



Ealing Symphony Orchestra

Antonín DVOŘÁK *Hussite Overture*
Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Major

William WALTON Symphony No. 1 in B \flat Minor

Ealing Symphony Orchestra
John GIBBONS Musical Director
Maria MARCHANT Piano

Saturday, 8 July 2023 · 7.30pm
St Barnabas Church, Pitshanger Lane, W5 1QG

Concert Programme



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**Ealing Symphony
Orchestra**

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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. ||

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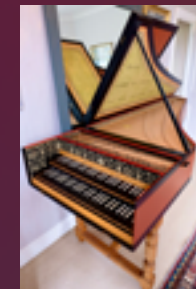
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Maria Marchant Piano

Steven Peskett Photography



'All Souls in Praise' on Premier Christian Radio in addition to TV appearances. Maria often collaborates with contemporary composers and her innovative lockdown project '7 Notes in 7 Days at 7pm' ran for 60 weeks, showcasing piano premieres by upcoming composers in weekly livestreams on social media. The project was awarded a Classical Music Digital Award, featuring in Gramophone Music Blog as well as on Radio 3 and in the international press. Maria's debut SOMM Recordings CD, *Echoes of Land & Sea*, was released in 2017 and her ground-breaking second album for SOMM, *Bantock Rediscovered*, reached No. 15 in the Official Classical Chart, featuring works never before recorded on disc. Maria won numerous piano competitions at Trinity Laban in addition to the Conducting Prize, before gaining the MMus in Advanced Piano Performance at the Royal College of Music as an RCM Hilda Anderson Deane Scholar and BBC Performing Arts Fund Award recipient. She also won the International Hindemith Competition, Berlin, and was selected as an artist on the Concordia, Tillett Trust and Park Lane Group schemes resulting in Wigmore and Southbank appearances.

Sussex-born Maria is a member of the Stradivarius Piano Trio and is pianist-in-residence at the Shipley Arts Festival: last year, the Stradivarius Piano Trio premiered a new chamber music movement at the Festival composed by Roderick Williams OBE. Maria is a Christian and directs the choir at All Souls Church, Langham Place where she leads the choir in services, recordings, and concerts. Maria performed Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* at Prom Praise at the Royal Albert Hall in 2022, and has also performed the Gershwin with Worthing Symphony Orchestra in 2023 conducted by John Gibbons in the Orchestra's 2022-2023 season. ||

"...All phenomenally played, with Marchant's chameleon-like ability to inhabit each work something to marvel at..."
Arts Desk

"...She brought my music alive with great sensitivity and made it glow in a way I had not imagined possible..."
Roderick Williams OBE

"...delivered by Marchant with a richness of musicianship that haunts the memory..."
Malcolm Hayes, BBC Music Magazine

Award winning British pianist Maria Marchant performs frequently as recitalist, concerto soloist and chamber musician for numerous festivals, music societies and at leading venues in the UK and abroad. A former BBC Music Magazine Rising Star, her performances have been featured on several radio stations including BBC Radio 3 'In Tune', WMNR Radio in the USA, and



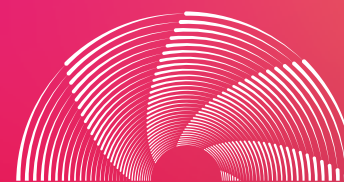
Maria Marchant will be performing
Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor
with the Worthing Symphony Orchestra
in May 2024

+
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Scriabin's "Reverie"
Brahms's Symphony No. 1

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—
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Orchestra



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Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

Hussite Overture, Op. 67

The publication of Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* in 1878 propelled him more or less overnight into national and international popularity. Their strongly nationalist spirit helped the Bohemian and Moravian people to assert a Czech identity at odds with the domination of the Hapsburg Empire. A National Theatre opened in June 1881, but soon after was badly damaged by fire. For the grand re-opening in November 1883, the chief administrator of the theatre asked Dvořák for an overture and suggested a dramatic trilogy based on the life of Jan Hus. In the event, Dvořák composed only this single overture.

Hus was a Bohemian religious leader involved in pre-Reformation struggles in the 15th century. He objected publicly to many practices of the Roman Catholic Church, for example the sale of indulgences. For this he was excommunicated and lived in exile for two years. Having been invited, with safe conduct, to present his views to the Council of Constance, he was arrested and imprisoned. He refused to recant his views and was burned at the stake for heresy in 1415. His followers, known as Hussites, were outraged and the people of Bohemia moved even more rapidly away from papal teachings, leading to the Hussite Wars. Hus was an inspiration to Martin Luther a century later and his statue accompanies Luther in the memorial sculpture in the city of Worms in Germany.

