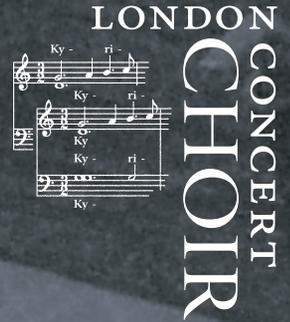


Wednesday 29 March 2017



RACHMANINOV

THE BELLS

Borodin: Polovtsian Dances

Tchaikovsky: Polonaise from Eugene Onegin
Fantasy Overture - Romeo and Juliet

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PROGRAMME: £3

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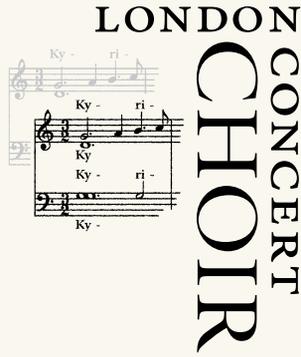
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Programme designed by Stephen Rickett and edited by Eleanor Cowie

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Wednesday 29 March 2017, Barbican Hall

Tchaikovsky: Polonaise from Eugene Onegin

Borodin: Polovtsian Dances

Tchaikovsky: Fantasy Overture - Romeo and Juliet

INTERVAL

RACHMANINOV: THE BELLS

Mark Forkgen *conductor*

London Concert Choir
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Natalya Romaniw *soprano*

Andrew Rees *tenor*

Michael Druiett *bass baritone*

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Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Polonaise from *Eugene Onegin*



If Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837) very soon came to be known as the ‘father of Russian literature’, he is also the father of Russian opera. His short stories, verse novels, history plays and fairy tales soon became essential subjects for operatic treatment, from Glinka’s *Ruslan and Lyudmila* and Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov* via Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov operas all the way to Stravinsky’s one-act oddity *Mavra* (1923).

In the case of Tchaikovsky’s first Pushkin project, life and art became inextricably linked. He had regarded an initial suggestion that he should adapt *Eugene Onegin*, already a classic, as ‘wild’, but in 1877 he found himself playing out the role of the moody hero to a young woman, Antonina Milyukova, a former student, who had written to him – just as the romantic, impressionable teenage Tatyana in the verse-novel writes to Onegin – declaring her love. Onegin’s rejection seems perverse, and he pays for it by falling in love with the married Tatyana four years later. Partly through cynical motives, to stop the gossip about his homosexuality, Tchaikovsky went so far as proposing to Antonina. After a ‘courtship’ during which he told her that he could not love her, they married. Only two weeks later, the composer had attempted suicide and left her for good.

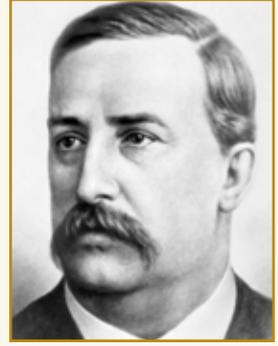
Following a much-needed break in Italy during which he managed some composition, Tchaikovsky completed *Eugene Onegin* in February 1878 and it was premiered a year later by students at the Moscow Conservatoire – an apt choice because the composer wanted realism, with the ages of the singers corresponding to those of their characters.

He had worked simultaneously on the Fourth Symphony, an intensely autobiographical drama of a battle with Fate in which, strangely, the opening fanfares are in polonaise rhythm. Fanfares also appear at the beginning of the dance itself in the opera’s third act. Onegin, having gone off on a long wandering abroad following his murder of his close friend Lensky in a duel, finds himself at a Petersburg society ball where he will come face to face with Tatyana, now the wife of Prince Gremin, an aristocratic retired general. The brilliance of the fanfares is appropriately offset by melancholy in the cello theme of the central, contrasting sequence.

Alexander Borodin (1833–87)

Polovtsian Dances from **Prince Igor**

for Chorus and Orchestra



By the time of Borodin's death in 1887, the opera *Prince Igor*, the major musical project of his life, was still incomplete, perhaps not surprisingly, since Borodin was a research chemist by profession who only composed in his spare time. Like those epic storytellers of the past who left their legacy in the hands of oral tradition, he had left sufficient indications for his close friends Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov to stitch *Prince Igor* together, though it was only thanks to Korsakov's persistent encouragement during Borodin's lifetime that they had enough raw material to work on.

It all began nearly 18 years earlier in April 1869 when Vladimir Stasov, the critical conscience of the circle of Russian nationalist composers to which Borodin belonged, along with Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Cesar Cui and the founder member Mily Balakirev, supplied Borodin with a detailed operatic scenario based on the ancient manuscript of the 12th-century epic poem *The Lay of Igor's Campaign*. The poem's date is generally accepted as being between 1185, the year of Prince Igor Svyatoslavovich of Novgorod-Seversk's raid on the Polovtsian tribe in the southern steppes, and 1187 (Igor died in 1202). It is a short text, no *Iliad* in length, and deals simply with the solar eclipse spelling doom on Igor's campaign, a three-day battle resulting in Igor's defeat (completely omitted in the opera), his escape from captivity under the Polovtsian leader Khan Konchak and his return to wife and people.

Borodin started proper work on *Prince Igor* in 1874, and it joined other fragments in the pioneering series of concerts at the St Petersburg Free Music School. In 1876 the public first heard the 'Glory!' chorus of the opening prologue, and the Polovtsian Dances were among the numbers promised for another of the concerts later that year. As the orchestration of the Dances was far from ready, Rimsky-Korsakov and his normally indolent pupil Anatoly Lyadov worked on it at white heat late into the night. As Rimsky later wrote in his wonderful autobiography *My Musical Life*,

The finished version of the score Borodin covered with liquid gelatine, to keep our pencil marks intact; and in order to have the sheets dry the sooner, he hung them out like washing on lines in my study. Thus the number was ready and passed on to the copyist.

