

Concert Programme Wednesday 3 May 2023



# **Norse Gods**

### Lighthouse, Poole Wednesday 3 May

Supported by Janet Boyle

This concert is being recorded for broadcast on 30 May on BBC Radio 3



### **Sibelius**

Pohjola's Daughter 17'

### Grieg

Piano Concerto 30'

Interval

### Nielsen

Symphony No.4 'The Inextinguishable' 36'

Kirill Karabits Conductor

Alexander Malofeev

Piano

Amyn Merchant

Leader

Katie Derham

Livestream Presenter

Celebrating 10 years of support







## Pohjola's Daughter

### Jean Sibelius

Born: 8 December 1865 Hämeenlinna, Finland Died: 20 September 1957 Järvenpää, near Helsinki

Throughout his life Sibelius drew inspiration from the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*, and this was one of the factors which contributed to the uniqueness of his style. He composed his opus 49 symphonic fantasy *Pohjola's Daughter* between 1905 and 1906. The work's first performance took place at St Petersburg on 29 December 1906, when Sibelius conducted the Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre.

The score is prefaced with a long quotation from the *Kalevala*, which may be summarised as follows:

"The minstrel-magician Väinämöinen sees a beautiful maiden (Pohjola's Daughter), who sits at a high window weaving a tapestry of golden thread. Immediately he falls in love with her; but he finds she has a heart of ice, since her delight is to ask her suitors to perform impossible tasks, which are often highly dangerous, in order that they may win her. The tasks given to the unfortunate Väinämöinen are to tie an egg into tiny, invisible knots and then to construct a boat from the pieces of her spindle.

In his attempt at the second task, the hero wounds himself with his axe; only with the help of a wise elder is he able to stem the flow of blood. Sadder but wiser as the result of his experience, Väinämöinen goes on his way."

In this composition Sibelius follows the poetic programme more closely than in any of his other symphonic poems, uniting imaginative inspiration with an integrated symphonic structure. The flexible theme presented by the cello at the outset serves to establish the mood, which is atmospherically developed by the countersubject on cor anglais, answered by clarinet. Another important theme is heard on the oboe, before a typically Sibelian momentum generates the release of sonorous music for the brass. The maiden's own theme, played by the oboe, is joined by the rhythm of the harp suggesting her spinning, and by the woodwind theme of Väinämöinen as he makes his entreaties.

The next section deals with his attempt at the challenges, accompanied by the maiden's mocking laughter; the toils of the hero are represented by the rising figure in the bass. As the music proceeds so the evocation of the story is combined with the symphonic development of the material, achieving considerable range and power in the process. And in keeping with the imagery of the programme, the ending is enigmatic, a miracle of under-statement which is thoroughly idiomatic.

Terry Barfoot



## Piano Concerto

### **Edvard Grieg**

Born: 15 June 1843 Bergen, Norway Died: 4 September 1907 Bergen

- 1. Allegro molto moderato
- 2. Adagio
- 3. Allegro moderato molto e marcato

The majority of Grieg's orchestral works are arrangements of existing songs or piano pieces, and the Piano Concerto is his most successful essay on the larger scale. He wrote it in 1868 at the age of twenty-five. though he made revisions at various times: the definitive edition heard today was made only towards the end of his life. The music is to some extent modelled on Schumann's Piano Concerto. As a student in Leipzig, one of the great German musical centres, the young Grieg naturally developed an interest in the Classical musical forms, writing a symphony and in due course this concerto, which has justly become one of the most popular works in the concert repertory.

The Piano Concerto, Grieg's op 16, is in the key of A minor and opens with a bold introductory gesture which makes an immediate impression. This contrasts strongly against the tender lyricism of the second subject, allowing Grieg to generate a substantial musical construction that finds room both for Lisztian virtuosity and tender poetic feeling.

The soloist is given a striking cadenza, releasing in turn an energetic coda to bring the movement to its close.

Grieg's special qualities as a composer of intimate miniatures are reflected in the beautiful *Adagio*, whose tone is set by the initial theme on muted strings. The piano writing is at once delicate and decorative, until a new theme is introduced in the central section. Thereafter the mood changes, while the first theme becomes more emotionally intense upon its return.

The finale adopts the halling, a Norwegian dance-rhythm (a fast dance, originating from the town of Hallingdal), and the themes too reflect a nationalist style. At the heart of the movement, surrounded by all this activity, there lies a magically poetic episode featuring a solo flute and the piano too. And it is to this wonderful tune that Grieg turns in order to build the concerto's expansive and exultant conclusion.

