

NEW BEGINNINGS

Live from
Sage Gateshead

Royal Northern Sinfonia:
Dawn and Dusk
Friday 16 April, 7.30pm

Dinis Sousa conductor
Dame Sarah Connolly mezzo soprano
Royal Northern Sinfonia

JOSEPH HAYDN 1732-1809

SYMPHONY NO.6 IN D, 'LE MATIN'

*Adagio; Allegro - Adagio; Andante; Adagio -
Menuet e Trio - Finale: Allegro*

On being appointed Assistant Music Director to Prince Paul Anton Esterházy's renowned court orchestra in 1761 Haydn was well aware that, effectively being in charge of one of the most talented groups of musicians in Europe, he'd have to please the players almost as much as his employer.

Esterházy was an enthusiast of Italian Baroque music and Antonio Vivaldi's thematic set of concertos, *The Four Seasons*, was a particular favourite. It is thought the prince himself suggested to Haydn the idea of a series of works taking periods of the day as their subject. The result was three symphonies: 'Le matin' (Morning), 'Le midi' (Noon) and 'Le soir' (Evening).

These harked back to the early Italian style, which would please his employer, but Haydn also skilfully structured the symphonies to showcase a range of virtuoso displays. It was then the practice to financially reward players who performed challenging solo passages, so Haydn was keeping his musicians sweet, winning respect by allowing their considerable skills to shine.

'Le matin' opens with the brief crescendo of a sunrise, making way for some lyrical work, especially for flute and oboe. The loud-then-soft playing that gives the movement so much of its drive was new – another example of Haydn testing the resources now at his command.

The wind instruments are left out of the second movement for a graceful display by violin and cello against the remaining strings, but they return for the *Menuet*, whose *Trio* section offers a cheerful dialogue between bassoon and double bass. The lively *Finale* gives the orchestra – and the violin and flute especially – plenty of opportunities for some exciting playing.

HECTOR BERLIOZ 1803-1869

LES NUITS D'ÉTÉ

*Villanelle - Le spectre de la rose - Sur les lagunes -
Absence - Au cimetière - L'île inconnue*

This exquisite song cycle *Les nuits d'été* – 'Summer Nights' – began as a set of songs for piano and solo voice, composed around 1840. Berlioz later orchestrated two of the songs for the soprano Marie Recio, later to become his second wife, and was then persuaded by a publisher to orchestrate the remainder.

The songs are taken from the morbidly exotic collection of poems *La comédie de la mort* by Théophile Gautier, who was a friend of Berlioz, and take the form of two lively songs interspersed with four more sombre pieces. The opening *Villanelle* is an optimistic song of spring love. It is followed by *Le spectre de la rose*, an elegant meditation on mortality by a rose, picked for the previous night's ball.

Sur les lagunes – 'On the lagoons' – is a lament for a love divided by death, while *Absence* is a song of yearning for a loved one separated by distance.

A ghostly encounter in the moonlight, *Au cimetière* – 'At the Cemetery' – tells of a solitary dove perched above a white tomb singing a song of 'morbid sweetness', and Berlioz concludes with *L'île inconnue* – 'The Unknown Isle' – in which the poet invites a young beauty to sail to any land of her choice.

She asks for the 'shore of fidelity, where love lasts forever' but is told: 'That is a land unknown'.

VILLANELLE

Quand viendra la saison nouvelle,
Quand auront disparu les froids,
Tous les deux nous irons, ma belle,
Pour cueillir le muguet aux bois;
Sous nos pieds égrenant les perles
Que l'on voit au matin trembler,
Nous irons écouter les merles
Siffler!

Le printemps est venu, ma belle;
C'est le mois des amants béni,
Et l'oiseau, satinant son aile,
Dit ses vers au rebord du nid.
Oh! viens donc sur ce banc de mousse,
Pour parler de nos beaux amours,
Et dis-moi de ta voix si douce:
Toujours!

Loin, bien loin, égarant nos courses,
Faisons fuir le lapin caché,
Et le daim au miroir des sources
Admirant son grand bois penché;
Puis, chez nous, tout heureux, tout aises,
En paniers enlaçant nos doigts,
Revenons rapportant des fraises
Des bois!

VILLANELLE

When the new season comes,
When the cold has gone,
We two will go, my sweet,
To gather lilies-of-the-valley in the woods;
Scattering as we tread the pearls of dew
We see quivering each morn,
We'll go and hear the blackbirds
Sing!

