



BSO

**BR●MLEY
SYMPH●NY
●RCHESTRA**

**VAUGHAN
WILLIAMS**

**Music Director - Adrian Brown
Leader - Andrew Laing
Soloist - Maybelle Young-Eun Park**

**106th Season 2025 - 2026
Saturday 14th March 2026**

**Langley Park Centre for the
Performing Arts**

£2.00

PROGRAMME

Vaughan Williams Symphony no 9



**VAUGHAN
WILLIAMS
FOUNDATION**

This performance is supported by the
Vaughan Williams Foundation

Interval - 20 Minutes

Refreshments are available in the dining hall

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto

Soloist Mabelle Young-Eun Park



Mabelle Young-Eun Park appears courtesy of
The Philip and Dorothy Green Young Artists (PDGYA) Scheme

Gershwin An American in Paris

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.

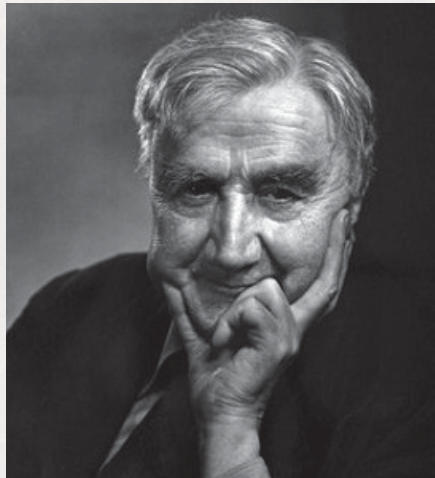
Since its inception in 2018, his orchestra the Elgar Sinfonia has gone from strength to strength. Many rare works by Elgar and other British composers have been presented. In October 2022, the Orchestra celebrated the London Branch Elgar Society 50th anniversary with a concert including 'Sea Pictures,' 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, Gipps, Moeran, Farrenc, Finzi, Boulanger and many more in an inexhaustible career.

Ralph Vaughan Williams 1872 - 1958

Symphony No. 9 in E Minor



'If my music doesn't make itself understood without any explanation—well, it's a failure as music and there's nothing more to be said. It matters, of course, enormously to the composer what he was thinking about when writing a particular work; but to no one else in this world does it matter one jot.'

Ralph Vaughan Williams

When asked about the tepid critical reaction to his Ninth Symphony, Vaughan Williams, then in his mid-eighties, quipped: 'I don't think they can quite forgive me for still being able to do it, at my age!'

Vaughan Williams's last symphony has been described as enigmatic, evocative, breathtaking – and unorthodox. Originally inspired by Hardy's masterful *Tess* of the D'Urbervilles and by the mystical Stonehenge and Salisbury Plain, its reputation has ballooned ever since its 1958 debut – which itself proved rather disappointing. According to Michael Kennedy, the biographer, 'there was no denying the coolness of the British critics. The Ninth's enigmatic mood puzzled them, and more attention was paid to the flügelhorn than to the work itself'. Vaughan Williams' flippant programme notes might have been partly to blame: 'The saxophones are not expected, except in one place in the scherzo, to behave like demented cats, but are allowed to be their own romantic selves... The beautiful and neglected flügelhorn has been banished to the brass band, where it is allowed to indulge in the bad habit of vibrato to its heart's content. While in the orchestra it will be obliged to sit up and play straight.' Though later, he rather repented his

comment about the vibrato ('The flugel player has convinced me that unless I allow a minimum of vibrato, the tone will sound hard, like a bad horn.' I'm indebted to Roger Moisan, playing flügelhorn this evening, for this gem, Alice).

If the first British critics weren't exactly smitten, most American critics saw further, with Harold C. Schonberg raving in the *New York Times*: 'The symphony is packed with strong personal melody from beginning to end ... A mellow glow suffuses the work, as it does the work of many veteran composers who seem to gaze retrospectively over their careers... a masterpiece.'

By the mid-1990s, critical opinion had pivoted almost unanimously in the Ninth's favour. The *Times* in 2008: 'The Ninth is the synthesis and summation of all that had gone before... visionary, violent, elusive and ambiguous.' And here is Larry Rothe, writing for the *San Francisco Symphony* in 2011: 'Like Beethoven's Ninth, it portrays huge conflicts and superhuman striving.'

Then, a light-drenched seascape unfolds... Vaughan Williams had not composed music so angry and assertive since his Sixth Symphony.'

