

Ealing Symphony Orchestra

JANÁČEK *Sinfonietta*
Richard STRAUSS *Four Last Songs*

Traditional Jamaican arr. Martin JONES *Chi Chi Bud, Oh!*
SCRIABIN *Symphony No. 3 in C minor, Op. 43, "Le Divin poème"*

Ealing Symphony Orchestra
John Gibbons Musical Director
Peter Nall Leader
Anna Gorbachyova-Ogilvie Soprano

Saturday, 18 May 2024 · 7pm
St Barnabas Church, Pitshanger Lane, W5 1QG

Concert Programme



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John Gibbons is a multi-faceted musician: conductor, composer, arranger, pianist, and organist, who works across musical genres including opera, cathedral music, and recording neglected British orchestral music.

John has conducted most of the major British orchestras including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, and, most recently, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

He has recorded orchestral works by Nikos Skalkottas with the Philharmonia Orchestra, the string concertos of Arthur Benjamin with the RSNO on the Dutton Epoch label, four Mozart Piano Concertos with Idil Biret — two with the London

Mozart Players and two with the Worthing Symphony Orchestra, Bruckner's Ninth Symphony (with a completion of the finale by Nors Josephson) with the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra on the Danacord label, and William Wordsworth's Orchestral Works (Vol. 1) on the Toccata label.

Renowned for his adventurous programming, John has given many world and UK premieres of both new pieces (most recently the Triple Concerto by Errollyn Wallen with Kosmos Ensemble and WSO in Chichester Cathedral) and neglected works including the Third Orchestral Set by Charles Ives, the Violin Concerto by Robert Still, and both the Second Piano Concerto and Violin Concerto by William Alwyn. His performance of George Lloyd's Fourth Symphony with the Ealing Symphony Orchestra drew an ecstatic review from Simon Heffer in the Daily Telegraph.

John recorded Laura Rossi's film score *The Battle of the Ancre* (Pinewood Studios) and conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra in her score to *The Battle of the Somme* at the live screening in the Royal Festival Hall to commemorate the centenary of the ending of this battle.

Overseas work includes Walton's First Symphony with the George Enescu Philharmonic as well as concerts with the Macedonian Philharmonic, the Çukurova Symphony (Turkey), the Portuguese Symphony Orchestra, and performances of Malcolm Arnold's Fourth Symphony in Latvia and Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* in Worms, Germany.

John Gibbons studied music at Queens' College, Cambridge, the Royal Academy of Music, and the Royal College of Music, winning numerous awards as conductor, pianist, and accompanist. He assisted John Eliot Gardiner on the 'Leonore' project and the recording of music by Percy Grainger, and was Leonard Slatkin's second conductor for a performance of Charles Ives's Fourth Symphony with the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam.

He has conducted numerous opera productions at Opera Holland Park with particular emphasis on Verdi, Puccini, and the verismo composers, including Mascagni's *Iris* and Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur*. He conducted *La Bohème* for the Spier Festival in South Africa, toured *Hansel &*

Gretel around Ireland with Opera Northern Ireland and Opera Theatre Company, and conducted a number of productions for English Touring Opera. John's orchestral reductions include Walton's *Troilus & Cressida* for Opera St Louis, Missouri and Karl Jenkins's *Stabat Mater*.

John, a renowned communicator with audiences, is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Vice-Chairman of the British Music Society, and Choral Director at Clifton Cathedral. His own music has been performed in various abbeys and cathedrals as well as at the Southbank, London. ||

