



BSO

**BR●MLEY
SYMPH●NY
●RCHES●TRA**

TCHAIKOVSKY

**Music Director - Adrian Brown
Leader - Clare Wibberley
Soloist - Rustam Khanmurzin**

**106th Season 2025 - 2026
Saturday 16th May 2026**

**Langley Park Centre for the
Performing Arts**

£2.00

PROGRAMME

Ravel La Valse

Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No 1

Soloist Rustam Khanmurzin

Interval - 20 Minutes

Refreshments are available in the dining hall

de Falla Three Cornered Hat

Unauthorised audio or video recording is not permitted

We are carrying out a short audience survey.
Please complete either the copy on your seat or
use the QR code here to do so online. Thank you!



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.

Maurice Ravel 1875 - 1937

La Valse



'I did my work drop by drop. It came out of me in pieces.'

'Music, as I feel it, must be emotional first and intellectual second.'

'We are dancing on the edge of a volcano,' - in his notes, during the composition of La Valse

Ravel

Ravel had planned *La Valse* as early as 1906, as a straight homage to Johann Strauss, tentatively entitling it 'Wien' (Vienna). (Who can imagine a different *La Valse*?) Instead, WWI intervened. Health issues exempted Ravel from the military, but he endured quite as much as he could bear while serving as an ambulance driver – during which period his mother unexpectedly passed away. During the war Ravel couldn't bring himself to compose, but when Diaghilev proposed *La Valse*, a *Poème chorégraphique* – which the impresario conceived as a hedonistic homage to Vienna, he was tempted enough to accept.

Once again, there was a toughish day at the office. Francis Poulenc was present when Ravel presented his new score to Diaghilev in 1916. As he wrote:

'Ravel arrived with his music under his arm, and Diaghilev said to him, in that nasal voice of his: 'Well now, my dear Ravel, how lucky we are to be hearing *La valse*.' And Ravel played *La Valse* with Marcelle Meyer, not very well maybe,

but anyway it was Ravel's *La Valse*. Now I knew Diaghilev very well...and I saw the false teeth begin to move, then the monocle, I saw he was embarrassed, I saw he didn't like it. When Ravel had got to the end, Diaghilev said, 'Ravel, it's a masterpiece...but it's not a ballet...It's the portrait of a ballet...It's the painting of a ballet.' I was twenty-two and, as you can imagine, absolutely flabbergasted. Ravel proceeded to give me a lesson in modesty which has lasted me all my life: he picked up his music quite quietly and, without worrying about what we all thought of it, calmly left the room.'

Ravel had just as much right to his confidence as had Tchaikovsky. As Ravel described it, 'Through swirling clouds, glimpses of waltzing couples appear. The clouds gradually disperse, revealing a vast hall filled with a whirling throng. The stage slowly brightens until, in a fortissimo burst, the full splendour of the chandeliers is ablaze. An imperial court around 1855.' The waltz taking shape – the oboe dances, the trumpet rejoices,



Ravel's stunning orchestral colours to the fore. However, the tone soon darkens, permeating by a heartbeat-like pulse suggestive of winter. By the end, the music transforms into an apocalyptic vision, heralded by what Manuel Rosenthal described as a 'cry of anguish – a harrowing, highly dramatic premonition of death.' The dreamy opening swirls into an energetic and irresistible climax whose violence suggests the whole edifice of Austrian society – righteousness, sense, reason – disintegrating. The violated waltz becomes grotesque, distorted, warped, dismembered. Its careening dance hints at a climax and backs away, several times, at last building to a clashing orgiastic explosion and to one long shudder of a conclusion.

La Valse has been (brilliantly) described as a deconstructed Strauss waltz – itself widely considered a relic of a bygone era. Here, Ravel uses it as a symbol of a civilization grown decadent, doomed, and in thrall to Austro-German militarism. Having said which, when directly asked,

by Maurice Emmanuel, about its meaning, the composer nervously dismissed any political element, writing, rather defensively, 'I believe this work needs to be illuminated by footlights, as it has elicited so much strange commentary. While some discover an attempt at parody, indeed caricature, others categorically see a tragic allusion in it—the end of the Second Empire, the situation in Vienna after the war, etc.' Despite this, most musicologists and Ravel biographers believe that Ravel was subconsciously processing the killing fields of WWI in his most sensational and brilliant work.

