

A sepia-toned portrait of Edward Elgar, an elderly man with a prominent white mustache, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt with a tie. The portrait is the background of the entire page.

**BSO**  
BR●MLEY  
SYMPH●NY  
●RCHES●TRA

Music Director - Adrian Brown  
Leader - Andrew Laing  
Soloist - Sasha Rozhdestvensky

105th Season **2024 - 2025**

Saturday 18th January 2025  
Bernard Brook Memorial Concert

Langley Park Centre for the  
Performing Arts

**£2.00**

**ELGAR**

# PROGRAMME

## Nielsen Symphony no 1

Interval - 20 Minutes

*Refreshments are available in the dining hall*

## Elgar Violin Concerto in B minor

***Soloist*** Sasha Rozhdestvensky

*Tonight's performance marks Frank Cottee's 50 years in the Orchestra, having joined the orchestra in December 1974 at the invitation of the then first horn, John Redfern, at the time when we were still building up a home-grown wind and brass section after many years of LSO imports on concert days. We thank him for his long service to the Orchestra, including serving on the committee with Ernest Rainer when Adrian Brown was appointed.*

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*Unauthorised audio or video recording is not permitted*

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## Adrian Brown -Music Director



Adrian Brown comes from a distinguished line of Sir Adrian Boult's most gifted pupils, studying intensively with him for some years after graduating from the Royal Academy of Music. Sir Adrian wrote: He has always impressed me as a musician of exceptional attainments who has all the right gifts and ideas to make him a first-class conductor. Adrian remains the only British conductor to have reached the finals of the Karajan Conductors' Competition: the Berlin Philharmonic was the first professional orchestra he conducted.

In 1992 Adrian was engaged to conduct the St. Petersburg Philharmonic. In 1998 Sir Roger Norrington recommended him to conduct the Camerata Salzburg. Adrian has also conducted the City of Birmingham, the BBC and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestras, and the London Sinfonietta. He is a great proponent of contemporary music and has given several first performances.

Adrian has made a particularly invaluable contribution to British musical life working with young musicians. Between 1972 and 2013 he was Music Director of Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra, his tenure honoured with a Celebratory Concert in Cadogan Hall in March 2013. He has frequently conducted both the National Youth Orchestra (working with Sir Colin Davis and Norrington) and the National Youth Wind Orchestra. He runs courses for young musicians, coaches young conductors, and was given the Novello Award for Youth Orchestras at the 1989 Edinburgh Festival. Adrian was one of a hundred musicians presented with a Classic FM Award at their 10th Birthday Honours Celebration in June 2002. In 2013 he was awarded the Making Music NFMS Lady Hilary Groves Prize for services to Community Music.

Adrian is particularly highly-regarded for his interpretations of Berlioz and Elgar: he was presented with the Berlioz International Society Medal in December 2017, and, coinciding with his 70th birthday in October 2019, the Elgar Medal. Adrian founded his own orchestra, the Elgar Sinfonia, in 2018: highlights include Falstaff in June 2021 and, to mark the Elgar Society 50th anniversary, Sea Pictures, Polonia and the Crown of India in the presence of Dame Janet Baker. The Sinfonia has performed a complete cycle of all the Elgar Symphonies and rarely heard choral works, The Light of Life and the Black Knight, with the London Chorus. He has also led performances of Verdi's Requiem and Beethoven's Missa Solemnis with the Royal Orchestral Society and the London Chorus. He has also maintained his connections with his place of birth Suffolk, has conducted the Waveney Sinfonia for 45 years and returning to conduct the Trianon Music Group in Ipswich.

Adrian recently collaborated with Rustam Khanmurzin in the Bliss Piano Concerto with the Elgar Sinfonia and plans include more Bliss, George Lloyd, Holst, Berlioz and Finzi. In the future he hopes to bring more Elgar to the public, continue to explore new repertoire with Bromley (and his other orchestras), and to share his joy of music through illustrated talks.

# Bernard Brook

23 April 1949 - 5 April 2024



Introduced to the violin by his father, Bernard was a product of the School Instrument Training system which used to be available to all. He studied at the Blackheath Conservatoire under Bob Hewitt and latterly with Reginald Morley. He was leader of Bromley Symphony Orchestra for 23 seasons from October 1989 until May 2012. During this time he played the solo in many orchestral works, including Strauss' Ein Heldenleben and Also Sprach Zarathustra, Tchaikovsky's Sleeping Beauty (Act 2), Vaughan Williams' Job, a mask for dancing, and Rimsky Korsakov's Scheherazade. He also appeared as soloist in Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto, the Bliss Violin Concerto, Vaughan Williams' Lark Ascending, Berlioz' Reverie and Caprice and the Khachaturian Violin Concerto. In his last concert as leader he performed the Meditation from Thais (Massenet).

