

An illustration of a young boy with dark hair, wearing a dark vest over a grey shirt and dark shorts, looking shocked with his hands to his face. In the background, a large grey shark with sharp teeth is breathing fire. The scene is set in a forest with green trees and a bright yellow sun. A small house with a red roof is visible in the distance.

London  
Firebird  
Orchestra

# Firebird for Schools

## PROGRAMME

*Wednesday 15 May 2024*

*St George's Hanover Square*

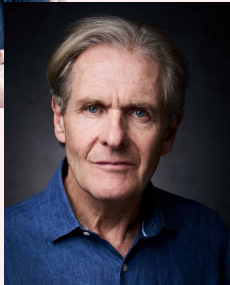


## *Hello boys and girls!*

**W**elcome to 'Firebird for Schools' - a special concert for schoolchildren presented by the London Firebird Orchestra here at St George's Church in Hanover Square! We are delighted to have you with us today for an afternoon of magical orchestral music. We've got an exciting programme in store designed to help you enjoy hearing a full orchestra play live. So sit back, relax and enjoy the show!

**Marc Corbett-Weaver**

Artistic Director  
London Firebird Orchestra



## *Programme*

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Overture to The Marriage of Figaro K.492

**Sergei Prokofiev**

Peter and the Wolf, Op.67

**Michael Thrift** *conductor*

**Robert Bathurst** *narrator*

# Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

## *Overture to The Marriage of Figaro K.492*

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.

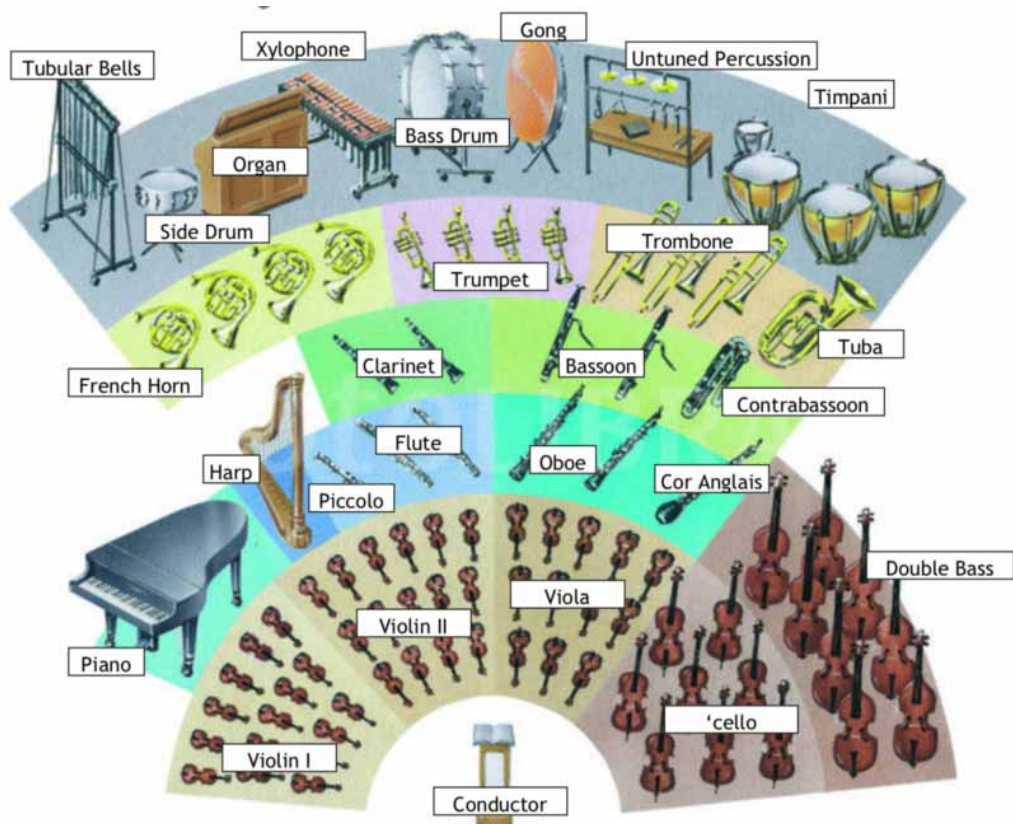
The music then develops into a series of contrasts between louder and quieter themes.

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



# Introducing the orchestra

Here is a picture showing all the instruments in a full size symphony orchestra. Have a close look at the instruments in this afternoon's concert and see how many you can spot:



And here are all the musicians playing in this afternoon's concert. See how many you can spot!

