



Ealing Symphony Orchestra

William WORDSWORTH Divertimento in D major, Op. 58
Sergei PROKOFIEV Piano Concerto No. 1 in D \flat major, Op. 10

Witold LUTOSŁAWSKI *Variations on a Theme of Paganini*
Josef SUK *Fairy Tale*, Op. 16

Ealing Symphony Orchestra
John GIBBONS Musical Director
Reuben MOISEY Piano

Saturday, 20 May 2023 · 7.30pm
St Barnabas Church, Pitshanger Lane, W5 1QG

Concert Programme



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John Gibbons Musical Director

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 RSO 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 Toccatà 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 par-

ticular 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. ||

Malcolm Gerrella Piano Tuning

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Reuben first hit national headlines and breakfast TV sofas at the tender age of 11 in the midst of an international playing career already encompassing Malaysia, Dubai, and Romania. It was Scrabble board rather than keyboard which had brought him to the nation's attention following his triumphant victory in the 2019 European under-21 Scrabble tournament, and he has since represented his country four times in World Scrabble Championships. Still the UK's top-rated under-18 player, he has also featured in an ITV documentary on child genius, beating "Chaser" Anne Hegerty on camera by over 200 points.

But alongside memorising long lists of seven-letter words he was always busy tinkling the ivories. He undertook his first concert tour at the age of 10 when, together with the rest of his family, he cycled from Land's End to John o' Groats, giving recitals along the way to raise money for Alzheimer's Society. With energy still to burn, Reuben later completed

the 2019 UK swimming marathon of 200 lengths, this time raising funds for Cancer Research UK.

After a few months' rest, during which he achieved Distinction in his ATCL piano diploma aged just 12, he finally swapped Scrabble scores for music scores in 2021, taking up a place at the Royal College of Music Junior Department where he studies with his father Alvin, who has taught him both Scrabble and piano since the age of three. There he immediately made his mark, winning the Ruby White piano prize in his first year, followed in 2023 by the Angela Bull prize, the RCM's top award for pianists. He has appeared in recitals at the College as both soloist and chamber musician, while also having huge success in competitive music festivals across London, winning a total of 21 first prizes.

As the winner of Ealing Festival's Susan Bicknell concerto award in 2022, tonight he makes his debut with orchestra in the 20th century repertoire lying closest to his heart. Sue was a fine viola player, a deeply committed and serious musician whose life was tragically cut short by cancer. Reuben's father had the honour and privilege of playing alongside her even during her final illness, giving tonight's performance in her memory a special poignancy.

Unless actually physically chained to his Steinway at home, he can be found at any hour of the day or night on the tennis courts of Bromley honing a fearsome forehand with the help of his current coach Richard Whichello, a former mentor of Emma Raducanu. Despite his already considerable achievements in the worlds of music, cycling, swimming, and board games, his principal ambition remains to emulate her spectacular achievement in a Grand Slam one day soon. Watch this space! ||

William Wordsworth (1908–1988)

Divertimento in D major, Op. 58

Overture

Air

Gigue

William Brocklesby Wordsworth (1908–1988) was born in London, a great-great-grandson of the famous poet's brother Christopher. He developed an all-consuming passion for music at the age of 12, when he became a chorister at St. Michael's, Croydon, and studied harmony, counterpoint, singing, and three instruments with the choirmaster, composer George Oldroyd. Later he studied for three years in Edinburgh with Sir Donald Tovey, from whom he acquired a respect for, and command of, traditional genres.

As a pacifist during the Second World War, he was consigned to work on the land, but still found time at night to compose, and achieved a breakthrough when his first String Quartet won a prize in 1941. His music displays a rugged individuality and an integrity that isolated him from the influence of the latest musical trends. Nevertheless, if the music demanded it, he would use quarter tones, or electronic tape. The best of his music is passionate, tough, direct, and sincere.

The fifteen or so post-War years were his most productive in terms of performances and recognition. It is from that period that this Divertimento comes. It was commissioned by Stewart Deas, then the University's Professor of Music, for the Jubilee concert of the University of Sheffield, and was premiered by the Hallé Orchestra under Barbirolli in 1955. It makes much use of the notes D-E-A-S (S = E \flat , Es in German), spelling out the surname of the dedicatee, as a germ idea.

The Overture begins with a slow intro-



duction that recurs at the end. The main section is an allegro, using the germ to develop an extended tune, with various subsidiary ideas.

The Air begins with an inversion of the germ idea, from which another extended melody is derived, heard first on the oboe. Hushed chords on divided strings add to the haunting quality of this movement.

The finale begins as a perky dance. Without losing tempo, the music becomes more serious and eventually more dramatic. The dance returns and leads to a jubilant conclusion.

