

RNCM

14 / 01 / 18

Sunday 14 January 2018



RNCM STRINGS FESTIVAL PROGRAMME

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RNCM STRINGS FESTIVAL

THE HALLÉ FEATURING STUDENTS FROM THE RNCM

William Walton Viola Concerto* (27')

Edward Elgar Introduction and Allegro Op 47 (14')

Interval (20')

Benjamin Britten Violin Concerto in D minor Op 15 (31')

Veit Hertenstein *viola*

Alexander Sitkovetsky *violin*

Sir Mark Elder, Sergej Bolkhovets* *conductors*

Patron Her Majesty The Queen
President Sir John Tomlinson CBE
Principal Professor Linda Merrick
Chairman Nick Prettejohn

To enhance everyone's experience of this event please try to stifle coughs and sneezes, avoid unwrapping sweets during the performance and switch off mobile phones, pagers and digital alarms. Please do not take photographs or video in the venue. Latecomers will not be admitted until a suitable break in the programme, or at the first interval, whichever is the more appropriate.

The RNCM reserves the right to change artists and/or programmes as necessary.
The RNCM reserves the right of admission.



William Walton

Viola Concerto

- i. *Andante comodo*
- ii. *Vivo, con moto preciso*
- iii. *Allegro moderato*

ABOUT THE COMPOSER
Born: 1902
Died: 1983
Nationality: British

William Walton's reputation has suffered somewhat over the years from the fact that his career was sandwiched between those of Elgar and Britten, and he has never quite achieved the notoriety of either. However, he did write a handful of works that can justifiably be named among the greats of the 20th century – such as the cantata *Belshazzar's Feast* and his Symphony No 1. He also won commissions from some of the biggest-name performers of his day, including violinist Jascha Heifetz and cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. Walton's style is unashamedly Romantic, expressive and lyrical, qualities that drew harsh reviews from music critics during his lifetime, when the fashion was all about modernism. Born into a wealthy family in Oldham, he dropped out of Oxford University but later enjoyed professional success in London and spent a large part of his later life living in Italy.

About the music

Walton's is probably the most popular modern viola concerto, a reflective and subtle piece that provides the ideal showcase for instrument's warm, sonorous tone and weaves it expertly into the texture of the orchestra. The concerto didn't get the best start in life, though – Walton originally wrote it for the virtuoso violist

Lionel Tertis, on the suggestion of conductor Thomas Beecham, but Tertis rejected it (he later suggested in his autobiography that he regretted the decision, and that he 'had not learnt to appreciate Walton's style'). The première was in fact given by Paul Hindemith in 1929. The viola concerto is a prime example of Walton's preference for Romantic melodies, large intervals and intense harmonies. It begins with a haunting *Andante*, followed by a brusque, angular *Scherzo*, and concludes with a sweeping finale in the style of Elgar, the composer with whom Walton is most often associated.

Did you know...

Walton was exempted from military service during the Second World War on the understanding that he would compose music for war propaganda films. He wrote scores for six films during the war.

'It's just as difficult to overcome success as it is to overcome failure'
William Walton

Edward Elgar

Introduction and Allegro Op 47

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Born: 1857

Died: 1934

Nationality: British

There is a certain irony in the fact that Edward Elgar tends to be regarded as the most quintessentially English composer. In fact, compared with most of his English contemporaries, Elgar had a notable tendency to embrace and adopt the styles of other European composers – the influence of Wagner can be heard in his oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius*, for example, and his late chamber music contains distinct elements of Brahms. But, perhaps thanks to his reputation as a lover of the English countryside, and the patriotism of his works during the war years, the image of the hill-walking, pipe-smoking English gentleman prevails. Largely self-taught until adulthood, Elgar nevertheless managed to become one of the most accomplished masters of orchestral writing of his day, producing gems such as the Cello Concerto as well as a duo of symphonies that are still performed all over the world.