Despite the piecemeal nature of the work during and after Borodin's death, *Prince Igor* works as an honourable specimen of the Russian epic opera. The music exhibits dramatic contrasts between the Orthodox choruses and folk song of the proto-Russian people and the exotic celebrations of the Polovtsian Khan Konchak's retinue while Igor and his son are held prisoner.

The style is a curious melange, though all the themes are melodically inspired. Borodin consulted an expert on what sort of music these nomads of the southern steppes would produce, and the answer was a mix of Turkic style with Magyar folk music later to be collected together by Bartok (part of ancient Polovtsia extended into Hungary).

The divertissement begins with a flowing maidens' dance, its sinuous theme further immortalised as 'Stranger in Paradise' in the musical *Kismet* (no shame in that, for Borodin was Tchaikovsky's equal as the supreme Russian melodist). A 'wild men's dance' with flamboyant clarinet whirls follows, succeeded by a 'general dance' with 3/4 leaps praising the Khan. Young men spin and leapwhirl in a mysterious Presto, interwoven with a return of the women's melody and the wild men's strains, and culminating in a final blazing celebration of Konchak's might.

Text and Translation

Women

Uletai na kryl'yakh vetra
Ty v krai rodnoi, rodnaya pesnya nasha,
Tuda gde my tebya svobodno peli,
Gde bylo tak privol'no nam s tobou.

Tam, pod znoinym nebom
Negoi vozdukh polon,
Tam pod govor morya
Dremlyut gory v oblakakh;

Tam tak yarko solntse svetit,
Rodnye gory svetom zalivaya,
V dolinakh pyshno roza rastsvetayet,
I solovi poyut v lesakh zelyonykh;
I sladkii vinograd rastyot
Tam tebe privol'nei, pesnya –
Ty tuda i uletai!

Fly away on the wings of the wind
To our motherland, our native song,
Thither, where we sang you in freedom,
Where we were so carefree with you.

There, under a burning sky,
The air is full of delight,
There, to the murmur of the sea,
The mountains slumber in the clouds.

There the sun shines so brightly,
Bathing our native mountains in light.
In the valleys the roses bloom luxuriantly,
And nightingales sing in the green forests;
And sweet grapes grow.
You are freer there, song –
And so fly away there!

All

Poite pesni slavi khanu! Poi!
Slav'te silu doblest khana! Slav!
Slaven Khan! Khan!
Slaven on, Khan nash!
Bleskom slavy solntsu raven Khan!
Netu ravnykh slavoï khanu! Net!

Sing songs of praise to the Khan! Sing!
Praise the power and valour of the Khan! Hail!
Glorious Khan! Khan!
He is glorious, our Khan!
The Khan's glory is splendid as the sun!
None can equal him in glory, none!

Women

Chagi khana, slavyat khana svoyevo.

The slavewomen praise their Khan.

All

Poite pesni slavi khanu! Poi!
 Slav'te shchedrost' slav'te milost'! Slav!
 Dlya vragov Khan,
 Grozen on, Khan nash!
 Ktozhe slavoï raven khanu, kto?
 Bleskom slavy solntsu raven on!

Men

Slavoï dedam raven Khan nash!
 Khan, Khan Konchak!
 Slavoï dedam raven on, groznyi Khan,
 Khan Konchak!
 Slaven Khan, Khan Konchak!

Women

Uletai na kryl'yakh vetra
 Ty v kraï rodnoi, rodnaya pesnya nasha,
 Tuda gde my tebya svobodno peli,
 Gde bylo tak privol'no nam s toboyu.

All

V kraï tot, gde pod znoinym nebom
 Negoï vozdukh polon,
 Gde pod govor morya
 Dremlyut gory v oblakakh.

Tam tak yarko solntse svetit,
 Rodnye gory svetom ozaryaya,
 V dolinakh pyshno roza rastsvetayet,
 I solovi poyut v lesakh zelyonykh;
 Sladkii vinograd rastyot.
 Tam tebe privol'nei, pesnya
 Ty tuda i uletai!

Men

Slavoï dedam raven Khan nash!
 Khan, Khan Konchak!
 Slavoï dedam raven on, groznyi Khan,
 Khan Konchak!
 Slaven Khan, Khan Konchak!

All

Plyaskoi vashei teshte khana,
 Plyaskoi teshte khana, chagi!
 Khana svoevo!
 Nash Khan Konchak!

Sing songs of praise to the Khan! Sing!
 Praise his bounteousness and mercy! Hail!
 To his enemies the Khan
 Is ruthless, our Khan!
 Who is equal in splendour to the Khan?
 His glory is splendid as the sun!

Our Khan is equal in splendour to his fathers!
 Khan, Khan Konchak!
 He is equal in splendour to his fathers, terrible Khan,
 Khan Konchak!
 Praise our Khan, Khan Konchak!

Fly away on the wings of the wind
 To our motherland, our native song,
 To there, where we sang you in freedom,
 Where we were so carefree with you.

In the motherland where, under a burning sky,
 The air is full of delight,
 There, to the murmur of the sea,
 The mountains slumber in the clouds.

There, the sun shines so brightly,
 Bathing our native mountains in light.
 In the valleys the roses bloom luxuriantly,
 And nightingales sing in the green forests;
 And sweet grapes grow.
 You are freer there, song –
 And so fly away there!

Our Khan is equal in splendour to his fathers!
 Khan, Khan Konchak!
 He is equal in splendour to his fathers, terrible Khan,
 Khan Konchak!
 Praise our Khan, Khan Konchak!

With your dancing entertain the Khan,
 Dance to entertain the Khan, slaves!
 Your Khan!
 Our Khan Konchak!

