



Solihull Symphony Orchestra



Summer Concert
Shirley Methodist Church
19:30, Saturday 2 July 2022

Programme £1

Richard Jenkinson



Richard Jenkinson is Music Director of the British Police Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of St John, Bromsgrove. In 2019 he conducted the BPSO at the Royal Albert Hall in a Gala Concert celebrating the orchestra's 30th anniversary.

In 1990 he won a scholarship to the Guildhall School, studying with Raphael Wallfisch, William Pleeth and conducting with Alan Hazeldine, graduating with Distinction in 1994. He also won the Guildhall's Gold Medal and top prize at the Vittorio Gui Competition. He has given concerts at Wigmore Hall and South Bank Centre and made several recordings. In 1995 Richard became principal cello with the Irish Chamber Orchestra and for 18 years was principal with the CBSO. Since 2012 he has been the cellist of the Dante Quartet with whom he has toured

internationally and made several recordings.

Richard has a PhD in Music from the University of Birmingham and was awarded an ARSM diploma in Singing with Distinction in 2021. He will be conducting performances of Lehar's *The Merry Widow* with Opera Worcester in July.

Charlotte Berresford



Charlotte studied violin at Birmingham Conservatoire and has worked with orchestras such as the BBC Philharmonic, Northern Ballet and the English Symphony Orchestra. She has played in West End shows such as *Les Miserables* and *Miss Saigon*, for artists such as Michael Ball, Gloria Estefan and Barry Manilow and in ITV's recent Concert for Ukraine. She is a member of the Enigma Quartet, and teaches violin privately and in schools.

Programme notes - Vivienne Brown and David Evans
Cover - *Dressing for the Carnival*, 1877, Winslow Homer, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Programme

Delibes - Prelude et Les Chasseresses from *Sylvia* 5'

Delius - La Calinda from *Koanga* 4'

Delius - Summer Night on the River 7'

Elgar - Cockaigne Overture (In London Town) 16'

INTERVAL

Ungar - Ashokan Farewell 5'

Dawson - An African-American Symphony 35'

Elgar - Pomp and Circumstance March No. 4 5'

Conductor

Richard Jenkinson

Leader and Solo Violin

Charlotte Berresford



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Leo Delibes (1836-1891)

Prelude et les Chasseresses

Delibes's career coincided with the peak of popularity of classical ballet in France. *Coppélia* (1870) remains very popular but *Sylvia* (1876) is less well known, except through an orchestral suite from which this introduction is taken. The plot of the ballet is classical and complicated - the shepherd Aminta and the god Orion are infatuated with one of the huntress Diana's chaste nymphs, Sylvia, who accidentally kills Aminta when he tries to stop her loosing an arrow at Eros's statue. It was royal opposition to his production of this ballet in St Petersburg in 1901 that prompted Sergei Diaghilev to leave Russia and to found the Ballets Russes, leading to his collaboration with Stravinsky



on *The Rite of Spring*.

The opening bars of the Prelude, a majestic march, subside into horn calls and pastoral stirrings, blending seamlessly into the ballet's third number, *Les Chasseresses*, the volatile and vigorous first entry of Sylvia and her cohorts. The music was used in a film accompanying the 1994 Winter Olympics and it is perhaps fitting to welcome the Commonwealth Games to Birmingham.

Frederic Delius (1862-1934)

La Calinda

Summer Night on the River

Born in Bradford to German parents, Delius spent time in Florida in the mid 1880s, working in an orange grove being more appealing than his family's wool business. There he was influenced by African-American spirituals and determined to follow a musical career himself, returning to Europe to study music formally in Leipzig and Paris with his father's blessing. The 1897 opera *Koanga*, from which *La Calinda* is taken, reflects his American experiences, as it is based on a tale of Creole slaves in the Mississippi plantations, and makes extensive and, for the time, unusual use of African-American melodies. The short orchestral



idyll *Summer Night on the River* is more European in style, and was published in 1911 as a companion piece to the better-known *On hearing the first Cuckoo in Spring*