The publication of a book exploring Vaughan Williams's earliest sketches for the work might have helped. In these fragments, which – very rarely – the composer failed to destroy, he acknowledges Tess of the d'Urbervilles as his original inspiration. The first movement was once headed 'Wessex Prelude' – while 'Tess' was scribbled above the earliest ideas for the second movement. Alain Frogley's book, analysing the sketches succeeded in 'humanising' the Ninth – despite the quote from Vaughan Williams above. By suggesting that Tess's plot drives the engine of the second movement, Frogley gives the casual listener something to catch hold of... Eventually, of course, the Ninth would have triumphed, regardless. But the composer's sketches, and Frogley's analysis, still had something to do with it.

1. Moderato maestoso

Vaughan Williams described the first movement as 'obeying the general principles of sonata form, without quite conforming to it'. It opens menacingly, amid ominous horns and whole tone descents in the violins. With near-continual oceanic restlessness, we're gifted snapshots of tempests, bucolic beauty, English verdure. Eventually, the principal themes coalesce. An ethereal violin solo then introduces an uncertain, searching section, which eventually drifts away, irresolute, amidst horns and harps.

2. Andante sostenuto

Vaughan Williams's Tess-inspired movement opens with a lovely if desolate solo flügelhorn theme, which Vaughan Williams once described as 'the wind blowing through Stonehenge'. This is interrupted - repeatedly - by his

'barbaric' march theme – jagged, dotted, mechanical. Later, the music evokes Tess's anguish, her arrest and – clearest of all – the foreboding bells heard before her death by hanging. Listen for a reminder of springlike romance in the strings, a reminiscence of the flügelhorn theme, the return of the mechanised march and the flügelhorn's farewell, this time with solo clarinet, fading to nothing.

3. Scherzo

The waspish, strutting, half-grimacing scherzo – rather a warped Sorcerer's Apprentice – is embellished by flurries of brilliance in the winds and a small army of percussionists. The three saxes ignite a jazzy fugue, threatened by percussion, brass. The violins, similarly, are blasted away. An orchestral fury arises – giving way to sonorous chords in horns and winds. When the irrepressible fugue first resumes in the saxes, the timpani dispatches it. Undeterred, the sardonic fugue resumes, only to slip away, leaving a single side-drum on its own. (Some experts consider the solitary side-drummer a nod to the legend of 'the ghostly drummer of Salisbury Plain', which features in Hardy's Tess.)

The finale, with its massive scope and epic feel, suggests the open spaces and craggy grandeur of Vaughan Williams's Sinfonia Antartica. The wavering semis of its opening give little hint of the tumult to come. A melancholy fugue emerges in the strings, decorated by solo flute. The fugue waxes passionate – near-Apocalyptic – and features immovable granite chords in the brass (see Stonehenge?). Its culmination is thrusting, brassy, and crammed with whole tone grandeur. We're not astonished when the movement fades to nothing, yet still feels completed – it could have ended here, the previous movements all faded away – but instead Vaughan Williams's power surges almost to the last note, amidst a whisper of harps.

Mabelle Young-Eun Park

Violin



Mabelle Young-Eun Park is a German-born violinist from South Korea. Mabelle is the Strings Prize winner of 2025 Royal Over-Seas League Competition and was awarded the prestigious Prince's Prize in 2025 along with the Prudi Hoggarth Audience Prize. She is currently on the Artist Diploma programme with full scholarship at the Royal College of Music as a Sue Balston Scholar, studying with Radu Blidar.

Mabelle is a recipient of awards including the Parikian Award, Craxton Memorial Trust Award, Musicians' Company Goldman Award and Clarence Myerscough Award. She is a 2025-27 Making Music Phillip and Dorothy Green Young Artist, and she is grateful for the generous support of the Countess of Munster Trust, Leverhulme Arts Trust, Help Musicians UK and the Harbour Foundation.

She has performed in prestigious venues around the world including the Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall, Barbican Centre, Moscow International House of

Music and Carnegie Hall. In recent years, Mabelle has been invited to perform and participate in international music festivals such as the IMS Prussia Cove, Encuentro de Santander, Aldeburgh, Alpen Kammer, Hellensmusic and Aspen as a Polonsky Fellow. As part of the LSO String Experience Scheme, Mabelle has worked under Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Antonio Pappano and Thomas Adès with the London Symphony Orchestra in a series of concerts.

As an avid chamber musician, Mabelle has collaborated and performed with leading musicians such as Anthony Marwood, Guy Johnston and Bruno Delepelair. Founding member of the Regency String Quartet, Mabelle has been on the Sir Elton John Global Exchange Programme and have been selected as 2025/26 Kirckman Concert Society artists with her quartet.

Mabelle graduated Bachelor of Music and Master of Arts from the Royal Academy of Music with distinction and DipRAM under the tutelage of So-Ock Kim.

Felix Mendelssohn 1809 - 1847

Violin Concerto in E minor Op. 64



'People usually complain that music is so ambiguous, while words are understood by everyone. But for me it is the opposite... what the music I love expresses to me are thoughts not too indefinite for words, but rather too definite...'

