



ROTTERDAM
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

Programme Notes

Pictures at an
Exhibition

Fri 13 October 2023 • 20.15

PROGRAMME

conductor **Finnegan Downie Dear**

violin **Clara-Jumi Kang**

Thomas Adès (1971)

The Exterminating Angel Symphony (2020)

- Entrances
- March
- Berceuse
- Waltzes

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Violin Concerto op. 15 (1938-39/1958)

- Moderato con moto – Agitato – Tempo primo
- Vivace – Animando – Largamente – Cadenza
- Passacaglia: Andante lento (Un poco meno mosso)

intermission

Modest Moesorgski (1839-1881)

Pictures at an Exhibition (1874) (orch. Ravel, 1922)

- Promenade
- Gnomus – Promenade
- The Old Castle – Promenade
- Tuileries
- Bydło – Promenade
- Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks
- Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle
- Limoges. The Market
- Catacombs (Sepulcrum romanum – Cum mortuis in lingua morta)
- The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba Yaga)
- The Great Gate of Kyiv

concert ends at around 22.15

Most recent performances by our orchestra:

Adès *The Exterminating Angel Symphony*: first performance

Britten *Violin Concerto*: Oct 2017, violin Janine Jansen, conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Mussorgsky/Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition*: Sep 2021, conductor Lahav Shani

One hour before the start of the concert, Jan Willem van Ree will give an introduction (in Dutch) to the programme, admission €5. Tickets are available at the hall, payment by debit card. The introduction is free for Vrienden.

Cover: Photo Maureen Sgro (Unsplash).

A black and white portrait of Benjamin Britten, showing him from the chest up. He has dark, curly hair and is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt and a dark, patterned tie. The background is dark and out of focus.

Ode to imagination

Stories without words, images created just in sound: surely ideas that break the laws of nature. But the three works comprising this concert programme seem to subvert these laws.

Avenging angel

Thomas Adès based his symphony *The Exterminating Angel* on his earlier opera bearing the same title – which in turn pays homage to *El ángel exterminador*, the 1962 surrealist film by Luis Buñuel. *The Exterminating Angel* tells of a group of friends who after a night at the opera meet for dinner in a grand house. There they fall under a strange spell: suddenly they are unable to behave according to social norms, nor are they able to escape from the house. At its premiere in Salzburg in 2006 the opera was immediately hailed as a triumph. This success extended to the concert hall when the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra asked Adès to rework parts of the opera for a symphony orchestra. This commission resulted in a complete, four-movement symphony that closely follows the story of the opera.

The first movement 'Entrances' depicts the guests arriving for dinner. They introduce themselves to each other in a kind of stumbling chaconne. The solo horn introduces the theme of the avenging angel and following a short moment of calm in the orchestra the story begins to repeat itself. The guests arrive for a second time, enchanted by the angel: a slight variation in a reprise of the opening bars that eventually slows to a sighing stop.

'March' depicts the first night under the angel's spell. The menace is heard in the ritualistic drumbeats that are also heard in the film: a rhythm that Buñuel borrowed from the traditional Easter processions in Calanda, the town where he was born. This drumbeat so obsessively controls the second movement of Adès's symphony that it brings to mind Ravel's *Boléro*.

The third movement, 'Berceuse', expresses the seductive side of the angel: a lullaby based on a heart-rending duet between two lovers in the opera. They choose suicide over a drawn-out death, but the angel's spell renders them unable to act as they wish.

The last movement, 'Waltzes', unites the waltz motifs from the entire opera. The elegant dance symbolises social decadence and the masks people hide behind in public. Adès combines these dance rhythms with the theme of the angel. The tale thus leads to its inevitable conclusion, in an atmosphere of catastrophic dread that brings to mind Ravel's *La Valse*.



