



bournemouth  
symphony orchestra

Concert Programme  
Wednesday 29 March 2023





## Rachmaninov First and Last

**Rachmaninov** The Rock  
**Tchaikovsky** Piano Concerto No.1  
**Rachmaninov** Symphonic Dances

Gabor Kali Conductor  
Marie-Ange Nguci Piano

Wednesday 19 April Lighthouse, Poole  
Thursday 20 April Guildhall, Portsmouth

## Norse Gods

**Sibelius** Pohjola's Daughter  
**Grieg** Piano Concerto  
**Nielsen** Symphony No.4

Kirill Karabits Conductor  
Alexander Malofeev Piano

Wednesday 3 May Lighthouse, Poole

**bsolive.com 01202 669925**

All concerts begin at 7.30pm

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# Mighty Brahms

**Lighthouse, Poole**  
Wednesday 29 March

With thanks to all our  
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**Weber**  
Overture: Der Freischutz  
10'

**Prokofiev**  
Violin Concerto No.2  
26'

*Interval*

**Brahms**  
Symphony No.1  
45'

Anna Sułkowska-Migoń  
Conductor

James Ehnes  
Violin

Amy Merchant  
Leader

Sarah Walker  
Livestream Presenter

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## Overture: Der Freischütz

### Carl Maria von Weber

Born: 18 November 1786 Eutin, Germany

Died: 5 June 1826 London

With a libretto by Johann Friedrich Kind, Weber's opera *Der Freischütz*, freely translated as '*The Marksman with Magic Bullets*', was first produced in Berlin in 1821. The opera is set in Bohemia after the Seven Years' War, which lasted from 1756 to 1763. Its plot is rich in supernatural melodrama, while other important elements are romantic love and hunting scenes. The composer Hans Pfitzner recognised a further vital aspect when he wrote: "The heart of *Der Freischütz* is that indescribably fervent and acute ear for nature; the main character ... is the German forest." Sinister and powerfully atmospheric, the *Wolf's Glen* scene in Act Two, during which the magic bullets are cast, is the most celebrated and influential part of the opera.

The *Overture to Der Freischütz* begins with an *Adagio* introduction dominated by the richly evocative writing for horn quartet, suggesting the potent atmosphere of the depths of the forest. One of Weber's most important contributions to the early Romantic movement was the soloistic freedom he gave to the horn and clarinet.

The final bars of this introduction bring a dramatic and ominous change of mood, representing the demon Samiel in the opera itself. Here a string tremolando, punctuated by double-basses and timpani, supports a cello line of sombre eloquence.

Another of Weber's great gifts was his ability to evoke a powerful atmosphere with music of relatively simplicity. The ensuing *Molto vivace* section begins with a tense and gloomy passage in which syncopation in the strings contributes to the feeling of uneasiness. Emphatic horn chords subsequently introduce a broad clarinet melody associated with young forester Max's first sighting of the Wolf's Glen in the full moon. Again, in the lyrical main theme associated with Max's lover Agathe, Weber gives the melody to the clarinet. After an admirably concentrated development section in which the potential of some of the themes is explored, the recapitulation is interrupted by a return of the mysterious atmosphere from the end of the *Adagio*.

Then, following a short pause, a coda concludes the overture in brilliant and triumphant mood. *Der Freischütz* is usually regarded as the first German Romantic opera, while its magnificent overture has always been popular in the concert hall. Weber completed five operas, all containing brilliant music - several others are either unfinished or lost - but none represents such a landmark as *Der Freischütz*.

Philip Borg-Wheeler



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## Violin Concerto No.2

### **Sergei Prokofiev**

Born: 23 April 1891 Sontsovka, Ukraine

Died: 5 March 1953 Moscow

1. Allegro moderato
2. Andante assai
3. Allegro, ben marcato

Each of Prokofiev's two violin concertos is linked with a crucial period of Russian history. Following the Russian Revolutions of February and October 1917 Prokofiev became an exile, first touring America as a piano virtuoso before settling in Paris in 1920. Having failed to establish permanent roots outside Russia, he made the extraordinary decision to resettle there in 1936, during Stalin's 'Great Purge'. His First Violin Concerto was composed in the turbulent year 1917, whereas the Second Concerto, in the key of G minor, completed in 1935, was the last work he composed before returning to Russia. It therefore belongs to the same period as three of his most popular compositions – *Lieutenant Kijé*, the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* and the children's tale *Peter and the Wolf*.

