



Welcome to the 2022 BBC Proms



Welcome to the BBC Proms 2022. I am delighted that, in this centenary year of the BBC, we can return to the first full eight-week season since 2019, and to the scale and ambition for which the Proms is famous. We see the return of big orchestral and choral repertoire,

visits from some of the world's finest symphony orchestras, family concerts with big screens, and Relaxed Proms in a more informal environment. This is the Proms as we know and love them, and we hope you will find much to enjoy.

When in 1927 the BBC, just five years into its existence, took over the running of the Proms, the introduction of broadcasts – first on radio and then also on TV – enabled our founder-conductor, Henry Wood, to reach the widest audiences that were so central to his vision. In 2022 that partnership is stronger than ever. The BBC's own orchestras and choirs play a central role in our programme, and other BBC collaborations include the return of our hugely popular CBeebies Proms and a celebration of the remarkable work of the Natural History Unit. We also have a special new commission from the band Public Service Broadcasting that draws together material from the BBC archive to create a new work reflecting the origins of the organisation.

Mixing the familiar with the lesser-known is one of the cornerstones of the Proms. There will always be a place for the central pillars of the repertoire, but I hope you will also want to know more about Ethel Smyth, George Walker and Doreen Carwithen – composers less frequently heard on the concert platform. They sit alongside a huge range of contemporary work that embraces Oscar-winning composer Hildur Guðnadóttir, composer-performer Jennifer Walshe and Minimalist icon Philip Glass. This summer also features our first ever Gaming Prom, as well as celebrations of the legendary Aretha Franklin, singer and actress Cynthia Erivo and distinguished sarod player Amjad Ali Khan.

This year our concerts venture into all corners of the UK, as well as to other London venues. But our home remains here at the Royal Albert Hall, where so many extraordinary Proms events have taken place. Here's to a memorable summer of shared musical exploration!

David Pickard
Director, BBC Proms



BBC Proms

THE BBC PRESENTS THE 128TH SEASON OF HENRY WOOD PROMENADE CONCERTS

Tonight at the Proms

The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under its Chief Conductor Thomas Dausgaard gives the first of two concerts on consecutive nights pairing symphonies by Nielsen – a cycle of which these musicians have been performing this season – with piano concertos by Beethoven.

A ‘cosmic waltz’ propels us onto a powerful, elemental trajectory in Nielsen’s expansive Third Symphony, before nature takes a simpler, more bucolic form in the later movements. Solos from former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists, soprano Elizabeth Watts and baritone Benjamin Appl, colour the sumptuous second movement.

Nielsen’s waltz is mirrored in the opening work, Ravel’s *La valse*, an irresistible, Dionysian work intended as a ballet for Diaghilev, said by some to allude to the heightened pleasures and ultimate tragedy of Vienna during the early 20th century.

In between, Uzbek-born pianist Behzod Abduraimov returns to the Proms as soloist in Beethoven’s First Piano Concerto, in which Mozartian grace is allied to the young German’s own rhythmic power and energy.



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Please be considerate to the performers and other audience members, while also recognising that listeners may show a variety of responses to the music.



Royal Albert Hall

If you leave the auditorium during the performance, you will only be readmitted when there is a suitable break in the music. There is no requirement to wear a face covering, but please feel free to wear one for your protection and the safety of others.



Please do not take photos, or record any audio or video during the performance





For an online exhibition
relating to the 2022
BBC Proms season, scan here



PROM 41 • WEDNESDAY 17 AUGUST 7.30pm–c9.40pm

Maurice Ravel *La valse* 12'

Ludwig van Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major* 36'

INTERVAL: 20 minutes

Carl Nielsen *Symphony No. 3, 'Sinfonia espansiva'* 39'

Behzod Abduraimov *piano*

Elizabeth Watts *soprano*

Benjamin Appl *baritone*

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra *Laura Samuel leader*

Thomas Dausgaard *conductor*



RADIO 3 SOUNDS

This concert is broadcast live by BBC Radio 3 (repeated on Wednesday 31 August at 2.00pm). You can listen on BBC Sounds until Monday 10 October. Visit bbc.co.uk/proms for all the latest Proms information.



PROGRAMME NOTES

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

La valse – choreographic poem (1919–20)

Ravel's mother was of Basque origin and his earliest memories included listening to her singing Spanish folk songs before he went to bed. Song and dance rhythms lie at the heart of much of his music, and some of the underlying tension in *La valse* comes from the mismatch between Ravel's qualities as a refined aesthete and consummate technician on the one hand, and the overpowering, Dionysian forces he is determined to shape and control on the other.



Viennese whirl: *Court Ball at the Hofburg, 1900* – watercolour by Wilhelm Gause (1853–1916)

Bridgeman Images





In 1906 he had thought of composing a piece in Viennese style called *Wien* ('Vienna'), but nothing came of it before the war, when any such project became tactless, to say the least. Then, at the end of 1919, the impresario Sergey Diaghilev, after going back on his promise to perform Ravel's ballet *Daphnis and Chloe* the previous year, risked asking for a new work for 1920.

La valse, as it was now called, was completed first in a solo piano version, then in one for two pianos, and finally as an orchestral score. It was the two-piano version that Ravel and his friend Marcelle Meyer played to Diaghilev in the spring of 1920. Among those present was Francis Poulenc who, seeing Diaghilev fiddle with his monocle and hearing the rattle of his false teeth, knew from quite early on that things were not going well. When the playing was over, Diaghilev said: 'It's a masterpiece, but it's not a ballet. It's the portrait of a ballet.' Ravel picked up his score and walked out without a word.

The work was a great success, nevertheless, in Vienna in the autumn of 1920, when Ravel and a friend played it in the two-piano version, and in its full orchestral form this 'impression of a fantastic, fatal whirling motion', as the composer called it, seemed to chime with the mood of post-war Paris. As to what, if anything, the work 'means', with its two long crescendos broken at times by disorientating interruptions, we must decide for ourselves. In 1922 Ravel admitted that:

some people have discovered in it an intention of parody, even of caricature, others plainly saw a tragic allusion – end of the Second Empire, state of Vienna after the war, etc. ... Tragic, yes, it can be that, like any expression – pleasure, happiness – which is pushed to extremes. You should see in it only what comes from the music: a mounting volume of sound, which in the stage

performance will be complemented by lighting and movement.

