



Solihull Symphony Orchestra



Spring Concert
Shirley Methodist Church, Solihull
15:30, Saturday 29 April, 2023

Programme £1

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. Jon has been Music Director of Solihull Symphony Orchestra since 2013.

Caroline Bodimead

Caroline studied violin at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and enjoys a varied career performing with many ensembles including Royal Ballet Sinfonia, English Symphony Orchestra, Royal Shakespeare Company and Orchestra Da Camera. She has



performed on stage with Madness, Gloria Estefan, George Benson, Cliff Richard, The Proclaimers, The Cult, Richard Hawley, Katherine Jenkins, and Imelda May. She also enjoys teaching violin and tutoring string ensembles. She is currently is 1st violin tutor for Birmingham Schools Symphony Orchestra.

Programme notes - David Evans

Cover - Mary Cassatt, *Spanish Girl Leaning on a Window Sill*, 1872, oil on canvas, Milwaukee Art Museum

Programme

Smyth - *Overture to The Wreckers* 10'

Mahler - *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* 18'

INTERVAL

de Falla - *El sombrero de tres picos* 40'

Conductor

Jon Malaxetxebarria

Mezzo Soprano

Anna Starushkevych

Leader

Caroline Bodimead



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Ethel Smyth (1858-1944)

The Wreckers Overture

The Wreckers is set in the 19th century on the remote north Cornish peninsula of Gurnard's Head, where villagers plunder ships lured onto the rocks, invoking ancient salvage rights to murder the shipwrecked crews for profit. It is the story of how a community turns into a mob, and has obvious parallels with Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, although Britten claimed not to have heard Smyth's work. However, the overture was performed frequently at the Proms between the wars.

In *The Wreckers*, Smyth subverts all normal operatic tropes. She made Thirza, the moral heroine of the opera a mezzo-soprano, a voice type normally consigned to witches or old women; and the soprano, Avis, is a feisty character, not the classic operatic heroine saved by a prince charming.

The dramatic music of the overture sets the scene for the opera. It begins with an ominous melody in the strings, followed by a lively and energetic section evoking the excitement and danger of the sea. The driving rhythm in the brass and percussion represents the villagers' excitement and energy as they carry out their scheme. The music then

becomes more subdued, reflecting on the tragedy of the shipwrecks, ending with a triumphant coda celebrating the power of the human spirit.

Smyth, who studied in Leipzig, was immersed in European music and spoke German and French fluently. She had met many of the great names of 19th century music including Dvořák, Tchaikovsky, Brahms and Clara Schumann. Little about Smyth was ordinary, from her bisexuality to her refusal to accept that her voice was any less important than that of her male counterparts. She was active in the Womens' Social and Political Union, for which she was imprisoned, and is credited with teaching Emmeline



Pankhurst how to throw stones. 'She was a stubborn, indomitable, unconquerable creature - nothing could tame her' said the conductor Thomas Beecham. Visiting her in prison in 1912, he found her conducting her fellow inmates marching and singing the WSPU anthem with a toothbrush.

The libretto to *The Wreckers* by her friend and lover Henry Brewster was written in French, Smyth perhaps hoping that a French-language opera would find a more receptive audience over the Channel where she felt there was less of a prejudice against female composers' However, the premiere in Leipzig in 1906 was actually performed in German.

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen

I - Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht (When My Sweetheart is Married)

II - Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld (I Went This Morning over the Field)

III - Ich hab' ein glühend Messer (I Have a Gleaming Knife)

IV - Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz" (The Two Blue Eyes of my Beloved)

Mahler's song cycle for voice and orchestra was composed in the wake of an unhappy love affair with the soprano Johanna Richter, whom he met while conductor of the opera house in Kassel. The lyrics are by the composer himself, though they are influenced by *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, a collection of German folk poetry and the subject of a later song cycle. It tells the story of a young man who is wandering the world in search of meaning and purpose. The title is often mistranslated as 'wayfarer' implying aimless drifting, but 'Geselle' in German has the more specific meaning of 'journeyman', a former apprentice in the medieval guild system who has qualified and now has the right to charge a fee for each day's work. Although derived from the French 'journée' (a day), a journeyman would often have to travel to find a town where he could settle down and practice his trade.

The cycle begins with the young man contemplating his lost love. In the second song, he finds solace in the beauty of nature. In the third song, he is overcome by despair. In the fourth and final song, he finds peace in sleep.

Mahler appears to have begun composing the songs in 1884 and to have completed them the following year, orchestrating the original

piano versions a decade later. The orchestral cycle was first performed by the baritone Anton Sistransky with the Berlin Philharmonic and Mahler conducting. Nowadays, it is performed by both male and female singers.

In the song cycle, Mahler extensively uses progressive tonality with each of the four songs ending in a different key to that on which it begins. There are strong connections between this work and Mahler's *Symphony No. 1*, written in the late 1880s, with the main theme of the second song being the main theme of the first movement and the final verse of the fourth song reappearing in the third movement as a contemplative interruption of the funeral march.



Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

El sombrero de tres picos

Manuel de Falla's *El sombrero de tres picos* (The Three-Cornered Hat) is a ballet that premiered in 1919, with choreography by Léonide Massine and sets and costumes designed by Pablo Picasso. De Falla had a close relationship with Sergei Diaghilev, the founder of the Ballets Russes. Diaghilev, who was at the peak of his fame following the success of Stravinsky's ballets earlier in the century and had been introduced to him by Stravinsky during the company's first visit to Spain in 1916. Diaghilev was an influential figure in the world of dance and was known for collaborating with leading composers, choreographers, and designers to create ground breaking works of ballet. He requested permission to use de Falla's already-completed *Noches en los jardines de España* (Nights in the Gardens of Spain) and the work-in-progress which was to become *El sombrero de tres picos*, but he only managed to secure permission for the latter

After their first meeting Diaghilev commissioned Falla to write a ballet score based on a Spanish folk tale called *El amor brujo* (Love, the Magician). The ballet premiered in Paris in 1917, with choreography

by Nijinska and sets by the artist Valentine Hugo. The work was an instant success and helped to establish Falla's reputation as one of the leading composers of his time. *El sombrero de tres picos* followed in 1919.

It is not only a ballet with Spanish setting but one that also employs the techniques of Spanish dance (adapted and somewhat simplified) instead of classical ballet. The work is based on a traditional Spanish tale of a corrupt magistrate who attempts to seduce a miller's wife, and the miller's subsequent revenge.

Falla's score for the ballet is a masterpiece of orchestration, incorporating traditional Spanish folk melodies and rhythms with his own modernist style. The music is full of vivid contrasts, from the playful and rhythmic opening dance to the lyrical, almost impressionistic depiction of the miller's wife. The use of castanets, guitar, and other Spanish instruments adds a distinct flavour to the score.

The ballet is divided into two acts, with seven scenes in total. The first act begins with a lively fandango, setting the scene in a bustling Spanish village. The miller's wife dances a sensuous solo, capturing the attention of the lecherous magistrate. In the second scene,

the magistrate sends a letter to the miller's wife, inviting her to his mansion. The third scene features a comical dance of the miller's assistants, poking fun at the magistrate's ineptitude.

The second act takes place in the magistrate's mansion, where he attempts to seduce the miller's wife. The tension builds as the miller arrives and confronts the magistrate, ultimately defeating him and restoring justice to the village. The ballet concludes with a triumphant dance, celebrating the triumph of the miller and the enduring spirit of the Spanish people.



Manuel de Falla was born on November 23, 1876, in Cadiz, Spain. He was the son of a businessman, and from an early age, showed a great aptitude for music. He studied piano and composition at the Madrid Royal Conservatory, and then travelled to Paris, where he became a student of Paul Dukas and Maurice Ravel.

De Falla's early compositions were heavily influenced by the works of composers such as Claude Debussy and Igor Stravinsky, but he soon developed his own unique style that included many elements of traditional Spanish folk music, especially Andalusian flamenco.

He also collaborated with prominent writers and artists, such as Federico García Lorca and Salvador Dalí. After the success of *El sombrero de tres picos*, Diaghilev and Falla continued to work together on other projects, including a planned collaboration with Lorca, but unfortunately it was never realized due to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. The war forced the composer out of his native country into exile in Argentina, where he continued to compose and teach until his death in November 1946.



The poster features a diamond-shaped logo with the letters 'LM' in the top left corner. The background is a colorful, abstract collage of musical notes and instruments. A photograph of a woman playing a saxophone and a man in a suit is positioned in the lower-left quadrant. The text is arranged in a clear, hierarchical layout, providing all necessary details for the event.

Leamington Music Festival
All Saints Church | Leamington Spa
Sunday 30 April | 7.30pm
Sinfonia of Birmingham

Tchaikovsky
Glazunov
Rachmaninov
Michael Seal *conductor*
Amy Dickson *saxophone*

Tickets: £26 | £16
£1 students and children
Full details and booking www.leamingtonmusic.org or call 01926 334418

Anna Starushkevych

Anna Starushkevych was born in Lviv, Ukraine where she started her artistic journey as a pianist and as a singer. After graduating from the Liudkevych State Music College and the Lysenko National Music Academy in Lviv, she moved to the United Kingdom to continue her studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

After starting her career singing mostly contralto repertoire, Anna has begun exploring her voice during the global pandemic and moved to a broader spectrum of mezzo-soprano operatic roles. Anna has won prizes at a variety of competitions, including the International London Handel Competition, the Audience Prize and the York Early Music Prize.

Anna's recordings include the role of Rosimonda in Handel's *Faramondo* which was nominated for the Grammy Awards.