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Fantasy Overture - Romeo and Juliet

Lovers loom largest in Tchaikovsky's three 'fantasy overtures', or 'symphonic fantasias', on Shakespearean subjects. Wonderful though the melodies he found for them certainly are, the relationships between the Prince of Denmark and Ophelia in *Hamlet* (1888), or Ferdinand and Miranda in *The Tempest* (1873) are hardly as central to the drama as they are in Tchaikovsky's interpretation. Unquestionably, though, the star-crossed lovers of his first total orchestral masterpiece, *Romeo and Juliet*, deserve to be celebrated with one of the most famous bitter-sweet themes in all music.

The outlines of what the 29-year-old Tchaikovsky began to compose in late 1869 had all been suggested by a crucial mentor, Mily Balakirev, slow-moving composer and doyen of the nationalist group encountered above and known as the 'Mighty Little Handful' (*moguchaya kuchka*) or 'The Five'. Tchaikovsky was briefly embraced by this short-lived brotherhood, and moved them to raptures in early nationalist works like the Second Symphony. *Romeo and Juliet* was more in the line of Berlioz, a programmatic master they all worshipped, however, Tchaikovsky's own ideas about Shakespeare's tragedy were very distinct from Berlioz's 'dramatic symphony' on the subject.

The first of those ideas was not the opening of the work as we know it today. Friar Laurence, the young people's confidant and catalyst of the ultimate tragedy, was initially introduced by a rather placid theme in a major key, part of it sounding like the verse melody of 'O! Man River'. Balakirev criticised it and recommended instead 'something like Liszt's chorales... with an ancient Catholic character resembling that of Orthodox church music'. The solemn opening woodwind chorale punctuated by lower string brooding is the result. Then come the brilliant, syncopated fight music of Montagues and Capulets – and the famous love theme. Balakirev, who had suggested the unusual key, praised the great melody unreservedly:

The second D flat tune is simply delightful. I play it often, and I want very much to kiss you for it. Here are tenderness and the sweetness of love.

The note of poignant regret in the theme, first heard on plaintive cor anglais and muted violas, surely comes from the element of autobiography, Tchaikovsky's sense of never knowing true happiness in love, as he later told his patroness Nadezhda von Meck.

The subsequent development we hear is very different from Tchaikovsky's original, 1870 conception. In the revision, he moves the interplay of two of the three themes – at one point balancing eerie chords on a single sustained note, a touch gleaned from Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila* Overture – towards a powerful climax in which the two trumpets peel out the Friar Laurence theme in fateful ferocity. The return of the love theme, propelled to its most lush climax, is interrupted by more fighting and a dramatic tumble, after which a funeral march and a tragic coda form the natural conclusion: 'for never was a story of more woe/ than this of Juliet and her Romeo'.

INTERVAL - 20 Minutes

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Rachmaninov – Worth a “Lengthy Encounter”?

Mark Forkgen, Musical Director - London Concert Choir

For many years the music of Sergei Rachmaninov occupied an uneasy position, sandwiched between the love of the general musical public and the lukewarm views of musical commentators. In some ways this is understandable. He was writing seemingly old-fashioned music at the same time as Arnold Schönberg, Alban Berg and Anton Webern were deconstructing tonality and Igor Stravinsky was changing the whole function of rhythm within music. Rachmaninov's most famous works, the Second and Third Piano Concertos and the Paganini Variations (well, one in particular), have given us the caricature image of the virtuoso pianist with big hands who wrote show-stopping tunes, perfect for TV and cinema. Surely there must be more to him than that?

I've been lucky enough to conduct performances of Rachmaninov's two great choral works this month, *The Bells* and his monumental *All-Night Vigil* or *Vespers*. What has struck me is the curious mix of different traditions and worlds which creates a real tension in his music. The ardent romanticism is combined with the ritual of sacred music and folksong. Some of the basis of this style is Znamenny Chant, common in the Orthodox Church and far more melodious than the equivalent plainchant of the Roman Church. It occupied a place in traditional society alongside folksong – the lines between sacred, secular and even pagan were pretty blurred. The most obvious combination of these styles is the second movement of *The Bells* where the ritual of bells and chants from the choir alternates with the most sensual music for soprano soloist and orchestra. Russia's official political and musical past is also represented in the third movement. The “choral mob” style pays homage to Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* and the alternating tone/semi-tone (octatonic) musical language has its roots in Rimsky-Korsakov and early Stravinsky.

European influences also play their part. The delicacy and vivid colours of the orchestral writing in the first movement, while being intrinsically Russian, owe much to the French school of Debussy and Ravel. The last movement, however, feels more Germanic. The opening cor anglais lament is reminiscent of the beginning of Act 3 from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* and the soloist's musings are in a similar musical and literary vein to Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. Rachmaninov even quotes Richard Strauss in the final few bars. His choice of the “transfiguration theme” from the tone poem *Death and Transfiguration* leaves the listener in no doubt of the musical depiction of soul's final journey.

These combinations of darkness and light, sacred and secular, Russian and European, reserved and impassioned, for me, give the music both extra layers of interest and personality. Rachmaninov was, of course, not a revolutionary figure. But he certainly has hidden depths. Every triumphant arrival is preceded by a hard-fought struggle.

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873–1943)

The Bells - Choral Symphony, Op. 35

for Soprano, Tenor, Bass Baritone, Chorus and Orchestra



1. The Silver Sleigh Bells (Allegro ma non tanto) - Tenor and Chorus
2. The Mellow Wedding Bells (Lento) - Soprano and Chorus
3. The Loud Alarm Bells (Presto) - Chorus
4. The Mournful Iron Bells (Lento lugubre) - Bass Baritone and Chorus

‘All my life,’ declared Rachmaninov in his reminiscences, ‘I have taken pleasure in the differing moods and music of gladly chiming and mournfully tolling bells.’ He gives two examples of their impact on the Russian soul. One is a vivid anecdote of Chekhov hearing the Vesper bells and declaring they were ‘all that religion has left me’. The other is how the ‘four silvery weeping notes’ of Novgorod’s Saint Sophia Cathedral, familiar to Rachmaninov from childhood, found their way into his First Suite for two pianos and his opera *The Miserly Knight*.