As for Diaghilev, his initial judgement was proven just as wrong as Rubenstein's had been in relation to the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto. La valse has been choreographed twice – by George Balanchine and Frederick Ashton. While Ashton's is rather more nuanced, Balanchine clearly embraced the 'dance of death' school of thought, with his ballerina first seduced and later destroyed by his sinister male dancer.

Rustam Khanmurzin

Piano



Rustam Khanmurzin is a rising pianist who is gaining recognition as both a soloist and collaborative artist across Eurasia. He was previously a Junior Fellow at the Royal College of Music, and a Young Artist of The Musicians' Company of the City of London.

Rustam has performed at major international festivals, including the El Lied Festival Victoria de los Ángeles, MusicFest Perugia, Festival d'Auvers-sur-Oise, Rheingau Musik Festival, Oxford Song Festival, St Endellion Festival in Cornwall. He has appeared on Radio France Musique and released two CDs with the Melodiya label. As a soloist, he has worked with several orchestras, such as The Elgar Sinfonia of London, Moscow State Symphony Orchestra, Ulsan Philharmonic Orchestra in South Korea, and the Karaganda Philharmonic Orchestra in Kazakhstan.

He won 1st Prize at the Royal College of Music Concerto Competition, and also received prizes at the Paul Badura-Skoda International Piano Competition in Vienna, the CLAMO International Piano Competition in Murcia and Asia-Pacific F. Chopin Piano Competition in Daegu.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky 1840 - 1893

Piano Concerto No 1 in B-flat minor Op. 23



'...You see, my dear friend, I am made up of contradictions, and I have reached a very mature age without resting upon anything positive, without having calmed my restless spirit either by religion or philosophy. Undoubtedly I should have gone mad but for music.'

If that condition of mind and soul, which we call inspiration, lasted long without intermission, no artist could survive it. The strings would break and the instrument shattered into fragments.'

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

The first mention of Tchaikovsky's iconic piano concerto occurs in a note to his brother that 'the piano concerto was going with much difficulty and rather badly.' Yet only a few months later, Tchaikovsky played the entire work for the influential Nikolay Rubinstein, whom he hoped would introduce it to the world. In his own words:

'I played the first movement. Never a word, never a single remark. Oh, for a single word, for friendly abuse, for anything to break the silence!...But Rubinstein never opened his lips. Once I had played through the entire concerto a torrent broke from Rubinstein's lips, finally bursting into the fury of a Jupiter. My concerto was worthless, absolutely unplayable; the passages so broken, so disconnected, so unskilfully written, that they could not even be improved; the work itself was bad, trivial, common; here and there I had stolen from other people; only one or two pages were worth anything; all the rest had better be destroyed. I left the room without a word. Presently Rubinstein came to me and repeated that my concerto was impossible but said if I would suit it to his requirements he would bring it out at his concert. "I shall not alter a single note," I replied.'

Later, Rubinstein repented, and did in fact champion the work. However, his

initial judgement still spelled curtains for a Russian premiere – especially with the Russian establishment's dubiousness about Tchaikovsky's temperament and sexuality. In the end, Hans von Bülow was persuaded to debut the 'unplayable' work in Boston – where it went down a storm.

Why is it so brilliant? For a start, the first movement is revolutionary, incorporating a melody Tchaikovsky claimed he copied from a Ukrainian street beggar and an out-of-place cadenza. The cadenza is improvisatory and deeply-felt – while the stormy development features not one but two bravura climaxes.

The second movement also stars a dreamy solo flute, while the pianist sidesteps into a cadenza of pyrotechnics based on a cabaret song ('Il faut s'amuser, danser, et rire') – a favourite encore of Tchaikovsky's one-time fiancée, Désirée Artôt.

Tchaikovsky also flouts conventions in the finale, deploying a folk tune with off-beats. At the climax, the violins remember the first movement – while, in place of a formal final cadenza, the orchestra reprises the second theme. Beyond all this, the work is shockingly, gloriously, remorselessly melodious from beginning to end.

Manuel de Falla 1876 - 1946

Three-Cornered Hat



'The poem, the song, the picture, is only water drawn from the well of the people, and it should be given back to them in a cup of beauty so that they may drink - and in drinking understand themselves.'