Significantly, he continued to play in the orchestra after retiring as leader, indicative of his love for orchestral playing and the high regard in which he was held. Playing the violin was

his life - but never the day job - and he had a serene elegance and effortless style to his playing, whatever the circumstances!

Bernard was also the driving force behind with the Bromley Symphony Players which he directed for many years - ably supported, as ever, by Ruth - and raising considerable sums for various charities. He also led the Militaire Orchestra which performed at prestigious venues such as the Mansion House, Guildhall and various Livery Companies in the City of London.

He was simply an enormous part of our collective musical lives: it was a privilege to make music alongside him for all those years.

# Sasha Rozhdestvensky

## Violin



Sasha Rozhdestvensky is considered one of Russia's finest young violinists. He has worked with many of the world's renowned conductors, including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Yuri Bashmet, Jean-Claude Casadesus, Valery Gergiev, Vernon Handley, Jacques Mercier, Gennady Rozhdestvensky and Gerard Schwartz. He has appeared internationally with many leading orchestras including the Bayerische Staatsorchester, Boston Symphony orchestra, L'Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, The Mariinsky Orchestra, The Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Prague Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, The Tonhalle Orchester Zurich and the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony.

He has appeared at major festivals including the BBC Proms, Tanglewood, Schleswig-Holstein, Gstaad, Istanbul, Colmar, Ravinia, Florida, Taormina, Sienna, Lockenhaus, Montreux. Sasha has recorded numerous works for Thesis and Chandos, including the Double Concerto (Concerto Grosso No.6), written by Alfred Schnittke especially for him and Viktoria

Postnikova. He has recorded The Glazunov Violin Concerto and Shostakovich Violin Concerto N1 with The State Symphony Capella of Russia and Gennady Rozhdestvensky, the complete works of Tchaikovsky for violin and piano with Josiane Marfurt and the complete works of Ravel.

His dedication to contemporary music is highlighted through close contact with several eminent composers, such as Alfred Schnittke, Sofia Gubaidulina and Giya Kancheli. He also devotes his time to the performance of traditional Latin American music together with the instrumental group "Ambar" and "Paris Gotan Trio". Both groups recently released CDs "El Diablo Suelto" and "Champan Rosado"

Sasha studied at the Central Music School in Moscow, the Moscow Conservatory, the Paris Conservatoire and the Royal College of Music in London with Dr. Felix Andrievsky, Zinaida Gilels, Maya Glezarova and Gérard Poulet.

He plays several violins, among which are a Guarneri del Gesù and a Stradivari loaned to him by the Stradivari Society. He recently became an ambassador for the Stradivari Society.

