

WSO

Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: KEITH SLADE

BEETHOVEN Symphony No 9 "Choral"
with WSO Chorus and soloists

BRAHMS

Violin Concerto
with soloist Katy Smith

PARRY

I Was Glad

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

Saturday 9th May 2026

7:30pm

About the Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra

The Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra traces its origins back to the early 20th century, with our founders including Sir Edward Elgar. The orchestra performs several concerts a year in Worcester, and occasionally elsewhere in the county, under its inspirational conductor Keith Slade. We play with soloists of local, national and international renown, and are committed to the development of musical talent among future Worcestershire generations.

In proudly presenting this evening's performance of three uplifting works from the classical music repertoire we would like to thank: Worcester Cathedral, and its staff and volunteers; Richard Jenkinson, for his support and advice to the string sections of the orchestra; Piers Maxim, Chorus Master, and all of the singers who have joined us to form the WSO Chorus, testament to the great tradition of choral music in the city of Worcester and the county beyond.

2026 Diary dates! **WSO**
Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra
Conductor: KEITH SLADE

BACH - ELGAR - CARWITHEN - MOZART
Saturday 30th May, 1:30pm
Worcester Guildhall
Promoted by Elgar Festival 2026

MENDELSSOHN - MOZART - BARBER
Saturday 11th July, 7:30pm
St Martin's Church, Worcester

BRITTEN - WALTON - ELGAR
Saturday 7th November, 3:00pm
St Martin's Church, Worcester

CHRISTMAS CONCERT
Thursday 10th December, 7:30pm
St Martin's Church, Worcester

Scan here or head to our website to find out more and to book your tickets!

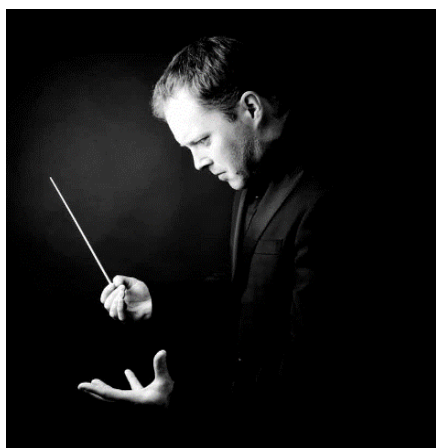
PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING

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Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra receives financial assistance from The Elmley Foundation

Conductor: Keith Slade



Born in the West Midlands, Keith Slade began his musical journey learning the clarinet from the age of ten. After reaching the final of the BBC Young Musician of the Year Woodwind Category, Keith graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music where he was awarded the Hilda Collens' prize. He furthered his studies under the guidance of Angela Malsbury and Nicholas Rodwell on a postgraduate degree at the Royal Academy of Music supported by the Countess of Munster Trust. At the RAM, Keith was awarded the Dorothy Grinstead Memorial Prize for the most outstanding postgraduate, the John Solomon Woodwind and Brass Prize and the Morgenstern's Award.

Keith has extensive experience as an orchestral musician and has worked with many of the great British orchestras including the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the BBC Philharmonic, under Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Colin Davis, Richard Hickox, Pierre Boulez and Andris Nelsons. As a soloist, Keith has performed concerti by Mozart, Finzi, Weber and Copland in venues throughout the UK.

Keith was selected to participate on the Colin Metters' International Conducting Course in 2012. Previous appointments include Head of Wind and Brass at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Junior School and Head of Woodwind at Oakham School. At present he is Head of Woodwind at Solihull School. Keith has conducted Sinfonia of Birmingham, Chandos Symphony Orchestra, The National Schools' Symphony Orchestra, The British Police Symphony Orchestra, Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra, St Endellion Easter Festival Orchestra and the WorldCon Philharmonic Orchestra at London's ExCeL Arena. Keith has worked with artists including James MacMillan, Mark Padmore, Roderick Williams, Sarah Fox and Mark Bebbington.

In January 2010, Keith was appointed Music Director of the Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra where he has seen the ensemble grow from strength-to-strength; WSO performs several concerts each season and Keith is a regular guest on BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester promoting the orchestra and classical music amongst the local community. In 2014 WSO commissioned a new children's work in the style of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, entitled *The Magic Bojabi Tree*, which was a huge success. In 2018 WSO performed in Worcester Cathedral in remembrance of the Armistice Centenary. Continuing his passion for music education, Keith worked with primary schools in the area to create a truly remarkable concert. In recognition of his services to WSO, Keith was honoured to be invited by Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II to a private gathering to celebrate HRH's Diamond Jubilee in Worcester.

As Principal Conductor of Kimichi Symphony Orchestra, Keith received a 5 star review for his performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, "Slade's rehearsal technique is undoubtedly persuasive, and his beat here was clear, unhistrionic and totally effectual" (Birmingham Post, January 2018). He subsequently took the production to the Rudolfinum in Prague, and has since

conducted numerous concerts with KSO which have received 5 stars: “the performance was spine tingling from the start”.