But for audiences who have seen or lived through the wars since Ravel wrote that letter, *La valse*, even without lighting and choreography, seems to touch inescapably on death and destruction.

Programme note © Roger Nichols

Roger Nichols is a writer, translator and critic with a particular interest in French music from Berlioz to the present day. His books include studies of Debussy, Ravel, Messiaen, Satie and, most recently, Poulenc (Yale UP, 2020). In 2006 he was appointed Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur for services to French culture.

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

Henry Wood conducted the Proms premiere of *La valse* in 1921, having been responsible for its first UK airing at the Queen's Hall the previous May. This was the pre-BBC period in which virtually all summer-season 'Promenade Concerts' were given by Wood and his orchestra with only a minimum of rehearsal. Later the work was rested for a time (1960–76) before regaining its previous popularity with schedulers and audiences alike. Now a fixture here, its recent interpreters have included Gustavo Dudamel (2008 and 2016), Ilan Volkov (2009), Jonathan Nott (2010), Charles Dutoit (2011), Daniele Gatti (2012), Thierry Fischer (2014), Nicholas Collon (2015), Semyon Bychkov (2018) and John Wilson (2021). The wheel came full circle in 2019, when *La valse* brought down the curtain on a 150th-anniversary tribute to our founder-conductor, showcasing music with which he enjoyed a special association; the late Bramwell Tovey directed the BBC Concert Orchestra.

© David Gutman

David Gutman is a writer and critic who since 1996 has contributed extensively to the BBC Proms programmes; his books cover subjects as wide-ranging as Prokofiev and David Bowie, and he reviews for *Gramophone* and *The Stage*.

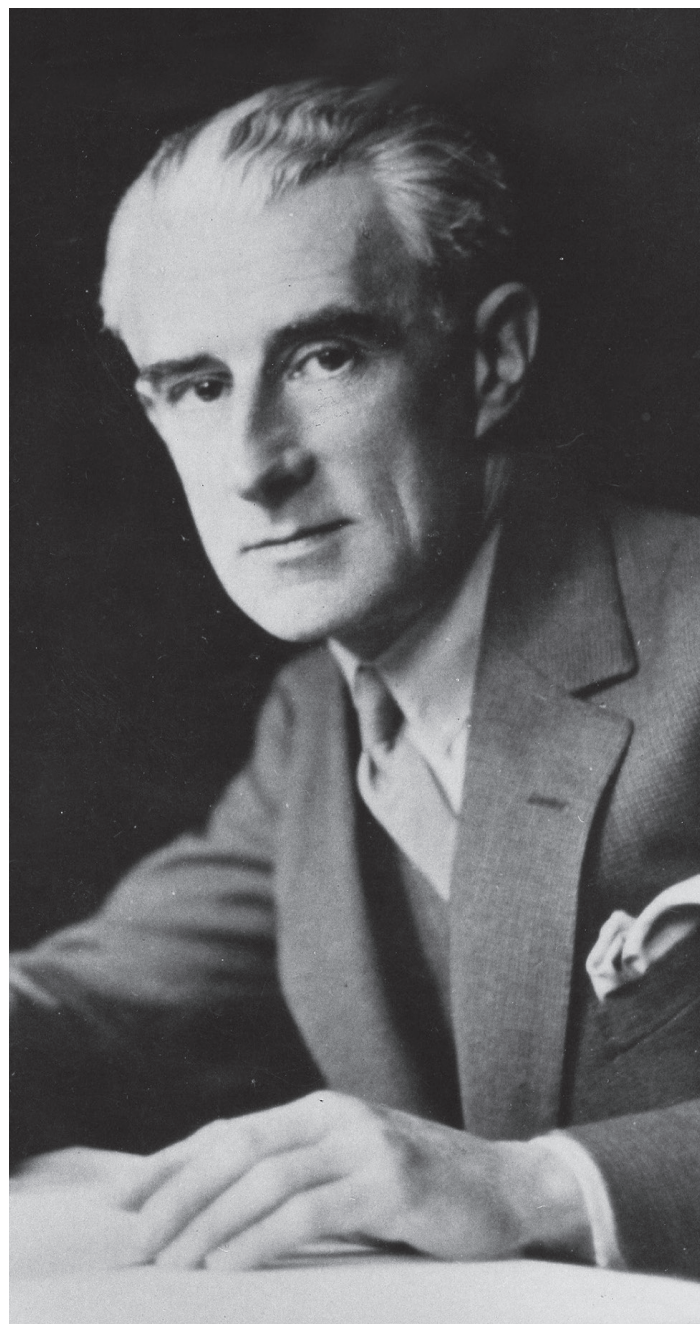
Delve into Proms history for yourself by searching the online database of all Proms performances at bbc.co.uk/proms/archive.



MAURICE RAVEL

Maurice Ravel was born on 7 March 1875 in Ciboure in the French Basque region, his mother being Basque while his father was from the Jura in eastern France. In 1889 Ravel entered the Paris Conservatoire but had to leave in 1895, having won no major prizes. In 1898 he entered Fauré's composition class and in 1901 wrote his first important piano piece, *Jeux d'eau*. The String Quartet (1902–3) and the song-cycle *Shéhérazade* (1903) brought him general notice and a brief friendship with Debussy, although both men were annoyed by press insistence on the similarities of their music. From 1900 he made five attempts to win the Prix de Rome, but his final failure in 1905, causing a scandal, was in no small measure due to the inclusion of 'modernisms' – signs of a persistent awkward streak in his character.

