

SEASON 22-23 WHAT'S ON

SAT 10 DEC 2022 7.30PM

SOUNDS OF THE CINEMA
Conductor **CHRIS SWAFFER**

NEW AUDITORIUM,
GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL

SAT 25 MAR 2023 7.30PM

**BEETHOVEN –
SYMPHONY No. 9**
Conductor **STEPHEN BROAD**
with **THE CITY OF GLASGOW
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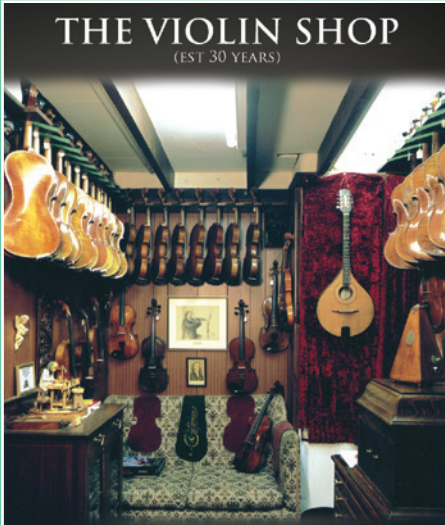
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VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

THE LARK ASCENDING

JOSHUA BROWN

**HARDENED BY
SUN AND AIR**

PREMIERE

SIBELIUS

**SYMPHONY
NO. 7**

Conductor **CHRIS SWAFFER**
Violin **IONA MCDONALD**

SAT 29 OCT 2022 7.30PM

**NEW AUDITORIUM
GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL**

Welcome

to this first concert of our 2022-23 season!

For the past year, we have been taking part in the **Adopt a Music Creator** programme for 2022, one of only six music groups UK wide selected for a year-long collaboration with a music creator.

In January last year we met composer **Josh Brown** for the first time. We received initial sketches soon afterwards and following some experimentation and several workshops, we were delighted to receive the finished piece from Josh for our rehearsals in September. **Tonight, we give the work its premiere, and it is being recorded live for broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in the New Year.**

Our programme includes the ever-popular Lark Ascending by **Ralph Vaughan Williams**, in this 150th anniversary year, and **Iona**

McDonald (daughter of our guest leader Hazel McDonald) plays solo violin. With music by **Wagner** to open and two wonderful pieces by **Jean Sibelius**, we know we have a feast for your ears!

Thank you for coming to hear us tonight and for your support for our music-making – it would not be half as much fun for us without you, the audience, to hear us!

Adopt a Music Creator is run by Making Music in partnership with Sound and Music, and is funded by the PRS Foundation and the Philip & Dorothy Green Music Trust.

Ann Westwood
President

Composer JOSHUA BROWN

Joshua completed his PhD in composition with Professor Philip Grange at the University of Manchester in 2018. From 2019-2020 he was Artist in Residence at the John Rylands Research Institute, and a London Philharmonic Orchestra Young Composer, and since 2021 he has held the post of Lecturer in Composition at the University of Manchester.

His music often explores a dichotomy of precision processes alongside elements of chance, and embraces the unique qualities individual

musicians bring to a piece of music, so that each composition feels like a premiere every time it is played.



www.joshuabrowncomposer.com

Conductor CHRIS SWAFFER

Chris is Artistic Director of the Auricle Ensemble and has guest conducted many groups, including the St. Petersburg Academic and Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestras, the Orchestra of Opera North, Slaithwaite Philharmonic, Ensemble 11 and the Metropolitan Ensemble of London. Chris' passion for new music has led to countless premieres, most recently for 'Navigate the Blood' by Gareth Williams and the band Admiral Fallow for NOISE Opera, which was nominated for Outstanding Musical Performance in the 2019 Herald Culture Awards.

With Auricle Ensemble, Chris directed several critically acclaimed projects including Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire, 'Mini-Mahler', his own reconstruction of Copland's 'The City' for Glasgow Film Festival, and 'Re-Write', which saw a commission from Sarah Hayes performed alongside Steve Reich, Jonny Greenwood and Frank Zappa.

Chris has held many principal conductor posts with youth and amateur orchestras, including at the universities of St Andrews, Glasgow and Manchester.

Educated at Chetham's School of Music, Chris holds a master's degree in Composition from the University of Manchester



where he studied with John Casken and Geoff Poole.

He has participated in conducting courses and masterclasses worldwide, including in Vienna, London, St. Petersburg and New York.

Violin IONA MCDONALD

Iona McDonald is a violinist recently graduated from the Royal Academy of Music in London where she studied with Maureen Smith and Michael Foyle. Born in Dumfries, and with her early education in Moffat, Iona is a well-known young musician around Dumfries and Galloway.

Iona was appointed as a Chamber Music Fellow at the Royal Academy for 2022/23 with her quartet the Asaka Quartet.

She is also a keen orchestral player and has been a member of the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester since 2019. While studying, she regularly lead the Academy Symphony Orchestra and Opera Orchestra. Iona has been a member of the National

Youth Orchestra of Scotland ensembles since the age of 8. In July 2022 she was invited back as a soloist to perform Bruch Violin Concerto no.1 with the NYOS Junior orchestra.

Iona is passionate about music education and has been working with the Benedetti Foundation since January 2020 where she currently works as a Senior Lead Ambassador.



