

Welcome the Spring



PROGRAMME

Tuesday 18 May 2021

St George's Hanover Square

London
Firebird
Orchestra

Firebird Friends & Benefactors

Firebird Circle

Nick & Debbie Barton
Rory Graham
Howard de Walden Estates
Limited
Hyde Park Place Estate
Charity
London Chamber Music
Society
The Morris-Venables
Charitable Foundation
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Morris
The Williams Charitable
Trust

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Endowment Scheme

Michael & Helen Brown
(Principal First Violin)
Jenny Jones *(First Violin)*
Anatoly Savin *(Principal
Second Violin)*
Philip & Suzy Rowley
(Principal Cello)
Jarrod Henderson &
Sue Sinclair *(Cello)*
Stephen & Susan Yarnold
(Cello)
David & Eillis Baty
(Principal Double Bass)
Trevor & Elizabeth Gore
(Principal Oboe)
Ken Watters & Robin
Wilkinson *(Principal Clarinet)*

Rory Graham *(Principal Horn)*
Professor Thomas Hale &
Dr Sam Webster *(Principal
Trumpet)*

Golden Firebird Friends

The Rt Hon Sir Richard &
Lady Aikens
Misako Akane
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Emily Bohill
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Jeanie Hirsch
Christopher Humphry
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Brian Read
Edwin & Harold Robson
Thomas Sharpe QC &
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Silver Firebird Friends

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Tonia Leon Corbett-Weaver
Ness Cowdrey
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Allasonne Lewis
Martin Melville
Doreen Munden
James Saunders
Nicholas Sokolow
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Martin & Alison Walshe
Andrew Willey

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The Barton Trust
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Charity
The Morris-Venables
Charitable Foundation
The Williams Charitable
Trust

Become a Firebird Friend at londonfirebird.com



Welcome

Dear Friends, Last autumn our orchestra performed twice, in October to a socially-distanced audience and in November without a live audience.

Both concerts were filmed and released online. We focused on music for strings.

Tonight, we are delighted to be able to present our first concert of the calendar year now that COVID restrictions are gradually easing.

This concert features wind and brass players as well as strings and percussion.

We are very pleased to welcome a socially-distanced live audience.

Once again the performance will be filmed, to be enjoyed by others at home.

Tonight's performance would not have been possible without the unstinting support of our Friends & Benefactors Society.

I would like to thank each and every one of our donors who have provided support to the charity.

If you are not yet a member, do please consider joining us as your support would be extremely valuable to the orchestra - particularly in these challenging times.

Just join online by visiting our website at www.LondonFirebird.com.

Details of the rest of the concerts of the season are viewable there too.

It is also now possible to send a one-off donation via the site too.

Our next concert takes place on Thursday 24 June, again to a socially-distanced audience.

We very much hope to see you there.

Kindest regards,

Marc Corbett-Weaver

Artistic Director & Chief Executive

Frederick Delius (1862-1934)

On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring

On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring is a tone poem composed in 1912 by the English composer Frederick Delius.

It premiered in Leipzig, Germany, on 23 October 1913. It is the first of Two Pieces for Small Orchestra, the second being Summer Night on the River, although for many years these have been often been performed, and recorded, separately.

As a tone poem (a musical work that tells a story or describes a scene), the piece is a vivid depiction of the hearing of the first cuckoos emerging at springtime. Delius uses the woodwind, namely the clarinets, to portray the cuckoo call.

The pastoral opening showcases the woodwind section, which shares exchanges of cuckoo calls – a theme which is also taken up by the strings.

The string section then introduces and develops a rich second theme, which was based on the Norwegian folk song In Ola Valley, which was introduced to Delius by the Australian composer, Percy Grainger.

As the final cuckoo calls are heard from the clarinet, the piece ends quietly, in a gentle, serene mood.



Richard Wagner (1813 - 1883)

Siegfried Idyll WWV 103



I could no longer imagine myself in a dream, music was sounding, and what music!