In December 2022 Keith was honoured to have been invited to the Princess of Wales’ Christmas carol concert for his “Services to Music”. Keith also sits on the Board of Severn Arts.

Leader: Victoria Lee



Victoria began playing the violin through Dudley Schools’ Music Service at the age of nine, learning with Linda Fowler and then Ken Farmer. During this time, she played in and led many groups, including the Dudley Schools’ Symphony Orchestra, and was a 1st violinist in the Midland Youth Orchestra, predecessor to the CBSO Youth Orchestra.

She went on to study for a Bachelor of Music degree at King’s College, University of London, studying violin with Gerhard Schmidt at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama during her degree course. During this time Victoria was co-principal of the University of London Orchestra and violinist with various King’s College ensembles including the college main orchestra, as well as the highly regarded Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra.

Victoria now performs violin extensively on an amateur and professional basis including as leader of the Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra, 1st violinist and occasional leader of the Orchestra of St John, Bromsgrove, and with Kings String Quartet.

When not playing her violin, Victoria works as an independent HR Consultant and Coach.



Worcestershire Early Music

Promoting the enjoyment and understanding of music composers before 1800 through our annual concert session, which features artists trained in historically-informed performance.

Future Events:

25 October 2026	Red Priest (Piers Adams & David Wright)
20 December 2026	Siglo de Oro
14 February 2027	Bellot Ensemble
11 April 2027	Musical & Amicable Society

We issue regular newsletters to keep our audiences up to date with both Worcestershire Early Music’s activities as well as concerts and events happening in the local area.

To sign up, please use this page of our website: <https://www.earlymusicworcs.org/contact/>

You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram

THE ORCHESTRA

1st Violin

Victoria Lee (Leader)
Jane Allen-Griffiths
Sarah Bertram
Alison Clennell
Vicky Colbourne
Ian Dow
Kim Ingram
Peter Jackson
Chlöe Phillips
Anita Porter
Sarah Vernon

2nd Violin

Lesley Jackson (Leader)
Sarah Baker
Jennie Bond
Rosemary Cameron
Jenny Fleming
Julie Greenwood
Jane Holwill
Sasha Hvidsten
Katy Kelly
Anne Mitchell
Melanie Pick
Matthew Wood

Viola

Stephen Brind (Leader)
Chris Bertram
Matt Gardner
Jo Joyce
Paul Kelly
Natalie Maynard
Bethany Piper
Paul West

Cello

Sally Alexander (Leader)
Carrie Brett
Richard Brunt
Caroline Channon
Isobel Coltman
Ruth Eyles
Amanda Furniss
India George
John Mills
Kate Moon
Kate Porter

Double Bass

Matthew Stiff
David Best
Ruth Bourne
Helena Evans
Sophie
Simon Smith

Flute and Piccolo

Jenny Argent
Rosie Edgar
Heather Barnes (Piccolo)

Oboe

Maggie Chapman
Pat Murray
Nadia Accili

Clarinet

Rob Porter
Simon Grew

Bassoon and Contrabassoon

Hannah Wrieden
Marcia Heidesch
Richard Tattum (Contra)

Horn

Matthew Bradley
Jim Moffat
Ruth Jones
Julia Burton

Trumpet

Sophie Hughes
David Gibson

Trombones

Les Whitehouse
Craig Sprotson
Mark Oldham (Bass)

Tuba

Simon Ridley

Timpani

Jack Campey

Percussion

Philippa Hillman
Hayden Phillips



THE WSO CHORUS

Soprano

Linda Blackwell
Sarah Bullock
Carlina Carlton
Claudia Cobban
Susie Cockrell
Jessica Dormer
Jenny Guyatt
Rosalind Hopkinson
Es Hoyle
Maxine Ingram
Lucy Lewis
Alison Marlow
Kirsten McDonagh
Pam O'Brien
Christine Perks
Catherine Pritchard
Alison Riddell
Margaret Saunders
Kath Skinner
Louise Tammadge
Carlina Walton
Janet Wareing
Michelle Whitefoot

Alto

Susie Arnold
Marjory Bisset
Joy Black
Libhin Bromley
Jenny Brumhead
Sarah Burgess
Ann Carman
Louise Conneeley
Justine Cosson
Annette de la Cour
Jackie Elgendy
Sarah Fardon

Rachel Gasper
Jo Greenaway
Karen Ingram
Judy Jenkins
Fiona Keith
Alison Kemp
Olivia Kirk
Satyam Makoieva
Mary Marsh
Nicola Matheson
Nicola Preece
Marie Randall
Ruth Reeves
Kathy Roberts
Helen Robinson
Diana Schindler
Penny Searley
Helen Sommerville
Nancy Strange
Deirdre Sutton
Julie Sutton
Fiona Taylor
Carol Thomson
Penny Wagner
Susanna Wolff