Edward Elgar (1857-1934) **Cockaigne (Op 40)**

Despite the international fame that followed Elgar's *Enigma Variations* in 1899, leading to more commissions, Elgar was still struggling financially and became dispirited after the initial performance of *Dream of Gerontius* in 1900 was less than successful. None of this gloom is at first evident in *Cockaigne*, a commission from the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra which he described in letters to friends as 'stout and steaky' and 'humorous and strong, but not vulgar'. His score, however, bears a

handwritten note describing himself as 'meatless and moneyless on Malvern Hills' – a quotation from the Middle English poem *Piers Plowman* in which the eponymous hero dreams of London full of vice and awakes depressed on the hills where Elgar himself lived.

Indeed the name 'Cockaigne' itself originally denoted a land of luxury and debauchery, but had been used of London since the 1820s in a humorous reference to the land of Cockneys. Elgar dedicated the overture, first performed in June 1901, to his 'many friends, the members of British orchestras' and it was an immediate success, perhaps reflecting the optimism of the new Edwardian age and the prospect of an end to the Boer War.

There are five main themes, commonly identified as 'the city itself' (bustling and busy), the 'citizen' (a noble theme which came to Elgar while looking at memorials in the Guildhall), the romantic 'lovers in a park', the 'cheeky Cockney' (a speeded-up 'version of the citizen theme) and finally a 'military march' theme. Elgar alternates these episodes in a loose sonata form, ending with a coda in which contrasting themes are expertly woven together simultaneously in much the same way as Wagner's overture to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

Jay Ungar (1946-) **Ashokan Farewell**



After one hundred and fifty years, the legacy of the American Civil War remains unfinished business. Lincoln's emancipation proclamation of 1863, and three amendments to the constitution in the late 1860s after his assassination were supposed to have resolved racial strife, but it was not that simple. Winslow Homer's cover painting captures this era - Jonkonnu, from an African festival celebrated by enslaved people in Carolina and Virginia is watched by his son carrying the stars and stripes. Newly emancipated Black Americans in the South saw an end to their brief experience of civil rights with the final withdrawal of federal troops from the south in 1876. The 'Jim Crow' era and the 'Black Codes' which followed

allowed segregation and racism to continue unabated in the former Confederacy, with the Ku Klux Klan and lynching to ensure that black citizens were kept in their place. Not until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and reforms instigated by Lyndon B Johnson did things slowly begin to change.

The PSS television series, *The American Civil War* in the 1990s was a long overdue, although flawed attempt to tell the story to a new audience. The series is probably best remembered for two things - Ken Burns' use of a rostrum camera to bring old photos dramatically to life, and Jay Ungar's hauntingly beautiful theme tune, *The Ashokan Farewell*. Many assume that the melody dates back to the 1860s or has some connection with the South, but it was actually written in 1982 after a summer music and dance camp in the Catskill Mountains in New York State at the Ashokan Center, dedicated to traditional music, environmental education, and local arts and crafts. It was created in the style of a Scottish lament and released on a CD in 1983 at the time when Ken Burns was researching the series. On hearing it, Burns immediately asked Ungar for permission to use it as the theme tune. All the other music on the lush soundtrack to the series was from the mid-19th century.

William L Dawson (1899-1990)

An African-American Folk Symphony

In the first half of the 20th Century, African-Americans did not write much concert music, play in orchestras or conduct them. The only three notable interwar black composers were William Grant Still, Florence Price and William Levi Dawson. Over the past few years, works by both Still and Price have been played occasionally, but the forgotten masterpiece is Dawson's symphony, written in the same year (1934) as both Elgar and Delius died. The three movements quote extracts from spirituals such as *O Lemme Shine* and a horn call, symbolically linking Africa and America, binds the symphony together.



