

PROGRAMME

Schubert Symphony no 8 (*Unfinished*)

Strauss Four Last Songs **Soloist** Rebecca Hardwick

Interval - 20 Minutes
Refreshments are available in the dining hall

Mahler Symphony No 4

Unauthorised audio or video recording is not permitted

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, Berloz 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.

Franz Schubert 1797-1828 Symphony No 8 - Unfinished



My compositions spring from my sorrows. Those that give the world the greatest delight were born of my deepest griefs.

Franz Schubert

The whole (first) movement is a melodic stream so crystal clear, despite its force and genius, that one can see every pebble on the bottom. And everywhere the same warmth, the same bright, life-giving sunshine!... The tonal beauty of the second movement is fascinating. With a few horn figurations and a clarinet or oboe solo, Schubert achieves effects which no Wagnerian instrumentation could capture.'

Eduard Hanslick

There are any number of theories about why Schubert's 'Unfinished' – as tuneful, moving and beloved as his 'great' C major – is incomplete. He left nine bars of a Scherzo; while

many believe that the entr'acte from his incidental music to Rosamunde to have been based on sketches for a finale.

Depression, self-criticism, syphilis and 'imposter syndrome' with regard to Beethoven have all been suggested. I prefer the Alfred Einstein school of thought. As he wrote: 'Schubert could never have finished the work – for nothing could approach the originality, power, and skill of the first two movements.' In other words, the 'Unfinished' is perfectly complete, just as it is.

When he wrote it, Schubert was only 25, and almost penniless. One of only five children out of fourteen to survive, he'd been a member of the famous Vienna Boys Choir, but failed to win a follow-up scholarship once his voice broke. Once he returned home, his father – a rather bitter cellist

 urged him to pursue any other profession. (Luckily, Schubert was unpersuadable.)

He might have sometimes wondered if his father had been right. At 25, when composing his 'Unfinished', Schubert was sleeping on friends' couches, and playing background music in a string guartet. He died, of course, only six years later, still mostly unknown. He probably did suffer from depression. As he wrote, 'When all hopes of recognition or honour have faded into distant memory, when purity of heart meets sorrow of mind, when all the world seems to walk in blindness and yet a man works without wearying for that which he loves... only in this moment is passion truly understood...No one feels another's grief, no one understands another's joy. People imagine they can reach one another. In reality they only pass each other by.'

The 'Unfinished' might even have been lost had not Schubert passed a copy to his brother Anselm.

Anselm – whose maid almost used its score to nurture a fire – took several decades before sharing it with the conductor Johann von Herbeck in 1865. Thanks to Herbeck, forty-three years after Schubert had 'finished' it, his masterfully unfinished 'Unfinished' finally entered the repertoire.

Why did Anselm hold back? He must have rated the work highly, having himself arranged it for two pianos. One reason might have been opportunism: by 1860, Schubert was finally enjoying a posthumous 'moment'. It might even have been jealousy. After all, Herbeck only obtained Anselm's

permission to debut his late brother's 'Unfinished' by promising to programme one of Anselm's own overtures as well. (History records nothing of the overture. The 'Unfinished' went down a storm!)

The first movement, marked allegro moderato, opens with darkly mysterious brooding in the lower strings, then a ravishing duo for oboe and clarinet. After a powerful section, the cellos introduce the famous waltz-like second theme. Suddenly, shockingly, the movement crashes to a halt (see the Mahler, later on!) The famous melody returns, though clearly broken. The development section is turbulent: a massive struggle between gentleness and violence ensues. The first theme grows in stature, but the violins prefer the second – again torpedoed by the brass. The recapitulation follows, capped by a short Coda, amounting to a gut punch.

The Andante at first appears to offers sweet relief from all disquiet: yearning and tenderness prevail. But yet again, Schubert whips up a contrapuntal storm. When all the dust is cleared away, there is serenity, resignation, resolution, and – a stroke of genius – a great wash of E major.

A world away from B minor, it is clear, balanced, rounded-off, and perfectly – finished.

Rebecca Hardwick Soprano



Rebecca Hardwick is based in London and is known for her versatility and strength of musicianship.