Tenor

Pete Crookall
Simon Darley
Frank Davies
Helen Dowson
Chris Harper
Wynne Harries
Robert Jackson
Vincent Kirk
Godfrey Lyne
Jeremy Morfey
Paul Mountain

Tony Ovenell
Adrian Read
Edward Reeves
Nigel Rendell
Ian Thomas
Roland Trafford-Roberts
Kit Williams

Bass

Lawrence Bacon
Richard Betts
Mark Blackwell
Colin Boyne
Clive Buswell
Colin Chandler
Graham Clennell
Phil Clennell
Kevin Dowson
Mike Fardon
Tim Hodgetts
Justin Hughes
William Jenkins
John Kemp
Tim Keyes
Aidan Lawrence
Tom McCanna
David Meachem
Graham Messervy-Whiting
David Moonlight
Cyril Pulleng
David Sims
Paul Strange
Philip Swift
Peter Wagner
Tim Watson

Sir HUBERT PARRY (1848–1918)

I Was Glad

The orderly pomp and opulent choral sound which Parry achieved in this anthem written for Edward VII's coronation in 1901 has made it a fixture for all subsequent coronations; but more than that, it is a clear favourite at choral concerts throughout the land, when something affordable but on a grand scale is required. Parry's setting works equally well with organ or orchestral accompaniment, and the central section with its shouts of *Vivat!* (originally assigned to the Queen's Scholars of Westminster School) can be performed or left out as needed. The words are from Psalm 122. Particularly noteworthy is the beautiful tune in the episode for the semi-chorus: "O pray for the peace of Jerusalem".

*I was glad, glad when they said unto me
We will go into the house of the Lord.
Our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is builded as a city
That is at unity in itself.
O pray for the peace of Jerusalem,
They shall prosper that love thee,
Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces.*

Programme notes provided by Ivor Keys, April 2011 (courtesy of Making Music)

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

Violin Concerto

I. Allegro non troppo e molto;

II. Adagio; III. Allegro giacoso, ma non troppo vivace - poco piu presto

Soloist: Katy Smith



Katy Smith is an international solo violinist recognised for her commanding stage presence, artistic authority and ability to connect with audiences at scale. She has appeared as soloist with orchestras across the United Kingdom and internationally, performing repertoire that spans the core Romantic concertos and beyond.

She made her concerto debut at the age of ten, performing Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* at Birmingham's Adrian Boult Hall after winning the Birmingham Conservatoire Junior Department Concerto Competition. Since then, her artistry, reliability, and collaborative nature have earned her repeat invitations from orchestras and conductors alike.

Smith's artistry is shaped by a distinctive and highly-informed relationship with the violin bow. Her long-standing interest in bow design, balance and response plays a central role in her approach to sound, colour and phrasing, contributing to the clarity and character that define her performances.

In 2024, Smith gave a highly-acclaimed performance of Elgar's Violin Concerto with the Hertfordshire Philharmonia Orchestra, performing the work using Elgar's own bow. (Editor's note: Katy brought Elgar's bow to our rehearsal last week, and it is inscribed with the date 1878, as a gift from the amateur musicians of Worcester.) The performance received a standing ovation and exceptional praise from the Elgar Society, who commended her authority, musical insight and complete command of the concerto.

Her career highlights include being featured soloist with the New English Concert Orchestra at the Battle Proms, a six-concert summer series performed to audiences of up to 10,000. Smith was the first soloist invited back for a second consecutive season and was subsequently selected as the orchestra's featured soloist for its 20th anniversary concert.

In 2022, she stepped in at five days' notice to perform the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto on tour in Prague with the Kimichi Symphony Orchestra, performing the concerto twice in one day.

Alongside her solo work, Smith recently formed a duo partnership with pianist Amy Butler. Their debut recital received glowing critical acclaim, with reviewers praising their "synergistic" collaboration and describing their performances as "as good as it gets".

Smith studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School, the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, where she was placed directly into the Advanced Diploma programme, studying with György Pauk. She has enjoyed success in a number of competitions, including first prize at the Eastbourne Young Soloist Competition, and appeared on national TV as a strings finalist on BBC Young Musician of the Year.

An advocate for musicians with disabilities, Smith lives with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome and is a visible and influential voice within the classical music profession, contributing through performance, public speaking and an engaged online presence.

Smith performs on a rare 18th-century violin by Daniel Parker, often referred to as the "English Stradivarius". Long attributed to Nathaniel Cross, the instrument was only recently identified as a Parker. She is generously sponsored by Pirastro.