Vaughan Williams declared that the Divertimento had originality without eccentricity and should perhaps be expanded into a four-movement symphony — a significant compliment. Wordsworth never took up the suggestion. ||

Adapted from a note by Paul Conway on the recording by Toccata Classics.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in D \flat major, Op. 10

Allegro brioso —
Andante assai —
Allegro scherzando

The first of Prokofiev's five piano concertos dates from his student days at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire and was considered by its creator to be his “first more or less mature work, in terms of both the conception and its realisation”. Certainly it was the work which established him both as a pianist and as a composer, for it was 21-year-old Prokofiev who played it at the premiere in the summer of 1912. Despite its being his own work, he took about six weeks to learn it — the notes were difficult and as this was his first appearance with an orchestra, he was keen to impress. Although rehearsals were ill-tempered, the performance was a success: even Prokofiev was satisfied. Critics, however, were divided, those in favour praising its “brilliance, wit, piquancy, and humour within a general frame of impressive splendour”, those against describing it as an “energetic, rhythmic, harsh, coarse, primitive cacophony that hardly deserves to be called music”.

The introductory section of this single-movement concerto, which is heard three times all told, is played by soloist and orchestra together and seems specially designed to make Prokofiev's first audience sit up and take notice. Its surging sequences of four beats to the bar seem to be saying: “Take note of me, I'm here to stay, Here's something new. Watch out for more...” and so on! The gaiety is quite irrepressible. The exposition includes a brilliant, humorous, scurrying figure introduced by the soloist and then a jumpy, impish theme played first by the soloist



and then imitated by flute and trumpet. The sense of movement is interrupted by a short, grumpy slower theme in the bass: someone clearly disapproves of all the fun though he is soon cast aside by a fast Rachmaninov-like episode. The andante provides lyrical contrast and already the sparkling, fantastic style typical of the later Prokofiev casts a magic spell over the proceedings. Then comes the development (*allegro scherzando*), cadenza, recapitulation and a final fling at the surging extrovert figure that gives the concerto its unity.

In 1914, when Prokofiev left the Conservatoire, he entered the competition for the Anton Rubinstein prize, playing this new concerto, reasoning that the jury would be “unable to judge whether he was playing well or not”. The jury headed by Glazunov awarded Prokofiev the prize.

It is entirely fitting that tonight this young man's concerto is played by a young soloist and competition winner. We are privileged to hear him. ||

Adapted from notes held in the Music Bank of Making Music.



Witold Lutosławski (1913–1994)

Variations on a Theme by Paganini

Witold Lutosławski was born and largely brought up in Warsaw. He entered the Warsaw Conservatory in 1927 by which time he had already started composing.

At the outbreak of the Second World War he was called up, briefly taken prisoner by the German Wehrmacht but escaped, and made his way back to Warsaw where he eked out a living playing duos with his contemporary composer, Panufnik. After the war he stayed on in Warsaw and like other composers needing to survive under a communist regime, wrote music that was overtly functional with influences from the rich tradition of Polish folk music. His more serious ‘bottom drawer’ music

saw him experiment with new techniques in composition that eventually brought him recognition in Western Europe.

Variations (written in 1941 and based on Paganini's well known Caprice No. 24 for solo violin) is one of the few works surviving from these early years of Lutosławski's compositions, as most were destroyed when he left the city with his mother just before the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. Lutosławski scored this version for orchestra and piano much later.

Although the theme is immediately recognisable, and the subsequent variations stick closely to the form of Paganini's original variations, Lutosławski immediately undercuts the standard harmonies with his own much richer variety which verges on the polytonal (two different keys at the same time!). This combined with rhythmic vitality verging on the jazzy makes for a colourful and entertaining work.

The work opens with a simple folk-inflected melody on flute over pizzicato strings followed by celesta, which is then subject to a kaleidoscopic series of variations. Lutosławski divided his score into eight sections, distinguished by different tempo markings: *Andante*, *Tempo 1*, *Allegro*, *Stresso*, *Tempo 1*, *Adagio*, *Andante*, *Allegro non troppo*. The work reveals the concision and economy which characterised Lutosławski's later style, together with a fascination with lucid textures. The theme reappears at the end fantastically decorated and is terminated by an abrupt three-bar coda. ||

Adapted from notes held in the Music Bank of Making Music.

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Josef Suk (1874–1935)

Fairy Tale, Op. 16

About the Constant Love of Radúz and Mahulena and Their Trials
Playing at Swans and Peacocks
Funeral Music
Runa's Curse and How It Was Broken by True Love

Josef Suk studied violin at the Prague Conservatoire. After graduation he took a course in composition with Antonín Dvořák and became his devoted follower. He also became his devoted son-in-law when he married Dvořák's daughter Otilie in 1898.

His grandson, also Josef Suk, became an outstanding violinist of the 20th century.

Pohádka, Op. 16 (Fairy Tale) is an orchestral suite from incidental music composed for Julius Zeyer's mythological drama *Radúz and Mahulena* in 1897–1898.

