



bournemouth  
symphony orchestra

Kirill Karabits Chief Conductor

Concert Programme  
Winter/Spring 2022



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# Glorious Rachmaninov

## **Guildhall, Portsmouth**

Thursday 20 January

Supported by

**David & Julie Edyvean**

## **Great Hall, Exeter**

Friday 21 January

## **Chopin/Stravinsky**

Grande valse brillante

6'

## **Prokofiev**

Lieutenant Kijé Suite

18'

Interval

## **Rachmaninov**

Symphony No.2

60'

Kirill Karabits

Conductor

Amy Merchant

Leader

**Please wear face masks at all times and comply with any other Covid safety measures that are in place in the venue.**

Please turn off all mobile phones, pagers and watch alarms, ensure that hearing aids are switched to the correct setting, and consider fellow audience members in general regarding noise and the glare from mobile phone screens. The use of cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited. All information is correct at the time of going to print. All timings are guidelines only and may differ slightly from actual lengths.

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## Grande Valse Brillante

### Frédéric Chopin

Born: 1 March 1810 Zelazowa Wola, Poland

Died: 17 October 1849 Paris

### Orchestrated by Igor Stravinsky

Born: 17 June 1882 Oranienbaum (now Lomonosov), nr St Petersburg

Died: 6 April 1971 New York

Chopin composed his *Grande Valse Brillante* in 1833, and the following year it was his first waltz for solo piano to be published.

Stravinsky's orchestration of the waltz was commissioned by the impresario Diaghilev for a newly conceived version of the ballet *Les Sylphides* for his Ballets Russes during the company's first Paris season in 1909.

The ballet was danced to orchestrations of Chopin's piano works, and apart from Stravinsky, Diaghilev also commissioned Lyadov, Tcherepnin, Taneyev, and retained one extant instrumentation by Glazunov.

With choreography by Mikhail Fokine, set by Alexander Benois and costumes by Léon Bakst, and a cast of star dancers headed by Tamara Karsavina, Vaslav Nijinsky and Anna Pavlova, the premiere on 2 June 1909 at the Théâtre du Châtelet, was a triumph. The Chopin/Stravinsky waltz formed the finale of the ballet, and doubtless it helped Stravinsky gain the commission the next year for what would be his breakthrough work, *The Firebird*.

Andrew Burn



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# Suite, Lieutenant Kijé

## **Sergei Prokofiev**

Born: 27 April 1891 Sontsovka, Ukraine

Died: 5 March 1953 Moscow

1. The Birth of Kijé: Allegro
2. Romance: Andante
3. The Wedding of Kijé: Allegro
4. Troika: Moderato
5. The Burial of Kijé: Andante assai

In an article *The Course of Soviet Music*, published in *Izvestia* on 16 Nov 1934, Prokofiev cited his suite from his score for the film, *Lietenant Kijé* as suitable for a Soviet audience for whom concert music was a new experience. “What we need above all is great music, i.e. music that will be both in keeping both in conception and technical execution with the grandeur of the epoch. The composer must take into consideration the fact that there are thousands of people in the Soviet Union who are discovering music, people who, in the past, would have been resistant or indifferent to it. Above all, it must be melodious; moreover, the melody must be simple and comprehensible, without being repetitive or trivial. The simplicity should not be an old-fashioned simplicity, but a new simplicity.”

Since the early 1930s, Prokofiev had been seriously considering returning to his homeland permanently. Although based in Europe during the 1920s, he had kept closely in touch with Russia, and indeed strengthened the connection by offering a number of works to the Soviet state music publishers. Clearly, he was anxious to keep a prominent presence there.

Towards the end of 1932 he gave an interview to the *Evening Moscow* newspaper in which he more than hinted that a return to Russia was on the cards, and that he found the Soviet Union more conducive to his creativity than elsewhere. He revealed too that he had been commissioned to write a score for a film based on the satirical novella by Yury Tynanov, *Lieutenant Kijé*.

He saw the commission as an opportunity to compose music inspired by a Russian source, which would reflect the “new simplicity” he expounded in the article.

Tynanov’s Gogolesque satire on bureaucracy was based on a supposedly true anecdote dating from the short reign of Emperor Paul 1, son of Catherine the Great, when a clerk, mistaking an order, creates a non-existent person – Lieutenant Kijé – who is promptly promoted by the Emperor. Since the latter had a reputation for mercurial eccentricity and irascibility, the military bureaucrats were too frightened of their own positions to gainsay the truth. Matters came to a head when the Emperor demands to meet Kijé, necessitating his rapid demise; the Emperor on learning the news supposedly commented. ‘A pity, he was a fine officer’. Tynanov, one of the first Soviet authors of the time to write anti-Bolshevik satire, considerably expanded the story creating incidents and adventures for the imaginary Kijé; however it was clear to his readers that the target of his wit was as much the inefficient Soviet bureaucracy.