The decade before the First World War was for him a happy time during which he enjoyed both health and inspiration. If *Miroirs* (1904–5) brought new harmonic audacity to so-called 'Impressionist' piano music, *Gaspard de la nuit* (1908) gave evidence of a dark side to his art, touching on black magic and loss. Meanwhile, in 1907 a conservative, middle-class audience had been shocked by the 'vulgar' word-setting in his song-cycle *Histoires naturelles*, which also served as preparation for his first completed opera, *L'heure espagnole* (1907–9), itself part of a Spanish period that included the brilliantly orchestrated *Rapsodie espagnole* (1907–8). Four works then gave a taste of Ravel's diverse talents: spellbinding simplicity in the original piano-duet version of *Ma mère l'Oye* ('Mother Goose', 1908–10), orchestral mastery in the ballet *Daphnis and Chloe* (1909–12), further harmonic audacity in *Valses nobles et sentimentales* (initially written for piano in 1911 and orchestrated the following year) and hitherto unsuspected power in the Piano Trio (1914).



BBC



Echoes of Ravel’s brief service as a lorry driver in the First World War survive in the terrifying *La valse* (1919–20). In the enchanting (and enchanted) opera *L’enfant et les sortilèges* (1920–25) and the song-cycle *Chansons madécasses* (1925–6) he turned the latest techniques, including bitonality, to his own purposes. The obsessional character of *Boléro* (1928) not only marked it as unique in its time, but went on to inform the style of the Minimalists. But, diverse as ever, he completed his orchestral works with the Piano Concerto for the Left Hand (1929–30) and the Piano Concerto in G major for both hands (1929–31), embodying respectively the great, powerful 19th-century tradition and the lighter one of Mozart and Saint-Saëns, even if both are infused with jazz idioms. For the last four years before his death on 28 December 1937, a progressive brain disease prevented this most lucid of men from further composition.

Profile © Roger Nichols

MORE RAVEL AT THE PROMS

THURSDAY 1 SEPTEMBER, 7.30pm • PROM 60
Mother Goose – Little Ugly, Empress of the Pagodas

For full Proms listings, and to book tickets, visit bbc.co.uk/proms.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major, Op. 15 (1795, rev. 1800)

- 1 **Allegro con brio** (*cadenza: Beethoven*)
- 2 **Largo**
- 3 **Rondo: Allegro scherzando** (*cadenza: Beethoven*)

Behzod Abduraimov *piano*

Beethoven's Piano Concerto in C major was written in Vienna in early 1795 and is known as his First, but this was by no means the first time he had written a concerto. Before he left his native Bonn in 1792 he had already composed at least four concertos: a piano concerto in E flat major, of which only the piano part survives; a violin concerto in C, for which we have the full score but only for the first 259 bars; an oboe concerto in F that is now lost apart from a few fragments; and another piano concerto that eventually became known as No. 2 in B flat. Also preserved is what appears to be part of the slow movement of a triple concerto from about 1786. The Piano Concerto in C major was his first concerto to be published, however, and has consequently become known as No. 1.

The work was written rather rapidly, shortly before its first performance. The precise date of this is a matter of some dispute, as Beethoven performed a concerto at a concert on 29 March 1795, and some have argued that this was No. 2, with No. 1 receiving its premiere later in the year. However, the advertisement for the March

concert described his concerto as brand-new, which was not true of No. 2, and so the evidence strongly favours No. 1 as having been performed that day.

Beethoven's friend Franz Wegeler has left an amusing account of the preparations for the premiere of the work. The finale was written only two days before the concert, while Beethoven was feeling unwell; pages of score had to be passed, as soon as they were ready, to a team of four copyists who sat in the hall outside his room, so that instrumental parts could be produced. At the first rehearsal the next day, the piano was found to be a semitone flat, but in performance Beethoven nonchalantly transposed his very difficult piano part up a semitone to C sharp major!



Tonight's soloist, Behzod Abduraimov, performing Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto at his Proms debut on 18 July 2016



The concerto was not published immediately, since Beethoven found it advantageous to keep it back so as to prevent rival pianists using it. It would then make a much greater impact on the occasions when he performed it himself, as it did when he took it to Prague in 1798. Eventually he revised the work, writing out an entirely new score in 1800, and it was published the following year. It was dedicated to Princess Barbara Odescalchi, a former piano pupil and neighbour of his, probably as a kind of wedding present, for she married Prince Odescalchi in February 1801, only a month before the concerto appeared.

The style of the concerto owes much to Mozart, who had developed the genre so successfully in Vienna in the 1780s, but the rhythmic power and energy are unmistakably Beethovenian. As in all his concertos, the first movement is the most elaborate, combining elements of sonata form with traditional Baroque ritornello form to create a highly complex structure.

The concerto begins with a march-like theme characterised by an octave leap followed by a rushing scale, and both motifs figure prominently in the rest of the movement; Beethoven loved to build whole movements out of seemingly insignificant ideas such as these. Further innovations appear in such features as the key of the lovely second subject, which is first heard in E flat – relatively distant from the ‘home’ key of C major – in the orchestral introduction.

The second movement, the main theme of which is loosely related to the E flat theme of the first, is a wonderfully lyrical and deeply emotional Largo in the profound key of A flat, in which the piano weaves increasingly fantastic decorations.

The Rondo finale, however, provides a complete contrast – humorous and playful. It contains numerous musical

jokes, such as sudden lurches into the ‘wrong’ key and ridiculous off-beat accents in the second subject, and it reminds us that Beethoven was actually an extremely witty man.

Programme note © Barry Cooper

Barry Cooper is a Professor of Music at the University of Manchester. His books include *Beethoven and the Creative Process* (1990), *Beethoven* (2000) and *The Creation of Beethoven's 35 Piano Sonatas* (2017). He is also general editor and co-author of *The Beethoven Compendium* (1991) and has produced a complete performing edition of Beethoven's 35 piano sonatas (2007).