About the music

Composed in 1905 to showcase the string players of the newly formed London Symphony Orchestra (LSO), the *Introduction and Allegro* is Elgar's most ambitious work for strings. According to the composer, the inspiration behind it was a folk tune he heard while on holiday in Wales. The piece is, however, much more than just a folk tune, as he

explained on a postcard to his friend Jaeger: *'I'm doing that string thing [...] no working out part but a devil of a fugue instead [...] with all sorts of japes & counterpoint.'* It also features an interesting lineup: the combination of a 'competing' string quartet and string orchestra was quite unusual at the time, and went on to inspire many of Elgar's contemporaries. In the end, the strings of the LSO were unable to perform the work because of limited rehearsal time, but it has nevertheless gone on to claim a firm spot in the repertoire.

Did you know...

Music was not Elgar's only talent. He was also a keen chemist, who kept a small laboratory at his Hereford house, Plas Gwyn.

'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

Benjamin Britten

Violin Concerto in D minor Op 15

- i. *Moderato con moto – Agitato – Tempo primo*
- ii. *Vivace – Animando – Largamente – Cadenza*
- iii. *Passacaglia: Andante lento (Un poco meno mosso)*

Britten was a central figure in 20th-century British music and arguably the most important British composer since Purcell. He devoted much of his life to working with young people and some of his critics accused him of failing to ever really grow up, maintaining a childlike, black-and-white view of the world. But it was his extensive work with young people and amateur musicians that led Britten to specialise in music involving a theatrical element and ultimately shaped his pioneering approach to opera. His most celebrated works include the operas *Peter Grimes*, *Billy Budd* and *The Turn of the Screw*, all of which focus on a central character who is an outsider and has been marginalised by society. Britten was something of an outsider himself: he was a conscientious objector and also maintained a homosexual relationship – with his great friend and musical collaborator, the tenor Peter Pears – at a time when homosexuality was still illegal.

About the music

Britten's Violin Concerto is not one of his best-known works; nor is it one of the world's best-known violin concertos. It has suffered partly because of the fact that it was published during the 1930s, a

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Born: 1913

Died: 1976

Nationality: British

decade in which several composers (Stravinsky, Bartók, Berg, Prokofiev, etc) wrote great concertos for the instrument. Conceived in 1938 – 39, when Britten was 25, it was inspired partly by the brutalities of the Spanish Civil War and the tensions which would lead to the outbreak of the First World War. Perhaps because of this, it is predominantly heavy and serious in character – from the ominous rumblings of the timpani at the very beginning to the spiky, dramatic Scherzo, and the eventual restlessness of the finale, which never fully settles into major or minor. The work is at times reminiscent of Shostakovich's First Violin Concerto, though that was not published until almost a decade later.

Did you know...

Britten was born on 22 November, the feast day of Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of musicians.

'It is cruel, you know, that music should be so beautiful. It has the beauty of loneliness of pain: of strength and freedom. The beauty of disappointment and never-satisfied love'

Benjamin Britten

BIOGRAPHIES

Sir Mark Elder CBE (conductor)



Sir Mark Elder is Music Director of the Hallé and the RNCM's International Chair in Conducting. He works regularly with the world's leading symphony orchestras and, in the UK, enjoys close associations with both the London Philharmonic and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. In the USA he has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, his most recent project for whom was a three-week Dvořák Festival in June 2009. He appears frequently in many of the most prominent international opera houses, including Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera New York, and the Opéra National de Paris and was the first British conductor to conduct a new production at the Bayreuth Festival.

Sir Mark has made many recordings with orchestras including the Hallé (on the Hallé's own label), LPO, CBSO, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the OAE, ROH and ENO. He has been involved in several TV projects including a film on the life and music of Verdi for BBC TV and a similar project on Donizetti for German television. In September 2006 he conducted the internationally televised Last Night of the Proms.

Recent and forthcoming guest engagements also include the Berlin Philharmonic, the Munich Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the London Symphony, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Russian National Orchestra and the Budapest Festival Orchestra.