“After it had died away, R. [Richard] came in to me with the five children and put into my hands the score of this ‘symphonic birthday greeting’. I was in tears, but so, too, was the whole household; R. had set up his orchestra on the stairs and thus consecrated our Tribschen forever!”

Sources drawn upon in this unique work include from

The great operatic composer Richard Wagner wrote the one-movement, symphonic piece Siegfried Idyll for his second wife, and love of his life, Cosima (daughter of the composer Frans Liszt), both as a surprise birthday present and to celebrate the recent birth of their son, Siegfried.

She awoke on Christmas morning, 1870 (her birthday was the 24th but she was to celebrate it on Christmas day) to the sound of music.

Her husband had set up a small orchestra on the front stairs of their home, in the lakeside district of Tribschen (near Lucerne in Switzerland). Cosima recorded in her diary for that day:

“When I woke up I heard a sound, it grew ever louder,

Wagner’s opera Siegfried, from which he borrowed the horn motif and the melody of the forest bird as well as the major love theme, melodies from an uncompleted string quartet sketched some years before and a lullaby composed in 1868 (heard in the oboe solo).

In its original form, the Siegfried Idyll was scored for a domestic-sized orchestra of under 16 players.

To Cosima’s disappointment, who wanted to keep the work private as her romantic gift, Wagner later sold the piece as a result of debt problems (as was typical with him).

In so doing, to make it commercially viable, he scored it for a larger orchestra.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Symphony no. 36 in C, K. 426 *Linz*

I Adagio - Allegro spiritoso

II Andante

III Minuetto

IV Finale (Presto)

Mozart's Symphony No. 36 in C Major *Linz*, opens the series of the composer's five great final symphonies.

Mozart was travelling through the city of Linz in Austria in Autumn 1783 and while there was asked to give a concert.

The problem was, he did not have any symphony scores with him. So he had to write a new one. On 31 October he wrote in a letter to his father:

"On Tuesday, 4 November, I am giving a concert in the theatre here and, as I have not a single symphony with me, I am writing a new one at breakneck speed, which must be finished by that time ..."

The symphony contains four movements: adagio, adante, menueto, and finale-presto. Every movement except the minuet is in sonata form.

The slow introduction to the first movement is a new idea for Mozart, and it seems to presage the music's impending seriousness.

By that time Joseph Haydn (and also his composer brother, Michael) had pioneered the feature of a solemn slow introduction in his own symphonies.

But what marks out Mozart's as quite original is the heroic beginning and play of

light and shade that follows, leading from tender longing to intense agitation. The following allegro is thematically rich and large-scale.

Among other features it contains quirky 'Turkish' themes (tutti in E minor) and development in solo-dialogue texture.

In the second adagio movement, the presence of trumpets and drums, never before featured in Mozart's slow movements, transforms what might otherwise have been a merely gracious instrumental aria into something darker.

The minuet is conventionally courtly but the trio, with its duet for oboe and bassoon, is Mozart at his most wittily elegant.

The dazzling and slightly frenzied finale, instructed to be played "as fast as possible", is a movement containing a conglomerate of thematic ideas, each subtly developed from its predecessor, alternating between mirthful exuberance and poignant lyricism.

The Mozart scholar Alfred Einstein observed that the symphony would be quite in the style of Haydn were it not that it contains "*typically Mozartian chromaticism, agitation, and pliancy – qualities quite foreign to Hadyn, but which Mozart could not avoid even when he composed 'at breakneck speed'.*"

1756 • W.A. MOZART • 1791



EIGLER

PROGRAMME

Welcome the Spring

Tuesday 18 May 2021
St George's Hanover Square

Frederick Delius (1862-1934)
On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring

Richard Wagner (1813 - 1883)
Siegfried Idyll WWV 103

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Symphony no. 36 in C, K.426 *Linz*
I Adagio - Allegro spiritoso
II Andante
III Minuetto
IV Finale (Presto)

George Jackson conductor



George Jackson

Armed with insatiable artistic curiosity, a true performer's instincts and the advantages of a rigorous central European training, George Jackson has earned critical acclaim for the authority and eloquence of his music-making.

