



SCRIABIN

RÊVERIE

BARTÓK

PIANO CONCERTO No.3

SOLOIST: ADAM HERON

BRAHMS

SYMPHONY No.4

SATURDAY 8 JULY 2023 7:30pm

**All Saints' Church, Lovelace Road
West Dulwich SE21 8JY**

**Conductor: Chris Stark
Leader: Paula Tysall**

£12/£10 (concessions) under 16s free

ADAM HERON

Acclaimed by The Sunday Times for the verve and spirit of his performances, Adam Heron rose to prominence in 2018 as a BBC Young Musician piano finalist. Through his unique artistry, coupled with an innate public appeal and flair for communication, he has become a leading ambassador for classical music across the UK and abroad.

Born in Hong Kong, Adam has performed at distinguished venues including the Southbank Centre and Royal Albert Hall in London, the International Center for Arts in Cairo, and the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Mumbai. He has performed alongside eminent musicians such as double-bassist Chichi Nwanoku CBE, soprano Francesca Chiejina, and cellist Laura van der Heijden, as well as with high-ranking conductors including David Curtis, Jonathon Heyward, and Pete Harrison.

A laureate of the Stefano Marizza International Piano Competition in Italy and the International Piano Competition HRH Princess Lalla Meryem in Morocco, he studied with Christopher Elton at the Royal Academy of Music. Generously supported by Irish Heritage, The Keyboard Charitable Trust, and The Talent Unlimited Foundation, Adam recently completed an MPhil at the University of Cambridge and he currently studies with Penelope Roskell.

This is Adam's second performance with DSO. In December 2022, he performed Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor.



RÊVERIE

ALEXANDER Scriabin (1871-1915)

Known as “the Russian Chopin”, Scriabin composed almost exclusively for piano, producing a vast catalogue of preludes, mazurkas and nocturnes. After completing his first piano concerto in 1897, Scriabin penned first orchestral work—*Rêverie*—a year later. His good friend Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, a master of orchestration, deemed the composition ‘delightful’ and ‘not badly orchestrated’. *Rêverie* was well received at its December 1898 premiere in St. Petersburg, leading Rimsky-Korsakov to conduct an encore performance, while Scriabin followed with an impromptu selection of his piano works.

Scriabin represents an important transition between romantic composers and modernists. Igor Stravinsky described him as “a man without citizenship” noting no clear fit with any distinct musical or cultural tradition. Scriabin’s music largely abandons traditional tonality in favour of drifting chromatics and expanded diminished chords. He is widely credited as the founder of the ‘mystic chord’. The six note chord, which forms the basis of much of his music, comprises augmented and diminished fourths, which became widely repeated in Russian music of the 20th century. Scriabin died in April 1915, aged just 43, at the height of his career.

Helen Bartholomew

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3 IN E MAJOR

BELA BARTÓK (1881-1945)

i) Allegretto ii) Adagio religioso iii) Allegro vivace

In 1904, Bartók made his first notation of a Magyar song and during the next 15 years collected and studied the folk music of every area of eastern Europe where Hungarian was spoken, and beyond. He found that by penetrating this source he learned “the art of expressing any musical idea with the highest perfection and the shortest form”. Using what was now available to him - the various scales, enlarged harmonic possibilities, new rhythms and the ability to handle variation with great imagination - he changed the development of art music of the 20th century.

Written in 1945 for his second wife Ditta, with the intention that she should perform it after his death, the third piano concerto is a major work with ideas of sharp clarity – a great achievement of his later deceptively simple style - but with structural intricacy and emotional strength. When he died, the orchestration of the final 17 bars was unfinished, but was completed by Tibor Serly using Bartók’s detailed notes.

In the first movement the piano weaves melodic threads, intertwining with the orchestra. Textures come and go with much mirroring and variation - tenderness interspersed with drama and bolder music - but the beauty shines through.

At the opening of the second movement it is night time and with sparse chords the piano alternates with the orchestra in searching and reaching out. At that hour before dawn, when the birds are coming awake, the woodwinds reproduce bird calls until all of nature is animated. A woodwind chorale with piano obligato takes us to the summit, confirming that this movement is the heart of the concerto. The piano cadenza leads us into the lively third movement which is clearly based on, and very much in the spirit of, folk song, grounded on a short-long/long-short rhythm. At times gentle and pensive there is also complexity, but to calm us Bartók throws in a joyful fugue before the race to the finish.

Folk music led Bartók to create works of power – with this masterpiece we have no better example!

Frances Barrett

Interval drinks are available in the church.

SYMPHONY NO.4 IN E MINOR

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

- i) Allegro non troppo
- ii) Andante moderato
- iii) Allegro giocoso
- iv) Allegro energico e passionato

The 52-year old Brahms completed his fourth symphony in 1885 by which time he had been living in Vienna for 22 years and was a revered member of the city's musical establishment. The symphony received its first performance from the Meiningen Orchestra in central Germany the same year, conducted by Hans von Bülow. The orchestra had a very good reputation but was small – only 49 players including nine first violins and Brahms turned down von Bülow's offer to add more strings. Brahms, then at the height of his reputation, was surprisingly nervous about how the symphony would be received and the Viennese public took time to appreciate it.

E minor was an unusual key for a symphony, and contemporaries, alluding to Haydn's *Trauersymfonie* (No 44), called it 'the new tragic symphony'.