Programme Note

Brahms himself would have sharply disliked any programme note which linked his music to any aspect of his character, though the music was intimately bound up with the man. Brahms went to great lengths to avoid any form of probing into his life or the background to his music; he took great care to destroy his letters, sketches and working materials (the story that when he died an envelope was found in his desk marked "*good second subjects*" is entirely apocryphal). Yet paradoxically, Brahms became a great authority on composers of the past, including many figures, such as Schütz, who had been almost completely forgotten in his day. He collected original manuscripts and organised their publication, and was sufficiently versed in musicology to dispute successfully the authorship of the St Luke Passion, which had been wrongly ascribed to J. S. Bach.

Brahms' awareness of his musical past and the way in which that past impinged on his present made him, in one sense, a very modern composer. Few 19th-century musicians, and almost no members of the public, were particularly interested in music of earlier generations; Beethoven

was the only composer of the past to be regularly played. Brahms' constant reference to the past and his advocacy of its music, in parallel with the music of his time, marked him out from his contemporaries, who wrote for the present, expecting their music to be heard for a short while and be forgotten with them. In this Brahms heralded the 20th century's much deeper obsession with its past.

Brahms' highly prickly character meant that friendship with the composer was never uncomplicated, and there were few friends or colleagues with whom Brahms, always prone to speak his mind directly, did not quarrel at some point or other. Antonin Dvořák seems to have been one of the very few who failed to have any sort of argument, another was the Danish composer Niels Gade. One close friend with whom he did eventually fall out spectacularly was the Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim (1831–1907).

Joachim and Brahms first met in Hanover, in the spring of 1853, where Joachim was the leader of the Court Orchestra, although Brahms had in fact heard Joachim five years earlier, playing the Beethoven *Violin Concerto* in a concert conducted by Mendelssohn. Joachim was already regarded as among the greatest violinists of his day, while Brahms was an unknown fledgling composer, acting as accompanist to another violinist on tour. Joachim asked Brahms to play some of his own music and was spellbound by the young man's playing and by the power and intensity of his music.

Joachim's friendship was one of the most significant of Brahms' musical life; not only did Joachim provide an introduction to Robert and Clara Schumann that same year, he was already an experienced composer, more than willing to exchange composition exercises with Brahms. He also had a wide knowledge of contemporary literature, which he shared with Brahms. Joachim gradually gave up composition because he felt that Brahms had outreached him. In November 1860 Brahms conducted Joachim's *Concerto in the Hungarian Manner* with its composer as soloist.

Brahms and Joachim maintained their friendship through lengthy correspondence, especially following Robert Schumann's death in 1856, when Brahms took responsibility for caring for Clara Schumann and her large family. In the spring of 1863 Joachim became engaged to and married the mezzo-soprano Amalie Weiss. Brahms got on extremely well with his friend's new wife and she in turn became a champion of Brahms' music and was a noted interpreter of the *Alto Rhapsody*.

Joachim's long-held hopes of a major work from Brahms were rewarded in 1878 when Brahms completed his *Violin Concerto*; he characteristically left the cadenza un-composed in order that his friend could write his own, now regarded as the standard for the work. Brahms had taken summer holidays at Pörtlach-am-Wörthersee in Carinthia, which he must have found congenial, for here he wrote in consecutive years his *Second Symphony*, the *Violin Concerto* and the *G major Violin Sonata*. He remarked that melodies were so abundant in Pörtlach that "one must be careful not to tread on them". When Brahms completed the *Violin Sonata*, also for Joachim, the friendship between the two men must have seemed as secure as any could be. However, in 1880 Joachim, who had always been a highly-strung artist and could be a jealous husband, initiated divorce proceedings against Amalie alleging adultery with (of all unlikely people) the publisher Fritz Simrock. Brahms, knowing his friend's capacity for overreaction, wrote a long supportive letter to Amalie, giving her permission to use it if she saw necessary, but clearly thinking the episode would blow over. Brahms did not expect that Amalie would produce the letter in open court. Joachim's

case collapsed over this evidence, but he and Amalie were not reconciled and remained separated. Joachim was furious at Brahms' intervention, and broke off all relations, leaving the composer deeply wounded. Brahms did make an effort to repair the friendship, which involved composing the *Double Concerto* for Joachim and Robert Hausmann, the cellist of Joachim's famous quartet, and Joachim was so moved that he too relented and the friendship was repaired for the remainder of Brahms' life.

The *Violin Concerto* is laid out in the traditional three movements. In the first movement, Brahms writes a double exposition—one for the orchestra alone, the second led by the violin. The long opening melody has three sections, an eight-bar phrase for the whole orchestra, a melody for solo oboe and a brisker passage led by the strings. The striking entry of the soloist is followed by a brief moment of reflection, before he sweeps away with a very long-breathed tune, interspersed with much double stopping over a pizzicato accompaniment. This leads into an extended reworking of the opening melody for the soloist. A new theme, in a dotted rhythm, emerges and leads into the cadenza, after which the orchestra has a brief final word.