**Conductor**

Michael Thrift

**Narrator**

Robert Bathurst

**Leader**

Eliot Bougant

**Violin I**

Wilmien Janse van Rensburg (*Sponsored by Michael & Helen Brown*)

Julie Piggott (*Sponsored by Michael Manning Clark*)

Kiok Son (*Sponsored by Jenny Jones*)

Amy-Jo Gilbert

**Violin II**

Victoria Marsh (*Sponsored by Anatoly Savin*)

Adriana Cristea

Michelle Kolesnikov

Claudia Carrey

**Viola**

Cameron Howe (*Sponsored by Stephen & Juliet Callaghan*)

Anastasia Sofina

**Cello**

Eddie Mead (*Sponsored by Philip & Suzy Rowley*)

Rebecca Strong Garcia (*Sponsored in Memory of Herc & Oeschka Hefer*)

**Bass**

Adam Churchyard (*Sponsored by David & Eillis Baty*)

**Flute**

Nika Pinter (*Sponsored by Ann Scott*)

**Oboe**

Katherine Jones (*Sponsored by Trevor & Elizabeth Gore*)

**Clarinet**

Thomas Gant (*Sponsored by Ken Watters & Robin Wilkinson*)

**Bassoon**

Amy Thompson

**Horn**

Caomie Glavin  
Joe McDermott  
Henry Wright

**Trumpet**

Samantha Barnhart (*Sponsored by Professor Thomas Hale & Dr Sam Webster*)

**Trombone**

Joe Smales

**Timpani**

Lewis Blee (*Sponsored by Mathieu & Nathalie Gaveau*)  
Peter Ashwell

**Percussion**

Peter Ashwell

**Stage Manager**

Gabriella Coomber  
Jason Wescombe



Sergei Prokofiev

## *Peter and the Wolf, Op.67*

**T**he Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev wrote this music as a “symphonic fairy tale for children”. The narrator tells a story, while the orchestra illustrates it.

Peter lives in his grandfather’s house in a forest clearing. One day, Peter goes out into the clearing, and leaves the garden gate open. The duck that lives in the garden walks through the gate, to go for a swim in a nearby pond. The duck starts arguing with a little bird, about which is better – flying or swimming. Peter’s cat creeps up on them quietly. The bird, warned by Peter, flies to safety in a tall tree, and the duck swims safely to the middle of the pond.

Peter’s grandfather sees what is happening and is angry with Peter for being outside in the meadow alone. “Suppose a wolf came out of the forest?” – he says. “Boys like me are not afraid of wolves” – says Peter. His grandfather takes Peter back inside and locks the gate.

Soon after, a big wolf comes out of the forest. The cat runs up a tree, but the duck, who has jumped out of the pond, is caught by the wolf and swallowed up.

Peter fetches a rope and climbs over the garden wall into the tree. He asks the bird to fly around the wolf’s head to distract him, while he lowers a noose and catches the wolf by his tail. The wolf struggles to get free, but Peter ties the rope to the tree and the noose only gets tighter.

Some hunters, who have been following the wolf, come out of the forest ready to shoot him, but Peter gets them to help him take the wolf to a zoo in a victory parade that includes himself, the bird, the hunters leading the wolf, the cat, and his grandfather.

In the story’s ending, the listener is told: “If you listen very carefully, you’ll hear the duck quacking inside the wolf’s belly, because the wolf in his hurry had swallowed her alive.”



## Conductor

### Michael Thrift

In 2024 Australian-British conductor Michael Thrift continues his long-standing relationship with the London Firebird Orchestra, having conducted the orchestra during the past several seasons.

In addition to 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 Rousse State Theatre, Bulgaria, leading the company's forces in Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* and Saint-Saens *Samson et Delilah*. Elsewhere, Michael has led productions of Wagner's *Parsifal*, as well as performances of Britten's *Peter Grimes*, Billy Budd, and Beethoven's *Fidelio*.

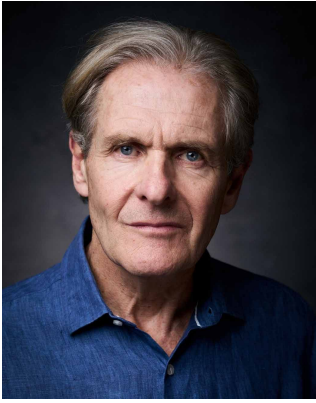
In 2021 he led an acclaimed performance in the London Opera Company's debut production of *Tristan & Isolde*. 2022 performances include Verdi's *Aida*, and

Janacek'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 has lead premiers of new music with the London Firebird Orchestra, and has worked closely with composition students from the University of Middlesex during LFO's collaborations in 2018, 2019, and 2020.

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. He lives with his wife and son in Manchester.



Narrator

## Robert Bathurst

Robert Bathurst is an actor. His television appearances include *Cold Feet*, *Downton Abbey*, *Toast Of London*, *Joking Apart* and *Red Dwarf*. On stage he has performed in numerous plays in The West End and on tour, most recently in *Jeffrey Bernard Is Unwell* and as

Scrooge in the musical *Dolly Parton's Smoky Mountain Christmas Carol*. He adapted for the stage, with cartoon animation, two books by the poet Christopher Reid. His latest reading of Dorothy L Sayers *Lord Peter Wimsey* murder mysteries are available on Audible.



*Thank you*

London Firebird Orchestra would like to thank The Hyde Park Place Estates Charity and The Story of Christmas for supporting today's concert

