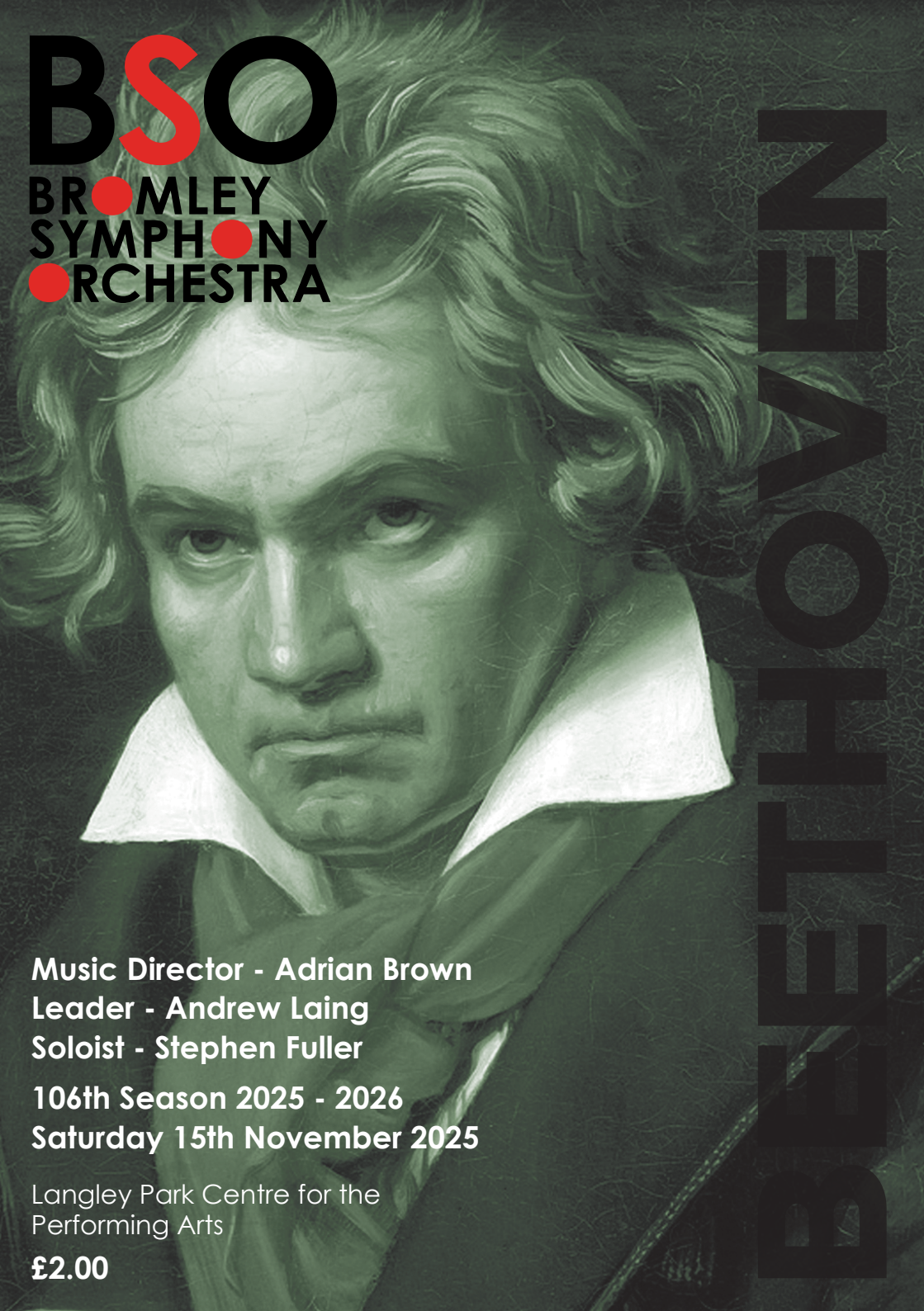




BSO

**BROMLEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**

BEETHOVEN

Music Director - Adrian Brown

Leader - Andrew Laing

Soloist - Stephen Fuller

106th Season 2025 - 2026

Saturday 15th November 2025

**Langley Park Centre for the
Performing Arts**

£2.00

PROGRAMME

Mozart Don Giovanni Overture

Beethoven Symphony no 8

Interval - 20 Minutes

Refreshments are available in the dining hall

Weber Bassoon Concerto

Soloist Stephen Fuller

Richard Strauss Don Juan

Tonight's concert is dedicated to the memory of Terry Dillon.

July 16th 1939 to Sept 20th 2025

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. After graduating from the Royal Academy of Music in London, he studied intensively with Sir Adrian for some years. He remains the only British conductor in 1975 to have reached the finals of the Karajan Conductors' Competition: in fact, the Berlin Philharmonic was the first professional orchestra he conducted. 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.' In 1992 Adrian Brown was engaged to conduct one of the great orchestras of the world: the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1998 Sir Roger Norrington recommended him to conduct the Camerata Salzburg, one of Europe's foremost chamber orchestras. In addition, Adrian has conducted many leading British orchestras including the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta. He is also a great proponent of contemporary music and has several first performances to his credit. In 1972 Adrian was appointed Music Director of Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra a position from which he stood down in March 2013 after 40 years. It is felt he has made a major contribution to the musical education of quite a few youngsters over a long period. Working with such young musicians has also been an area where Adrian Brown has made a valuable contribution to British musical life, as well as in Europe, Japan and the Philippines. He has frequently conducted both the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain (working closely with Sir Colin Davis and Sir Roger Norrington) and the National Youth Wind Orchestra.

