ROS | 150

Royal Orchestral Society
150th Anniversary Season

ROS Celebrates
The Genius of Mahler

SYMPHONY No.3

19 March 2023
Cadogan Hall

ROS | 150

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this, the third concert of our 150th anniversary season. We have devised the season's programme to reflect the prevailing musical taste of the time.

Our conductor tonight, Orlando Jopling was our principal conductor for over 10 years. His ambition was always to perform the complete cycle of Mahler Symphonies. In the event we did only 1, 4 and 6, so we thought it appropriate to ask him to conduct this monumental Third Symphony to celebrate our 150th Anniversary.

We have produced a brochure with the history of the orchestra and its conductors, which is available to purchase at the entrance to the concert for £10 or from our website. Details of the final celebratory concert are on the back cover of this programme.

I would like to thank you all for your support at this concert and hope that you will continue to support us for the rest of the season and for the future. Please consider becoming an associate member, which will help us to continue putting on exciting concerts.

We have just appointed a new principal conductor, Rebecca Miller, who electrified the orchestra in our performance of Elgar's first symphony in June 2022.

Francis Norton
Chairman

ROS|ROYAL ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY

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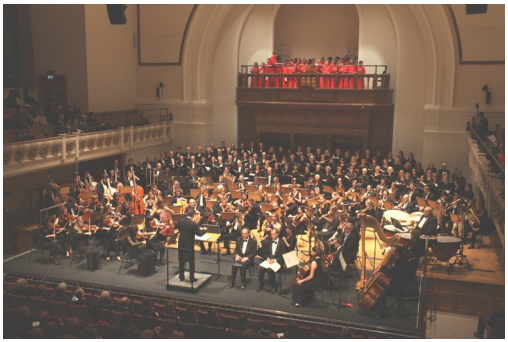
THE ROYAL ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY was founded in 1872 by Queen Victoria's second son, Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, an enthusiastic amateur musician. At the time it was the only London orchestra apart from the Royal Philharmonic Society.

The first concert was conducted by Sir Arthur Sullivan in the Royal Albert Hall in 1873, and the orchestra went on to perform with Pablo Casals, Fritz Kreisler, Mischa Elman, Jacques Thibaut, Dame Clara Butt and Sir Edward Elgar.

Repertoire has included symphonies by Mahler, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich, Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra and Viola Concerto, Britten's Sinfonia da Requiem and Sea Interludes, Holst's Planets and Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring. Choral works have included Verdi's Requiem and Vaughan Williams' Sea Symphony, Walton's Belshazzar's Feast and Elgar's Dream of Gerontius with Ronald Corp's excellent choir The London Chorus. In 2012, we performed Prokofiev's iconic cantata Alexander Nevsky to an edited edition of Eisenstein's film for which it was written, displayed on screens in the auditorium.

In November 2014 we performed Britten's War Requiem— our first concert in Cadogan Hall. 2017 brought the first opera— Bluebeard's Castle by Bartok, and this was followed by Wagner's Die Walkure, Act 3 in February 2019.

Britten's War Requiem
with James Gilchrist, Ashley Riches & Geraldine McGreevy, Cadogan Hall, November 2014

Peter and the Wolf

the first children's concert
St Mary's, Stoke Newington, April 2013

Walton's Belshazzar's Feast
Cadogan Hall, November 2016

Britten's Young Person's Guide
St John's Smith Square

Bartok's Bluebeards Castle

With Janice Watson and Andrew Greenan

Village Underground, Shoreditch

Sunday 19 June 2023 7pm

Cadogan Hall

MAHLER

Symphony No 3

Arlene Belli (contralto)

The Choir of St.John the Divine

Ben Vonberg-Clark *(Director)*

Royal Orchestral Society

Leader **Christian Halstead**

Orlando Jopling (*Conductor*)

In accordance with the requirements of the local Council, persons shall not be permitted to sit or stand in any gangway. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment is strictly forbidden without formal consent from Cadogan Hall.
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GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911) SYMPHONY No 3

When Gustav Mahler and Jean Sibelius met in Helsinki in 1907, the two composers laid out radically contrasting conceptions of the symphony. Sibelius found beauty and ultimate meaning in the symphony's "severity of form" and "profound logic." "No!" Mahler replied. "*The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything*!"