The first famous Soviet artist to visit Spain, Prokofiev was greeted enthusiastically at the premiere in Madrid, on 1 December 1935, given by the violinist who had commissioned the work – the French/Belgian Robert Soetens – with Enrique Arbós conducting.

This concerto reflects a general shift towards classical simplicity and restraint in Prokofiev's music at that time, with structural divisions clearly defined. However, even within this classical restraint, and with the relatively modest orchestration, the potentially romantic atmosphere familiar from the *Romeo and Juliet* ballet score is never far away. The work begins unusually with eight bars of solo violin – a concise melody of serious character and memorable shape. The other principal theme is an ardent melody also introduced by the soloist. In the development section both themes are accompanied by energetic new passage-work in the solo violin part, and further development of the first theme, combined with robust chords from the violin, dominates the final part of the movement.

In the serenely beautiful slow movement – again similar in character to much of the music from *Romeo and Juliet* – the soloist sustains a rapturous melodic line, accompanied with disarming simplicity by staccato clarinets and pizzicato strings. In two episodes of magically shimmering effect a striking orchestral texture of horns, muted trumpet and strings provides a background for the soloist's rapid but delicate figuration.

The rondo finale typifies the more spiky and acerbic elements of Prokofiev's musical style. The principal theme suggests a robust peasant dance, but in spite of the stamping rhythms and pungent harmony, the composer's outstanding melodic gift is equally obvious. In the latter half of the movement the solo violin's passage-work is fiendishly demanding, while Prokofiev's subtle use of percussion, especially bass drum and castanets, adds another dimension. This concerto is firmly established in the repertoire as one of the handful of classic 20th-century works for the violin.

Philip Borg-Wheeler

## Interval



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# Symphony No.1

## Johannes Brahms

Born: 7 May 1833 Hamburg

Died: 3 April 1897 Vienna

1. Un poco sostenuto - Allegro
2. Andante sostenuto
3. Un poco allegretto e grazioso
4. Adagio - Allegro non troppo ma con brio

Brahms was an experienced composer, aged forty-three, when he completed his Symphony No.1, in the key of C minor, op. 68, and the reason for the work's relatively late position in his output reflects upon the nature of his career. For the ghost of Beethoven loomed large over Brahms, who as a young man was apprehensive about releasing compositions by which this comparison might readily be made. The same surely applies also to the two String Quartets, op. 51, written just a short time before.

Brahms was barely twenty when Robert Schumann hailed him publicly as the inheritor of Beethoven's mantle, springing "armed like Minerva from the head of Zeus". From the earliest stage, therefore, Brahms was a major figure in the musical world; and the fact that he spent some sixteen years dwelling upon and refining the sketches for his symphony confirms just how significant a work it was for him.

He knew well that when the work appeared it would be judged by the highest standards. The work was duly first performed in Karlsruhe on the 4th of November 1876, conducted by Felix Dessooff, and soon it made its triumphant passage to Mannheim, Munich and Vienna, collecting the nickname 'Beethoven's Tenth'.

A tense and tragic mood is immediately established by the slow introduction. Drums and basses throb a reiterated pulse, while violins and cellos climb laboriously upward as woodwind and violas move in the opposite direction. The intensity is relieved by means of contrasts of texture: woodwind against pizzicato strings, then expressive string music. Further woodwind solos are abruptly cut off by the sudden launch of the *Allegro*. It seems scarcely credible that this immensely impressive introduction was a late addition, the last part of the work to be written. The principal subject of the main *Allegro* is tersely rhythmic, but very powerful in its effect by virtue of its displaced accents. An evocative and typically Brahmsian horn solo leads into the second group, in which the woodwind writing is very distinctive, particularly the oboe solo.

The development is wide ranging but tightly coherent, and there is a new theme whose extended and noble line brings the illusion of a slower tempo. The recapitulation is fairly regular until the closing stages, when the tension is relaxed, as subtle references to the music of the introduction bring a more peaceful mood.