Although Dvořák never abandoned the folkly nationalism that was so popular,



by 1883 he was already finding a darker voice, which reached its fully developed expression in the Seventh Symphony, in D minor, two years later. The *Hussite Overture* begins with a solemn chorale in C major based on the traditional Czech tune St. Wenceslas. It moves to the minor for the main section, which represents the looming conflict. Battles ensue, and the Hussite battle hymn *Ye who are God's Warriors* is heard in a series of dramatic chords. The success of the Hussites in repelling a number of papal crusades against them is celebrated in a jubilant coda in the major key. ||

Programme note by Martin Jones.
(Source: Wikipedia.)



Photo: Christine Bradshaw

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Programme Notes

Dmitri Shostakovich

(1906–1975)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Major, Op. 102

Allegro
Andante
Allegro

The Second Piano Concerto of Shostakovich was written to display the gifts of his son, Maxim, being a present for his 19th birthday on 10 May 1957. The work apparently contains many private family jokes in the piano solo, one being a reference to some infamous student finger exercises. Maxim's performance of the work gained him entrance to the Moscow State Conservatoire.

The first movement is jaunty and cheeky, and filled with a feeling of Russian patriotism. Woodwind opens the movement with the piano skipping in with a bright little tune after a few bars. The tone then becomes a little more strident with off-beat strings, and the brass and woodwind mimicking the *What shall we do with a drunken sailor* theme played by the piano. The mood calms down a little until the piano, remembering that it is leading the orchestra on a merry, drunken dance crashes back into life, causing the woodwind to shriek in alarm. The piano and orchestra dance merrily along until the piano takes a break, allowing the whole of the orchestra to revel in an expansive tune until, with a crash the orchestra demands that the piano take over again. The piano plays

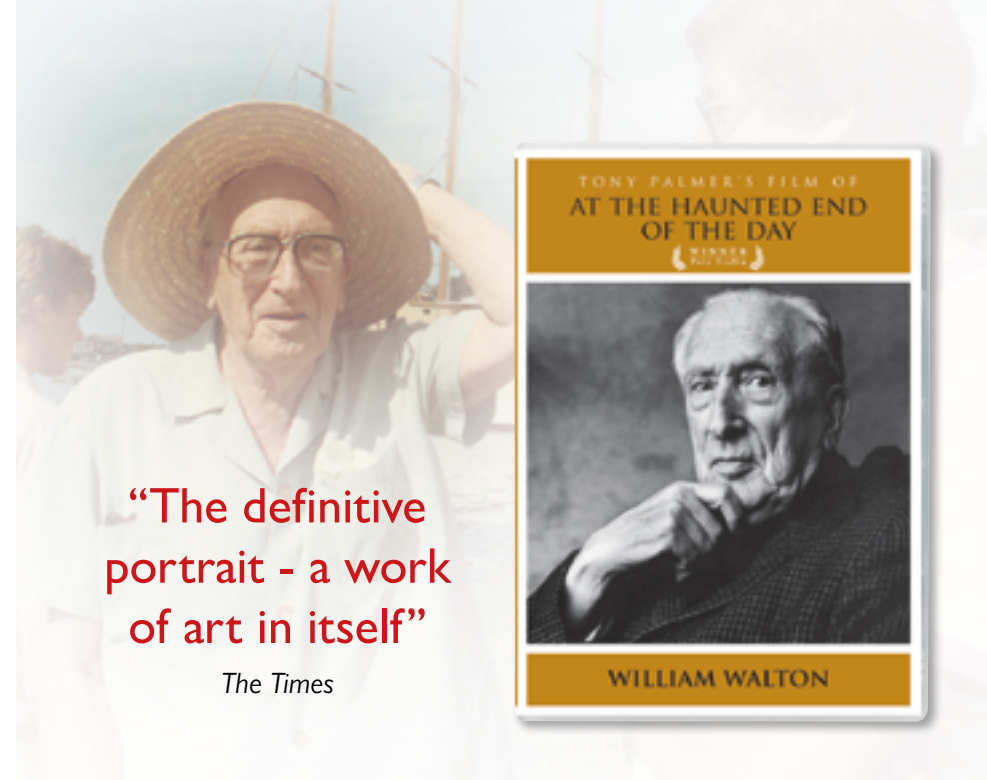


solo for a while until the orchestra joins in, bringing the movement to a close.

The Andante is a truly enchanting movement, having distinct echoes of Rachmaninov. It is scored for piano and strings only and is full of long, unbroken lines having a tranquil and sublime mood.

