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Vaughan Williams A Sea Symphony



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Cambridge Philharmonic presents

Claude Debussy

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune

John Ireland

These Things Shall Be

Interval

Ralph Vaughan Williams

A Sea Symphony

Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra

Cambridge Philharmonic Chorus

Tom Primrose *conductor*

Simon Hewitt Jones *leader*

Jenny Stafford *soprano*

Armand Rabot *baritone*

Part of Cambridge Summer Music Festival

Mighty music to thrill the skies

Whether it is the startlingly beautiful flute solo which opens tonight's concert, the fate theme which launches us into John Ireland's twenty-minute choral masterpiece, or the arresting brass chords which provoke the chorus to exclaim 'Behold the sea', mighty music, in the words of John Addington Symonds, will thrill the skies. You will hear magnificent orchestral writing, beautiful melodies and exceptional opportunities for the chorus and soloists to take us far out into the ocean of our imaginations.

There is something else special about tonight's music, too. It offers us a glorious window into a certain style of music at a certain time and in a certain geographically cultural setting. Here is the evolving English tradition – Elgar, on the way to Britten, Judith Weir, Elizabeth McConachie and later Turnage, leavened with the French colours of Debussy and Ravel. And so, in Walt Whitman's words: 'Away O soul. Hoist instantly the anchor' and – he might have added – enjoy!

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune

It is a hot summer's day. A playful faun, half-man, half goat, is messing around in the woods doing his best to catch and conquer passing nymphs – well the sun is up and he's feeling ready for anything! His intended conquests are not, however, and as the afternoon heat builds the faun gives up, lies down and sinks into a blissful sleep, loaded with pleasantly erotic reveries of what might have been. Claude Debussy, like so many of his contemporaries, read, and was entranced by, Stéphane Mallarmé's poem *L'après-midi d'une faune*. It proved to be the inspiration for one of his best loved works: not a literal rendering of what Mallarmé had written but rather his own impressionistic sound-painting of it.

Mallarmé was initially having none of it, convinced that his words were music enough. That is until he heard what the composer had come up with, after which he wrote Debussy a letter which said: 'I have just come out of the concert, deeply moved. The marvel! Your illustration of the *Afternoon of a Faun*, which presents no dissonance with my text, but goes much further, really, into nostalgia and into light, with finesse, with sensuality, with richness. I shake your hand admiringly, Debussy. Yours, Mallarmé

Claude Debussy was something of a musical prodigy, although he did not come from a musical background. His father had a china shop (which went

bust) and his mother was a seamstress. Nevertheless, he entered the Paris Conservatoire aged just ten, against the wishes of its more conservative professors, and studied there for eleven years. Depending on which teacher was writing he was either 'a charming child, a truly artistic temperament,' or 'desperately careless.' Interestingly, the young student, aged 18, got a job in 1880 as a pianist in the household of Nadezhda von Meck, the woman who was the Patron of Tchaikovsky.

Claude Debussy was often a controversial figure, firstly because of his experimental approach to music (he and Camille Saint-Saens did not see eye to eye, for example!), and secondly because he took up with the mother of one of his students, the ex-mistress of Gabriel Fauré, whilst they were both still married to other people. They ran away, initially, to a hotel in Eastbourne where Debussy finished his three-movement sea-portrait *La Mer*.

Debussy gave us a treasury of piano pieces, *Preludes* and *Etudes*, *Nocturnes*, *Images* and the ballet score *Jeux*. He wrote that "the beauty of a work of art will always remain a mystery [...] we can never be absolutely sure 'how it's made.' We must at all costs preserve this magic which is peculiar to music and to which music, by its nature, is of all the arts the most receptive." He hated being labelled impressionistic but to many people that's what his music suggests.

What else to listen to: *Syrinx* (for solo flute), *String Quartet*, *La Mer*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (opera).

