

MATINEE CONCERT SCHMIDT SYMPHONY NO4

New Auditorium, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall Wed 21 Sep 2022 2pm

Kindly supported by the Music Reprieval Trust



REVOLUTIONARY THE RITE OF SPRING

EDN Fri 30 Sep GLW Sat 1 Oct

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Stravinsky Fireworks Britten Violin Concerto David Fennessy SCOTCH The Riot Act Stravinsky The Rite of Spring



Thomas Søndergård Conductor Stefan Jackiw Violin Mark Le Brocq Tenor

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SCHMIDT SYMPHONY No4

A lonely trumpet calls in the twilight and the Austrian composer Franz Schmidt begins his Fourth Symphony – music of joy and sorrow, Alpine grandeur and deep, tender poetry. If you enjoy the music of Mahler and Richard Strauss, this might just be the greatest symphony you've never heard. Guest conductor Jonathan Berman simply loves it, and he's got another surprise up his sleeve too: Elgar's majestic, multicoloured homage to Johann Sebastian Bach.

J S BACH orch. ELGAR Fantasia and Fugue in C minor BWV537 [8'] VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Death of Tintagiles [15']

INTERVAL

SCHMIDT Symphony No4 in C major [42']

Jonathan Berman Conductor Royal Scottish National Orchestra

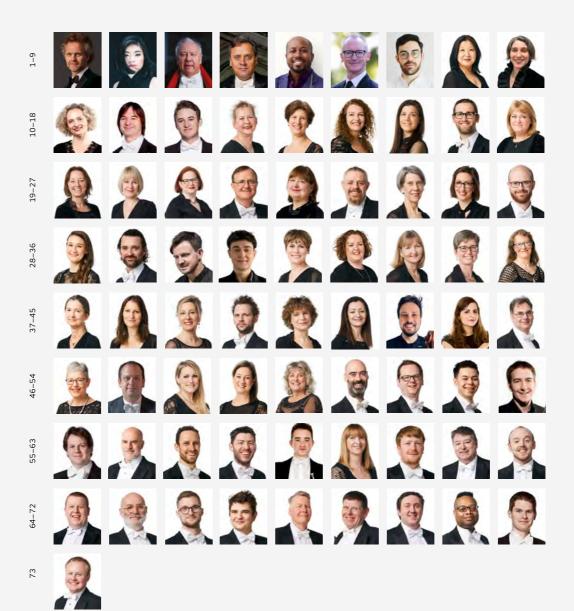
NEW AUDITORIUM, GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL Wed 21 Sep 2022 2pm

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ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA



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Elim Chan	2
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Neeme Järvi	3
CONDUCTOR LAUREATE	
Alexander Lazarev	4
CONDUCTOR EMERITUS	
Kellen Gray	5
ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR	
Stephen Doughty	6
CHORUS DIRECTOR, RSNO CHORUS	
Patrick Barrett	7
CHORUS DIRECTOR, RSNO JUNIOR CHORU	JS

FIRST VIOLIN

Maya Iwabuchi LEADER	8
Sharon Roffman LEADER	9
Lena Zeliszewska	
ASSOCIATE LEADER	
Tamás Fejes assistant leader	11
Patrick Curlett ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	12
Caroline Parry	13
Ursula Heidecker Allen	14
Lorna Rough	15
Susannah Lowdon	16
Alan Manson	17
Elizabeth Bamping	18

SECOND VIOLIN 1.5 ~

Jacqueline Speirs	19
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL	
Marion Wilson Associate PRINCIPAL	20
Harriet Wilson SUB PRINCIPAL	21
Nigel Mason	22
Wanda Wojtasinska	23
Paul Medd	24
Anne Bünemann	25
Sophie Lang	26
Robin Wilson	27
Emily Nenniger	28

VIOLA

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Felix Tanner
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Katherine Wren
Maria Trittinger
Francesca Hunt

