



SATURDAY 29 MARCH 2025

**ALL SAINTS, WEST DULWICH
LONDON SE21 8JY**

**DULWICH SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**

CONDUCTOR: CHRIS STARK

LEADER: PAULA TYSALL

SIBELIUS

PAN AND ECHO

HOLST

‘COTSWOLD’ SYMPHONY

BRAHMS

SYMPHONY No.2



PAN AND ECHO

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865-1957)

This is one of Sibelius's shortest free-standing orchestral pieces, only 122 bars (I've counted), so I'll try to make sure it doesn't take you longer to read this programme note than it does for us to perform the piece. It's an intensely concentrated little Sibelius tone poem - he called it a Dance Intermezzo - and it might say more than you suspect about where we are in the great Finnish composer's life and musical evolution.

It's 1906, Sibelius is 40 and becoming famous not just at home in Finland, but in wider Europe, increasingly identified as an important voice for Finnish identity at a time of resistance against Russian subjugation. Sibelius's Finlandia, Second Symphony, Violin Concerto, and incidental music for Maeterlinck's play Pelleas and Melisande (the theme for 'The Sky At Night') were all successful. Sibelius had also been increasingly inspired by Finland's national folk epic the Kalevala, with its creation myth and tales of great voyages and heroic deeds - Tolkien borrowed from it for his Middle Earth mythologies.

Sibelius's major orchestral work in 1906 was a tale from the Kalevala: 'Pohjola's Daughter', the story of the bard-magician Väinämöinen, who falls for the moon god's beautiful daughter, seated at her spinning wheel at the top of a rainbow. But she spurns his advances, and Väinämöinen retreats on his sleigh in a fury. It's one of Sibelius's most detailed and descriptive tone poems...in some ways the opposite of Pan and Echo, which is mysteriously (mischievously?) compressed in comparison. But they're written around the same time, the arc of the stories is similar, and so is the music.

Sibelius wrote Pan and Echo to help raise funds for a new concert hall in Helsinki, and conducted the first performance himself with the Helsinki Philharmonic Society Orchestra, 119 years ago in March 1906. Why it's so short we don't know, nor how it was received - Sibelius didn't even leave us an explicit storyline. In Greek mythology Pan is the wild god of shepherds and rustic music, part-man, part-goat, libidinous and lecherous, linked to fertility and spring, hanging out with a succession of nymphs. Not all of them enjoy their encounters with Pan, and Echo is one of them, a beautiful singer and dancer, who scorns the attention of men. In one legend Pan and Echo have two children together, but that's not the scenario Sibelius is describing; there's no 'happy-ever-after' here.



Pan appears with the solo bassoon, followed by wisps of his flute over delicate strings as he tries to seduce Echo, with surges of romantic passion and eloquent beseeching in the cellos. Echo seems to demonstrate her indifference by dancing, and then it all goes wrong... another legend relates that Pan is infuriated by Echo's dismissive attitude, and orders his followers to tear her to pieces; there's a sudden outburst of savagery as the orchestra accelerates to the end. In the myth, the earth goddess Gaia gathers up Echo's remains, and her voice can still be heard repeating the ends of other people's sentences. But if there are echoes to be heard fluttering after the brutal ending of Sibelius's miniature tone poem, perhaps they are in the music that followed? Sibelius was about to embark on his Third Symphony, a more original path in his orchestral music after the relative romanticism of the first two symphonies. Pohjola's Daughter and Pan and Echo are definitely steps in that new direction.

I reckon that took you about three minutes to read - enjoy the music!

Andrew McGregor

SYMPHONY NO.8 IN F MAJOR "THE COTSWOLDS"

GUSTAV HOLST (1874-1934)

i) Allegro con brio ii) Elergy Molto adagio iii) Scherzo Presto iv) Finale Allegro moderato

Holst's Symphony Op 8 in F (The Cotswold) is his only symphony just for orchestra (though he also wrote a choral symphony) and is one of his earliest works, completed in 1900, when he was 25. At the time he was working as a professional trombonist with the Carl Rosa opera company. It premiered in April 1902 by the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra.

Holst grew up in the Cotswolds and went to school in Cheltenham. In his late teens he was given the job of organist and choirmaster at Wyck Rissington in Gloucestershire and also conducted the choral society in Bourton-on-the-Water. He moved to London when he was 20 to continue his musical studies, but remembered fondly the Cotswold hills where he had enjoyed walking, and to which he returned throughout his life. In this symphony he conjures up a picture of the landscape.

The symphony has four movements of different lengths and styles. The first movement, *allegro con brio*, lasts only about 3 minutes and is a joyful and vigorous evocation of the countryside, starting with a brass fanfare and continuing with allusions to English folk song.

The second movement, *Elegy*, is the longest and most significant, and is sometimes performed on its own. It is an elegy in memory of William Morris, the social reformer, writer, designer and artist who Holst greatly admired. It offers a real contrast from the first movement, starting slowly and quietly with a repeated rhythm on one note by a single horn, setting a shadowy, funereal tone. The horn is joined by the woodwind, introducing a slow, mournful tune, which is then taken up by the strings. The initial horn rhythm reappears later in the movement played by the tuba, timps and bass, as the music moves slowly to a huge climax, before subsiding quietly at the end. The movement has been referred to as “Wagnerian”, perhaps inspired by Siegfried’s march in *Götterdämmerung*.

The third movement is a *Scherzo* which returns to the lighter mood of the first movement. It is followed by the *Finale*, *allegro moderato*, which again celebrates the countryside with elements of folk song. The influence of both Brahms and Holst’s composition teacher, Charles Villiers Stanford, is evident in the movement. It starts with a horn and trumpet tune, which is then taken up by the woodwind, accompanied by the strings, then the second subject is introduced by the strings. The symphony ends with a triumphant fanfare by brass and wind, accompanied by scurrying violins.

