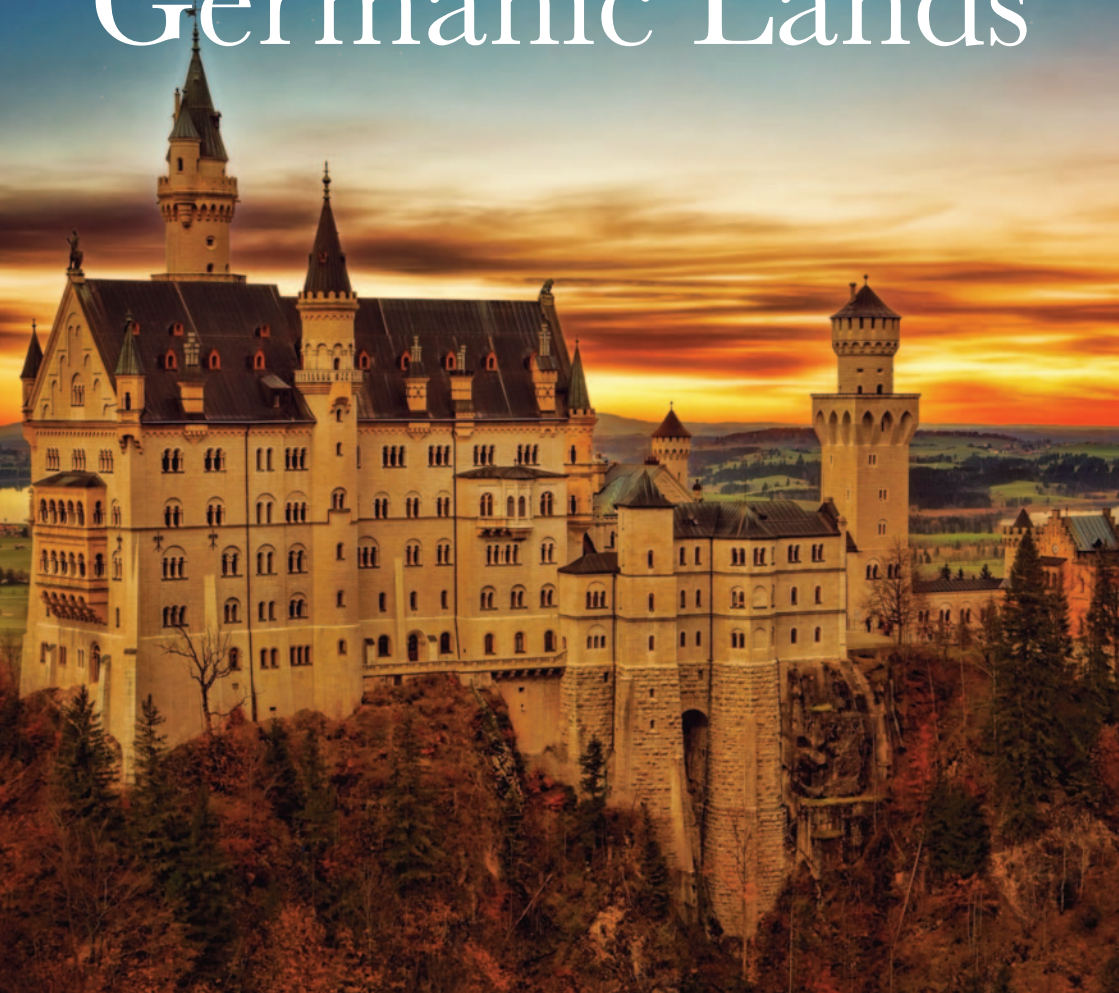


From the Germanic Lands



PROGRAMME

Thursday 28 October 2021
St George's Hanover Square

London
Firebird
Orchestra

Firebird Friends & Benefactors

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Welcome

Dear Friends, We are delighted to present the second concert of our 2021-22 season.

This has been organised in accordance with government guidelines, as things continue to return closer back to normal. As usual, tonight's concert is being filmed for everyone to enjoy later online.

We are thrilled to welcome the prize-winning violinist Emmanuel Bach who is performing with us for the first time. Our regular Principal Guest Conductor Michael Thrift is conducting once again.

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.

We look forward to announcing further details of our 2021-22 programme soon.

Kindest regards,

Marc Corbett-Weaver

Artistic Director & Chief Executive

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Overture to Le Nozze di Figaro (*The Marriage of Figaro*)



The overture is played at the beginning of Mozart's opera, the Marriage of Figaro, before the curtain rises.

It prepares the audience for the story that is to follow, which is a light-hearted comedy but with some serious parts.

The character of this music reflects the fast pace and funny antics of the characters in the story of the opera.

The music begins with a whispered pianissimo section – meaning very quiet. This is followed by a loud and grand musical theme.

