

A black and white portrait of Sergei Rachmaninov, looking thoughtfully at the camera with his hand resting on his chin. The image is the background for the entire poster.

BSO

BROMLEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Music Director - Adrian Brown
Leader - Clare Wibberley
105th Season **2024 - 2025**

Saturday 16th November 2024
Langley Park Centre for the
Performing Arts
£2.00

RACHMANINOV

PROGRAMME

Brahms Academic Festival Overture

Stephen Goss Guitar Concerto

***Soloist* Louis Moisan**

Interval - 20 Minutes

Refreshments are available in the dining hall

Rachmaninov Symphony no 2

Tonight's performances of Brahms' Academic Festival Overture and Rachmaninov's 2nd Symphony have been chosen by Helen Griffiths and Andrew Condon to mark their 50 years in the orchestra, having joined in September 1974! Both remember their intimidating auditions in violinist Ernest Rainer's gloomy Chislehurst house with John Cooling (conductor) and accompanied by Barbara Strudwick (Deputy Conductor and Orchestra Secretary). Their first season included the Elgar Violin Concerto with Ralph Holmes and Stravinsky's Firebird, challenging fare for young players!

We thank them for their long service to the orchestra, not least in their various roles on the committee, including stints as secretary, librarian and chairman.

Unauthorised audio or video recording is not permitted

Adrian Brown -Music Director



Adrian Brown comes from a distinguished line of Sir Adrian Boult's most gifted pupils, studying intensively with him for some years after graduating from the Royal Academy of Music. Sir Adrian wrote: He has always impressed me as a musician of exceptional attainments who has all the right gifts and ideas to make him a first-class conductor. Adrian remains the only British conductor to have reached the finals of the Karajan Conductors' Competition: the Berlin Philharmonic was the first professional orchestra he conducted.

In 1992 Adrian was engaged to conduct the St. Petersburg Philharmonic. In 1998 Sir Roger Norrington recommended him to conduct the Camerata Salzburg. Adrian has also conducted the City of Birmingham, the BBC and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestras, and the London Sinfonietta. He is a great proponent of contemporary music and has given several first performances.

Adrian has made a particularly invaluable contribution to British musical life working with young musicians. Between 1972 and 2013 he was Music Director of Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra, his tenure honoured with a Celebratory Concert in Cadogan Hall in March 2013. He has frequently conducted both the National Youth Orchestra (working with Sir Colin Davis and Norrington) and the National Youth Wind Orchestra. He runs courses for young musicians, coaches young conductors, and was given the Novello Award for Youth Orchestras at the 1989 Edinburgh Festival. Adrian was one of a hundred musicians presented with a Classic FM Award at their 10th Birthday Honours Celebration in June 2002. In 2013 he was awarded the Making Music NFMS Lady Hilary Groves Prize for services to Community Music.

Adrian is particularly highly-regarded for his interpretations of Berlioz and Elgar: he was presented with the Berlioz International Society Medal in December 2017, and, coinciding with his 70th birthday in October 2019, the Elgar Medal. Adrian founded his own orchestra, the Elgar Sinfonia, in 2018: highlights include Falstaff in June 2021 and, to mark the Elgar Society 50th anniversary, Sea Pictures, Polonia and the Crown of India in the presence of Dame Janet Baker. The Sinfonia has performed a complete cycle of all the Elgar Symphonies and rarely heard choral works, The Light of Life and the Black Knight, with the London Chorus. He has also led performances of Verdi's Requiem and Beethoven's Missa Solemnis with the Royal Orchestral Society and the London Chorus. He has also maintained his connections with his place of birth Suffolk, has conducted the Waveney Sinfonia for 45 years and returning to conduct the Trianon Music Group in Ipswich.

Adrian recently collaborated with Rustam Khanmurzin in the Bliss Piano Concerto with the Elgar Sinfonia and plans include more Bliss, George Lloyd, Holst, Berlioz and Finzi. In the future he hopes to bring more Elgar to the public, continue to explore new repertoire with Bromley (and his other orchestras), and to share his joy of music through illustrated talks.

Johannes Brahms 1833-1897

Academic Festival Overture Op 80



In 1880 the University of Breslau offered Brahms a signal honour – an honorary doctorate in philosophy. The modest Brahms wrote back with grateful thanks, which he hoped was sufficient. However, his sponsor for the award, Bernhard Scholz urged him to attend the ceremony, and more. 'Compose a fine symphony for us!' he wrote. 'But well-orchestrated, old boy, not too uniformly thick!'