The central slow movement, *Hope in the Night* begins with a wistful tune on the cor anglais tune against a pizzicato accompaniment - 'a melody,' Dawson wrote in the original program notes, 'that describes the characteristics, hopes, and longings of a folk held in darkness.' A long journey into the light follows, its eventual climax being punctuated by a clamor of chimes, the chains of servitude. Finally, three gong strokes that began the movement - 'the Trinity,' says Dawson, 'which guides forever the destiny of man' - are amplified by an underlying throb of chimes, timpani and strings.

The symphony's basic structure is European and restrained, but its energies are more primal and uninhibited. There are several sudden rhythmic gestures implying spontaneity and improvisation. At one point, the music is intended to suggest 'rhythmic clapping of hands and patting of feet'. Dawson use both the humour and the tragedy of the sorrowful songs of the cottonfield with an oracular vehemence.

Between the two world wars, a bias seemed to develop in classical music against the familiar and the vernacular. These were the very sources that Antonin Dvořák, the first European to take American

music seriously held dear. In an 1895 article for Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Dvořák had said that a composer 'must prick his ear for music,' making sure to listen closely 'to every whistling boy, every street singer or blind organ-grinder.' Better known American symphonies of the period such as those of Aaron Copland and Roy Harris are more austere works written in what was then the dominant modernist style. Dawson's symphony, in comparison, exudes a wild folk energy driven by a burning cause.

Notwithstanding its present obscurity, Dawson's symphony received a spectacular premiere by Leopold Stokowski and his Philadelphia Orchestra in 1934. Speaking from the stage, Stokowski called it 'a wonderful development.' He also broadcast the symphony nationally. After that however, the symphony disappeared from the repertoire for many years. Stokowski made a recording of it in 1963, as did Neeme Jarvi with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in the 1990s. But performances and recordings of consequence remain few and far between.

William Dawson had hoped to write a series of symphonies and to conduct orchestras, believing what Dvořák had predicted in 1893 that a 'great and noble school' of American

classical music would arise from the black music that he adored. Instead, he became a leading arranger of black spirituals, joining Dvořák's African-American assistant, Harry Burleigh who had begun to turn spirituals into concert songs with great success several years earlier. There were some causes for optimism. George Gershwin, who wrote the opera *Porgy and Bess* (1935), arguably the highest creative achievement in American classical music insisted that it be performed only by a black cast. However like Dawson's symphony written in the previous year, these isolated examples do not in any way suggest that Dvořák overestimated the music of black Americans. Sadly, he overestimated the willingness of white America to truly accept the music making of its black citizens.

Non-Playing Members

If you've enjoyed our concert and want to support the orchestra more actively, there are a variety of tasks and activities that are always open to friends of the orchestra as well as to players. In return, we can offer you complimentary tickets for our concerts, visits to rehearsals and other benefits!

Contact us at
info@solihullsymphony.org.uk

A Note on Terminology

Astute audience members may have noticed that we are not using Dawson's original title, *A Negro Folk Symphony*.

After the end of the Civil War, 'colored' was the preferred term for black Americans until in the early 20th century intellectuals such as W E B Du Bois and Booker T Washington, advocated a switch to 'Negro'. Despite claims that 'Negro' was a white-coined word intended to marginalise black people, Du Bois argued that the term was 'etymologically and phonetically preferable' to any of the alternatives, adding that eight million Americans were entitled to a capital letter too. Most importantly, the new terminology, chosen by black leaders themselves symbolized a rising tide of black intellectual, artistic, and political assertiveness. With the rise of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s however, the word 'Negro' began to become socially unacceptable. The decline started in 1966 when Stokely Carmichael coined the phrase 'Black Power', arguing that the term 'Negro' implied black inferiority. Among black activists, 'Negro' soon became shorthand for a member of the establishment. According to Newsweek polls, more than two-

thirds of black Americans still used the term 'Negro' in 1968, but 'Black' had become the majority preference by 1974. The New York Times abandoned 'Negro' in the 1970s. The last time the Supreme Court used the word 'Negro' outside quotation marks or citations to other scholarship was in 1985. In 1988, after the Black Power movement had itself faded, Jesse Jackson led the push toward 'African-American', although in recent polls, most black interviewees express no preference between black and African-American. Most publications do not recommend the use of one over the other, although some American institutions still retain now discredited terms in their names. Stowoski suggested the title we are using to Dawson, but at that time there was concern it might become confused with William Grant Still's *Afro-American Symphony*, which had been premiered in 1931. There is no easy answer to these questions, and no ideal alternative. Calling it a Black Folk Symphony would have unfortunate connotations of the occult, and A Folk Symphony alone does not convey Dawson's insistence that 'the finest compliment that could be paid my symphony [...] is that it unmistakably is not the work of a white man.'