The music then develops into a series of contrasts between louder and quieter themes.

Notice how the music, quite is played fast, creates a sense of humour, fun and anticipation, along with whispered plots and secrecy.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)

Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64

i Allegro molto appassionato

ii Andante

iii Allegretto non troppo – Allegro molto vivace



Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor was the first truly great concerto for violin since Beethoven's of 1806, and was the last until the concertos of Bruch in 1868, and Tchaikovsky and Brahms, both written in 1878. It is scored for pairs of woodwinds, horns, and trumpets, with timpani and strings.

The work was written late in the composer's life, dating from the end of 1844 (he died in 1847, when he was 38), although much of the piece was sketched over the course of the previous decade.

He dedicated it to his childhood friend, the virtuoso violinist Ferdinand David, who helped as technical advisor during the concerto's composition. It premiered on the 13th of March 1845 in Leipzig, Germany, with David as soloist.

The concerto was ground-breaking and departed from established concerto conventions in several ways.

Opening immediately with the soloist and completely foregoing the customary orchestral exposition, it begins with the soloist playing the main theme, a charming melody that has become the signature of the work as a whole.

Traditionally cast in sonata form, the movement shows Mendelssohn's skill in paring down the orchestral fabric, allowing smaller groups of instruments to accompany the soloist.

The first movement is fused to the second by a single sustained note played by the bassoon, leading to a lyrical andante theme.

In this middle movement, the violin sings passages of lyrical beauty, accompanied by technically difficult multiple stops (different strings beyond played at once).

The finale is sparkling, lively and elegant, showcasing the virtuoso whilst never sacrificing technical display for musical beauty and integrity.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93

i Allegro vivace e con brio

ii Allegretto scherzando

iii Tempo di minuetto

iv Allegro vivace

Beethoven began working on his Eighth Symphony in F major (opus 93) in the summer of 1812, straight after finishing the Seventh Symphony, and it took him four months to complete.

The premier performance was given on 27 February 1814 in Vienna. Beethoven was growing increasingly deaf at this point, but nevertheless conducted (though the orchestra largely ignored his direction and followed the lead violinist instead).

The Eighth Symphony stands out among many of Beethoven's other mature works, for its easy-going and relatively light emotional touch, and a general cheerfulness not interrupted by grey clouds.

It has been described by musicologist Marion Scott as "happiness incarnate and a masterpiece of character and conciseness".

It is without the storm and stress so characteristic of him. And, by contrast with his other later symphonies, each of its four movements is remarkably focused and compact.

The contemporary author and composer Jan Swafford has described the symphony as "a beautiful, brief, ironic look backward to Haydn and Mozart".

The compact sonata form of the first movement begins suddenly, without the typical introduction.

The opening theme is dancelike, though a little heavy-footed, appearing immediately in vigorous triple meter.

The second theme is introduced by the violins, at first slowly and then more urgently. The movement continues, as it begins, in an expansive and festive mood, with an intermittent dancelike character.

The second movement is a sonatina – a sonata form without a development section – based on a ticking theme in the woodwinds. The story goes that it is an imitation of the metronome, which had recently been invented by Beethoven's friend Johann Nepomuk Mälzel. This is contrasted with a charming music-box melody played by the violins.

The third movement departs from the practice in Beethoven's other symphonies of having a scherzo, and returns to the more traditional minuet dance, typical in the Haydn and Mozart era.

Its central trio features horns and clarinets over an arpeggiated accompaniment in the cellos. The movement is typically Viennese in style.

The opening of the lively finale movement is quintessentially Beethoven, with great energy in the rhythms and violent dynamic contrasts.

In mood the movement is boisterous and exuberant. It is in sonata form, with enough



Photograph: Maria Lupan, Unsplash

repetitions of its main theme to make it close to a rondo.

The celebrated musicologist Sir George Grove memorably described the final movement as capturing some of the most distinctive aspects of Beethoven's genius:

“The finale ... is the great movement of the symphony. It is pure Beethoven in his most individual and characteristic vein, full of those surprises and unexpected effects, those mixtures of tragedy and comedy, not to say farce, which make his music so true a mirror of human life, equal in his branch of the art to the great plays of Shakespeare in his – and for the same reasons.”

PROGRAMME

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Overture to Le Nozze di Figaro (The Marriage of Figaro)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)

Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64

i Allegro molto appassionato

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iii Allegretto non troppo – Allegro molto vivace

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i Allegro vivace e con brio

ii Allegretto scherzando

iii Tempo di minuetto

iv Allegro vivace

Michael Thrift conductor

Emmanuel Bach violin

Calyssa Davidson leader

London Firebird Orchestra

Programme notes by Michael Manning Clark

Members of the audience are respectfully requested to refrain from filming or recording any part of this evening's performance on phones or other electronic devices. Recording is strictly prohibited.



