



**bournemouth
symphony orchestra**

Kirill Karabits Chief Conductor

**Concert Programme
Winter/Spring 2022**



Life Over Death

Lighthouse, Poole

Wednesday 23 February

Great Hall, Exeter

Thursday 24 February

Beethoven

Overture, The Creatures of Prometheus

5'

Sibelius

Violin Concerto

31'

Interval

Tchaikovsky

Symphony No.6

'Pathétique'

46'

Gergely Madaras

Conductor

Simone Lamsma

Violin

Amy Merchant

Leader

To help build confidence and protect the players we ask that you wear face masks wherever possible. Please comply with any other Covid safety measures that are in place in the venue.

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Overture, The Creatures of Prometheus

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: 17 December 1770 Bonn

Died: 26 March 1827 Vienna

Beethoven composed his music for the ballet *The Creatures (or Creations) of Prometheus* soon after the First Symphony and the Opus 18 Quartets, during the winter of 1800-01. The chosen subject may well have been inspired by the huge success of Haydn's oratorio *The Creation*, which would give a more precise context to Beethoven's play on words in the title. Although he did not particularly admire the work of the ballet-master Salvatore Vigano, he was much attracted by the legendary figure of Prometheus, the bringer of fire, a hero-figure with whom Beethoven readily identified himself as an artist. Moreover, this treatment of the story gave Prometheus the combined gifts of Orpheus and Pygmalion, bringing statues to life through the power of harmony, and then teaching them the virtues of culture.

The original ballet soon fell into neglect, and so did Beethoven's music, with the notable exception of the Overture, which quickly became established in the concert repertory. The opening chords are a dramatic gesture, soon giving way to the eloquent music of the *Adagio* introduction. The lively string writing in the main *Allegro* section is no less typical, anticipating for example the finale of the Fourth Symphony.

Terry Barfoot



Violin Concerto

Jean Sibelius

Born: 8 December 1865 Hämeenlinna, Finland

Died: 20 September 1957 Järvenpää, near Helsinki

1. Allegro moderato
2. Adagio di molto
3. Allegro ma non tanto

Although Sibelius composed a large body of orchestral music, he left just one concerto. He was himself a violinist, and as a student had even harboured ambitions to become a virtuoso. And a deep understanding of his own instrument pervades the concerto he completed in 1903, in the key of D minor, his op.47, soon after the premiere of his Second Symphony. Its first performance took place at Helsinki (Helsingfors) on 8 February 1904 with Viktor Nováček as soloist. This was a less than successful premiere; consequently, Sibelius subjected the music to a thorough revision, and the final version was performed in Berlin on 19 October 1905 by Karl Halir, the Berlin Philharmonic's concert-master, under the direction of Richard Strauss.

The concerto achieves an ideal balance between cogent musical development and virtuoso display. In this regard the opening theme plays an important part, since it ranks among Sibelius' finest inspirations. The music immediately imposes its unique personality, the soloist presenting the deeply-felt initial theme over a discreet accompaniment.

This material is worked to a climax, releasing both a solo cadenza and an orchestral response, before the more naturally imposing second subject is heard. This too is elaborated upon by the soloist, the closing phrase proving especially fruitful. The third group of themes, at a lively *Allegro molto* tempo, is presented by the orchestra and soon generates considerable momentum.

When this has run its course the solo-ensemble balance is restored, while a substantial cadenza reasserts the importance of the solo violin. What is more, since it is placed at the very centre of the movement, this cadenza becomes a structural fulcrum, a development section in its own right. The familiar material maintains its importance henceforth, with developments both subtle and powerful, which assume veritably symphonic proportions.

The *Adagio di molto* second movement has a three-part (ABA) design, including a principal theme whose eloquence is not unlike that with which the concerto had begun. This theme, presented “sonorously and expressively” by the solo violin, is introduced by a rocking woodwind figure, and this becomes transformed at the centre of the movement, forming the dramatic and passionate contrasting section. This process is commenced by the orchestra, and when the soloist joins the fray, the music’s technical demands are fearsomely difficult, as well as far removed from the eloquent line and rich tone which together represent the principal characteristics of the remainder of the movement.

