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PRESENTS

Vive La Musique

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SATURDAY 28 FEBRUARY, 7.30PM



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TONIGHT'S CONCERT

Conductors: Simon Chalk

Leader: Richard Quick

Berlioz *Overture: Le Carnaval Romain*

Delibes *Ballet Suite from Sylvia*
I. Prélude – Les Chasseresses
II. Valse Lente
III. Pizzicati
IV. Cortège de Bacchus

Ravel *Boléro*

INTERVAL

Saint-Saëns *Symphony No.3 in C minor (Organ Symphony)*
I. Adagio–Allegro moderato–Poco Adagio
II. Allegro moderato–Presto–Maestoso–Allegro

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Chair's Welcome

Good evening, and a very warm welcome to Hull City Hall for tonight's Hull Philharmonic Orchestra concert 'Vive la Musique'. This programme is a true celebration of the greats of French classical music, bringing together works that revel in colour, character, and sheer musical vitality.

We open with Berlioz's *Carnival Romain*, a whirlwind of exuberance and virtuosity that sets the tone for an evening of high-spirited energy.

From there, we turn to the elegance and charm of Delibes' *Ballet Suite from Sylvia*. These dances, full of grace and sparkle showcase the composer's gift for melody. It's music that glows with theatrical imagination.

Ravel's *Boléro* needs little introduction – its steady crescendo and ever-changing colours make it one of the most recognisable and mesmerising pieces in the repertoire.

The centrepiece of our celebration of great French music is Saint-Saëns' magnificent *Organ Symphony*. The mighty Hull City Hall organ – one of the great treasures of our musical landscape – brings a depth and splendour that transforms the entire space. When it enters, the hall seems to expand around us. It is always a delight to hear this instrument in full voice, and tonight it takes its place firmly at the heart of the programme.

My thanks go to our musicians for their dedication and artistry, and to our supporters, and volunteers whose commitment sustains the Hull Philharmonic orchestra. Thanks also to you, our audience, for joining us and continuing to support live music in our city.

I hope this evening's celebration leaves you uplifted and inspired. Enjoy the performance and 'Vive la Musique!'.

With all best wishes

Peter Walker

CHAIR

Hull Philharmonic Society



Simon Chalk

*“Dynamic”... “passionate... “committed”...
“devilish but with a great sense of fun”...
“a musician’s conductor”*

These are not the words of a music critic but those of Simon’s many orchestral colleagues throughout the world with whom he has been fortunate to share a platform thus far. They are some of the finest musicians, playing in some of the world’s finest orchestras, including the St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Concert Orchestra, the Shanghai Philharmonic, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Kazakhstan, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Slovak Sinfonietta (State Chamber Orchestra of Slovakia).

Alongside these illustrious ensembles, Simon has conducted orchestras in over 70 countries, across a plethora of musical genres, to tens of thousands of concert-goers. He has appeared at many of the world’s most iconic venues, from the Royal Albert Hall and Sydney Opera House to the O2 in London and Caesar’s Palace in Las Vegas to name but a few, working alongside some of the finest soloists including Peter Donohoe, Eugen Indjic, Nicholas Daniel, Catrin Finch, Craig Ogden as well as musicians from many other musical styles including IL Divo, Lea Salonga, Alfie Boe, Kathryn Jenkins, Russell Watson, Alice Cooper, Roger Daltrey, Barry Manilow and Johnny Mathis.

Simon was born and educated in Oakdale, a small mining village in South Wales, and began playing the violin aged 11. He received his formative musical training from Gwent County Music Service and has remained a committed supporter to this type of publicly-funded music education throughout his career. At the Birmingham Conservatoire (now Royal Birmingham Conservatoire) he studied conducting with Jonathan Del Mar, Omri Hadari and John Carewe, and violin with James Coles and Roger Coull and, following a period of postgraduate violin study in Manchester with Malcolm Layfield, he then spent his early career as the leader of the Almira String Quartet. During his many years as a violinist he was also a principal player and guest with many of the UK’s leading ensembles.

