

Bolt's War

Fri 30 Oct, 7pm

Town Hall

Please note that all timings are approximate and may be subject to change. Performers are correct at time of uploading.

Doreen Carwithen Suffolk Suite (12')
Vaughan Williams The Lark Ascending (15')
Alan Bolt (arr. Jackson) Overture for a Festival (5')

INTERVAL – (20')

Butterworth The Banks of Green Willow (7')
Ravel Le Tombeau de Couperin (27')

Andrew Manze *conductor*
Braimah Kanneh-Mason *soloist*

First Violins

Peter Liang
 Concettina Del Vecchio
 Stephan Mayer *
 Susanna Poole
 Qian Wu
 Kelvin Ng
 Claire Stranger Ford
 Daniel Lewis

Second Violins

Kate Richardson *
 David Rimbault
 Frances Evans
 Chu Yu Yang
 Ruth Sanderson
 Celia Goodwin

Violas

Alexander Mitchell
 Sarah Hill
 Daniel Sanxis
 Ray Lester

Cellos

Nicholas Trygstad
 Hilary Browning *
 Alexander Holladay
 Anna Crawford

Double Basses

Marcel Becker
 Nigel Dufty *

Flute

Helen Wilson

Piccolo

Claire Duggan

Oboe

Helena Mackie

Cor Anglais

Drake Gritton

Clarinets

Miquel Ramos Salvadó
 Emma Burgess

Bassoons

Jordy Meulenbroeks
 Rebekah Abramski

Horns

Timothy Jackson
 Timothy Nicholson
 Erin Cooper Gay

Trumpets

Jonathan Holland
 Hannah Mackenzie

Trombones

Simon Cowen
 Simon Powell

Timpani

Neil Hitt

Percussion

Josephine Frieze
 Scott Lumsdaine

Harp

Elizabeth McNulty

Bolt's War

Programme Notes

An evening of music inspired by remembrance, resilience and hope, centred on the remarkable story of local composer and music director Alan Bolt. While held as a prisoner of war during WWII, Bolt formed an orchestra in the camp and composed *Overture for a Festival*. Liberated before it could be performed, this concert finally presents the work's world premiere alongside music by Vaughan Williams, Butterworth, Carwithen and Ravel.

About the Music

Doreen Carwithen *Suffolk Suite*

The delightful and evocative [*Suffolk Suite*](#) dates from 1964 when she was asked for piece for the boys of Framlingham College to perform at the royal opening of their new concert hall.

In it Carwithen repurposed and reworked a tune she had composed for a 1950s British Transport film, East Anglian Holiday. And you can hear a cinematic quality in its four movements: Prelude, Orford Ness, Suffolk Morris and Framlingham Castle.

Ralph Vaughan Williams *The Lark Ascending*

[*The Lark Ascending*](#) is inspired by a poem of the same name by George Meredith, was composed in 1914 – but the outbreak of the First World War delayed its premiere, its composer serving as a stretcher bearer in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Audiences eventually first heard the piece at Shirehampton Public Hall in Bristol in December 1990. It was performed by violinist [Marie Hall](#) to whom it was dedicated, with a piano accompaniment.

The first performance with an orchestra came in in June 1921 when Hall joined the British Symphony Orchestra and Adrian Boult in a concert at the Queen's Hall in London.

With its evocative solo violin soaring the thermals like a skylark, set against an idyllic pastoral aural setting, it's certainly delighted listeners over the last 100 years and has been consistently voted the nation's favourite piece of classical music in the [Classic FM Hall of Fame](#). In 2026, it came in at number 3.

The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, led by conductor Andrew Manze, made a much-praised [recording](#) of Ralph Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* with violinist James Ehnes in 2019.

Alan Bolt (arr. Jackson) *Overture for a Festival (world premiere)*

This whole evening has at its heart the inspirational story of Cumbrian composer and musical director Alan Bolt who died in March 2019 at the age of 100.

It was during a particularly eventful period in his long life that Bolt produced *Overture for a Festival* which is now finally being given its world premiere (with an arrangement by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic's own Tim Jackson) more than 80 years after it was first composed.

George Butterworth *The Banks of Green Willow*

The Banks of Green Willow is based on two folk song melodies he had noted on his travels in Edwardian England – the titular *The Banks of Green Meadow* and *Green Bushes* - and scored for small orchestra, listen out for the theme introduced by the horns which was Butterworth's own.

The premiere of *The Banks of Green Willow* took place in West Kirby, on the Wirral peninsula, on 27 February 1914, with Adrian Boult conducting a combined orchestra of 40 members of the Hallé and Liverpool orchestras.

Maurice Ravel *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

Le Tombeau de Couperin was composed on and off between 1914-17. François Couperin was a French Baroque composer of the late 17th and early 18th Century, and in his era a 'tombeau' was a musical piece written in memory of a person.

The work references Baroque musical form and ornamentation while also resonating very much with the chromatic and harmonic soundworld its composer created in the early 20th Century.