The bell-songs of *Kolokola* (to give *The Bells* its musical Russian title) are never far from two of Rachmaninov’s other church-related fixations – the stepwise patterns of orthodox *znamenny* (or ‘sign’) chant that dominate his symphonies, and the Catholic chant for the dead, the *Dies irae*, used to macabre effect in the orchestral predecessor to *The Bells*, the 1909 tone-poem inspired by Arnold Böcklin’s painting *The Isle of the Dead*.

The Bells is clearly the next step on that symphonic path not only because it, too, has its roots in liturgical music but also because Rachmaninov explicitly called it a Choral Symphony, not a cantata; he had already sketched a plan for a purely orchestral symphony before an anonymous correspondent sent him verses by Edgar Allan Poe in a very free translation by the Russian Symbolist poet Konstantin Balmont.

Settling in Rome for the winter of 1912–13, and occupying at first the very same rooms overlooking the Piazza di Spagna which his beloved Tchaikovsky had used as a retreat in the late 1870s, he worked at fever pitch on *The Bells* from early morning to sunset every day.

He also conducted the St Petersburg premiere on 30 November 1913, and the reception was unusually perceptive, one critic noting that those familiar ‘concentrated shades of hopeless anguish and despair ... pessimistic passion and sublime tragedy’ which Rachmaninov had inherited from Tchaikovsky stood revealed with ‘unusual clarity’ and ‘special force’.

Poe's poetry, as filtered through Balmont, promises a half bright, half black ritual; but even in the first two movements pensive or sombre musical moods cloud the scene. 'Silver Sleigh Bells' takes up where the jubilant finale of the Second Symphony left off but with a newly refined sense of orchestral fantasy, glittering and flashing around the high tenor solo. Mysticism suspends time in a bittersweet, quasi-liturgical humming chorus as Poe writes of 'the delight of tender sleep' but the excitement returns to introduce a new theme at the majestic climax, descending in steps from a single, repeated high B flat. This is, in fact, the leading 'bell song' of the work, and as phrased by muted violas at the start of the next movement, punctuated by Mussorgskyan chimes, it comes to sound like the *Dies irae*.

The mood of 'Mellow Wedding Bells' is elusive: the soprano conveys the sensuous rapture of the bride, but that, too, is undercut by solemn choral writing and disconcerting shifts of orchestral colour. Rachmaninov's new-found daring in harmony and subtlety of orchestration is encapsulated in the two clarinets' last word, only reluctantly coming to rest in D major.

'A tale of horror' follows, with Rachmaninov unleashing all his orchestral demons to match Poe's 'Loud Alarm Bells'. Lurid cross-rhythms look forward to Adams and American Minimalism, but otherwise Rachmaninov is looking back to Mussorgsky and specifically to the Russian people's plea for mercy in *Boris Godunov*. Rachmaninov simplified the tricky choral writing for a Sheffield Festival performance in 1936 but the original version, as performed tonight, is more overwhelming.

The slow lament of 'Mournful Iron Bells' emulates the finale of Tchaikovsky's 'Pathétique' Symphony and at first is perhaps even more desolate in its fear of death, shared between cor anglais and the expressive bass. At the last hour, though, redemption strikes. With a luminosity akin to Mahler in the transfigured conclusion of his 10th Symphony (which Rachmaninov would not, of course, have known), the composer glides from minor into major and movingly gives the lie to Poe: there is rest and respite beyond the quiet of the tomb.



The Bells (*Text and Translation*)

Poem by Konstantin Dmitrevich Balmont, from the poem of the same name by Edgar Allan Poe

The Silver Sleigh Bells

Slyshish', sani mchatsya v ryad,
Mchatsya v ryad!
Kolokol'chiki zvenyat,
Serebristym lyokhgkim zvonom
slukh nash sladostno tomyat,
Etim pen'yem i guden'yem
o zabven'ye govoryat.
O kak zvonko, zvonko, zvonko,
Tochno zvuchnyy smekh rebyonka,
V yasnom vozduke nochnom.
Govoryat oni o tom,
Shto za dnyami zabluzhden'ya
Nastupayet vozrozhden'ye,
Shto volshebno naslazhden'ye,
naslasheden'ye nezhnym snom.

Sani mchatsya, mchatsya v ryad,
Kolokol'chiki zvenyat,
Zvyozdy slushayut, kak sani,
ubegaya, govoryat,
I, vnimaya im, goryat,
I mechtaya i blistaya,
v nebe dukhami paryat;
I izmenchivym siyan'yem,
Molchalivym obayan'yem,
Vместe s zvonom, вместе s pen'yem,
o zabven'ye govoryat.

The Mellow Wedding Bells

Slyshish' k svad'be zov svyatoy,
Zolotoy.
Skol'ko nezhnovo blazhenstva
v etoy pesne molodoy!
Skvoz' spokojnyy vozdukh nochi
Slovno cmotryat ch'i-to ochi
I blestyat,
Iz vol'ny pevuchikh zvukov
na lunu oni glyadyat.
Iz prizyvnykh divnykh keliy,
Polny skazochnykh veseliy,
Narastaya, upadaya, bryzgi svetlye letyat.
Vnov' potukhnut, vnov blestyat,
I ronyayut svetlyy vzglyad
Na gryadushcheye, gde dremlet
bezmyatezhnost' nezhnnykh snov,
Vozveshchayemykh soglas'yem zolotykh kolokolov!