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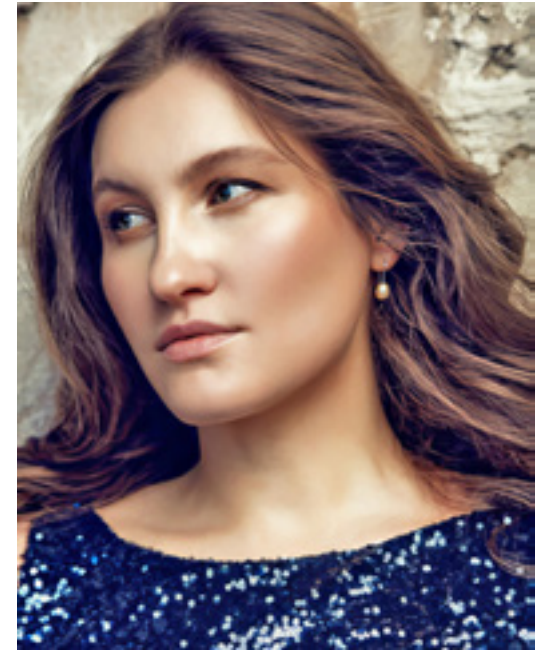
Anna Gorbachyova-Ogilvie Soprano

Siberian born soprano Anna Gorbachyova-Ogilvie graduated with distinction from the Royal Academy Opera of the Royal Academy of Music in London. Anna also studied at the Royal College of Music in London and prior to that she gained her BA in International Relations from the Faculty of International Relations of the Ural State University in Yekaterinburg.

Anna's engagements from 2018 to 2020 include Alcina in Handel's *Alcina* in Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow (2018, 2019), Cleopatra in Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egypt* in Teatr Wielki Stanisława Moniuszki Opera Poznań. Anna also performed the title role in Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* with the Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn in Switzerland and in Opéra de Tours in France, Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* in the Yekaterinburg State Opera House and Francesca in Rachmaninov's *Francesca da Rimini* at the Ealing Festival of Music and Film.

From 2010 until 2017 Anna sang the role of Musetta in Puccini's *La Bohème* at the Hungarian State Opera, the title role in *La Calisto* by Cavalli at the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music, Nymph in L. Auerbach's *Gogol* in the Theatre an der Wien, the title role in *Le Rossignol* by Stravinsky in Lyon National Opera, Musetta in *La Bohème* at Theater an der Wien, Zhou in *Kommilitonen!* (Young Blood!) by P. Maxwell Davies and the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* with the Royal Academy Opera, Madeline in *La Chute de la Maison Usher* at the Welsh National Opera, the First Nymph in Dvořák's *Rusalka* at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Katya in *The Passenger* at the Michigan Opera Theatre and the Florida Grand Opera in the USA.

Anna performed as a soloist with wide-ranging repertoire at such international venues and festivals as Palau de



la Música Catalana in Barcelona, Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow, Varaždín International Baroque Evenings Festival, Herne International Festival of Early Music, Yekaterinburg State Philharmonics, Kremlin in Moscow, the 9th International Chamber Music Festival in Nuremberg, Bath International Music Festival, Ulverstone International Music Festival, London Handel Festival and cooperated with such orchestras and chamber orchestras as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, American Bach Soloists in San Francisco, Pratum Integrum, Moderntimes_1800.

Anna has won numerous awards including the First Prize and the Audience Prize at the First International Singing Competition for Baroque Opera Pietro Antonio Cesti in Innsbruck, Austria (2010) and the First Prize at the 42nd International Antonín Dvořák Vocal Competition in Czech Republic (2007). ||

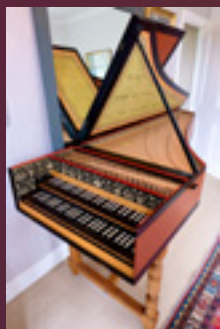
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Programme Notes

Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)

Sinfonietta

Fanfare (Allegretto — Allegro maestoso)
The Castle (Andante — Allegretto)
The Queen's Monastery (Moderato)
The Street (Allegretto)
The Town Hall (Andante con moto)

Leoš Janáček was born in Moravia, in what was to become Czechoslovakia following World War I. From the age of ten, he was a chorister at the Augustin monastery in Brno, and he later studied organ and composition in Prague, Leipzig and Vienna. Returning to Brno in 1881, he was active in the city for the rest of his life, as a composer, folklorist, conductor and as a teacher at the Conservatory, where he greatly influenced the next generation of Czech composers.