Her recent concert highlights include Verdi Requiem with the English Festival Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall, and both Verdi and Brahms Requiem in Cadogan Hall. Rebecca performed in both the premiere and revival of Salvatore Sciarrino's Venere e Adone at Staatsoper Hamburg.

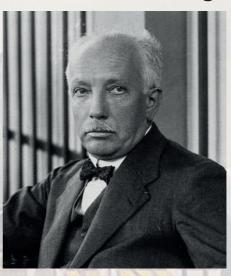
Operatic highlights include Violetta La Traviata, Zerbinetta Ariadne auf Naxos, Isabella L'inganno Felice (Rossini, Wexford Festival Opera) cover Belinda Dido's Ghost (Errolyn Wallen, Dunedin Consort), Dot/ Day The Enchanted Pig (Jonathon Dove, Hampstead Garden Opera). For Opera Holland Park; Una Conversa (Suor Angelica), La Cugina (Madame Butterfly), Victorian in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (Will Todd, also Lindbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House). Recent concert appearances include Bach St John Passion at the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester Cathedral, Haydn Creation in the Southern Cathedrals Festival in Salisbury Cathedral, and Brahms Requiem in Worcester Cathedral.

Rebecca is a member of the Hampstead Collective, with whom she has performed in a variety of concerts including song recitals of Strauss Brentano Lieder and Howells In Green Ways, Mozart Exsultate Jubilate and J. S. Bach Weinachtsoratorium with the Players of the Hampstead Collective, and Couperin Leçons de ténèbres with viola da gamba and theorbo.

Rebecca is an advocate for contemporary repertoire, and has performed Schoenberg Pierrot Lunaire at the RCM, Stockhausen In the sky in Germany and the UK, Thomas Adès Five Eliot Landscapes and Life Story at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. She is currently a doctoral candidate at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, studying György Kurtág Kafka Fragments.

Rebecca read Music at the University of York, before studying at the Royal College of Music with Tim Evans Jones. She then completed the Opera Works course at English National Opera, and was an Apprentice with the Monteverdi Choir.

Richard Strauss 1864-1949 Four Last Songs



I. Frühling II. September III. Beim Schlafengehen IV. Im Abendrot

As Strauss confided on his deathbed: 'Death is just as I wrote it.'

Strauss possessed an infuriating tendency to appear uncommitted, aloof, and above politics. Though he loathed the Nazis, in 1945 he moved to Switzerland, having been unjustly accused of having collaborated with them. Instead, typically, he had done nothing, or almost nothing. He had – reluctantly – accepted an honour from the Nazi regime – but his only motive was to protect his Jewish daughter-in-law from probable death in a concentration

camp (an aim he achieved). When he eventually – perhaps rashly, perhaps bravely – expressed his contempt for Hitler, he was summarily fired. In Switzerland, post-war, by this point in his mid-eighties, Strauss was unwell, depressed and considered past it, compared to Stravinsky, Schoenberg etc. Growing impatient with his father's gloom, his son Franz urged him to attempt a lieder. A book of Herman Hesse's poetry – a tribute from a fan – has also

been credited with rousing the ailing Strauss to one last effort. He composed his immortal Four Last Songs in 1948, the year before his death. He never lived to hear it performed.

Though she had long since retired, he might have had his wife's voice in mind. Pauline de Ahna had been a famous soprano and – though equally famous for tempestuousness - their marriage had been a great success. Strauss once summed her up as, 'very complex, very feminine, a little perverse, a little coquettish!' She undoubtedly inspired others of his works, including Ein Heldenleben, Symphonia Domestica, and the opera Capriccio. It's possible, too, that the prominence of the solo horn is in tribute to the memory of his late father, a well-known horn player.

1. Frühling

In dämmrigen Grüften träumte ich lang / von deinen Bäumen und blauen Lüften, von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.

Nun liegst du erschlossen in Gleiß und Zier von Licht übergossen wie ein Wunder vor mir.

Du kennst mich wieder, du lockst mich zart, es zittert durch all meine Glieder deine selige Gegenwart!

1. Spring

In shaded grottoes
I dreamt long
of your trees and blue skies,
of your scents and birdsong.

Now you lie revealed in glistening finery, bathed in light like a miracle before me.

You recognize me, you beckon me tenderly. All my limbs quiver in your presence blissfully!