Adrian Brown was one of a hundred musicians presented with a prestigious Classic FM Award at their Tenth Birthday Honours Celebration in June 2002. In the summer of 2013, he was awarded the 'Making Music' NFMS Lady Hilary Groves Prize for services to Community Music, a much appreciated and admired honour. In December 2017 Adrian was presented with the Berlioz International Society Medal for services to the great French composer. In October 2019 at the time of his 70th Birthday, he was awarded the Elgar Medal.

Since its inception in 2018, his orchestra the Elgar Sinfonia has gone from strength to strength. Many rare works by Elgar and other British composers have been presented. In October 2022, the Orchestra celebrated the London Branch Elgar Society 50th anniversary with a concert including 'Sea Pictures,' Polonia' and the 'Crown of India' in the presence of Dame Janet Baker. The Sinfonia have performed a cycle of the Elgar Symphonies and have revived Elgar's 'The Black Knight' and the Piano Concerto by Arthur Bliss.

The year 2025 has seen two concerts with The London Chorus of Elgar and Bliss with the New London Orchestra, and he conducted them triumphantly again in Mozart's Requiem in October.

He has conducted the Bromley symphony Orchestra for 45 years and plans many concerts of Strauss, Berlioz and Vaughan Williams in future seasons. Together they have covered an enormous repertoire from Mahler and Bruckner to most of the standard classics performed in a style and a standard second to none. As too with the Elgar Sinfonia, Adrian plans to still explore works that deserve a live hearing including Holst, Gipsy, Moeran, Farrenc, Finzi, Boulanger and many more in an inexhaustible career.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756-1791

Don Giovanni Overture K527



Between them, Mozart and da Ponte produced three of the world's greatest operas, including Don Giovanni – a tragi-comedy/morality play which has gone down a storm ever since its Prague debut in 1787. Plot in a nutshell: The anti-hero's bravura charisma and innumerable feats of seduction culminate in his being dragged down to hell at the hands of an irate father, the Commendatore. Whereupon the ladies he cheated on all stand around and sing about what a great pity it isn't.