John Ireland (1879-1962)

These things shall be

Composer, performer, organist and teacher (his pupils included Edward Moran and Benjamin Britten), John Ireland is chiefly known for his piano miniatures, a fine piano concerto (extremely popular at the time but now not performed very often), church music, violin sonatas, some chamber works, and for his settings of poems by Christina Rossetti, Thomas Hardy, A.E. Houseman, John Masefield and Rupert Brooke. His exquisite setting of Masefield's *Sea Fever* is, for example, one of the jewels of the baritone repertoire. He also wrote the score for the film, *The Australian Overlanders*.

A lifelong 'bachelor' (although, rather like Tchaikovsky, he was briefly married to a young student, a relationship that was almost certainly never consummated), Ireland, most probably gay, was celebrated during his lifetime. A special prom concert was organised in his honour when he was seventy in

1949. He was a lifelong friend and confidante of Vaughan Williams (they were students together), and indeed Vaughan Williams left a warm congratulatory message in a 75th birthday book for his friend, and he conducted a performance of *These things shall be* in 1949.

These things shall be was commissioned by the BBC for its 1937 concert, celebrating the crowning of King George VI. Ireland chose to set verses from John Addington Symonds poem *A vista* which offers a utopian vision of a future in which free people ('a loftier race') would live peaceably with one another and use science to 'plant man's lordship firm on nature'. Ireland thought the words of the poem were 'an expression of British national feeling at the time'. Such an optimistic almost Nietzschean vision is deeply ironic given the death, destruction and mayhem Europe suffered for six years, just two years later. Addington Symonds' words today, in the shadow of wars, climate change and venality, seem increasingly unrealistic.

A four-note fate motif opens the work which has strong affinities with the style of Vaughan Williams, mixed in with hints of Elgar and Debussy. Throughout this superb twenty-minute piece Ireland's pessimism struggles with the optimism of the poem with its affirmative melodies, rich post-romantic orchestration and soaring choral writing. Only the soloist offers quiet lyrical contrast to the large, hymn-like outbursts of choral glory, and by the end of the piece the doom-laden fate theme is finally vanquished.

What else to listen to: *Sea Fever* (a setting of John Masefield's poem), *Piano Concerto in E-flat major*, *The Holy Boy* (piano solo), *A Downland Suite*.

Interval

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Symphony No 1 – A Sea Symphony

1. A song for all seas, all ships
2. On the beach at night, alone
3. Scherzo: The Waves
4. The Explorers

The text for *A Sea Symphony* is taken from poems by Walt Whitman, considered a founding father of contemporary American literature. A sometime reporter, novelist and print worker, in 1855 Whitman anonymously wrote and published a short book of poems called *Leaves of grass*. The book

might have disappeared from view but for the rave review it got from Ralph Waldo Emerson, a poet, philosopher, abolitionist and, according to Whitman, 'the master.' Waldo's good opinion helped to make *Leaves of grass* a massively important American work with its celebration of nature, human sensuality (which shocked some commentators at the time) and American democracy (although he pointedly ignored the plight of indigenous tribes). Whitman revised and expanded his collection six times before his death in 1892. Years later, in the 1950s, his poetry was an important guiding light for beat poets such as Allen Ginsburg and Jack Kerouac, and in 1980 Michael Gore and Dean Pitchford took the title of one of his poems *I sing the body electric* (a paean to the human anatomy) and repurposed it for the grand finale of the immensely popular musical movie *Fame*.

By the early twentieth century *Leaves of grass* was a huge hit in the UK. Vaughan Williams was introduced to it by Bertrand Russell when they were both students. Many composers turned to it for inspiration including Stanford, Bliss, Delius (*Sea Drift*) and Vaughan Williams' great friend Gustav Holst (*Ode to Death, Walt Whitman Overture*). None were more effective than Ralph Vaughan Williams, however, who, in a blaze of creative fire, used an orchestra in full cry, soloists, and a hard-working chorus to create this immense choral symphony. It was composed between 1903 and 1909, around the same time as he was working on the far more acetic *Fantasia on a theme of Thomas Tallis* for battered-down, mystical strings. To be able to create significant and long-lasting magic in two such contrasting spheres – and relatively early in a composing career – was an extraordinary feat for someone who was still relatively unknown.