DSO has enjoyed getting to know this rarely played symphony and has appreciated its tuneful exuberance which contrasts with the moving slow movement.

Liz Cleary

Interval drinks are available in the church (donations to the orchestra gratefully received)

SYMPHONY NO.2 IN D MAJOR

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

i) *Allegro non troppo* ii) *Adagio non troppo* iii) *Allegretto grazioso* iv) *Allegro con spirito*

“The new symphony is so melancholy that you won’t stand it. I have never written anything so sad”. So wrote Brahms, tongue in cheek, to his publisher during the composition of his second symphony. It was of course a joke: this new work was full of warmth and happiness.

And the composition came relatively easily. While his first symphony had taken many years to complete, Brahms wrote his second shortly afterwards in only a few months. This was in the summer of 1877, much of which he spent in southern Austria, surrounded by mountains and lakes. When the composer’s friend Theodor Billroth heard the piece he declared that “it is all blue sky, babbling of streams, sunshine and cool green shade.” As one would expect with Brahms, the score is a masterpiece of motivic writing and there are serious elements in mood and structure that underlie the contentment. But while there are certainly darker moments, these come as passing shadows across a largely sunlit landscape.

The first movement is in sonata form. At the very beginning we hear a four-note phrase on the lower strings, introducing a beautiful horn melody. It is from both of these that ideas are developed in all four movements. For the second subject Brahms quotes from his own *Wiegenlied* (Cradle Song – Op. 49 no. 4), and this is followed by a contrasting, energetic passage. After a powerful and at times stern development section, the recapitulation is slightly more reflective than the opening, with many inventive changes to the original material. At the end of the movement, just as the music appears to be coming to a calm conclusion, Brahms adds a charming little coda with *pizzicato* strings and playful woodwind, as if to close with a smile.



Johannes Brahms

The second movement is the radiant centre of the symphony, consisting of a broad, glowing *adagio* in B major, with a more urgent middle section. By contrast, the third movement introduces a different mood, a gracious *allegretto*, with a charming, lilting melody that is interrupted by two boisterous *presto* sections.

The final movement (*Allegro con spirito*) begins mysteriously *sotto voce*, and then explodes in an outburst of joy. A broad hymn-like second theme (*largamente*) soon appears. Later a calm *tranquillo* passage introduces a temporary element of doubt and uncertainty, but this soon gives way to an affirmative recapitulation and a return to the generous warmth that has pervaded the work. Hitherto the lower brass has been used sparingly, mainly for small touches of colour, but in the final pages it is summoned to support an extended coda which brings Brahms’ sunniest symphony to a blazing D major conclusion.

Charles Mackworth-Young

Chris Stark is based in South East London. He began as a cellist, turning to conducting whilst a choral scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge.

As a co-founder of the RPS Award Winning Multi-Story Orchestra, he has conducted all the Orchestra's car park performances since their inception with The Rite of Spring in 2011, including celebrated performances at the BBC Proms.

Away from Multi-Story, he works mostly in opera, for organisations that include Glyndebourne, Oper Köln, Garsington, English Touring Opera and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Committed to community music, he is principal conductor of the Ernest Read and Blackheath Halls Symphony Orchestras. He has recorded for NMC and broadcast with both Multi-Story and the Aurora Orchestra.

Paula Tysall studied violin at the Centre for Young Musicians, the Royal College of Music and the National Centre for Orchestral Studies.

As a member of the New London Orchestra she has recorded for Hyperion Records, made broadcasts for the BBC and Classic FM, appeared at the Proms and in Matthew Bourne's award winning Swan Lake. She has played with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia and English National Ballet, and also has performed in many operas, shows, and chamber music concerts.

She leads the Blackheath Halls Orchestra and recently took over shared running of the Minehead Orchestral Festival and is delighted that Chris Stark has become their new Musical Director.

Paula teaches at Westminster School and has just a few private pupils.

Violin 1
Paula Tysall
Helen Bartholomew
Marc Callonnec
Tessa Crilly
Ruth Holton
Emma Owen
Piers Patten
Nancy Simpson
Wendy Talbot
Kate Vineall

Violin 2
Jane Howard
Gillian French
Andrew Fryer
Lucy Galloway
Stephen Holt
Virginia Kennedy
Andrew McGregor
Ishani O'Connor
Chris Shone
Jessica Smith
Fi Treharne

Viola
David Lawes
Joe Berry
Liz Cleary
Will Lawrence
Nicola Prior
Sophia Swanepoel
Alan Taylor
Imogen Tedbury
Sally Winter

Cello
Nicky Jackson
Russell Ashley-Smith
Sarah Bort
Karen Bowman
Laura Bradley
Fiona Clarey
Rebecca Clarke
Emma Geoghegan
Nikolay Gromov

Catherine Johnson
Annabelle Juritz
Celia Kent

Double Bass
Sylvain Letall
Sam Wise
Flute
Alison Gill
Sam Purser

Oboe
Ian Finn (and cor anglais)
Louise Simon

Clarinet
Claire Richards
Ally Rosser

Bassoon
Jeremy Crump
Penny Whittingham

French Horn
Mary Cowlett
Henry Osmond
David Aylmer
Jay Sewell

Trumpet
John-Paul de Soissons
Susan Emmons
Will Fletcher

Trombone
Frances Barrett
Charles Mackworth-Young
David Syer

Tuba
Martin Oxenham

Percussion
Theo Francis-Crossley
Juho Hwang



Elfrida André

Concert Overture

Dvorak

Cello Concerto

Soloist: Sophie Kauer (*Tár*)

Schumann

Symphony No.2

Saturday 28 June 19:30 All Saints, West Dulwich