Like many composers of the early 20th century, Janáček believed in the artistic importance of folksongs, and so collected traditional music and also notated Moravian speech patterns. His early works revealed an interest in Russian literature and music, but in the last decades of his life he was increasingly influenced by the French school of impressionist composers. That idiom is clearly reflected in his most popular work, the *Sinfonietta*, written two years before his death.

The *Sinfonietta* was composed and premiered in 1926, dedicated to the Czechoslovakian armed forces. Janáček had been inspired by a military band a few years earlier, and requested that the *Sinfonietta*'s large brass section should sound as rough, brash and bright as an army band. The entire work is characterised by abrupt changes in mood, colour and ideas, but unified by repeated musical cells. His desire to create a distinctly Czech sound in classical music — using instruments like the xylophone and local modes and speech rhythms —



was paired with intricate polyrhythms and close dissonances to create a complex and dynamic sound.

The opening movement is a bold and triumphant fanfare for thirteen brass instruments and timpani, written originally as the opening for a youth gymnastics festival in Brno. Janáček wrote that it was intended to express “contemporary free man, his spiritual beauty and joy, his strength, courage and determination to fight for victory.” The following movements each represent a feature of Janáček’s hometown, Brno. The second movement starts with rapid wind ostinati, but has more lyrical episodes featuring the oboe and flute. The third movement opens with an intense and mournful theme that starts in the strings, but this is interrupted by a flurry of flutes and an almost snarky trombone tune. The fourth movement depicts a joyful street — short fanfares are interrupted gruffly by the cellos and basses. The finale opens calmly but soon becomes triumphant, the opening fanfare now decorated with swirling figures in the strings and wind. ||

Programme note by Martin Jones.

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

Four Last Songs

Richard Strauss wrote songs throughout his long life and it is fitting that his last complete composition should have been *September*, the third of the group now known as the *Vier letzte Lieder*. It was completed on 20 September 1948. The title *Four Last Songs* is not Strauss's own, but taken together, the songs represent not only a summation of his style, using the large orchestral forces of his youth now handled with masterly restraint, but also a mood of conscious and deliberate farewell. Strauss never heard the songs performed; he died on 8 September 1949. The first performance was given by Kirsten Flagstad with the Philharmonia Orchestra in the Royal Albert Hall on 22 May 1950.

The *Four Last Songs* came as the final crown to that marvellous period of late creativity that began in 1941 with Strauss's last and finest opera *Capriccio* and includes such masterpieces as the Horn Concerto No. 2, the Oboe Concerto, and *Metamorphosen*, his pain-wracked homage to a pre-war Germany gone forever. It celebrates also his passion for the soprano voice, not to mention his devotion to the romantic orchestra.

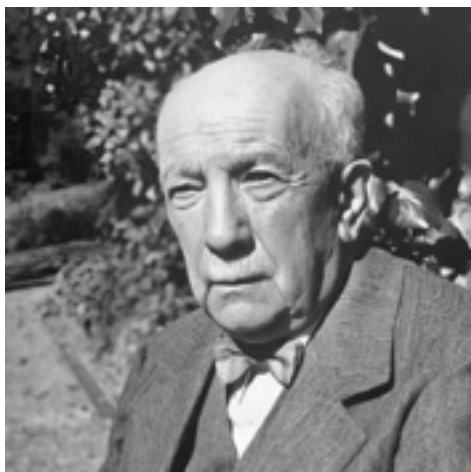
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Frühling (Herman Hesse)

In dämmrigen Grüften
träumte ich lang
von deinen Bäumen und blauen Lüften,
von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.

Nun liegst du erschlossen
in Gleiß und Zier,
von Licht übergossen
wie ein Wunder vor mir.

