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symphony orchestra

Kirill Karabits Chief Conductor

Concert Programme
Autumn 2021



Crackers About Dance

Lighthouse, Poole
Wednesday 3 November

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Debussy
Prélude à L'après-midi
d'un faune
10'

Bizet
Symphony in C
27'

Interval

Tchaikovsky
The Nutcracker (Act Two)
45'

Andrew Litton
Conductor

Mark Derudder
Leader

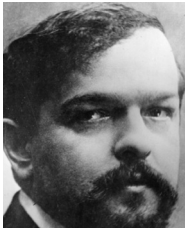
Catherine Bott
Livestream Presenter

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Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune

Claude Debussy

Born: 22 August 1862 Paris

Died: 25 March 1918 Paris

Debussy was inspired to compose the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* after reading the poem of the same name by Stéphane Mallarmé. It was written in 1894 and given its premiere the same year on 22 December, conducted by Gustave Doret.

Initially the poet was doubtful about a musical evocation of his work, but when he heard the music he confessed that he was most impressed. He even wrote to Debussy in warmly appreciative terms: "Your music is not discordant with my text, except in that it goes even further into nostalgia and into light, with sensitivity, with disquiet and with richness." This extract from the original poem gives an indication of its nature:

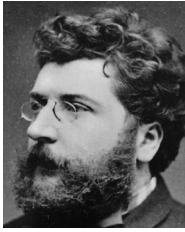
'O nymphs, let us bring back to life those many different memories. My eye, piercing the reeds, fixed on each immortal figure as it slaked its burning in the cooling waters, crying in frustration to the forest sky; and the splendour of hair disappears in the shuddering and jewelled brightness.'

Thus the *Prélude* evokes "the desires and dreams of the faun, which are played out in the heat of the afternoon". The opening phrase has four varied presentations of the somewhat oriental theme, which is so memorably introduced by the solo flute. This theme forms the basis for much of what follows, and proves to be a recurring point of reference. The orchestral treatments are particularly imaginative in colour and texture. At the centre of the *Prélude*, the music reaches to a rich-toned climax, until at length subsiding to a more intimate focus, with dialogues between solo violin and horn, then oboe and clarinet.

The return of the initial flute theme creates a rarefied and dream-like atmosphere.

With this 'recapitulation', Debussy indulges in the further possibilities of the material, colouring the subtle texture with a new sound: antique cymbals. The coda is more magical still, and confirms the subtlety and beauty of Debussy's sound-world, which Maurice Ravel described as "the only music I know which is absolutely perfect".

Terry Barfoot



Symphony in C

Georges Bizet

Born: 25 October 1838 Paris

Died: 3 June 1875 Bougival

1. Allegro vivo
2. Adagio
3. Allegro vivace
4. Allegro vivace

It is one of the saddest features of 19th century music that Bizet did not live to enjoy the successes of his most famous compositions. In March 1875 the first performance of his opera *Carmen* was a failure, and though later in the year its revival was a great success, it was too late, since the composer had died in June, aged only thirty-eight. In the case of the Symphony in C, however, there was no performance at all until 1935, sixty years after Bizet's death and eighty years after the music had been written.

Bizet composed the symphony in 1855, when he was just seventeen. His model was the Symphony No.1 by Charles Gounod, to whom he later wrote: "You were the beginning of my life as an artist; I can now admit that I was afraid of being absorbed." The young composer's apprehension was reflected in the fact that he sought neither publication nor performance.

The score lay unknown until 1933, when, along with several other manuscripts, it was bequeathed by the composer Reynaldo Hahn to the Paris Conservatoire. There it was discovered by the English musicologist Douglas Parker, who was so impressed by what he saw that he took the manuscript to the conductor Felix Weingartner. He concurred with this enthusiasm and gave the symphony a belated premiere at Basel on 26 February 1935; and from that time forth the work's popularity has never waned.

The Symphony in C is designed along Classical lines, with four movements in the conventional order and an orchestra which comprises double woodwind (two flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons), horns, trumpets, timpani and strings.

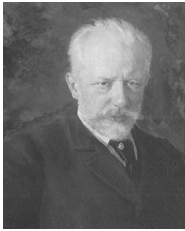
The *Allegro vivo* first movement is a sonata form structure with a splendid balance of material, sparkling orchestration and a naturally flowing sense of momentum.

The strongly characterised oboe melody which dominates the *Adagio*, and first appears after an eight-bar introduction, later became the basis of an aria in Bizet's opera *The Pearl Fishers* (Paris, 1863). At the centre of this slow movement there is a highly effective fugue, but this unexpected feature does not dominate, since in the later stages the original theme returns.