Spring has come, my sweet;
It is the season lovers bless,
And the birds, preening their wings,
Sing songs from the edge of their nests.
Ah! Come, then, to this mossy bank
To talk of our beautiful love,
And tell me in your gentle voice:
Forever!

Far, far away we'll stray from our path,
Startling the rabbit from his hiding place
And the deer reflected in the spring,
Admiring his great lowered antlers;
Then home we'll go, serene and at ease,
And entwining our fingers basket-like,
We'll bring back home wild
Strawberries!



Dame Sarah Connolly © Christopher Pledger

LE SPECTRE DE LA ROSE

Soulève ta paupière close
Qu'effleure un songe virginal;
Je suis le spectre d'une rose
Que tu portais hier au bal.
Tu me pris encore emperlée
Des pleurs d'argent de l'arrosoir,
Et parmi le fête étoilée
Tu me promenas tout le soir.

Ô toi, qui de ma mort fus cause,
Sans que tu puisses le chasser,
Toutes les nuits mon spectre rose
À ton chevet viendra danser.
Mais ne crains rien, je ne réclame
Ni messe ni De profundis;
Ce léger parfum est mon âme,
Et j'arrive du paradis.

Mon destin fut digne d'envie:
Et pour avoir un sort si beau,
Plus d'un aurait donné sa vie,
Car sur ton sein j'ai mon tombeau,
Et sur l'albâtre où je repose
Un poète avec un baiser
Écrivit: Ci-gît une rose
Que tous les rois vont jalouser.

SUR LES LAGUNES

Ma belle amie est morte:
Je pleurerai toujours;
Sous la tombe elle emporte
Mon âme et mes amours.
Dans le ciel, sans m'attendre,
Elle s'en retourna;
L'ange qui l'emmena
Ne voulut pas me prendre.
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!

Le blanche créature
Est chouchée au cercueil.
Comme dans la nature
Tout me paraît en deuil!
La colombe oubliée
Pleure et songe à l'absent;
Mon âme pleure et sent
Qu'elle est dépareillée.
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!

Sur moi la nuit immense
S'étend comme un linceul;
Je chante ma romance
Que le ciel entend seul.
Ah! comme elle était belle,
Et comme je l'aimais!
Je n'aimerai jamais
Une femme autant qu'elle.
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!

THE SPECTRE OF THE ROSE

Open your eyelids,
Brushed by a virginal dream;
I am the spectre of a rose
That yesterday you wore at the dance.
You plucked me still sprinkled
With silver tears of dew,
And amid the glittering feast
You wore me all evening long.

O you who brought about my death,
You shall be powerless to banish me:
The rosy spectre which every night
Will come to dance at your bedside.
But be not afraid – I demand
Neither Mass nor De Profundis;
This faint perfume is my soul,
And I come from Paradise.

My destiny was worthy of envy;
And for such a beautiful fate,
Many would have given their lives –
For my tomb is on your breast,
And on the alabaster where I lie,
A poet with a kiss
Has written: Here lies a rose
Which every king will envy.

ON THE LAGOONS

My dearest love is dead:
I shall weep for evermore;
To the tomb she takes with her
My soul and all my love.
Without waiting for me
She has returned to Heaven;
The angel who took her away
Did not wish to take me.
How bitter is my fate!
Alas! to set sail loveless across the sea!

The pure white being
Lies in her coffin.
How everything in nature
Seems to mourn!
The forsaken dove
Weeps, dreaming of its absent mate;
My soul weeps and feels
Itself adrift.
How bitter is my fate!
Alas! to set sail loveless across the sea!

The immense night above me
Is spread like a shroud;
I sing my song
Which heaven alone can hear.
Ah! how beautiful she was,
And how I loved her!
I shall never love a woman
As I loved her.
How bitter is my fate!
Alas! to set sail loveless across the sea!

ABSENCE

Reviens, reviens, me bien-aimée;
Comme une fleur loin du soleil,
La fleur de ma vie est fermée
Loin de ton sourire vermeil!

Entre nos cœurs quelle distance!
Tant d'espace entre nos baisers!
Ô sort amer! ô dure absence!
Ô grands désirs inapaisés!

Reviens, reviens, ma bien-aimée.
Comme une fleur loin du soleil,
La fleur de ma vie est fermée
Loin de ton sourire vermeil!