Du kennst mich wieder,
du lockst mich zart,
es zittert durch all meine Glieder
deine selige Gegenwart!



Three of the poems are by Strauss's contemporary, the poet and novelist Herman Hesse, who was noted for a spiritual, even mystical, vein in his writings. The last song sets words by the great 19th-century German romantic Joseph von Eichendorff. In setting these pieces, Strauss has left us music that is almost unbearably beautiful — sumptuous in its harmony, sensuous in its long melodic lines, and aglow with a lifetime's mastery of the craft of composition. ||

*Adapted from a note in the
Music Bank of Making Music.*

Spring

In shadowy crypts
I dreamt long
of your trees and blue skies,
of your fragrance and birdsong.

Now you appear
in all your finery,
drenched in light
like a miracle before me.

You recognise me,
you entice me tenderly,
all my limbs tremble
at your blessed presence!

Beim Schlafengehen (Herman Hesse)

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,
soll mein sehnliches Verlangen
freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.

Hände, laßt von allem Tun,
Stirn vergiß du alles Denken,
alle meine Sinne nun
wollen sich in Schlummer senken.

Und die Seele unbewacht
will in freien Flügen schweben,
um im Zauberkreis der Nacht
tief und tausendfach zu leben.

//

September (Herman Hesse)

Der Garten trauert,
kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
still seinem Ende entgegen.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt
nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt
in den sterbenden Gartentraum.

Lange noch bei den Rosen
bleibt er stehen, sehnt sich nach Ruh.
Langsam tut er die großen
müdgewordnen Augen zu.

//

Im Abendrot (Joseph von Eichendorff)

Wir sind durch Not und Freude
gegangen Hand in Hand,
vom Wandern ruhen wir beide
nun überm stillen Land.

Rings sich die Täler neigen,
es dunkelt schon die Luft.
Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen
nachträumend in den Duft.

Tritt her, und laß sie schwirren,
bald ist es Schlafenszeit.
Daß wir uns nicht verirren
in dieser Einsamkeit.

O weiter, stiller Friede!
So tief im Abendrot.
Wie sind wir wandermüde —
Ist dies etwa der Tod?

Falling Asleep

Now the day has wearied me,
my ardent longing shall receive
happily the starry night
like a sleepy child.

Hands, stop all your work,
brow, forget all of your thinking,
all my senses now
yearn to sink into slumber.

And my unfettered soul
longs to soar up freely,
into night's magic sphere
to live there deeply and a thousandfold.

September

The garden is in mourning,
cool rain seeps into the flowers.
Summertime shudders,
quietly awaiting his end.

Leaf after golden leaf falls
from the tall acacia tree.
Summer smiles, astonished and feeble,
at this dying dream of a garden.

For just a while he carries
beside the roses, yearning for repose.
Slowly he closes
his weary eyes.

At Sunset

We have through sorrow and joy
gone hand in hand,
from our wanderings, let us rest
now in this quiet land.

Around us, the valleys bow,
the day is darkening already.
Two larks soar upwards
dreamily into the light air.

Come close, and let them fly,
soon it will be time for sleep.
Let's not lose our way
in this solitude.

O vast, tranquil peace!
So deep in the sunset.
How weary we are of wandering —
Is this perhaps death?

English translations by Richard Partridge.

Keel Watson (1964–2023)



Jo Boswell

Chair, ESO

Tonight's performance is dedicated to Keel Watson, a cherished member of the ESO family, having performed with the Orchestra on several occasions both as a soloist but also in the trombone section. Following the announcement in November 2023 of his untimely death, tributes poured in from around the classical music world and beyond, showing both enormous affection for his warm and generous character as well as tremendous admiration for his operatic talents.

Keel was born in 1964 in Greenford, the only child of Jamaican parents Calda and Frank Watson, who had arrived in Britain in the 1950s as part of the Windrush generation.

