ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto

Sat 21 Nov, 7:30pm

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

Domingo Hindoyan *conductor*
Clara-Jumi Kang *soloist*

Rene Orth *Chasing Light* (4′)

Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto* (27′)

-INTERVAL- (20′)

Elgar *Symphony No.1* (52′)

First Violins
Nicholas Wright
Adi Brett
Mihkel Kerem
Peter Liang
Martin Richardson *
Concettina Del Vecchio
Stephan Mayer *
Ruth McNamara
Susanna Poole
Elizabeth Lamberton
Emily Mowbray
Qian Wu
Esther Zaglia
Marino Capulli

Second Violins
Kate Richardson *
Sophie McQueen
Kate Marsden
James Justin Evans *
David Rimbault
Olga Smoleń
James Pattinson
Frances Evans
Chu Yu (Joe) Yang
Evan Lawrence
Celia Goodwin
Adam Riding

Violas
Alexander Mitchell
Gwendolyn Cawdron
Sarah Hill
David Ruby *
Fiona Stunden *
Rachel Jones
Ian Fair
Amy Hark
Joanna Claire
Harriet Mitchell

Cellos
Nicholas Trygstad
Hilary Browning *
Ian Bracken *
Gethyn Jones *
Alexander Holladay
Mark Lindley
Anna Stuart
Lizzie Elliott

Double Basses
Marcel Becker
Nathan Knight
Ashley Frampton *
Nigel Dufty *
Imogen Fernando
Aaron Barrera Reyes
Georgia Lloyd

Flutes
Cormac Henry
Helen Wilson

Piccolo
Sameeta Gahir

Oboes
Helena Mackie
Sam Willsmore

Cor Anglais
Drake Gritton

Clarinets
Miquel Ramos Salvadó
Jill Allan

Bass Clarinet
Isaac Prince

Bassoons
Will Kidner
Rebekah Abramski

Contrabassoon
Gareth Twigg

Horns
Timothy Jackson
Simon Griffiths
Lindsey Stoker
Timothy Nicholson
Erin Cooper Gay

Trumpets
Toby Street
Hannah Mackenzie
James Nash

Trombones
Simon Cowen
Simon Powell

Bass Trombone
Simon Chappell

Tuba
Robin Haggart *

Timpani
Neil Hitt

Percussion
Matthew Brett
Josephine Frieze
Scott Lumsdaine

Harp
Elizabeth McNulty
Eira Lynn Jones

*Denotes 25 years' service

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto
Programme Notes

About the Music

Rene Orth (b. 1985): *Chasing Light*

Composed: 2015
First Performed: March 2015, Philadelphia, Curtis Institute Symphony Orchestra

Brief it may be (just under four minutes), but American composer Rene Orth's *Chasing Light* packs a hefty punch – and it leaves us thinking too. For most of its length, it's like a darker version of John Adams's modern classic, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*. If this is a car journey, it's tense, fearful, nocturnal, with garish city lights confusing the mind rather than pointing the way. There's a sense of searching frantically for something, perhaps a more enduring, meaningful kind of light? Eventually we glimpse something, but is this a glimmer of hope – or a mirage? The question is left hanging in the air, unanswered.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847): Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64

1. Allegro molto appassionato -
2. Andante -
3. Allegretto non troppo - Allegro molto vivace

Composed: 1838-45
First Performed: 13 March 1845, Leipzig, Gewandhaus, Gewandhaus Orchestra, Ferdinand David (violin), cond. Mendelssohn

'I should like to write a Violin Concerto for you for next winter', wrote Mendelssohn to his old friend Ferdinand David. 'One in E minor is running round in my head, the beginning of which gives me no peace.' But it wasn't ready 'next winter'. In fact, completing the Violin Concerto took Mendelssohn another six years, during which he anxiously fired off letter after letter to David, imploring his advice: 'Please don't laugh at me too much! I'm truly ashamed of myself, but I can't help it. I'm just groping around here.' In the end, David's help, plus his promise to play the new work 'so that the angels in heaven will rejoice', gave Mendelssohn the reassurance he needed to finish the score. The Concerto's premiere was a sensation. Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto was immediately accepted as one of the gems of the concerto repertoire, and its status and popularity, with audiences and violinist, has remained secure ever since.