Terry Barfoot

### Interval



# Symphony No.4 'The Inextinguishable'

### **Carl Nielsen**

Born: 9 June 1865 Fünen, Denmark Died: 3 October 1931 Copenhagen

- 1. Allegro -
- 2. Poco allegretto -
- 3. Poco adagio quasi andante -
- 4. Allegro

Nielsen's Fourth Symphony, his opus 29. represents an important point in his artistic development. He composed it between 1914 and 1916, and though the Scandinavian countries were not directly involved as combatants in the First World War, as to some extent they were in the Second, the war and its unprecedented savagery still came as a tremendous psychological shock to thinking people. Indeed the senseless destruction, the seemingly unending slaughter and suffering haunted Nielsen's imagination. It was evident to him, as it was to others, that life could never be the same again, and that this world war represented a significant turning point in the history of mankind. Therefore it can be no surprise that the music he composed at this time enters upon a new creative phase, even a new style.

The Symphony No.4 is undoubtedly the most important composition in this context, with music whose contours are harder, whose harmonies are more striking, whose textures are altogether darker.

The contour of the lines soars in the most powerfully anguished and intense fashion. In the extraordinary slow movement, for example, Nielsen spoke of the music sounding "like the eagle rising on the wind". There is a potent awareness of the erosion of conventional tonality and of the awakening of many of those qualities which are readily identified with the post-war musical world.

Like George Bernard Shaw, Nielsen believed in the concept of the life-force. In a preface to the score, he wrote: "Under this title the composer has endeavoured to indicate in one word what the music alone is capable of expressing to the full: The elemental Will of Life. Music is Life and, like it, inextinguishable. The title given by the composer to this musical work might therefore seem superfluous. The composer, however, has employed the word in order to underline the strictly musical character of his subject. It is not a programme, but rather a suggestion as to the right approach to the music."

All four movements relate to each other and develop naturally out of each other. The general design requires that the music be played continuously, without pauses between the movements, and the transitions and contrasts become particularly important features. In the opening movement, at tempo Allegro, the first group has an elemental explosive power. This material contrasts strongly with a glowing, lyrical theme that surely is intended to characterise the life-enhancing forces which are central to Nielsen's conception. This theme. moreover, will return in order to deliver an expression of complete fulfilment, since in due course it will bring the symphony to its magnificent conclusion.

After a carefully controlled diminuendo. there follows a Poco allegretto second movement, a disarming pastoral. Now the emphasis is on charm and naivety, the woodwinds dominating an ensemble in which the strings, when they play, remain pizzicato. When in due course the high violins burst upon the scene at the beginning of the third movement, the intensity generated seems all the stronger. In this Adagio Nielsen's expressive language is at its most intense, though relief is brought by a beautiful violin solo, whose music is soon taken up by the orchestral strings. The challenges of loud winds and solemn trombones extend the range still further, until a great climax brings some kind of resolution, but only temporarily, since the music fades towards calm.

Nielsen surely modelled the transition to the finale on Beethoven's Overture. Leonore No.3. The rhythmic attack of the violins is supported by the lower strings, until the horns and timpani launch the new movement. This is music of astonishing power, possessed of seemingly inexhaustible reserves of energy. Part of the intention is to convey the feeling that the performance is threatening to go over the edge, to explode beyond control. The imaginative masterstroke is the role of the two sets of timpani. Positioned on either side of the orchestra, the two players thunder volleys of electrifying violence at one another. representing the forces of chaos. At length they are pulled into order via an extraordinary *glissando*, as the main theme triumphs over them. Thus Nielsen brings the symphony to its affirmative conclusion: "Music is Life and, like it, is inextinguishable".

Terry Barfoot



# **Composer Profile**

**Carl Nielsen** 

In his fifties Denmark's greatest composer, Carl Nielsen, looked back to his youth in a remarkable and enchanting autobiography My Danish Childhood (1927). It reveals how from an impoverished family background that was happy but constantly under financial hardship (Nielsen had to look after geese during the school holiday to help supplement the family income), his evident musical aptitudes led him to study violin, play in a village band, lean the cornet from his father so that by the age of fourteen he became a military trumpeter. It describes how later, through the generosity of benefactors, he was able to study at the Royal Conservatory in Copenhagen. The book too is suffused with a love of nature and a keen observer of humanity. characteristics that appear in his art, the former in his overture Helios (1888) and the pastoral nature of the second movement of the Fourth Symphony, and the latter his strong delineation of character in the operas Saul and David (1898-1901) and the comedy Maskarade (1906).

Apart from composing, in his early career he played violin in the Royal Chapel Orchestra and later succeeded the Norwegian composer and conductor Johan Svendsen, as its conductor from 1908 to 1914. He taught at the Royal Conservatory too for many years becoming its Director in the last vear of his life. The backbone of his compositional achievements are six symphonies composed between 1891 and 1925, powerfully argued dramas in which Nielsen evolved a highly personal use of tonality: several bear titles such as The Four Temperaments (No.2, 1901-2), and The Inextinguishable (No.4, 1914-16). Other important works are the concertos for flute (1926) and clarinet (1928) (two of the 20th century's finest for these instruments), the Wind Quintet (1922) and Commotio (1931) for organ. Neilsen also lavs claim to one of the most bizarre titles in music - his Cantata for the 50th Anniversary of the Danish Cremation Union! (1931).