Educated at Ealing Junior School, Keel also attended the Caribbean School at Oaklands Primary School in Hanwell on Saturday mornings, as his parents were keen that he should explore his Jamaican heritage. There he

learnt to sing Caribbean folk songs. One day in the school assembly when the music teacher was absent, Keel volunteered to sing 'Chi Chi Bud Oh', a song about the birds of Jamaica. The applause and adulation that followed this first ever public performance had him hooked. As Keel described it "There were perks: no more being bullied, no more being punched, the girls actually talking to me like I was someone. There are people who do not know my name but after over 40 years still remember the name of the song I sang and call me by that name."

In 1975 he moved to Hounslow Manor School and started attending the Boys' Brigade in Northfields where he continued to sing, but also learnt trumpet and music theory. A few years later he moved onto trombone, joining the Hounslow Wind Band and subsequently the Ealing Youth Orchestra. By this time, he was receiving trombone tuition from Leon Taylor, the principal trombonist with the English National Opera, who helped him achieve distinction in his Grade 8 exam. He went on to study Voice and Trombone at the Trinity College of Music where he came to the realisation that he should pursue a singing career.

He made his debut with the Royal Opera in *Billy Budd* in 2000 and has appeared



with the ENO, Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera and Opera Holland Park, as well as numerous performances abroad.

Keel first performed with the ESO as a soloist in 2016 in a performance of excerpts from Puccini's operas. His thundering appearance as the menacing Scarpia, walking from the back of St Barnabas to the stage, is one of those spine-tingling musical moments that, once heard, is never forgotten. He returned a couple of years later to perform the role of Porgy in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, which is also a treasured memory for all those involved.

ESO Music Director, John Gibbons, who worked with Keel many times over thirty years said: "Members of the Orchestra were really keen to pay a tribute to him, and it is fitting that we are remembering him with a programme of repertoire that features the trombones so prominently." //

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In Keel's Own Words

His contribution to
the ESO's Centenary Book

I had heard of the Ealing Symphony Orchestra long before I even thought of ever joining its esteemed ranks. I knew John Gibbons in the days of Opera Lirica. The day came to 'bite the bullet' and do a concert with the ESO, performing the concert version of *Porgy and Bess* as one of the principal singers, but once at the rehearsal, the memories of being in an orchestral setting again grew like a Phoenix from the flames, and I was already hooked on the idea of going back into the melee of a band. My chance eventually came about two years later when I was invited by John to do Scriabin's Third Symphony.

Meeting 'The Crew' (Martin, Felix, Hywel, David, and Alan) was a very major learning curve for me to integrate into the scheme of things. I have enjoyed the notion of be-

ing the 'Nanki-Poo' player (check *The Mikado*) and the best concert for me was being in the trombone section when Sheku Kanneh-Mason came and performed the Elgar Cello Concerto (his first public gig of the piece). I look forward to so many more concerts with the ESO (work permitting) and hope I can live up to the expectations of the Orchestra.

//

Martyn, Felix, David, Hywel and Alan
Heavy Brass Section, ESO

Despite his undoubtable star quality and charisma, Keel was also at home being 'just part of the band'. There's a change of gear moving to the back of an orchestra and the differences in discipline in being part of a section rather than a soloist — he spoke once of needing to "disengage my opera brain in order to get my trombone brain engaged".



Keel was always a thoughtful, enthusiastic, and diligent part of the team who definitely didn't want any special treatment when he was in trombone-mode — he'd disarm with self-deprecating charm, generously complimenting others in the section on their playing or joking about missing an entry or splitting a note. ➤

Tribute to Keel Watson

He had a good line in trombonist schtick and an enthusiastic geekiness for trombone hardware, as well as the requisite maverick sense of humour often found in the farther reaches of the brass section...

