



Ealing Symphony Orchestra

SIBELIUS *Finlandia*, Op. 26

BERLIOZ *Harold in Italy*, Op. 16

KALINNIKOV Symphony No. 1 in G minor

Ealing Symphony Orchestra

John Gibbons Musical Director

David Way Viola

Saturday, 7 October 2023 · 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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David Way Viola

David Way had early professional success while still a student at the Guildhall School of Music, as a violinist with his quartet at Chipping Norton and Cambridge Festivals, also freelancing with the Hallé Orchestra. After graduating, he joined the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in the first violins. He later moved to Norway where he was alternating Principal Second Violin in Stavanger and then in Trondheim. He has also worked with the Bergen Philharmonic, Oslo Philharmonic, Norwegian Radio, and Royal Philharmonic orchestras. He first played the viola on a freelance basis with the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra's viola section. He joined the Ealing Symphony Orchestra as Principal Viola in 2018 and was soloist in Alwyn's Pastoral Fantasia in their live stream in 2021. He has collaborated with members of the ESO in chamber music concerts.



Early memories of playing the Bach Double Concerto and hearing a live broadcast of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante were key inspirations. He studied at the Guildhall School of Music, initially as a Junior Exhibitioner, and began his studies with Detlef

Hahn. He played in the National Youth Orchestra and led the Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra, also performing the Tchaikovsky Concerto with them. He is a dedicated teacher to his own students. ||

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Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Finlandia, Op. 26

The life of Jean Sibelius, who became one of the giant figures of twentieth-century music, was rather uneventful. He received a thorough academic training and studied law at the University of Helsingfors (Helsinki). After one year at the University, however, it became clear that he had to dedicate himself to music. He studied first at the Music Academy of Helsingfors and later on in Berlin and Vienna. After returning to his homeland he became Professor of Theory and of the Violin at the Academy of Helsingfors and soon established himself as the prominent national composer of Finland. In 1897 a government stipend, providing a regular income for his lifetime, relieved him of the necessity of earning his living and thus he was able to devote himself entirely to composition. He spent the rest of his life in Finland, with the exception of a few short visits to England and the USA. He lived mostly on his estate in Järvenpää (some 40 miles from Helsinki), where he found the solitude and inspiration he required for his creative work amidst the forests and lakes of his beloved country.

The most characteristic feature of the music of Sibelius is that, in spite of not being deliberately modern, it is completely different from any other music. His strong individuality and personal style revealed itself in his very first compositions and it is noteworthy that, unlike most other composers in their earlier works, he never came under the dominant influence of any of the great composers of his younger days. He succeeded in absorbing all foreign influences into his own musical personality, which was firmly rooted in his native soil, gaining constant inspiration from both folk music and the natural beauty of



his surroundings. These sources of inspiration account for an elemental, almost pagan, strength characterising all his writings.

The tone-poem *Finlandia* is one of Sibelius's earliest compositions and perhaps the first to bring him international recognition. Written in 1899, at a time when Finland suffered under Russian domination, it appeared to express in such a vivid way the struggle of the Finns against oppression and their yearning for liberty that it soon became the treasured possession of his compatriots and the musical manifestation of Finnish patriotism for the rest of the world.

It is significant that the principal theme is so much like a Finnish folk song that it was at first found hard to believe that it was in fact an original invention of Sibelius. When it first appears, intoned gently by the woodwind after the gloom of the powerful brass passages of the introduction, it conveys the impression of an enchanting landscape emerging from the mist after a

storm. But darkness and vigorous conflicts return again, building up towards the final climax which culminates in a last victorious return of this lovely tune — played this time by the brass with the support of the full orchestra — which brings to a rousing

conclusion this wonderful musical expression of an oppressed nation's struggles and hopes for freedom and deliverance. ||

*Programme note from
the Music Bank of Making Music.*



Hector Berlioz (1803–1869)

Harold in Italy, Op. 16

Harold in the Mountains

March of the Pilgrims

Serenade of an Abruzzo Mountaineer

Orgy of Brigands

Berlioz was remarkable in that, unlike many other great composers, he spent his first twenty years in a country town virtually destitute of music and that on arrival in Paris, in 1822, he had to learn the elements of technique others had absorbed as children. Yet in a short time he produced a number of works of remarkable originality owing little to any predecessors. He had a view of melodic design, harmony, orchestration and rhythm which were completely his own, and all are displayed in *Harold*. He belonged to no lineage and, perhaps strange to say, his line commenced and died with him.

