



**bournemouth
symphony orchestra**

Kirill Karabits Chief Conductor

**Concert Programme
Winter/Spring 2022**





Welcome

I'm sure you'll join me in providing a very warm welcome to our Chief Conductor, Kirill Karabits, as he returns to the Orchestra and the South West for the first time since the humanitarian crisis erupted in his native Ukraine, a region that has long held a very special place in the hearts of BSO audiences and musicians.

Over the past thirteen years Kirill has enriched our lives with musical discoveries through his 'Voices from the East' series of lesser-known (and often entirely lost) symphonic works from former Soviet countries. From his homeland in Ukraine to music from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, we have had our minds opened to a new world through Kirill's own version of the symphonic Silk Road; so much so that *The Times* recently pointed out: "music lovers in Dorset may now be the most knowledgeable in the western world about the symphonic pieces of eastern Europe and central Asia".

Tonight's programme paints a landscape slightly closer to home through the vivid colours of Arnold Bax's symphonic tone poem, *Tintagel*. The popular work made its first appearance in 1921 - its world premiere given by Sir Dan Godfrey and the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra (now BSO), with an appreciative Bax in the audience.

This week we'll perform two new works by composers alive today: Elizabeth Ogonek's *All These Lighted Things*, a set of dances full of joy; and – when we travel to give the first symphonic performance at the newly refurbished Hall for Cornwall – *Unforged* by Carmen Ho, which explodes with opportunity.

Sibelius' monumental Second Symphony closes the programme. Written during a period of censorship of Finnish language and culture, the work provides an ecstatic celebration of a nation's pride. Whatever Sibelius' true intentions, it's a work that certainly uplifts the soul and reminds us, despite the challenges, of music's universal power to move our emotions unlike anything else.

Dougie Scarfe
Chief Executive

Stirring Sibelius

Lighthouse, Poole
Wednesday 16 March

Supported by
Steve Edge & Jane Fogg

Ogonek
All These Lighted Things
14'

Bax
Tintagel
14'

Interval

Sibelius
Symphony No.2
43'

Kirill Karabits
Conductor

Amy Merchant
Leader

Martin Handley
Livestream Presenter

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.

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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All These Lighted Things

Elizabeth Ogonek

Born: 26 May 1989 Anoka, Minnesota

1. Exuberant, playful, bright
2. Gently drifting, hazy
3. Buoyant

When I began working on *All These Lighted Things* in 2017, I set out to write a set of mazurkas based on musical fragments from the other two works on the programme (Rossini's Overture to *William Tell* and Bruckner's Fourth Symphony). I would get up every day and scavenge for material that I could mutate and transform into something I thought would be interesting. Every day, despite my efforts, I would fail miserably. I quickly gave up on that plan. Something inside of me was fervently committed to the mazurka: perhaps my Polish heritage; perhaps the joyful abandon with which Polish people dance the mazurka; perhaps my unabashed love of Chopin.

Chopin has been a preoccupation of mine lately. I think it's because the piano music is some of the first music I really fell in love with as a kid. When I think back to my earliest memories as a musician, I'm reminded of the Chopin F minor Ballade or the Db major Nocturne or the A minor Mazurka (op. 17, no. 4), and how my heart would leap out of my chest as I listened to those pieces and to so much of Chopin's other piano music.

There's something about the unapologetic lyricism, the manipulation of time, the burgeoning intensity and range of expression as Chopin returned again and again to the same forms that gets me every single time.

Eventually, the mazurka plan fell by the wayside as well. But what stuck was a collection of little dance-like figures that I had composed as I tried to made each iteration of my initial compositional plan work. As I thought about how time transformed the bones of the mazurka for Chopin, it occurred to me that I could take my dance figures and cast them through imaginary "filters" to see how they might bend and warp. The first dance, for example, explores the ways in which a tune with qualities characteristic of the mazurka (triplet and dotted rhythms, second beat emphasis, in three) might fluidly transition between contentedness, ecstasy and irrational danger. The second dance imagines that a sarabande has been stretched out and submerged in water. Elements of the slow, stately dance surface only occasionally. Lastly, the third dance is more communal. Each section begins with a small grouping of instruments and, like a fly strip, begins to attract more and more members of the orchestra doing their own thing until the independent lines become indistinguishable. The result is a composite sound made up of all the kinks and quirks that give way to individual personalities.

The title, *All These Lighted Things*, comes from a line in a poem about dawn written by Thomas Merton. At the heart of the piece is celebration and reverence for the things that bring joy. It comes on the heels of several dark works and, thus, is a kind of first morning light.

All These Lighted Things was commissioned by Riccardo Muti, Zell Music Director, for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association. It was first performed on 28 September 2017, by the CSO conducted by Riccardo Muti.