The story of the overture is as follows. The night before the premiere, Mozart was out toasting hopes for its success with friends when one of them mentioned the overture... which Mozart had actually forgotten (!) Upon reaching the family home around midnight, Mozart – after begging his wife to keep prodding him awake – spent the wee hours hastily scribbling a scintillating-if-only-six-minute-long overture, which kept his copyists frantic most of the following day. There

was not a spare moment in which to rehearse the overture, but the orchestra apparently sightread it perfectly.

It opens with a blast of the Commendatore's signature minor chords – the same chords which foretell the Don's doom in the finale, when the Commendatore's ghost confronts his daughter's seducer. From this foreboding start, the sonata-form body of the overture emerges jovially enough, with the overture merging with the action of the opera in an unexpectedly modern fashion. (Here, as is usual, we'll instead be performing an arrangement with a defined ending.)

All in all, a terrific night's work!

Ludwig van Beethoven 1770- 1827

Symphony No. 8, Opus 93

When Beethoven's friends, according to Czerny, speak to him of his renown, he replies, "Ah, nonsense! I have never thought of writing for renown and glory. What I have in my heart must out – that is why I write."

Romain Rolland

'A colossus beyond the grasp of most mortals, with his totally uncompromising power, his unsensual and uningratiating way, with music as with people.'

Yehudi Menuhin, on Beethoven

'The Eighth is one of the greatest symphonic masterpieces of Beethoven.'

Tchaikovsky

Beethoven – 41, and certainly on a roll - began his Eighth Symphony immediately after finishing his Seventh, and completed it within a few short months. It failed to shine upon its 1814 debut, however, as it unluckily premiered on the same Viennese night as Beethoven's Seventh – both conducted by a half-deaf and ill-tempered Beethoven, whose conducting some orchestra members apparently found unfollowable. The Seventh Symphony made a far stronger impression, despite the orchestra boasting a mere eight violins, four in each section.

When Beethoven was asked by his pupil Carl Czerny why the Eighth was less popular than the Seventh, Czerny reported this defensive response: 'because the Eighth is so much better!' George Bernard Shaw later strung along with this school of thought: 'In all subtle respects the Eighth is better than the Seventh.' Beethoven was also fond of referring to his Eighth as "my little Symphony in F", distinguishing it from his Sixth – which is also in F, but quite a bit longer.

Whatever one might think of the relative



glories of Beethoven's symphonies, this is a stunning work. Musicologist Jan Swafford describes the Eighth as, 'a beautiful, brief, ironic look backward to Haydn and Mozart.' For Martin Geck, its variety is its strength, with its 'advanced planning, defiant counterpoint, furious cross-rhythms, sudden shifts from piano to forte, and idyllic and even hymnlike episodes.'

1. Allegro vivace e con brio

The first movement opens genially but with undercurrents, notably in bassoons and timpani, foreshadowing a particularly dynamic development, whose concluding section features that rarely-sighted bird, a Beethovenian treble-f. Once this subsides, the music of the recapitulation feels subtly altered, capped by a gloriously opinionated closing section.

2. Allegretto scherzando

Possibly inspired by Haydn's 'Clock' Symphony – or, still likelier, a joke at the expense of the metronome – the second movement's tick-tocking semi-quaver rhythm never wavers. (Richard Wagner boldly described it as a scherzo, and took it at a blistering pace!)

3. Tempo di menuetto

The tempo di menuetto is meaty for its genre, with long melodic lines and a secondary role for solo bassoon. Its Trio section is stunning. Here a pair of horns, aided and abetted by solo clarinet, take over, accompanied lightly by the united cellos in rippling triplets before the first section returns.

4. Allegro vivace

The finale is an Allegro vivace – with the emphasis on the vivace! Despite its brilliant, tossed-off theme, this is the most substantial movement in the symphony – an arresting, powerful exercise in sonata form. Its sizzling

opening is recalled thrice – at the start of the powerful development section, the start of the recapitulation, and in the coda. The development dramatically judders to a complete halt, before plucking up sufficient courage to undertake the recapitulation.