PROGRAMME

RICHARD WAGNER (1813 – 1883) **PRELUDE TO TRISTAN UND ISOLDE**

While working on his four-part music drama series *The Ring of the Nibelungen* in the early 1850s, Wagner became interested in the *Tristan und Isolde* romance. It was perhaps an unusual choice, being set in the Celtic world of Cornwall and Brittany, even if following the German 12th century version by Gottfried of Strassburg. He interrupted work on *Siegfried*, part 3 of *The Ring*, to compose the music for *Tristan*. This took two years from August 1857, against a backdrop of turbulence in his domestic life and political exile from Germany. Arranging performance proved tortuous because of the demands on singers. Only after King Ludwig II of Bavaria began to support Wagner was the work staged, in Munich in 1865. Its musical impact was profound. The complexity of Wagner's score, particularly the innovative chromatic harmonies, heavily influenced German composers such as Strauss and Schoenberg but also had an impact in France and beyond. Wagner adapted the Prelude and also conclusion of the drama for concert performance either together or the Prelude alone, ensuring a place for them in concert programmes

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865 – 1957) **ANDANTE FESTIVO**

This short occasional piece is a charming curiosity. In 1922 the owner of a sawmill in central Finland asked Sibelius to compose a cantata to mark his firm's 25th anniversary. What Sibelius actually produced was this short *Andante Festivo*, originally scored for string quartet. It was revived for a niece's wedding in 1929, played by an octet. When Sibelius was asked to write something as

Finland's "greeting to the world" on the occasion of the New York World Exhibition in 1938 he arranged it for full string orchestra with timpani. This was broadcast internationally on 1st January 1939 with the composer conducting. The Finnish Radio recording of the event is the only one known of Sibelius as conductor.

JOSHUA BROWN (1989 –) **HARDENED BY SUN AND AIR**

The musical material for *Hardened by Sun and Air* is derived from a melody that I composed for a Christina Rossetti poem.

When I was first working with the orchestra in Glasgow, I decided to use this melody to create a piece that would evoke qualities of the late Romantic repertoire that the members of the orchestra were so enthusiastic about, such as long flowing irregular phrases, richly ambiguous harmonies, and shifting orchestral colours. The musical structure overall has a tone poem-esque feeling of an unfolding landscape that presents the melody in a number of contrasting ways inspired by these qualities. This approach was coupled with a desire to dismantle, conceal, and obscure the nature of the original melody from the beginning, and to reveal parts of it bit by bit, section by section, until the seemingly simpler textures of its evolving revelation became a cacophony.

I N T E R V A L

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872 – 1958) **THE LARK ASCENDING**

Vaughan Williams was exceptionally well read. Among many recent or contemporary writers he admired was George Meredith.

The score of *The Lark Ascending* quotes several lines of his eponymous poem, including: "*He rises and begins to round, He drops the silver chain of sound*".

Vaughan Williams played the violin and the viola, and therefore understood stringed instruments. Inspired by Meredith's poem, this Romance for solo violin and (originally) piano may have been composed before the Great War but was first performed in 1920 by Marie Hall, a leading soloist of the day, with the pianist Geoffrey Mendham. Vaughan Williams then made the familiar orchestral version, which was first played in 1921, again by Hall, with Adrian Boult conducting. A contemporary critic noted its "serene disregard of the fashions of to-day or of yesterday" and perhaps that timeless quality is still an important part of its attraction.

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865 – 1957) **SYMPHONY NO. 7 IN C**

Dating from 1924, Sibelius's 7th symphony is one of his last works: the tone poem *Tapiola* and incidental music to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* followed in 1926. Thereafter the 33-year "silence of Järvenpää" (his home town) was broken only sporadically by the appearance of minor pieces or new arrangements, the noteworthy exception being publication of Lemminkäinen Legends nos. 1 and 3 in 1939 – over forty years after their composition. It is worth mentioning here the extraordinary popularity of Sibelius's music in Britain and North America from the early 1900s up to the present day, more so than anywhere except Scandinavia and his native Finland. Serge Koussevitzky in the USA and Basil Cameron in England were conductors who had been promised the première of the rumoured, hugely anticipated, and quite possibly completed, 8th symphony. This never saw the light of day and Sibelius is

believed to have burned the manuscript in the 1940s. The weight of public expectation was too much.

But we do have the Seventh. Here, Sibelius returns to C major, the key of his 3rd symphony which is in three movements and in which he explored a new conciseness. Though he reverted to four movements in the 4th and 6th symphonies (the 5th has three), these are around the length of, for instance, Beethoven's 4th. Early sketches for the Seventh suggest he again envisaged a three or four movement concept; but as his thoughts refined, he collapsed the structure into a single movement. Originally titled *Fantasia Symphonica No. 1* at its Stockholm première in March 1924, by its publication a year later Sibelius had settled on formally recognising it as his Seventh Symphony "In one movement". It is widely regarded as a major masterpiece.

The condensed single movement of Sibelius's 7th is in several sections. Starting with an adagio opening passage, each grows organically and inexorably from the previous one until the final resolution. Wisps of melody and short motifs emerge and then recede. The pulse subtly changes. Almost throughout, the unusual time signature of 3/2 is used, allowing various subdivisions to the beat and giving rein to Sibelius's trademark rhythmical ambiguities. It is defiantly tonal and musical trends elsewhere since the 1890s might as well not have happened. After hearing the work, Vaughan Williams remarked that only Sibelius could make C major sound completely fresh.

Note on "Hardened by Sun and Air" by Joshua Brown; other notes by Alastair Whitelaw.

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