Listen, the sleighs are rushing in a row,
Rushing in a row!
The little bells are jingling,
With their silvery, light tinkle,
they torment our hearing with sweetness,
With their singing and ringing
they tell of oblivion.
O how clearly, clearly, clearly,
Sounding just like the laughter of a child,
In the clear night air.
They are saying that
After days of confusion
Follows renewal,
That enchanting delight,
the delight of tender sleep.

The sleighs are rushing, rushing in a row,
The little bells are jingling,
The stars are listening, how the sledges,
as they run away, are talking,
And hearing the sledges, the stars sparkle,
Dreaming, and twinkling,
they float in the sky with the spirits;
And with changing brightness,
With silent grace,
Together with the sound and the singing,
they are telling of oblivion.

Listen to the holy call to the wedding,
The golden bells.
How much tender bliss
is in this young song!
Through the quiet night air
As if looking through someone's eyes
And twinkling,
From waves of melodic sounds
they look at the moon.
From beckoning wondrous cells,
Full of fabulous joy,
Growing, falling, light splashes fly.
Now they extinguish, now they twinkle again
And shed their bright gaze
On the future, where the tranquillity
of tender dreams slumbers,
Proclaiming the harmony of the golden bells!

The Loud Alarm Bells

Slyshish', voyushchiy nabat,
Tochno stonet mednyy ad!
Eti zvuki, v dikoy muke,
skazku uzhasov tverdyat.
Tochno molyat im pomoch',
Krik kidayut pryamo v noch',
Pryamo v ushi tyomnoy nochi.

Kazhdyy zvuk, to dlinneye, to koroche,
Vyklikayet svoy ispug,
I ispug ikh tak velik,
Tak bezumen kazhdyy krik,
Shto razorvannyye zvony,
nesposobnyye zvuchať,
Mogut tol'ko bit'sya, vit'sya
i krichat', krichat', krichat'!
Tol'ko plakat' o poshchade
I k pylayushchey gromade
Vopli skorbi obrashchat'!

A mezh tem ogon' bezumnyy,
I gluchoy i mnogoshumnyy,
Vsyo gorit,
To iz okon, to po kryshe,
Mchitsya vyshe, vyshe, vyshe,
I kak budto govorit:

Ya khochu
Vyshe mchat'sya, razgorat'sya,
vstrechu lunnomu luchu,
Il' umru, il' totchas, totchas
vplot' do mesyatsa vzlechu!

O, nabat, nabat, nabat,
Yesli b ty vernul nazad
Etot uzhas, eto plamyá, etu iskru, etot vzglyad,
Etot pervyy vzglyad ognya,
O kotorom ty veshchaesh',
s voplem, s plachem i zvenya!

A teper' nam net spasen'ya,
Vsyudu plamyá i kipen'ye,
Vsyudu strakh i vozmushchen'ye!

Tvoy prizyv,
Dikikh zvukov nesoglasnost'
Vozveshchayet nam opasnost',
To rastyot beda glukhaya,
to spadayet, kak priliv!
Slukh nash chutko lovit
volny v peremene zvukovoy,
Vnov' spadayet, vnov' rydayet
medno-stonushiy priboy.

Listen, the warlike alarm bells,
are groaning just like a brazen hell!
These sounds, in wild torment,
repeat tales of horror.
As if begging for help,
They throw their screams directly into the night,
Straight into the ears of the dark night.

Every sound, now longer, now shorter,
Proclaims its terror,
And their terror is so great,
Every scream is so insane,
That the tortured bells,
incapable of ringing out,
Can only batter, writhe
and scream, scream, scream!
Only weep for mercy
And to the thunderous blaze
Address their cries of sorrow!

And meanwhile the frantic fire,
Deaf and clamorous,
Burns everything,
Now from the window, now on the roof,
It soars higher, higher, higher,
As if to say:

I want
To soar and blaze higher,
to meet the moon's rays,
Either I die, or at once
climb right up to the moon!

O, alarm bells, bells, bells,
If only you could turn back
This horror, the flames, this spark, this sight,
This first sight of the fire,
Which you proclaim,
with wailing, lamentation and ringing!
But now there is no escape for us,
Everywhere are flames and boiling,
Everywhere is fear and torment!

Your pleading,
Of wild disconsolate noise
Proclaims our danger,
Now the deaf misfortune grows,
now it retreats, just like the tide!
Our hearing clearly catches
the waves of changing sound,
Again it retreats, again it sobs,
the brazen, groaning surf.

The Mournful Iron Bells

Pokhoronnyy slyshen zvon,
Dolgiy svon!

Gor'koy skorbi slyshny zvuki,
gor'koy zhizni konchen son.

Zvuk zheleznyy vozveshchayet
o pechali pokhoron!

I nevol'no my drozhim,
Ot zabav svoikh speshim

I rydaeyem, vspominayem,
shto i my glaza smezhim.

Neizmenno-monotonnyy,
Etot vozglas otdalyonnyy,

Pokhoronnyy tyazhkiy zvon,
Tochno ston,
Skorbnyy gnevnyy
I plachevnyy,

Vyrastaeyet v dolgiy gul,
Vozveshchayet, shto stradalets
neprobudnym snom usnul.

V kolokol'nykh kel'yakh rzhavykh

On dlya pravyykh i nepravyykh

Grozno vtorit ob odnom:

Shto na sertse budet kamen'
shto glaza somknutsya snom.

Fakel traurnyy gorit,
S kolokol'ni kto-to kriknul,
kto-to gromko govorit.

Kto-to chornyy tam stoit,

I khokhochet, i gremit,

I gudit, gudit, gudit,

K kolokol'ne pripadayet,

Gulkiy kolokol kachayet,

Gulkiy kolokol rydayet,

Stonet v vozdukhe nemom

I protyazhno vozveshchayet o pokoye grobovom .

Listen to the funeral knell,

A long sound!