JS CELLO

Betsy Taylor Associate PRINCIPAL	39
Kennedy Leitch ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	40
Rachael Lee	41
Sarah Digger	42
Robert Anderson	43

DOUBLE BASS

Margarida Castro	44
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL	
Michael Rae Assistant principal	45
Sally Davis	46
Aaron Berrera Reyes	47

FLUTE

Katherine Bryan PRINCIPAL	
Helen Brew Associate PRINCIPAL	
Janet Richardson	
PRINCIPAL PICCOLO	

OBOE

Adrian Wilson PRINCIPAL	51
Peter Dykes associate principal	52
Henry Clay principal cor anglais	

CLARINET

48

49

50

	CLARINET	
29	Timothy Orpen	54
	PRINCIPAL CLARINET	
30	Duncan Swindells	55
	PRINCIPAL BASS CLARINET	
31		
32	BASSOON	
33	David Hubbard PRINCIPAL	56
34	Luis Eisen Associate principal	57
35	Paolo Dutto	58
36	PRINCIPAL CONTRABASSOON	
37		
38	HORN	
	Christopher Gough PRINCIPAL	59
	Alison Murray Assistant PRINCIPAL	60
39	Andrew McLean	61
40	ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL	
41	David McClenaghan	62
42	Martin Murphy Assistant PRINCIPAL	63
43		
	TRUMPET	
	Christopher Hart PRINCIPAL	64
44	Marcus Pope SUB PRINCIPAL	65
	Jason Lewis Associate principal	66
45		
46	TROMBONE	
47	Dávur Juul Magnussen PRINCIPAL	67
	Lance Green Associate PRINCIPAL	68
	Alastair Sinclair	69

PRINCIPAL BASS TROMBONE

TUBA John Whitener <i>principal</i>	70
TIMPANI Paul Philbert <i>principal</i>	71
PERCUSSION Simon Lowdon principal John Poulter associate principal	72 73

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) FANTASIA AND FUGUE in C minor BWV537 (orch. Edward Elgar)

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Orchestration: Gloucester, 7 September 1922 **DURATION** 8 minutes

It was in the dark days of 1920, hard hit by the death of his wife Alice and creatively at a low ebb, that Elgar embarked on a transcription of one of Bach's organ works. Written during or shortly after Bach's years as organist and Director of Music to the Duke of Weimar, 1708-17, the Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, despite its short length, was a lavish work, composed during a period in which Bach, at a relatively early stage in his career, wrote much of his organ repertoire.

The idea to embark on a transcription of the work had been sparked in the aftermath of World War I, when Elgar lunched with his old friend Richard Strauss, whom he had first met in 1901 when his *Dream of Gerontius* had its German premiere. The two composers struck on the idea of orchestrating one of Bach's organ works as a way of perhaps symbolically healing some of the wounds of the war. Elgar would transcribe the Fugue, and Strauss the opening Fantasia.

Elgar, who himself composed relatively little for the organ despite being steeped in its traditions – his father was an organist – was struck by what Bach might sound like had he had modern forces at his disposal. He embarked on the transcription with enthusiasm, completing the Fugue in 1921, more than aware that his approach to orchestrating Bach was somewhat more lavish than some might expect. 'I have orchestrated a Bach fugue in a modern way – largish orchestra – you may not approve,' he wrote to his friend, the organist Ivor Atkins, on 5 June 1921. 'Many [arrangements] have been made of Bach on the "pretty" scale and I wanted to show how gorgeous and great and brilliant he would have made himself sound if he had had our means.' Atkins came along to the rehearsal on 26 October, the day before the Fugue's premiere at London's Queen's Hall under conductor Eugene Goossens, and pronounced it 'magnificent'.