Only towards the end does the violin resume the melodic lead; but the equal relationship between soloist and orchestra remains a central feature of the music’s expressive language.

Rhythmically the finale is a tour-de-force. The agenda is set by the timpani and lower strings prior to the soloist’s assertive presentation of the main theme, whereas the second subject is more conventionally dance-like. Now there are some ingenious transformations, and a virtuoso role for the violin which is at once effective and exhilarating. As the finale drives forward towards its exuberant conclusion, Sibelius confirms the strength of his conception and the force of his musical personality.

Terry Barfoot

Interval



Symphony No.6 ‘Pathétique’

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Born: 7 May 1840 Kamsko-Votkinsk

Died: 6 November 1893 St Petersburg

1. Adagio - Allegro non troppo
2. Allegro con grazia
3. Allegro molto vivace
4. Finale: Adagio lamentoso

During his last year Tchaikovsky was obsessed with death. This was, however, a mood wholly in keeping with his normal outlook, for he had regularly composed works in which Fate played a central part. Indeed, this was the driving force behind his last three symphonies. In the Fourth and Fifth the result in each case was a somewhat forced triumph, but in the Sixth it was submission.

During the composition of the Symphony No.6, his op.74, in the key of B minor, Tchaikovsky wrote that the work would be “full of subjective feeling, so much so that I frequently shed tears. There will be numerous innovations from the formal point of view: the finale, for instance, is not to be a noisy *Allegro* but a long *Adagio*”.

The unusual formal design, with the slow movement placed last, is the crucial feature. The composer told his brother Modest that he sought “to exorcise and drive out the sombre demons that have so long plagued me”. But the celebrated title was virtually an afterthought.

At first the work was merely called *Programme-Symphony*, and though Modest's first suggestion, *Tragic*, was rejected, his next, *Pathétique*, was accepted readily enough. In translation the English 'Pathetic' seems uncomfortable, and this is why the French is preferred, conveying a meaning closer to pathos and suffering.

The first movement has a dark introduction, as from the depths the bassoons present the theme which will pervade the movement. The introduction falls back to silence, and the *Allegro non troppo* begins with music which derives from it, now tautly rhythmic. The textures are far more complex, but the intensity subsides to allow the emergence of the second subject. This rightly famous tune is played at tempo *Andante*, and its mood maintains the passionate mood with slight changes of pulse every few bars. When this tune eventually dies away, Tchaikovsky makes his point with the direction *pppppp*.

Immediately the development begins with a shattering tutti chord, the complete antithesis. The music is now frenetic in the extreme, with whirling fugal textures derived from the first subject. A slight relaxation in dynamics brings a new theme based on a Russian Orthodox chant, but the hectic activity returns. The development reaches a tremendous climax with a falling motif pounded forth by the brass, so that the return of the second subject in recapitulation brings some solace. This in turn subsides to silence, while the short coda features a solemn brass chorale above a downward pizzicato tread.

The second movement, *Allegro con grazia*, brings some relaxation. The theme is immediately played by the cellos with a pizzicato accompaniment, and the woodwinds share its continuation with the strings. The unusual pulse – 5/4 time – gives this melody a sense of unease, and the mood becomes sorrowful in the central section, whose dark theme and throbbing pulse recall the work's introduction. The initial theme returns, and once again the ending is subdued.

The *Allegro molto vivace* third movement is a brilliant march. The first half of the movement builds in excitement through brilliant triplets for strings and woodwind, tossed between the sections of the orchestra. Tchaikovsky only permits fragments of the theme in these early stages and there are downward scales too, a frequent device in this work. Then a rising scale on the clarinet heralds the full statement of the theme, a moment that has been keenly anticipated. However, agitated violins disturb its confidence as the march proceeds. Even the majestic climax, replete with cymbals and trumpet fanfares, results only in hysterical excitement and an abrupt ending.

The opening of the finale is a passionate expression of desperate emotion, the music deriving from the descending scale that has pervaded the symphony. The central section moves at a slightly faster *Andante* tempo and at first its melody is more gentle, once again using a descending scale.