The audible sounds of bitter sorrow,
sounding the end of a bitter life.

The iron sound proclaims
the sorrow of a funeral!

And we unwillingly shudder,

And hasten away from our pastimes

And we lament, as we remember
that we too shall close our eyes.

Unchanging and monotonous,
That distant call,

The heavy funeral knell,

Like a groan,

Plaintive, angry

And weeping,

Swells to a lengthy din,

It proclaims that a sufferer

has fallen asleep to eternal slumber.

In the rusty cells of the belfry

It – for the just and unjust –

Sternly repeats one thing:

That a stone will be upon your heart,
that your eyes will close in sleep.

The mourning torch burns,

From the belfry, someone screamed,
someone is calling loudly.

A black figure is standing there,

Laughing and roaring,

And howling, howling, howling,

Leaning against the belfry,

He swings the resounding bell,

The hollow bell sobs,

And groans though the silent air

Slowly proclaiming the quiet of the tomb.

Translation by Gesa Brinkmann

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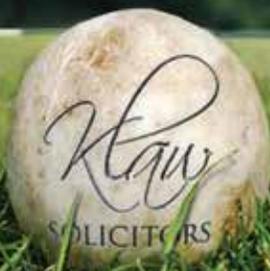
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Mark Forkgen *Conductor*



This season Mark Forkgen is celebrating 20 years as the Music Director of London Concert Choir. He is also Music Director of Canticum chamber choir, Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of Kokoro (the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's New Music Group) and Director of Music at Tonbridge School. He has conducted major UK orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, English Chamber Orchestra, English Northern Philharmonia and Manchester Camerata, appearing at major venues, including the Royal Festival Hall, the Barbican and the Royal Albert Hall.

A specialist in the field of choral and contemporary music, Mark has given the first performances of more than 100 works. He has also conducted stage works with the Trestle Theatre Company and Britten Sinfonia, and contemporary opera with the Unicorn Theatre Company and an ensemble from the Philharmonia, at the Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Mark's wide range of conducting includes performances with Deep Purple for the Henley Festival and recreating Pink Floyd's *Atom Heart Mother* in the Chelsea Festival. He also enjoys an active life as a pianist, focusing on twentieth-century and contemporary music. His recitals this season cover repertoire by Stravinsky, Debussy, Messiaen, Bartok, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Oliver Knussen and Thomas Adès.

He has been Conductor and Artistic Advisor for highly acclaimed festivals including: Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' 70th Birthday; Stravinsky, 'A Festival of Britten', 'Music of the Americas', 'Britain since Britten' and 'East meets West'. Outside the UK he has conducted in Denmark, Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Eire, the Czech Republic and Italy (including Handel's *Messiah* in Sienna and *Israel in Egypt* at the Viterbo Early Music Festival), Bulgaria (concerts broadcast for National TV and Radio) and Hong Kong.

Last season's highlights included Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' *Vesalii Icones* with the composer, productions of *Cabaret* and *The Boy Friend*, programmes based on Masters of the Kings' and Queens' Music, a project combining the music of Eric Satie with film, and a highly acclaimed concert including three first performances at the Cheltenham Festival.

Highlights of the current season include composer projects for New Music South West, the Bournemouth Festival, and the European Union Old Hispanic Office initiative conducting twenty first performances; acting as Artistic Director for *Home of the Brave*; a festival of American Music; Rachmaninov's *Vespers* with Canticum at St Sophia's Cathedral; a production of Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods* and, as a pianist, performances of Shostakovich's Second Piano Trio and works by Stravinsky, Bartok and Debussy.

Andrew Rees *Tenor*

Born in Carmarthen, West Wales, Andrew Rees gained a scholarship to study at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, and completed his studies on the Opera Course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. He was a Jerwood Young Artist at English National Opera and later became a principal tenor at the company.



In opera, he has performed for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Chelsea Opera Group, Grange Park Opera, Longborough Festival Opera, Northern Ireland Opera, Opera Holland Park and Welsh National Opera, as well as for Angers-Nantes Opera, the National Theater Weimar, the New Israeli Opera, the Nederlandse Reisopera and the Stadttheater St Gallen. His repertoire has included Bob Boles in *Peter Grimes*, Boris in *Katya Kabanova*, Sergei in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, Doctor Yes in *Anna Nicole*, Macduff in *Macbeth*, Froh in *Das Rheingold*, Heinrich der Schreiber in *Tannhäuser* and Siegmund in *Die Walküre*.

Concert highlights have included performances with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Hallé, the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the NDR Sinfonieorchester, Hamburg, and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.

His recordings include Narraboth in *Salome* for Chandos and Doctor Yes in *Anna Nicole* for Opus Arte Blu Ray / DVD.

Current engagements include Vladimir Igoryevich in *Prince Igor* for Chelsea Opera Group, Laca in *Jenufa* for Grange Park Opera, Melot in *Tristan und Isolde* at the Dutch National Opera and the Rome Opera, and Jimmy Mahoney in *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*.

Natalya Romaniw *Soprano*

Award-winning Welsh soprano Natalya Romaniw was born in Swansea and owes her surname to her Ukrainian grandfather, who settled in Wales during the Second World War. Natalya studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and was a member of the Houston Grand Opera Studio. She was the first person to ever win both the Loveday Song Prize and first prize at the prestigious Kathleen Ferrier Awards in 2012. Subsequent awards include the Clonter Opera Prize, London Welsh Singer and the Welsh Singers competitions. In 2009 Natalya represented Wales in the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition, where she was a Song Prize finalist.