He was also perhaps the most distinguished member of a tradition new to the nineteenth century – the literary musician who related music to life and thought. He brought to his music a depiction of life as he saw it, warts and all, and an exposure of his inner feelings that marked him out as a romantic in contrast to the sober classical tradition. In some parts of the *Symphonie fantastique* and in the last movement of *Harold* he gave way freely to sacrilege and violence. Elsewhere there is a remarkable lightness of touch, as in the inner movements of *Harold* which, respectively, are scenes of piety and idyllic bliss.

Harold in Italy started as a vehicle for displaying Paganini and his Stradivarius viola. Paganini rejected it after seeing the first movement because the viola was not continually in action. So Berlioz changed the emphasis and wrote, as he says in his marvellous *Memoirs*, “a series of orchestral scenes in which the solo viola would be



involved, to a greater or lesser extent, like an actual person, retaining the same character throughout. I decided to give it as a setting the poetic impressions collected from my wanderings in the Abruzzi and to make it a kind of melancholy dreamer in the style of Byron’s *Childe Harold*”.

He used a motto, the viola’s first theme representing Harold, as an *idée fixe* which is “superimposed on the other orchestral voices so as to contrast with them in character and tempo without interrupting their development”.

In the first movement adagio a dolorous theme in the strings is treated *in fugato* and is soon joined by a counter-subject from the winds. Harold’s theme is first heard in the winds but is soon taken up by the solo viola, delicately accompanied by harp and clarinets, and becomes more and more ardent. The allegro is in a happier mood. Following the orchestra, the viola makes a few stabs at a lilting melody before properly launching it on its way. The allegro is in sonata form with a repeated

exposition. The development strongly features Berlioz’s quirky rhythms and there is a characteristically fierce coda.

The two inner movements provide episodes of repose in contrast to the drama of the outer two. The first is a *Pilgrims’ March*, displaying the composer’s ability to vary a tune and giving it his own distinct brand of harmony. The *idée fixe* duly makes its appearance as a counter-subject. The theme of the *Serenade* resembles an Italian *pifferari*, a lively tune in jagged rhythm for piccolo and oboe. The slower middle section introduces a tune first heard on the cor anglais; a detached Harold observes the happy scene.

The finale commences with reminiscences of earlier movements before launching into an aptly named allegro frenetico. As Berlioz explains “... the brigands’ orgy, where wine, blood, joy and rage mingle in mutual intoxication and make music together and the rhythm seem now to stumble, now to rush furiously forward, and the mouths of the brass spew forth curses, answering prayer with blasphemy, and they laugh and swill and strike, smash, kill and rape and generally enjoy themselves...”. ||

Programme note by Ben Brickman, from the Music Bank of Making Music.



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Programme Notes

Vasily Kalinnikov (1866–1901)

Symphony No. 1 in G minor

Allegro moderato

Andante commodamente

Scherzo: Allegro non troppo

Finale: Allegro moderato

Vasily Kalinnikov studied bassoon and composition at the Moscow Philharmonic Society School and later made a living playing in theatre orchestras and as a music copyist. In 1892 Tchaikovsky recommended him for the position of main conductor at two theatres in Moscow, but the contraction of tuberculosis forced him to resign and move to the warmer climate of Crimea in 1893.

Kalinnikov's reputation was established with his First Symphony, completed in 1895 in Yalta. It was premiered in Kyiv on 20 February 1897, with great success. The second and third movements were encored. Further performances swiftly followed in Moscow, Vienna, Berlin, London and Paris. A second symphony was completed in 1897.