Currently, Anna's repertoire includes roles such as: Angelina in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, Sesto in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, Mignon by Thomas, Ottavia in *Il Coronazione di Poppea* by Monteverdi, *Pinocchio* in *The Adventures of Pinocchio* by Dove, *Stéphano* in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* and others.



Performing songs is a great passion of Anna's. Amongst some of her favourites are Ukrainian songs by Ihor Shamo, Mykola Lysenko, Nestor Nyzhankivsky, Bohdana Filtz, as well as Britten's song cycle *A Charm of Lullabies*, Chinese Songs' by Haas and songs by a young Armenian-British composer Kristina Arakelyan. She also enjoys singing jazz and folk.

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Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra

Sunday 11 June, 15:00

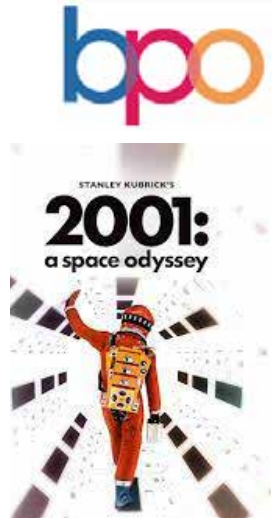
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
200 Jennens Road, B4 7XR

Khachaturian - Selections from Gayanne
J Strauss ii - Blue Danube
Ligeti - Lontano
R Strauss - Also sprach Zarathustra

Conductor - Michael Lloyd

Tickets £16, £14 conc, £6 students

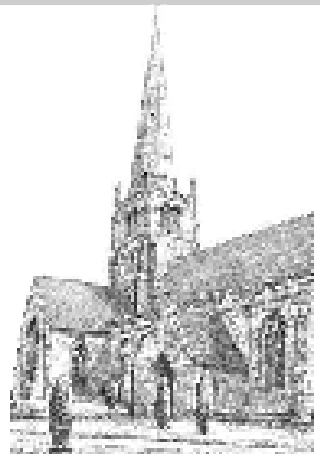
www.bpo.org.uk



Music at St Alphege Church Wednesday Lunchtimes, 13:10 - 14:00

3 May - Christopher Martin Thomas - organ
10 May - RBC Harp Department
17 May - *performer to be confirmed*
24 May - Eularia Ensemble - clarinet quintet
31 May - Anna Downes and Tony Bridgewater -
violin and piano
7 June - Tingguang Li - tenor vocal recital

*Admission free, with a retiring collection. Coffee,
tea and cakes are available from 12:30.*



Our Mailing List

If you've enjoyed this concert, why not sign up to our Supporters' Newsletter to make sure you don't miss out on future events? You'll receive advance notice of the full season's programme, and reminders about all our concerts a few weeks in advance. solihullsymphony.org.uk/mailling-list



Solihull Symphony Orchestra

Patron: The Mayor of Solihull



First Violins

Caroline Bodimead
leader
Marina Battey
Lis Branson
Vivienne Brown
Manisha Chauhan
Sarah Sasse

Second Violins

David Roper
John Bayley
Jessica Harris
John Maxwell
Charlotte McLuskie
Christine Oates

Violas

Kelvin Farge
Joanna Clarke
Mark Emms

Harp

Freya Brylka-Mee

Cellos

Helen Atherton
Nicola Walters
Sheila Armstrong
Raye Garrett
Alison Hart
Anne Kemp
Louise Robertson

Double Basses

David Evans
Jamie Wall

Flutes

Su Newton-Ede
Mary Wright
Chris Kellard

Oboes

Sarah Vaughan
Fiona Speak

Cor Anglais

Jack Mouradian

Clarinets

Victoria Rex
Jane Emms
Richard Salt

Bassoons

Harry Jones
Simon Gates

Trumpets

Lynne Hodgson
David Hirst

Horns

Stephen Mayes
Tim Overton
Sarah Gee
Jane Geddes

Trombones

Stephen Rhodes
Tony Miller
Bernard Moses

Tuba

Paul Arthur

Timpani

Helga Perry

Percussion

Juffie Zhu
Jacob Thomson

Piano / Celeste

Chris Hall



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About the Orchestra

Solihull Symphony Orchestra is an inclusive and friendly group that enjoys taking on the challenge of a varied repertoire with professional leadership and inspiring soloists.

We are always open to new members, especially violin, viola and bass players. Commitment to attend rehearsals regularly, and a willingness to learn are more important to us than exam qualifications. We like to perform in different venues around 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 school term time, with at least three concert performances each year.



Our Next Concert

Saturday 8 July 2023, 19:30

Shirley Methodist Church

Kristina Arakelyan – Penelope Suite

Coleridge-Taylor – Violin Concerto

Berlioz – Symphonic Fantastique

Conductor

Jon Malaxetxebarria

Violin

Boglarka Gyorky



Group Bookings

For groups of ten or more people from churches, music societies, reading circles, clubs, U3A or other bodies 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