*Following a short
moment of calm the
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itself. The guests arrive
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enchanted by the angel.*



*The Exterminating Angel as an opera: world premiere production, Salzburg 2016.
Photo Monika Rittershaus.*

Requiem

Escaping the looming war in Europe, in early 1939 Benjamin Britten travelled to the United States. During the sea journey the 25-year-old composer continued his work on the *Violin Concerto* that he had promised three years earlier to Spanish violinist Antonio Brosa. At the time, having listened together for the first time to Berg's *Violin Concerto*, the young Britten decided to compose a 'big heavyweight' (as he described it) of a concerto himself. Britten began his *Violin Concerto* – as Beethoven had done – with a solo for timpani: the prelude to a first movement full of long sensual melodic lines. This is followed by a raucous scherzo which ends in a solo cadenza that returns to the theme from the first movement. This fast-paced middle movement transitions seamlessly into a poignant passacaglia, a theme and variations above a repeated base line. For Brosa, one should interpret this last movement as a requiem following the horrors of the Spanish Civil War. The ending of the work fluctuates between hope and fear with a trill uniting major and minor keys. By the time that Britten, a pacifist through and through, wrote down those final bars, war had broken out in Europe, leading to World War II, and it is difficult to listen to this music without visualising a bleak picture of the times. With the final bar lines within sight, Britten wrote to his publisher to announce completion of his *Violin Concerto*. 'So far it is without question my best piece. It is rather serious, I'm afraid — but it's got some tunes in it!' In April 1942 Britten returned to England, where he would revise the work a few more times, although its overall mood would never change.

Tribute

Pictures at an Exhibition also tells a story that goes beyond the sounds themselves. In June 1874 Mussorgsky composed his now world-renowned suite for solo piano, having attended a posthumous exhibition of the paintings of his good friend Victor Hartmann, architect and painter, who had died aged just 39. In tribute, critic Vladimir Stasov exhibited a collection of his drawings, paintings and architectural sketches.

It was a visit to this exhibition that inspired Mussorgsky to make his own tribute to Hartmann. During the composition he kept in mind's eye how he had wandered around the exhibition: 'at times tranquil, at others with an urgency to get closer to the paintings that had caught his imagination, occasionally reflecting sadly on the passing of his friend'. This gave birth to a suite for piano in which various works of Hartmann are depicted in music, linked together by a regularly recurring 'promenade' theme. In this form, Mussorgsky had created an intriguing black and white drawing that cried out for colouration. Although the Russian Mikhail Tushmalov and British conductor Henry Wood offered earlier orchestral versions, the work only obtained its exalted status with its complete orchestration by Maurice Ravel, commissioned by conductor Serge Koussevitzky, who premiered the work in Paris and would perform it in this form many more times. Together, Koussevitzky and Ravel were at the birth of the great success with which this score would be received.

Paul Janssen



Photo: Frank Bloedhorn

FINNEGAN DOWNIE DEAR conductor

Born: London, England

Current position: Music Director (since 2014) of the Shadwell Music Theatre Company (London)

Education: music at Cambridge University, piano at the Royal Academy of Music

Assistant of: Simone Young, Thomas Adès, Sir Simon Rattle, Daniel Harding, Richard Baker

Breakthrough: 2020, winner Gustav Mahler Competition Bamberg

Subsequently: debuts with London Philharmonic Orchestra, Staatskapelle Berlin, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Bamberger Symphoniker, Camerata Salzburg, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Staatsoper Berlin, Polish National Opera, invitations from opera houses such as Theater an der Wien and Staatsoper Hamburg

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2023



Photo: Marco Borggreve

CLARA-JUMI KANG violin

Born: Mannheim, Germany

Education: first violin lessons at age three, Musikhochschule Mannheim with Valerie Gradov; Musikhochschule Lübeck with Zakhar Bron; Juilliard School with Dorothy DeLay; Korean National University of Arts with Nam-Yun Kim; Musikhochschule München with Christoph Poppen

Breakthrough: at five, as a soloist with the Symphoniker Hamburg

Awards: Seoul Music Competition (2009); Sendai Violin Competition (2010), Violin Competition of Indianapolis (2010)

Subsequently: Kremerata Baltica, Mariinsky Orchestra, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, symphony orchestras of New Jersey, Indianapolis, Santa Fe, Stockholm, philharmonic orchestras of Moscow, Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Sendai, Seoul

