



Solihull Symphony Orchestra



Programme £1

New Year Concert
15:30, Saturday 29 January 2022

Jon Malaxetxebarria



Born in Gernika in the Basque Country of Spain, Jon Malaxetxebarria conducts regularly in both Spain and the United Kingdom. In Spain he has conducted many ensembles such as the Orquesta Radio Televisión Española, the Basque Country Symphony Orchestra, Bilbao Symphony Orchestra, Navarra Symphony Orchestra, Oviedo Filarmonía, Orquesta Sinfónica de Extremadura, the Orfeón Pamplonés and the Malaga Philharmonic. Recently, Jon has been the assistant conductor of the two main opera houses in Spain: Teatro Real (Madrid) and Liceu (Barcelona). He has been Music Director of the Basque Youth Orchestra since 2016.

In the UK he has conducted Manchester Camerata, Hallam Sinfonia, Liverpool Mozart

Orchestra, Crosby Symphony Orchestra, Sheffield Philharmonic Orchestra, North Staffordshire Symphony Orchestra and the Derbyshire City and County Youth Orchestra amongst others. He has been Music Director of Solihull Symphony Orchestra since 2013.

Cristinel Bacanu

Originally from Bucharest, Romania, Cristi trained in the USA in Ohio and Arizona before moving to Birmingham where he is developing a portfolio career as a freelance violinist, violist, conductor and music educator. He is much in demand as a wedding performer and has led and performed concertos with many orchestras in the Midlands.



Cover: Gabrielle Ray as Frou Frou at the supper party, Talbot Hughes, 1905

Page 8: Pierre Loti by Henri Rousseau, 1891

Programme notes - Vivienne Brown and David Evans

Programme

Coates – *The Merrymakers*, 8’

Borodin – *Polovtsian Dances*, 15’

Puccini – *Quando mèn vo: La Boheme*, 4’

Strauss – *Mein Herr Marquis: Die Fledermaus*, 4’

INTERVAL

Coates – *Footlights Waltz*, 6’

Pierné – *Ramuntcho Overture and Suite No. 2*, 12’

Mozart – *Deh vieni non tardar: Marriage of Figaro* 5’

Lehar – *The Merry Widow Overture*, 9’

Lehar - *Meine lippen, sie küssen so heiß: Giuditta*, 6’

Conductor

Jon Malaxetxebarria

Leader

Cristinel Bacanu



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Eric Coates (1886-1957)

The Merrymakers

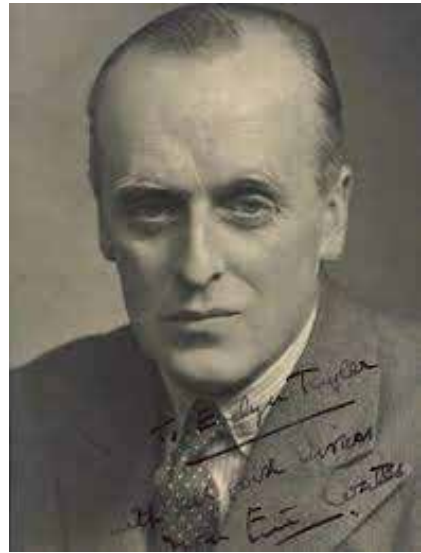
Footlights Waltz

Born in Nottinghamshire, Eric Coates was initially a viola player who worked with Henry Wood, Edward Elgar and Richard Strauss before turning to composition after developing neuritis in his left hand. He was one of the first European composers to take jazz seriously and integrate syncopation into his polished melodic light music. Nowadays, although his name may not be well known, many of his tunes are - in particular, the theme for Desert Island Discs (*By the Sleepy Lagoon*), and the *Dambusters March*. In real life, he was apparently a very formal and tidy man, a dapper dresser who couldn't settle down to write music until he was properly dressed in the morning complete with tie and a Harris Tweed coat smoking a Turkish cigarette.

The Merrymakers, initially called A New Year's Overture was written in 1922 while Coates was living in a flat on top of his wife's parents' house, which 'looked down on to a wide road with its abundance of trees where the birds sang all day' The feeling of well-being that this delightful environment engendered

pervades the music. It also owes much to the early 20th century revival of traditional English music - however, Coates was more influenced by the faux *Merrie England* of Edward German than the folk tunes on which Holst and Vaughan-Williams based many of their compositions.

