



**bournemouth  
symphony orchestra**

Kirill Karabits Chief Conductor

**Concert Programme  
Winter/Spring 2022**



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# Tales from Russia

## Lighthouse, Poole

Wednesday 26 January

Supported by

**The Stacey Family**

## Borodin

In the Steppes of  
Central Asia

9'

## Rachmaninov

Piano Concerto No.2

33'

Interval

## Rimsky-Korsakov

Symphony No.2 'Antar'

30'

Kirill Karabits

Conductor

Alexander Malofeev

Piano

Amy Merchant

Leader

Tom Service

Livestream Presenter

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## In the Steppes of Central Asia

### Alexander Borodin

Born: 12 November 1833 St Petersburg

Died: 27 February 1887 St Petersburg

Alexander Borodin was a man of remarkable and diverse talents, for in addition to his musical achievements his career as a scientist was highly successful. He held many official posts, founding a School of Medicine for Women, and working as a Professor of Chemistry. It is no surprise therefore that he was a 'spare-time composer'; and this can with justice be considered both his strength and his weakness. He remained relatively uninfluenced by the music of others, and his musical personality is the more distinctive as a result. But of course he might have achieved even more from the creative point of view had he been able to devote more time to composition and had he lived longer, for his list of works is rather short.

Borodin's lack of formal training did not prove an obstacle to his musical development. The turning point in his creative life came in his late twenties, when he met Mily Balakirev and became part of the famous group of composers known as 'The Mighty Five', the other members being César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.

The tone poem *In the Steppes of Central Asia* has a clear and descriptive outline, and was originally intended to form incidental music to a pageant that was planned for the silver jubilee of Tsar Alexander II in 1880. Although the project came to nothing, Borodin was so enthused by the scene allotted to him, a trading caravan making its way across the vast expanses of the steppes, escorted by Russian soldiers, that it spurred him to compose one of his most characteristic and evocative works. Composed in 1880, *In the Steppes of Central Asia* was an immediate success at its first performance the same year on 8 April 1880 in St Petersburg, when it was played by the Orchestra of the Russian Opera, conducted by Rimsky-Korsakov.

The musical material is generated from two contrasting themes: a Russian song, presented first by the clarinet and then by the horn, and an oriental melody, introduced by the cor anglais. At length these ideas are combined towards the close of the work, which Borodin dedicated to Franz Liszt, whose symphonic poems had inspired him to compose it.

Terry Barfoot



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## Piano Concerto No.2

### **Sergei Rachmaninov**

Born: 1 April 1873 Oneg, Russia

Died: 28 March 1943 Beverley Hills, USA

1. Moderato
2. Adagio sostenuto
3. Allegro scherzando

Following the failure of his First Symphony at its premiere in 1897, Rachmaninov suffered a nervous breakdown and withdrew from creative work, his confidence shattered. Family and friends tried to help, and even the assistance of the great novelist Tolstoy was sought. But this proved of no avail, until the hypnotherapist Dr Nicolai Dahl began to work with the composer. This was in 1900, and the Piano Concerto No.2 in C minor, op.18, was among the first compositions to result from the success of the treatment. The composer gave the premiere of the concerto on 27 October 1901 in Moscow. This is one of Rachmaninov's best and most characteristic achievements which, moreover, has become perhaps the most popular among all his works. It was therefore an entirely appropriate gesture that the dedication was given to Dr Dahl, without whom the music would not have been written.

The opening is as distinctive as that of any in the entire concerto literature. The soloist plays eight solemn and dramatic chords which grow in intensity and volume, heralding a passionate and extended first subject which is dominated by rich string textures.

Another potent sequence of chords serves to introduce the second subject, also lyrical in character, whose first presentation is given to the soloist. The orchestra extends this material before a cadenza leads into the lengthy development section, which is particularly striking in its treatment of rhythm. The climax brings the return of the first subject, now *Maestoso alla marcia*, before the horn recalls the second subject. The wistful coda has typical ingenuity in its rhythmic subtleties.

The expressive sensitivity of the slow movement is largely the result of the delicate scoring, as the piano adds telling decorations to the melodic line. The central part of the movement has the characteristics of a scherzo, leading on to a powerful cadenza, which like its first movement counterpart is wholly integral to the structural design.

The rondo finale has a short introduction to assert the home key of C minor, before a cadenza of prodigious virtuosity leads into the main theme. This has typical rhythmic characteristics and is treated fully until the contrast of the second subject is reached. The approach is now unashamedly romantic, the orchestral presentation taken up by the piano.

Triplet figurations form the bridge to the return of the first subject, a fugato development preceding the distinctive statement of the lyrical theme. Towards the end, the orchestra suggests the music of the first movement – though in fact this finale was written first – until Rachmaninov brings the concerto to its close with a majestic and truly confident statement of his great romantic tune.