# Carl Nielsen 1865-1931

## Symphony no. 1, Opus 7



*I love the vast surface of silence; and it is my chief delight to break it.*

*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!*

*Music is life and, like it, inextinguishable.*

**Carl Nielsen**

**Allegro orgoglioso**

**Andante**

**Allegro comodo — Andante sostenuto — Tempo I**

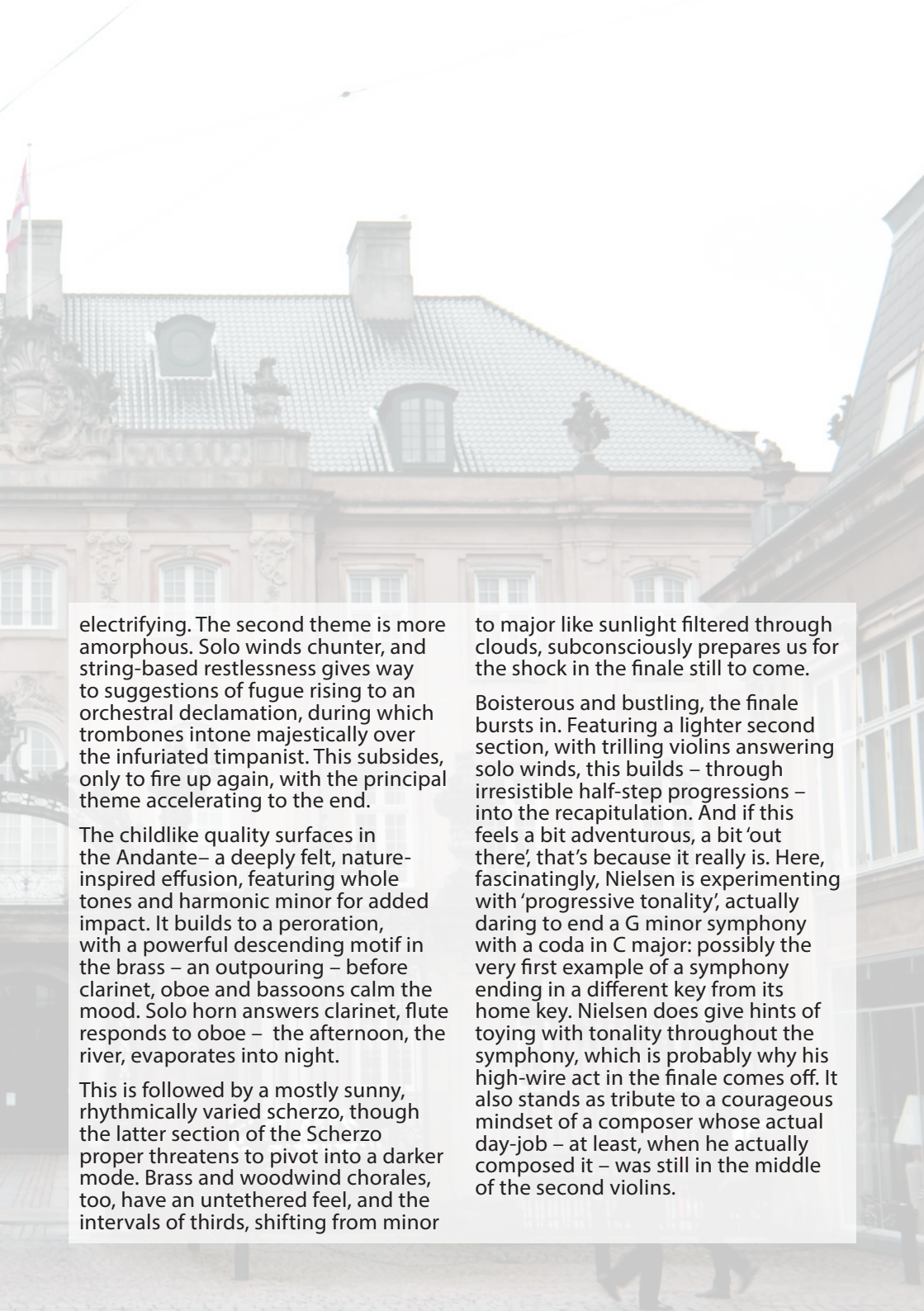
**Finale: Allegro con fuoco**

Carl Nielsen was a Danish composer whose star has continued to rise from the middle of the last century. A second violinist by profession, he was thrilled, in 1892, to win a scholarship allowing him to study composition for a couple of years, to develop his ideas and to extend his contacts. Nielsen's six symphonies are considered seminal to the development of the form but at the premiere of his First he accepted the composer's curtain call from his seat in the orchestra. Despite such modesty, his First makes an emphatic and persuasive statement of intent.

He had conceived it as describing, 'From earth you have come; to earth you shall return', though there's no actual programme to it. There's a hint of Schumann at his most swaggering

in the first and fourth movements, and some homage to Berlioz – another born rule-breaker. It is muscular rather than overtly romantic: Nielsen detested fussily romantic music as much as gratuitous effects. (His idiosyncratic designation for the first movement of 'orgoglioso' – 'proudly' – was once erroneously translated as 'organ-like' – which amused him a good deal.) Thoroughly classical in terms of form, some have also considered Nielsen influenced by Johan Svendsen, who conducted its première in 1894. Yet in his review of the performance, the critic Charles Kjerulf, described it admiringly as 'a child playing with dynamite'.

