



Sutton Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Philip Aslangul
Leader: Annmarie McDade

Sibelius Karelia Suite

Grieg Piano Concerto

Soloist: Andrew Yiangou

Nielsen Symphony No 4
“The Inextinguishable”

St Andrew’s United Reformed Church
Northey Avenue, Cheam

Saturday 18th March 2017
7.30pm

In the presence of the Mayor and Mayoress
Councillor Richard Clifton and Mrs Gloria Clifton

CONDUCTOR PHILIP ASLANGUL

Philip Aslangul graduated from the Guildhall School of music in 1990, where he studied cello, piano and conducting with Stefan Popov, Carola Grindea and Alan Hazeldine respectively.

He has pursued a varied career; as a cellist, he has given recitals around the country with the Burlington Duo and The Q Piano Trio, including a live radio broadcast in 1991. He has worked as a freelance cellist appearing as principal with orchestras including the National Pops Orchestra, The Camerata of London and The City Chamber Ensemble, and has played with other orchestras including the English Philharmonia.

As a pianist, Philip is in demand as a repetiteur and accompanist; he has worked with the award-winning ladies choir 'Impromptu' for the past 20 years including performances on BBC2 and Radio 3. He is a Jazz and Grades examiner for ABRSM for whom he is also a Music Medals Moderator, and has worked as a Mentor for The Open University.

Philip is actively involved in youth music and conducted Kingston Schools Orchestra and Kingston Young Strings between 1998 and 2004. He is currently conductor of SYSO, Sutton's Youth Orchestra, which performs regular concerts at St Andrew's, with a tour to the Music Festival in Lisbon and a concert at the Royal Festival Hall planned for 2017.

LEADER ANNMARIE MCDADE

Annmarie studied violin with Trevor Williams and Jonathan Carney and piano with Raymond Fischer at the Royal College of Music.

Annmarie had many years leading touring shows and in West End shows such as Annie get Your Gun, Aspects of Love, The Sound of Music, Oklahoma, The Producers and Company.

She spent nearly eight years in the West End production of Les Miserables (frequently leading) until 2004 and worked with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, English Northern Philharmonia, British Symphony Orchestra, Opera Della Luna, London Arts Orchestra (principal 2nd), Camerata of London (principal 2nd & guest leader), Pro Arte Orchestra (leader), London Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (principal 2nd & founder member) and many others.

Solo performances include Mozart A major and G major and Bruch G minor concertos, Beethoven's F major Romance, Bach's and Malcolm Arnold's Double Violin Concertos and Vivaldi's Four Seasons.

Annmarie teaches in schools and privately - all ages, all abilities! She was orchestral coach for Berkshire Young Musicians' Trust, Beauchamp House International Music and drama courses and ENCORE.

SOLOIST ANDREW YIANGOU

Andrew Yiangou is a concert pianist from London. He has recently been awarded the prestigious Mills Williams Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music for his studies on the Artist Diploma Course 2016/17. At the Royal College of Music, he has been working with Professors Gordon Fergus-Thompson, Vanessa Latarche and Norma Fisher where he completed his Bachelor of Music and Masters of Music with Distinction. He is very proud and grateful to be supported by the Tillet Trust and Eileen Rowe Musical Award Trust.

Andrew has worked with artists such as Stephen Hough, Lang Lang, Kathryn Stott and Boaz Sharon, and has won prizes at international competitions including the 'Bromsgrove International Competition' and the 'Norah Sande Award' in the UK, the 'WPTA International Piano Competition' in Novi Sad, Serbia, the '19th International Petar Konjovic Piano Competition' in Belgrade, Serbia, and the 'International Piano Festival Poros' in Greece. He has worked with artists from various chamber ensembles including the Bardolino Trio, Elias Quartet, Callino Quartet, Cherubini Quartet and the Heine Quartet.

Andrew has performed at various venues in the UK including St. James's Piccadilly, Steinway Hall, St. Lawrence Jewry, St. Barnabas Ealing and St. Mary's Perivale, with Ealing Youth Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall and on tour in Belgium, Spain, France and Poland. He has performed Rachmaninoff's 2nd Piano Concerto, Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.1 and Saint Saens' 2nd Piano Concerto with the Orchestra over the last few years. In 2016 he performed the Grieg Piano Concerto with the City of Rochester Symphony Orchestra in February 2016, Rachmaninoff's 2nd Piano Concerto with the Bedford County Youth Orchestra on the 26th of July and the Grieg again with the Dorking Philharmonia on the 19th November.

Andrew has a particular affinity for music of lesser known composers such as Nikolai Kapustin, Leopold Godowsky, Charles-Valentin Alkan, Nikolai Medtner, Georgy Catorie and Sergei Lyapunov among many others.