D'ici là-bas, que de campagnes,
Que de villes et de hameaux,
Que de vallons et de montagnes,
À lasser le pied des chevaux.

Reviens, reviens, ma bien-aimée.
Comme une fleur loin du soleil,
La fleur de ma vie est fermée
Loin de ton sourire vermeil!

ABSENCE

Return, return, my sweetest love!
Like a flower far from the sun,
The flower of my life is closed
Far from your crimson smile!

Such a distance between our hearts!
So great a gulf between our kisses!
O bitter fate! O harsh absence!
O great unassuaged desires!

Return, return, my sweetest love!
Like a flower far from the sun,
The flower of my life is closed
Far from your crimson smile!

So many intervening plains,
So many towns and hamlets,
So many valleys and mountains
To weary the horses' hooves.

Return, return, my sweetest love!
Like a flower far from the sun,
The flower of my life is closed
Far from your crimson smile!



AU CIMETIÈRE

Connaissez-vous la blanche tombe
Où flotte avec un son plaintif
L'ombre d'un if?
Sur l'if, une pâle colombe,
Triste et seule, au soleil couchant,
Chante son chant;

Un air maladivement tendre,
À la fois charmant et fatal,
Qui vous fait mal
Et qu'on voudrait toujours entendre,
Un air, comme en soupire aux cieux
L'ange amoureux.

On dirait que l'âme éveillée
Pleure sous terre à l'unisson
De la chanson,
Et du malheur d'être oubliée
Se plaint dans un roucoulement
Bien doucement.

Sur les ailes de la musique
On sent lentement revenir
Un souvenir;
Une ombre, une forme angélique
Passe dans un rayon tremblant,
En voile blanc.

Les belles-de-nuit, demi-closes,
Jettent leur parfum faible et doux
Autour de vous,
Et le fantôme aux molles poses
Murmure, en vous tendant les bras:
Tu reviendras?

Oh! jamais plus, près de la tombe
Je n'irai quand descend le soir
Au manteau noir,
Écouter la pâle colombe
Chanter sur la pointe de l'if
Son chant plaintif!

AT THE CEMETERY

Do you know the white tomb,
Where the shadow of a yew
Waves plaintively?
On that yew a pale dove,
Sad and solitary at sundown
Sings its song;

A melody of morbid sweetness,
Delightful and deathly at once,
Which wounds you
And which you'd like to hear forever,
A melody, such as in the heavens,
A lovesick angel sighs.

As if the awakened soul
Weeps beneath the earth together
With the song,
And at the sorrow of being forgotten
Murmurs its complaint
Most meltingly.

On the wings of music
You sense the slow return
Of a memory;
A shadow, an angelic form
Passes in a shimmering beam,
Veiled in white.

The Marvels of Peru, half-closed,
Shed their fragrance sweet and faint
About you,
And the phantom with its languid gestures
Murmurs, reaching out to you:
Will you return?

Ah! nevermore shall I approach that tomb,
When evening descends
In its black cloak,
To listen to the pale dove
From the top of a yew
Sing its plaintive song!



L'ÎLE INCONNUE

Dites, le jeune belle,
Où voulez-vous aller?
La voile ouvre son aile,
La brise va souffler!

L'aviron est d'ivoire,
Le pavillon de moire,
Le gouvernail d'or fin;
J'ai pour lest une orange,
Pour voile une aile d'ange,
Pour mousse un séraphin.

Dites, le jeune belle,
Où voulez-vous aller?
La voile ouvre son aile,
La brise va souffler!

Est-ce dans la Baltique
Dans la mer Pacifique,
Dans l'île de Java?
Ou bien est-ce en Norvège,
Cueillir la fleur de neige
Ou la fleur d'Angsoka?

Dites, le jeune belle,
Où voulez-vous aller?

Menez-moi, dit la belle,
À la rive fidèle
Où l'on aime toujours.
– Cette rive, ma chère,
On ne la connaît guère
Au pays des amours.

Où voulez-vous aller?
La brise va souffler.

Théophile Gautier

THE UNKNOWN ISLE

Tell me, pretty young maid,
Where is it you would go?
The sail is billowing,
The breeze about to blow!

The oar is of ivory,
The pennant of watered silk,
The rudder of finest gold;
For ballast I've an orange,
For sail an angel's wing,
For cabin-boy a seraph.