Instrument: 'Thunis'-Stradivarius (1702)

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2017

Agenda

Music for Breakfast 1

Sun 29 October 2023 • 10.30

Jurriaanse Zaal, de Doelen
with **Karel Schoofs** (oboe) and
colleagues from the orchestra
Blake Suite for two oboes and
cor anglais

Bozza Bergers de Provence

Britten Pan (from: Metamorphoses)

Canteloube Rustiques

Covoni Pandemonio

Fri 3 November 2023 • 20.15

Sun 5 November 2023 • 14.15

conductor **Tarmo Peltokoski**

piano **Yuja Wang**

Bartók Romanian Folk Dances

Bartók Piano Concerto No. 2

Strauss Also sprach Zarathustra

Thu 9 November 2023 • 20.15

Fri 10 November 2023 • 20.15

Sun 12 November 2023 • 14.15

conductor **Maxim Emelyanychev**

piano **Beatrice Rana**

Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4

Harry Potter in Concert, part 7

Wed 15 November 2023 • 19.30

Thu 16 November 2023 • 19.30

Fri 17 November 2023 • 19.30

Sat 18 November 2023 • 19.30

Sun 19 November 2023 • 13.30

conductor **Justin Freer**

Desplat Harry Potter and the

Deathly Hallows Part 1

Musicians

Chief Conductor

Lahav Shani

Honorary

Conductor

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Principal Guest

Conductor

Tarmo Peltokoski

First Violin

Marieke Blankestijn,
concertmeester

Quirine Scheffers

Hed Yaron Meyerson

Saskia Otto

Arno Bons

Mireille van der Wart

Rachel Browne

Maria Dingjan

Marie-José Schrijner

Noëmi Bodden

Petra Visser

Sophia Torrenga

Hadewijch Hofland

Annerien Stuker

Alexandra van

Beveren

Second Violin

Charlotte Potgieter

Cecilia Ziano

Frank de Groot

Laurens van Vliet

Tomoko Hara

Elina Staphorsius

Jun Yi Dou

Bob Bruyn

Eefje Habraken

Maija Reinikainen

Wim Ruitenbeek

Babette van den Berg

Melanie Broers

Lana Trimmer

Viola

Anne Huser

Roman Spitzer

Galahad Samson

José Moura Nunes

Kerstin Bonk

Lex Prummel

Janine Baller

Francis Saunders

Veronika Lénártová

Rosalinde Kluck

León van den Berg

Olfje van der Klein

Cello

Emanuele Silvestri

Eugene Lifschitz

Joanna Pachucka

Daniel Petrovitsch

Mario Rio

Gé van Leeuwen

Eelco Beinema

Carla Schrijner

Pepijn Meeuws

Yi-Ting Fang

Double Bass

Matthew Midgley

Ying Lai Green

Jonathan Focquaert

Robert Fransenberg

Harke Wiersma

Arjen Leendertz

Ricardo Neto

Flute

Juliette Hurel

Joséphine Olech

Désirée Woudenberg

Flute/piccolo

Beatriz Da Baião

Oboe

Remco de Vries

Karel Schoofs

Anja van der Maten

Oboe/Cor Anglais

Ron Tijhuis

Clarinet

Julien Hervé

Bruno Bonansea

Clarinet/ Bass Clarinet

Romke-Jan Wijmenga

Bassoon

Pieter Nuytten

Lola Descours

Marianne Prommel

Bassoon/ Contrabassoon

Hans Wisse

Horn

David Fernández Alonso

Felipe Santos Freitas Silva

Wendy Leliveld

Richard Speetjens

Laurens Otto

Pierre Buizer

Trumpet

Alex Elia

Simon Wierenga

Jos Verspagen

Trombone

Pierre Volders

Alexander Verbeek

Remko de Jager

Bass trombone

Rommert Groenhof

Tuba

Hendrik-Jan Renes

Percussion

Danny van de Wal

Ronald Ent

Martijn Boom

Adriaan Feyaerts

Harp

Charlotte Sprenkels