Orchestra

### First Violins

Sarah Sasse *leader*  
Andrew Birdsall  
Vivienne Brown  
Joanne Collingwood  
Helen Francis  
Emma Halldron  
Peter Halldron  
Charlotte McLuskie  
Trish Moore  
Louise Rhodes  
Graham Smye  
Bob Thomas  
Melanie Tubbs

### Second Violins

Ruth Jenkins  
Philip Clare  
Jessica Harris  
William Hawthorne  
Sarah Letters  
George Newns  
Heather Thompson  
Diana Turnbull  
Emma Tustin  
Elaine Woodward

### Violas

Kelvin Farge  
Helen Barrett  
Norman Cole  
Nathanael Farley  
Jessie Hitchcock  
Julia Lawley  
Jo Sands  
Alan Thompson

### Cellos

Miriam Taylor  
Russell Rhodes  
Helen Atherton  
Sheila Armstrong  
Aaron Billson  
Raye Garrett  
Sarah McCullogh  
Helen Thompson  
Claire Troth  
Nicola Walters

### Double Basses

David Evans  
Bill Gale  
Sue Hawthorne  
Jon Raphael

### Flutes

Anne Thompson  
Vyvyan Jones  
Mary Wright  
Alastair McCulloch

### Oboes

Sarah Vaughan  
Andrew Wilson  
Catherine Adams  
Julie Billingham

### Clarinets

Victoria Rex  
Jane Emms  
Ellie Ball  
Paul Knapman

### Bassoons

Matthew Morgan  
Simon Gates  
Jan Riley

### Trumpets

Ron Barnett  
Paul Barrett  
Lynne Hodgson  
Bill Sands

### Trombones

Richard Nield  
Tony Miller  
Jim Rothnie

### Tuba

Jason Cox

### Horns

Kendell Lee  
Stephen Mayes  
Tim Overton  
Matthew Franklin  
John Geddes  
Nigel Braithwaite  
Bob Thomas

### Timps/ Percussion

Brendan Gudgeon  
Alex Webb  
Huw Thomas  
Ed Beesley

### Harp

Rita Schindler



SUPPORTING &  
CHAMPIONING  
VOLUNTARY MUSIC

revealed he is totally fit to rule. Mahler fantasises that this is what he is becoming himself, what his range of experiences is making him, as the symphony gathers up the reminiscences of the previous movements, until the superhuman final chorale where the horns express the total domination of the finished superman. Well, he can dream.

© Bob Thomas, 2011

# Programme

*Sergei Rachmaninov*

Piano Concerto No 3

Interval

Complimentary drinks will be served

*Gustav Mahler*

Symphony No 1

Conductor      Martin Leigh

Piano            Simon Callaghan



Please make sure that all mobile telephones, watch alarms and other electronic devices are switched off before the performance.

# Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninov (1873 – 1943)

## Piano Concerto No.3 in

### D Minor, Op.30

- I Allegro ma non tanto**
- II Intermezzo: Adagio**
- III Finale: Alla Breve**



In 1909 Rachmaninov, one the greatest pianists in history, made his first concert tour of America. At his family estate in Russia he wrote this new concerto to play there, completing it on 29<sup>th</sup> September (modern calendar). The work is famous as the most technically demanding concerto in the standard classical repertoire. He did not have time to practise playing it before he sailed for the United States, so he took a silent keyboard on the ship with him, and learnt it during the crossing.

He gave the first performance on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 1909 with Walter Damrosch conducting the now defunct New York Symphony Society Orchestra at the New Theater in New York. The splendid theatre had opened less than three weeks earlier, but sadly proved to have dire acoustics, and it was soon closed down.

In the same city on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December 1909, Mahler gave the (unsuccessful) American première of his own First Symphony with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra – the last time he conducted the work himself. And on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 1910 Rachmaninov gave the second performance of this concerto at the Carnegie Hall, just 800 yards from the New Theater in New York, with Mahler conducting the NYPO – a performance which Rachmaninov later recalled with affection.

The music of the concerto is instantly attractive and accessible, but with the good taste and gravity that has ensured its continuing popularity. Rachmaninov's favourite of his own concertos, its brilliant and virile pianism is set against his very individual style of expressive melody that blends the long-drawn melisma of orthodox chant with restless, pungent harmonic deviations, the whole punctuated with sharp rhythmic figures. Many concertos resort at some point to empty virtuoso display, but not this one. From start to finish it always has something to say.

here for, closing the real-world part one, except to give the symphony a scherzo movement, which in view of all the rest would be a bit of a lame reason.