The slow movement has a lyrical character, and is unusual among Brahms' orchestral music by giving particular emphasis to the upper range of the violins. A peaceful mood is maintained, with new material in the central section, eloquently presented by the oboe and the clarinet. When the opening ideas return, the scoring is full of subtle touches, while the solo violin is prominent in the serene coda; this memorable solo episode probably resulted from the influence of the D minor Symphony of Schumann.

Brahms often preferred to write flowing intermezzi instead of rhythmic scherzi. In the third movement the lyrical mood is therefore continued, the initial clarinet melody played to an accompaniment of pizzicato cellos with discreet harmonies in horn and bassoon. The easy flow is somewhat disturbed in the central section, however, in which the time signature changes and the music becomes more energetic. The opening ideas are then repeated, but with many subtle changes, such as the way in which the decorations of the flute and oboe retain the rhythm of the trio. The movement closes with a wistful glance back to the energetic central section.

The finale, like the first movement, has an impressive slow introduction, and once again the character is tragic. The *Adagio* theme of the violins is twice interrupted by pizzicati which try to increase the pace; and the second of these interruptions leads to a crisis which is manifest in the swirling intensity of the string writing.

A fierce timpani roll is followed by a horn call, and the trombones, silent thus far, make their portentous entry, *pianissimo*. When the horn call returns, it leads into the famous C major tune which forms the reference point for the *Allegro*. Indeed this theme dominates the remainder of the symphony, its nature enhanced by the related supplementary material. Therefore the music builds a tremendous and sweeping momentum, until at the final climax the trombones blaze forth their initial idea, in order to confirm the triumphant resolution of the epic drama.

Terry Barfoot.



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# Anna Sułkowska-Migoń

Conductor

Born in Kraków, Anna Sułkowska-Migoń won first prize at the La Maestra conducting competition in Paris in March 2022. Upcoming highlights for the 2022/2023 season include engagements with the Dresden Philharmonic, Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, Warsaw Philharmonic, the Southbank Sinfonia, and the National Forum of Music Wrocław. Her La Maestra success has led to a tour with the Paris Mozart Orchestra, with concerts confirmed in the Philharmonie de Paris and the BOZAR in Brussels in collaboration with Claire Gibault and Midori. Sułkowska-Migoń has also been invited to conduct main series performances with the Philadelphia Orchestra, as well as the 25th Anniversary of Penderecki's *Credo* at the Oregon Bach festival in 2023. She has been selected as one of four conductors to participate in the Dallas Opera's Hart Institute for Women Conductors Programme in the 2022/2023 season.

In the 2022/2023 season she will work with conductors including Klaus Mäkelä, Lahav Shani, Edward Gardner and Marta Gardolińska, whilst she has also collaborated with François Xavier-Roth, Antonin Wit, Jerzy Maksymiuk, Piotr Sułkowski, Marek Wroniszewski and Massimiliano Caldi. She is the recipient of the 2022-2024 Taki Alsop Conducting Award, and attended Ravinia Festival in August 2022 as part of the Taki Alsop masterclasses with the Chicago Symphony.

As a choral conductor she was a scholarship holder of the Noël Minet Fund Scholarship, Finalist in 2nd Romano Gandolfi International Competition for Choral Conductors in November 2021, participated in masterclasses with Josep Vila i Casanas, and led workshops of the Kraków Philharmonic Youth Choir. She currently conducts Ars Cameralis Choir and assists in Kraków Philharmonic Boy's Choir.

She has also earned scholarships at the Polish National Institute of Music and Dance, which were undertaken with the Lower Silesian Philharmonic and the Polish Sinfonietta Iuventus Orchestra, and won conducting masterclasses with Marin Alsop and the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. Sułkowska-Migoń completed a bachelor's degree at The Feliks Nowowiejski Academy of Music in Piotr Sułkowski's orchestra conducting class in 2019.

As an instrumentalist, she completed her MA studies, specializing in viola, at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in the class of Piotr Reichert and Katarzyna Budnik (2019). She is currently a master's student at The Krzysztof Penderecki Academy of Music in Kraków where she studies symphonic conducting in the class of Łukasz Borowicz and choral conducting in the class of Lidia Matynian and Andrzej Korzeniowski.