The dynamite is perhaps most obvious in the compact, rhythmical units of the first movement, which carries a near-Beethovenian punch. (In fact Nielsen, an ardent fan, had recently challenged himself to write out Beethoven's Fifth first movement score from memory.) The grandeur of Nielsen's ignition, complete with brass and timpani, is



electrifying. The second theme is more amorphous. Solo winds chunter, and string-based restlessness gives way to suggestions of fugue rising to an orchestral declamation, during which trombones intone majestically over the infuriated timpanist. This subsides, only to fire up again, with the principal theme accelerating to the end.

The childlike quality surfaces in the Andante – a deeply felt, nature-inspired effusion, featuring whole tones and harmonic minor for added impact. It builds to a peroration, with a powerful descending motif in the brass – an outpouring – before clarinet, oboe and bassoons calm the mood. Solo horn answers clarinet, flute responds to oboe – the afternoon, the river, evaporates into night.

This is followed by a mostly sunny, rhythmically varied scherzo, though the latter section of the Scherzo proper threatens to pivot into a darker mode. Brass and woodwind chorales, too, have an untethered feel, and the intervals of thirds, shifting from minor

to major like sunlight filtered through clouds, subconsciously prepares us for the shock in the finale still to come.

Boisterous and bustling, the finale bursts in. Featuring a lighter second section, with trilling violins answering solo winds, this builds – through irresistible half-step progressions – into the recapitulation. And if this feels a bit adventurous, a bit ‘out there’, that’s because it really is. Here, fascinatingly, Nielsen is experimenting with ‘progressive tonality’, actually daring to end a G minor symphony with a coda in C major: possibly the very first example of a symphony ending in a different key from its home key. Nielsen does give hints of toying with tonality throughout the symphony, which is probably why his high-wire act in the finale comes off. It also stands as tribute to a courageous mindset of a composer whose actual day-job – at least, when he actually composed it – was still in the middle of the second violins.

# Edward Elgar 1857 - 1934

## Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 61

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SEASON - 1955-1956

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NOTES - - - PRICE 6s.

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*'My idea is that there is music in the air, music all around us; the world is full of it, and you simply take as much as you require.'* **Edward Elgar**

Elgar, on his violin concerto, *'It's good! Awfully emotional! Too emotional, but I love it.'*

As early as 1890, Elgar attempted a violin concerto, which he destroyed. In 1907 the eminent Fritz Kreisler dared him to try again, saying emphatically in an interview with a major publication: 'If you want to know whom I consider to be the greatest living composer, I say without hesitation Elgar... I say this to please no one; it is my own conviction... I place him on an equal footing with my idols, Beethoven and Brahms.

He is of the same aristocratic family. His invention, his orchestration, his harmony, his grandeur, it is wonderful. And it is all pure, unaffected music. I wish Elgar would write something for the violin.'

The Philharmonic Society agreed, commissioning the Elgar violin concerto in 1909, with Kreisler – its dedicatee – performing brilliantly at its debut. (It is also associated with a quite uncannily glorious performance by the teenage Menuhin.) Though highly regarded and ridiculously beautiful, at fifty minutes – roughly twice the length of his cello concerto – the violin concerto has always been considered difficult, not only to play but simply to programme. Improvisatory, impulsive, by turns virtuosic and nostalgic, it's the Everest of violin concertos.

Exactly who inspired one of Elgar's longest and most passionate works is much debated. His enigmatic inscription: 'Aqui esta encerrada el alma de....' ('Herein is enshrined the soul of...'), is a quotation from the novel Gil Blas. The five dots remain unexplained. The soul enshrined remains anonymous.

Opinions differ over which of Elgar's numerous crushes – both female and male – these five dots refer to. Perhaps likeliest is Alice Stuart-Wortley, a close friend whom he nicknamed 'Windflower'. Elgar once wrote to her mentioning 'our' concerto – he also referred to one of its many glorious themes as the 'Windflower' theme. However, Elgar's first love, Helen Weaver, to whom he was briefly engaged, is also a contender – while his wife maintained that it was inspired by his close American friend, Julia "Pippa" Worthington. Finally, Elgar's biographer, Jerrold Northrop Moore, wrote that 'enshrined in each movement of the concerto are both a living inspiration and a ghost: Alice



Stuart-Wortley and Helen Weaver in the first movement; Elgar's wife and his mother in the second; and in the finale, Billy Reed and August Jaeger. So it's anybody's guess!