The slow movement opens with a long oboe solo over a bassoon counterpoint, which is regarded as epitomising that instrument's particular qualities. The violin then meditates on this melody, supported by strings with snatches of woodwind and horns. The whole mood is intimate and tender yet deeply reticent, echoing the complex, reserved character of the composer.

In the finale, Brahms dons the gypsy coat which he had worn before in the *Hungarian Dances*, and in which his music never fails to sound dashing. The soloist and orchestra lead one another through a lively series of dances, the music by turns fiery and relaxed. The final dance whirls away faster than ever before, but the coda is an extraordinary gesture, opened by a chord of B-flat major which contrasts sharply with the preceding passage. Having surprised his audience once, Brahms sets out as if he intends to do so again, and the coda slows down as if for a quiet reflective ending, before three commanding final chords.

Programme notes provided by Dominic Nudd, October 2018 (courtesy of Making Music)



Sunday 20 September 2026 7.30pm
The King's Singers

Sunday 18 October 2026 3.00pm
Jess Gillam with Far Flung Trio

Sunday 15 November 2026 3.00pm
Leon McCawley

Sunday 17 January 2027 3.00pm
Maxwell Quartet

Sunday 21 February 2027 3.00pm
Robert Plane, Rosalind Ventris and Finghin Collins

Sunday 18 April 2027 7.30pm
Ensemble 360 Octet

Sunday 16 May 2027 7.30pm
Steven Isserlis and Connie Shih

Friday 4 and Saturday 5 June 2027
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INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

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SATURDAY 30 MAY

**WORCESTERSHIRE
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1.30pm *The Guildhall, High Street, Worcester WR1 2EY*

Keith Slade conductor

Bach *Brandenburg Concerto no.3*

Elgar *Salut d'Amour*

Doreen Carwithen *Lento for Strings*

Mozart *Symphony no 25 in G minor*

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Photography: Michael Whitefoot



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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Symphony No 9 (“Choral”)

I. Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso; II. Molto vivace – Presto;

III. Adagio molto cantabile – Andante moderato;

IV. Presto – Allegro assai – Alla Marcia: Allegro vivace assai – Andante maestoso – Adagio non troppo, ma divoto – Allegro energico, sempre ben marcato – Allegro ma non tanto – Poco Adagio – Poco Allegro, stringendo il tempo – Prestissimo

Soloists:

Claire Prewer – Soprano



Claire Prewer studied at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama where she was awarded a scholarship on the AGSM Performer’s Course, and subsequently on the Opera Course studying with Johanna Peters and Dr Elizabeth Vaughan.

Although Claire’s training has been primarily classical, she grew up surrounded by recording studios and pop artists so she has always enjoyed singing in a wide variety of styles. She performed at the Royal Albert Hall aged 15 singing pop backing vocals in a concert with Fats Domino, and was delighted to return there in 2019 singing solos in Wagner’s *Ride of the Valkyries* and Mahler’s 8th Symphony with the British Police Symphony Orchestra in their Gala concert. Claire has performed regularly with the BPSO at Beacon Park, Symphony Hall (Birmingham) and singing the soprano solo in a chamber version of the last movement of Mahler’s 4th Symphony (which she arranged with her husband, Richard Jenkinson) live on BBC Radio 3’s ‘In Tune’. Claire has also

performed this same arrangement with members of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra at many of the UK’s leading festivals, including Buxton, Fishguard and Petworth.

Claire is also a composer and was commissioned to write an arrangement of ‘Mo Li Hua’ for a CBSO tour of China and big band arrangements for both Cunard and P&O cruise lines. In 2021 Claire wrote a string arrangement of ‘You Raise Me Up’ which was performed by the British Police Symphony Orchestra for the UK Police Memorial dedication in the presence of the Prince of Wales (now King Charles III), and which was subsequently performed as a full orchestral arrangement which she also sang in Symphony Hall in 2021. In 2019 she wrote, directed and sang in her debut opera, ‘*Sabrina, Spirit of the Severn*’, which was performed by the Orchestra of St John as part of the Bromsgrove Festival in July of that year. In 2024 she wrote a programmatic piece for ‘cello and orchestra called ‘*Kai Awakens*’, which was performed by the Worcestershire Youth Orchestra. She is currently in the process of writing a new musical.

Claire is a respected singing teacher, having taught as a vocal coach at Birmingham School of Acting and The King’s School, Worcester, as well as teaching privately in all genres of music. Her

students regularly gain choral scholarships to Oxford, Cambridge and Durham Universities, as well as all the major British music and drama conservatoires.

Locally, Claire has been a regular soloist with the Orchestra of St John in Bromsgrove (highlights including *Les Illuminations* (Britten), an Opera Gala Night, the soprano solo in Fauré's *Requiem*, *Façade* (Walton), Verdi's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah* and Strauss' *Four Last Songs*). Claire has also sung several times as a soloist in Worcester Cathedral and she is delighted to be performing with the Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra this evening.