Footlights Waltz was composed in the early part of 1939 although the original title of the piece was apparently Behind the Footlights. It



was also a time when the composer 'took up his journalistic pen' and wrote a letter to the Evening News decrying the prejudice against so-called light music. This piece was possibly a wistful reflection on Coates' time working in theatre pit orchestras as a viola player.

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)

Polovtsian Dances No 17

Born in St Petersburg, Alexander Borodin was one of those composers for whom writing music was essentially a hobby - he called himself a 'Sunday composer.' His day job was professor of chemistry at the Medico-Surgical Academy in St. Petersburg where among other things, he played a prominent role in establishing medical training for women. However, he was also an accomplished musician, and played the flute, cello and piano. Together with Balakirev, Cui, Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin was one of the 'mighty handful' of composers trying to establish a uniquely Russian romantic musical style free from French influences. Unlike Tchaikovsky, who mixed in elite courtly circles, the handful came from more humble origins and saw themselves as closer to the Russian soil. In particular, they were fascinated by the indigenous music of Polovtsia or the Cumans, a vast area of the Southern Russian steppes north of the Caspian Sea. The dance comes from the second act of the opera, *Prince Igor*. Although composed entirely by Borodin, the orchestration had to be completed at the last minute with help from Rimsky-Korsakov

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and Lyadov. The Prince, having been captured by a Mongolian chief is entertained by his musicians in a series of brilliant and exciting dances.

Dance No. 17 starts with a plaintive melody for clarinet and oboe, accompanied by pizzicato strings and percussion. This is followed by the tune better known nowadays as *Stranger in Paradise* from the 1953 musical, *Kismet*, played on the oboe and cor anglais. The speed increases in the third dance, a kind of manic waltz. However, like Pierne's *Ramuntcho*, the whole work is essentially an orientalist fantasy. Recent research has revealed that native Polovtsian warriors would have done relatively little formal waltzing - Borodin had simply found some French influences



Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

Quando m'en vo

Also known as Musetta's Waltz, *Quando m'en vo* is a soprano aria from Act 2 of Puccini's 1896 opera *La Bohème*. It is sung by Musetta, in the presence of her bohemian friends, hoping to reclaim the attention of Marcello. The scene takes place in a café shortly after the group have taken seats for a drink. Musetta, who is Marcello's former girlfriend, arrives with her current sugar-daddy, Alcindoro and initiates her move on Marcello. The aria is directed at the people in the café as much as at the audience in the theatre.

Johann Strauss II (1825-1899)

Mein Herr Marquis

Often called Adele's Laughing Song this comes from the operetta *Die Fledermaus*. Adele, a chambermaid has borrowed one of her mistress's gowns and gone to a party without permission. While there, she is approached by her mistress's husband, Eisenstein. He recognizes her, but she denies her identity while reminding him that he too is at the party under an alias. She attempts to convince him that he is wrong by laughing at the idea that a glamorous woman like herself could possibly be a lowly chambermaid.

Jane Burnell

Jane Burnell is currently studying for an MMus at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) with Paul Nilon, and was named Coro Nuovo Sussex Young Musician of the Year 2021. She has a 1st Class BA(Hons) from Leeds Conservatoire under the tutelage of Adriana Festeu, where she also received The Leeds Rotary Club Music Prize and The Peter Roberts CBE Memorial Prize.

Jane has participated in master classes with Lisette Oropesa, Michael Chance, Richard Wiegold, Roderick Williams, Martin Pickard and Matteo Dalle Fratte.

In 2019, Jane was the recipient of the Badoer Dalla Rizza Bursary for the Veneto Opera Summer School (Melofonetica), with whom she performed Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), in Asolo, Italy. Other roles include: Pamina *The Magic Flute* (Leeds Youth Opera), La Novizia *Suor Angelica* (Random Opera Company), Adele *Die Fledermaus* (LCSU Opera Society), Belinda/Second Woman *Dido and Aeneas* (LUUMS Opera Society) and Mabel (cover) *Pirates of Penzance* (Rocket Opera). Recently she performed the title role of Pauline in *The Language of Flowers*, a contemporary feminist opera, at Thought Bubble Festival (Harrogate).