### III Funeral March

Even without being told “A la pompes funèbres”, this movement, built around a heavy-treading minor key rendition of Bruder Martin (*Frère Jacques*) is obviously a funeral march of some sort, but what sort? Who has died? Why the miserable monks?

Its 1893 title was “Stranded! Funeral March after the manner of Callot” while a note explained that Callot drew a well-known childrens’ caricature in which cartoon animals form a Bohemian band and the cortège of an old hunter. “At that point the piece in some ways expresses an ironic, humorous mood and in other ways expresses an eerie, brooding mood.” That will do for the little marching band which rudely cuts across the main procession, but what is the rest about?

This movement starts part two, the metaphysical interpretation. We have left real-world biography on another plane. Johanna Richter didn’t die when Mahler left Kassel, (she was probably relieved,) but in *Titan* the pious Liane does die, which for Jean Paul is symptomatic of the death of traditional religion in his age, and Albano moves on from his obsessive, pure passion and takes an interest in other women. Does “stranded!” refer to Mahler’s being cast up in Leipzig, with no way back to the world where he puppy-loved Johanna, and where he started an affair with a friend’s wife? Innocence was dead.

At the heart of this movement, accompanied by the harp, comes the quote from the fourth *Gesellen* song, where the words are “on the road stood a linden tree, and there I first rested and slept, beneath the tree, whose blossoms fell on me like snow.” The linden, as in Schubert’s *Winterreise*, means oblivion in death.

### IV Finale

With no break, a huge orchestral scream announces “Dall’inferno al Paradiso, as the sudden outburst of a deeply wounded heart”. There can be no doubt from that title there is a confessional purpose in this symphony. With gigantic steps the hero thrusts into the tempest. But there are more sides to this romantic heaven-stormer. Successive episodes show him as the sensitive thinker, the enquiring mind, in fact the all-round great man. In *Titan* this is what Albano becomes. By taking on aspects of the many strong characters he is in contact with, by the time his princely status is finally

tradition. His childhood was punctuated by the sounds of bugle calls and impromptu bands, and all his life the thread of thought in his music is frequently interrupted by “noise music”. These invasive vulgarisms, which may be entirely extraneous to the ‘meaning’, seem to be just a feature of Mahler.

After the slow introduction, the movement proper gets under way with a jaunty tune announced by the cellos, which is a straight quote from the second *Gesellen* song, “This morning I went out over the meadow, dew was on the grass, the finch said to me Hey you! Good morning!”. Not that anybody could have picked up the reference in the early years before the songs were published. But it continues the idea of innocence in nature.

#### [- Andante: Blumine

Even though we are not playing this discarded movement tonight, it is still important. It was the original building block of the symphony, and the rest was built around it. Every other movement makes musical references to it. To Mahler it was the icon of innocent first love, an idealised image of Johanna sublimated into woodland flora. In terms of Jean Paul’s *Titan*, she is the pure and pious Liane whom the hero Albano (secretly a prince) spends two thirds of the book courting, but who will not yield to him because of misinformation and her affliction of night-blindness – which, given Mahler’s sublime egotism, would explain why Johanna did not want his ardent affection. Even though Blumine is structurally integral, and the puppy love phase is a key chapter in the *Bildungsroman* of his own emotional development, which the symphony is, it had to go in the end. Its subject is naivety, but the music itself is naïve. Its salon-sized musical thoughts are out of place among the symphony-sized gestures he was writing by now. So, like a bouquet garni, having flavoured the stock it had to be discarded before serving.]

#### II Scherzo and Trio

This movement has the least interpretive information. Its discarded title was “Under full sail”. Admittedly it works quite well to hear the Scherzo as a sea voyage, with the cries of the sailors and a great ship breasting the crashing waves. In that case the oily, haunted waltz which is the Trio becomes the eerie destination of the voyage, but where would that be? There was nothing in Mahler’s life so far, nor in *Titan*, corresponding to such a scene. Perhaps it stands more generally for an heroic, adventurous spirit, and discovering the exotic. Perhaps Mahler saw himself developing as a heroic character and a savant of the dark side in his peregrinations following the Johanna experience. Otherwise it is not at all clear what this movement is

## Gustav Mahler (1860 – 1911)

### Symphony no. 1 in D Major

(formerly entitled “Titan”, “Symphonic Poem in Two Parts” and “Tone Poem in Symphonic Form”)

- I **Langsam, Schleppend** (*Slow, dragging*) - **Immer sehr gemächlich** (*always very leisurely*)  
[In the earliest versions an additional Andante movement known as Blumine (*Flora*) came here. It was dropped after the third performance.]
- II **[Scherzo] Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell** (*Strong motion, but not too fast*) **[and Trio] Recht gemächlich** (*rather leisurely*)  
[In the earliest versions the piece was presented in two parts, divided here.]
- III **Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen** (*Solemn and measured, without dragging*)  
[leading straight into...]
- IV **Stürmisch bewegt – Energisch** (*Stormy motion – Energetic*)