By 1921, Elgar had still heard nothing from Strauss, and so under request from Herbert Brewer for a work for the following year's Three Choirs Festival, of which Brewer was Director, he decided to orchestrate the Fantasia himself. He conducted the premiere in Gloucester Cathedral on 7 September 1922 to much acclaim. It is a full-bodied and apposite transcription, very much Elgar and yet also recognisably Bach, the orchestral parts interleaving, the harp, brass, strings woven in fugally, the sonorities lush and generous, the whole a voluminous magnification of the organ's raison d'être, as if the polyphonic orchestral sound which had first been magically crammed into those ingenious stops and pipes and pedals had suddenly found its exuberant escape.

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Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) DEATH OF TINTAGILES



FIRST PERFORMANCE London, June 1913 DURATION 15 minutes

In 1912, Vaughan Williams, with a couple of diverse theatrical commissions already under his belt, was asked by actor and theatre manager Frank Benson to compose the incidental music for his next prestigious series of Shakespeare plays at Stratford. Williams was delighted, and embarked enthusiastically on a flurry of theatrical incidental music both for Benson and others, which included, in 1913, music for a one-off private performance of Maurice Maeterlinck's *The Death of Tintagiles*, which was to take place in London.

The play is a sombre five-acter, the plot lines only evoked, as per Maeterlinck's Symbolist style, and never directly explained. The story revolves around Tintagiles, a young boy and future king of an unnamed kingdom who is

captured and brought to a castle where unseen dark forces are at work. His grandmother, the Queen, is the architect, having already killed most of Tintagiles' family in a jealous attempt to retain total control over the kingdom. Stolen from the arms of his sleeping sisters, Ygraine and Bellangère, Tintagiles pleads with them to open the iron door behind which he is held as they hammer on the castle gates. The horrors of the castle and the ordeals he undergoes make themselves known, opaquely. Ygraine and Bellangère make desperate attempts to save him, as their old master Aglovale speaks fatalistically of the bitter taste of men's 'useless lives'. Ygraine's emotive pleas are ignored by the unseen forces, and Tintagiles is murdered.

Vaughan Williams, who had some four years earlier composed the rather wittier music to a Cambridge University production of Aristophanes' The Wasps, cast dark magic over the gloom of Maeterlinck's castle in atmospheric and at times highly original music. And yet the project was doomed to failure, for while Maeterlinck's stage works were popular, not least with artists and composers (both Martinů and Loeffler had previously written music for productions of *Tintagiles*), the sombre nature of the drama was not quite the upbeat crowd-pleaser the private performance's afterdinner crowd might have preferred. And while Vaughan Williams' music was skilfully crafted, understated and tense, it is, like Maeterlinck's drama, nowadays only rarely heard.

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Franz Schmidt (1874-1939) SYMPHONY No4 in C major



FIRST PERFORMANCE Vienna, 10 January 1934 DURATION 42 minutes

- 1. Allegro molto moderato-Passionato -
- 2. Adagio-Più lento-Adagio -
- 3. Molto vivace –
- 4. Tempo primo un poco sostenuto-Passionato-Tempo primo: Allegro molto moderato

It is widely asserted, with plenty of justification, that Franz Schmidt's Fourth Symphony is one of the finest symphonic works written in the 20th century. Yet it is also one of the least well known, indeed one of the most overlooked. Why is that?

There are probably two main reasons. First, the symphony simply doesn't fit into the neat narrative we've constructed about what happened in music in the early 20th century. It was premiered to great acclaim in Vienna in 1934, by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra under Oswald Kabasta, but if we imagine the Austrian capital around that time, we might more naturally think of the rigorously controlled pitches and highly dissonant harmonies of composers such as Schoenberg or Webern. The lush, opulent music that Schmidt was writing concurrently - far closer in style to that of Gustav Mahler or early Richard Strauss – sounds like it might have strayed in from the earlier age.