The appeal of Hesse's poem is immediate, Strauss's music springs from it. After a long winter in 'shaded caverns', a glorious Spring unfurls – a spring the composer perhaps, had never thought to see. There are breezes in the strings, trickling waterfalls in the clarinet; sprinkled wildflowers stud the turf. The soprano leans into bright Spring like a lover, cluttered with butterflies.

2. September

Der Garten trauert, kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen. / Der Sommer schauert still seinem Ende entgegen.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum. Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt In den sterbenden Gartentraum.

Lange noch bei den Rosen bleibt er stehen, sehnt sich nach Ruh. / Langsam tut er die (großen) müdgewordnen Augen zu.

2. September

The garden is in mourning, cool rain seeps into the flowers. Summer quietly shudders, relinquishing his power.

Leaf after golden leaf falls from under the tall acacia tree. Summer smiles, amazed and frail, at his dying garden dream.

Long beside the roses he lingers, yearning for repose. Slowly his heavy eyes grow weary, droop and close.

A garden mourns the end of summer where the last roses may linger but the leaves are turning sere. The soprano floats nostalgically above the rich-hued orchestra, firing one of the most eloquent violin solos ever composed. Under a soft sea of horns, the violin crests, comforting, consoling. The soprano resumes, in exquisite conjunction with all firsts and solo horn, till the last rose petal falls.

3. Beim Schlafengehen

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht, soll mein sehnliches Verlangen freundlich die gestirnte Nacht wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.

Hände, laßt von allem Tun, Stirn, vergiß du alles Denken. Alle meine Sinne nun / wollen sich in Schlummer senken.

Und die Seele, unbewacht, will in freien Flügen schweben, um im Zauberkreis der Nacht tief und tausendfach zu leben.

3. Falling Asleep

Now that the day has wearied me, shall my ardent desires welcome the starry night like a child grown tired.

Hands, abandon all your work. Brow, forget your thinking. All my senses now would fall into slumber, sinking.

And my soul, unguarded, will float upwards freely into the magic sphere of night to live a thousandfold deeply.

Exhaustion seeps from the singer, longing to 'float freely' and unfold herself in sleep. The 'magic circle of the night' unfurls in the flutes – there are evening cries of birds, a harp undertow. Violins climb down from the clouds, the cellos rise to meet them. The 'unguarded spirit' soars free on the soft winds of childhood. The solo horn – a father? – sings a tender, tenor benediction.

4. Im Abendrot

Wir sind durch Not und Freude gegangen Hand in Hand; vom Wandern ruhen wir (beide) nun überm stillen Land. Rings sich die Täler neigen, es dunkelt schon die Luft. Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen nachträumend in den Duft. Tritt her und laß sie schwirren, bald ist es Schlafenszeit. Daß wir uns nicht verirren in dieser Einsamkeit. O weiter, stiller Friede! So tief im Abendrot. Wie sind wir wandermüde--Ist dies etwa der Tod?

4. At sunset

We have gone through sorrow and joy / together hand in hand; Now we rest from wandering above the tranquil land. Around us slope the valleys, the air is growing dimmer. Two skylarks rise upwards dreamily in the fragrant air. Come here and let them flutter, soon it is time for sleep. Let us not lose our way in this solitude so deep. O spacious, tranquil peace! So steeped in sunset's breath. How tired we are of wanderingcould this perhaps be death?

It's impossible not to imagine this not being Strauss and his wife – the pair of horns – as being the two who 'through trouble and joy have walked hand in hand' – finally achieving the 'spacious, tranquil peace' of near-death.

Tellingly, Strauss altered the very last line from 'Is that perhaps death?' to 'Is this perhaps death?' Driving the point home, after the soprano sings 'death' (Tod) so exquisitely, Strauss inserts a quotation from his Tod und Verklärung (Death and Transfiguration), the theme about which he wrote, 'The hour of death approaches, the soul leaves the body to gloriously achieve in everlasting space those things which could not be fulfilled here below.'

In the last of The Four Last Songs, luxuriant textures pave the way for the soprano in a lower register, less aspirational than previously ('soon it will be time to sleep'). The flutes/larks decorate her longer lines... the leader reminiscences. Twin horns pull closed the shutters against the night, as the light fails and the last birds fly away.