The coda is quite shocking for its period, with a pivotal C sharp - recalled from earlier – abruptly twisting the key into a mega-distant F-sharp minor. This is later hammered back down to the ‘correct’ F major and into a bullish conclusion where F major resounds throughout the orchestra. Not a dull moment!

Stephen Fuller Bassoon



Stephen began learning the bassoon at secondary school and went on to study at Trinity College of Music London where he won the college's woodwind competition. Stephen did not pursue a full time musical career but music has always been an important part of his life and he performs regularly as both a bassoonist and contra bassoonist with many orchestras and ensembles.

Stephen has been a committee member of the British Double Reed Society, a charity supporting and encouraging the learning and performance of the oboe and bassoon since 2017, and its Treasurer from 2019. He is particularly pleased to have led the organisation of the societies first post Covid oboe and bassoon event at Bromley Youth Music Trust (2021) as well as establishing a double reed day in conjunction with the Royal Academy of Music that has now run very successfully in 2022, '23 and '24.

Stephen has been a member of Bromley Symphony Orchestra for over 30 years and has previously appeared as soloist with the orchestra in Elgar's Romance, the Haydn Sinfonia Concertante and Richard Strauss's Duet Concertino. He has performed the Weber concerto with the Kensington Symphony Orchestra and the Gordon Jacob concerto with the Bromley Symphony Players and is delighted to have the opportunity to play the Weber concerto again this evening.

Carl Maria von Weber 1786 - 1826

Bassoon Concerto, Opus 75

'Music is truly love itself, the purest, most ethereal language of the emotions, embodying all their changing colours in every variety of shading and nuance.'

Carl Maria von Weber

*The wind,
Tempestuous clarion, with heavy cry,
Came bluntly thundering, more terrible
Than the revenge of music on bassoons.*

American poet Wallace Stevens

I. Allegro ma non troppo

II. Adagio

III. Rondo: Allegro

The bassoon is so often, and so unjustly, the unsung hero of the woodwinds, passed over in favour of the delicate flute, soulful oboe or jazzy clarinet. Perhaps for this reason, concertos for the bassoon have never abounded, despite the characterful beauty of its tone. Weber's charming concerto – a cornerstone of the bassoon repertoire – is owed to Maximilian I, King of Bavaria in 1811.

Von Weber had been commissioned to supply a clarinet Concertino for the principal in the Munich Court Orchestra. This proved so successful that the current King, well-impressed, immediately commissioned two full-length clarinet concertos from von Weber, while von Weber found himself besieged by other Munich principals to favour their own cause. It was bassoonist Georg Friedrich Brandt who got lucky, convincing the King to commission this bassoon concerto, which rivals Mozart's itself in terms of popularity.

William Waterhouse – the scholar and bassoonist – has written a great deal on the subject. Apparently von Weber composed the entire work in about ten days in 1811 (not quite in a single night, but still...!) Forty years later, according



to Waterhouse, an anonymous editor added marks of articulation, dynamics and expression not in the original. Still more blatantly, in 1952, when the work was again republished, 'notes were altered, while errors and omissions in the markings abound.' In short, Waterhouse had centuries of cobwebs to clear away for this edition!

The work opens with a pleasing flourish and an upbeat, jaunty feel. A nudge from the timpani kickstarts the soloist into action. The principal theme is the jaunty, dotted-rhythm one, the second winsome, while the development features snazzy runs from one end of the instrument to the other (reaching a high D, the highest note available to bassoonists of the period). Von Weber exploits both the bassoon's lyrical propensities and technical facility. Peppery trills, snazzy runs and sizzling triplets give this most avuncular of orchestral comrades a glorious chance to show off.

Of the Adagio, Waterhouse wrote, 'The theatrical atmosphere is maintained by an almost operatic cantilena.' (Von Weber was most famous for opera, after all.) The bassoon opens in tenor-esque vein, long phrases above string accompaniment.