From the very beginning of the Concerto it's easy to see why it's so loved. The famous opening is not only very beautiful and superbly conceived for the violin,

it imperiously scorns concerto tradition. Traditionally, concertos began with a substantial introduction for orchestra alone, the soloist making his or her entry once the main themes had been presented. In Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto however the soloist sweeps straight in with a long, soaring melody. The violin is never silent for very long, and only at the very end of the movement does the orchestra seize the stage for the emphatic final chords - or at least they *sound* final. But a bassoon hangs on to one note, bends it upwards, then woodwind and strings lead straight into the slow movement, *Andante* and with another glorious long melody emerges, and despite stern challenges from trumpets and timpani, the sense of instrumental song is sustained right through to the end.

No sooner has last chord sounded than the violin starts again with a wistful new idea, in a slightly faster tempo, *Allegretto non troppo*. Is this the finale, or some kind of intermezzo movement? There's a moment of teasing uncertainty, then the finale proper races into action, *Allegro molto vivace*, with brass fanfares answered eagerly by the violin. Again the soloist is rarely silent, leading the display of technical fireworks through to a joyous conclusion, soloist and orchestra now in thrilling accord.

Edward Elgar (1857-1934): Symphony No 1 in A flat major , Op. 55

1. Andante. Nobilmente e semplice - Allegro
2. Allegro molto -
3. Adagio
4. Lento - Allegro

Composed: 1907-8
First Performed: 3 December 1908, Manchester, Hallé Orchestra cond. Hans Richter

The premiere of Elgar's *Enigma Variations* in 1899 was the big breakthrough of his career. Overnight, this little known, Worcestershire-based 42-year-old composer was transformed from minor local celebrity to national treasure. But it placed a huge burden of expectation on his shoulders: Elgar was now the country's musical bright hope, the composer who would provide his people with the first Great British Symphony. However he presented himself in public, privately Elgar was nervous, fragile and prone to depression and agonising self-doubt. It took him nearly ten years of hard work, including several false starts, with a lot of patient, determined encouragement from his friends, before his Symphony No 1 was finished. Despite Elgar's fears, it was a sensation, with over a hundred performances following in its first full year of existence, in Britain, the USA and on the continent. Elgar was now an international star.

Of course, audiences and critics now wanted to know more about the symphony. What kind of ideas or images did Elgar have in mind? Was there some kind of story behind the music? In public, Elgar offered few clues as to what the symphony might be 'about', saying only that there was 'no programme beyond a wide experience of human life with great charity (love) and a *massive* hope in the future' – a rousing symphonic hymn, it would

appear, to what Elgar was later to call the 'glad confident morning' of the Edwardian era. But Elgar was complex, as man and as composer. Many listeners have felt a compelling drama, or narrative, unfolding in the First Symphony, but as so often with Elgar it's far from straightforward.

Though the First Symphony does appear to begin and end with 'massive hope', in the form of a wonderful slow 'noble' march theme, there are shadows and enigmas, and they make their presence felt as soon as the march theme has blossomed in full orchestral colours. The turbulent, impassioned Allegro that follows is mostly fraught, despite moments of blazing glory and tender pastoral beauty. There's more strife in the darkly martial second movement, but here the tender pastoral element eventually wins, leading into the Adagio - one of those wonderful Elgarian orchestral 'songs without words' that seems half noble and aspiring, half achingly sad. The finale raises itself splendidly from its shadowy beginning, but does 'massive hope' win out in the end, or does a note of self-doubt and regret linger even after the oceanic ending? For Elgar's first audiences it seems to have been 'massive hope' that won out. But these are different times, and we may find that Elgar has things to say to us, too.

About the Artists

Domingo Hindoyan

Domingo Hindoyan was born in Caracas in 1980 to a violinist father and a lawyer mother. He started his musical career as a violinist in the ground-breaking Venezuelan musical education programme El Sistema. He studied conducting at **Haute Ecole de Musique in Geneva**, where he gained his masters, and in 2012 was invited to join the Allianz International Conductor's Academy, through which he worked with the London Philharmonic and the Philharmonia Orchestra and with conductors like Esa-Pekka Salonen and Sir Andrew Davis.

He was appointed first assistant conductor to **Daniel Barenboim** at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin in 2013, and in 2019, he took up a position as principal guest conductor of the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. In the same year, he made his debut with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and was appointed as the Orchestra's new Chief Conductor in 2020, taking up his position in September 2021. He has now extended his contract with the Orchestra to 2028.