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

Least played of the cycle at these concerts, Beethoven's First Piano Concerto has still amassed more than 60 outings to date. There have been multiple performances from several pianists including Edward Isaacs (1906, 1928, 1929), York Bowen (1921, 1922), Cyril Smith (1932, 1941, 1943), Kendall Taylor (1933, 1953, 1955), Noel Mewton-Wood (1947, 1952), John Lill (1971, 1973, 1978), Alfred Brendel (1974, 1980) and, most persistent of them all, Stephen Kovacevich (1963, 1981, 1997, 2003). Twice in recent years all five Beethoven piano concertos have been presented in a single season by just one pianist. Paul Lewis in 2010 worked with a variety of conductors and ensembles; Leif Ove Andsnes in 2015 directed the Mahler Chamber Orchestra from the keyboard.

© David Gutman



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Ludwig van Beethoven was at the forefront of the major developments that took place in the musical world during his lifetime. He began his career in the employment of the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne in Bonn at a time when professional music-making was primarily cultivated within the courts of the European aristocracy. By the end of his life Beethoven had achieved great public success with works that posed unprecedented challenges for both performers and listeners, and lived as an independent artist – a status that was unimaginable for previous generations of musicians.

Beethoven moved from Bonn to Vienna at the age of almost 22, initially to study composition with Joseph Haydn (Mozart having died the previous year), and soon made his name as a virtuoso pianist and composer in all the major instrumental genres. A high point in his career was the public concert organised for his own benefit in December 1808, which included the premieres of his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and his Fourth Piano Concerto with himself as soloist.

Beethoven's performing career was cut short by the onset of deafness, which began when he was in his late twenties and grew increasingly severe until the end of his life, leading him to focus his creative energies on composition. His seriousness of purpose with regard to his art is demonstrated by his laborious process of composing: he could devote upwards of six months to a single symphony, whereas Haydn sometimes produced six such works for a single season. His only opera, *Fidelio*, underwent two major revisions before achieving its final form in 1814, and his monumental *Missa solemnis* (completed in 1823) was the product of several years' work.



Much of Beethoven's music has remained in the core performing repertoire since the 19th century, particularly the 32 piano sonatas and the nine symphonies. Among his most influential and celebrated works are those in his so-called heroic style, characterised by their expanded scale, an emphasis on thematic development and dramatic overall trajectory leading to a triumphant conclusion. Such works are mostly concentrated in Beethoven's middle period, exemplified by the odd-numbered symphonies from No. 3 (the 'Eroica', 1803) onwards, the *Egmont*



overture and the Fifth Piano Concerto. Nevertheless, an immense variety of expression is found across Beethoven's works, from the lyrical and introspective, notably the 1816 song-cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* ('To the Distant Beloved'), to the comical and bombastic (as in the Symphony No. 8 of 1812). His late style grew increasingly esoteric, and works such as the five late string quartets (1824–6) appealed mainly to musical connoisseurs, being considered incomprehensible by some early listeners.

Profile © Erica Buurman

Erica Buurman is Director of the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies and Assistant Professor in the School of Music and Dance at San José State University, California. She has contributed to *The Cambridge Companion to the Eroica Symphony* (CUP) and *The New Beethoven* (University of Rochester Press), and has appeared on BBC Radios 3 and 4. She is editor of *The Beethoven Journal* and *The Beethoven Newsletter*.

MORE BEETHOVEN AT THE PROMS

TOMORROW, 7.30pm • PROM 42
Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major

FRIDAY 2 SEPTEMBER, 7.30pm • PROM 61
Symphony No. 9 in D minor, 'Choral'

SUNDAY 4 SEPTEMBER, 11.30am • PROM 64
Piano Sonatas Nos. 30–32: in E major, Op. 109; in A flat major, Op. 110; in C minor, Op. 111

MONDAY 5 SEPTEMBER, 7.30pm • PROM 66
The Creatures of Prometheus – overture

WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER, 7.30pm • PROM 69
Missa solemnis

THURSDAY 8 SEPTEMBER, 7.30pm • PROM 70
Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, 'Eroica'

For full Proms listings, and to book tickets, visit bbc.co.uk/proms.

INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

Now playing on BBC Radio 3 ...

Radio 3's Martin Handley is joined by Scandinavian music expert Daniel Grimley to discuss the music of Carl Nielsen.
Available on BBC Sounds until 10 October

**CARL NIELSEN** (1865–1931)

Symphony No. 3, Op. 27 'Sinfonia espansiva' (1910–11)

- 1 **Allegro espansivo**
- 2 **Andante pastorale**
- 3 **Allegretto un poco**
- 4 **Finale: Allegro**

Elizabeth Watts *soprano***Benjamin Appl** *baritone*

The year 1911 was a remarkable one for the symphony. The death of Mahler brought to a close one of the great late-Romantic symphonic cycles at the cusp of a new modernist wave, with the final draft of his epic 10th Symphony left agonisingly incomplete. The premiere of Elgar's radiantly nostalgic Second Symphony at the Queen's Hall in London on 24 May unfolded a no less complex and demanding text than Mahler's, and one whose ambiguously retrospective coda left its contemporary audience puzzled by comparison with the more apparently affirmative conclusion of its acclaimed precursor (Elgar's First) from 1908. Sibelius's Fourth Symphony, meanwhile, unveiled a radically pared-down orchestral sound-world, in which the shadowy symbolist gestures of his early tone-poems were transformed in an astonishingly terse, elliptical manner. The sheer concision of Sibelius's work might have seemed a vivid testament to the symphony's final gasp as a genre, even as its closing bars signalled a resolute sense of continuity amid the desolation.