Jane is a regular concert soloist, performing with choirs and orchestras all across the UK. Her performed repertoire includes: Mozart *Exsultate Jubilate* (Suffolk Philharmonic Orchestra), Handel *Messiah* (Skipton Camerata), Bach *B Minor Mass* (National Festival Orchestra), Dvorak *Stabat Mater*, Mozart *Requiem*, Brahms *Requiem*. In 2021 Jane performed for The Great Yorkshire Proms at Harewood House with the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra alongside Sir Willard White and Aled Jones MBE.



Gabriel Pierné (1863-1937)

Ramuntcho Overture and Suite

In 1908, the French composer Gabriel Pierné was asked to write incidental music for the stage adaptation of a novel, *Ramuntcho*, by Pierre Loti, a retired diplomat, and oriental fetishist set in the Basque region of South West France.



Ramuntcho returns to his village after serving in the Napoleonic wars to find that his sweetheart Gracieuse has been enrolled into a convent. Challenged by the Mother Superior to choose between him and God, she balks at choice and drops dead instead. Pierné manages to incorporate all these elements in a medley of songs and dances, the elements of which are contained in these extracts. Much of the first part of the piece

is based on the *zortziko*, an unusual 5/8 Basque dance rhythm with one short beat and two longer ones. This is interspersed with the *arresku*, another dance, traditionally heard on the *txistu*, a three holed flute that can be played with one hand, leaving the other hand free to play a tambourine. Pierné uses flutes, piccolos and drums to depict the village dances at which the young lovers meet.

During the first performance of the play in Paris, police invaded the theatre intent on arresting one of the actors. Worried about disrupting the performance, the director insisted that they could only do so if they wore traditional Basque costumes and made it appear part of the plot. This was all accomplished without the audience being aware that anything was amiss.

Wolfgang Mozart (1756-91)

Deh vieni non tardar

Premiered in Vienna in 1786, *The Marriage of Figaro* was the first of three operatic collaborations between Mozart and the librettist Da Ponte. Figaro, his bride-to-be Susanna, and the Countess plot between them to outwit the Count who is pursuing Susanna on her wedding night. The aria is sung by Susanna, in disguise as the Countess, in the hearing of Figaro,

who jealously thinks Susanna is now in love with the Count. It has been described as ‘a rich woman’s aria in a poor woman’s key’ and contains multiple layers of deception and seduction.

Franz Lehar (1870-1948)

The Merry Widow Overture

Meine Lippen, sie küssen so heiß

In 1905 Vienna, writers Leo Stein and Viktor Leon found themselves with a problem. They had adapted a 40-year old comic play into a sparkling libretto, hoping to revive the success of the golden years of Viennese operetta founded on the works of Strauss and von Suppe. However the music offered by Richard Heuberger, their chosen composer, wasn’t working, and they were anxious to find a replacement. Staff at the Theater an der Wien suggested they ask the young violinist turned composer Franz Lehar who also worked at the theatre. Although Stein and Leon feared his background in Austro-Hungarian band music might prevent him creating the Parisian atmosphere they wanted, Lehar rose magnificently to the challenge, and *Die Lustige Witwe*, with its balls, waltzing, can-can dancing, high finance, Balkan intrigue and the

triumph of true love over pride, became internationally popular. Initially there was no separate overture, with the curtain rising almost immediately onto the first scene, but Lehar later composed this lively concert overture for his own 70th birthday celebration concert, skilfully weaving together favourite melodies from the operetta. Several other successful operettas followed, but his final 1934 grand opera *Giuditta* is now perhaps best well known for the aria *Meine Lippen* we are to hear today. In a plot reminiscent of Bizet’s *Carmen*, the fiery young wife Giuditta runs away with an army officer, but he eventually leaves her to return to his regiment. Scraping a living as a night club singer in a North African city she sings this aria to a wealthy English Lord, the flirtatious lyrics explaining how all men find her irresistible. She succeeds in winning his devotion and support, and when her former lover returns it is too late – sadly there is no happy ending. *Giuditta* proved to be Lehar’s last major composition: he stayed in Austria throughout the Second World War, keeping a low profile. However Hitler was a huge fan of *The Merry Widow*, and this uncomfortable patronage enabled Lehar to protect his Jewish-born wife from deportation.

