

LSO St Luke's

CHAMBER MUSIC

BBC
RADIO 3

**ESSENTIALLY STRAUSS
LSO WIND ENSEMBLE**

Friday 22 September 2023 1-2.15pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Richard Strauss Serenade in E-flat major for 13 Wind Instruments
Jonathan Dove Figures in the Garden
Richard Strauss Suite in B-flat major for 13 Wind Instruments

LSO Wind Ensemble
Nicolò Umberto Foron conductor

Recorded for future broadcast on **BBC Radio 3**

LSO

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ACOUSTIC TRIAL

While LSO St Luke's undergoes an acoustic trial, there will be window coverings in place until the end of January 2024. We welcome any feedback you may have on the impact of these coverings, be it acoustically, aesthetically and operationally. Please email tickets@lso.co.uk to share feedback.

THE CRYPT CAFÉ & BAR

The Crypt café and bar is open from one hour before the concert and during the interval (where applicable), selling hot and cold drinks. Please note we can accept card payments only. Only cold drinks will be permitted inside the Jerwood Hall.

PROGRAMME NOTE WRITER

Wendy Thompson studied at the Royal College of Music, before taking an MMus in musicology at King's College, London. In addition to writing about music she is Executive Director of Classic Arts Productions, a major supplier of independent programmes to BBC Radio.

In accordance with the requirements of Islington Council persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any gangway.

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are strictly forbidden without formal consent from LSO St Luke's.

Please make sure that digital watch alarms and mobile phones are switched off during the performance.

Please recycle this programme after use.

Richard Strauss

composer



Richard Strauss was born in Munich in 1864, the son of Franz Strauss, a brilliant horn player in the Munich court orchestra; it is therefore perhaps not surprising that some of the composer's most striking writing is for the French horn. Strauss had his first piano lessons when he was four, and he produced his first composition two years later, but surprisingly he did not attend a music academy; his formal education ending rather at Munich University where he studied philosophy and aesthetics, continuing with his musical training at the same time.

Following the first public performances of his work, he received a commission from Hans von Bülow in 1882 and two years later was appointed Bülow's Assistant Musical

Director at the Meiningen Court Orchestra, the beginning of a career in which Strauss was to conduct many of the world's great orchestras, in addition to holding positions at opera houses in Munich, Weimar, Berlin and Vienna. While at Munich, he married the singer Pauline de Ahna, for whom he wrote many of his greatest songs.

Strauss' legacy is to be found in his operas and his magnificent symphonic poems. Scores such as *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Don Juan* and *Ein Heldenleben* demonstrate his supreme mastery of orchestration; the thoroughly modern operas *Salome* and *Elektra*, with their Freudian themes and atonal scoring, are landmarks in the development of 20th century music, and the neo-Classical *Der Rosenkavalier* has become one of the most popular operas of the century. Strauss spent his last years in self-imposed exile in Switzerland, waiting to be officially cleared of complicity in the Nazi regime. He died at Garmisch Partenkirchen in 1949, shortly after his widely celebrated 85th birthday.

Composer profile by Andrew Stewart

Serenade in E-flat major for 13 Wind Instruments

Richard Strauss



1881



10 minutes

Richard Strauss was just turned 17 when he composed this one-movement piece, a homage to the Viennese Classical composers revered by his father, the principal horn player in the Munich Court Orchestra. It was first heard in Dresden on 27 November 1882, played by members of the Court Orchestra conducted by Franz Wüllner, and taken up just over a year later by Hans von Bülow.

The Serenade has always been loved for its gloriously rich sonority, underpinned by a quartet of horns. The horn remained one of Strauss' two favourite instruments (the other being the violin), and one of the most ravishingly beautiful moments comes when the horns reintroduce the opening melody at the start of the recapitulation. The Serenade ends quietly, a foretaste of magical operatic moments to come.

Figures in the Garden

Jonathan Dove



1991



17 minutes

- 1 **Dancing in the Dark**
- 2 **Susanna in the Rain**
- 3 **A Conversation**
- 4 **Barbarina Alone**
- 5 **The Countess Interrupts a Quarrel**
- 6 **Voices in the Garden**
- 7 **Nocturne: Figaro and Susanna**

Jonathan Dove has composed over 20 operas, among them *Flight*, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, *Swanhunter*, *Mansfield Park*, and the latest, *Itch* (premiered in summer 2023 by Opera Holland Park), as well as choral, vocal and instrumental music, including the LSO-commissioned trombone concerto *Stargazer*.