It is a stirring tribute to Nielsen's spirit and creative independence, therefore, that his Third Symphony, which belongs to precisely the same year as these illustrious contemporary works, should be his most outwardly optimistic and accessible contribution to the genre. The catalyst for this remarkably forward-looking music can perhaps be located in the unexpected popular success of Nielsen's second opera, *Maskarade* (1904–6), based on a text by the great Danish–Norwegian playwright Ludvig Holberg. Though Nielsen and his librettist, Vilhelm Andersen, had courted controversy by adapting the words of one of the most canonic figures in Scandinavian literature, the vitality of Nielsen's music, and the opera's richly comic vein, had swiftly conquered its critics and established Nielsen's pre-eminent professional reputation at home. It was furthermore the opera's urgent call for artistic freedom and its glowing response to the classic tale of young love overcoming parental censure, alongside its intense feeling for the mood and colour of the Danish summer night, which proved so attractive to its first listeners and which became one of the motivating impulses for the symphony in its wake.

In a programme note for a 1931 performance, Nielsen described the Third Symphony's first movement as 'a burst of energy and acceptance of life out into the wider world, which we humans not only want to know in its diverse activity but also wish to conquer and appropriate'. The opening bars are among the most remarkable in the repertoire. A series of sharp, unison As, played by the whole orchestra, gradually accelerate, like the whirling atoms in a particle collider, until the Allegro espansivo is fully launched (in D minor) with a seemingly unstoppable harmonic momentum. It is significant in this context that

A scene from a 2005 production of Nielsen's opera *Maskarade* at the Royal Opera House, directed by David Pountney



PROGRAMME NOTES



Laurie Lewis/Bridgeman Images





the genesis of Nielsen's symphony coincided with the groundbreaking work of the Danish physicist Niels Bohr. The Allegro, a kind of cosmic waltz, dips only momentarily for its second subject group, in the seemingly remote key of A flat, before the development accumulates an even greater feeling of melodic expansiveness (one of the most obvious interpretations of the symphony's characteristic subtitle). The reprise runs in reverse order, with the second subject recalled before the final climactic appearance of the opening motto and the sharp upward curve of the coda (in an electrifying A major). It is as though the movement reaches maximum escape velocity as it rapidly attains its final bars.

Nielsen once wrote that the second movement, 'a broad landscape andante', was 'completely different from my other works', and it forms the structural and expressive antithesis to the expansiveness of the opening Allegro. The initial bars evoke a sense of timelessness, an imaginary Nordic past. A series of three intense string chorales then alternate with more earthy woodwind cadenzas, which Nielsen described as nature voices. The second half of the movement consists simply of a single sustained sonority (an E flat major chord with modal inflections), which softly glows across the whole orchestra. Nielsen originally sketched lyrics for the two vocal parts that enter, almost unnoticed, halfway through the passage but their melismatic arabesques are more richly evocative for being wordless. Two low flutes bring the music to a sultry conclusion.

If the final moments of the Andante sound completely immersed in their distant idyll, the third movement (which takes the place of the expected scherzo) bursts through with a renewed sense of energy and vigour. The Allegretto's chief structural purpose is to reach D major, the opening tonality of the finale, in a brief window at the very heart of the movement. It was the closing Allegro,

however, that most appealed to the Czech music critic Max Brod, better known as Franz Kafka's biographer. Writing to Nielsen in 1913, Brod hailed the music's moral elevation and fortifying character: 'I hear you intone a song about a happy, work-rich and yet Arcadian-innocent future for humanity. That indeed awakens hope anew!' Nielsen himself described the movement as 'straight down the line', 'the apotheosis of work!' The opening theme is a Danish 'ode to joy', a broad walking tune that returns, ennobled in A major, in the striding bars of the coda. In the aftermath of the 1914–18 war that was shortly to wreak such irrevocable damage upon the landscape of European music, such gestures of optimism and artistic faith must have seemed precious beyond measure.

Programme note © Daniel M. Grimley

Daniel M. Grimley is Professor of Music and Head of Humanities at the University of Oxford. His most recent books include *Delius and the Sound of Place* (CUP, 2018) and *Jean Sibelius: Life, Music, Silence* (Reaktion, 2021).

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

The Proms, so often in the vanguard of public taste, played little part in the dissemination of the music of Carl Nielsen. Until 1952, when Emil Telmányi played the Violin Concerto here with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Malcolm Sargent, not a note of the composer's music had been heard. Henry Wood, the first and most indefatigable of Proms conductors, had tried (and failed) to get that work into the 1939 schedule. The First, Fourth and Fifth Symphonies arrived in the 1960s, the Third in 1990, the Sixth in 1999, and it was not until the present century that the Second Symphony was heard at all. Curiously all three previous performances of the 'Sinfonia espansiva' took place within a single decade. The first came courtesy of Esa-Pekka Salonen's visiting Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the others from Baltic conductors fronting British bands: Neeme Järvi and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in 1995, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and the BBC Symphony Orchestra in 1999. Thomas Dausgaard directed the Danish National Symphony Orchestra in the Fifth Symphony here in 2005.

© David Gutman



“Nielsen’s music rides the crest of the wave: confident, unstoppable, expansive – an unobstructed image of the energies that underpin life itself.”

Andrew Mellor, ‘The Northern Silence’ (2022)

CARL NIELSEN

Born the seventh of 12 children, to a humble family amid the gently rolling countryside of Denmark’s central island of Funen, Carl August Nielsen was destined to compose six symphonies capable of standing alongside those of Mahler and Sibelius, to become conductor at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen and to be revered as the creator of his country’s national opera (with the fun-loving *Maskarade*) and as renewer of its song tradition. As famous for his genial conversation and generous friendship as for his youthful looks and spirit, his 60th birthday in June 1925 was an occasion for nationwide celebration and it was accompanied by the publication of his memoirs, *My Childhood*, in which the empathetic side of his character is memorably enshrined, as it was soon to be musically in his concertos for flute and clarinet, now widely regarded as the finest 20th-century examples of their kind. His death six years later brought forth extraordinary scenes of affection and mourning.