Born at Down Ampney in Gloucestershire to a reasonably well-off family, VW, as he became universally known, always wanted to dedicate himself to music, though his family were unsure he had what was needed for such a career. He studied at Charterhouse (a posh public school) and then the Royal College of Music, before going on to Trinity College, Cambridge. He idolised his teacher at the RCM, Hubert Parry, writing later in his autobiography:

Parry once said to me: 'Write choral music as befits an Englishman and a democrat'. We pupils of Parry have, if we have been wise, inherited from him the great English choral tradition, which Tallis passed on to Byrd, Byrd to Gibbons, Gibbons to Purcell, Purcell to Battishill and Greene, and they in their turn through the Wesleys, to Parry. He has passed on the torch to us and it is our duty to keep it alight.

The young VW then went to Trinity College, Cambridge where his composition teacher was Charles Villiers Stanford, whose musical conservatism rubbed the young man up the wrong way. They argued, but Stanford recognised a student already on the way to finding his own musical voice. He may have been writing in the shadow of English composers Elgar and Parry, but he was also influenced by the impressionism of Debussy, and by the few intense months that he studied with Maurice Ravel.

Another important element that went into the Vaughan Williams' style was his extensive work, along with others such as Cecil Sharp and Lucy Broadwood, collecting the indigenous music of the United Kingdom. Without their extensive journeying around the country a whole folk tradition, which is today so important in the cultural life of Britain, might have faded from view. What they did with the songs and melodies they collected is still controversial in the folk world, however. The collectors have been accused of stealing the creativity of ordinary working men and women, insisting on a romanticised pastoral, and then prettifying it as they bent it to their more classical sensibilities. Whether you buy that argument or not, Ralph Vaughan Williams incorporated folk tunes in early works like *The Norfolk Rhapsody* and *Five variants of Dives and Lazarus*, and borrowed them for hymns in his work as editor of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. The tune he used for *O little town of Bethlehem*, for example, was originally a folk song called *The Ploughman's Dream*.

When the Leeds Festival commissioned a new work in 1910 VW had been working with Whitman's poems for a first symphony which he originally called *The Ocean*. The sea, after all, was a popular topic at the time. Think for example, of Elgar's *Sea Pictures* (1898), and Debussy's *La Mer* (1905). Vaughan Williams had already set some of Whitman's words from *Leaves of grass* for *Towards the unknown region*, premiered in Leeds three years earlier and about which one critic praised the 'perfect maturity of his genius.... earnestness and invention...piling climax upon climax'.

A Sea Symphony is on a different scale altogether. Sixty minutes in length, it is a major work. The orchestral writing is varied, colourful and romantic. The choral writing is superb, full-throated and apparently omnipresent, the tone by turns celebratory and doubting, playful and awe-inspiring. The dramatic brass fanfare which leads to the exultant *Behold the Sea* ushers in something special – nothing less than an existential quest for the journey of the soul because: 'We are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go and we risk the ship, ourselves and all.'

A song for all seas, all ships with its juxtaposition of minor and major, brings us the awesome force of the sea, its dashing spray (in a shanty-like section) before the soprano offers up the soul of man and laments all who are lost at sea.

On the beach at night alone is a gentle nocturne, with waves lapping at the shore as the baritone questions humankind's place in the universe.

The Waves gives us the power and frolicsome push and pull of the restless ocean in a glittering scherzo.

And then, finally, we are all ***The Explorers***, searching for our place, setting sail, but not before a wonderful duet between the soloists which ends: 'Away O soul. Hoist instantly the anchor', and we set off on our final voyage.

Ursula Vaughan Williams, her husband's much younger widow and lifelong custodian of his legacy, wrote: 'There is in his work a fundamental tension between traditional concepts of belief and morality and a modern spiritual anguish which is also visible.'

Vaughan Williams died suddenly aged 85, a beloved figure, champion of the great tradition of English music, but also of new compositions, and the writer of operas, chamber music, orchestral and choral music, film scores, and nine great symphonies.