Sir Mark was awarded the CBE in 1989 and knighted in 2008. He was made a Companion of the RNCM in 2016.

Veit Hertenstein (viola)

German violist Veit Hertenstein plays with *'admirable precision, dedication and strong musical expression'* (Augsburger Allgemeine, 2013) as well as *'maturity, technique, thoughtful musicianship, and a tone of dark honey'* (The Boston Musical Intelligencer, 2013).

Hertenstein is Professor for Viola at the RNCM and at the Musikhochschule Detmold in Germany, and is a member of the Orion String Trio.

Hertenstein has been invited to the Marlboro Music Festival, the Seiji Ozawa International Music Academy, the Viola Space Festival Tokyo, Menuhin Festival in Gstaad and the Verbier Festival, where he was awarded the 'Henri Louis de la Grange' viola prize. He has also been invited on numerous occasions to the La Folle Journée Festival in Nantes and Tokyo.

As a chamber musician he has collaborated with Trio Wanderer, the Modigliani and Ysaye Quartets, Brigitte Engerer, Valentin Erben (Alban Berg String Quartet) and Midori.

In the US Hertenstein has performed in concert halls such as The Merkin Hall, New York and at The Kennedy Center in Washington DC after winning First Prize as well as eight performance prizes in the Young Concert Artists International Auditions 2011 in New York City.

In 2009 Hertenstein was the first violist to win the New Talent Competition of the European Broadcasting Union in Slovakia founded by Yehudi Menuhin, which was followed by world-wide radio broadcasts, and was a prize-winner at the first Tokyo International Viola Competition. In 2007 he was the first violist to win First Prize at the Orpheus Competition in Zurich, Switzerland.

Pro Helvetia commissioned a Viola Concerto by Swiss composer Nicolas Bolens which was premiered in Geneva 2014.

From 2011 until 2017 Hertenstein was Principal Violist with the Basel Symphony Orchestra in Switzerland.



Alexander Sitkovetsky (violin)

Alexander Sitkovetsky made his concerto début at the age of eight and in the same year joined the Menuhin School. Lord Menuhin was an inspiration throughout his school years and they performed together on several occasions.

Alexander has performed with leading orchestras worldwide, including the Netherlands Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, English Chamber, Konzerthaus, Brussels Philharmonic, European Union Chamber, Malmo Symphony, Academy of St Martin's in the Fields, Moscow Chamber, Mulhouse Symphony, Stuttgart Chamber, St Petersburg Symphony, Welsh National Opera and the BBC Concert Orchestra. Conductors he has worked with include Sir Mark Elder, Yakov Kreizberg, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Denis Russell Davies, Andrew Sewell, Alexander Dmitriev, George Hanson and Joseph Swensen.

He has recorded for Angel/EMI, Decca, Orfeo, Onyx and Avanti Classics including the Bach Double Concerto with Julia Fischer. Since 2012, Alexander and Julia have performed in a string quartet project, meeting once a year to play in some of Europe's most prestigious venues.

In 2011, Alexander won First Prize at the Trio di Trieste Duo Competition with pianist Wu Qian, with whom he subsequently embarked on a concert tour in Italy as well as a recital at the Weill Hall in Carnegie Hall. He has also been accepted into the prestigious Chamber Music Society Two programme at the Lincoln Centre in New York.

Alexander has shared the stage with Janine Jansen, Maxim Rysanov, Alexander Chaushian, Misha Maisky, Natalie Clein, Eric Le Sage, Polina Leschenko, Julian Rachlin, Boris Brovtsyn, and many others. He also performs regularly with the Razumovsky Ensemble and the Ensemble RARO.



Sergej Bolkhovets (conductor)

Sergej Bolkhovets is the RNCM's Junior Fellow in Conducting 2016 - 2018. He graduated from the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music in Berlin as a violinist and began playing with the Berlin Philharmonic at the age of 22. Since the age of 15 he has worked with conductors such as James Levine, Zubin Mehta, Claudio Abbado, Paavo Järvi and Wolfgang Sawalish, and has continued to play as a guest leader with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Frankfurt Opera, Orquestra de Algarve, Gothenburg Symphony, Stockholm Royal Philharmonic, Stockholm Royal Opera and other orchestras in Sweden and Germany.