Secondly, and more seriously, Schmidt has been tarnished by accusations of collaboration with the Nazi regime – and not, it has to be said, without foundation. He'd been born in what is now Bratislava, Slovakia (in 1874 still part of Austria-Hungary), but studied cello, piano and composition in Vienna, where he became a cellist in the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and Court Opera Orchestra (often playing under Mahler), and later taught at the Vienna Conservatoire, becoming director there in 1925.

The deeply melodic, lyrical music he wrote was considered conservative even at the time, and once Austria had been brought under Nazi rule in the 1938 Anschluss, Schmidt was widely celebrated as one of the Reich's greatest living composers. Indeed, he was commissioned to write a Nazi cantata – *The German Resurrection* (complete with closing cries of 'Sieg Heil!') – which he agreed to compose, though he never finished the piece. Perhaps significantly, he instead worked on two pieces for the Jewish pianist Paul Wittgenstein, who had lost his right arm in World War I. Friends claimed he was simply very naive in political terms, and he never went as far as joining the Party.

In any case, his Symphony No4 dates from several years earlier than these controversial incidents. And rather than a grand political statement, it's a deeply personal piece that draws heavily on Schmidt's family life. His first wife, Karoline Perssin, had been confined to a Vienna psychiatric hospital in 1919 (and was later murdered as part of a Nazi extermination programme), and their daughter, Emma Schmidt Holzschuh, died suddenly in 1932 following the birth of her first child. Emma's death prompted something of an emotional and mental breakdown in the composer, a crisis that was only resolved by the writing of his Fourth Symphony, which he described as 'a requiem for my daughter'.

There is indeed a lot of sadness in the symphony, but it's a work of rich and contrasting emotions, and one that compresses a symphony's traditional four movements into a single arching span of music.

Schmidt begins, very unusually, with a long, unaccompanied trumpet solo that is generally quiet and introspective – and perhaps represents a personal reference in itself. Schmidt had played the trumpet as a student, but reportedly struggled to master the instrument, such that he'd take long walks into the Viennese countryside in order to practise in isolation, away from the judgement of others. The pensive opening mood continues when the strings come in, and it is only broken by the opening section's second main theme, a soaring, sweeping but troubled melody for the first violins.

A substantial development section combines and reworks elements of both themes, but just when we'd expect a return to the opening material. Schmidt instead moves on to his second 'movement', led by a long, pensive cello solo. A funeral march interrupts the cello's melancholy, but it makes a return before the symphony's skittering, dancing 'scherzo' section, introduced by the violas. Just as the symphony reaches its massive climax - an almost Mahlerian cry of pain – Schmidt returns to the opening material, now the symphony's finale. The solo trumpet comes back to lead the work to its quiet close, playing the same melody with which it opened the piece, but now transfigured by everything that has gone between

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THRILLING Saint-saëns' organ symphony

DND Thu 6 Oct **EDN** Fri 7 Oct **GLW** Sat 8 Oct

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Stravinsky Jeu de cartes Poul Ruders Concerto for Harpsichord Saint-Saëns Symphony No3 Organ

Thomas Søndergård Conductor Mahan Esfahani Harpsichord





Scottish Government Riaghaltas na h-Alba

JONATHAN BERMAN Conductor



Jonathan Berman started conducting as a teenager and has since established a reputation as a conductor of great insight, a polymath whose wide-ranging achievements both on and off the stage reveal a thoughtful, imaginative artist much sought after in repertoire ranging from classical to contemporary.

Berman's upcoming and recent debuts include the Philharmonia, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Picardie, Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Hagen Philharmonic Orchestra, Bilkent Symphony Orchestra, Turku Philharmonic Orchestra, London Mozart Players, City of London Sinfonia and the Nash Ensemble.

During the pandemic Berman's deeply innovative and imaginative approach to music has led to him creating nine award-winning films of, or about, classical music for Greengage Productions, combining stop motion animation, art, poetry and choreographic cinematography in repertoire as diverse as Bach, Messiaen, Stravinsky and Satie. At the start of the 2020 lockdown, he founded Stand Together Music, an initiative to help musicians in both the classical and nonclassical worlds. He charted every cancelled concert in the UK for 100 days and compiled 12,149 tracks created by over 1,000 artists and composers whose work was impacted by lockdown.