Gustav Mahler 1857 - 1934

Symphony No 4

- Sehr behaglich. »Wir genießen die himmlischen Freuden
- Bedächtig. Nicht eilen Recht gemächlich
- 3. In gemächlicher Bewegung. Ohne Hast
- 4. Ruhevoll (Poco adagio)

'If you think you're boring your audience, go slower not faster.'

'I don't choose what I compose. It chooses me.'

'Don't bother looking at the view – I have already composed it.'

Gustav Mahler

From 1897 to 1900, Mahler – overworked and underappreciated – composed almost nothing. His first three symphonies were rarely performed, while his summer vacations in the Alps had become so unproductive that he began to fear that – partly thanks to the demands of his conducting career – he was washed-up.

Directing the famous Vienna opera orchestra was not all jam. Born into a Moravian Jewish family, Mahler had been obliged to convert to Catholicism to even be considered for the post. And, while this satisfied the Kaiser, it failed to placate Vienna's famously anti-Semitic critics.

Determined to compose a fourth symphony, Mahler boldly commissioned the construction of, not only an Alpine house, but also a leafy conductor's hut in its grounds. This worked. Midflow, in July 1900, he compared his new symphony to the 'uniform blue of the sky.'Though he also wrote, more forebodingly, to his wife Alma, 'My Fourth ... is all humour, naïvety, etc. It is that part of me which is still the hardest for you to accept!'



His shortest symphony and his most lightly scored, Mahler's Fourth is the epitome of gemütlichkeit ('coziness' or 'belonging.') It has, in places, a delightfully domestic feel, a sense of melody almost Schubertian. (Fascinatingly, that same summer Mahler played through most of Schubert's works.)

He was equally captivated by the trendy German passion for folk verse. Back in the early 1800s, a pair of poets published three volumes of nothing else, called Des Knaben Wunderhorn (The Boy's Wondrous Horn). They doubtless never imagined that folk verse would still be trending in German art some decades later.

Mahler adored it. As Bruno Walter put it: 'Everything that moved Mahler was there – nature, piety, longing, love, parting, night, the world of spirits, the tale of the mercenaries, the joy of youth, childhood, jokes, quirks of humor all pour out as in his songs.' Mahler's first four symphonies – nicknamed the 'Wunderhorn symphonies – were largely inspired by the collection.

For the first time, Mahler refused to provide programmatic descriptions for this symphony ('I know the most wonderful names for the movements, but I will not betray them to the rabble of critics, lest they subject them to banal misunderstandings and distortions,' he wrote.)

Given the vicious reception that his Fourth endured, this might've been a good call. As the youthful William Ritter recalled, 'Something was up...We all felt it at once. This symphony spelt danger.' There was no shortage of complaints. Mahler's Schubertian allusions were blasted as lacking originality, while some passages were decried as vulgar, even sexually suggestive. One reviewer described the symphony as 'a shapeless stylistic monstrosity that collapses under a surfeit of witty details. For another, it was sheer 'ear torture.' Yet another: 'a monstrous joke.' Nor was it only the Viennese 'rabble' of critics who had it in for Mahler. A New York critic in 1904 described the Fourth as 'a drooling and emasculated musical monstrosity.' But a few critics got it. As Arthur Seidl, wrote, 'Mahler contemplates the immensity of nature with a really religious fervour; he is inexorably drawn toward the enigma of existence.

In the first movement, one Schubertian melody follows another in what Mahler himself described as, 'a dewdrop on a flower, suddenly illuminated by the sun, bursts into a thousand lights and colours.'

The 'sleighbells' make their first appearance early on, along with a limpid theme for cellos and violins. The second motto announces the development, which is rich not only in fragmentation of earlier themes but in completely new material, the most prominent featuring the flutes. The drama builds until the recapitulation, which is provocatively unusual: the expected sleighbells return, but disjointedly, amid a maverick

violin solo, an assertive horn solo and sturdy grumbling in the bassoons. The brass tension builds and builds until – suddenly – the movement comes to a grinding halt. As Mahler put it: 'The atmosphere darkens and grows strangely terrifying. Not that the sky itself clouds over: it goes on shining with its everlasting blue. But we suddenly become afraid of it, just as on a beautiful day in the sun-dappled forest one is often overcome by a panic terror.'