'The trombone is too sacred for frequent use.'

'This is what I think art is and what I demand of it: that it pull everyone in, that it throws open the window of the soul.'

Felix Mendelssohn

'The Germans have four violin concertos. The greatest, most uncompromising is Beethoven's. The one by Brahms vies with it in seriousness. The richest, the most seductive, was written by Max Bruch. But the most inward, the heart's jewel, is Mendelssohn's.'

Joseph Joachim,
dedicatee of Brahms' violin concerto

Mendelssohn – famously no slouch – composed his first violin concerto at just thirteen, and his first real masterpiece, the string octet, only five years later. (Which reminds me of P.G. Wodehouse: 'I was writing at the age of five. I don't know what I was doing before then. Just loafing, I suppose.') This particular violinistic esprit was first inspired by the composer's affection for Ferdinand David, a colleague from when both were teenagers. Their friendship never flagged: upon his 1835 appointment to the eminent Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Mendelssohn employed David as leader – and, in July 1938, a letter to him marks the first mention of the work in question. 'It is nice of you to press me for a violin concerto. I have the liveliest desire to write one for you and, if I have a few propitious days, I will bring you something... One in E minor keeps running through my head – the opening gives me no peace.'

However, only a year on, a dejected Mendelssohn complained, 'this task is not an easy one. You ask that it should be



Ferdinand David

brilliant, but how can anyone like me do this?' (With ease, Ferdinand David might well have thought – however, Mendelssohn's Third symphony intervened, along with a period of unhappiness in Berlin, while working for King Frederick William IV.)

A true friend, David stepped up. He not only provided technical advice, but also composed the cadenza and proved a source of constant encouragement. ('This is going to be something great!'

he told Mendelssohn, 'There has only been one truly great violin concerto – now there will be two!' 'I am not competing with Beethoven,' was the composer's wry response.) The concerto wasn't completed until 1844, by which time Mendelssohn was unluckily too ill to attend. Despite this drawback, this perfect, and perfectly balanced, work has proved a violinistic staple ever since.

The concerto subverts convention from its opening – the soloist arrests the orchestral introduction, as if impatient to get going. Just as startlingly, Mendelssohn promotes the cadenza to shortly before the recapitulation, instead of at the very end of the first movement. Daringly, the work is through-composed: a solo bassoon note links the opening movement to the lyrical Andante – the second movement merges with the finale.

The first movement is thrusting, dynamic, passionate and all that a first movement should be. There's a subtle feel of a 'Song without words' in the dream-like second. This gives way to a fairy-dusted, impishly virtuosic finale, where suggestions of Mendelssohn's own *Midsummer Night's Dream* abound.

George Gershwin 1898 - 1937

An American in Paris

'I frequently hear music in the heart of noise.'

'When I'm in my normal mood, music drips from my fingers.'

George Gershwin



Since his early teens, Gershwin had been besotted with Harlem jazz – then, the centre of the jazz universe. In fact, his first compositional attempt – a disaster at its only performance – was a one-act opera about a Harlem night-club. (Entirely undeterred, his second was Rhapsody in Blue.)

Success soon lined young Gershwin's pockets and, in early 1928, he and his family toured Europe, where he enjoyed exchanging ideas with many of the major European 'names', including Ravel, Berg, Prokofiev, Milhaud, and Poulenc. (He's even rumoured to have dug around the detritus of Paris junk shops in search of authentically Parisian car horns for the just-commissioned American in Paris!) Despite this, New York remained his primary inspiration. Back home, Gershwin refreshed his memories of the view from his apartment over the Hudson. 'I love that river,' he wrote,

'and I thought of how often I had been homesick for the sight of it, and then the idea struck me of using that homesickness, the blues, in my piece.'

In his own words, 'The gay opening is followed by a rich "blues" with a strong rhythmic undercurrent. Our American, perhaps after strolling into a café and having a few drinks, has suddenly succumbed to a spasm of homesickness...

The "blues" rise to a climax, followed by a coda in which we return to all the exuberance of the bubbling opening... Finally, street noises and French atmosphere wax triumphant.'

Other influences include Debussy and Ravel – there's even a cheeky allusion to a Bach 'air' in the bluesy trumpet theme. But there's science at work, along with artistry. The pacing, orchestration and organisation of the work are glorious. No question... That glance over the Hudson inspired a perfect gem.

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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Andrew Condon
Liz Swaffield
Kathryn Hayman
Nick Georgiadis

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Jane Ferdinando
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Monika Molnar
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Saturday 16th May 2026 7.30pm

Ravel La Valse

Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No 1

Soloist - Rustam Khanmurzin

da Falla Three-Cornered Hat