Tell me, pretty young maid,
Where is it you would go?
The sail is billowing,
The breeze about to blow!

Perhaps the Baltic,
Or the Pacific
Or the Isle of Java?
Or else to Norway,
To pluck the snow flower
Or the flower of Angsoka?

Tell me, pretty young maid,
Where is it you would go?

Take me, said the pretty maid,
To the shore of faithfulness
Where love endures forever.
– That shore, my sweet,
Is scarce known
In the realm of love.

Where is it you would go?
The breeze is about to blow!

Translations by Richard Stokes, from A French Song Companion (Oxford, 2000)



LILI BOULANGER 1893-1918

D'UN MATIN DU PRINTEMPS

Little more than a century on from her untimely death, the world is looking afresh at the music of Lili Boulanger, the first woman, at 19, to win the coveted Prix de Rome and one who composed some astonishing works while battling illness.

Boulanger was raised in a Parisian family with an impeccable musical pedigree. Her father, Ernest, was himself a Prix winner in 1835; her mother, Raissa, was a singer; and her elder sister, Nadia, a composer who gained international fame as a composition teacher of musicians of world status.

Before she was five, Lili was attending Paris Conservatoire classes with her 10-year-old sister and not long afterwards would sit in on music theory classes and study the organ. She also sang and played piano, violin, cello and harp.

From early childhood she suffered debilitating ill health and the death of her elderly father when she was just six was a particular lasting blow.

After winning the Prix in 1913 with her cantata *Faust et Hélène* and securing a publisher, Boulanger travelled Italy and wrote some of her best works at the Villa Medici academy.

On the outbreak of war in August 1914 she returned to France, and despite confirmation of intestinal TB, devoted herself to charity work for wounded soldiers. With Nadia, she helped establish an organisation supporting composition students who'd been recruited to fight.

In 1917 Lili wrote several versions of *D'un matin de printemps* ('One Spring Morning') for chamber instruments as well as for orchestra. We now hear Iain Farrington's arrangement. It's a joyful and capricious piece and reveals the influence of contemporaries Debussy and Ravel in its impressionistic free spirit.

SERGEI PROKOFIEV 1891-1953

SYMPHONY NO.1, OP.25, 'CLASSICAL'

Allegro - Larghetto - Gavotte: non troppo allegro - Finale: molto vivace

Sergei Prokofiev's music earns its place in history by his remarkable talent for enhancing traditional structures with an irony and wit that was very much of the 20th century.

While at the St Petersburg Conservatory he steadily developed a fondness for the scores of Haydn and Mozart. He wrote in a memoir: 'It seemed to me that, if Haydn had lived into our time, he would have preserved his own style of writing and at the same time absorbed something from the new music.'

The 'Classical' Symphony, composed between 1916 and 1917, is a miniature triumph in the way it combines old and new styles in a witty and unpretentious work within less than a quarter of an hour. He chose the title 'Classical' to 'tease the geese', as he put it, of the establishment.

The opening *Allegro* is brisk and breezy and short on classical dignity, soon leading into a mock-serious passage in which the bassoon links with the first violins for a quiet little tune that wouldn't be out of place in a circus ring.

The *Larghetto* opens more gracefully and offers a haunting melody on high strings. The winds and *pizzicato* strings keep the rhythm flowing in the middle section.

In the third movement Prokofiev has fun with the classical *Gavotte*, which takes on a slightly tipsy lilt with its just-too-deliberate steps. There's a brief contrast with a Russian musette – bagpipes – drone before the dance resumes quietly on the winds and is gently laid to rest by the strings.

The *Finale* sweeps along relentlessly and Prokofiev here excels himself, linking classical themes in what at times becomes a joyful hoe-down.