No Mahler Symphony gives us a greater sense of this cosmic scale than the Third. Set in six movements, it remains the longest symphony in the standard repertoire, scored for a large orchestra with women's and boys' choirs (in movement 5) and an alto solo (in movements 4 and 5). Over the course of some 105 minutes, its dramatic journey encompasses and unifies nature, man, and God.

The Third Symphony pushed the boundaries so far that for a while Mahler considered classifying it as a symphonic poem. In the end, it became the next step in the evolution of a form which began before Haydn.

Occupied with a busy conducting schedule during most of the year, it was in the summer months that Mahler retreated into the Alpine countryside to fulfil his deeper calling as a composer. The Third Symphony was written during the summers of 1895 and 1896 in a small hut on the Attersee near Steinbach in Upper Austria.

Mahler eventually discarded the programme outlining this hierarchical journey to the divine. Indeed, the pure dramatic force of this music transcends any literal meaning. At the same time, Mahler's programme may help unfamiliar listeners gain entrance to this awe-inspiring work.

PART 1

1. Introduction
Pan's Awakening; Summer Marches in (Procession of Bacchus)
The first movement is a vibrant celebration of the life force, sweeping in with an overwhelming Dionysian power. Mahler related it to the banishment of winter with "*the victorious appearance of Helios and the miracle of spring thanks to which all things live, breathe, flower, sing and ripen*," and later, the arrival of summer, "*a conqueror advancing amidst all that grows and blooms.*"

It begins with a titanic statement in the unison horns. As this movement progresses, we are confronted with pure sound, from the barely-audible rumble of the bass drum, to the strangely echoing, ethereal overtones created by new combinations of instruments. Powers are unleashed which are simultaneously triumphant, lamenting, exuberant, and terrifying. This is music which encompasses everything from the solitary, recurrent voice of the solo trombone, to the pastoral sounds of "fluttering wings" and woodwind bird calls. An irrepressible march, which begins with hushed intensity and grows into an overwhelming force, embraces everything from the sinister to the innocent.

2. What the Flowers of the Field Tell Me
From the Dionysian exuberance of the first movement, we move into the meadow with a Tempo di menuetto. This is music filled with simple, unsophisticated beauty and sensuality. Mahler characterized it as "*the most carefree thing that I have ever written—as carefree as only flowers are. It all sways and waves in the air…like flowers bending on their stems in the wind*."

INTERVAL
20 minutes

PART 2

3. What the Animals of the Forest Tell Me
The third movement climbs the next rung of nature's ladder with the birds and beasts of the forest. This movement grows out of 'Ablösung im Sommer' (*The Changing Guard of Summer*), a song from Mahler's 'Des Knaben Wunderhorn'. In the second trio section, the sound of birds and beasts fades into the plaintive serenity of a distant (off-stage) post-horn call. The tranquility is shattered by a military trumpet fanfare. In the final moments, the vibrant life force of the animal kingdom returns with an awesome eruption of uncontrollable energy.

4. What Man Tells Me
The fourth movement pulls us into a new, mysterious world. Solemnly rising out of silence, the opening bars of the first movement return. The human voice is present for the first time in the Symphony. The text is taken from the "Midnight Song" portion of Friedrich Nietzsche's Also sprach Zarathustra:

O man! Give heed!
What does the deep midnight say?
I slept!
From deepest dream have I wakened!
The world is deep!
And deeper than the day had thought!
Deep, deep is its suffering!
Joy deeper still than deepest woe!
Woe says: Be gone!
But all joy seeks eternity!
Seeks deep, deep eternity!

5. What the Angels Tell Me

As the tragedy and self-awareness of Man fades into silence, a joyful new sound breaks the stillness. Angels, the laughter of children, and the sound of celestial bells ring out.

The origin of this music is Mahler's Wunderhorn song *'Es sungen drei Engel*'. The text is based on an anonymous 17th -century church hymn:

Ding, dong, ding, dong…
Three angels sang so sweet a song;
Resounding joyfully through Heaven,
They shouted with delight
That St. Peter was free of sin,
And when Lord Jesus sat at the table,
For the Last Supper with His twelve disciples,
Lord Jesus spoke: What doest thou here?