Winner of the 2015 Aspen Conducting Prize, Jackson came to attention after stepping in at short notice with Orchestre de Paris, where he stepped in for Daniel Harding.

Recent highlights include leading Ensemble Intercontemporain at the Rainy Days Festival in Luxembourg and Festival D'Automne in Paris, as well as conducting the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, the orchestra of Opéra de Rouen, and the world premiere of Tscho Theissing's *Genia* with Theater an der Wien.

His varied operatic experience includes performances at Opera North, Hamburg State Opera and Opera Holland Park, as well as conducting a new production of *Hänsel und Gretel* at Grange Park Opera, where he was described in review as 'a young conductor to watch'.



"George Jackson raised the stature of the music to a rarely-encountered level, absolutely enthralling from first bar to last," **Robert Matthew-Walker,**
Classical Source

Samantha Wickramasinghe

Samantha Wickramasinghe arrived in the UK in 2000 from her native Australia after winning a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music.



She studied with Lydia Mordkovitch, former assistant of David Oistrakh. She has since gone on to work with almost all of the country's major orchestras, and today is a regular guest of the London Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, amongst others.

She has worked under the baton of many great conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Valery Gergiev, Sir Colin Davis and Sir John Elliot Gardiner.

A big opera fan, Samantha has had the good fortune to work with the likes of Bryn Terfel,

Jonas Kauffman, Plácido Domingo, Joyce Didonato and Angela Gheorghiu at the Royal Opera House, exploring the depths of monumental works such as *The Ring Cycle* and many Strauss and Mozart operas.

She has been the recipient of awards from the Park Lane Group, Royal Overseas League, Musician's Benevolent Fund and Tunnell Trust.

As a chamber musician she has appeared at the Wigmore Hall and the Purcell Room and toured widely with the LSO and BBC orchestras.

Samantha has recorded for USK, NMC, UMC and LSO Live labels including recording extensively for some of the later Harry Potter films.

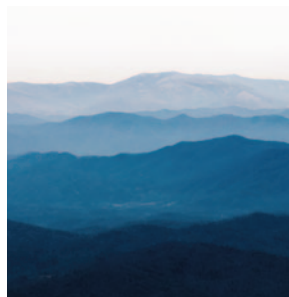
She enjoys a wide variety of music, and whilst her first love is classical music, she has appeared alongside Elton John, Rod Stewart, Ed Sheeran and Paloma Faith; from big arenas such as the O2 to Abbey Road and Pinewood Studios to a stage in a sold out club in Ibiza!

A passionate teacher, she holds a position at Wycombe Abbey School, and also runs a busy private teaching practice.

Educational outreach work as a solo, chamber and orchestral musician is a huge priority, and she has taken part in schemes from the furthest reaches of Scotland to the East End of London, coaching all ages from beginner children to young professionals out of music college at the beginning of their careers.

Samantha plays on a 1746 Carcassi violin, purchased with the generous support of the Tillett Trust.

Concert Programme 2021

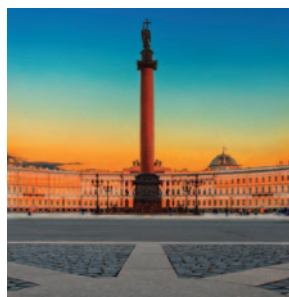


Appalachian Awakening

Thursday 24 June 2021

London Firebird Orchestra's second concert of its revised season features two fabulous orchestral works: The enduring popularity of American composer Aaron Copland's music is contrasted with one of Josef Haydn's symphonies which reworks music he wrote for a play, *Le Distrait* or 'The Distracted'.