Terry Barfoot

## Interval



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# Symphonic Suite: Antar

## **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov**

Born: 18 March 1844 Tikhvin,

Died: 21 June 1908 Lyubensk

1. Largo - Allegro
2. Allegro
3. Allegro risoluto
4. Allegretto - Adagio

Rimsky-Korsakov's *'Antar'*, originally described by him as his Second Symphony, was composed in 1868, the year he turned twenty-four. The work's inspiration lay in the chivalrous and heroic deeds of the pre-Islamic poet/warrior Antarah ibn Shaddād; however, the composer's specific source, was an original story about Antar, published in 1833 by Osip Senkovsky, a Polish/Russian author, orientalist, and journalist.

In Senkovsky's story, which Rimsky-Korsakov outlined as a preface to the score, Antar, has forever abandoned his fellow human beings since they have only given back evil for the good he offered them. Instead he has sought solitude in the desert ruins of ancient Palmyra. There he watches a gazelle, whom he playfully tries to capture, then saves from a predator. He falls asleep and in a magical dream the gazelle is revealed as the beautiful supernatural princess Gül Nazar. In gratitude, she grants him three gifts: revenge, power and love. Little wonder that Rimsky-Korsakov wrote that "all of this was tempting to a composer", the more so since it neatly provided him with a scenario for a four-movement symphonic work.

The resulting Symphony No.2, *Antar*, was premiered in March 1868 at a concert of the Russian Music Society conducted by Mily Balakirev. The composer subsequently revised the work three times and by its third version he referred to it as a symphonic suite. In his autobiographical *My Musical Life* he justified this change: “I was wrong in calling *Antar* a symphony ... My *Antar* was a poem, suite, fairy tale, story, anything you like, but not a symphony”. In this final form, and with its programmatic character and oriental inspiration, *Antar* is a precursor to Rimsky-Korsakov’s orchestral masterpiece, *Sheherazade*, composed twenty years later. The use in both works of recurring motifs associated with particular characters, shows the influence of Berlioz and his use of the *idée fixe* in the *Symphonie Fantastique*.

Rimsky-Korsakov explained that “The first movement is a free musical delineation of the consecutive episodes of the story, save that they are musically unified by the ever-recurring theme of *Antar* himself.” It opens in a slow, *Largo* tempo, with bassoons and horns, a parched fragment on violas and a rising figure on wind and strings evoking the arid desert landscape. Shortly after, the theme associated with *Antar* is introduced by violas and cellos.

As the music quickens to *Allegro*, the free-spirited theme of *Gül Nazar*, is heard on the flute. Tinged with the orient and full of enchantment, it is combined with a cantering rhythmic figure on violins. The music darkens in mood, as it vividly portrays the gazelle chased by a monstrous bird of prey.

*Antar* intervenes and with a defiant gesture of his lance – heard on the flute - saves the gazelle.

*Antar*’s wondrous dream, in which the gazelle’s true personage is revealed follows. It is a long, dance-like section in which three new thematic ideas are introduced and frequently combined with *Antar*’s motif. The music slows to *Adagio*, and a harp cadenza, against tremolo strings, seems to conjure the moment when *Gül Nazar*, in her gratitude, offers *Antar* the three joys of life: revenge, power and love. The desert music returns; *Antar* awakes, alone again, amidst the ruins of Palmyra.

Rimsky-Korsakov observed that “If the structure of the first movement flows from the form of the very narrative, the tasks of depicting the joys of revenge, power and love, on the contrary are purely lyrical tasks, calling for no fixed form; they merely denote moods and their changes, and thus allow complete freedom of musical structure.” Thus the second movement (originally titled ‘*Joy of Revenge*’) was, he wrote, “built upon the single fundamental theme of *Antar* himself and upon the introductory theme of threatening character.”

With a tempo marking of *Allegro*, it opens with tense, fervid rumbling on cellos, then violas. It is followed by a martial version of *Antar*’s theme striding across the orchestral landscape in a variety of contrapuntal combinations and orchestral colours. As the music slows a little, the opening section is rounded off with brass majestically intoning *Antar*’s theme.

Rimsky-Korsakov brings back the opening ideas, then builds fragments of the Antar theme to create a dramatic climax with triplet rhythms to the fore. After a final assertive statement of Antar's theme, the music softens bringing the movement to its close with the first violins playing a quiet, melancholic, rhythmically augmented version of his theme.

The third movement (initially headed '*Joy of Power*'), was summarised by the composer as a "triumphal march, ... with a subsidiary Oriental *cantabile* melody and a conclusion on Antar's theme." Marked *Allegro risoluto*, it begins with the animated march tune, thoroughly Russian in character, on woodwind. It is followed by an equally Russian folk-like *cantabile* melody for half of both the first violins and cellos. Rimsky-Korsakov continues in a similar vein, passing the melody around the instruments, before Antar's theme is hinted at in elongated notes on the first horn, then reappears with a new nobility on horns and trombones. It leads to the return of the opening theme and a thrilling coda.