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Tintagel

Arnold Bax

Born: 8 November 1883 Streatham

Died: 3 October 1953 Cork

Dan Godfrey, founder of what is now the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, greatly admired Bax's music; writing in an article of 1923 he commented that, "of the modernists Arnold Bax stands first at the moment, and I regard him as the leader of the British impressionist school." Undoubtedly, Bax was one of the major creative forces in British composition during the inter-war years, when he wrote the backbone of his achievement – a cycle of seven symphonies spanning the years 1922 to 1939. Also significant among his orchestral works is his *Symphonic Variations* for piano and orchestra (1917), and his colourful tone poems such as *The Garden of Fand* (1913-16), *November Woods* (1917) and *Tintagel* composed between 1917 and 1919. The latter is Bax's most enduring work which has remained in the orchestral repertoire ever since its première, by the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra on 20 October 1921 conducted by Godfrey.

Bax studied at the Royal Academy of Music between 1900 to 1905; however, the major formative influence on him was not musical, rather it was through the culture of Ireland, and particularly the work of Yeats that he found himself.

Throughout his life Ireland was his second home, its landscape, folklore and literature his prime inspiration. Apart from his music he also wrote poetry under the pseudonym Dermot O' Byrne. Another important musical influence was the music of the Russian nationalist composers whose works he heard on a visit to Russia in 1910. Bax was knighted in 1937 and from 1942 until his death was Master of the King's, and briefly, the Queen's Musick. His orchestral works were only part of a prolific output, he also left a fine body of chamber and instrumental music, and his score for David Lean's film of Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1948) was hailed as a major contribution to the genre.

Bax described himself as a "tireless hunter of dreams", and it was to seascapes that time and again he returned in the dreams that created his music. He loved to spend time alone beside the Atlantic, the ocean of that Celtic twilight world of mystery and magic that he evoked supremely in *Tintagel*, Bax aiming to "evoke a tone-picture of the castle-crowned cliff of Tintagel, and more particularly the wide distances of the Atlantic as seen from the cliffs of Cornwall on a sunny but not windless day."

The composer succeeds brilliantly with all the elements of the scene being vividly realised in sound; indeed from the very opening bars the image of swelling waves flecked with foam is unmistakable. The ruined castle “now so ancient and weather-worn as almost to be an emanation of the rock on which it is built”, appears on the brass; the “serene almost limitless space of ocean” is evoked by an expansive melody on the violins. “With the increasing tumult of the sea” shadowy figures of history and legend are conjured up: King Arthur, King Mark, Tristan and Isolde. The many “passionate and tragic incidents of their times” are unleashed in tempestuous music which incorporates a motif from Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*. It surges to its conclusion in the rich colours of the composer’s masterly orchestral palette.

Andrew Burn

Interval



Symphony No.2

Jean Sibelius

Born: 8 December 1865 Hämeenlinna, Finland

Died: 20 September 1957 Järvenpää, nr. Helsinki

1. Allegretto
2. Tempo andante ma rubato
3. Vivacissimo
4. Finale: Allegro moderato

In 1900 an aristocrat admirer of Sibelius' music, Baron Axel Carpelan, raised funds to enable the composer to devote himself wholly to creative work for up to a year including travel to Italy. By February 1901 he was ensconced with his family in Rapallo, where he planned to write a new symphony. Progress proved rapid, and by the time of his return to Finland in May, his Second Symphony in the key of D major, his opus 43, was drafted. Work continued during the autumn and winter when he made substantial revisions to the score and orchestrated it. The premiere was given by the Helsinki Philharmonic, with Sibelius conducting, on 8 March 1902.

The nationalist overtones, which are so implicit in the finale's romantic triumph, ensured an immediate success, and this was soon repeated elsewhere, particularly in England and Germany.

In this symphony, Sibelius composed music of great mastery, ingeniously adapting the Classical four-movement design.

For example, it opens both beautifully and purposefully with a subject on the strings, which only reaches its full potential as the movement proceeds. The music is endlessly inventive with many fine themes which are woven together in a fabric of great subtlety.

One theme seems especially worthy of comment: that which dominates the second subject group. It is wholly idiomatic and perhaps forms the work's most important reference-point. Played by flutes, oboes and clarinets, it comprises a long-sustained note, then a slow trill, and finally an expressive descending phrase. No other composer has created music like it.

The sombre and dramatic slow movement begins with an extraordinary pizzicato passage, alternating between cellos and basses, whose heavy rhythm sets the agenda. As the music proceeds so the expressive range grows, with rich string writing and broad melodic contours. A terrific, almost monumental force is generated in the climaxes, and the coda is highly dramatic too. Dark and fragmentary recollections of earlier themes are contrasted against savage woodwind trills and rushing string passages.