Prokofiev watched some of the scenes of the film, which was directed by Alexander Feinzimmer, as it was being made, then composed the music for comparatively small instrumental forces during July and August of 1933 in Paris. The film, released in March 1934, had a modest success in the Soviet Union and was shown in other European countries including the UK, but has not survived the test of time. Prokofiev himself was unhappy about the many changes that occurred to filming which resulted in some of his music being omitted and hacked about. At the request of the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Prokofiev created a suite for full orchestra which was first performed in Paris on 21 December the same year conducted by the composer.

Much of the film music had comprised short numbers, the longest of which was under two minutes long, discounting repeats, so for the suite the music was considerably developed; two of the movements *Romance* and *Troika* had been songs in the film and Prokofiev scored the melodies for saxophone. The piquant bi-tonal harmony that is a distinctive character of the score is created by the clashes of the keys of D and B flat Major. The individual movements broadly follow the main storyline of the film:

**1. ‘The Birth of Kijé’.** With a clerk’s mistake the Lieutenant is ‘born’. It opens and closes with a wistful offstage cornet solo; in between a side-drum underpinning a perky march led by piccolo, then blazing trumpet fanfares, suggest the military background of the story.

**2. 'Romance'.** Originally scored for soprano and harp in the film, Prokofiev recasts the haunting melody (that in itself seems to evoke the Russian soul) to create a sequence of instrumental colour as the love-song is passed around the orchestra, beginning with solo double bass and later on saxophone, combined with a livelier counter melody on flute.

**3. 'The Wedding of Kijé'.** To keep the subterfuge alive, a wedding is faked. After a majestic orchestral fanfare, a jocular trumpet solo accompanied by vamping tuba leads the celebrations. A pensive saxophone solo suggests, perhaps, the nerves of the bridegroom?

**4. 'Troika'.** Having been banished to Siberia, then pardoned by the Tsar, Kije travels back post-haste by the traditional Russian sledge drawn by three horses abreast. This is the most well-known movement of the suite having become staple fare of the Christmas orchestral repertoire. Prokofiev's orchestral version evokes the Russian string folk instrument, the balalaika, through a superbly imagined combination of pizzicato upper strings, piano and percussion, as the exhilarating melody is shared between cellos, trombone and bassoons.

**5. 'The Burial of Kijé'.** To prevent the situation getting even further out of hand, Kije has to be killed off - to the relief of the bureaucrats. Prokofiev skilfully combines the themes of the various movements, as if Kije's 'life' is reviewed in flashback, creating a somewhat tongue-in-cheek funereal processional as the music comes full circle to the return of the distant cornet melody with which the suite began.

Andrew Burn

## Interval



## Symphony No.2

### Sergei Rachmaninov

Born: 1 April 1873 Oneg, Russia

Died: 28 March 1943 Beverley Hills, USA

1. Largo - Allegro moderato
2. Allegro molto
3. Adagio
4. Allegro vivace

Rachmaninov composed his Symphony No.2 in E minor, op. 27, during 1906-7, while living in Dresden. He had retreated there incognito, in order to escape the pressures of his performing duties in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Along with its contemporaries, *The Isle of the Dead* and the Piano Concerto No.3, this is one of his most important compositions, a large-scale symphony in the traditional four-movement mould, that is utterly typical of his richly romantic expressive language.

The first movement opens with a *motto* idea in the bass, which proves to be the germ for an introductory *Largo* of nearly seventy bars. The principal theme of the succeeding *Allegro moderato* section also derives from the *motto*, and serves to confirm and intensify the prevailing mood of romantic sadness. In these circumstances a vigorous and rhythmic second subject might be expected, but on the contrary Rachmaninov provides an unexpectedly warm and lyrical theme, which is worked to a richly scored and impressive climax. The most significant contrasting element takes the form of accompanying triplet figurations, which from time to time dominate in animated fashion.

The necessary symphonic ingredients of tension and release are certainly present in this movement, the thematic material ingeniously integrated into the frequently luxuriant orchestral texture.