As I behold thee, thou weepest before me?
And shall I not weep, thou merciful God?
You must not then weep!
I have broken the Ten Commandments.
I go my way with bitter tears.
Ah, come and have mercy on me!
If thou hast broken the Ten Commandments,
Then fall on thy knees and pray to God!
Only love God at all times!
So shalt thou aspire to heavenly joy.
The Kingdom of Heaven was readied for Peter
And all, through Jesus, for blessedness,
Ding, dong, ding, dong…

6. What Love Tells Me

As the last echoes of the shimmering, angelic bell tones fade away, the final door of this transformational journey opens. With the first two chords, everything which came before seems to dissolve into irrelevance. Human voices recede and we find ourselves entering the ultimate "Bruckner adagio."

The movement's expansive first theme begins with a dominant-tonic resolution. Each time this cadence comes, initiating a new statement of the theme, it seems to bring a new layer and revelation. In the opening, it is an intense and reverent whisper in the strings. Then, it emerges as a new strand in the high woodwinds. Innocence and lament seem to mix in this new voice. Later, it becomes a mighty, earth-shattering and heroic statement in the horns.

For the symphony's final climax and moment of transfiguration, the upper strings seem to move through the orchestra with an octave that delivers a sense of upward lift. Before the majestic final bars, listen for that surprising, intimate moment of hushed mystery—a final glimpse that allows the music to let go.

ORLANDO JOPLING

Orlando Jopling has worked with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the London Mozart Players and the Irish Chamber Orchestra among many others, both on the concert platform and in the recording studio.

He is Artistic Director of Wild Arts, a new company with sustainability at its core, bringing great performances of opera and orchestral works to new audiences. Wild Arts gave 38 performances in over 30 venues in its inaugural year 2022.

Orlando works as guest music staff at the Royal Opera House and Royal Ballet, recently working on Tosca, Cavalleria Rusticana, I Pagliacci, Giselle, Mayerling and Coppélia.

He was Associate Conductor of English National Ballet until 2020, conducting Pina Bausch's Rite of Spring, Akram Khan's Giselle, Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, the Nutcracker, Prokofiev's Cinderella, Massenet's Manon, Peter Salem's Broken Wings, and many contemporary scores, at Sadler's Wells, the London Coliseum, the Albert Hall, and on tour in the UK and abroad.

He was principal conductor and artistic advisor of the Royal Orchestral Society for ten years. He transformed their repertoire to include twentieth and 21st century composers, introduced soloists James Gilchrist, Tim Hugh, Benjamin Grosvenor and Boris Giltburg, and brought new collaborations, semi-staging Bluebeard's Castle in Village Underground, Shoreditch with director Lila Palmer and Britten's War Requiem in Cadogan Hall.

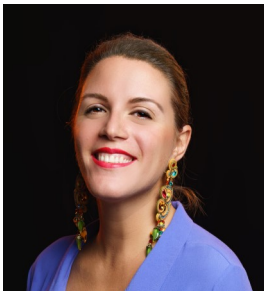
Orlando read music at Trinity College Cambridge where formative influences were the Wagner expert John Deathridge and Janáçek expert Paul Wingfield. He studied conducting at the Royal Academy of Music in London where the principal teachers were Colin Metters, George Hurst, Colin Davis and the great Russian guru Ilya Musin.

With a sound knowledge of French, German and Italian, he has conducted over 25 opera productions with Savoy Opera, Carl Rosa, Independent Opera, British Youth Opera and the Schönbrunn Orchestra.

Orlando has co-founded two opera companies: the contemporary opera company Tête à Tête, commissioning and conducting over a dozen chamber operas, and Stanley Hall Opera, conducting five seasons of Mozart, Verdi and Rossini.

In 2022/2023 Orlando will continue his Wagner Ring cycle, conduct Strauss's Elektra and embark on a ten-year project performing all the Janáçek operas, with various semi-professional groups and ensembles.

ARLENE BELLI



Described as 'A true vocal personality' by Alberto Mattioli in *Amadeus magazine*, Italian Mezzosoprano Arlene Belli is a graduate of Conservatorio Santa Cecilia in Rome and a National Opera Studio alumna 20/21. She is a recipient of the Help Musicians Sybil Tutton Opera Award and won First Prize at the Simone Alaimo International Competition. Whilst graduating from the Conservatorio Santa Cecilia in Rome, she completed a degree in Political Science and International Relations at LUISS Guido Carli University.