Keel was an absolute pleasure to play and spend time with; we miss our friend and are pleased and honoured to offer tonight's programme in tribute to his memory — a concert we know he would have enjoyed! ||

//

During lockdown the ESO held weekly virtual meetings in lieu of our Thursday evening rehearsals. In January 2021 John Gibbons interviewed Keel for one of these 'socials'. Keel was the master of the anecdote, and one such story was how he discovered that Martyn Brabbins was a fellow trombonist — Keel had taken his trombone to an ENO rehearsal as he was due to join our ESO rehearsal later that day.

Martyn Brabbins

Orchestra Conductor and former Music Director of English National Opera

I clearly recall Keel walking in to the Three Mills studios out in Bromley-by-Bow with Conn trombone case in hand. Rehearsals for Fiona Shaw's production of *The Marriage of Figaro* were underway and Keel was getting himself immersed in the role of Bartolo.

We got talking trombone, and all came clear. He and I, as students, studied trombone with the various members of the



ENO orchestra trombone section. Keel with Leon Taylor and Roger Brenner, me with Les Lake. A formidable section it was too!

I was really touched by the way Keel enthused about the Ealing Symphony Orchestra. So typical of Keel — no airs and graces, just honest humanity and warmth, for his colleagues there and for music.

We both also shared a passion for the work of ENO. I was Music Director at the time of *Figaro*, and I thought that a little PR video of Keel and me playing our trombones might catch a little attention. But that meant I had to get my lapsed embouchure back in to some kind of shape...! Little by little some muscles were revived and Keel and I recorded — a one-take wonder I seem to recall — one lunchtime in the Friends Meeting House, the arrangement I had thrown together of an aria from *Figaro*. We had fun, we laughed, we even rehearsed a little!

I remember Keel as a friend, and a special human being. A singer of great natural musicianship, and a presence of infinite warmth and wisdom. A special person, missed by all who knew him. ||

//

John Gibbons

Musical Director, ESO

I first met Keel in 1991 when we were both at the start of our operatic careers. I was assistant conductor with Opera Lirica and its founder Joe Vandernoot, performing operas in Holland Park at the behest of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. Eventually these independent opera companies were replaced by Opera Holland Park.

Keel first appeared as Monterone in Verdi's *Rigoletto* (August 1991), returning two

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Tribute to Keel Watson

years later to play Osmin in Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. We quickly became firm friends and as we lived quite close to each other I would often give Keel a lift home after rehearsals or shows. We laughed a great deal and spent a long time putting the world to rights.

Looking back over nearly 35 years of programmes, I recall concerts from the early years of our friendship — *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with Meistersingers in Turnham Green, Bach with East Herts Choral Society in Cheshunt — through to concerts with Ealing Symphony Orchestra and St Albans Chamber Choir.

Working together for over 30 years a number of occasions stand out in my memory:

In 1998 Keel sang my 'super-condensed' concert version of Bizet's *Carmen* with Milton Keynes Chorale, the Danesborough Chorus in a programme, Wild Nights with *Carmen*, that also included John Adams's amazing *Harmonium*. With much rehearsal time needed for the John Adams, I was blessed that Keel, Yvonne Fontane and Peter Jeffers were totally in tune with this concise telling of the opera's love triangle and utterly wowed the audience.

We worked together for Opera Holland Park in a rare outing for Verdi's *Stiffelio*. This was during a particularly strong heat wave, and John Rawnsley collapsed from the excessive heat mid-way through Act One. After a pause to check that John was going to be OK (his own GP was in the audience that night!) we made it to the first interval with me singing John's lines. At the interval, Keel, 'deeply moved' by my performance, generously stepped forward to sing the rest of John's role, from the side of

the stage. This typified the total musician, always willing to help others and work collaboratively.

The third key memory is a concert in Thame with Lord Williams Festival Chorus and Ealing Symphony Orchestra. Keel was the soloist in Rachmaninoff's *Spring Cantata*, brilliantly portraying the obsessive, cuckolded husband brooding during the frozen winter months about revengefully killing his unfaithful wife, until, with the sudden arrival of spring, his heart melts and he forgives his wife, to live happily ever after.