But with a tremendous effort the music builds to a huge climax which is overthrown by rushing scales and silence. The first theme returns, tenser than ever, and the mood becomes yet more despairing with trombones and tuba adding to the gloom. The coda employs the *Andante* theme, but now the mood is increasingly desolate, as the music dies away against the dark throbbing pulse of the double basses.

After completing the Sixth Symphony, Tchaikovsky wrote: "I can tell you in all sincerity that I consider this Symphony the best thing I have ever done. In any case, it is the most deeply felt. And I love it as I have never loved any of my compositions."

Terry Barfoot



Gergely Madaras

Conductor

Gergely Madaras has been Music Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège since 2019. He has previously held positions as Chief Conductor of the Savaria Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of the Orchestre Dijon Bourgogne.

Having forged strong professional relationships throughout Europe, Gergely regularly appears as a guest conductor with orchestras including the BBC Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, Hallé, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Tonhalle Orchestra Zürich, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Filarmonica della Scala, Orchestre National de Lyon, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Oslo, Copenhagen, Bergen, Luxembourg Philharmonic orchestras as well as the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Münchener Kammerorchester and Academy of Ancient Music.

Further afield, he has appeared with the Melbourne and Houston Symphony orchestras. During the 2021/2022 season he makes his debuts with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Russian National Orchestra, Bamberger Symphoniker, Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic, Musikkollegium Winterthur, Hamburger Symphoniker and Den Norske Opera & Ballet Orchestra. He will also return to the Budapest Festival Orchestra, as well as Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI for three programmes across the season, which include the opening concert of Milano Musica at La Scala and a staged performance of Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*.

While grounded in the core Classical and Romantic repertoire, he maintains a close relationship with new music.

He has collaborated with composers George Benjamin, Péter Eötvös, György Kurtág, Tristan Murail, Luca Francesconi, Philippe Boesmans and Pierre Boulez, for whom he served as assistant conductor at the Lucerne Festival Academy between 2011-2013.

Equally established in the operatic repertoire, he has appeared at the English National Opera, Dutch National Opera, Hungarian State Opera and Grand Théâtre de Genève. Future plans include his debut at La Monnaie in Brussels.

Born in Budapest in 1984, Gergely first began studying folk music with the last generation of authentic Hungarian Gypsy and peasant musicians at the age of five. He then went on to study classical flute, violin and composition, graduating from the flute faculty of the Liszt Academy in Budapest, as well as the conducting faculty of the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, where he studied with Mark Stringer.



Simone Lamsma

Violin

With an extensive repertoire of over sixty violin concertos, Simone's recent seasons have seen her perform with many of the world's leading orchestras.

Notable recent highlights include her debut with the New York Philharmonic under Jaap van Zweden, and with the Chicago Symphony, tours with Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg and Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, as well as return invitations to the Cleveland Orchestra Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Warsaw Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic and Dallas Symphony Orchestra.

In 2017 Simone's most recent recording featuring Shostakovich's First Violin Concerto and Gubaidulina's *In Tempus Praesens* with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic under James Gaffigan and Reinbert de Leeuw was released on Challenge Classics and

received high accolades from the press, as did her previous Mendelssohn, Janáček and Schumann CD with pianist Robert Kulek.

In addition to her many international prizes and distinctions, Simone was awarded the national Dutch VSCD Classical Music Prize in the category 'New Generation Musicians' in 2010, awarded by the Association of Dutch Theatres and Concert Halls to artists that have made remarkable and valuable contributions to the Dutch classical music scene.

In May 2018 Simone was invited by His Majesty King Willem-Alexander and Her Majesty Queen Máxima of The Netherlands to perform during their official state visit to Luxembourg.

Simone began studying the violin at the age of five and moved to the UK aged eleven to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School with Professor Hu Kun.

At the age of fourteen Simone made her professional solo debut with the North Netherlands Orchestra performing Paganini's 1st Violin Concerto, her debut highly praised by the press. She continued her studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London with Professor Hu Kun and Professor Maurice Hasson, where she graduated aged nineteen with first class honours and several prestigious awards. In 2019, she was made Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in London, an honour limited to 300 former Academy students, and awarded to those musicians who have distinguished themselves within the profession.

Simone plays the "Mlynarski" Stradivarius (1718), on generous loan to her by an anonymous benefactor.

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Championing the role of culture in people's lives



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 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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