And it also had other contemporary resonances for Ravel. Each of its six movements is dedicated to a friend who died in the war, including Jacques Charlot, who had transcribed Ravel's works for piano, and French musicologist Joseph de Marliave who was killed in action in August 1914 near Verdun. In addition, Ravel also lost his mother in 1917.

Originally a piano suite, the work was premiered in April 1919 in Paris by the celebrated pianist Marguerite Long, widow of Marliave.

In the same year, Ravel took four of its six movements – the Prelude, Forlane, Menuet and Rigaudon - and created the orchestral version you will hear tonight.

About the Artists

Andrew Manze *conductor*

[Andrew Manze](#) is Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, a role he has held since 2018.

With boundless energy and warmth and an extensive and scholarly knowledge of the repertoire, Manze is in great demand from some of the world's leading orchestras and ensembles and is widely celebrated as one of the most stimulating and inspirational conductors of his generation.

Manze read Classics at Cambridge and then studied the violin. He began his career as an Early Music specialist, becoming Associate Director of the Academy of Ancient Music at the age of 31.

Along with a busy conducting career he also teaches, edits and writes about music and is in demand as a broadcaster.

As a violinist, he has released an astonishing variety of recordings, many of them award-winning.

He was Chief Conductor of the NDR Radiophilharmonie from 2014-2023, during which time he led two successful tours to China and one to Japan, and he is currently Principal Guest Conductor of the [Scottish Chamber Orchestra](#) and Honorary Conductor of the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra.

In great demand as a guest conductor across the globe, Manze has long-standing relationships with leading orchestras that include the Munich Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Camerata Salzburg. He is also a regular guest at the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York City.

Engagements during the 2026/27 season include concerts with the Bournemouth Symphony, Philharmonic Luxembourg, Estonia National Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic and Finnish Radio Symphony among others.

Braimah Kanneh-Mason *violin*

The second eldest of the spectacularly talented Kanneh-Mason siblings, [Braimah Kanneh-Mason](#) is a dynamic and engaging violinist who has performed throughout the UK, Europe, USA and the Australia as a soloist and as a chamber musician.

In recent seasons he has played concerti with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Bath Philharmonia. An avid

chamber musician, Braimah is a member of the Kanneh-Mason Piano Trio, Festival Academy Budapest Ensemble and Kaleidoscope Collective. He has performed at venues and festivals such as London's Wigmore Hall and Barbican Hall, Melbourne Symphony Hall, Verbier Festival, Highgate International Chamber Music Festival, Leicester International Chamber Music Festival and collaborated with artists such as Nicola Benedetti, Tom Poster and Priya Mitchell.

In 2024 he appeared in two concerts at the [BBC Proms](#) with his brother Sheku, Brazilian guitarist Plinio Fernandés and Fantasia Orchestra, conducted by Tom Featherstonhaugh. He also played Coleridge Taylor's violin concerto in the USA with the Canton Symphony and Illinois Symphony Orchestras.

Through playing and presenting [Kanneh-Mason](#) has recorded an episode of the BBC series *In the Studio*, has co-presented a radio programme for Classic FM and recorded as a soloist for BBC Radio 3 and performed on BBC Radio 4's *Loose Ends*.

He is a passionate advocate for equal opportunity and diversity in music education and is a Cultural Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda and a Junior Ambassador for Music in Secondary Schools Trust. He has been a mentor at Sistema England, Junior Music Works and a mentor for consecutive years for the Antigua and Barbuda Youth Orchestra (ABYSO).

Most recently, Kanneh-Mason has studied with Barnabás Kelemen and Eszter Perenyi at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest. He is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music where he was a scholarship student with Mateja Marinkovic and Jack Liebeck, winning the Harold Craxton Prize, the John McAslan Prize and the Dame Ruth Railton Chamber Music Prize.

He plays a [Matteo Goffriller](#) violin on generous loan from a private sponsor through Florian Leonhard Fine Violins.

About the Composers

Doreen Carwithen

The name [Doreen Carwithen](#) may not be instantly recognisable, but the chances are you might recognise some of her work.

Because Carwithen was a prolific composer of film scores - and indeed, has the distinction of being the world's first professional full-time female film composer, scoring dramas, horror films, mysteries and documentaries.

Aged just 24, she became, the inaugural recipient of the J Arthur Rank Film Scholarship, and [among her credits](#) are the films *Boys in Brown* (1949) starring Jack Warner, Richard Attenborough and Dirk Bogarde, *Mantrap* (1953) whose cast included a pre-Miss Money Penny Lois Maxwell, *The Men of Sherwood*

Forest (1954) and Three Cases of Murder (1955), the latter of which had a cast headed by Orson Welles.

Carwithen was known for working well under pressure. When she was asked in 1953 to compose the music for the official coronation film Elizabeth is Queen, her deadline was just three days!

But alongside her film music, she also enjoyed a parallel career as a composer of orchestral, instrumental and piano works.

Doreen Mary Carwithen was born in Haddenham in Buckinghamshire in 1922, the daughter of a baker and grocer, and had early piano and violin lessons from her mother who was an aspiring concert pianist-turned-teacher. A younger sister, Barbara, would also become a musician and composer.