[Spoiler alert] It is unusual for a minor key symphony in not concluding with a triumphant major key ending - compare for example Beethoven's 5th and 9th. The critic Hanslick, a strong advocate of Brahms's music, wrote that it was 'like a dark well; the longer we look into it, the more brightly the stars shine back'. He also wrote that the first movement reminded him of 'two very clever people cudgelling one another'.

Richard Strauss likened the second movement to 'a funeral procession moving in silence across moonlit heights'. The third movement is contrastingly bright, the only true scherzo in a Brahms symphony.

The finale is a set of variations on the bass line from the chorale in Bach's Cantata No 150, the text of which, from Psalm 25, is 'Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net'. Brahms had no strong religious commitment; his reverence here is for Bach. The movement is an updated version of the ancient form of the passacaglia, in which a bass figure is repeated throughout the piece. The 30 short variations are in three groups, the central section beginning with a flute solo (variation 12) and the third with the restatement of the opening theme in variation 16.

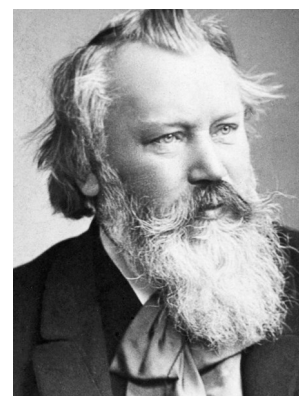
George Bernard Shaw heard the symphony performed by Hans Richter in London in 1890 and complained in his column in *The World* that Brahms

takes an essentially commonplace theme; gives it a strange air by dressing it in the most elaborate and far-fetched harmonies; keeps his countenance severely (which at once convinces an English audience that he must have a great deal in him); and finds that a good many wiseacres are ready to guarantee him as deep as Wagner, and the true heir of Beethoven...His symphonies are endured at the Richter concerts as sermons are endured, and his requiem is patiently borne only by the corpse.

But then Shaw was, as a Wagnerian, unmoved by Brahms, and enjoyed making fun of the English concert- and theatre-going public. Posterity has not taken Shaw's side and has had little difficulty in seeing Brahms as the heir – perhaps the final one – of the German musical tradition of Bach and Beethoven.

The symphony is the last of his works which Brahms heard performed in public. The English pianist, Florence May (1845-1923), who had been taught by Clara Schumann and Brahms in the 1870s, described the occasion, a concert by the Vienna Philharmonic, in her *Life of Brahms* (1902):

The applauding, shouting house, its gaze riveted on the figure standing in the balcony, so familiar and yet in present aspect so strange, seemed unable to let him go. Tears ran down his cheeks as he stood there, shrunken in form, with lined countenance, strained expression, white hair hanging lank: and through the audience there was a feeling as of a stifled sob, for each knew that they were saying farewell. Another outburst of applause and yet another; one more acknowledgment from the master; and Brahms and his Vienna had parted forever.



Johannes Brahms

Chris Stark is based in South East London. He began as a cellist, turning to conducting whilst a choral scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge.

As co-founder of the RPS Award Winning Multi-Story Orchestra, he has conducted all of the Orchestra's car park performances since their inception with The Rite of Spring in 2011, including celebrated performances at the BBC Proms.

Away from Multi-Story, he works mostly in opera, for organisations that include Glyndebourne, Oper Köln, Garsington, ETO, OAE and Gurzenich Orchestra.

Committed to community music, he is principal conductor of Ernest Read and Blackheath Halls Symphony Orchestras.

He has recorded for NMC and broadcast with both Multi-Story and Aurora. Chris was appointed conductor of DSO in December 2022.



Paula Tysall studied violin at the Centre for Young Musicians, where she was awarded the Associated Board's Silver Medal, the Royal College of Music and the National Centre for Orchestral Studies.

As a member of the New London Orchestra she has recorded for Hyperion Records, made broadcasts for the BBC and Classic FM, appeared at the Proms and in Matthew Bourne's award winning Swan Lake. She has played with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia and English National Ballet.

She teaches at Westminster School and is a member of the Ashington, Beaufort and Allenby String Quartets.

Violin

Paula Tysall
Jane Howard
Helen Bartholomew
Chris Burns
Tessa Crilly
Christine Foster
Steve Holt
Ruth Holton
Virginia Kennedy
Victoria Kershaw
Ann Lorek
Ishani O'Connor
Emma Owens
Piers Patten
Christopher Shone
Kate Vineall
Arabella Watkiss
Sappho Xenakis

Viola

David Lawes
Frances Barrett
Liz Cleary
Liz Simpson
Sophia Swanepoel
Alan Taylor
Sally Winter

Cello

Nicky Jackson
Sarah Bort
Laura Bradley
Emma Geoghegan
Annabelle Juritz
Tania Otto
Karen Bowman

Double Bass

Chris Bond
Sam Wise

Flute

Claire Bridge
Alison Gill

Oboe

Ian Finn
Louise Simon

Clarinet

Claire Richards
Ally Rosser

Bassoon

Jeremy Crump
Hilary Dodd

Contra bassoon

Calum Kennedy

Horn

Mary Cowlett
Alec Johns
Henry Osmond
Lack Reilly

Trumpet

Susan Emmons
John-Paul de Soissons

Trombone

Tom Jenkins
Frances Barrett
Peter Bruce

Tuba

Martin Oxenham

Percussion

Jon French (Timpani)
Jez Wiles



Tchaikovsky

The Sleeping Beauty

with narration

Saturday 2 December 2023

7:30 pm

at All Saints Church

Lovelace Road, West Dulwich