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KARELIA SUITE

JEAN SIBELIUS

At the time of Sibelius' birth, Finland was emerging into national consciousness, but still dominated and ruled by Russia; in addition, as a legacy from past rule, Swedish remained the official language, including in schools. Young Jean's parents countered these influences by sending him to a grammar school that taught in native Finnish. There he was introduced to the national epic, the Kalevala, and this together with the collection of folk literature made by Elias Lönnrot were the sources of inspiration for much of the music he was to write. Sibelius also had a love of nature, and much of his creative energy was devoted to setting legend and landscape to music.

Sibelius became a major force in Finnish music with the Kullervo Symphony of 1891/2, which drew on mythology for inspiration, and the following year he composed En Saga and the Karelia Suite. It was written for the Vipuri Student's Union as incidental music to a series of seven historic tableaux about the province of Karelia, now part of Russia. The first movement (Intermezzo) is well known as a TV tune, but originally depicted Karelians passing in procession to pay tribute to a Lithuanian prince. The sombre Ballad portrayed a deposed ruler listening to a minstrel at the castle in Vipuri, and is based on folk tunes. The finale (Alla Marcia) described the call to battle, and so provides a stirring climax to one of the composer's most popular works.

PIANO CONCERTO IN A MINOR, OP 16

EDVARD GRIEG

- I. Allegro molto moderato
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro moderato molto e marcato

Edvard Grieg was born in Bergen, on the West coast of Norway. Cut off from the rest of the country by mountains and fjords, Bergen had been a fishing and trading port since the Middle Ages, and Grieg's family had lived in the town ever since the composer's great grandfather emigrated there from Scotland. Grieg always loved Bergen and was inspired by the town, its fish market, its countryside and its cultural life. Once he even claimed that "I'm sure my music has a tang of codfish in it." Well, maybe! He was also inspired by Norwegian folk music, some of which he recorded and carefully transcribed, in particular music for the unique instrument of the Bergen district known as the hardanger fiddle. In this type of research he predated Vaughan-Williams, Bartok and others by several years, and inspired many early 20th century composers.

His genius for melody and harmonic colour means that he is at his best in smaller forms - piano music and songs in particular. He is sometimes described as the Chopin of the north. The composer Debussy cruelly (but memorably) described his music as "pink bon-bons stuffed with snow". But Debussy had the grace to acknowledge Grieg as a fine conductor who drew excellent performances from the orchestras he directed. Grieg was also a first

rate pianist himself, performing his own solo works and concerto frequently, as well as music by other composers.

Early in 1867 Grieg married his cousin Nina, a fine and sensitive singer with a lovely voice. In April 1868 a daughter was born to Nina, and that summer all three spent an idyllic holiday in a rented cottage in Denmark. It was here that Grieg wrote his piano concerto. It was first performed in Copenhagen in April 1869, and was revised several times.

The famous opening, which is not just sweeping chords but a motto theme in itself, leads into a gentle theme on the woodwind. This is soon taken up by the piano. A graceful second theme appears on the cello - in the first version this was played by the trumpet, but was given to the cellos as part of a later revision. It is developed furiously by the piano before the orchestra takes it over. Much of this music appears a second time, though with scoring and harmonies transformed. Towards the end of the movement, the piano has a substantial and exciting cadenza.

The slow movement is in the, remote key of D flat, and is very lyrical and calm. The piano soon moves into the even more remote key of F flat, but the serenity of the song hides all complexity. The finale, which follows without a break, has two main tunes. The first is a dance known in Norway as a lalling; the second is a beautiful melody first heard on the flute. At the end, the lalling is transformed into triple time which, coupled with a powerful version of the second theme, drives the concerto to an exhilarating conclusion.

INTERVAL

SYMPHONY NO.4 "THE INEXTINGUISHABLE"

KARL NIELSEN

In a letter to his wife Anne-Marie in May 1914, Carl Nielsen wrote of his idea for a new symphony. The uncharacteristically jumbled stream of thoughts in this letter reflects his struggle to articulate a new kind of music: "I have an idea for a new composition, which has no programme but will express what we understand by the spirit of life or manifestations of life, that is: everything that moves, that wants to live ... just life and motion, though varied - very varied - yet connected, and as if constantly on the move, in one big movement or stream. I must have a word or a short title to express this; that will be enough. I cannot quite explain what I want, but what I want is good."

Nielsen was a countryman by birth. He grew up on the Danish island of Funen, one of twelve children born to parents unconventional enough not to have married before their firstborn arrived. He was a gregarious man who loved nature and dancing. Filled with a high sense of artistic purpose and determined to challenge musical convention, he was equally happy to indulge a love of practical jokes. Anne-Marie Brodersen was an ambitious and talented artist determined to refresh Danish sculpture just as Nielsen was in music. When the two met in 1891 the attraction was instant and mutual, and they were married within months. Their influence on each other's artistic development was considerable, but a union between two such people was bound to be fiery. Nielsen had something of a roving eye:

Anne-Marie knew before they were married that he had an illegitimate son. The extent of Nielsen's philandering remains unclear, but he fathered at least one other child by another woman, and it is safe to say that marital fidelity was not his strong point. The fact that both were pursuing successful careers that took them away from home for extended periods did not help matters. Anne-Marie's patience ran out when she discovered that her husband had been committing indiscretions rather too close to home: he had had an affair with the governess of their children. They separated in September 1914, a breach that would eventually be healed, but not for many years. This crisis fuelled the parallel upheaval that had been brewing in his work for some time, and prompted a profound reappraisal of his life and his art which impacts enormously on the style of his Fourth Symphony.