Zeyer's poem is a love story, combining classical fairy-tale motifs with mythological references. *Radúz and Mahulena*, from feuding kingdoms, fall in love, but have to face various challenges, including the sorcery of Queen Runa.

Suk started to write incidental music in 1897 and soon became very attached to the material. In the end he wrote overtures to each scene, intermezzos, as well as various vocal solos and choruses. The play was first performed on 6 June 1898 at the National Theatre in Prague. Because the chance of the play receiving regular staging was small, Suk decided to turn most of the music into a four-movement orchestral suite.

Suk began to work on the suite in September 1899 at his home in Křečovice and completed the first two movements by the end of the month. Because of extensive touring as second violinist in the Bohemian Quartet he didn't start to work on the third movement until the following February in Amsterdam. He completed the work back at home in June 1900. ||

Source: Wikipedia.

Tonight's spotlit star is our very own Deb Lovell. A talented cellist, Deb began learning in her school years, after being told that she was too small to learn the double bass!

Since 1987 she has been a dedicated member of the Orchestra and we are very pleased to have her, and her organisational skills, with us — along with her cheeky smile.

Prior to joining the ESO, Deb was a member of the Cornwall Youth Orchestra and the Penzance Orchestra — the latter's society being set up by significant musician William Barnes. It was Barnes's daughter who taught Deb the cello — small world!

She had also played in the same orchestra (the University of London Orchestra) as had our Paul Robinson and Martin Jones previously ... again, small world!

Deb was also one of the original Isle-of-Wighters — an (almost) yearly tradition between cellos and adopted cellos (now including a trombonist!) which has been going strong since 2002, when Tim and Anne Baker (who married after meeting in the ESO) invited the cello section to their home in St Helen's for a weekend of music-making, games, walks, and fun. The group has expanded since their first outing, so much so that their accommodation has extended from the house to include the flats (offered by Angela and Adrian Hailstone) across the Green as well! Traditions seeded from the first trip have continued to bloom, including a Saturday morning walk to the nearby National Trust Beach, a new tradition of completing a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle, and five hours of lovely cello melodies in the little church next to the house and breaks for cream teas and cakes. Occasionally the local residents have been able to watch the cellos perform, and there is always a supportive gathering of friends and family.



Deb tells us they have performed a variety of arrangements, with favourites including music by Villa-Lobos, Klengel, *Polonaise de concert*, Op. 14, by Popper, *Rigoletto* by Verdi, and *Hymn* by Davidov which they also performed at an ESO concert in St. Barnabas. The Isle of Wight trips are also well known for the amounts of food and wine consumed (with an emphasis on the latter ... or so it is said!).

At the ESO Deb loves the music, the friendship, the challenges to her playing, and the encouragement, particularly from the cello section. She says she has had too many special moments with the Orchestra to possibly name them all, but if she had to name a few she would choose the Ischia trip and concert, the first Children's concert at Ealing Green Church, and the rehearsals there with the homeless winter night shelter in the next room.

On concert days the lovely Deb takes responsibility for organising the interval refreshments, ensuring we have enough supplies of wines and juices, as well as marshalling a team of volunteers to serve them and clear up afterwards. We are most grateful to her for taking on this vital role in making our concerts a success. ||

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Thank you all.

Gary Walker
Friends Representative



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Jo Boswell*
Emily Gardner
Michiru Tsutsui
Anne-Marie Sheldon
Angela Hailstone
Adrian Hailstone
Graham Ritchie
Paul Grigg*

Violins II

Luisa Page
Mark Robbins
Helena Gumley-Mason
Kate Day
Mollie Koenigsberger
Andrew Roberts
Simon Morris
Sarah Lough
Veronica Colyer
Sze Ying Chan
Vincent Haastrup
Laura Rossi

Violas

David Way
Clare Barker
Catherine Barlen
Janet Robinson
Jenny Davies
James Greener*
Hilary Potts
Álvaro Rebón*
Matthew Newton

Cellos

Rachael Bucknall
Alice Laddiman
Emma Wakeling
Deborah Lovell
Martin Jones
Tessa Watson
Richard Bolton
Karin Hawkesworth
Maya Stimson
Paul Robinson
Barbara James

Basses

Emmanuel Adeshina
Jonny Hayward
Sam Lee

Flutes

Peter Robertson
Caroline Swan
Paul Darling

Oboes

Rachel Wickham
Mike Phillips
Richard Partridge*

Clarinets

David Weedon*
Felicity Bardell
Barbara James

Bassoons

Gary Walker*
Steve Warrington*
Nick Epton

Horns

Matthew Sackman
Mary Saunders
Catherine Fox
Paul Jefferson

Trumpets

Richard Davies
Fergus Pateman
Nelson Falcó Cordes

Trombones

Martyn Humphreys
Felix McGonigal
David Fletcher

Tuba

Guy Osborn

Percussion

Matthew Fletcher
Feargus Brennan
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