Birmingham Philharmonic

Sunday 20 February, 15:00

The Bramall, University of Birmingham



Humperdinck - Hansel und Gretel Overture and Excerpts

Wagner - Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral, Lohengrin

Sibelius - Symphony No 1

Conductor *Richard Laing*

£16.00 (adults), £14.00 (concessions), £6 (students)

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Music at St Alphege Church

Wednesday Lunchtimes, 13:10 - 14:00

2nd February – Peter Irving, organ

9th February – *performer to be confirmed*

16th February – Shi Chin, violin

23rd February – Davina Brownrigg, mezzo-soprano

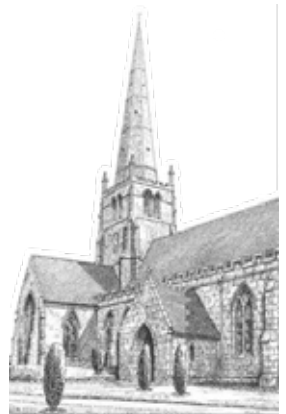
2nd March – Rita Schindler, harp

9th March – Ewan Murray, organ

16th March – Benjamin Carnell, cello

23rd March – Christopher Martin Thomas, organ

Admission free, with a retiring collection. Home made sandwiches and cakes available from 12:30.



Sunday 30 January, 17:00, Epiphanytide Vespers

Admission free, with a retiring collection. Cheese and wine reception

Solihull Symphony Orchestra

Patron: The Mayor of Solihull



First Violins

Cristinel Bacanu *leader*
Marina Battey
Becky Beadsworth
Emilio Blasich-Gagg
Liz Branson
Vivienne Brown
Manisha Chauhan
Peter Halldron
Hannah Massey
Lara Nevitt
David Roper
Sarah Sasse

Second Violins

Emma Brereton
Jessica Harris
Rachael Johnson
Sarah Letters
Charlotte McLuskie
Dawn Watson

Violas

Kelvin Farge
Maya Adelt
Mark Emms
Julia Lawley



Cellos

Helen Atherton
Sheila Armstrong
Jeremy Dale
Alison Hart
Anne Kemp
Louise Robertson
Michelle Sanders
Sarah Smith
Nicola Walters

Double Basses

David Evans
Kerry Beaumont
George Roberts

Flutes

Su Newton-Ede
Mary Wright
Chris Kelland

Oboes

Sarah Vaughan
Fiona Speak
Paul Raybould
Cor Anglais

Clarinets

Victoria Rex
Jane Emms
Alison Kennedy

Bassoons

Harry Jones
Simon Gates

Trumpets

Lynne Hodgson
Laurie Edwards

Horns

Emma Marzetti-
Godman
Stephen Mayes
Paul Marzetti-
Godman
Sarah Gee

Trombones

John Whittall
Tony Miller
Bernard Moses

Timpani

Helga Perry

Percussion

Evie Elliott
Jason George

Celeste

Judith Fisher

Harp

Freya Brylka-Mee



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About The Orchestra

The Solihull Symphony Orchestra is a welcoming and friendly group that enjoys taking on the challenge of a varied repertoire.

We are always open to new members, especially violin and viola players. Commitment to attend rehearsals regularly, and a willingness to learn are more important to us than exam qualifications. We aim to perform in different venues throughout the Borough, and will always consider 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 Shirley Methodist Church for the use of their premises as our regular rehearsal venue.



Our Next Concert

Saturday 9 April 2022, 19:30

The Core Theatre, Touchwood, Solihull

Strauss J II – Roses from the South

Vaughan Williams – The Lark
Ascending

Monti – Czardas

Sarasate – Zigeunerweisen

Vaughan Williams – The Wasps Suite

Warlock – Capriol Suite

Conductor - *Jon Malaxetxebarria*

Violin - *Cristinel Bacanu*



Group Bookings

For groups of ten or more people, booked and paid for in advance we can offer reductions of up to 20% on normal ticket prices - for further details, contact concerts@solihullsymphony.org.uk