Operatic engagements have included Mimi in *La Bohème*, Ines in *Il Trovatore*, Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Micaela in *Carmen* and Krystina in *The Passenger*, with performances at the Lincoln Center in New York with Houston Grand Opera. She has also sung Governess in *The Turn of the Screw* for Glyndebourne on Tour; Maliella in *I Gioielli della Madonna* and Fiora in *L'amore dei tre re* for Opera Holland Park; Woglinde in a concert performance of excerpts from



Credit: Patrick Allen, Opera Omnia

Das Rheingold with the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, and returned to Houston Grand Opera as Ortlinde in *Die Walküre*.

More recently Natalya made her European debut as Suzel in *L'amico Fritz* for Den Jyske Opera, and an impressive company debut with Scottish Opera as the Foreign Princess in *Rusalka*. She also gained unanimous critical acclaim for her outstanding portrayal of Tatyana in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* for Garsington Opera, which was closely followed by her debut as Lisa in his *Queen of Spades* in a return to Opera Holland Park.

In 2016/17, her engagements include a return to Scottish Opera as Suzel in *L'amico Fritz* as part of their 'Sunday Series', Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Hallé under Sir Mark Elder, an operatic movie gala – also with the Hallé – under Stephen Bell, and her role and company debut in the title role of *Jenufa* for the new Grange Park Opera. Next season she makes her company debut at Welsh National Opera as Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin*.

Michael Druiett *Bass Baritone*

Born in London, Michael Druiett studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Royal College of Music and the National Opera Studio. Studies with Norman Bailey, and, more recently, with Sir John Tomlinson led to his debut as Wotan in Opera North's *Das Rheingold*. He returned to the company to sing Der Wanderer in *Siegfried*. He also took part in Opera North's complete cycles of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in 2016, a performance currently to be seen on BBC Online.



Michael Druiett began his career at English National Opera and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, since when he has appeared as a guest with companies including English Touring Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Welsh National Opera, La Monnaie, Brussels, the Deutsche Oper am Rhein, L'Opéra national de Lyon, L'Opéra national de Montpellier, L'Opéra national de Paris and the New Israeli Opera.

His repertoire includes Sergeant Budd in *Albert Herring*, Mr Redburn in *Billy Budd*, Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Prince Ivan Khovansky in *Khovanschina*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Misha in *The Bartered Bride*, Jokanaan in *Salome*, Amonasro in *Aïda*, Monterone in *Rigoletto* and Donner in *Das Rheingold* for Scottish Opera.

Recent and current engagements include Hobson in *Peter Grimes* for the Opéra de Monte-Carlo, Inspector / Uncle in *The Trial* for Scottish Opera, The Bonze in *Madam Butterfly* for Glyndebourne on Tour, a return to Opera North to sing Wotan in *Das Rheingold*, and Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* for the Leeds International Concert Season.

Michael Druiett continues his studies with Sherman Lowe.

London Concert Choir

London Concert Choir, founded as the Brompton Choral Society in 1960, now has around 150 members of a wide range of ages. With Music Director Mark Forkgen the choir regularly appears at all the major London concert venues and in cathedrals and churches in and around the capital, as well as visiting destinations further afield. The choir's broad range was illustrated in its tour to Krakow in July 2016, where concerts of unaccompanied 'Hymns to the Virgin' alternated with performances of jazz standards with Mark Forkgen on piano.

In 2014 the choir performed Haydn's oratorio *The Seasons* in Assisi and in 2011 a performance of Verdi's Requiem with the Augsburg Basilica Choir in the Royal Festival Hall was followed by a joint concert at the Augsburg Peace Festival.

LCC celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010 with memorable performances of Britten's *War Requiem* at the Barbican and in Salisbury Cathedral. Among other major works in recent seasons have been Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the English Chamber Orchestra; Mozart's Requiem with the London Mozart Players; and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony*, all with Southbank Sinfonia. The symphony was the main work in a Battle of Jutland centenary concert in 2016 in aid of maritime charities.

Performances of Baroque music with Counterpoint include Handel's *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *St Matthew Passion* and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*. Operas in concert performance have ranged from Gluck's *Orfeo* to Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and the London premiere of *The Chalk Legend* by Stephen McNeff. LCC has also performed Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert*, and Will Todd's *Mass in Blue*. The choir often gives concerts for charity and continues to commission new works.

www.london-concert-choir.org.uk



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Principal Accompanist

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Olivia Brown
Aisling Carroll-Turner
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Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

In 2017 the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) continues to celebrate 70 years at the forefront of music-making in the UK. Its home base since 2004 at London's Cadogan Hall serves as a springboard for fourteen residencies across the country, often in areas where access to live orchestral music is very limited. With a wider reach than any other UK large ensemble, the RPO has truly become Britain's national orchestra.

The regional programme, plus regular performances at Cadogan Hall, Royal Festival Hall and a hugely popular series at the Royal Albert Hall, are conducted by a distinguished roster of musicians: Charles Dutoit, appointed Artistic Director and Principal Conductor in 2009 after a decades-long association with the RPO; Pinchas Zukerman, the inspirational Principal Guest Conductor; Alexander Shelley, the dynamic young Principal Associate Conductor since January 2015, and the esteemed Permanent Associate Conductor Grzegorz Nowak.

International touring is vital to the Orchestra's work, taking it to many prestigious destinations worldwide. Recent engagements include concerts at the festivals of Montreux and Granada, an extensive tour of the USA, and visits to central Europe and the Far East, including South Korea and China.

For more than twenty years RPO Resound, the Orchestra's community and education programme, has taken music into the heart of the regions that the Orchestra serves. From Azerbaijan to Jamaica and from Shanghai to Scunthorpe, the team – comprising the majority of the Orchestra – has worked with young people, the homeless, recovering stroke patients in Hull and in settings ranging from the Sea Life London Aquarium to hospitals, orphanages and children's hospices.

In 1986, the RPO became the first UK orchestra to launch its own record label. Continuing its tradition of entrepreneurial innovation, in 2015 the RPO started an online radio station, which broadcasts via its website, and RPO TV, an online video channel streaming fly-on-the-wall shorts written, directed and filmed by the musicians. The Orchestra has also become increasingly active on social media platforms.