Watch these concerts online at londonfirebird.com



From London to St Petersburg

This concert recorded live in September 2020 features the following programme:

Corelli Concerto Grosso op. 6 no. 4
Holst St Paul's Suite in C, Op. 29 no. 2
Tchaikovsky Serenade for Strings in C, Op. 48



String Fling

This concert recorded live in October 2020 features the following programme:

Vaughan Williams Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus
Elgar Serenade for Strings, Op. 20
Mahler Adagietto (from Symphony no. 5)
Grieg Holberg Suite, Op. 40

London Firebird Orchestra

Conductor

George Jackson

Leader

Samantha Wickramasinghe

Violin I

Juliet Lee

(Sponsored by Michael & Helen Brown)

Ben Paulden

(Sponsored by Jenny Jones)

Melissa Hutter

Emma Curtis

Violin II

Stella di Virgilio

(Sponsored by Anatoly Savin)

Victoria Marsh

Isabella Fleming

Sherry Shen

Viola

Tetsuumi Nagata

Anastasia Sofina

Vanessa Hristova

Cello

Ruth Hallows

(Sponsored by Philip & Suzy Rowley)

Elia Benhamou

(Sponsored by Stephen & Susan Yarnold)

Elizabeth Elliot

(Sponsored by Jarrod Henderson & Sue Sinclair)

Bass

Owen Nicolaou

(Sponsored by David & Ellis Batty)

Flute

Sofia Zambrano

Oboe

James Hulme

(Sponsored by Trevor & Elizabeth Gore)

Olivia Fraser

Clarinet

Nelson Sinclair-Strong

(Sponsored by Ken Watters & Robin Wilkinson)

Rowan Jones

Bassoon

Antonia Lazenby

Sarah Hoyle

Horn

Fabian van der Geest

(Sponsored by Rory Graham)

Lizzi Tocknell

Trumpet

Louis Barclay

(Sponsored by Professor Thomas Hale &

Dr Sam Webster)

Lewis West

Timpani

Lewis Blee

A complete list of Friends & Benefactors can be found on page 2 of this programme.



London Firebird Orchestra is an orchestra of young musicians comprising talented orchestral players who are making the journey from study into the profession.

Through Firebird's annual season of concerts, players perform core repertoire at central London concert venues, while collaborating with renowned soloists, composers and conductors of the younger generation.

By providing this experience, Firebird offers a helpful platform at the crucial early stages of professional life.

The orchestra has collaborated with many renowned soloists, including Mathieu van Bellen, Thomas Gould, Aleksei Kiseliiov, James Meldrum, Jennifer Pike, Yury Revich, Leonard Schreiber and Raphael Wallfisch.

Each Season, Firebird showcases a small number of prize-winning conductors of the younger generation who conduct the concerts.

The orchestra also organises an annual composition competition for young composers, with a cash prize and live performance for the composer of the winning work.

Outreach is an important part of Firebird's mission. Since 2013, the orchestra has held a residency at Middlesex University, involving large-scale concerts, conducting and composition workshops, ensemble and dance performances.

The 2018/19 season saw the launch of a new outreach project for the orchestra "Firebird for Schools" – a tailor-made children's concert for London schoolchildren.

London Firebird Orchestra operates as a registered charity, governed by a Board of Trustees.

The orchestra is supported by Dame Judi Dench as Patron, the Firebird Friends & Benefactors Society and a series of generous sponsors.



SUPPORT US, BECOME A FRIEND

At the heart of our orchestra is the Firebird Friends & Benefactors Society. Launched at the orchestra's inception in 2012 and now with around 100 members, the Friends & Benefactors Society is a growing association of supporters forming the core of our audience.

Members commit an annual donation to the charity, providing a vital bedrock of funding for the orchestra. Without this vital income stream, the orchestra's concerts would not be possible. Why not join to today to become part of our family and help us continue to grow?

Sign up today at www.londonfirebird.com
or speak to one of our team.