*The tide flows in, the tide flows out
Twice every day, returning*

From *Just as the tide was flowing*, a folk song collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams from Mr Harper, Kings Lynn 1905.

What else to listen to: Symphonies Nos 2 – 9, especially No 2 *The London Symphony* and No 5, *The Lark Ascending*, *Riders to the Sea* (opera), *A Serenade to Music*, *Tuba Concerto*.

Programme notes: Jeremy Harmer

Texts

These things shall be

Text: John Addington Symonds

Say, heart, what will the future bring
To happier men when we are gone?
What golden days shall dawn for them,
Transcending all we gaze upon?

These things shall be! A loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of science in their eyes.

They shall be gentle, brave and strong,
Not to shed drop of blood, but dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm
On earth and fire and sea and air.

Nation with nation, land with land,
Inarmed shall live as comrades free ;
In every brain and heart shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.

They shall be simple in their homes,
And splendid in their public ways,
Filling the mansions of the state
With music and with hymns of praise.

In aisles majestic, halls of pride,
In gardens, groves, and galleries,
Manhood and youth and age shall meet
To grow by converse inly wise.

New arts shall bloom of loftier mould,
And mightier music thrill the skies,
And every life shall be a song,
When all the earth is paradise.

These things – they are no dream – shall be
For happier men when we are gone:
Those golden days for them shall dawn,
Transcending all we gaze upon.

A Sea symphony

Text by Walt Whitman

1. A Song for all seas, all ships

Chorus

Behold, the sea itself,
And on its limitless, heaving breast, thy ships;
See, where their white sails, bellying in the wind, speckle the green and blue,
See, thy steamers coming and going, steaming in or out of port,
See, dusky and undulating, their long pennants of smoke!
Behold, the sea itself,
And on its limitless, heaving breast, thy ships.

Baritone solo and chorus

Today a rude brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal,
Of unnamed heroes in the ships – of waves spreading and spreading far as the
eye can reach,
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing,
And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations,
Fitful, like a surge.
Of sea-captains young or old, and the mates, and of all intrepid sailors,
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise nor death
dismay.
Picked sparingly without noise by thee old ocean, chosen by thee,
Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and unitest nations,
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

Soprano solo and chorus

Flaunt out O sea your separate flags of nations!
Flaunt out visible as ever the various ship-signals!

But do you reserve especially for yourself and for the soul of man one flag
above all the rest,

A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man elate above death,

Token of all brave captains and all intrepid sailors and mates,

And all that went down doing their duty,

Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid captains young or old.

Soloists and chorus

A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all brave sailors,

One flag, one flag above all the rest.

Behold, the sea itself.

And on its limitless heaving breast, the ships

All seas, all ships.

2. On the beach at night, alone

Baritone solo and chorus

On the beach at night alone,

As the old mother sways her to and fro singing her husky song,

As I watch the bright stars shining, I think a thought of the clef of the
universes and of the future.

A vast similitude interlocks all,

All distances of place however wide,

All distances of time,

All souls, all living bodies though they be ever so different,

All nations,

All identities that have existed or may exist,

All lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future,

This vast similitude spans them, and always has spanned,

And shall forever span them and compactly hold and enclose them.

3. The Waves

Chorus

After the sea-ship

After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,

After the white-gray sails taut to their spars and ropes,

Below, a myriad, myriad waves hastening, lifting up their necks,

Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship,

Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven, emulous waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant, with curves,
Where the great vessel sailing and tacking displaced the surface,
Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the ocean yearnfully flowing,
The wake of the sea-ship after she passes, flashing and frolicsome under the sun.
A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and many fragments,
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake following.

4. The Explorers

Chorus

O vast Rondure, swimming in space,
Covered all over with visible power and beauty,
Alternate light and day and the teeming spiritual darkness,
Unspeakable high processions of sun and moon and countless stars above,
Below, the manifold grass and waters,
With inscrutable purpose, some hidden prophetic intention,
Now first it seems my thought begins to span thee.