Although the RPO embraces twenty-first-century opportunities, including appearances with pop stars and on video game, film and television soundtracks, its artistic priority remains paramount: the making of great music at the highest level for the widest possible audience. This would have been lauded by its Founder and first conductor, Sir Thomas Beecham, who set up the RPO in 1946, leading a vital revival in the UK's orchestral life after World War II.

Since then, the Orchestra's principal conductors have included Rudolf Kempe, Antal Doráti, Walter Weller, André Previn, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Yuri Temirkanov and Daniele Gatti; and its repertoire has encompassed every strand of music from the core classical repertoire to music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and works by leading composers of recent years, including Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and Sir John Tavener.

As the 70th Anniversary Season continues to unfold, the RPO's versatility and high standards mark it out as one of today's most open-minded, forward-thinking symphony orchestras. Now it proudly looks forward to the next 70 years.

RPO Players

First Violins

Duncan Riddell
Tamás András
Judith Templeman
Joana Valentinaviciute
Andrew Klee
Kay Chappell
Anthony Protheroe
Charlotte Reid
Geoffrey Silver
Joanne Chen
Sheila Law
Alexandra Caldon

Second Violins

Elen Hâf Rideal
Antonella D'Andrea
Jennifer Christie
Charlotte Ansbergs
Peter Graham
Stephen Payne
Manuel Porta
Charles Nolan
Sali-Wyn Ryan
Colin Callow

Violas

Liz Varlow
Michelle Bruil
Ugne Tiškutė
Esther Harling
Jonathan Hallett
Andrew Sippings
Helen Picknett
Rebecca Carrington

Cellos

Tim Gill
Roberto Sorrentino
William Heggart
Raphael Lang
Anne Chauveau
Emma Black
Anna Mowat
Jane Oliver

Double Basses

Tyler Shepherd
Chris West
David Gordon
Marianne Schofield
Ben Wolstenholme
Kylie Davies

Flutes

Katie Bedford
Joanna Marsh
Lianne Barnard

Piccolo

Sharon Williams

Oboes

John Roberts
Timothy Watts
Lucy Foster

Cor Anglais

Patrick Flanagan

Clarinets

Katherine Lacy
Sonia Sielaff
Emily Meredith

Bass Clarinet

Katy Ayling

Bassoons

Emily Hultmark
Helen Storey
Stuart Russell

Contrabassoon

Fraser Gordon

French Horns

Laurence Davies
Jonathan Quintrell-Evans
Richard Ashton
Paul Cott
Carys Evans
Elise Campbell

Trumpets

James Fountain
Adam Wright
Mike Allen

Trombones

Matthew Gee
Matthew Knight

Bass Trombone

Roger Argente

Tuba

Kevin Morgan

Timpani

Alasdair Kelly

Percussion

Stephen Quigley
Martin Owens
Gerald Kirby
Richard Horne
Oliver Yates

Harp

Suzy Willison-Kawalec

Celesta

Alistair Young

Piano

John Alley

Organ

Andrew Lucas



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London Concert Choir is committed to high standards and constantly aims to raise the level of its performances by means of all-day workshops and other special events. However it is not possible for us to promote our concerts with professional performers of the required calibre unless we receive income from sources other than ticket sales. We greatly appreciate the financial contribution of our regular supporters in helping the choir to maintain its position as one of the leading amateur choirs in London.

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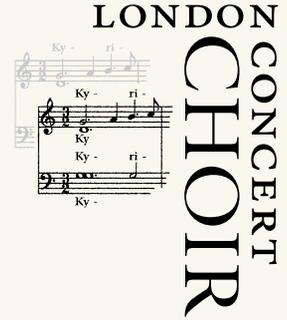
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Mendelssohn: Verleih uns Frieden
Schubert: Unfinished Symphony
Schubert: Mass in E flat



THE NAVAL CLUB



Well placed in the heart of Mayfair, the Naval Club is the only London Club providing a Naval and Maritime environment where all those interested in the sea can feel at home.

- It is NOT necessary to have been a Naval Officer to become a Member. We welcome all those with an interest in maritime affairs and the sea in general.
- The Club is open 7 days a week throughout the year for accommodation and offers special reduced week end break rates.
- Private function and conference rooms are available.
- Ladies are welcome, both as Members and as guests.

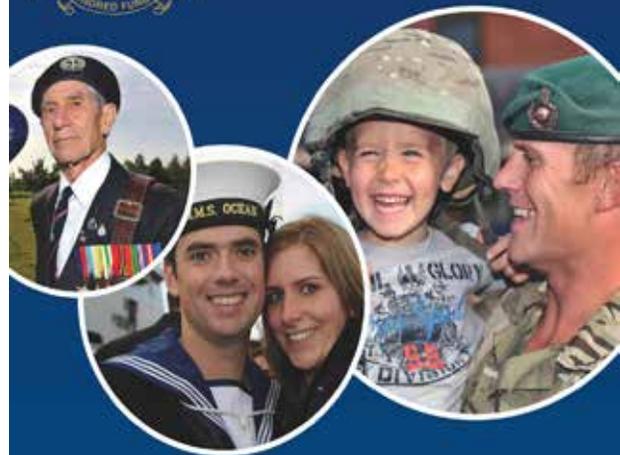
For more information contact:

Commander Phillip Ingham RN, Chief Executive,
on 020 7493 7672, Fax: 020 7355 2644,
email: cdr@navalclub.co.uk
or visit our website at www.navalclub.co.uk



The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust

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Men and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines serve their country, often at times of danger. Established in 1922, the RNBT helps non-commissioned Sailors, Marines and their families (The RNBT Family) throughout their lives.

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