Keel's brooding performance was aided by the large axe, lodged in a large log that I had placed on a table between myself and Keel.



I was thrilled when Keel started playing trombone with Ealing Symphony Orchestra. He was so loved by the whole Orchestra and his untimely passing shocked us all. Tonight's performance, with trombones playing such a key role in Scriabin's Third Symphony, feels totally apt on this occasion of remembering our great friend and fellow musician. ||

Traditional Jamaican arr. Martin Jones (1947-)

Chi Chi Bud, Oh!

Martin Jones joined the cello section of Ealing Symphony Orchestra in 2015. He also plays double bass with the Windsor and Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra and accompanies the Parenthesis Choir of Reading on piano. He has composed throughout his life, but performances were rare until, following retirement from a scientific career, he joined London Composers Forum, since when several works for small forces have been presented. Martin's talent for orchestration was discovered by ESO in November 2022, when the orchestra performed his Suite: *Arctic Adventure*. So he was asked to put it to good use arranging this Caribbean song in memory of Keel Watson.

Keel Watson contributed to the book of ESO Memories compiled for the Orchestra's centenary a couple of years ago. He recalled a time in Little Ealing Junior School when the assembly accompanist was away and the headmaster called for anyone to provide a musical item. Keel stood up and sang this little ditty, which he had learnt at Caribbean School, and discovered the thrill of receiving rapturous applause. A turning point in his life: he was a star even then.

In this arrangement the song has accompaniment of a few wind and brass (three trombones of course), a small string section and Caribbean percussion. The song consists of call-and-response, all about birds ("buds"). You might like to join in "Some o' dem a-holler some a-baw!!" second time through. ||

Programme note by Martin Jones.



Lyrics

Refrain (3x)

Chi chi bud, oh!

Some o' dem a-holler, some a-baw!!

Some a black bud,

Some o' dem a-holler, some a-baw!!

Some a grass bud,

Some o' dem a-holler, some a-baw!!

Some a white bud,

Some o' dem a-holler, some a-baw!!

Some a beeny bud,

Some o' dem a-holler, some a-baw!!

Refrain (2x)

Chi chi bud, oh!

Some a lagga-head,

Some o' dem a-holler, some a-baw!!

An a chickman chick,

Some o' dem a-holler, some a-baw!!

Some a John crow,

Some o' dem a-holler, some a-baw!!

An a docta bud,

Some o' dem a-holler, some a-baw!!

Refrain (2x)

Chi chi bud, oh!

Some o' dem a-holler, some a-baw!!



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Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915)

Symphony No. 3 in C minor, Op. 43, “Le Divin poème”

Prologue
Luttes (Struggles)
Voluptés (Delights)
Jeu divin (Divine Play)

Alexander Scriabin was a mystic. His music is mystical and esoteric and he has often been described as the first psychedelic composer. He certainly had an intense synaesthesia, the close association between the various senses. He had very individual ideas about colour, to the extent of inventing a colour organ, which produced coloured light in response to sounds. He also wanted sounds to produce perfumed smells. His music philosophy was the result of early involvement in religion, mysticism, theosophy, magic and occultism.

Scriabin maintained that there was no difference between harmony and melody: they are one and the same. He was obsessed by Russian bells, with their natural tempered, sharp overtones and infinite dissolving decibels of sound. For him they expressed the variety of emotions that the spirit and soul experience before the final achievement of ecstasy. Those overtones led him to his harmonic system and the “Promethean Mystic Chord”, which is derived from some of the more dissonant overtones. The chord embraces major, minor, diminished and augmented triads. In his last period, the traditional major and minor modes disappear, but not tonality.