The third movement is a scherzo with a clear, even emphatic, rhythmic emphasis, and a development which abounds in subtleties. For example, when the second subject arrives, the first theme becomes an elaborate counterpoint to it, while in the central trio section the tune is ingeniously reshaped to achieve an entirely different effect. The finale too is dominated by a single idea, and its rapid momentum is achieved with a delightful lightness of touch, which often assumes the character of a *moto perpetuo*.

Terry Barfoot

Interval



The Nutcracker, Act II

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Born: 7 May 1840 Kamsko-Votkinsk

Died: 6 November 1893 St. Petersburg

1. The Enchanted Palace of Konfiturenburg
2. Arrival of Clara and the Nutcracker Prince
3. Divertissement: Chocolate
4. Divertissement: Coffee
5. Divertissement: Tea
6. Divertissement: Trépak
7. Divertissement: Dance of the Shepherdesses
8. Divertissement: The Old Woman who lived in a shoe
9. Waltz of the Flowers
10. Pas de deux: Adagio
12. Pas de deux: Variation 1
13. Pas de deux: Variation 2
14. Pas de deux: Coda
15. Waltz Finale - Apotheosis

Following the success of his second ballet, *The Sleeping Beauty*, Tchaikovsky was commissioned early in 1891 to write the music for a double bill at the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, comprising a one act opera and a two-act ballet. The resulting opera was *Iolanta*, the ballet *The Nutcracker*, opus 71, the latter being the suggestion of the famous choreographer Marius Petipa. At first Tchaikovsky expressed misgivings, for he wondered about the suitability of Dumas's adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffmann's fairy-tale, and in any case, he was about to set off on a protracted concert tour of Western Europe and America. But further study soon reconciled him to the subject, to the extent that by the time he left Russia he had completed a draft of the entire first act. *The Nutcracker* was ready in its final form soon after Tchaikovsky's return from America in March 1892, and well before the double bill received its premiere on 18 December that year. With choreography by Petipa and Lev Ivanov, *The Nutcracker* was performed by members of the Imperial Ballet.

Act One takes place in the home of Silberhaus, President of the Council of a small German town. Among the Christmas presents given to his children Fritz and Carla is a Nutcracker doll shaped as a man; when Fritz accidentally breaks it Clara cradles it like a baby and sings a compassionate lullaby. After the family has gone to bed, Clara creeps downstairs to her doll's cot to look again at her Nutcracker. When midnight strikes strange happenings begin: an army of mice appears and attacks the toys, whose leader is the Nutcracker. Clara kills the Mouse King by throwing her slipper, whereupon the Nutcracker is transformed into a handsome prince, who invites Clara to join him at his castle - called Konfiturenburg - in the Kingdom of Sweets. This magic castle is the setting for Act Two, where Clara is treated to lavish entertainments, led by the Sugar-Plum Fairy.

Scene [No. 10 in the score] The Kingdom of Sweets (Konfiturenburg). The Sugar-Plum Fairy welcomes the visitors to her domain. The lush character of the orchestration reflects the richness of the scene with throbbing horns and woodwind scales surrounding the swaying theme. The violin harmonics and celesta, the latter surely representing the Fairy, evoke the magical atmosphere.

Scene [No. 11] Beside a river of rose-water, Clara and the Prince appear and are welcomed to the Great Hall of the Palace. The flutter-tonguing of the flutes intensifies the previous effects. As the Prince explains how Clara saved his life, the music recalls the battle from Act One.

A warm and stately theme follows in preparation for the entertainment of the *Divertissement*.

Divertissement [No. 12] A series of dances for groups from the corps de ballet.

(a) Chocolate (Spanish Dance) features a prominent trumpet solo and the inevitable castanets.

(b) Coffee (Arabian Dance). A sinuous melody based on a lullaby from Georgia.

(c) Tea (Chinese Dance). Flutes are high above the rhythmic background of the bassoons.

(d) Trépak (Russian Dance). This vigorous movement is basically an *accelerando* up to *prestissimo*.

(e) Danse des mirlitons. The title refers to French reed-pipes, and these are elegantly characterised by three flutes contrasted against the cor anglais. Here, Tchaikovsky's orchestration is at its most deftly imaginative.

(f) Mère Gigogne et les polichinelles. This is the familiar fairy tale of the Old Woman who lived in a shoe. There is a lively tune with tambourine accompaniment, then a contrasting middle section deriving from a French folksong. The return of the initial material brings a new orchestration, closing the *Divertissement* with a fast and exciting coda.

Waltz of the Flowers [No. 13] The Sugar-Plum Fairy's attendants dance to a lilting melody. A short woodwind phrase is answered by harp arpeggios, and a harp cadenza then leads into the main theme. This is an extended number with themes in profusion, which are developed with the utmost skill and imagination.