Her most recent performances include concerts with WNO, ENO, Opera North appearing at St. David's Hall (Cardiff), The Coliseum and Cadogan Hall (London); working with conductors such as Paul Daniel, Olivia Clarke, Jeremy Silver, James Southall and Christoph Eschenbach.

In 2022 she was involved with two World premieres; The Pope in *The Burning Question* by Edward Lambert with Tête à Tête Opera and her Wexford Festival Opera debut as Lady Louisa Wolseley in *The Master* by Alberto Caruso making her debut at.

In 2023 projects include performing the role of The Pope in The Burning Question at London's King's Head Theatre, contralto soloist in *Messiah* by G.F.Handel with the Allegri Singers and *Petite Messe Solennelle* by G. Rossini with the Magna Grecia Orchestra in Taranto. In April she will also be singing Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and Handel's *Foundling Hospital Anthem* with Aberystwyth Choral Society.

This Summer Arlene will make her role and company debut at The Grange Festival, performing the role of Polina in *Pikovaya dama* (The Queen of Spades) by Pëtr Il'ič Čajkovskij.

THE ORCHESTRA

Violin 1
Christian Halstead
Emil Chakalov
Jen Tillier
Tony Burrage
Prasanthi Matharu
Peng Nian
Fiona Werner
Melissa Hutter
Alice Garland
Aaliyah Booker
Emily Groom
Rebecca Baratto

Violin 2
Katie Lander
Jeannie Okikiolu
Jeremy Cook
Adrienne Freeman
Peter Steele
John Dawson
Mark Isherwood
David Coltman
Louise Kamill
Patrizia Lichtscheidl

Violas
Rosemary Cook
Johanna Thoma
Matthew Newton
Steven Taylor
Deborah Miles-Johnson
Janet Farrell
Varinia Oyola-Rebaza
Anna Barsegjana

Cellos
John Best
Hugh Larsen
Antoine Kaisermann
Dan Ivens
Hedley Rokos
Sarah Harding
Dirk Wong
Geraldine Isherwood
Brian Coffey

Double Basses
Olive Chan
Penny Halnan
Charis Hadjisophocleous
Ruohua Li

Flutes
Jo Felton
Edit Paulik
Fran Hall
Tiffany Hore

Oboes
Paul Blaker
Heather Bailey
Lydia Brookes
Nina Swann (cor)

Clarinets
Ian Pay
Joe Smouha
Chaz Keiderling (bass)
Ivan Rockey (1st Eb)
Sándor Sás (2nd Eb)

Bassoons
Simon Upcott
Jeremy Crump
Clare Smart
Sheila Wallace (contra)

Horns
Sophie Prett (principal)
Evan Penn
Gill Bird
Adrian Wheeler
Richard Slater
Derek Holland
David Claydon
Ben Horton
Iain Clarke

Posthorn
Stephen Kenny

Trumpets
Benjamin Day
Pippa Scourse
Nick Smith
Rob Cossins

Trombones
Benjamin Wakley
Jim Robins
Andy Ross
Steve Freeman

Tuba
Richard McCann

Harps
Gabriella Jones
Alexander Thomas

Timpani
Tony Lucas
David Coronel

Percussion
Andrew Cumine
Riccardo Fabisiak
Maria Kolpaktchi
Zach Mitchell
Susie Nathan
Kim Sargeant

The Choir of St John the Divine, Kennington

Music has been at the heart of the church's worship for many years. It has several choirs, including over eighty children and thirty adults, who sing at its Masses and Evensongs. Its music programme has been building links with St John's College, Cambridge with the College also helping to fund organ scholarships at St John the Divine for the church's young people.

St John Divine's youth choirs have been running since January 2013. The area between Brixton, Camberwell and Kennington, south London, is one of Britain's toughest places to grow up. Its youth work focuses on high-quality musical education. Local children benefit from free and expert tuition in a part of London with almost no free arts provision. Every week, over 80 young people sing in our choirs or learn the piano or organ with us. Each year residential courses are run for them outside London, including at Cambridge University. The parish sees music as an agent of change, improving life chances, academic engagement, broadening horizons, and ultimately relieving poverty and creating social mobility.