The Third Symphony (“Divine Poem”) — is it a symphony or a tone poem? — is for a large orchestra including quadruple woodwind, eight horns and five trumpets. It is the longest work that Scriabin wrote, composed in a prolific year, 1903. It was premiered in 1905 and reached London



in 1913, conducted by Sir Henry Wood. Its Prologue and three movements are played without a break.

The slow and grandiose Prologue presents in its first three bars the three leading motifs of the Symphony: Divine Grandeur, the Summons to Man, and Fear to Approach (suggestive of Flight). These are combined throughout the work and some of the themes of later movements are derived from them.

The Prologue leads straight into the first movement proper, called “Luttes”, meaning struggles, in C minor. Scriabin’s explanation described the Ego split into “Man-God” and “Slave-Man”: free spirit versus spiritual imprisonment. The movement develops this interplay amongst three themes, often marked (in French) “mysterious” or “tragic”, derived from elements of the Prologue. Emotions are never less than intense, happiness turning to despair and returning to a yearning for the heroic. A vigorous coda leads to a reprise of the Prologue as a link to the next movement.

The slow movement is entitled “Voluptés”, meaning sensual pleasures. It enters a completely different world, a garden of erotic delights, sounds and colours.

Birds trill in a scene of exquisite natural beauty. There is delight in physical sensation. The initial theme transforms with “ever growing intoxication” reaching a trombone fanfare marked “élan sublime” (sublime fervour). An ecstatic passage of beautiful harmony leads to the final movement.

“Jeu Divin” (Divine Play), describes the release of the soul, the joy of freedom. Scriabin has discovered light in music, with passages marked “lumineux”. Now in the untroubled key of C major, there is energy, calm, and happiness, building to a

final apotheosis.

Whatever one may think of Scriabin’s mysticism, the Symphony can also be appreciated simply as a masterpiece of pure romantic music in a classical form. Themes are stated, developed and recapitulated in a classical manner. But Scriabin has added a new dimension through the unifying use of the various themes and their mystical meaning throughout the Symphony. ||

*Adapted from a programme note
by Dafydd Llewelyn.*

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Emily Gardner
Graham Ritchie
Ben Bucknall
Angela Hailstone
Adrian Hailstone

Violins II

John Martin
Luisa Page
Mark Robbins
Helena Gumley-Mason
Caroline Bush
Sze Ying Chan
Sarah Lough
Martin Burchette
Andrew Roberts
Laura Rossi

Violas

David Way
Clare Barker
James Greener*
Catherine Barlen
Álvaro Rebón*
Francesca Landauer
David Smith*
Sally Romary

Cellos

Rachael Bucknall
Alice Laddiman
Martin Jones
Mark Walker
Maya Stimson
Deborah Lovell
Alan Garriock

Paul Robinson
Richard Bolton

Basses

Jonny Hayward
Dominic Nudd
James Bartholomew
Tom Amgoni

Flutes

Peter Robertson
Caroline Swan
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Chris Reding

Oboes

Veronica Colyer*
Richard Partridge*
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Mike Phillips

Clarinets

Charlotte Swift
David Weedon*
Felicity Bardell
Barbara James

Bassoons

Gary Walker*
Steve Warrington
Izzy McGonigal
Nick Epton

Horns

Pamela Wise
Mary Saunders
Catherine Fox
Paul Jefferson
Matthew Kibble
Emma Syrus
Joey Walker
Katrina McGrath

Trumpets

Richard Davies*
Fergus Pateman
Nelson Falcó Cordes
Dan Burchette
Paul Raynor
Nick Smith
Matthew Harraghy
Daisy Mock
Ben Wong
Frank Burgum
Barry Yardley
William Longhurst

Bass Trumpets

Tash Strange
Dave Griffiths

Trombones

Martyn Humphreys
Felix McGonigal
Hywel Walters
David Fletcher

Tenor Tuba

Charlie Brighton
Guy Berry

Tuba

Guy Osborn

Percussion

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