A pair of horns are featured, then strings and soloist trade the lead, before the bassoon triumphs in (what amounts to) an accompanied cadenza.

The impish rondo finale is as showy as the opening movement, but comparatively angst-free. The rondo theme is skittish and dance-like, while off-beat, Leporello-

like dance motives abound. With the bassoon alternately commanding or commenting on the action, Weber has great fun with this movement – as will Stephen Fuller, I am sure, who has led the Bromley Symphony bassoon section with great distinction for over thirty years. Here's hoping for very many more!

Richard Strauss 1864 - 1949

Don Juan, Opus 20



'I am not one to compose long melodies... But what I can do, is utilize such a theme, paraphrase it and extract everything that is in it, and I don't think there's anybody today who can match me in that.' 'It is difficult composing endings. Beethoven and Wagner could do it. Only great composers can do it. I can do it too.'

Richard Strauss

Strauss rarely failed to divide opinion. Here's Mahler on Salome: *'Every note is spot on! Your vocation is to be a dramatist. Through your music you have made me understand for the first time what Wilde's work is about!'* And here's an awestruck Ravel, *'Salome and Pelléas et Mélisande are the most striking works in European music for the last fifteen years.'*

And yet... for every Schoenberg – *'Strauss is one of the characteristic and outstanding figures in musical history'* – there's an unimpressed Stravinsky – *'Richard Strauss? An old oyster!'* or Alma Mahler objecting – and of Heldenleben besides – *'Richard Strauss is a brilliant pig – I can find no other word for it. The whole thing is larded with illogical, unnecessary and hideous discord.'*

For professional musicians, Strauss's Don Juan is feared almost as much as it is revered, as the orchestral Everest. Demanded of every orchestral audition panel, memorised painfully in every Conservatoire practice room, the unchallengeable star of every course in orchestral technique, Strauss's demands here – musical as well as technical – are inescapable.

Strauss's opening, for strings, is perhaps oftenest required. Here, with its off-beat swagger, Strauss takes on the world, with what Bryan Gilliam and Charles Youmans described as 'dazzling orchestration, sharply etched themes, novel structure and taut pacing... flagrantly pictorial, humorous and altogether irreverent music.'

The tone-poem – Strauss's 'breakthrough' work – was based on a play derived from an unfinished 1844 retelling by Nikolaus Lenau of the 'Don Juan legend'. In Lenau's rendering, Don Juan's promiscuity springs from his determination to find the ideal woman. Eventually despairing of the quest, he surrenders to melancholy and – even, perhaps – wills his own death (see Mozart's Don Giovanni's own refusal to repent).

Musicologist Herbert Glass explains the piece perfectly: 'Don Juan embraces two principal themes, the grand opening flourish—corresponding possibly to Lenau's "Out and away to new conquests, as long as the pulse of youth continues to beat"—and what is usually referred to as the Don's principal theme, the upward sweeping roar of the four horns in unison, marked "sehr energisch" (very energetic). These vigorous motifs are contrasted by several tender love themes, the most extended of which is announced by the solo oboe, subsequently taken over by clarinet, then bassoon, and finally horn. This theme, and others along the



way, dissolve into mocking phrases, indicating that damnation – or, worse, satiety – will mark the Don's end.'

Perfectly poised between bravura swagger and lyrical longing, Don Juan is Strauss's greatest masterpiece.

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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NEXT CONCERT

Saturday 24th January 2024 7.30pm

Boulanger D'un Matin de Printemps

Berlioz - Harold in Italy - Soloist Scott Storey (viola)

Saint-Saëns Symphony No 3 - Soloist Lucy Morrell (organ)

Saturday 15th March 2024 7.30pm

Vaughan Williams Symphony No 9

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto - Soloist Mabelle Young-Eun Park

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Gershwin An American in Paris

Saturday 16th May 2024 7.30pm

Ravel La Valse

Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No 1

Soloist - Rustam Khanmurzin

da Falla Three-Cornered Hat