Clara-Jumi Kang

Regarded as one of the most outstanding violinists of her generation, **Clara-Jumi Kang** is celebrated for her exceptional musicality, technical mastery, and artistic depth. She has received numerous awards and accolades, including First Prize at the **2010 Indianapolis International Violin Competition**, along with five additional special prizes.

In the 25/26 season, Kang was Artist-in-Residence with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. As part of her residency, she performed concerti by Lalo, Shostakovich and Bernstein with Chief Conductor Ryan Bancroft.

Other highlights of the 25/26 season included her subscription debut with the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, a tour with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and the Philharmonia Orchestra on their Korean tour. She also made her debut at Walt Disney Concert Hall for a duo recital as part of their celebrity series alongside regular partner Sunwook Kim.

Kang was selected as one of the top 100 Most Promising and Influential People of Korea in 2012 by Dong-A Times and was awarded the Daewon Music Award (2012). She has made two recordings for Decca: *Modern Solo*, featuring works by Schubert and Ysaÿe, and a Brahms-Schumann album with Yeol Eum Son. In 2021, she released a cycle of Beethoven's Violin Sonatas with **pianist Sunwook Kim**.

Born in Germany to Korean parents, Clara-Jumi Kang took up the violin at the age of three and a year later enrolled as the youngest ever student at the Mannheim Musikhochschule. She went on to study with Zakhar Bron at the Lübeck Musikhochschule and at the age of seven was awarded a full scholarship to the Julliard School to study with Dorothy Delay.

Having received musical guidance from Daniel Barenboim starting from the age of 11, she was then invited to perform with him and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra aged 12. She took her bachelor's and master's degrees at the Korean National University of Arts under Nam-Yun Kim before completing her studies at the Munich Musikhochschule with Christoph Poppen.

Kang plays on the **"Thunis" Stradivarius** from 1702, on generous loan by KIA.

About the Composers

Rene Orth

American **Rene Orth** is an innovative composer whose music combines emotional directness with a distinctly contemporary dramatic sensibility, often blending acoustic forces with electronics.

Critics have praised her work for its dramatic force and immediacy. Classical Voice North America describes her as a "master composer" with a "sophisticated sound world," while The Washington Post has noted the "unexpected immediacy" of her musical voice.

Born in Dallas and based in Valencia, Orth is a graduate of the **Curtis Institute of Music**, where she held the Edward B Garrigues Fellowship. She received her M.M. in Music Composition from the University of Louisville as a Moritz von Bomhard Fellow and holds additional degrees from MediaTech Institute and Rhodes College.

She recently completed a three-year tenure as Composer-in-Residence at Opera Philadelphia and previously served as the inaugural Resident Composer at Opera San José. During the 23/24 season, Opera Philadelphia presented the world premiere of ***10 Days in a Madhouse***, co-commissioned by Opera Philadelphia and Tapestry Opera. The work went on to win the 2024 MCANA Best New Opera Award, was a finalist for Best World Premiere at the 2024 International Opera Awards and was named number one on The Washington Post's Best of Classical Music in 2023.

She is also looking forward to the world premiere of a new *Concerto for Percussion and Harp* by the San Francisco Symphony in April 2027.

Orth's music has been performed by a wide range of opera companies and orchestras, including Washington National Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Curtis Opera Theatre, Berkeley Symphony, New World Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Summerville Orchestra, Juilliard Youth Symphony, and Festival d'Aix-en-Provence.

Honours and distinctions include OPERA America Commissioning and Discovery Grants, an American Composers Forum Subito Grant, a Kentucky Foundation for Women Artist Enrichment Grant, and the 2023 NATS Art Song Composition Award.

Felix Mendelssohn

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy was born in Hamburg in February 1809 and grew up in Berlin. His grandfather Moses Mendelssohn was a famous Jewish philosopher and his father Abraham, who converted to Christianity to avoid antisemitic discrimination, was a successful and wealthy banker.

The Mendelssohn home was full of music, and Felix – who showed prodigal talent on the piano (he was taught by his mother Lea) – started composing aged 10. But he wasn't the only composer in the family. His beloved older **sister Fanny** was also a talented (and prolific) composer who, because she was female, did not get an equal opportunity to shine.