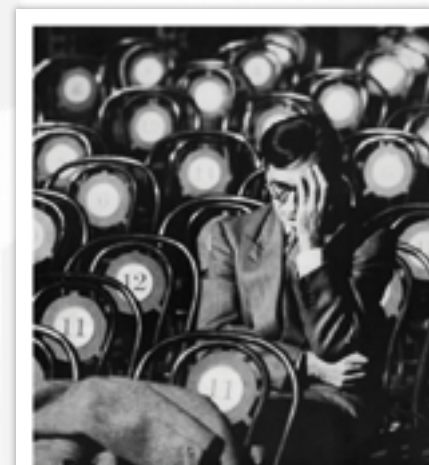
The peaceful Andante leads straight into the chattering and scampering final Allegro. This movement skips along, changing key signature and time constantly. This is in direct contrast to the previous movement, the whole of the final movement careering on until the triumphant final bars. ||

*Programme note by
Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra,
from the Music Bank of Making Music.*



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The Times



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The Sunday Times

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William Walton (1902–1983)

Symphony No. 1 in B \flat Minor

Allegro assai

Presto, con malizia

Andante con malinconia

Maestoso — Briosò ed ardentemente —

Vivacissimo — Maestoso

During the 1920s Walton established a reputation as a composer of brilliant, entertaining works such as the suite *Façade*, the overture *Portsmouth Point* and the Viola Concerto, and consolidated it with the cantata *Belshazzar's Feast* of 1931. In January 1932 the composer was present at a performance in Manchester of the Viola Concerto given by the Hallé Orchestra with the violist Lionel Tertis, conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty. A week later Walton wrote to his publisher, "Harty has asked me to write a symphony for him. A rather portentous undertaking, but the Hallé is such a good orchestra and Harty such a magnificent conductor. Anyhow it is a good thing to have something definite suggested and a date to work for."

He began to write the Symphony that year, but work was interrupted by the illness of his lover, Baroness Imma von Dornberg during their stay in Switzerland. The scheduled premiere in April 1933 had to be postponed as the Symphony was nowhere near completion, although the first two movements were reasonably well advanced. Back in London, Walton spent the spring and summer working on the slow movement and jotted down some ideas for a finale.

Another premiere date was set for March 1934, but by February, Walton realised that there was no hope of finishing the work in time. The finale was a particular problem, and his writer's block was not helped by the break-down of his relationship with Imma and the beginnings of a



new relationship, with Alice Wimbourne. He took time out to write his first film music, which at least stabilised his finances. The patience of the London Symphony Orchestra was wearing thin, though, and they insisted on announcing a new premiere date for 3 December 1934. Walton agreed that the Symphony could be presented without its finale if necessary, and that is what happened. The first three movements were well received, and two further incomplete performances followed in April 1935.

Walton was now secure in the companionship of Alice Wimbourne and settled down to address the finale question. In his own words: "When I got to the middle of the movement I got stuck, so I rang up a friend at the other end of London to ask if he had any ideas. He suggested a fugue. I said I didn't know how to write one, to which he replied that there were a couple of good pages in Grove's Musical Dictionary on the subject. So I had a good look at Grove and wrote the fugue." And with that, possibly a gross simplification, the Symphony was completed by August.

At last, the premiere of the complete Symphony took place on 6 Novem-

ber 1935, played by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Sir Hamilton Harty, who had waited so long for his request to be answered. It was triumphant. Sir Henry Wood wrote, "What a work, truly marvellous; it was like the world coming to an end. No orchestral work has ever carried me away so much," and Walton's fellow composer John Ireland wrote, "it is simply colossal, grand, original." Indeed, Walton's Symphony No. 1 has come to be regarded as among the greatest masterpieces of the twentieth century.

It engages players and audience from the first timpani roll to its final stabbing chords. Its four movements span a wide range of emotions: relentless agitation, sneering malice, forlorn melancholy and triumphant swagger. One might speculate that this had everything to do with Walton's emotional turmoils during the period of its gestation.

After a seemingly peaceful start on timpani and horns, the second violins quietly introduce the element of agitation that will power the whole first movement. A throwaway remark from the cellos will become more significant, too. Long notes, first heard on the oboe and increasingly found in the bass line, bind the faster music together and give the highly dissonant harmonies grounding and direction. The various thematic elements combine, sometimes at half or even quarter speed, building huge and inevitable climaxes. It's hard to believe that the size of the orchestra is no greater than that used by Tchaikovsky in his symphonies. There is time for some plaintive interludes featuring solo instruments. The final climax retains an air of anxiety, despite its radiant major tonality.

Malice is an unusual emotion to portray in a symphony. The scherzo is quirky, angular, unforgiving, with irregular rhythms and outbursts. The fast triple time is often

interrupted by a missed beat or an empty bar. Eventually, after a long trill, there is a pregnant pause — for no fewer than five empty bars — before the music stutters to its conclusion.