Nielsen’s rise to fame was not achieved without opposition. At the time of his Third Symphony (‘Sinfonia espansiva’, 1910–11) he referred to himself as ‘a bone of contention ... because I wanted to protest against the typical Danish soft smoothing-over’. And protest he did, in his music’s pulsating Beethovenian rhythms and exhilarating Berliozian harmonic swerves. By nature, too, he could be combative and his music’s embodiment of conflict was rooted in personal experience. For one thing, his marriage to the strong-willed Anne Marie Brodersen, herself a sculptress with a national reputation, was an intermittently stormy one. Great charmer that he was, Nielsen was more than once led into temptation, and his marriage went through its most serious crisis between 1914 and 1922, after the truth about his infidelities emerged. This coincided with the onset of the First World



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War, in which Denmark was neutral, but which plunged Nielsen's whole system of values into turmoil.

The conflict-ridden Fourth Symphony ('The Inextinguishable', 1914–16) is a product of that mid-life crisis, and it proved to be a turning-point in his output; the faith it ultimately reasserts is expressed in the motto to the score: 'Music is life and, like it, inextinguishable'. Five years later, his Fifth Symphony found even bolder ways of embodying life-and-death struggle, as the first movement instructs a solo side-drummer to improvise an anarchic cadenza in the first movement, as if to halt the progress of the rest of the orchestra.

Nielsen's sixth and last symphony, entitled 'Sinfonia semplice' (1924–5), was originally to have been a more relaxed affair than the Fifth, but it turned out to be the most complex and disturbing of all his works. It shares something of the manic-depressive swings of the young Shostakovich's First Symphony, coincidentally composed at exactly the same time.

For most of his last decade, Nielsen suffered from heart problems. His late-period turn towards the purity of neo-Renaissance and neo-Bachian counterpoint – in his Three Motets and the mighty organ fantasy *Commotio*, respectively – offers just a tantalising glimpse of new musical adventures he was never to enjoy.

Profile © David Fanning

David Fanning is a Professor of Music at the University of Manchester, the author of books on Nielsen, Shostakovich and Weinberg and a critic for *Gramophone* and *The Daily Telegraph*.

MORE NIELSEN AT THE PROMS

TOMORROW, 7.30pm • PROM 42
Symphony No. 4, 'The Inextinguishable'





The Proms Listening Service

As Radio 3's *The Listening Service* revisits earlier episodes reflecting a range of this summer's Proms themes, presenter **Tom Service** takes a wide-angle view of each theme in this weekly column



Week 5 What's the point of the conductor?

Despite appearances, they're not magicians, just very clever musical girls and boys, as *Monty Python* never quite said: conductors, those sculptors of musical time and space, without whom the majority of this year's Proms season wouldn't happen.

In the *Proms Guide* and in this very programme, conductors' names, such as Sofi Jeannin or Thomas Dausgaard, are listed in the same size type as their ensembles, such as the BBC Singers or the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, as if they were as important on their own as the collective virtuosity of the groups of musicians in front of them. That can't be true, because conductors don't – ideally! – make any noise at all, and yet they are uniquely privileged as the most important channel of communication between the composers' works and our listening; their hands and their batons are lightning rods of musical re-creation.

Although it's been a musical profession for around 200 years, conducting is a job that remains shrouded in mystery. Classical music culture is in thrall to its conductor-conjurors, unwilling to demystify the tricks of musical semaphore they perform, seemingly commanding oceans of sounds from hundreds of musicians with the merest flick of their wrists.

And yet conductors aren't really musical Mysterons. They're more like the Wizard of Oz, because there are no supernatural gifts being wielded up there on the Royal Albert Hall's podium. There is no incomprehensible magic

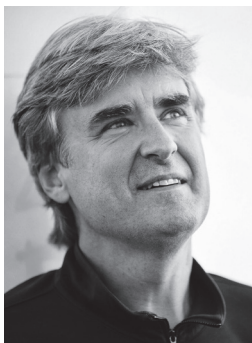
that's conjured by their air-carving choreography. What we experience in the energy between our conductors and orchestras at the Proms is the result of all-too-human processes that are forged in the crucible of rehearsal rooms and in months and years of partnership. That means a collaboration that's as much about the practicalities of time, energy and scheduling as it is about the search for an ultimate ideal of orchestral brilliance, and it also means a final reckoning with the audience on the night.

But the musical phenomenon that truly is the responsibility of all conductors is the consecration of the musical moment. They are responsible for the beginnings and endings of their performances, for the speed, the flow and the texture of what we all hear. And in those extra-special performances that create a tangible bond between their music-making and our listening, you feel the power of music as a physical reality rather than as an abstract ideal. The magic that conductors really can create is a collective one, an energy that is led by them on the podium, brought to life by the musicians and increased in intensity in the feedback loop of all of us listening in the Royal Albert Hall.

Conductors, at their best, are activators of this resonant musical community, which connects us all in an ecstatic present tense of togetherness. And, if that's not a supernatural sorcery, it's very definitely a human-made musical alchemy.

→ Next week: **Brahms – behind the beard**

Join Tom Service on his Proms-themed musical odysseys in *The Listening Service* on BBC Radio 3 during the season (Sundays at 5.00pm, repeated Fridays at 4.30pm). You can hear all 200-plus editions of the series on BBC Sounds. Tom's book based on the series is now available, published by Faber.



Thomas Dausgaard

conductor

Thomas Dausgaard is in his final season as Chief Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. He is Conductor Laureate of the Swedish Chamber Orchestra (of which he was Chief Conductor, 1997–2019) and Honorary

Conductor of the Danish National Symphony Orchestra (Chief Conductor, 2004–11) and Orchestra della Toscana. He was Music Director of the Seattle Symphony (2019–22).

With the BBC Scottish SO he has commissioned a range of works from British and international composers under the title 'Scottish Inspirations'. His 'Composer Roots' programmes have shed light on Brahms, Mahler, Debussy, Nielsen, Bartók, Sibelius and others, and forged collaborations with leading artists from other genres. Following a recording of Sibelius's *Kullervo*, they have embarked upon a survey of Bartók's orchestral works, while this season sees a cycle of Nielsen's symphonies in concert. International tours have taken the partnership to a week-long residency in Tokyo for the inaugural BBC Proms Japan, a residency in Salzburg and performances at the Vienna Musikverein.