Down from the gardens of Asia descending,
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them,
Wandering, yearning, with restless explorations,
questionings, baffled, formless, feverish, with never-happy hearts,
With that sad incessant refrain,

Wherefore unsatisfied soul?

Whither O mocking life?

Ah who shall soothe these feverish children?

Who justify these restless explorations?

Who speak the secret of impassive earth?

Yet soul be sure the first intent remains, and shall be carried out,
Perhaps even now the time has arrived.

After the seas are all crossed,

After the great captains and engineers have accomplished their work,

After the noble inventors,

Finally shall come the poet worthy that name,

The true son of God shall come singing his songs.

Soloists

O we can wait no longer,
We too take ship O Soul,
Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas,
Fearless for unknown shores on waves of ecstasy to sail,
Amid the wafting winds, (thou pressing me to thee, I thee to me, O soul,)
Caroling free, singing our song of God,
Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

O Soul thou pleasest me, I thee,
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death, like waters flowing,
Bear me indeed as through the regions infinite,
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all over,
Bathe me O God in thee, mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

Soloists and Chorus

O Thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them,
Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee O Soul, thou actual me,
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding O Soul thou journeyest forth.

Away O Soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
Cut the hawsers – haul out – shake out every sail!.
Sail forth – steer for the deep waters only,
Reckless O Soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me,
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.
O my brave Soul!
O farther, farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail!

Jenny Stafford *soprano*



Jenny Stafford is now firmly established as one of the brightest talents on the UK opera stage.

In March 2018, she made her major house debut, with Dutch National Opera, as Sarah in James MacMillan's *Clemency*. Bachtrack.com praised how her 'soprano soared in Sarah's ecstatic music with dramatic intensity'.

Jenny Stafford trained at King's College, London and the Royal Academy of Music – winning the Isabel Jay Operatic Prize and the Dame Eva Turner Award – and at ENO Opera Works and the Georg Solti Accademia di Bel Canto.

In the UK, Jenny Stafford has appeared with Bampton Classical Opera as Tisbé (*Cendrillon*) and as Eginia (*Gli sposi malcontenti*); at the BBC Proms as Prima Cercatrice (*Suor Angelica*, conducted by Pappano); with the Buxton International Festival as Prima Donna (*Viva la diva*); at the Cadogan Hall as Vitellia (*La clemenza di Tito*); with English National Opera as Mary Seton (*Mary, Queen of Scots*); with English Touring Opera as Despina, (*Manon Lescaut*), Melissa (*Amadigi*), Musetta (*La bohème*), and Soprano Soloist (*St John Passion*); with Nevill Holt as Musetta; with Opera North as the Piper (*The Pied Piper of Hamelin*); at Theatre Royal Bath as Miss Jessel (*Turn of the Screw*); with Welsh National Opera as Pamina and Papagena (*The Magic Flute*); with West Green House Opera as Nedda (*Pagliacci*), Suor Angelica and Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*), and Wild Arts as Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*).

Rupert Christiansen wrote in The Telegraph that: 'It was Jenny Stafford as Manon who really commanded the stage, with impressive ringing top Cs for declarations of undying passion, and interestingly subtle moments when you could feel a dawning, regretful awareness of her own flightiness.'

Season 2026/27 engagements include: further performances of *To Die For* in the Netherlands and at English National Opera; Erste Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*) and cover Suor Angelica at the Royal Ballet and Opera and her first Ariadne (*Ariadne auf Naxos*).

Armand Rabot *baritone*



British-Sri Lankan baritone Armand Rabot is a current member of the Bayerische Staatsoper Opernstudio. He was previously part of the Aix-en-Provence Festival Académie in 2025 and a Young Singers Project artist at the Salzburger Festspiele in 2024. He studies with Ben Johnson.

Recent projects include his return to Salzburger Festspiele to sing Roucher *Andrea Chénier*, concert appearances with Graham Johnson, *Dream of Gerontius* at Truro Cathedral and Saffron Hall.