Elizabeth Lynch – Mezzo-soprano



Elizabeth is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where she was awarded the Silk Street Award for Opera, the Chartered Surveyors Audience Award for singing and a fellowship of the School. She is a former Glyndebourne New Generation Associate Artist and was a regular member of their ensemble and chorus in 2018–23.

Operatic highlights include: Ankhesenpaaten in Philip Glass's *Akhnaten*, and Lucienne (understudy) in Erich Korngold's *The Dead City* for English National Opera; Dorothee (understudy) in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, "opera diva" in *La Traviata: Behind the Curtain*, and Second Bridesmaid in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Cretan woman in Mozart's *Idomeneo*, and Anna (understudy) in Roxanna Panufnik's *Silver Birch* for Garsington Opera, where Elizabeth was an Alvarez Young Artist; Mercedes

in Bizet's *Carmen* for Waterperry Opera Festival; and a collaboration with Sir John Tomlinson and Susanna Stranders for Opera Cameratina, singing the role of Frugola in Puccini's *Il Tabarro* alongside a series of recitals with Sir John.

A keen champion for new work, Elizabeth has participated in the development of new opera for composers including Mark-Anthony Turnage (*Festen* for the Royal Opera House and *The Railway Children* for Glyndebourne), Colin Matthews (*A Visit to Friends* for The Aldeburgh Festival/Britten Pears Arts) and Helen Caddick (*Sophie* for *Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival 2021*).

Elizabeth has made two operatic films in recent years, Britten's *Phaedra*, directed by Keith Warner and co-starring Sir John Tomlinson, and *Un pâtre* in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* with London Philharmonic Orchestra/VOPERA directed by Rachael Hewer—the latter winning both Sky Arts and Royal Philharmonic Society awards. For Keith Warner, Elizabeth also understudied the role of Cordelia whilst playing a number of smaller roles in *King Lear* at The Grange Festival.

Elizabeth is a regular concert and recital artist, where solo performance highlights have included work with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and concerts at the Barbican and the Wigmore Hall. She performed on Song in the City's debut album *Voices of London: Songs of the Big Smoke*.

Gareth Dafydd Morris – Tenor



Gareth Dafydd Morris studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music. Gareth was contracted for nine years to Welsh National Opera and has recently sung Alfredo in Verdi's *La Traviata*, Torero in Golijov's *Ainadamar*, Mr Bebb in the world premiere of David Hackbridge Johnson's *Blaze of Glory!*, Jim in the world premiere of Will Todd's *Migrations*, Karatayev and Konovnitsyn in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, Cherevin and off-stage voice in Janáček's *From the House of the Dead*, Streshnev in Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*, Kaherdin in Frank Martin's *Le Vin herbé* and Faninal's Major Domo in Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Gareth has also performed as a soloist in WNO Family Concerts in St David's Hall, the Wales Millennium Centre, Plymouth and Hong Kong. Recent covers for WNO include Giuseppe in *La Traviata*, Kuzka in *Khovanshchina*, Pinkerton in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, German Soldier, Private Watcyn and Runner in the

world premiere of Iain Bell's *In Parenthesis* and Malcolm in Verdi's *Macbeth*. Selected roles elsewhere include Des Grieux in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* for English Touring Opera, Cavaradossi in Puccini's *Tosca* for Diva Opera in France, Faust in Boito's *Mefistofele* and the title role in Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux* for Opera Valladolid, Triquet in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* for Opera Holland Park, Borsa in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Bardolfo in Verdi's *Falstaff* and 1st Servant in Strauss' *Capriccio* all for Grange Park Opera, Rodolfo in Puccini's *La Bohème* and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* for OperaUpClose, Jenik in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* for Kentish Opera, Alfred in Johann Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus* and Camille in Lehár's *The Merry Widow* for Opera della Luna.

In demand on the concert platform, Gareth performs internationally all the major works, masses and requiems, notably at Sinfonia Smith Square, Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall, Bridgewater Hall, Birmingham's Symphony Hall, The Sage, St David's Hall, Colston Hall, Brangwyn Hall, and Rochester, Canterbury, Guildford, Bristol, Exeter, Brecon, Llandaff and Carlisle Cathedrals. He has broadcast as a soloist with both the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra on BBC Radio 2, 3 and 4. Gareth earned 4th place in the Lauritz Melchior International Singing Competition in Aalborg, Denmark in 2024, and was runner-up in the Wagner Society's Singing Competition in November 2015, winning the President's Award given by Dame Gwyneth Jones. Future work includes the Duke in a UK and France tour of *Rigoletto*, a Three Tenors concert tour of UK Cathedrals, Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* in London, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at the Cadogan Hall, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Verdi's *Requiem* in Sinfonia Smith Square and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* with CBSO at Symphony Hall, Birmingham.

John Lofthouse – Baritone

Originally from Levens in the Lake District, John read Theology at Durham University before training at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the National Opera Studio.