Recent recordings include Mahler's 10th Symphony, Nielsen's symphonies and the tone-poems of Richard Strauss with the Seattle Symphony and Brahms and Mendelssohn symphonies with the Swedish CO. As a guest conductor, Thomas Dausgaard maintains close connections with a number of orchestras internationally, including the Bergen Philharmonic, with which he is recording a cycle of Bruckner's symphonies. He also appears at festivals such as Edinburgh, Salzburg, Tanglewood, Mostly Mozart (New York) and the George Enescu Festival (Romania).



Behzod Abduraimov

piano

Born in Tashkent in 1990, Uzbek pianist Behzod Abduraimov studied with Stanislav Ioudenitch at Park University, Missouri, where he is Artist-in-Residence. In 2009 he won first prize at the London International Piano Competition, where he played

Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto.

He performs with orchestras worldwide, including the Philharmonia, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Cleveland and Royal Concertgebouw orchestras, the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and the Orchestre de Paris, under conductors such as Gustavo Dudamel, James Gaffigan, Jakub Hrůša, Vasily Petrenko, Santtu-Matias Rouvali, Juraj Valčuha and Lorenzo Viotti.

In recital he has appeared numerous times at Carnegie Hall, New York, Queen Elizabeth Hall in London and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. This season has included appearances at the Frankfurt Alte Oper, the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, Amare Hall in The Hague and the Conrad Center at La Jolla. Festival engagements include Aspen, Lucerne, La Roque d'Anthéron, Rheingau and Verbier.

Last year Behzod Abduraimov released a recital album including Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. His recording of Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* with the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra under James Gaffigan, recorded on the composer's own piano from Villa Senar in Switzerland, was issued in 2020.



Benjamin Appl *baritone*

German baritone Benjamin Appl is a former *Gramophone* Young Artist of the Year (2016), BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist (2014–16), Wigmore Hall Emerging Artist and ECHO Rising Star (2015–16). His recording of Schubert's *Winterreise* was released in February alongside

a film of the same work made by John Bridcut in the Swiss Alps, entitled *A Winter Journey*, for BBC Four and Swiss television.

In recital he has sung at the Edinburgh, Ravinia, Rheingau, Schleswig-Holstein, LIFE Victoria Barcelona, Oxford Lieder, Heidelberg Spring and Ruhr Piano festivals. He has performed at venues including the Baden-Baden Festspielhaus, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, the Louvre Museum in Paris and deSingel Antwerp, and makes regular appearances at Wigmore Hall and the Schubertiade in Hohenems and Schwarzenberg. As a soloist he has collaborated with the NHK, Seattle and Vienna Symphony orchestras, the Philadelphia and Philharmonia orchestras, Staatskapelle Dresden and many others.

Benjamin Appl opened the current season with his operatic debut at the Liceu, Barcelona, as Harlequin (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). This was followed by concerts across Europe and the USA, including recitals and performances at the Salle Gaveau in Paris, Berlin Konzerthaus and Philharmonie, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, Wigmore Hall, Boston Celebrity Series and Dallas Opera, concerts with the Helsinki and Sofia Philharmonic orchestras, NDR Radio Philharmonic and Munich Radio orchestras and Berlin Baroque Soloists, and residencies with the Jena Philharmonie and Hamburg Ballet.



Elizabeth Watts *soprano*

Elizabeth Watts read Archaeology at Sheffield University before studying singing at the Royal College of Music. She won the Rosenblatt Recital Prize at the 2007 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World and was a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist from 2007 to 2009.

Her appearances at the BBC Proms include Mahler's Second Symphony with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sakari Oramo, Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* with the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle, Schubert songs with the BBC Philharmonic under John Storgårds and Beethoven arias with the NDR Radio Philharmonic Orchestra under Andrew Manze.

Recent highlights include recitals at Wigmore Hall and the Oxford Lieder Festival; Mozart arias with the Philharmonia Baroque under Richard Egarr; Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia under Antony Hermus and a performance with live film of Vaughan Williams's score for *Scott of the Antarctic* at the Barbican and a recording of *Sinfonia antartica* with the BBC SO under Martyn Brabbins.

Future performances include her first visit to the Orchestre de La Suisse Romande under Jonathan Nott with Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and a return to the Residentie Orkest, The Hague, under Jun Märkl with Poulenc's *Gloria*, as well as Mahler and Beethoven with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Andrew Davis.

Elizabeth Watts's recordings include Schubert and Strauss songs, Mozart arias and, most recently, Handel's *Brookes Passion* with the Academy of Ancient Music.



BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra

The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1935 and has been based at Glasgow's City Halls since 2006. It has a rich history of performing, broadcasting, recording and touring in Scotland, the UK and overseas.

Under the artistic direction of Thomas Dausgaard – Chief Conductor since 2016 and now in his final season – it has performed 'Composer Roots' concerts, placing classical works in context through collaborations with folk musicians, students and choirs; instituted a 'Scottish Inspirations' series of BBC commissions; embarked on a series of Bartók recordings; and undertaken tours to Vienna, Salzburg, Tokyo and Osaka (for the inaugural BBC Proms Japan). Composer, conductor and pianist Ryan Wigglesworth becomes the orchestra's new Chief Conductor in September.

The BBC SSO has long championed new works, not least with 'Tectonics', its annual festival of new and experimental music, and has established strong links with local communities through its learning and outreach programmes in collaboration with its Associate Artist, Lucy Drever. It is a partner in Big Noise, Scotland's project for social change through music, and maintains a close association with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, working across a variety of disciplines with conductors, composers, soloists and orchestral players.

The orchestra appears regularly at the BBC Proms and Edinburgh Festival and is a recipient of a Royal Philharmonic Society Award and four *Gramophone* Awards. It maintains a busy schedule of broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, BBC iPlayer, BBC Radio Scotland and BBC television.