Michael Thrift

In 2021/22 Australian-British conductor Michael Thrift continues his long-standing relationship with the London Firebird Orchestra, having conducted them during the past several seasons.

In addition to tonight's concert, Michael will lead concerts later in the season, including the orchestra's annual tour date to Oxford.

As well as his symphony work, Michael is a fervent conductor of opera. In 2014 he joined the team at Fulham Opera for Verdi's *Falstaff*, returning to lead Puccini's *Il Tabarro* in 2015.

Since then, he has conducted the revival of *Falstaff*, as well as new productions of Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* and *Don Carlo*, and Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. For Ormond Opera, he has conducted Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and Bizet's *Carmen*.

In 2017, Michael conducted several works at the Blue Danube Opera Conducting Competition at the Rouse State Theatre, Bulgaria, leading the company's forces in Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* and Saint-Saëns *Samson et Delilah*.

Michael has led productions of Wagner's *Parsifal*, as well as performances of Britten's *Peter Grimes*, *Billy Budd*, and Beethoven's *Fidelio*.

In 2021 he led an acclaimed performance in the London Opera Company's debut production of *Tristan & Isolde*. 2022 performances include Verdi's *Aida*, and Janáček's *Katya Kabanova*.



Educated in Sydney, Michael undertook studies in composition at Sydney University, alongside conducting. Notable achievements include winning the Young Composer of the Year Award in 2001 (ASME) and performances by the Adelaide Symphony and the Sydney University Symphony Orchestra. A passionate advocate for new music, he is an active part of the London new music scene.

In 2013, he helped to inaugurate the Composer's Academy at the Cheltenham Festival and has worked with the Dr. K Sextet in both Cheltenham and London. He returns to work with composition students from the University of Middlesex after successful collaborations with them and LFO.

In his free time, Michael enjoys sharing the joys of South-Australian red wines as well as decrying the state of New Zealand whites. An unabashed love of sci-fi literature provides escapism. Michael regularly lives a vicarious, alternative existence through the Australia cricket team, though his duties to music inevitably snap him back into reality.

Emmanuel Bach

As a young British-born soloist, Emmanuel is fast gaining recognition in the UK and abroad.

Winner of the Royal Over-Seas League Strings Competition 2018, he has performed as co-soloist with Anne-Sophie Mutter in JS Bach's Double Concerto and played on stages including Queen Elizabeth Hall, Wigmore Hall, St Martin-in-the-Fields, St James' Piccadilly and St George's Bristol.

He was a Selected Artist on the Countess of Munster Trust Recital scheme 2017-20 and is an artist on Talent Unlimited.

Emmanuel has played solo concertos in the UK and abroad, including Brahms, Bruch No.1 and Scottish Fantasy, Lalo Symphonie Espagnole, Mendelssohn, Paganini No.1, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky and others.

Maxim Vengerov described his playing of the Brahms Concerto as 'a superb rendition, a deep and emotional performance.' Emmanuel's playing has taken him to Italy, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and South Africa, touring there several times.

His awards include: winner Una Clark Competition, JS Bach prize winner and semi-finalist in the 38th Premio Lipizer, winner 'Best Interpretation of a Contemporary Work (Boulez Anthemes I) at the Mirecourt International Competition, two nominations for 'Best Upcoming Artist' at the KKNK National Arts Festival in South Africa and an English-Speaking Union Scholarship.

He has broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 as a soloist and chamber musician and performed

live on Radio 3's World Music Day.

As soloist, he has worked with conductors including: David Hill MBE, Jonathan Willcocks, Maxim Vengerov, Darrell Davison, Roy Stratford, Rob Hodge and John Traill. As a chamber musician, Emmanuel held a Full Fellowship on the Yale Summer School at Norfolk Festival, USA, working with the Emerson, Artis and Brentano Quartets. He held an Edison Fellowship at the British Library, London, researching historic violin and chamber music recordings. He also teaches the violin and has coached young musicians on Pro Corda as a Leverhulme Fellow.

Emmanuel has benefitted from masterclasses with eminent musicians such as Pierre Amoyal, Miriam Fried, Shlomo Mintz, Maxim Vengerov, Dong-Suk Kang and others.

His teacher was Natasha Boyarsky, with whom he studied while reading Music at Magdalen College, Oxford, gaining a Double First. He then took a Masters as a scholar at the Royal College of Music, and an Artist Diploma latterly studying with Radu Blidar.

He has also studied with Ben Sayevich and Felix Andrievsky. CD releases include 'Bach to the Future' (2015, Salon Music) 'Musical Mosaics' (2018, Willowhayne Records) and 'Lennox in Paris' (2021, Willowhayne Records).

He is grateful for support from Talent Unlimited, the English-Speaking Union, the Tompkins Tate Trust, Joan Conway Bursary, Woking Young Musicians' Trust, HR Taylor Trust and Worshipful Company of Drapers.