The scherzo is based on a powerful accumulation of fragments, demanding great accuracy in performance. The rhythmic intensity sweeps the music on towards a trio section which makes a striking contrast with its stillness and calm. Here the oboe's theme starts out with nine repetitions of the same note, a further example of the stylistic tendency noted in the first movement.

Both the scherzo and the trio are repeated, then on its third appearance the scherzo material leads through a masterly transition and directly into the finale. This has a broad and noble principal theme and a clear solemn march-like second subject. The latter has woodwinds above a discreet timpani roll, the perfect foil to the inexorable progress of the main agenda. In the later stages the outlines of the principal material broaden to reach a blazing magnificence of sound. Although Sibelius would write even greater music as the years progressed, the rousing triumph he expressed here will ensure that the Second Symphony will remain the most popular of the seven.

Terry Barfoot



Composer Profile

Elizabeth Ogonek

Still in her early thirties, Elizabeth Ogonek, established her reputation as a composer, both in her native United States and Britain, as well as further afield, with a series of vibrant, engaging works. Her music has been described by the critic of the *Chicago Tribune* as “shimmering”, “dramatic” and “painstakingly crafted”.

Born in 1989 in Minnesota, Ogonek grew up in New York City. She studied at Indiana University, the University of South Carolina, and in London, at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama for her doctorate. Her composition teachers include Stephen Hartke and Julian Anderson. Alongside her composing she has worked in academia: from 2015 to 2021 she taught at Oberlin Conservatory, and currently, she is an Assistant Professor of Composition at Cornell University.

Her links with the UK date back to 2011, when her *Ringling the Quiet*, for large chamber ensemble, was performed under the auspices of the Britten-Pears Young Artists’ Programme.

Two years later, *as though birds* was premiered by the London Symphony Orchestra as part of the LSO Panufnik Composers Scheme, and this led to a LSO commission, *Sleep & Unremembrance* in 2016. Both works were performed at the Barbican Centre, conducted by François-Xavier Roth. Meanwhile, in 2015, *Falling Up*, for mixed instrumental quartet, was commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society. In 2018 her music was first heard at the BBC Proms in a collaboration with Gerard McBurney.

Most recently, Ogonek’s *Cloudline*, a joint BBC Proms and Los Angeles Philharmonic commission, was given its first performance in last season’s Proms season by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales conducted by Ryan Bancroft.

In the USA, Ogonek’s career and profile took a significant leap forward with her appointment in 2015 as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Mead Composer-in-Residence, a post she held jointly with Samuel Adams until 2018.

The appointment resulted in three new works: *In Silence (after Biber)* (2017), a chamber violin concerto, premiered by Benjamin Beilman; *The Water Cantos (Notes from Quiet Places)* (2018), for twelve instrumentalists, the first performance of which was conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen; and lastly, *All These Lighted Things* (2017), which was commissioned by Riccardo Muti, Zell Music Director for the Chicago Orchestra Association. Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra gave the first performance on 28 September 2017. The work's European premiere was given by the London Symphony Orchestra in 2020.

For Ogonek, poetry is, she says, “incredibly important” as a springboard for her compositions, and in her doctoral research she explored the relationship between words and music. Many of her works, like *All These Lighted Things* arise from a text or includes words set to music, in that instance a poem by the poet and Trappist monk, Thomas Merton. In *as though birds*, both the writings of the French anarchist and art critic Félix Fénéon as well as Ogonek's long-term collaborator, poet and playwright Jonathan Dubow, were catalysts for the work.

During the current season the US premiere of *Cloudline* will take place by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and there are also new works for the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons and the San Francisco Symphony with Elim Chan. All in all, Elizabeth Ogonek continues to forge ahead as among the most significant American composers of her generation.

Andrew Burn

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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 has enjoyed 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*.

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.



Martin Handley

Presenter

Martin Handley is an experienced broadcaster best known for presenting BBC Radio 3's *Breakfast* and *In Concert* programmes. His broadcasting career began at the BBC World Service, where he shared live classical music, including BBC Proms concerts, with listeners around the globe.

Alongside his busy broadcasting career he has coached young singers for the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the National Opera Studio, and the Royal Academy of Music.

A musician and actor, Martin has combined performing musically and vocally for as long as he can remember! He's worked as a répétiteur and conductor in Germany, as head of music and conductor for the Royal Danish Opera, and as chorusmaster and conductor for both English National Opera and Australian Opera.

Martin introduced the BSO's first livestreamed concert in 2020, following the longest break from the stage in the Orchestra's 127-year history.

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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