Sadly, the tuberculosis ended Kalinnikov's life two days before his thirty-fifth birthday.

Kalinnikov's musical style was inspired by composers like Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, and is notable for its expressive melodies and lush orchestration.

The Symphony's first movement begins simply enough with a unison theme, but blossoms into a richly orchestrated sonata movement, harmonically adventurous and tuneful.

The second begins with a two-note ostinato accompanied by imaginative harmonies, introducing a delightful melody on cor anglais and violas. The melody is developed in a long central section in a remote minor key. The ostinato returns to close the movement.



The scherzo is based on another lively unison theme, again developed with unexpected harmonic shifts. Its central trio section presents a folkish modal melody played by the oboe.

The finale is driven by a breathless energy that barely wavers from the start to its grand majestic triple-time conclusion.

This music is all we hear of Kalinnikov these days. Who knows how popular he might have become had not the tuberculosis cut short his musical development. ||

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

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Echoes of Genius



RAVEL *La Valse*
RACHMANINOV *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*
LLOYD *Symphony No. 4*

Ealing Symphony Orchestra
John Gibbons Musical Director
Reuben Moisey Piano

Saturday, 25 November 2023 · 7pm
St Barnabas Church, Pitshanger Lane, W5 1QG

£16 (£6 students & U25s; accompanied U18s free)

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Musician Spotlight



Emmanuel plays both classical and contemporary music, and currently leads and manages a group of young musicians from Nigeria, the “Dulcis Ensemble”, and has led them to some international appearances such as heads of government meetings in Valletta, Malta, in 2015 and London in 2018.

When did you start playing the double bass? Why did you choose this instrument?

I started learning in 2002 in Lagos, Nigeria, in my church Mountain of Fire & Miracles. As a little boy in the choir, I had a passion for the bass. I was originally assigned to learn to play the flute, but fortunately the flute teacher was on vacation, so I joined

my friend in the bass class, observing his lessons. After a few classes I started practising with my friend, and the bass instructor noticed my progress. And then after five classes he arranged for me to stay in the bass class. After studying Electrical Electronics at university in Nigeria, I got a scholarship to study music, and obtained a Diploma in Music (Double bass) in 2015.

I became a bass-player at the MUSON Symphony Orchestra in Lagos from 2012 to 2019, and principal bass player in the DKO Orchestra (named after the founder of my church, Dr. Daniel Kolawole Olukoya) from 2003 to the present day.

Your first time listening to an orchestra performance?

That was in 1992 when my dad took me to a concert as a little boy, listening to classical music.

Your first time playing with an orchestra?

In 2003, playing a rendition of Handel’s Messiah with my church orchestra, the DKO Orchestra.

How did you come about the ESO?

I saw an advert for a double bass player in a musical group chat on Facebook, I sent an email and amazingly it was successful.

What do you like about ESO?

I so much love the energy, the challenging pieces, and the love from everybody which has always been wonderful. I’m happy to be part of this Orchestra. ||



The Friends of ESO Scheme is a highly active programme that encourages our regular attendees and other supporters to take a closer interest in the development of the Orchestra.

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Thank you all.

Gary Walker
Friends Representative



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Violins II

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Mark Robbins
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Violas

David Way
James Greener*
Catherine Barlen
Clare Barker
David Smith*
Janet Robinson
Jenny Davies
Matthew Newton

Cellos

Rachael Bucknall
Alice Laddiman
Martin Jones
Deborah Lovell
Tessa Watson
Alan Garriock
Paul Robinson
Heather Humphreys
Mark Walker

Basses

Dominic Nudd
Emmanuel Adeshina
James Bartholomew
Jonny Hayward
Sam Lee

Flutes

Peter Robertson
Caroline Swan
Chris Reding

Oboes

Rachel Wickham
Mike Phillips
Richard Partridge*

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David Weedon*
Charlotte Swift
Felicity Bardell

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Gary Walker*
Steve Warrington*
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Dan Burchette

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