In 1938 she started taking cello lessons and three years later enrolled in the Royal Academy of Music, where she learned composition from composer and conductor William Alwyn, himself later a prolific composer of movie music. Carwithen and Alwyn would later marry, with her being known by the name Mary Alwyn.

Her earliest pieces date from the Second World War, including works for cello and piano, and voice and piano. She first came to critical attention with the overture *ODTAA* (One damn thing after another) which was premiered at the Royal Opera House in 1947.

Ralph Vaughan Williams

[Ralph Vaughan Williams](#) was born in the Cotswolds in 1872, the scion of a wealthy and well-connected family – his paternal grandfather was a judge while on his mother's side his ancestors included Josiah Wedgwood and Erasmus and Charles Darwin.

His father died when the young Ralph was a toddler and he was taken by his mother to be raised at her family home, Leith Hill, in leafy Surrey where, aged five, he started music lessons with a Wedgwood aunt – and the same year composed his first piece, *The Robin's Nest*.

Aged 18, Vaughan Williams enrolled at the Royal College of Music - tutors included Hubert Parry. On his family's insistence, he went up to study music at Cambridge where he met his first wife Adeline, before returning to the RCM where he forged a lifelong friendship with Gustav Holst.

In addition to composition, his early career was spent writing about music and editing The English Hymnal. He also developed what became a passion for collecting and preserving the nation's [traditional folk songs](#).

The young composer started travelling around the country in 1903, noting and collecting examples of Britain's oral musical tradition which he not only wove into his own compositions but also influenced his style. His work brought him into the orbit of fellow folk song collector Cecil Sharp and of the young George Butterworth who both became close friends as well as colleagues.

Alan Francis Bolt

[Alan Bolt](#) was born in London in March 1919 and was educated at Grammar School in Surbiton where he was head boy, captain of the rugby team and a keen musician.

He studied English at the University of London and on graduating joined the Royal Corps of Signals, serving in North Africa. It was there he was captured by the Italians and spent the rest of the war as a PoW, eventually at [Stalag IV-B at Mühlberg in Germany](#).

One of the largest PoW camps which operated on German soil during the Second World War, the 30-hectare Stalag was around 70 miles south of Berlin and during the conflict it reportedly held servicemen from more than 30 nations.

It was during his time that Bolt formed and conducted an orchestra among fellow prisoners and wrote his *Overture for a Festival*. But Mühlberg was liberated by the Soviets in April 1945 before it could be performed.

On returning to civilian life, Bolt worked as an English teacher at his old school and became active in amateur dramatics, choral and orchestral conducting. It was in 1984, on retiring, that he moved to Cumbria, settling in Leece with wife Alison, and continued his busy musical schedule.

He joined the Ulverston Bach Choir – now the [Furness Bach Choir](#) – and soon became its musical director, greatly expanding its repertoire. He also conducted the Fylde Coast's Phoenix Strings, became Master of the North Lonsdale Foxhounds and had a part share in a racehorse.

He celebrated his centenary in March 2019 with a series of festivities and a five-tier cake decorated with hounds, early musical instruments, rugby union and horse racing, [dying](#) just a few days after his landmark day.

George Butterworth

Killed at the Somme in August 1916 at the age of 31, English composer and folk song collector [George Butterworth](#) left a small body of work which hinted of a major talent the world sadly never got to enjoy.

Born in London in 1885 and educated in Yorkshire, Eton and Oxford - where he was president of the musical club, in the years before the First World War,

Butterworth played a significant role in the revival of English folk music alongside his friends Ralph Vaughan Williams and Cecil Sharp, collecting and preserving hundreds of examples of traditional song which would influence his own compositional work.

He was also a founder of the English Folk Dance Society, and a member of Sharp's Morris dancing demonstration team.

Butterworth's most famous surviving works are *A Shropshire Lad* - composed between 1909 and 1911 as two song cycles for voice and piano, using a dozen of A E Housman's elegiac poems, and the 1913 orchestral idyll

Maurice Ravel

While chiefly known by the wider public for the five minutes of music which carried Torvill and Dean to ice dancing victory, there is much more to French composer [Maurice Ravel](#) than just *Boléro*.

He was a master craftsman of imaginatively orchestrated, vividly textured work rich with elegant melodies over a four-decade career.

Born in 1875 in Cibourne on France's border with the Basque country of his mother, Ravel was attracted to all things Spanish – although he only set foot in Spain itself for the first time at the age of 38.

Meanwhile musically, he was also influenced by Erik Satie, Stravinsky (a friend), by jazz and by French Romantic composer and poet Emmanuel Chabrier.

Ravel began music lessons at seven and gave his first piano recital aged 14, entering the Paris Conservatoire where he won first prize in piano in 1891 and where he developed a dandyish personal style. Later, he would study composition there with Gabriel Fauré.

A master orchestrator as well as a gifted composer, Ravel's catalogue embraces concertos and chamber works, piano pieces, a ballet commissioned for the famous Ballet Russes, and two operas.

When the First World War broke out, Ravel tried to join the French air force, and when he was turned down, enlisted in an artillery regiment, driving munitions under bombardment although he was invalided out in 1917 due to illness.