Chief Conductor
Thomas Dausgaard

Principal Guest Conductor
Ilan Volkov

Associate Conductor
Alpesh Chauhan

Associate Artist
Lucy Drever

Conductor Emeritus
Sir Donald
Runnicles

Conductor Laureate
Jerzy Maksymiuk

Chief Conductor Designate
Ryan
Wigglesworth

First Violins
Laura Samuel
leader
Kanako Ito
associate leader
David Routledge *
Kana Kawashima
Jane Mackenzie
Elita Poulter
Olivier Lemoine
Mireia Ferrer
Yabar
Sarah
Whittingham
Katrina Lee
Kobus Frick
Liam Lynch
Lorna Rough
Colin McKee
Tessa Henderson
Daniel Stroud

Second Violins
Lise Aferiat *
Jamie Campbell †
Liza Johnson ‡
Tom Hankey
Julia Norton
Alex Gascoine
Barbara Downie
Ben Norris
Ana do Vale
Jane Lemoine
Jackie Norrie
Feargus
Heatherington
Fiona Stephen
Julia Lungo

Violas
Scott Dickinson *
Andrew Berridge †
Rhoslyn Lawton
Fiona Robertson
Alice Batty
Rik Evans
Martin Wiggins
Morag Robertson
David McCreadie
Rachel Davis
Sue Blasdale
Elaine Koene

Cellos
Rudi De Groote *
Siân Bell †
Sarah Oliver
Harold Harris
Amanda Shearman
Gill De Groote
Anne Brincourt
Feargus Egan
Sonia Cromarty
Naomi Pavri

Double Basses
Graham Mitchell ¥
Iain Crawford †
Genna Spinks
Derek Hill
Paul Speirs
Tom Berry
Lynette Eaton
Daniel Griffin

Flutes
Amy Yule ¥
Brontë Hudnott †
Luke Russell †



Oboes

Stella McCracken *
Alexandra Hilton †
James Horan †

Clarinets

Yann Ghiro *
Barry Deacon
Jenny Stephenson

Bass Clarinet

Jenny
Stephenson ¥

Bassoons

Daniel
Handsworth ¥
Graeme Brown †
Peter Wesley †

Contrabassoon

Peter Wesley †

Horns

Alex Wide ¥
Hector Salgueiro
Hannah Miller ¥
Flora Bain
Nicole Linning

Trumpets

Mark O'Keeffe *
Mark Calder
Hedley Benson †

Trombones

Simon Johnson *
Jonathan Hollick †
Becky Smith

Bass Trombone

Alexander Kelly ¥

Tuba

Andrew Duncan *

Timpani

Gordon Rigby *

Percussion

David Lyons
Alasdair Kelly
Martin Willis
Kate Openshaw
Christopher
Edwards
Jonathan
Chapman

Harps

Helen Thomson
Sharron Griffiths

* *Section Principal*
† *Principal*
‡ *String Sub-*
Principal
¥ *Guest Principal*

*The list of players
was correct at
the time of going
to press*

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Dominic Parker

Content Assistant

Joanna Charnock

**Assistant
Orchestra
Manager**

Ian Coulter

Music Librarian

Julian de Ste Croix

**Digital Marketing
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Alexandra
Rutherford

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Manager, Radio**

Alison Rhynas

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Douglas Templeton

**Head of Artistic
Planning and
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Andrew Trinick

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Coming up at the Proms

Highlights of the next few days



Marco Borggreve

FRANCESCO PIEMONTESE



Arielle Doneson

JOËLLE HARVEY

THURSDAY 18 AUGUST

PROM 42 SIBELIUS, BEETHOVEN & NIELSEN

7.30pm–c9.50pm • Royal Albert Hall
Two giants of the symphony, Sibelius and Nielsen, take the 20th century head-on with their Seventh and Fourth, while Beethoven looks inward in his Fourth Piano Concerto. Francesco Piemontesi is the pianist, and Thomas Dausgaard conducts the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.



Bertie Watson

NARDUS WILLIAMS

SATURDAY 20 AUGUST

PROM 44 DEBUSSY & SMYTH

7.30pm–c9.30pm • Royal Albert Hall
Ethel Smyth's majestic Mass in D major is one of the unknown glories of the British choral tradition. Sakari Oramo and the BBC Symphony Orchestra give the first Proms performance, featuring soprano soloist Nardus Williams, alongside Debussy's evocative *Nocturnes*.

FRIDAY 19 AUGUST

PROM 43 HANDEL'S SOLOMON

7.00pm–c10.05pm • Royal Albert Hall
'Thy harmony's divine, great king': Handel's lavish 1749 oratorio *Solomon* – a celebration of a nation (and a genius) at the height of its confidence – performed by The English Concert and the BBC Singers, starring Iestyn Davies as the King of Israel and Joëlle Harvey as his Queen.



AMJAD ALI KHAN

SUNDAY 21 AUGUST

PROM 45 AMJAD ALI KHAN – SAROD MASTER

11.30am–c1.00pm • Royal Albert Hall
Sarod master Amjad Ali Khan is joined today by his sons Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash – both leading virtuosos in their own right – as well as outstanding performers on the tabla and mridangam, in this Sunday-morning Prom.



2022/23 Season

BBC
Scottish
Symphony
Orchestra

Ryan Wigglesworth debuts as **Chief Conductor** with Ravel's
Daphnis & Chloé

Focus on **Messiaen** including his *Quartet for the End of Time*
and an excerpt from *Saint François D'Assise*

UK Premiere of Composer-in-Association **Hans Abrahamsen's**
Vers le silence

World Premieres from **Cheryl Frances-Hoad**, **Abel Selaocoe**
and **Jonathan Woolgar**

Associate Conductor **Alpesh Chauhan** directs **Shostakovich**
and **Rimsky-Korsakov**

Principal Guest Conductor **Ilan Volkov** conducts **Xenakis**,
Ligeti and **Debussy**

Artist Residencies from pianist **Isata Kanneh-Mason**,
cellist **Pablo Ferrández** and the **BBC Singers**

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