Additional notable performances include Mendelssohn's *Paulus* at Wakefield Cathedral, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Spires Philharmonic Orchestra, and *Elijah* with Birkenhead Choral Society. He has sung Mozart's *Requiem* at Liverpool Cathedral and with Marple Choral Society, and Handel's *Messiah* with Salford Choral Society, Birkenhead Choral Society, and at Shrewsbury Cathedral. Armand has also performed Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* with Formby Choral Society, Haydn's *The Creation* with Keele Bach Choir, Fauré's *Requiem* at Blackburn Cathedral, Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with the Amadeus Choir, and Saint-Saëns' *Oratorio de Noël* at Shrewsbury Cathedral.

Armand frequently collaborates with the Liverpool Bach Collective, having performed numerous Bach cantatas, as well as both the *St John Passion* and the *St Matthew Passion*.

In the upcoming season, he will appear in a Schubert lecture-recital alongside renowned pianist Graham Johnson OBE at the Salle de Musique de Chambre, Philharmonie Luxembourg and his roles at the Bayerische Staatsoper include Ping *Turandot*, Tom in a new production of *Die englische Katze*, the Kaiserlicher Kommissär in *Madama Butterfly*, Ein Cappadocier in *Salome*, and Male Consort IV in the world premiere of *Of One Blood*.

Recent and upcoming projects include a house debut at the ROH as Cristiano *Un ballo in maschera*, Der Direktor in *Der Spieler* at the Salzburger Festspiele, as well as appearances with The Grange Festival in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Littore, Familiare 3) and *The Rake's Progress* (Keeper of the Madhouse). He has performed Father in *Hänsel und Gretel* for Hampstead Garden Opera, and Narumov and cover for Surin in *Queen of Spades* at The Grange Festival.

Tom Primrose *conductor*

Tom Primrose is a critically acclaimed British conductor, accompanist and coach, whose performances have won praise for their discipline, grace, and imagination. Recent conducting engagements have included Antony McDonald's critically acclaimed *The Rake's Progress* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at the Grange Festival, *Die Fledermaus* in Lucerne, and Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*, again with the BSO. Next season he has various concert work taking him around the UK, and he conducts Britten's *Turn of the Screw* in the Linbury at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Tom's freelance work takes him all over the world, working at theatres such as Palais Garnier and Bastille with Opéra National de Paris, The Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen, Norwegian Opera in Oslo, Polish National Opera, Theater an der Wien, Korea National Opera, Opéra de Montecarlo, and the Mariinsky Hall in St Petersburg. In the UK he has freelanced in the music departments of the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, the Grange Festival, Shadwell Opera, Opera Holland Park, and a number of others. He has assisted or chorusmastered for a host of esteemed conductors including Alexander Soddy, Susanna Mälkki, David Parry, Richard Egarr, Finnegan Downie Dear, Paul Daniel, Yan-Pascal Tortelier, and Stephen Barlow. In addition to the core operatic repertoire, Tom is sought after in the preparation of twentieth century and contemporary opera. Recent engagements have included Janáček *The Makropoulos Case*, Srnka *Voice Killer*, Britten *Peter Grimes*, Berg *Wozzeck*, Bartok *Bluebeard's Castle*, Knussen *Where the Wild Things Are*.

He has strong connections with East Anglia where he is Artistic Co-Director of the Southrepps Music Festival, works regularly at the University of East Anglia and with the Cambridge Philharmonic, and acted for a time as Assistant Organist and Director of the Girls' Choir at Norwich Cathedral. Tom is an award-winning piano accompanist, and has performed in many of the UK's principal concert halls and festivals, on BBC television and radio, and has collaborated with many of the UK's and Europe's leading singers and instrumentalists. He remains a sought-after coach and as a chorus trainer, combining his wide ranging repertoire knowledge with a singular understanding of vocal technique and pedagogy. Tom studied at the University of Oxford with Robert Saxton, and at the Royal Academy of Music with Michael Dussek and Malcolm Martineau.