## James Ehnes

Violin

James Ehnes' recent orchestral highlights include the MET Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, San Francisco Symphony, London Symphony, NHK Symphony and Munich Philharmonic. Throughout the 2022/2023 season, Ehnes continues as Artist in Residence with the National Arts Centre of Canada.

Alongside his concerto work, Ehnes maintains a busy recital schedule. He performs regularly at the Wigmore Hall (including the complete cycle of Beethoven Sonatas in 2019/2020, and the complete violin/viola works of Brahms and Schumann in 2021/22), Carnegie Hall, Symphony Center Chicago, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Ravinia, Montreux, Verbier Festival, Dresden Music Festival and Festival de Pâques in Aix. A devoted chamber musician, he is the leader of the Ehnes Quartet and the Artistic Director of the Seattle Chamber Music Society.

Ehnes has an extensive discography and has won many awards for his recordings, including two Grammy's, three Gramophone Awards and eleven Juno Awards. In 2021, Ehnes was announced as the recipient of the coveted Artist of the Year title in the 2021 Gramophone Awards which celebrated his recent contributions to the recording industry, including the launch of a new online recital series entitled 'Recitals from Home' which was released in June 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent closure of concert halls. Ehnes recorded the six Bach sonatas and partitas and six sonatas of Ysaÿe from his home with state-of-the-art recording equipment and released six episodes over the period of two months. These recordings have been met with great critical acclaim by audiences worldwide and Ehnes was described by *Le Devoir* as being "at the absolute forefront of the streaming evolution".

Ehnes began violin studies at the age of five, became a protégé of the noted Canadian violinist Francis Chaplin aged nine, and made his orchestra debut with L'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal aged 13. He continued his studies with Sally Thomas at the Meadowmount School of Music and The Juilliard School, winning the Peter Mennin Prize for Outstanding Achievement and Leadership in Music upon his graduation in 1997. He is a Member of the Order of Canada and the Order of Manitoba, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and an honorary fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, where he is a Visiting Professor.

Ehnes plays the "Marsick" Stradivarius of 1715.



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# Sarah Walker

Livestream Presenter

Sarah Walker is well known as the presenter of BBC Radio 3's *Sunday Morning*. She also hosts many of Radio 3's *Lunchtime Concerts* from around the world and is a regular contributor to *Record Review*, *In Tune* and the BBC Proms.

Sarah's early career as a piano and keyboard teacher led her to create many volumes of original music for young players, published by Faber Music and ABRSM. She completed a PhD on the subject of English Experimental music, and as a performer has premiered many new British works: her latest album *Haunted Carbonek: the piano music of Martin Pyne* was released during lockdown.

Sarah has been presenting the Orchestra's concerts since the start of its inaugural livestream series in 2020, welcoming audiences from around the globe.

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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. Based at Lighthouse, Poole, the Orchestra has residencies in Bournemouth, Bristol, Exeter, Portsmouth and Yeovil – it is the largest cultural provider in the South West of England, serving one of the biggest and most diverse regions in the UK.

The Orchestra, 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, including Marin Alsop, the first female principal conductor of a major UK orchestra, the BSO has given memorable performances worldwide and with regular live broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM.

The Orchestra's livestreamed broadcasts have cemented its reputation for presenting live symphonic music of the highest quality and remain popular around the globe. In 2022/23, the series features artists Dame Sarah Connolly, James Ehnes, and Laura van der Heijden and a host of the UK's leading music broadcasters. Described by *The Times* as "one of the most inspiring figures on the concert scene today", Horn player Felix Klieser also returns – as the Orchestra's Artist-in-Residence – following a memorable UK concerto debut with the BSO in 2021.

Committed to new music, the BSO has presented premiere performances of works by Carmen Ho, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, Magnus Lindberg, Elizabeth Ogonek and Shirley J. Thompson OBE in recent years. This season the Orchestra celebrates the work of composer Anna Korsun, who becomes its Composer-in-Residence in 2023.

The BSO also marks a landmark moment when inclusive ensembles BSO Resound and RNS Moves join forces for a new commission by Kate Whitley, with performances in Poole and Gateshead in early 2023. Winner of the 2019 Royal Philharmonic Society's Impact Award, 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 the barriers 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 – and in 2022, the Orchestra welcomed its first community-based Young Associate musicians.

[bsolive.com](https://bsolive.com)

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