Emmanuel de Falla

'I have learned from the maestro Falla, who is not only a great artist but also a saint, a model lesson.'

Federico García Lorca

In the early 1900s Serge Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes were particular favourites of the Spanish King, Alfonso XIII. Diaghilev, who was forever hungry for new ballets, tempted Falla with a commission based on a feather-light novella by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón. The plot rehearses the ancient theme of a worthy miller and his wife, the latter pursued by a lecherous older patrician – a pompous magistrate whose 'three-cornered hat' signifies his high status. If Diaghilev was hoping Falla would produce something scandalous (see Stravinsky's Rite of Spring or Nijinsky's staging of Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune) he was disappointed. The primly Catholic Falla altered Alarcón's characters, making the Miller's wife both virtuous and untemptable. The resulting ballet – despite the tuneful felicities of the score, its Spanish dance motives and Pablo Picasso's sets and costumes – failed to hit the headlines. Despite this,

The Three-Cornered Hat was a solid hit, and its success enabled the pious Falla and his sister to retire to Granada.

Part I

1. Introducción (Fanfare)
2. La tarde (The Afternoon)
3. Danza de la molinera (Dance of the Miller's Wife) (Fandango) — El corregidor — La molinera
4. Las uvas (The Grapes)

Part II

5. La noche (At Night): Danza de los vecinos (Dance of the Neighbors) (Seguidillas)
6. Danza del molinero (Dance of the Miller) (Farruca) — Escena (Allegretto) — Las coplas del cuco (The Cuckoo Couplets) (Nocturno)
7. Danza del corregidor (Dance of the Magistrate) (Minué) — Allegro
8. Danza final (Final Dance) (Jota)

Part One

The curtain rises on an Andalusian mill. The miller (trumpet call) is trying to teach his pet blackbird to chirp the time. The miller gets angry at the bird and his wife (flute solo) offers it a grape. The bird takes the grape and at last chirps twice correctly.

The magistrate appears (piccolo solo): he is taking a daily promenade with wife and bodyguard (timpani). When they depart, the pastoral music returns, while the magistrate sneaks back to ogle the miller's pretty wife (bassoon solo). The miller notices and decides to play a trick on him, hiding while his wife dances the famous fandango. The magistrate reacts with a ponderously flirtatious bassoon solo. The miller's wife – continuing the joke – leads him on, first with an elegant interlude for strings, then with an offer of fresh grapes (harp, trills in violins and woodwind). Eventually the miller jumps out of his hiding place and the magistrate scuttles away.

Part Two

That evening the miller is entertaining guests with dancing, a long seguidilla followed by his solo dance, a ferruca (solo horn and cor anglais). He is interrupted by the magistrate's bodyguard, come to arrest him on a trumped-up charge (prominent piano). The miller arrested, his wife falls asleep (solo clarinet). The magistrate seizes his opportunity (bassoon solo followed by a rather old-fashioned minuet), but the miller's wife flees his advances and then the exhausted magistrate himself falls asleep.

From this point the action turns entirely slapstick, as the miller escapes from prison and – by way of revenge – attires himself in the sleeping magistrate's clothes with the intention of seducing the magistrate's own wife. The bodyguards arrest the wrong person, the magistrate dons the miller's clothes, the miller's wife turns up unexpectedly – really, it's *Marriage of Figaro* on steroids. In the end, every deception is admitted, the magistrate is publicly ridiculed, and there's a tumultuous celebratory dance for the worthy working classes.

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 14th November 2026 7.30pm

Sibelius Symphony No 3

Britten Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings

Soloists - Nick Allen and Roy Banks

Britten Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra

Saturday 23rd January 2027 7.30pm

Mussorgsky Night on a Bare Mountain

Barber Adagio for Strings

Dukas Sorcerer's Apprentice

Rimsky-Korsakov Schererazade

Tchaikovsky Cappricio Italien

Saturday 6th March 2027 7.30pm

Schubert Symphony No 3

Mahler Symphony No 10

Saturday 15th May 2027 7.30pm

Chabrier Gwendoline Overture

Gipps Oboe Concerto

Soloist - Izy Cheesman

Brahms Symphony No 1