Andrew Burn



## Kirill Karabits

Conductor

Kirill Karabits has been Chief Conductor of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra for fourteen 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 2019/20 season.

Karabits has worked with many of the leading ensembles of Europe, Asia and North America, including the Cleveland, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Chicago Symphony orchestras. Munich Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France. Philharmonia. Wiener Symphoniker, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony, Orchestra Filarmonica del Teatro La Fenice and the BBC Symphony - including a concert staging of Bluebeard's Castle at the Barbican Centre.

Recent highlights include Kirill's debuts with the Dallas Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, and the Prague Radio Symphony, as well as return visits to the Minnesota Orchestra, Bamberger Symphoniker, Orchestre National Captiole de Toulouse, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, and the Opéra Montpellier for a production of Pélléas et Mélisande. Kirill has also recently enjoyed conducting at the Edinburgh Festival and joining Mikhail Pletnev on extensive European and North American tours which included his New York debut at the Lincoln Center.

Highlights of the 2022-23 season include Kirill's return to the English National Opera for a production of *Die tote Stadt*, to Opernhaus Zürich for *La Boheme*, and to The Grange Festival for *Così fan tutte*.

This season sees Kirill perform with Opéra National de Bordeaux, Orchestre National de Montpellier, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, and embark on an extensive Korean Tour conducting the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

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 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 made his debut with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain on a UK tour including a sold out and critically acclaimed performance at the Barbican.

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



## Alexander Malofeev

Piano

Alexander Malofeev came to international prominence when he won the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians in 2014 at the age thirteen. Reviewing the performance. Amadeus noted. "Contrary to what could be expected of a youngster ... he demonstrated not only high technical accuracy but also an incredible maturity. Crystal clear sounds and perfect balance revealed his exceptional ability." Since this triumph Malofeev has quickly established himself as one of the most prominent pianists of his generation.

Recent appearances include a tour of Asia with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra under Riccardo Chailly, as well as performances with the Orchestra del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari under Mikhail Pletney, and the RAI National Symphony Orchestra and Fabio Luisi in Italy.

In 2022, Malofeev made debuts at major summer festivals including the Verbier Festival, Ravinia Festival, Aspen Music Festival with Vasily Petrenko. and the Tanglewood Music Festival with Michael Tilson Thomas. Future appearances include his return to the BSO in a multi-concert residency, and performances at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, and the Isarphilharmonie in Munich.

In addition to the Tchaikovsky Competition, he has won numerous prizes including the Grand Prix of the International Competition for Young Pianists **Grand Piano Competition** and second prize at the first China International Music Competition. In 2017 Malofeev became the first Young Yamaha Artist.

In 2020. Malofeey recorded Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto with the Tatarstan National Symphony Orchestra and Alexander Sladkovsky for Sony Classical's Tchaikovsky 2020 boxset.

Alexander Malofeev was born in Moscow in 2001. He studied at the Gnessin Moscow Special School of Music and Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory.



### Katie Derham

Presenter

Katie Derham is one of the most recognisable voices on BBC Radio 3, where she presents the stations flagship programme In Tune. She is the face of BBC Proms, anchoring the coverage from the Royal Albert Hall since 2010 in combination with fronting the weekly magazine show Proms Encore every Saturday on BBC2 during the season. In 2019. Katie also presented BBC Four's series Discovering with analysis and concerts in a wide range of musical genres.

Further Radio 3 credits include Sound of Dance on Saturday afternoons where she explored the relationship between music and dance and Afternoons on 3.

She also fronts television and music documentaries including *The Girl from Ipanema: Brazil, Nova* and the *Beach* for the BBC which saw her travelling to Rio de Janeiro, where her father was born, to explore the story behind Brazil's most famous and enduring song.

She was the host of All Together Now: The Great Orchestra Challenge for BBC4 and Fine Tuned, two specials for Sky Arts with Alexander Armstrong.

After reading Economics at Magdalene College Cambridge, Katie spent the first fifteen years of her broadcasting career in news and current affairs, first at the BBC then joining ITN as the Media and Arts Editor for ITV News.
Katie was ITV's youngest ever newsreader on British National Television, where her role as anchor meant she covered everything from elections to royal weddings and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In 2015 Katie's career took a decidedly glittery direction when she took part in *Strictly Come Dancing* reaching the final. In 2017 she was crowned Strictly's Christmas Champion.



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## **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. 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.

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