In 2020 Berman launched The Franz Schmidt Project to record all Schmidt's symphonies with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in the lead-up to his 150th anniversary in 2024.

As a champion of new music, Berman has conducted many premieres and regularly works with the London Sinfonietta, Ensemble Modern, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, New European Ensemble, Crash Ensemble Dublin and the Britten Pears Ensemble.

As an opera conductor he has a repertoire of over 40 operas, conducting productions for the Dutch Touring Opera, English Touring Opera, Aldeburgh Festival, Grachten Festival, Anghiari Festival, Dartington International Festival, Jerwood Opera Course, Opera Studio Netherlands, Dutch National Opera Academy, Mahogany Opera and the Centre for Opera Studies in Italy, and acting as cover conductor at the Royal Opera House, Barbican Centre and Holland Festival.

From his teenage years, Berman was mentored by and became close friends with composer Oliver Knussen and conductor Stanisław Skrowaczewski. He studied with Jac van Steen at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague. He was the first Brit and first conductor to win the Kempinski Young Artist Prize, which enabled him to study with Franz Welser-Möst and the Cleveland Orchestra, and Michael Tilson Thomas and the New World Symphony.

ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA



Formed in 1891 as the Scottish Orchestra, the company became the Scottish National Orchestra in 1950, and was awarded Royal Patronage in 1977. The Orchestra's artistic team is led by Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who was appointed RSNO Music Director in October 2018, having previously held the position of Principal Guest Conductor. Hong Kong-born conductor Elim Chan succeeds Søndergård as Principal Guest Conductor.

The RSNO performs across Scotland, including concerts in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth and Inverness. The Orchestra appears regularly at the Edinburgh International Festival and the BBC Proms, and has made recent tours to the USA, China and Europe.

The Orchestra is joined for choral performances by the RSNO Chorus, directed by Stephen Doughty. The RSNO Chorus evolved from a choir formed in 1843 to sing the first full performance of Handel's *Messiah* in Scotland. Today, the RSNO Chorus is one of the most distinguished large symphonic choruses in Britain. The Chorus has performed nearly every work in the standard choral repertoire, along with contemporary works by composers including John Adams, Howard Shore and Sir James MacMillan. The RSNO has a worldwide reputation for the quality of its recordings, receiving a 2020 Gramophone Classical Music Award for Chopin's Piano Concertos (soloist: Benjamin Grosvenor), conducted by Elim Chan; two Diapason d'Or awards for Symphonic Music (Denève/Roussel 2007; Denève/Debussy 2012) and eight GRAMMY Awards nominations. Over 200 releases are available, including the complete symphonies of Sibelius (Gibson), Prokofiev (Järvi), Glazunov (Serebrier), Nielsen and Martinů (Thomson) and Roussel (Denève) and the major orchestra works of Debussy (Denève). Thomas Søndergård's debut recording with the RSNO. of Strauss' Ein Heldenleben. was released in 2019

The RSNO's pioneering learning and engagement programme, Music for Life, aims to engage the people of Scotland with music across key stages of life: Early Years, Nurseries and Schools, Teenagers and Students, Families, Accessing Lives, Working Lives and Retired and Later Life. The team is committed to placing the Orchestra at the centre of Scottish communities via workshops and annual residencies.