A fond farewell to Tom



Everyone involved with Cambridge Philharmonic would like to wish Tom Primrose a fond farewell and *bon voyage* as he leaves us to take up an exciting role with a Dutch opera company.

Tom has been our Chorus Master since just before the pandemic, and has prepared the chorus for all their concerts since, as well as conducting the orchestra on several occasions.

Notable highlights have been our two performances jointly with UEA chorus, *Dream of Gerontius*

(March 2025) and *Elijah* (March 2024), which broke records for the number of singers at a Philharmonic concert.

He was a memorable pirate for our sea-themed family concert in March this year.

We thank Tom for his inspiring teaching and wish him well in his new adventure.

Simon Hewitt Jones *leader*



English violinist Simon Hewitt Jones is a musical omnivore, involved with a wide array of cross-disciplinary creative projects as a performer, teacher, writer, presenter and producer.

Simon performs extensively across the UK with the London Concertante chamber orchestra, often as leader or soloist. He is Concertmaster of the Guildford Symphony Orchestra, Principal Guest Leader of the Worthing Philharmonic, and violinist of House of Light, a Berlin-based new wave, shoegaze rock band.

Simon works as a session musician and recording artist in London, where he has recorded for artists as diverse as Massive Attack, Ed Sheeran, Deltron3030 (including Glastonbury Festival), the Medici Quartet, and the late Sir John Tavener. He was awarded a BBC Premiere Award for chamber music recording, made an acclaimed solo recording with the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, and has broadcast extensively on TV and Radio.

As a soloist and chamber musician, Simon has performed at many leading festivals, including Spitalfields, Aldeburgh, Henley, Gregynog, and at most of the UK's cathedrals and major concert halls.

Simon is an experienced teacher and workshop leader and has worked across all levels of music education in the UK and Ireland, from early years and primary, to special educational needs and teacher training. For over a decade he has contributed to educational and cultural development programmes in Palestine.

In TV/film, Simon has been a music consultant and actor coach for major productions by Disney, Netflix and other networks. He founded ViolinSchool, a leading UK provider of adult education programmes for the violin, and was previously a researcher at the Royal Academy of Music.

www.simonhewittjones.com

Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra

Violin 1

Simon Hewitt Jones (leader)
Kate Clow (co leader)
Hilary Crooks
Anne McAleer
Robert McFall
John Richards
Andrew Tusa
Sarah Ridley
Natalie Hogg
Stuart Holder
Anna Bailey

Violin 2

Christen Lee
Emma Lawrence
Imogen Poole
Nichola Roe
Anne Hewitt
John Bryne
Tabitha Smith
Abigail Tan
Roz Chalmers
Joyce Yu

Viola

Ruth Donnelly
Mari O'Neill
David Yadin
Anne-Cecile Dingwall
Sarah Legg
Emma McCaughan
Wendy Savage
Jeremy Harmer
Edna Murphy
Dominic de Cogan
Robyn Sorenson