Thus challenged, Brahms cheekily penned a massively thickly scored overture, which he privately termed 'a boisterous potpourri of student songs'. (Brahms had never attended university, but he'd greatly enjoyed hanging out with the famous Joachim in Göttingen, the university town, back in 1853.) Upon learning the title, his friend Scholz complained, 'Sounds devilishly academic and boring!'

Devilishly cheeky it might be, but never boring! After a dramatic opening, there follows an allusion to the Rakóczy

March. Timpani and three trumpets then introduce 'Wir hatten gebauet ein stattliches Haus' ('We have built a stately house'), which is folded into the Rakóczy.

After this, the upper strings sweep into 'Der Landesvater' ('The father of our country'). The freshman students' initiation ceremony favourite ('Was komm dort von der Höh' – 'What comes from afar') follows, showcasing the bassoons and introducing a swift development. The gloriously rousing 'Gaudeamus igitur' ('Therefore, let us be merry!') is Brahms' final choice.

He conducted the premiere in Breslau in 1881 where it doubtless went down a bomb. It has, of course, remained a pillar of classical repertoire ever since.

Louis Moisan

Guitar

Louis Moisan is a guitarist, lutenist, and theorbo player based in London, widely regarded as one of the most versatile and exciting musicians of his generation. He is active as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral continuo player, having performed across Europe, both sides of the Atlantic, and in some of the UK's finest concert halls.

As a soloist, Louis has been praised for his ability to captivate audiences with his uniquely intimate playing style, as well as his high-energy approach and "virtuosity beyond his years". He is dedicated to performing works from all corners of the musical canon, creating diverse and exciting programmes.

Louis is passionate about pushing the guitar repertoire into the future. He collaborates regularly with composers and has had the privilege of premiering and recording numerous new works. These range from solo pieces, such as Elliott Park's *Optick* for guitar and electronics, composed for the bicentenary of the Royal Academy of Music, to chamber works of all shapes and sizes. He also collaborates frequently with the Singaporean composer Elliott Teo, with a current project that includes a new guitar concerto set to premiere in 2025. His engagement with the contemporary music scene has brought him opportunities to work with some of the industry's finest conductors, including Vimbayi Kaziboni and Barbara Hannigan, with whom he performed her iconic show piece *Ligeti's Mysteries of the Macabre*. Demonstrating his versatility, Louis is equally comfortable on the electric guitar, having performed as a soloist, in ensembles, and with multitracked accompaniment. His repertoire includes works by



composers such as Laura Snowden, Louis Andriessen, Bryce Dessner, and Steve Reich. He also worked closely with acclaimed Icelandic composer Bára Gísladóttir on her virtuosic work for electric guitar, electronics, and contemporary ensemble, *Animals of Your Pasture*, which he performed with the Manson Ensemble earlier this year. Louis is deeply committed to expanding the repertoire for historical instruments, advancing the repertoire for the lute and theorbo into the modern world. He has performed works by Benjamin Oliver and Nico Muhly and is currently working on various projects with composers such as Jacob Fitzgerald and Archie John to expand the song repertoire for theorbo and voice.

As a continuo player on the theorbo and baroque guitar, Louis is highly sought after in the historical performance scene. He has collaborated with some of the world's finest performers across the UK, including Lawrence Power, Nicky Spence, Laurence Cummings, Bjarte Eike, Margaret Faultless, and Nicholas Mulroy. In Europe, he has worked with groups such as Gli Incogniti under the

direction of Amandine Beyer, and he regularly performs as the theorbo and guitar player for Musica d'Outroira. He also works closely with The English Concert, directed by Harry Bicket, as a Young Artist Fellow. Some of his work can be heard on recordings with Musica d'Outroira, including their debut album Still Life and a reimagining of Robert De Visée's solo theorbo works for theorbo duo, performed with Japanese lutenist Asako Ueda.

Louis is currently completing his master's degree at the Royal Academy of Music, where he studies on a scholarship under Michael Lewin, Fabio Zanon, Stephen Goss, and Elizabeth Kenny. He has had the privilege of learning from and performing for many of the world's finest guitarists

and lutenists, including Fabio Zanon, Nigel North, David Russell, and Jonathan Leathwood. He completed his undergraduate studies there with first-class honors and was awarded the Blyth Watson Guitar Prize twice for exceptional recitals, as well as the Regency Award for outstanding studentship, contribution and achievement.