The second movement is a lively, ebullient scherzo which, despite being cast in the minor key, has great gaiety and animation. There is a contrast in the lyrical nature of the secondary theme, but the gentler mood and contour proves short-lived, since woodwind and horns gradually lead the music back to the initial material. The central section is most unusual, a whirling fugato which begins in the second violins and eventually builds in complexity until it involves the whole orchestra. The movement closes with a virtual recapitulation of the scherzo material, and a short coda follows, its self-effacing character surely designed to anticipate the slow movement to follow.

The *Adagio* is as romantic as music can be, an expression of a deeply felt sentiment. The music is warmly melodic; but it opens with a recurring feature, a sequence of 3rds which plays a vital role both structurally and emotionally as the movement progresses. The extended principal theme is presented by the clarinet, moving stepwise and relating closely to its surrounding web of harmony. Tensions mount at the centre of the movement, with agitated repetitions and further references to the motto, but the main theme eventually returns and the coda brings a mood of consolation.

After three movements of considerable substance, Rachmaninov inevitably faced the problem of how to provide a suitable finale. The music sets forth amid a carnival atmosphere, recalling aspects of the scherzo, while the motto plays its part too, amid the teeming rhythmic activity. Soon this gives way to a characteristic melodic flow, through a wonderfully lyrical string theme whose rich expressiveness provides the perfect foil. A brief recollection of the *Adagio* leads the return of the hectic activity, and insistent descending scales assume an increasing importance as the intensity mounts. The return of the lyrical theme therefore becomes the more welcome, and the symphonic momentum is such that its inflation into a grandiose statement proves the ideal way in which to bring the symphony to its conclusion.

Terry Barfoot





## Kirill Karabits

### Conductor

Kirill Karabits has been Chief Conductor of the BSO for thirteen years and their relationship has been celebrated worldwide. Together they have made many critically acclaimed recordings, performed regularly at the BBC Proms and appeared together at London's Barbican Centre as part of the Beethoven celebrations in the 19-20 season.

Karabits has worked with many of the leading ensembles of Europe, Asia and North America, and enjoys a special relationship with the Russian National Orchestra with whom he returned to the Edinburgh Festival in the 2018-19 season, and more recently embarked on extensive European and North American tours with Mikhail Pletnev which included his New York debut at the Lincoln Center.

Recent highlights include Kirill's debut with the Dallas Symphony, and the Russian National Youth Symphony Orchestra, as well as return

visits to the Minnesota Orchestra, Bamberger Symphoniker, Orchestre National Capitole de Toulouse, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, as well as the BBC Proms with the BSO.

Highlights of the 2021/22 season include Kirill's debut with the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, as well as a number of US debuts which include the Pittsburgh Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, and St Louis Symphony orchestras. This season sees Kirill return to the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, and the Opéra Montpellier for a production of *Pelléas*. Kirill will also return to the Russian National Orchestra for their tour of the US.

A prolific opera conductor, Karabits has worked with the Deutsche Oper, Opernhaus Zürich (*Boris Godunov*) and Oper Stuttgart (*Death in Venice*), Glyndebourne Festival Opera (*La bohème* and *Eugene Onegin*), Staatsoper Hamburg (*Madama Butterfly*), English National Opera (*Don Giovanni*), Bolshoi Theatre and

he conducted a performance of *Der fliegende Holländer* at the Wagner Geneva Festival. Music Director of the Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar from 2016-19, Karabits conducted acclaimed productions of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Tannhäuser* as well as Mozart's Da Ponte Cycle (*Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*).

Working with the next generation of bright musicians is of great importance to Karabits and as Artistic Director of I, CULTURE Orchestra he conducted them on their European tour in August 2015 with Lisa Batiashvili as soloist and a summer festivals tour in 2018. In 2012 and 2014 he conducted the televised finals of the BBC Young Musician of the Year Award, and has recently debuted with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain on a UK tour including a sold out performance at the Barbican.

Kirill was named Conductor of the Year at the 2013 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards.

Welcome to our stirring selection of fantastic symphonic concerts from January to May 2022. We very much hope that you will enjoy some great upcoming performances.

Alongside the symphonies of Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov and Shostakovich, Kirill Karabits continues our journey of 'Voices from the East' exploring some of the most important musical voices from the former Soviet states. We close the season with a celebration of Shakespeare as the country comes together to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen.

Free Pre-Concert Talks giving valuable insights into the music being played for each concert, as well as the latest up-to-date programme information, can be found at **bsolive.com**



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**Glorious Rachmaninov**

Kirill Karabits conductor

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Alexander Malofeev piano

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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. In 2021, Horn player Felix Klierer made a memorable UK concerto debut as the BSO's Artist-in-Residence, and the Orchestra resumed its symphonic touring of the South West.

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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