The church's three choirs rehearse every week after school, and sing for church services, singing regularly for Mass and Evensong, as well as Carol Services. They also take part in concerts – they have sung in Britten's War Requiem at the Cadogan Hall (with the Royal Orchestral Society), Bach's St John Passion at St John the Divine, a first performance of 'Footsteps' by Owain Park, in the Chapel of Trinity College Cambridge alongside acclaimed choral group Tenebrae, and twice live on BBC Radio 2.

Ben Vonberg-Clark *choir director*

Ben has established himself as a leading tenor and conductor. He performs in recitals and concerts around the country and conducts five regular choirs in London. Whether performing in the Aldeburgh Festival or taking a workshop for primary school children, Ben is fully committed to providing high-quality music to as many adults and children as possible – especially those, for whom music or musical tuition would otherwise be inaccessible.

Ben trained at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, King's College London, the University of Vienna and Durham University. Upon moving to London in 2012 he became increasingly in demand as a tenor, and therefore undertook a masters in vocal performance at Trinity Laban. He is now taught by operatic tenor Nicky Spence. He has sung in the Aldeburgh Festival, several times at Britten's Red House, and twice as part of the North Yorkshire Moors Chamber Music Festival, among others. He has sung with the BBC Singers, The Sixteen, La Nuova Musica, Tenebrae, the Eric Whitacre Singers and Stile Antico. Ben appeared in a documentary about Schubert's Winterreise on the BBC in December 2021, and will be singing on a documentary about Michael Tippett on the BBC, due for release in the Spring of 2023.

Ben's first love was teaching, and he taught for a year at a children's theatre in Vienna during his year abroad. In 2013 Ben set up the children's choirs for St. John the Divine Church. Child poverty in the parish is 95% higher than in the rest of the country. There are now 90 children coming to sing each week, aged 5-17, as part of three choirs. The choirs have sung in Covent Garden, Cadogan Hall, Peterborough, St. Albans and St. Edmundsbury Cathedrals, twice live on Radio 2's Chris Evans Breakfast Show and also have an annual residential in St. John's College Cambridge. Two of the choristers gained a place in the Chapel Royal Choir, St. James', and a full scholarship at City of London School under this tuition, and one chorister is now in Westminster Abbey choir.Ben also conducts the London Youth Boys' Choir and is conductor of the University of Essex Choir and the UBS choral society. He also runs singing courses and come-and-sing days internationally, most recently in Shanghai, China.

JOIN US

ROS is a friendly and sociable orchestra. There is a waiting list for most of the sections, but we'd love to have more members, as it is often the case that existing members can't play in all concerts. String players are particularly welcome!

We play to a high standard, being a mixture of conservatoire students and excellent amateurs. We normally perform 3 concerts per season, mostly in St John's Smith Square. This season we are also performing in the Cadogan Hall and the Duke's Hall in the Royal Academy of Music. We meet for 4-5 rehearsals in central London during the three weeks leading up to each concert.

We have worked with top soloists including Dimitry Sitkovetsky, Boris Giltburg, Alina Ibragimova, Thomas Gould, Lawrence Power, Tim Hugh, Piers Lane, Janice Watson, James Gilchrist and Benjamin Grosvenor.

To apply to join, email joinroyalorchsoc@gmail.com telling us about yourself and your playing experience.

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Please support the orchestra and help us to keep up the improvement and standard of our concerts. Your support will also help us seek out exceptional young performers and give them early solo experience.

If you would like to help, please use the contact form on our website www.royalorchestralsociety.org.uk or speak to a member of the orchestra and we will contact you.

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Royal Orchestral Society
150th Anniversary Season

ROS Celebrates

150 Years: Grand Gala Finale

Sunday 25th June 2023, 7.00pm
St John's Smith Square, London SW1P 3HA

Conductor: Tim Redmond
Janice Watson *soprano*

Wagner *Overture Die Meistersinger*
Judith Weir *Music, Spread Thy Voice* – new commission
Bizet, Dvořák & Saint-Saëns, arias for soprano and orchestra
Mendelssohn *Ruy Blas*
Dvořák *Symphony No.6*
Elgar *Pomp & Circumstance March No.1*

Tickets £16–20
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