Mendelssohn made full use of the freedom his (male) privilege afforded him and travelled widely, including **10 separate visits to Britain** , where he was always welcomed with open arms. The first came in 1829 when he was just 20, and the last in 1846 when his majestic oratorio *Elijah* was premiered at **Birmingham Town Hall** .

His first visit saw him in London but also in Scotland where he embarked on a rough crossing to the **Hebrides** which inspired him to compose his titular *Hebrides Overture* – more commonly known as *Fingal's Cave*. One of the most celebrated figures in the early Romantic period, among Mendelssohn's other best-known and best-loved works are the *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, composed in 1826 when he was only 17 and featuring the 'wedding march' which has graced a million nuptials, his *Italian Symphony* of 1833 and the lyrical 1844 *Violin Concerto in E minor.*

His ***Third 'Scottish' Symphony*** was completed in 1842 – the year he spent a musical evening at Buckingham Palace with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and was yet another work informed by his first, youthful visit north of the border. Despite his regular trips across the Channel, Mendelssohn never performed in Liverpool – the closest he got was in July 1829 when he played his *Fantasia in F sharp minor* on the Broadwood piano of an American ship moored in the docks. That didn't stop the Liverpool Philharmonic Society's Swiss-born conductor Jakob Zeugheer Herrmann engaging in an exchange of letters with the composer in early 1847, with the idea of a cantata to celebrate the opening of the new Philharmonic Hall, designed by architect John Cunningham and which was being built in Hope Street. Mendelssohn died before he could fulfil Zeugheer Hermann's commission brief, although his oratorio *Elijah* was eventually performed when the hall opened in August 1849.

In 1843 the composer had founded the Leipzig Conservatory, and it was in the German city that he passed away in November 1847, six months after his sister Fanny's death and following a series of strokes. He was only 38.

Did you know? In addition to being a composer, Mendelssohn the polymath was a talented artist, writer, philosopher and a linguist who was fluent in English, French, and Italian.

Enjoy the first movement of Mendelssohn's *Scottish Symphony.*

Sir Edward Elgar

The most important English composer since Purcell, **Sir Edward Elgar** was born at Lower Broadheath, a small village just outside Worcester, on June 2, 1857 – the middle child of seven children.

Elgar's father William was a piano tuner who ran a music shop in the city's High Street. Yet although the family would 'live above the shop' as the young Edward grew up - influenced by his mother Ann, a farmer's daughter from the Forest of Dean, he always retained a love of the rolling English countryside, particularly the nearby Malvern Hills which he captured, famously, in his music.

While he had piano and violin lessons as a child, Elgar never had any formal musical training. He taught himself to compose, and his early career was spent as a freelance musician and as a violin and music teacher at the Worcester

High School for Girls (a job he reputedly detested). He was also bandmaster at the Worcester City and County Pauper Lunatic Asylum at Powick.

He was associated with the **Three Choirs Festival** for more than half-a-century, from the age of 24, when he played second violin in the orchestra, to a year before he died. As a boy, he had attended concerts and his father and uncle had performed in the festival themselves.

Elgar's earliest compositions included a *Gloria*, written while still a teenager, *Mass for choir and organ* and *Romance for Violin and Piano*. His 1888 work *Salut d'Amour* was written as an engagement gift for his future wife (Caroline) Alice, while the 1892 *Serenade for Strings* was based on a melody he had actually written much earlier in his life.

His most famous and enduring works date from the mid-1890s onwards, including the ***Enigma Variations*** – premiered in London in June 1899 with Hans Richter conducting, *Dream of Gerontius* (1900), his *Pomp and Circumstance March No.1* (1901), *Symphony No.1* (1908), *Violin Concerto* (1909-10), and his 1919 masterpiece the *Cello Concerto*.

Elgar was knighted in 1904, and the following year was made a Freeman of Worcester and became the first Professor of Music at the University of Birmingham. He received the Order of Merit in 1911, was made a KVCO in 1928 and in 1931 was given a baronetcy, taking the title Lord Elgar of Broadheath. From 1924-34 he was **Master of the King's Musick** . Elgar died in Worcester on February 23, 1934. He was buried in the churchyard at St Wulstan's RC Church in Little Malvern.

Did you know? When Elgar's song cycle *Sea Pictures* was premiered at the Norwich Festival in 1899, with its composer conducting, the statuesque 6ft 2in English contralto Clara Butt appeared dressed as a mermaid.

Listen to Elgar's *Serenade for Strings.*