Programme notes © Richard C Yates



FIRST VIOLIN

Maria Włoszczowska
The Huntington Chair
Kyra Humphreys
The Christine Swales Chair
Katerina Nazarova
Iona Brown
The Voigt Chair
Sarah Roberts
Jane Nossek
Ian Watson
John Garner

SECOND VIOLIN

Roisin Walters
Gaëlle-Anne Michel
The Anonymous Chair
Marie Schreer
Sophie Appleton
Alanna Tonetti-Tieppo
Jenny Chang
The BA Summers Chair

VIOLA

Michael Gerrard
The Rossiter Family Chair
Malcolm Critten
The Merle Rewcastle Chair
James Slater
Tegwen Jones

CELLO

Steffan Morris
The Share Family Chair
Daniel Hammersley
The Freeman Chair
James Craig
Gabriel Waite
The Manning Family Chair

DOUBLE BASS

Enno Senft
The Anonymous Chair
Siân Hicks

FLUTE

Flona Kelly
Hannah Grayson

OBOE

Tom Blomfield
Michael O'Donnell
The Sylvia Fuller Chair

CLARINET

James Gilbert
Jessica Lee
The Bragg Family Chair

BASSOON

Stephen Reay
The Pyman Family Chair
Angharad Thomas

HORN

Peter Francomb
The Friends of RNS Chair
Jonathan Quaintrell-Evans
The Richardson Family Chair
Dave Tollington

TRUMPET

Richard Martin
The Alan Johnson Chair
Marion Craig

TIMPANI

Richard Cartlidge

HARP

Celine Saout

HARPSICHORD

Masumi Yamamoto

DINIS SOUSA

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR DESIGNATE

Dinis Sousa is Founder and Artistic Director of Orquestra XXI, an award-winning orchestra which brings together some of the best young Portuguese musicians from around Europe. Orquestra XXI has already established itself as one of the leading performing groups in Portugal, appearing regularly in its main concert halls. Recent highlights include opening the Gulbenkian Foundation season and appearing at Centro Cultural de Belém's festival "Dias da Música" for a televised concert with Orquestra XXI and the Gulbenkian Choir, performing Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri*.

Dinis has worked closely with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and his ensembles — the English Baroque Soloists, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and the Monteverdi Choir — culminating in his appointment as the Monteverdi Choir & Orchestras' first-ever Assistant Conductor. He has also assisted Gardiner with other orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic and Tonhalle Orchester Zürich. Recent highlights include co-conducting the Monteverdi Choir in Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* at the BBC Proms, and touring with the English Baroque Soloists to Colombia, conducting several concerts of Bach's orchestral music. Elsewhere, he assisted John Wilson for a production of *Cendrillon* at Glyndebourne Festival.

As a guest conductor, recent and forthcoming highlights include projects with Orchestre Symphonique de Mulhouse, Orquestra Sinfonica de Tenerife, Malta Philharmonic, Portuguese Symphony Orchestra, Madeira Chamber Orchestra and conducting rehearsals with the London Symphony

Orchestra. Dinis' core repertoire is firmly rooted in the Classical to early Romantic eras — with recent performances of Beethoven, Berlioz, Brahms, Schumann, Mozart — but also regularly conducts a wide range of music from Bach and Rameau through to 20th century and new music.

Dinis studied conducting with Sian Edwards and Timothy Redmond and piano with Philip Jenkins and Martin Roscoe at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he was Conducting Fellow. While at Guildhall, he conducted several different projects, including Bach's St. John Passion at Milton Court and a staged production of Harrison Birtwistle's *Down by the Greenwood Side* at the Silk Street Theatre.

In recognition of his work with Orquestra XXI, Dinis was awarded the title of Knight of the Order of Prince Henry in Portugal.



DAME SARAH CONNOLLY
MEZZO SOPRANO

Sarah Connolly was made a DBE in the 2017 Birthday Honours, having previously been awarded a CBE in the 2010 New Year Honours. In 2020 she was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society in recognition of her outstanding services to music.

She has sung at the Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Lucerne, Salzburg and Tanglewood festivals and the BBC Proms where, in 2009, she was a soloist at the Last Night. Opera engagements have taken her around the world from the Metropolitan Opera to the Royal Opera House, the Paris Opera, La Scala Milan, the Munich State Opera and the Bayreuth, Glyndebourne and Aix-en-Provence festivals.

Recent highlights include Fricka in *The Ring Cycle* at both the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Teatro Real in Madrid and recitals for the Schubertiada a Vilabertran, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Teatro de la Zarzuela in Madrid and for the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society.

Recent performances on the concert platform have included Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin/Jurowski & London Philharmonic Orchestra/Jurowski), his *Symphony No.8* (Wiener Symphoniker/Jordan), *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (Orchestre national de Paris/Saraste) and Tippett's *A Child of our Time* (Orchestre de Paris/Adès). In the 2018/19 season, Sarah curated a residency at Wigmore Hall.



Dame Sarah Connolly © Christopher Pledger