Cello

Daniel Coldridge
Anna Edwards
Angela Bennett
Lucy O'Brien

Jess Llewellyn

Clare Gilmour
Catherine Wilson
David Brown
Helen Davies
Helen Hills

Double Bass

Sarah Sharrock
Susan Sparrow
Elaine Shield
Alan Blackwell

Flute

Sarah Blazeby
Cynthia Lalli
Samantha Martin

Piccolo

Cynthia Lalli
Samantha Martin

Oboe

Rachael Dunlop
Kate Lane

Cor Anglais

Tom Gillam

Clarinet

Tom McFarlane
Stefano Panella

E♭ Clarinet

Graham Dolby

Bass Clarinet

Sue Pettitt

Bassoon

Sarah Kwan
Jenny Warburton

Contra bassoon

Phil Evans

Horn

Caroline Prozesky
Tony Hawkins
Gareth Edwards
Chris Wykes

Trumpets

Paddy Wakelam
Laureen Hodge
Alex McLean

Trombone

Ryan Higgin
Gary Davison

Bass Trombone

Alan Dimond

Tuba

Robin Norman

Timpani

Dave Ellis

Percussion

Derek Scurll
Lizzie Brightwell
Nick Cowling
Emma Shield

Harp

Nicolette Chin
Elspeth Wilson

Organ

Alex Trigg

Cambridge Philharmonic Chorus

Soprano 1

Charlotte Collins
Jane Cook
Susan Earnshaw
Agnes Heydtmann
Eri Latorre-Chimoto
Nicola Lythgoe
Carole MacBrayne
Ros Mitchell
Myrto Mitletton
Jan Moore
Penny Mullock
Mary Richards
Sheila Rushton
Anne Sales
Pat Sartori
Emma Slack
Hannah Stephenson

Soprano 2

Cathy Ashbee
Sally Goldsmith
Suzie McCave
Pip Smith
Sheila Stephens
Diana Sutton
Keren Turton
Catharine Warren

Alto 1

Jan Baiton
Helen Black
Alexandra Bolton
Caroline Courtney
Denise Emery
Elaine Fulton
Christine Hall
Sarah Marshall Owen
Christine Miskelly
Masako Narita
Caroline Shepherd
Sarah Upjohn
Alison Vinnicombe
Helen Wheatley
Anne Willitts
Susan Wilson

Alto 2

Jane Bower
Helen Cross
Elisabeth Crowe
Jane Fleming
Hilary Jackson
Rachel Krishnaswami
Hilary Lowe
Lynne McClure
Alistar Pearman
Sue Purseglove
Mairi Smart
Chris Strachan
Joanna Womack
Kate Wootton

Tenor 1

Pete Alexander
David Griffiths
Arne Kuijper
Chris Schaefer
Peter Scholten
John Williams
Ben Womack
Jack Zahn

Tenor 2

Aidan Baker
Jeremy Baumberg
Tabitha Driver
Ben Hetherington
Adam Higgins
Peter Norman
Andy Pierce

Bass 1

Richard Birkett
Chris Coffin
Andrew Dobson
Robin Dunford
Lewis Jones
Roger McClure
Tim Rossiter
Mike Ruffle
Martin Scutt

Bass 2

Andrew Black
Tim Bossanyi
Neil Caplan
Tom Read
Tom Wale

Join us!

Are you a singer or orchestral musician looking for a new creative challenge? We are keen to welcome new members to the chorus and orchestra.

We rehearse weekly during term time (orchestra on Mondays, chorus on Tuesdays) and perform in the best venues in and around Cambridge. Once you have sung or played with us for a few weeks, you'll be asked to audition. Members pay an annual subscription.

As well as pushing ourselves to perform at the highest standard, we enjoy the social side of making music together too – and we'd love to meet you!

Please visit cambridgephilharmonic.com/join-us to find out more.

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Thank you

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Cambridge Philharmonic

Forthcoming Concerts

Saturday 7 Nov 2026, 7.30pm	Stravinsky <i>Petrushka</i> Gershwin <i>Rhapsody in Blue</i> And works by Richard Strauss West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge
Saturday 14 Nov 2026, 4pm	Handel <i>Dixit Dominus</i> Bach <i>Brandenburg Concertos No 3 & 4</i> St Paul's Church, Cambridge
Saturday 19 Dec 2026, 1pm & 4pm	Humperdinck <i>Hänsel und Gretel</i> West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge
Saturday 16 Jan 2027, 2pm & 4pm	Family Concert <i>Lucy's Brilliant Book Bonanza</i> West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge
Saturday 6 March 2027, 4pm	Britten <i>War Requiem</i> Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden
Saturday 22 May 2027, 4pm	Debussy <i>La Mer</i> Sibelius <i>Tapiola</i> Brigg <i>New Commission</i> Coleridge-Taylor <i>Hiawatha's Wedding Feast</i> West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge
Saturday 3 July 2027, 4pm	Puccini <i>La Rondine</i> In collaboration with British Youth Opera Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden

To book tickets, join our mailing list, or find out how support us visit:
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