Pas de deux [No. 14] This features the Prince and the Sugar-Plum Fairy dancing together and takes the form of a grand entrance and a richly scored *Adagio*; rapidly after the original production this emotionally charged music soon became associated with Clara also. The music builds to a powerful climax with opulent scoring and emphatic trombone scales which anticipate the *Pathétique*' *Symphony*, soon to be composed. There is no wonder that the choreographer Petipa requested that this moment should be "colossal in effect". After the *Pas de deux*, the Prince and the Fairy each dances a solo.

Variation 1. The Prince dances a vigorous *tarantella*.

Variation 2. A dance for the Fairy. When Tchaikovsky visited Paris in June 1891, he wrote back to his publisher: "I have discovered a new instrument, something between a small piano and a glockenspiel, with a divinely beautiful tone ... I want you to order one and have it sent to Petersburg; I expect a colossal effect from it." The celebrated *Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy* was the result.

Coda. An energetic conclusion for both dancers, generating tension through one of the composer's favourite devices, reiterated scale figures.

No.15 Final Waltz and Apotheosis:

The entire Court join in, and the curtain falls on a final tribute to Clara.

Terry Barfoort



Andrew Litton

Conductor

Music Director of New York City Ballet and Principal Guest Conductor of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Andrew Litton is also Conductor Laureate of the Bournemouth Symphony and Music Director Laureate of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, organisations where he was previously Principal Conductor and Music Director respectively. Litton was also Music Director of the Dallas Symphony from 1994 to 2006, Music Director and Principal Guest Conductor of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, and was Artistic Director of the Minnesota Orchestra's Sommerfest for fifteen years before stepping down in summer 2017.

Under Litton's leadership the Bergen Philharmonic gained international recognition through extensive touring, making debuts at London's BBC Proms, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and appearances at Vienna's Musikverein, Berlin's Philharmonie, and Carnegie Hall. They recorded twenty-five CDs and in recognition of Litton's service to the cultural life of Norway, Norway's King Harald knighted Litton with the Royal Order of Merit.

He continues to guest conduct the world's leading orchestras and opera companies and has a discography of over 135 CDs, with awards including America's Grammy and France's Diapason d'Or.

Born in New York City, Litton is also an accomplished pianist and often conducts from the keyboard and enjoys performing chamber music with his orchestral colleagues.

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Catherine Bott

Presenter

Catherine Bott is one of the nation's most beloved voices, known for her work on both sides of the stage: as a world-famous soprano and a leading classical music broadcaster.

As a presenter, Catherine hosts Classic FM's three-hour *Sunday afternoon show*. She formerly led more than 300 editions of BBC Radio 3's *Early Music Show*, where she was also known for presenting live concerts and BBC Proms; she has also made feature programmes for BBC Radio 4.

Catherine studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and then spent two years singing everything from Bach to Berio with the Swingles before beginning her solo career. She is recognised as a virtuoso of early music: among her many recordings in this field are Bach's *St. John Passion* with the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with the Academy of Ancient Music.

Catherine returned to the BSO at the start of its inaugural livestream series in 2020 and continues to help the Orchestra welcome international audiences.

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One of the UK's best-loved orchestras, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra is a professional ensemble known for championing the role of culture in people's lives. With residencies in Bournemouth, Bristol, Exeter, Portsmouth and Poole, it is the largest cultural provider in the South West of England, serving one of the biggest and most diverse regions.

The BSO, under its Chief Conductor Kirill Karabits, is known for pushing artistic boundaries, and its ongoing series of music from former Soviet states, *Voices from the East*, continues to gain praise. Boasting an enviable list of principal conductors, since its founder, Sir Dan Godfrey, including Constantin Silvestri, Sir Charles Groves and Marin Alsop, the BSO has given memorable performances worldwide and is broadcast regularly on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM.

The Orchestra's inaugural livestreamed series, which featured Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Benjamin Grosvenor and Alina Ibragimova, was widely praised by audiences and critics alike, with the BSO making history as one of the first British orchestras to return to the stage in 2020. Horn player Felix Klieser makes his UK concerto debut as the BSO's Artist-in-Residence, as the Orchestra resumes symphonic touring in 2021.

Committed to new music, the BSO celebrates a triptych of contemporary works written by women in 2021/22, with premiere performances of works by Carmen Ho, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh and Elizabeth Ogonek. During the pandemic, the BSO also gave premieres by composers Shirley J. Thompson and Magnus Lindberg.

The BSO was recognised with the Royal Philharmonic Society's Impact Award in 2019 for its work in improving opportunities for disabled musicians, and BSO Resound – the world's first professional disabled-led ensemble at the core of a major orchestra – continues to receive international attention for igniting change. Challenging access to high-quality music for all, the BSO leads hundreds of events each year, from award-winning work in health and care settings to partnerships with schools and music education hubs.

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