The orchestra opens with strong hints of the glories to come. Six luxuriant themes overlap in a flow of effortless orchestral inspiration – reminding me of the famous photo of the First Symphony's themes, spread like puzzle pieces across the carpet of Elgar's Malvern home. The violinist enters – finally – in what Michael Kennedy described as, 'one of the most effective and haunting entries by the solo instrument in any concerto.' The soloist rummages through the themes for a while, and then begins to show just what the instrument is capable of. Elgar (himself an excellent player – his violin is also on display in Malvern) worked tirelessly with Fritz Kreisler and with London Symphony Orchestra leader, (and one-time conductor of Bromley Symphony Orchestra), Billy Reed. His goal: to push both soloist and violin to the limits of the technically possible.

Eventually, the movement quietens into a supple theme with simple accompaniment, after which the soloist provokes the orchestra to a virtuosic tutti in its own right. The soloist returns once the brass's tumult is spent, exploring the violin from the lowest to the highest possible register. Solo winds intervene with a rather dreamlike section, overruled by the violinist, who blasts through to the end. What could possibly follow a movement with every conceivable technical and musical challenge included, barring the kitchen sink?...

Elgar goes deeper. The second movement is set in the (completely unrelated) B-flat major key, and with the orchestra in a mood of bucolic serenity – which doesn't last. Again the violin emerges rather than enters, as part of the texture, or as if it had been playing beneath the orchestra all along.

The Malvernian landscape darkens to ominous pitch before the violinist, from the depths of his G-string, unearths a glowing theme of mingled solace and lament: an evocation of lost beauty and of existential despair. This is music of unsurpassable eloquence, sorrow and longing. And when the wistful opening theme returns, we find ourselves in a transformed landscape: nothing feels as it did before.

The finale opens tumultuously, as if Elgar has reminded himself to make both soloist and orchestra sweat for their livings. A second theme of notable grandeur follows, but the violinist prefers to indulge in feathery scales, double-stops and scherzo-esque frivolity.

Suddenly, the rhythmic impetus slips sideways; we're in a shadow-world instead. (Something rather similar – and still eerier – occurs near the end of the Enigma Variations.) Here, an accompanied cadenza emerges — one entirely lacking in the usual pyrotechnics. Instead, the cadenza represents the kernel of the entire work. The strings strum almost inaudibly, guitarlike, providing a skimming backdrop, while the soloist... remembers.

Themes from earlier in the concerto are thumbed over like sepia photographs. (H.C. Colles: 'Elgar dwells on his themes as though he could not bear to say good-bye to them, lest he should lose the soul enshrined therein!') The haze of memory flickers... the violinist is ascending from earth into the violinistic stratosphere. And at the conclusion, when all these watercolour memories coalesce in a great sunset glow, the first movement's rich-toned horn notes are transformed, in triumph, from the original minor to major over ecstatic violin figuration... leaving us standing on the summit, stupefied by the beauty all around.

# Bromley Symphony Orchestra

Bromley Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1918 by Miss Beatrice Fowle and Miss Gwynne Kimpton, teachers at Bromley High School for Girls. Over the years, it has earned a high reputation for concerts of professional standard and has worked with many famous soloists and conductors. Sir Adrian Boult conducted regularly in the 1940s and in 1952 Norman Del Mar took over. Internationally renowned soloists who have performed with the orchestra include Paul Tortelier, John Lill, Dennis Brain, Kathleen Ferrier, Ralph Holmes, Hugh Bean, Emma Johnson, Leslie Howard and Sir Donald McIntyre.

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\*Mike Ibbott  
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Tracey Renwick  
Kathryn Hayman  
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Phil McKerracher  
Jane Ferdinando  
Pete Bicknell

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Tarcisio Dantas  
Penny Longman  
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Claire Dillon  
Ruth Elliott  
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Sarah Clarke

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## NEXT CONCERTS

**Saturday 15th March 2025 7.30pm**

**Schubert** Symphony No 8 Unfinished

**Strauss** Four Last Songs - Soloist Rebecca Hardwick

**Mahler** Symphony No 4

**Saturday 17th May 2025 7.30pm**

**Ravel** Alborado del Gracioso

**Brahms** Double Concerto for violin and cello

Soloists - Thelma and Lionel Handy

**Shostakovitch** Symphony No 5

**Sunday 15th June 2025 5pm**

**Children's Concert**

**Saint-Saëns** Carnival of the Animals

**Kleinsinger** Tubby the Tuba - Narrator Daniel Mays (tbc)

**Richard Brown** Pageant of the Seas