John has worked for many of the UK's leading opera companies, big and small—including Glyndebourne, Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera and English National Opera. Operatic roles include the title role in Handel's *Imeneo* with Baroque Encounter, Danilo in Lehár's *The Merry Widow* and Leporello in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* for Opera della Luna, Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance* for the International G&S Festival, Sacristan in Puccini's *Tosca*, Amantio in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Morales in Bizet's *Carmen* and Frank in Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus* for Opera Holland Park and March Hare and the White Knight in Will Todd's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* at the Royal Opera House.

Concert performances include Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and Stainer's *Crucifixion* in Germany; Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* in Iași, Romania; C. P. E. Bach's *Magnificat* in Dunblane Cathedral, Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony* in Chichester Cathedral, Handel's *Messiah* in Carlisle, Liverpool and Portsmouth Cathedrals, Vaughan Williams' *Mystical Songs* in Rochester Cathedral, 'Pink Champagne' and *HMS Pinafore* with the RLPO, Mozart's *Requiem* in the Royal Albert Hall, Rachmaninov's *The Bells* in Southampton Guildhall, Britten's *War Requiem* in Kendal and the Celebrant in Bernstein's *Mass* at The Anvil, Basingstoke.

Future performances include Bartolo in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* for New Arts; further performances of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* for Opera Holland Park and a tour of a musical variety act featuring the work of both Flanders & Swann and Hinge & Bracket.

Programme Note

The importance of Beethoven's nine symphonies to the subsequent history of music cannot be exaggerated, and the final *Ninth* was to become a cultural icon within a generation of its first performance. But this last symphonic offering from the completely deaf composer didn't come to him easily, as years of entries in his notebooks make clear. There had been no new symphony for 12 years, during which he had struggled with new ideas that would make any subsequent symphony appeal to a universal public. The most significant feature of the D minor Symphony was the use of soloists and chorus in the final movement, and here, in his setting of his own adaptation of Schiller's *An die Freude (Ode to Joy)*, of 1785, there is a feeling that he is turning his back on the troubles of his private life and looking forward to the harmony of mankind, a thought obviously in the minds of those who chose the tune for the anthem of the European Union.

As time passed, the symphony became increasingly politicised, especially its choral finale, as its inner depths were interpreted as an autobiographical outpouring from the composer, with the first movements representing his search for joy and happiness then to be jubilantly fulfilled in the finale. Then it was Wagner's turn. He considered the symphony to be a representation of the Creation myth, ultimately revealing that "every human soul is made for joy". He went as far as to say that the inclusion of voices, transcending purely instrumental music, provided a vision of his own ideas where the use of the word transformed music into universal art. Following the revolutionary fervour of the mid-19th century the *millionen* of the finale became the millions of men and women who had gained their freedom and subsequent happiness. The idea became

current that the word *Freude* had been substituted for *Freiheit* to placate the censors, as the text would have been an *Ode to Freedom*. For the Nazis the symphony was a monument to Teutonic culture, but the fact that all men should 'become brothers' applied to Aryans only. The *Freiheit* substitution returned when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and the symphony was again harnessed to celebrate the triumph of Western democracy over Communism. No doubt Beethoven would have been bemused by such interpretations and uses of his symphony.

The First Performance

The new symphony was commissioned in 1817 by the Royal Philharmonic Society of London and performance rights were purchased for 18 months for a sum of £50. Beethoven failed to keep his promise, however, and allowed the first performance to take place in Vienna, at the Kärntnertor Theatre, on 7 May 1824. It was only after considerable confusion that the use of the theatre was granted after approaches for the booking of other venues had been turned down. Beethoven was on the point of moving the first performance to Berlin, but was finally persuaded by a petition from the leading musicians and citizens of Vienna appealing to him "not to withhold any longer from the popular enjoyment ... the performance of the latest masterworks of your hand." As was usual on these occasions, the concert was a massive affair, opening with the 'grand overture' *The Consecration of the House* followed by the *Kyrie*, *Credo* and *Agnus Dei* from the *Missa Solemnis* (described as 'Three Grand Hymns' so as not to offend the censor). Only then was the audience able to hear the new symphony.

Not only did finding a suitable venue cause a problem but the choice of soloists did, too. Although soprano Henriette Sontag and contralto Caroline Unger were expecting to take part, only a couple of weeks before the concert the name of another soprano was being spoken of, leaving Sontag in a state of frustration. In the event the original choice held the day. And, as for the men, Franz Jäger was first considered, but he turned the part down claiming that the music was too low for him. Similarly the bass was to have been Joseph Preisinger, but he found his part too high. Finally Anton Haitzinger and, just two days before the performance, Joseph Seipelt filled the vacancies. Michael Umlauf conducted but the stone-deaf composer sat alongside him to set the tempos. Additional instrumentalists and singers were drawn from the amateurs of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. Despite the problems, the performance was not a complete disaster and the audience applauded wildly, not only at the end, but during, too. Beethoven was not aware of the reception the symphony had received, although the audience had had to struggle to understand such difficult music, and it fell to the young Caroline Unger to turn him to face the audience and his rapturous reception on this historic occasion. The press was similarly appreciative, the *Allgemeine musikalische* declaring that Beethoven's "inexhaustible genius had shown us a new world".

