



Glasgow  
Orchestral  
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FREE



# KORNGOLD

VIOLIN CONCERTO

**BRAHMS**

SYMPHONY NO. 2

**SIBELIUS**

KARELIA SUITE

CONDUCTOR CHRIS SWAFFER  
VIOLIN DÁNIEL MÁTÉ MÉSZÖLY

SUN 29 OCT 2017 7.30<sup>PM</sup>

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# WELCOME TO THE FIRST CONCERT OF OUR 2017-18 SEASON

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Thank you for coming along tonight!

A very warm welcome to this, our first concert of the 2017-2018 season. We have been working hard in rehearsals and have really enjoyed preparing this wonderful programme. We hope you enjoy listening to it as much as we enjoy playing it.

It is a real treat in particular to be playing the Korngold Violin Concerto with the fabulous Dániel Máté Mészöly.

We are delighted to have Chris Swaffer back tonight as our guest conductor. Many of you will recognise Chris from previous concerts, including last year's October concert – The Isle of the Dead and Danse Macabre. He will also be joining us once again as we treat you to Music from the Movies – our next concert on December 10 in the RSNO Auditorium.

Put this date in your diaries and book early! This is likely to be a very popular concert and our last event in this venue sold out.

For now though, sit back, relax and enjoy tonight's performance.

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Liz Sime, President

# CHRIS SWAFFER

Chris Swaffer is Artistic Director of the Auricle Ensemble and has guest conducted many orchestras, including the St. Petersburg Academic and Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestras, Ensemble 11, the Orchestra of Opera North, Sraithwaite Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Ensemble of London.

Chris passion for new music has seen him conduct countless premieres, including Steve Forman's 'Sprawl' at City Halls and seven world premieres at the Royal Northern College of Music with contemporary music group Ensemble 11. With

Auricle he directed several critically acclaimed projects including Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire, a two year Mini-Mahler project and two European premieres of works by Copland, one of which, The City, was performed live to film at the Glasgow Film Festival. He conducted the first public performance of Howard Blake's Diversions for marimba in the presence of the composer, with soloist Heather Corbett. Chris also recently lead a Scottish Opera Connect workshop on a new opera at Aberdeen University.

Chris was educated at Chetham's School of Music and holds a Masters degree



in composition from the University of Manchester. He has worked with over 50 youth, amateur and university orchestras holding many Principal Conductor posts and is the founder of the Universities of Scotland Symphony Orchestra.

# DÁNIEL MÁTÉ MÉSZÖLY

Dániel Máté Mészöly started playing the violin in Hungary before moving to Scotland in 2010 to study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where he graduated with a First Class Honours Degree and later a Master's Degree studying with Chris George.

While at the RCS Dániel won numerous competitions and prizes both in solo and chamber playing, and lead the RCS Symphony Orchestra, Opera, String Ensemble and Baroque Ensemble many times.

As a freelance musician Dániel enjoys a varied career where as a soloist he performed the Sibelius Violin Concerto accompanied by the RSNO, as a chamber musician he is the violinist of the Broadwood Piano Trio, the viola player in the Sinopia Quartet and the leader of the Broen Ensemble, and as an orchestral musician he's performed with the

London Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Concerto Caledonia and Ludus Baroque.

Playing the modern and baroque violin and viola gave him the opportunity to play at venues such as the Royal Albert Hall, Wigmore Hall, Abbey Road Studios, Usher Hall, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall and festivals like the BBC Prom, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Cottier Chamber Project, Glasgow Cathedral Festival and Brecon Baroque Festival.



**JEAN SIBELIUS** (1865 – 1957)**KARELIA SUITE****1 Intermezzo; 2 Ballade; 3 Alla Marcia**

The backbone of Sibelius's output is the series of tone poems and symphonies which started with "En Saga" (1892) and the first symphony (1899). Early in his career another strand of his music was overtly associated with Finnish nationalism. Finland was then a duchy of imperial Russia. Popular historical pageants (often political demonstrations in disguise) were an expression of the yearning for independence and Sibelius often contributed music for these. The *Karelia* Suite is actually three excerpts from a much longer group written for the Viipuri Students' Association fundraising pageant in 1893. It is particularly poignant that, as a result of Finland's ill-advised entry into WW2 against the Soviet Union, in the postwar settlement, though hanging on to independence, at Stalin's insistence it had to make substantial territory concessions including the province of Karelia.

**ERICH WOLFGANG****KORNGOLD** (1896 – 1956)**VIOLIN CONCERTO IN D OP. 35****1 Moderato nobile; 2 Romance Andante; 3 Finale Allegro assai vivace**

The withering "more corn than gold" comment from a critic helped to diminish Korngold's reputation for many years after his film music career ended; just as whisperings of nepotism dogged him at the start of his career in Vienna (where his father was a leading music critic of the day). Nowadays we have the benefit of perspective and his music is gaining in popularity on its own terms. In the Vienna of the late 1800s into which Korngold was born, outstanding players and conductors abounded and new musical paths were being developed by Mahler and Schoenberg. From his teens onwards, a succession of concert and theatre music, both full operas and incidental music, notably to a Max Reinhardt

production of Shakespeare's *Much Ado*, confirmed Korngold's complete technical mastery and handling of orchestral sonority in a late romantic idiom. He was also a talented conductor. In 1934 Reinhardt, by then in Hollywood (where another Viennese composer, Max Steiner, was already well established), employed him to arrange Mendelssohn's famous incidental music, and add numbers of his own, for a film of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This led to further commissions from Warner Brothers who employed a large studio orchestra. Periodic returns to Vienna followed, between films. *Anthony Adverse* and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* won him Oscars. The latter also probably saved Korngold's life: he was Jewish and fortuitously, work on this film kept him in Hollywood during the Anschluss. His parents escaped, but family property was expropriated by the Nazis. Other major film credits include *Captain Blood*, *The Seahawk*, *Deception* and his last, the 1947 *Escape Me Never*.