The slow movement reveals a wholly different world — lost, aching, almost bewildered. The music opens with a long flute melody, almost aimless in its desolation, which is gradually taken over by oboe and clarinet over a restrained string accompaniment. The mood darkens as the orchestra join in and the intensity grows until solo horn, cello, and woodwind take over the melodic line. The impression of a soul in torment is heightened by the violins' angular theme, which increases in intensity to a painful climax and then sinks swiftly away to nothing.

The long-awaited finale shatters the sombre mood with a celebratory fanfare that would not be out of place at a coronation. This leads into a busy development of the fanfare material and eventually to the fugue that had been Walton's salvation. The fugue subject is long and vigorous, with Bachian sequences. By the time all the instruments have entered, the euphoria is palpable. Still with the fugue theme, a quieter interlude on woodwind and then strings leads to a brassy climax. Now in jaunty triple time, the fanfare music returns. Violas restart the fugue, which culminates in a happy climax, now with a second timpanist. The majestic fanfare returns on brass, then on strings. A solo trumpet seems to say we've come through rough times, but all is now well. The fanfare builds once more, to its most dramatic yet, and the Symphony ends with an extraordinary sequence of clipped chords for the whole orchestra. ||

*Programme note by Martin Jones.
(Sources: Music Bank of Making Music
and Wikipedia.)*

Musician Spotlight

Richard Partridge (aka RKP) is one of the longest-reigning members of ESO, having joined in 1972. Richard came from a musical family, where there was always something playing in his home. He remembers singing Gilbert and Sullivan, from his grandfather's records, well past his bedtime — as do his family! Richard's father led his local orchestra on the violin, as well as attending the church choir, which his mother also did later.

After starting boarding school, Richard joined the school choir and orchestra. His first orchestral experience was playing the timpani there, and many of his peers believed he was the first to actually tune them! Aged 15, a good friend let Richard try his oboe, which he managed to pick up right away. He started lessons, and soon after became the school oboist as well as flourishing in music competitions.

One of Richard's favourite memories from Wycliffe College was when the schoolboy soloist went up a semitone (or 4) in 'If with all your hearts' (possibly ending up a minor third higher than the original) and the organ accompanist followed him up, semitone by semitone!

By the end of his school years Richard had performed multiple leading parts in school plays, as well as receiving prizes for Drama, Music, and Physics in his final year. He next read physics at Oxford University, playing oboe a little and singing in his college choir. He began doing various recordings, and became a founder member of the Oxford University Tape Recording Society, as technician and a speaker in a tape which won a national competition.

Later, RKP joined BBC TV in technical operations, moving to Ealing because it was on the handy central line, and because



it was somewhere he had heard of, also handy! He then joined the ESO after asking a man carrying a horn through the streets of Ealing where he played, and the rest is history! In Richard's first concert with ESO in summer 1972 he played first oboe in Schubert's Great C Major Symphony.

Richard became Orchestral Manager, before stepping up to the title of Secretary in 1976 (not without his fiancée, now wife, Margaret's permission of course!)

We are greatly thankful to Richard for all that he has done and continues to do for the Orchestra, from dealing with the mailing list and fixing venues, to recording concerts and of course performing in them.

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Thank you all.

Gary Walker
Friends Representative



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Graham Ritchie
Saori Howse
Ann-Marie Sheldon

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Luisa Page
Paul Grigg*
Helena Gumley-Mason
Mark Robbins
Kate Day
Simon Morris
Laura Rossi
Martin Burchette
Veronica Colyer
Sze Ying Chan
Sarah Lough
Emilie Edelenbos*

Violas

David Way
Mike Frost
Jenny Davies
David Smith*
James Greener*
Francesca Landauer*
Catherine Barlen
Clare Barker

Hilary Potts
Matthew Newton
Álvaro Rebón*
Rainer Hersch

Cellos

Rachael Bucknall
Alice Laddiman
Paul Robinson
Heather Humphreys
Emma Wakeling
Tessa Watson
Alan Garriock
Richard Bolton
Barbara James

Basses

James Trowbridge
Dominic Nudd
Sam Lee
Ben Fosker
Tom Amigioni

Flutes

Peter Robertson
Caroline Swan
Paul Darling

Oboes

Rachel Wickham
Mike Phillips
Richard Partridge*

Clarinets

David Weedon*
Charlotte Swift
Felicity Bardell

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Gary Walker*
Steve Warrington*

Horns

Pamela Wise
Mary Saunders
Catherine Fox
Paul Jefferson

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