The instrument for tonight's performance - a guitar by Kenneth Leftwich - has been generously lent to Louis by the composer Stephen Goss. This guitar was used by Goss over 10 years ago to compose the concerto being performed, making this performance a particularly rare and special chance to hear the original instrument.

Stephen Goss Guitar Concerto



Stephen Goss, formerly of the Menuhin School, is currently Chair of Composition and Director of Research at the University of Surrey, as well as Professor of guitar at the Royal Academy of Music. Celebrated for writing stylishly accessible music in a wide variety of styles, Goss's compositions have been commissioned

by soloists including cellist Natalie Clein, percussionist Evelyn Glennie, violinist Nicola Benedetti, and tenor Ian Bostridge, among many others. Graham Roberts commissioned this guitar concerto, which has also benefitted from being toured and recorded by John Williams.

Goss writes: 'My guitar concerto is cast in a traditional three-movement structure, but I wanted each movement to be both stylistically and geographically self-contained. Thus, the first alludes to the urban music of North America and to the harmonic vocabulary of modern jazz. The finale instead draws on Latin American influences, while the concerto's heart is an elegiac slow movement tinged with English nostalgia.'

No one could fail to admire this lovely work. The virtuosity of the outer movements – the Latin finale especially – is balanced by the Adagio (subtitled 'a homage to Elgar') with its improvisatory opening, full-throated climax and delicate conclusion.

Sergei Rachmaninov 1873 - 1943

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Opus 27



I. Largo – Allegro moderato

II. Allegro molto

III. Adagio

IV. Allegro vivace

Rachmaninov's First Symphony's disastrous 1897 premiere was, according to him, 'the most agonizing hour of my life.' Cui, a noted critic/composer, described it as having emerged "from the conservatory of hell" – and this wasn't the rudest critique, by a long way. The composer's depression deepened into a case of writer's block lasting several years. However, after working with Dr Nikolai Dahl, a psychiatrist specialising in hypnotherapy, he conjured up

sufficient self-belief to compose the celebrated Second Piano Concerto (dedicated to Dr Dahl).

However, a second symphony, after so savage a reception of his first, was a far bigger ask. In 1905, Rachmaninov, taking his courage in both hands, requested leave of absence from conducting opera at Moscow's Imperial Theatre and moved to Dresden, determined to try. He confided to a friend in 1907, 'I have composed a symphony. It's true! . . . I finished it a month ago and immediately put it aside. It was a severe worry to me and I'm not going to think about it anymore.'

Despite all the trauma and angst associated with its birth, the Second Symphony was an instantaneous triumph. Unapologetically romantic, and fizzing with energy as well as a tender and sensual beauty, it has never

left the repertoire despite being, mid-century, disfigured by cuts. Its endless flow of gloriously expansive melodies suggest a composer erupting with pent-up creativity, after the years of symphonic drought.

I. Largo – Allegro moderato

The first movement – subtitled 'Of gloom and uncertainty in the homeland' – begins with an expectancy both yearning and foreboding, along with the stepwise motif that features throughout the work. (Rachmaninov's First was said to lack thematic cohesion. No one could say this of his Second!). A soulful Cor Anglais solo introduces the restless main theme – the glowingly sunny second, in the major, follows. Then a limpid violin solo culminates in the stormy development, with feverish string motives and alternating blasts from solo trumpet and trombone, abetted by horns and rampaging percussion... Once all the dust subsides the recapitulation privileges the warm E major second theme over the first – a preference tempestuously overruled by the Coda, which anchors the movement triumphantly in E minor.

II. Allegro molto

(Rachmaninov's note: 'Of flight, and optimism for the future'.) This arresting scherzo was possibly inspired by Rimsky-Korsakov, one of Rachmaninov's earliest influences. Its vaulting horn-led first theme references the 'Dies Irae' – its gloriously improvisational second recalls the stepwise opening of the work.

The central Trio section – preceded by a sudden blast like a gust of wind – features string passagework in fugal form, kickstarted in the second violins. This is superseded by the brass's hymn-like march, punctuated with off-beats and snare drum. Near the end of the section, a brass chorale reiterates the

'Dies Irae' – always Rachmaninov's favourite calling-card.

The Scherzo returns but Rachmaninov is unable to resist adding the march from the Trio section as well. Finally, a brass chorale recalls the 'Dies Irae'. The movement disintegrates in fragments of pizzicato.