As a conductor, Sergej has participated in several masterclasses and studied conducting at the Weimar Music Academy and Royal College of Music in Stockholm. Between 2014 and 2016, parallel to his conducting studies, he was Chief Conductor of the student orchestra Vielharmonisches Orchester in Münster, Germany, and has conducted orchestras such as the Jena Philharmonic, Dalasinfonietta, NEO, Västerås Sinfonietta and Gävle Symphony, with which he also performed as a soloist.

Earlier this year he conducted Schumann's Cello Concerto with Norbert Anger - solo cellist of the Dresden Staatskapelle - as well as Rachmaninoff's *Isle of the Dead* and Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony in Marburg. This month he makes his conducting debut at Berlin Philharmonic Hall with Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra.

As a soloist, Sergej holds prizes from several competitions. He has performed over 20 violin concertos with orchestras in Europe and USA, including J Adams, Bach, Beethoven (Solo and Triple), Bottesini (Double), Bruch (1), Brahms (Solo and Double), Dvořák, Mendelssohn (2), Khachaturian, Nielsen, Prokofiev (1 and 2), Schostakovich (1), Sibelius, Tchaikovsky, Vivaldi (Four Seasons) and Vaughan-Williams.

Sergej has 16 years of broad teaching experience. For several years he was a faculty member of the Royal College of Music in Stockholm as well as the Nordic Music High School in Stockholm where he currently continues to teach. He has also given violin masterclasses in Benasque, at the Boston Conservatory, in Tallinn, Estonia and in Stockholm.

The Hallé featuring students from the RNCM

FIRST VIOLINS

Lyn Fletcher
Thomas Balch*
Tiberiu Buta
Katie Payn*
Zoe Colman
Amelia Dew*
Steven Proctor
Sarah Baldwin*
Helen Bridges
Peter Hartley*
Alison Hunt
Wenchun Fan*

SECOND VIOLINS

Philippa Heys
Laura Embrey*
Rosemary Attree
Eleanor Shute*
Eva Petrarca
Jordan Garbutt*
Liz Bosworth
Rebecca Howell*
John Purton
Caroline Fairchild*
Grania Royce
Megan Thompson*

VIOLAS

Julian Mottram
Daire Roberts*
Martin Schäfer
Shujin Yu*
Robert Criswell
Rebecca Stephenson*
Gemma Dunne
John Hird*

CELLOS

Nicholas Trygstad
Harriet Walker*
Clare Rowe
Yuuki Bouterey-Ishido*
Mathieu Foubert
Yukyung Na*
Paul Grennan
Joseph Dawson*

DOUBLE BASSES

Roberto Carrillo-Garcia
Filipe Modaffore Dandalo*
Rachel Meerloo
Matthew Clarkson*
Nathan Knight*

*RNCM Student

FLUTES

Katherine Baker
Sarah Bennett

PICCOLO

Joanne Boddington

OBOES

Stephane Rancourt
Virginia Shaw

CLARINETS

Sergio Castello Lopez
Rosa Campos-Fernandez

BASS CLARINET

James Muirhead

BASOONS

Elena Comelli
Simon Davies

FRENCH HORNS

Laurence Rogers
Jonathan Maloney
Julian Plummer
Richard Bourn
Andrew Maher

TRUMPETS

Gareth Small
Kenneth Brown
Tom Osborne

TENOR TROMBONES

Roz Davies
Elizabeth Bateman

BASS TROMBONE

Kyle MacCorquodale

TUBA

Ewan Easton

TIMPANI

Harry Percy

PERCUSSION

David Hext
Ric Parmigiani

HARP

Marie Leenhardt

RNCM

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