The finale was at first called '*Joy of Love*', although like the other headings Rimsky-Korsakov omitted it from the work's final version. Of it the composer commented that "after a brief introduction borrowed from the first movement as Antar reappears from the ruins of Palmyra, the movement is an *Adagio*."

Apart from the now familiar themes of Gül Nazar and Antar, it is also built around a new theme, described by the composer as a '*Mélodie arabe*', which had been suggested by the composer Alexander Dargomizsky. Gradually, as the movement proceeds this motif merges more and more into the motifs of Gül Nazar and Antar.

After the reference to the first movement, the oboe plays the beguiling, sensual Arabian motif. Further revelations of the theme appear on different instruments until there is a magical passage, when the flute steals in with Antar's theme, now poignantly frail, as if he knows his life is fading. Just the opening fragment of Antar's theme is heard one final time on muted first violins before it descends and pauses as the hero breathes his last in Gül Nazar's arms. To music infused with love and loss, a brief recall of her theme on oboe is her heart-rending lament.

Andrew Burn





# 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 *Pélléas*. 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.



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# Alexander Malofeev

Piano

Alexander Malofeev came to international prominence when he won the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians in 2014 at age thirteen. Since this triumph Malofeev has quickly established himself as one of the most prominent pianists of his generation.

Recent and upcoming orchestral and recital highlights around the world include an appearance with the New World Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas, Fort Worth Symphony with Patrick Summers, La Scala Orchestra and Lucerne Festival with Riccardo Chailly, the Philadelphia, Münchner Symphoniker, RAI National Symphony, Orchestra of the Teatro di San Carlo, Prague Philharmonia, Lausanne Chambe, Russian National, Verbier Festival Chamber, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam—where he opened the 30th anniversary concert of the renowned Meester Pianists series—

Teatro alla Scala, Philharmonie de Paris, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, National Centre for the Performing Arts in China, Kaufman Music Center, Mariinsky Theatre, Tonhalle in Zurich, Boston Celebrity Series, Tilburg Recital Series, Vancouver Recital Society, a 2019 Asia tour with the Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala under Riccardo Chailly, a performance with the Mariinsky Orchestra in St. Petersburg commemorating the 175th anniversary of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, concerts at the Hong Kong Arts Festival, with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo and with the Orchestra of the National Academy of Santa Cecilia in Rome.

Festival appearances have included the Ravinia Festival, Festival Napa Valley, Aspen Music Festival, La Jolla Music Festival, Lucerne Festival, and Stars of the White Nights Festival in Russia, among many others.

In addition to his First Prize at the Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians, he won the Grand Prix of the International Competition for Young Pianists Grand Piano Competition, the Premio Giovane Talento Musicale dell'anno and Best Young Musician of 2017. Also in 2017, Alexander Malofeev became the first Young Yamaha Artist. In 2019, he received second prize at the first China International Music Competition.

In the spring of 2020, Sony Classical released the Tchaikovsky 2020 box-set celebrating the 180th anniversary of Tchaikovsky with a recording of his First Concerto performed by Alexander Malofeev with the Tatarstan National Symphony Orchestra and Alexander Sladkovsky.

Alexander Malofeev was born in Moscow in October 2001 and is a graduate of the Gnessin Moscow Special School of Music. In 2019, he entered the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory.



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## Tom Service

Presenter

One of the nation's most popular music broadcasters, Tom Service has been at the fore of the BBC's live music output for over twenty years. An authoritative voice on both television and radio, Tom is known for hosting both BBC Proms concerts and landmark documentaries, as well as BBC Radio 3's *The Listening Service*, *Music Matters*, and the *New Music Show*. His work has won international recognition, with *The Listening Service* awarded Special Commendation prizes at the Prix Europa and the Prix Italia, in 2017.

Tom has written regularly for *The Guardian* since 1999, and his book titles include *Music as Alchemy: Journeys with Great Conductors and their Orchestras* and *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*. He has spoken about classical music to audiences around the world, including at the Salzburg Festival, Lucerne Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Ensemble Modern, and the Stockholm International Composer Festival.

Tom was the Gresham Professor of Music, 2018-19. He is also the Chairman of Contemporary Music for All (CoMA).

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](http://bsolive.com)



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**Gift of Melody**

Kerem Hasan conductor  
Jack Liebeck violin

**Wednesday 19 January**

**Glorious Rachmaninov**

Kirill Karabits conductor

**Wednesday 26 January**

**Tales from Russia**

Kirill Karabits conductor  
Alexander Malofeev piano

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David Hill conductor  
Hanna Hipp mezzo-soprano  
BS Chorus

**Wednesday 9 February**

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Case Scaglione conductor  
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Recital**

Felix Klieser horn with BSO Principals

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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 Klieser 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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