III. Adagio

The glorious Adagio has appended: 'Of regret at what has been left behind'. Yet another rich stream of endlessly liquid melodies begins in the violins; but is quickly appropriated by a mellow solo clarinet. A second theme, starring first violins and woodwinds, circles back to the first, which climaxes rhapsodically.

The agitato central section features Cor Anglais and oboe solos. The principal horn takes charge in the recapitulation, but Rachmaninov expertly feeds in pulsating fragments of all the themes, with tune overlaying or underpinning tune in an extravagant frenzy of feeling, and every section of strings divided into two or more parts, creating a marvellously rich texture. The 'regrets' feature trumpets, solo horn, a single violin, Cor Anglais, flute, oboe and clarinet – each remembering. The strings put the movement to sleep, with nostalgic commentary from solo winds. It's as if Rachmaninov can't bear to let this movement go, like a walk in the woods where every view seems still lovelier than the last, and with a rosy benediction at the close.

IV. Allegro vivace

The tag Rachmaninov chose for the finale – Of resolution and new confidence – might really have been appended to the entire work. His Finale hums with vitality, and contains no fewer than three new themes, each interwoven with tunes from previous movements. It plunges forth with a jubilant, dancelike theme derived from the Scherzo. The second is yet another full-bodied melody in D major.



The Adagio's first theme is recalled, then the finale's first theme – finally, yet another glowing tune opens the development.

This begins with reminders of earlier movements, but mostly focusses on new ideas, among which a descending scale asserts prominence. Dispensing with the first theme in favour of the more passionate second, the recapitulation is gradually permeated, even overwhelmed, by the descending scale. The cymbals clash, the timpanist shines, the brass exult – and there's a final thrilling gallop to the finish.

I love to imagine what Rachmaninov must have felt at its premiere, as he put down his baton and turned to acknowledge the packed audience, after swearing that he was no symphonist and he would never attempt another!... His every gamble – psychotherapy, hypnotherapy, his long leave of absence, the move to Germany – had paid off in the most glorious, and lasting, triumph.

Bromley Symphony Orchestra

Bromley Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1918 by Miss Beatrice Fowle and Miss Gwynne Kimpton, teachers at Bromley High School for Girls. Over the years, it has earned a high reputation for concerts of professional standard and has worked with many famous soloists and conductors. Sir Adrian Boult conducted regularly in the 1940s and in 1952 Norman Del Mar took over. Internationally renowned soloists who have performed with the orchestra include Paul Tortelier, John Lill, Dennis Brain, Kathleen Ferrier, Ralph Holmes, Hugh Bean, Emma Johnson, Leslie Howard and Sir Donald McIntyre.

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*Mark Cousins
Rosie Cousins
Tarcisio Dantas
Eleanor Harber
*Mike Ibbott
Penny Longman
Richard Miscampbell
Monika Molnar
Lyn Parker
Veronica Parry

SECOND VIOLINS

Jacqueline Whitbread
(Principal)
Pete Bicknell
Liz Cromb
*Rachel Dubourg
Jane Ferdinando
Nick Georgiadis
Andrew Harber
Kathryn Hayman
Phil McKerracher
Judith Montague
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VIOLAS

David Griffiths (Principal)
Emily Colyer
Laura Davey
Richard Longman
Alan Magrath
Simon McVeigh
Nicola Oliver
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Alice McVeigh (Principal)
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Helen Griffiths
Jane Broadbent
Samantha Carter
Becky Fage
Andrew Garton
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Jane Walker (Cor)

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NEXT CONCERT

Saturday 18th January 2024 7.30pm

Dedicated to the memory of Bernard Brook

Elgar Violin Concerto - Soloist Sasha Rozhdestvensky

Nielsen Symphony No 1

Saturday 15th March 2024 7.30pm

Schubert Symphony No 8 Unfinished

Strauss Four Last Songs - Soloist Rebecca Hardwick

Mahler Symphony No 4

Saturday 17th May 2024 7.30pm

Ravel Alborado del Gracioso

Brahms Double Concerto for violin and cello

Soloists - Thelma and Lionel Handy

Shostakovitch Symphony No 5

Sunday 15th June 2024 5pm

Children's Concert

Saint-Saëns Carnival of the Animals

Kleinsinger Tubby the Tuba - Narrator Daniel Mays (tbc)

Richard Brown Pageant of the Seas