The complicated story of this symphony probably begins with Mahler’s appointment in August 1883 as assistant conductor at the Royal Theatre in Kassel at the age of 23. (For most of his life he was primarily a conductor, mainly of opera, and a composer only in his spare time.) He was not very popular, and was continually put down by his boss, the Kapellmeister, but three relevant things happened during his two years there.

i. He wrote some incidental music for a production in June 1884 of a play *Der Trompeter von Säckingen*. That music is lost, except that the symphony's discarded Blumine movement is now widely thought to be, or be derived from, the *Werner's Trumpet Serenade* scene.

ii. He developed an immature infatuation for a blonde soprano in the company by the name of Johanna Richter. She was older than him, and there is nothing to suggest she welcomed his attentions. Though unrelated, her name is similar to that of the early Romantic author Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, known as Jean Paul, several of whose works, particularly his *magnum opus* the sprawling anti-novel *Titan* of 1803, are alluded to in the descriptive titles which the symphony carried in its early years.

iii. Swept up in this emotion Mahler wrote first the poems then the music of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. The songs were completed in draft before he left Kassel, but were not prepared for performance and publication until 11 years later. Two of them are directly quoted in the symphony.

After resigning from Kassel, and then a temporary post in Prague, in April 1886 he started work at the Neues Stadttheater in Leipzig as junior colleague of the great Arthur Nikisch. It was there that he composed the symphony, which seems to have been more or less completed before he took his next post in October 1888 at the Royal Hungarian Opera in Budapest.

Hence it was in Budapest that the symphony, under the name "Symphonic Poem in two parts", received its first performance on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 1889, with Mahler conducting the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra.

Subsequently he made many minor alterations, mostly adjustments and corrections to the orchestration, but apart from the subsequent omission of the Blumine movement, the music remained essentially unchanged. Nevertheless he re-invented the meaning of the work several times, sometimes contradicting his earlier statements, and leaving behind a whole lot of confusion as to what, if anything, the symphony is all about.

In the programme for that première concert, which included the Blumine, the work was split after the Scherzo, and there were no descriptive titles except that what is now the third movement was called "A la pompes funèbres" (*funeral solemnities*). It was described not as an abstract Symphony but as a Symphonic Poem, yet with no hint of the programmatic content that it was supposed to represent, so naturally the audience and critics invented their own, and very off-the-wall some of them were.

So for the second performance four years later in Hamburg he provided more pointers. The work was now called *Titan*. We will consider why later. Part one (i.e. Movement I, Blumine and the Scherzo) was called *From the days of youth, Flower-, Fruit- and Thorn-pieces*, which is also a direct allusion to a Jean Paul title. The only significance of this name is to refer to a time of innocent life among nature: the music does not reflect the plot of the book. Part two (the Funeral March and Finale) is called *Commedia humana*. This division hints at the kind of structure found in some of his later symphonies, where the early movements represent a real-world context and the last is a metaphysical metamorphosis of the issues.

In addition each movement has a descriptive title. And there are also the quotations from the *Gesellen* songs as well as many internal cross-references. The whole apparatus of programmatic music is there, and so anyone would expect that the symphony could be read like a book. But it doesn't work. Mahler has not played the game with us. Many have tried, but the allusions refuse to join up into any coherent story by which to interpret the music.

What seems to be going on is that Mahler was not yet confident enough handling structures totally in the abstract. A succession of extra-musical ideas served as props and prompts to give him the material he worked with; but he did not follow those ideas through, only the musical materials they had suggested. The clues he feeds us are ideas which were ingredients in the recipe, but they are not a description of the dish itself.

He later withdrew all the descriptive titles on the grounds that they were proving misleading as much as helpful because they were not comprehensive. And he also started calling the work a symphony, not a tone poem, because the paper trail of hints about clever inner significance which he had scattered was proving an embarrassment. But pretending it was just an abstract symphony all along is a cop-out. So, allowing for the inherent limitations of the pointers to the thoughts behind the music, let us take a closer look at this piece we are listening to.

## I Langsam, Schleppend - Immer sehr gemächlich

"Spring and no end" was the discarded title, and a note in the score says "like the sound of nature". The still, primordial calm of the introduction is interrupted by the cheeky call of the cuckoo, but also by distant fanfares which do not have any evident connection with the scene.

Mahler grew up in Jihlava (then called Iglau) on the Bohemian/Moravian border, a town where four regiments were garrisoned and where every sort of folk music, often on homemade instruments, was a strong