Calyssa Davidson

American violinist, composer and arranger, Calyssa Davidson, is a versatile artist whose wide range of interests has led her to perform throughout the world. She has played with major orchestras, bands, in musicals, and as solo violinist on several feature and independent film soundtracks as well as television including the BBC.

Along with performing in musicals on the West End, Davidson has led recording sessions at Abbey Road, Air Edel, and Angel Studios. She recorded the solo violin score for the BBC TWO documentary series *The Story of China* and wrote and recorded the solo violin scores for the BBC TWO documentary *Normandy '44: The Battle Beyond D-Day* and BBC FOUR documentary *Shakespeare's Mother: The Secret Life of a Tudor Woman*. She can also be heard on the *Harry & Meghan: A Royal Romance* soundtrack from the LIFETIME original movie with the same title and is featured on soundtracks for various video games, trailers, and adverts worldwide.

Davidson has performed alongside Alfie Boe, Rick Wakeman and Grammy-award winner Rick Springfield and is also a member of The Hedone String Quartet represented by Twisted Noise Troupe.

Originally from California, Davidson moved to London in 2010 to attend the Royal College of Music where she earned her Master's Degree in Violin Performance and Composition for Screen and Bachelor of Music Degree in Violin Performance where she was supported by an



Alice Templeton Scholarship and a Robert McFadzean Whyte Award Scholarship. Whilst at the RCM, Davidson studied with former Associate Leader of the Philharmonia Orchestra and Co-Leader of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Adrian Levine, and film and television composers Maurizio Malagnini (*Call the Midwife*, *The Paradise*) and Howard Davidson (*Death Games*, *The Battle for Malta*). Amongst others, Davidson has also studied with world-renowned violinists Ivry Gitlis, Gilles Apap, LA Phil Concertmaster Martin Chalifour and former BBC Concert Orchestra Leader Cynthia Fleming.

Davidson frequently works in Los Angeles and is set to perform as soloist premiering a new violin concerto with the Santa Barbara Symphony in their next season.

Concert programme 2021/22

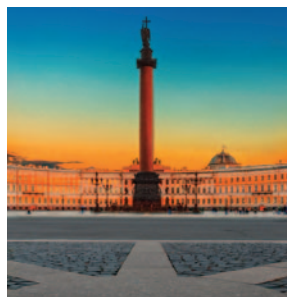
Join us for this live concert on 13 March in Oxford



From the New World

Join the London Firebird Orchestra with pianist Marc Corbett-Weaver and conductor George Jackson for this concert in Oxford featuring Arvo Pärt's magical *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten* alongside Grieg's ever popular *A minor Piano Concerto* and Dvořák's *New World* Symphony.

Watch these concerts online at londonfirebird.com



From London to St Petersburg

This concert recorded live in September 2020 features music by Corelli, Holst and Tchaikovsky



String Fling

This concert recorded live in October 2020 features music by Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Mahler and Grieg.



Welcome the Spring

This concert was recorded live in May 2021 and features music by Frederick Delius, Richard Wagner and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

London Firebird Orchestra

Conductor

Michael Thrift

Solo violin

Emmanuel Bach

Leader

Calyssa Davidson

Violin I

Sydney Mariano

(Sponsored by Michael & Helen Brown)

Joonas Pekonen

(Sponsored by Jenny Jones)

Claire Edwards

Melissa Hutter

Claudia Dehnke

Katherine Yoon

Violin II

Stella di Virgilio

(Sponsored by Anatoly Savin)

Can Cui

Harry O'Keefe

Cristina Morel

Caroline Heard

Konstancja Smolorz

Viola

Edwin Podolski

Cameron Howe

Anastasia Sofina

Cello

Charlotte Kaslin

(Sponsored by Philip & Suzy Rowley)

Elia Benhamou

(Sponsored by Stephen & Susan Yarnold)

Ruth Hallows

(Sponsored by Jarrod Henderson & Sue Sinclair)

Josie Campbell

Bass

Jack Cherry

(Sponsored by David & Ellis Baty)

Flute

Sofia Zambrano

Pedro Lopez Campos

Oboe

Izy Cheesman

(Sponsored by Trevor & Elizabeth Gore)

Elsie Gibbs

Clarinet

Nelson Sinclair-Strong

(Sponsored by Ken Watters & Robin Wilkinson)

Holly Isherwood

Bassoon

Matt Kitteringham

Antonia Lazenby

Horn

Ollie de Carteret

(Sponsored by Rory Graham)

Henry Wright

Trumpet

Adam Wood

(Sponsored by Professor Thomas Hale &

Dr Sam Webster)

Louis Barclay

Timpani

Charlie Hodge



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 Kiseliyov, 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.

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



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.**