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Lena Zeliszewska ASSOCIATE LEADER Tamás Fejes ASSISTANT LEADER Patrick Curlett Elizabeth Bamping Susannah Lowdon Ursula Heidecker Allen Lorna Rough Alan Manson Laura Ghiro Colin McKee Liz Reeves Seona Glen

SECOND VIOLIN

Jacqueline Speirs ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL Marion Wilson Paul Medd Nigel Mason Harriet Wilson Sophie Lang Emily Nenniger Anne Bünemann Sharon Haslam John Robinson

VIOLA

Tom Dunn PRINCIPAL Felix Tanner Asher Zaccardelli Lisa Rourke Claire Dunn Katherine Wren Maria Trittinger Francesca Hunt

CELLO

Jonathan Weigle GUEST PRINCIPAL Kennedy Leitch Gunda Baranauskaite Rachael Lee Sarah Digger Robert Anderson

DOUBLE BASS

Roberto Carrillo-Garcia GUEST PRINCIPAL Michael Rae Aaron Barrera-Reyes Joe Standley

FLUTE

Katherine Bryan PRINCIPAL Anthony Robb Daniel Shao

OBOE

Adrian Wilson PRINCIPAL Peter Dykes Henry Clay PRINCIPAL COR ANGLAIS

CLARINET

Timothy Orpen PRINCIPAL Rebecca Whitener Duncan Swindells PRINCIPAL BASS CLARINET

BASSOON

David Hubbard PRINCIPAL Luis Eisen Paolo Dutto PRINCIPAL CONTRABASSOON

HORN

Christopher Gough PRINCIPAL Alison Murray Andrew McLean David McClenaghan Martin Murphy

TRUMPET

Jason Lewis ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL Andrew Connell-Smith Robert Baxter Rebecca Goodwin

TROMBONE

Dávur Juul Magnussen PRINCIPAL Lance Green Alastair Sinclair PRINCIPAL BASS TROMBONE

TUBA

John Whitener

TIMPANI

John Poulter Associate principal

PERCUSSION

Simon Lowdon PRINCIPAL Tom Hunter Stuart Semple Philip Hague Colin Hyson

HARP

Pippa Tunnell Aimee Clark



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Thank you for being part of this wonderful Orchestra's journey, as we adapt and grow towards a bright future.

Thomas Søndergård MUSIC DIRECTOR, RSNO

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The RSNO Conductors' Circle is an inspirational group of individual supporters at the heart of the RSNO's Individual Giving programme. Our members' annual philanthropic gifts enable us to realise the Orchestra's most ambitious goals. Conductors' Circle members support inspirational concert performances for our audiences alongside transformational education programmes in communities across Scotland, via our ground-breaking initiative Music for Life.

The relationship between the RSNO and Conductors' Circle members involves exceptional levels of access to all aspects of Orchestra life. We design bespoke private events tailored to individual interests and passions, providing insight into the artistic process and bringing our supporters further into the RSNO family. Members of the Conductors' Circle benefit from an intimate and long-lasting connection with the RSNO Artistic Team and particularly with RSNO Music Director Thomas Søndergård, Principal Guest Conductor Elim Chan and the many renowned guest Conductors we are privileged to welcome to the RSNO each year.

The RSNO is very grateful for the continued support of its Conductors' Circle:

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We would also like to thank those generous donors who wish to remain anonymous.

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The Circle is a vital part of the RSNO family. Our community of music-lovers inspire and support us. Supporting us by joining the Circle will help us to bring music to so many people, from our Learning and Engagement programmes to our brand-new digital performances. As part of our community and family, we will keep in touch with our exclusive magazine *Inner Circle*, our Circle member webpage and invitations to special events throughout the year.

To find out more about joining the Circle please visit **rsno.org.uk/circle** or get in touch with Torran McEwan, Individual Giving and Partnerships Officer, at *torran.mcewan@rsno.org.uk*

To all our existing Circle members, thank you. Thank you for your unwavering support that allows us to continue sharing the joy of music.

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DRAMATIC DVOŘÁK SEVEN

EDN Fri 14 Oct GLW Sat 15 Oct

Julia Perry A Short Piece for Orchestra **Korngold** Violin Concerto **Dvořák** Symphony No7

Christian Reif Conductor Philippe Quint Violin

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