After the hiatus, we return to the blithebut-with-an-edge style of the opening – mid-phrase, as if the children had been playing, unnoticed, throughout the movement. It ends with a sense of lullaby, and a little burst of childish laughter.

The scherzo here is quite thrillingly mad. For a start, if you were wondering why our leader carried on two violins, one of these is mistuned up a whole step. Not only that, but Mahler's instructions are to play the mistuned violin 'like a medieval fiddle' – probably meaning rustically.

The violins begin, and a vaguely inebriated section with disorderly woodwinds follows, amid sardonic clarinet commentary. Then the principal horn - showcased throughout as much as the solo violin – flicks the music into a more minor, even macabre, mode. As Alma Mahler explained, this section was influenced by a painting ('Mahler was under the spell of the self-portrait by Arnold Böcklin, in which Death fiddles into the painter's ear while the latter sits. entranced:) Mahler's original notes also mention 'Friend Hein' - Hein being an allegorical medieval violinist - a vicious, Pied-Piper-esque figure – who led his victims dancing to their deaths.

Of course, the Scherzo isn't all devilish Pied Pipers, will-o-wisps, warped violins and dancing skeletons. Interspersed between are the dreamily beautiful, almost hypnotic Trio sections – spiced with harp – which Mahler described as 'musical spiders' webs'.

However, the end sees the solo winds' moods turn wild and manic again, and the triumph of the eerie violin.

Mahler's stunning slow movement again has two moods, which alternate: A-B-A-B-A. The first glows, the second suffers. First, juicy divided cellos in G major hand over to the violins... Then there's a deeply-felt oboe solo, endorsed by horns. Ethereal, the music skies ever higher, opening out with bassoons and solo harp into what amounts to a huge Amen.

The solo oboe first introduces, and then dominates, a more plangent E minor theme, a theme with an ominous edge. This culminates in a cataclysmic crisis, starring a wildly high solo horn (our horn principal, Roy Banks, having a very big night!).

The ever-genial cello section guides the orchestra back to tranquillity. However, Cor Anglais and solo oboe interrupt with a Jewish lament – which spirals, accelerating the entire orchestra into a soul-destroying crash, representing the gates of heaven. Clarinets ominously raise their bells... the strings, from top to bottom, are in desperation mode. (Here, apparently Mahler flirted with the idea of adding trombones which, along with the tuba, are not used.)

The clouds finally part for a cello-led waltz-like section, a horn chorale, and finally an angelic horns/ violins collaboration. But it still isn't over. The timpanist and tutti orchestra have one last glow of joyfulness before the true close, which is deeply satisfying, again with solo horn. It's as if Mahler, while bestriding the Alps, has found a view that he simply can't bear to leave.

The exquisite finale is where all this evocation of nature, spirit and childhood has been heading (it was the first movement Mahler wrote). The soprano rises, surrounded by soft E major and

sleighbells. And then she sings.

Mahler instructs the singer, 'Sing with childlike cheerful expression – and absolutely without parody!' – meaning without subtext or pretence. In the poem, the child's vision of heaven begins joyfully, almost gleefully.

'No worldly tumult is to be heard in heaven

All live in greatest peace We lead angelic lives

Yet have a merry time of it besides' Darkness enters briefly:

John lets out the little lamb

Herod the butcher lies in wait for it We lead a patient innocent, patient darling little lamb to its death...

Saint Luke slaughters the ox Without any thought or concern...'

However, the child's cheerful vision is quickly restored:

'Good greens of every sort grow in the heavenly vegetable path... and gardeners who allow everything...

There is just no music on earth That can compare to ours...'

In the end, the child skips into the distance, leaving tiny resonant bells from the harp, supported only by double basses playing ppp. Really, it's unsurprising that small-minded reviewers couldn't get their heads around Mahler's Fourth! After all that – orchestral fire and passion, a misshapen violin impersonating a dervish, screenshots of sonorous Alpine scenery – how could it wind up with a child chirruping about King Herod (in heaven, improbably) slaughtering little lambkins?

It has absolutely no right to work – still, it works brilliantly. This symphony, like Schubert's finished 'Unfinished', could end in no other way.

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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Ruth Elliott
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Claire Dillon Richard Miscampbell Penny Longman

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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