The poster features a background of a red and black target. In the top left, there is a white silhouette of three brass players. On the left side, a black silhouette of a man in a tuxedo holding a martini glass is shown, with the number '007' written vertically next to him. The text is arranged in a central, layered layout with various colors and fonts.

Enigma Brass Ensemble

SHAKEN
not
STIRRED

THE MUSIC OF
JAMES BOND
AND OTHER SPIES

The James Bond Theme, Goldfinger, Skyfall, Moonraker, Mission Impossible, Austin Powers, Joe 90 & many more!

Sunday 10th July 2022, 7.00pm

Wylde Green United Reformed Church, Britwell Road, Sutton Coldfield. B73 5SW

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www.solihullsymphony.org.uk/ mailing-list

Solihull Symphony Orchestra

Patron: The Mayor of Solihull



First Violins

Charlotte Berresford

guest leader

Manisha Chauhan

Marina Battey

Becky Beadsworth

Emilio Blasich-Gagg

Liz Branson

Vivienne Brown

Hannah Massey

Lara Nevitt

David Roper

Sarah Sasse

Second Violins

Emma Brereton

John Bayley

Jessica Harris

Rachael Johnson

Sarah Letters

John Maxwell

Charlotte McLuskie

Heather Thompson

Sue Walker

Dawn Watson

Violas

Kelvin Farge

Mark Emms

Julia Lawley

Isabella Smith

Cellos

Helen Atherton

Sheila Armstrong

Jeremy Dale

Raye Garrett

Alison Hart

Anne Kemp

Louise Robertson

Sarah Smith

Double Basses

David Evans

Ray Brown

Sue Hawthorne

Flutes

Su Newton-Ede

Mary Wright

Chris Kelland

Oboes

Sarah Vaughan

Fiona Speak

Clarinets

Jane Emms

Alison Kennedy

Bassoons

Harry Jones

Simon Gates

Trumpets

Lynne Hodgson

Charlotte Walters

Richard Bates

Horns

Tim Overton

Stephen Mayes

Emma Marzetti-Godman

Paul Marzetti-Godman

Trombones

Dave Nash

Dave Cole

Bernard Moses

Tuba

Paul Arthur

Timpani

David Pett

Percussion

Sabrina Gledhill

Matt Firkins

Alex Walton

Harp

Freya Brylka-Mee



About the Orchestra

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 viola and double bass 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 26 November 2022, 15:30

Shirley Methodist Church

Debussy - Prelude a l'Apres-Midi d'un
Faun

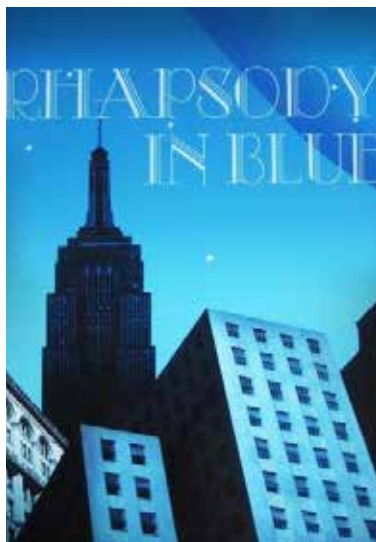
Gershwin - Rhapsody in Blue

Copland - Four Dances from Rodeo

Dvorak - The Golden Spinning Wheel

Conductor - Keith Slade

Piano - Anne Bolt



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