It was not until March 1825 that the symphony received its promised hearing in London, but English critics were not as generous as their Viennese colleagues, finding the work over-long, eccentric and crude.

The Music

Although revolutionary in so many ways the *Choral Symphony* owes much to Classical tradition, but in simple musical terms it represents a great victory of the tonic major over the tonic minor

key. The opening *Allegro* possibly represents Beethoven's greatest achievement in sonata form. The mysterious introductory opening gathers momentum until the first subject breaks out with a powerful unison. A varied group of themes forms the second subject and continues resolutely to its final fanfare. For the only time in the symphonies the exposition material is not repeated, but it is developed with drama and pathos until the recapitulation bursts out explosively with a triumphant D major. To end, the Coda returns to an unequivocal D minor but not without excursions into the major key, notably in the famous horn solo.

Beethoven placed the *Scherzo* second, rather than in the usual third position. There is an electrifying opening to be followed by extended stretches of fugato all still firmly planted in D minor with the help of the octave-tuned timpani. The luminous, pastoral trio section turns to D major helping the key to make its way to final victory.

Extremely beautiful, the *Adagio* is based on two alternating themes, one hymn-like, and the other a warmer, more fluid *Andante* announced in D major. Each is developed with variations. A passage in the *Adagio*, which otherwise would have been impossible to play, suggests that Beethoven knew that his fourth horn player possessed one of the newly-invented valved horns.

The sublimity of the slow movement is shattered by a loud discordant outburst from the orchestra. Beethoven's big problem now was to metamorphose an instrumental work into one which employed the human voice without the appearance of it being a vocal cantata merely tacked on. His answer was to briefly review each of the previous movements and then to provide the bass soloist with a recitative that looks back and then forward — "O friends, not these sounds! But let us sing something more pleasant, and more full of gladness". Then D major really establishes itself in its final victory with the 'Joy' theme. Beethoven had already used a version of this tune as early as 1808 in the choral finale to his *Fantasia for Piano, Chorus and Orchestra*, Op. 80. Now, heard first in the orchestra, with a brief interruption from the Turkish march, it was to shine forth in all its glory, with a number of variations, in the choral finale, all four soloists and choir carrying forward music of ecstasy and spiritual devotion.

Programme notes provided by John Dalton, February 2007 (courtesy of Making Music)

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Friedrich Schiller's *An die Freude* (Ode to Joy), as adapted by Beethoven

O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!
Sondern laßt uns angenehmere anstimmen,
und freudenvollere!
Freude!
Freude!
Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum.
Deine Zauber binden wieder
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.
Wem der große Wurf gelungen,
Eines Freundes Freund zu sein;
Wer ein holdes Weib errungen,
Mische seinen Jubel ein!
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele
Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle
Weinend sich aus diesem Bund!
Freude trinken alle Wesen
An den Brüsten der Natur;
Alle Guten, alle Bösen
Folgen ihrer Rosenspur.
Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,
Einen Freund, geprüft im Tod;
Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben,
Und der Cherub steht vor Gott.
Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen
Durch des Himmels prächt'gen Plan,
Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,
Freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen.
Seid umschlungen, Millionen!
Diesen Kuß der ganzen Welt!
Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt
Muß ein lieber Vater wohnen.
Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?
Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!
Über Sternen muß er wohnen.

O friends, not these sounds!
But let us sing something more pleasant,
And more full of gladness!
Joy!
Joy!
Joy, beautiful spark of divinity,
Daughter of Elysium,
We enter, drunk with fire,
Thy sanctuary, heavenly one.
Thy magic power reunites
What custom has strictly divided;
All men become brothers,
Under the sway of thy gentle wings.
Whoever has created
An abiding friendship;
Or has won a true and loving wife,
Join our song of jubilation!
Yes, all who can call just one soul
Theirs on this earth!
But those who cannot must creep
Tearfully away from our union!
All creatures drink of joy
At nature's breast;
All the just, all the evil
Follow her trail of roses.
She gave us kisses and grapes,
A true friend, proven in death;
Ecstatic pleasure was given to the worm,
And the cherub stands before God.
Gladly, as His suns fly
Through the heavens' grand plan,
Brothers, go on your way running,
Joyfully, like a hero going to victory.
You millions, I embrace you!
This kiss is for all the world!
Brothers, above the starry canopy
There must dwell a loving Father.
Are you faltering, you millions?
World, do you know your creator?
Seek Him in the starry canopy!
Above the stars must He dwell.



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