His shaky domestic situation led Nielsen to seek employment abroad. He had hoped to secure a post in Germany, but the outbreak of the First World War put paid to these plans. To Nielsen, as a Scandinavian not directly involved in the conflict, the humanitarian disaster appeared all the more acute. He wrote to a friend: "...it's as if the world is disintegrating... National feeling, that until now was distinguished as something lofty and beautiful, has become a spiritual syphilis... and it grins hideously through empty eye-sockets with dreadful hatred."

In March 1915 Nielsen was appointed head of the Copenhagen Music Society. This, along with regular appearances in Sweden as guest conductor for the Gothenburg Orchestral Society, would account for most of his public appearances for the rest of his career. At the same time he joined the governors of the Copenhagen Conservatory, of which he would later become director. Thus, in the year of his 50th birthday, he found himself at the heart of Danish musical life.

By summer he had completed the first part of the new symphony, and as he wrote to a friend, the idea of war had begun to permeate his thinking: "I have an idea about a duel between two kettledrums, something about the war. I've also a subsidiary theme in the first movement, it runs in parallel thirds for some time. It is not quite like me, but it came out that way, so it's going to be like that all the same." This "subsidiary" theme, which first appears in a sleepy haze but becomes more urgent every time it returns, in fact plays a central part in the overall design of the symphony.

Most of the summer was taken up with conducting engagements, so when he returned to work in earnest on the symphony he had to proceed at a rate: the premiere had been promised to the Music Society for January 1916 and as their new director he could not let them down. In the event the score was completed only two weeks before the performance. By then he had crystallised his thoughts about the music into his famous explanation:

"The title *The Inextinguishable* suggests something which only music itself can express fully: *the elementary will of life*. Only music can give an abstract expression of life, in contrast to the other arts, which must construct models and symbolise. Music solves the problem

only by remaining itself, for music is life whereas the other arts only depict life. Life is unquenchable and inextinguishable; yesterday, today and tomorrow, life was, is and will be in struggle, conflict, procreation and destruction; and everything returns. Music *is* life, and as such, inextinguishable.”

Although four “movements” can be discerned, *The Inextinguishable* is essentially one long burst of energy. It is characterised, as is all Nielsen’s music and was his life, by a boundless enthusiasm for life in all its richness, and a tireless appetite for exploration. Late in life, he summed up his philosophy: “The claims of life are stronger than the most sublime art; and even were we to agree that we had achieved the best and most beautiful it is possible to achieve, we should be impelled in the end, thirsting as we do for life and experience than for perfection, to cry out, ‘Give us something else; give us something new; for Heaven’s sake give us something bad, so long as we feel we are alive and active and not just passive admirers of tradition!’”

SUTTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

We are grateful for the continuing financial support from the Humphrey Richardson Taylor Charitable Trust, our President, Patrons, and our loyal audience and donors. We would like to thank St Andrew’s Church for the use of the Church buildings and refreshments service, and to Homefield Preparatory School for use of their premises for rehearsals.

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1ST VIOLINS

Annmarie McDade
Dave Larkin
Liz Evans
Paul Dickman
David Norbury
Stephen Lock
Charlotte Dodwell

2ND VIOLINS

Joanna Lee
Sarah Hackett
Carol Disspain
Fiona Glasscock
Henrik Jensen
Ann Arber

VIOLAS

Miriam Grant
Penny Dispirito
Sue White
Carolyn Brett
Pauline Dixon

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Marguerite Pocock
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Casper Green

PICCOLO

Sam Wade

FLUTES

Richard Ellis
Juliet Porter
Sam Wade

OBOES

Kathryn Gunn
Doug Lloyd
Cynthia Betts

COR ANGLAIS

Cynthia Betts

CLARINETS

David Cox
Christine Holland
Laura Drane

BASSOONS

David Silvera
Jamie O'Connor
Janet Martin

HORNS

Ollie De Cataret
Caroline Auty
Chris Pocock
Janice Barker
Jake Bagby

TRUMPETS

Paul Martin
Michael Ahearn
Mick Ahearn

TROMBONES

Roger Willey
Vince Freeman
Phoebe Thomas

TUBA

Helen Hereward

TIMPANI

Will Burgess
Helen Burgess

PERCUSSION

Izzy Lyons