For the 1991 Mozart bicentenary celebrations, he was one of five composers commissioned by Glyndebourne (where he had worked on the music staff) to write a wind serenade, suitable for outdoor performance, inspired by one of the Mozart operas being staged that season. Dove was assigned *The Marriage of Figaro*, and he says that he was attracted by the aptness of playing a serenade in the garden before performances of an opera whose last act is set in a garden, and which itself contains a number of serenades. He goes on to explain that, as Glyndebourne has experienced so many performances

of *Figaro* over the years, he had the idea that 'sounds from the opera had in some way impregnated the garden: snatches of recitative, musical figures, instrumental colours ... As if, when evening falls, the flowers themselves might give off the scent of Mozart'.

Each movement of *Figures in the Garden* – which is scored for wind octet, a favourite Mozartian combination – grows from a musical idea in the opera, which is reinterpreted rather than heard or quoted directly. After the vivacious, dance-like opening, a solo horn meditates on Susanna's soliloquy 'Deh vieni, non tardar', albeit drenched in musical imagery more appropriate to a rainy English evening than a balmy Mediterranean night. 'A Conversation' suggests fractured fragments of whispered discussions overheard in different locations, while the repeated ostinato motif of 'Barbarina Alone' conjures up the servant girl obsessing over her lost pin. 'The Countess Interrupts a Quarrel' evokes the heart-stopping moment from the opera's finale when the Countess magnanimously forgives her errant husband, while 'Voices in the Garden' opens and closes in a manner suggestive of recitative. Finally, the newly-weds are allowed a quiet moment to affirm their love in the closing Nocturne.

Suite in B-flat major for 13 Wind Instruments

Richard Strauss



1884



25 minutes

- 1 **Praeludium**
- 2 **Romanze**
- 3 **Gavotte**
- 4 **Introduction und Fuge**

Richard Strauss' reputation rests principally on the sequence of 15 operas he wrote between 1894 and 1940, in particular the five masterpieces to librettos by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. But he cut his teeth on chamber and orchestral music, starting in his early teens with a series of classically-based serenades, overtures and concert works. The two pieces for wind ensemble in this programme, both scored for 13 instruments in obvious homage to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, contrabassoon – rather than double bass – and four horns), date from Strauss' apprentice years of the early 1880s.

The Suite in B-flat was actually the later of the two, commissioned in 1884 by the celebrated conductor of the Meiningen Orchestra, von Bülow, who had met the young composer the previous winter, and organised a performance of his Serenade in E-flat major with members of the Meiningen band in Berlin. Its success prompted von Bülow to commission a second piece for the same instrumental combination.

Strauss himself conducted the Suite in Munich on 18 November 1884, apparently without rehearsing it first. It was nonetheless much admired, and encouraged him to embark on a dual career as composer and conductor. The Suite harks back to the 18th century in its use of archaic forms – the opening Praeludium is founded on a triplet rhythm which appears at the outset; while the third movement, Gavotte, recalls a dance form popular in the Baroque and Classical eras. The second movement has a more romantic feel, opening with a clarinet cadenza and featuring solos for horn and bassoon. Its principal theme recurs in the Introduction to the Finale, which then proceeds to a lively fugue introduced by the first horn.

Nicolò Umberto Foron

LSO Assistant Conductor



© Veit Mette

Nicolò Umberto Foron was named the winner of the 17th Donatella Flick LSO Conducting Competition in March 2023, becoming Assistant Conductor of the LSO for a year.

He is Principal Assistant Conductor of Ensemble Intercontemporain, Paris, was the winner of the International Conducting Competition Jeunesse Musicales Bucharest 2021, and in 2022 was selected as a member of the Peter Eötvös Mentoring Programme and as a Conducting Fellow of Tanglewood Festival.

On 1 August 2023 German National Broadcasting named him Artist in Residence Förderpreis Deutschlandfunk und Musikfest Bremen, recognising him

as young artist of the year. As part of this award he will undertake a concert tour and a CD recording with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin in 2024. Past winners include Julia Fischer and Patricia Kopatchinskaja, and he is the first ever conductor to receive this prize.

LSO Wind Ensemble

Gareth Davies LSO Principal Flute
Imogen Royce flute
Oliver Stankiewicz LSO Principal Oboe
Imogen Davies oboe
Julian Bliss guest principal clarinet
Chi-Yu Mo LSO Principal E-flat Clarinet
Daniel Jemison LSO Principal Bassoon
Graham Hobbs bassoon
Martin Field LSO Principal Contra Bassoon
Diego Incertis Sánchez LSO Principal Horn
Angela Barnes LSO Horn
Lauren Reeve-Rawlings horn
Jonathan Maloney LSO Horn
Oliver Johnson horn

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We champion new music, regularly commissioning some of the foremost British composers to write new works for full orchestra and mixed-ability ensembles. Through inspiring music, learning programmes and digital innovations, our reach extends far beyond the concert hall.

Today's concert features a Wind Ensemble formed of LSO woodwind players, and friends of the LSO.