During the War, the émigré violinist Bronislaw Huberman suggested that Korngold write a violin concerto. As Huberman lost interest, another Los Angeles friend, Jascha Heifetz, who had commissioned Walton's concerto a few years earlier, stepped in, offering a commission fee and giving the piece a triumphant première after its completion in 1947. Korngold's Warner contracts permitted him to re-use music from his film scores (*Deception* yielded the one-movement Cello Concerto) and the new piece was intended to re-launch his concert music career after retiring from film music. In the Violin Concerto's opening movement, he skilfully integrates material from *Another Dawn* (for the ecstatic opening theme) and *Juarez*; from *Anthony Adverse* in the contemplative and sometimes dreamy Romance; and *The Prince and the Pauper* in the finale, which fizzles with energy. A large orchestra is employed, including harp and an extensive percussion section with vibraphone. Now ranked with the great mid twentieth century violin concerti, it has stimulated renewed interest in Korngold's concert music and most leading soloists keep

it in their repertoire. Korngold followed up this concerto with a major symphony which alas had a rather shaky première in 1954 in Vienna. Undaunted, he was planning a new opera, second symphony and second violin concerto at the time of his sudden death at 60.

## INTERVAL

### JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897) SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN D OP. 73

**1 *Allegro non troppo*; 2 *Adagio non troppo*; 3 *Allegretto grazioso (Quasi Andantino)* 4 *Allegro con spirito***

Notoriously, Brahms, the leading non-operatic German composer of his generation, waited until well into a successful career before completing and releasing for performance a symphony. He was obsessed with the idea of being a successor to Beethoven – an almost impossible position – and had to wait until he felt ready to write something truly worthy. But his sense of being part of a tradition went deeper: he was a subscriber to the first scholarly edition of Bach's works, which he studied carefully. And as a young man he had known and enormously admired, even idolised, Schumann, who had been a great encouragement to him. Schumann's mental deterioration and relatively early death had a profound effect on Brahms. It cannot be a coincidence that in three key musical forms, piano sonata, string quartet and symphony, he stopped at the same number that Schumann completed (three, three and four respectively). Indeed, Brahms made what is best described as judicious contributions to many musical forms without being especially prolific in any. There is also a lighter side to his music such as the popular Hungarian Dances, waltzes for piano duet; and the Gipsy Songs and *Liebesslieder* waltzes for vocal ensemble and piano.

His first orchestral works, the two charming Serenades (1857 and 1859), romantic 1st Piano Concerto (1854–58) and Variations on a theme of Haydn (1873) show completely assured handling of the classical orchestra

and an ear for sonority and complex rhythm, so compositional skill was not an issue. But he laboured and fretted long over his first symphony, which eventually appeared in 1876 to triumphant acclaim. Once that psychological hurdle was out of the way the second symphony came easily. Started during a summer holiday in 1877 by Wörther Lake in Austria and essentially complete by November, it was premièred by Hans Richter and the Vienna Philharmonic on 30 Dec that year. The canny Brahms deflected expectations by jokingly telling friends that it was unbearably sad, and his publisher that the score should be printed with black edges. It is, of course, a return to the genial, even sunny, world of his first serenade of twenty years earlier. On hearing a piano run-thought, his friend Clara Schumann astutely wrote that it was “so genial in mood and so cleverly worked-out”, predicting great success. And so it was.

The symphony opens with gentle phrases successively from the 'cellos, horns and then woodwind, soon followed by a more sinuous figure from the first violins. These make up the first group of themes. As this material is expanded there is however contrast on the way, in the form of a martial passage using dotted rhythm. All these features are developed in a rich and complex movement. Brahms moves to the remote key of B major for a beautifully textured Adagio. Shifts between square and compound time, but within the overall slow pulse, add to the variety. Here as throughout the symphony there is a sense of natural progression. As in the first symphony, Brahms provides contrast after the slow movement with a moderately flowing intermezzo rather than a scherzo. There are, however, two quick-tempo sections providing internal variety. A quiet start to the finale belies the exuberance to come, as the movement develops. The rousing closing passage brings a joyful conclusion to a symphony much loved by musicians and audiences alike.

Alastair Whitelaw, October 2017

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WE HOPE YOU  
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CONCERT AND LOOK  
FORWARD TO SEEING  
YOU AGAIN.

Our next concerts...

**Sunday 10 December 2017**

**Music from the Movies**

Conductor Chris Swaffer

RSNO, New Auditorium, 7pm

**Sunday 18 March 2018**

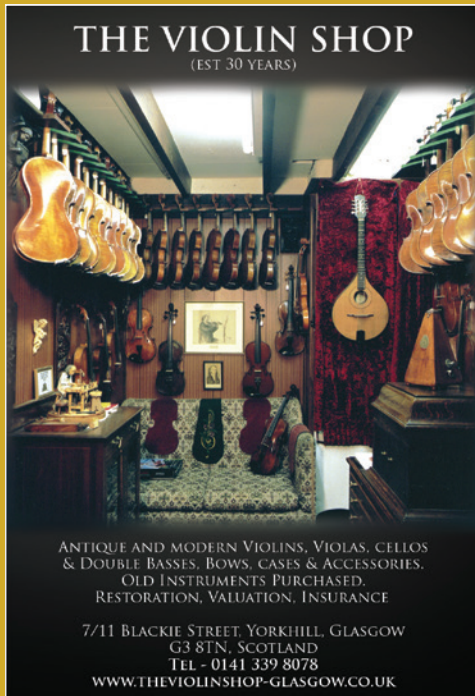
Conductor Stephen Broad

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