In 2011 the lure of the podium could no longer be resisted and Simon relinquished the bow for the baton as he took up the invitation to conduct orchestras for the international vocal quartet Il Divo, beginning his new life in at the deep end with a live DVD recorded in the London Coliseum with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. This was the beginning of his transition from player to conductor and led to more than three years on the road.

His first major appointment came in 2015 when he was appointed Chief Conductor of the Slovak Sinfonietta where he now continues his relationship as Principal Guest Conductor. He has developed an ongoing relationship with the St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra where he is a guest conductor, returning each season since his first in 2014, and is proud to be one of only a handful of British conductors—and the only Welshman—to be afforded the honour of working with the orchestra in its near 140 year history.

Simon has made numerous recordings, including two live DVDs with Il Divo and multiple discs with Southern Sinfonia, and has been a prize-winner in a number of international conducting competitions - most notably in Romania where, in June last year, he was the winner of the first 'Orchestra's Conductor Competition', the first competition of its kind where the winner was chosen by the members of the orchestra, The Brasov Philharmonic. He has been both honoured and delighted to be working with the orchestra recently as part of this win. In January 2018 Simon was honoured by the Slovak government with the award of a 'Diploma of Appreciation' in recognition of extraordinary merits in the development of friendly relationships with the Slovak Republic.

Simon continues to be in great demand throughout Europe and beyond and has an active schedule in the UK as the Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of Southern Sinfonia. Season 2023/24 highlights include return visits to both Slovakia and to Romania (Brasov and Satu Mare), alongside the launch of a new season of concerts with the Sinfonia throughout the South of England.



Elaine King Assistant Musical Director and Rehearsal Conductor

Elaine King moved to the East Riding of Yorkshire in 2000 when she became a lecturer in music at the University of Hull. She is currently reader and pursues both research and performance activities as part of her work. She has published widely on different aspects of music-making in the fields of performance studies, music psychology and education, including co-edited volumes on Music and Gesture (2006; 2011); Music and Familiarity (2013); and Music and Empathy (2017). She is currently working on three projects: STROKESTRA (with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra); Chinese Whispers (language learning through choral singing); and Transitions in Music Education (with Hull and East Riding Music Services). As a performer, Elaine is a cellist, pianist and conductor. She directs the University Camerata and has conducted various ensembles over the past several years, including the Hessle Sinfonia. She is thrilled to be involved with the Hull Philharmonic Orchestra as Rehearsal Conductor and Assistant MD.



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Assistant Musical Director and Rehearsal Conductor

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Sarah Milner
Sophie Zeeman
Becky McKee
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Lucy Brewster
June Pitts

Second Violin

Michael Nolan*
Amanda Pettit
Jennie Laing*
Laura Whitworth
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** Denotes 40 years' service or more

* Denotes 25 years' service or more



Simone Butterworth 1948–2025

Simone was a strong and forthright character, never one to suffer fools and always confident in knowing her own mind. When I took over the Hull Philharmonic in 1982, she was a cellist but soon returned to the violin, sitting for many years on the front desk of second violins with the late Jill Booth. What a redoubtable pair they were.

She was musically gifted, learning the violin whilst at St Mary's school and playing in the Hull Youth Orchestra. She also sang in a folk band that entertained around Hull.

After leaving school, she headed off to Art College in Liverpool embracing her creativity and independence. She stayed in the city for a few years before returning to Hull, where she married Mike Harding and lived near Pearson Park. It was after her marriage had ended however, that she then found comfort in going back to Westbourne Avenue where she had grown up.

Her love of music continued to grow, not only playing the violin but now the cello, playing with both the Hull Philharmonic Orchestra and the Hesse Sinfonia.

In 1994 she was elected as a Liberal Democrat councillor for the Avenue Ward and in 2002, she became the first female Liberal Democrat Leader of Hull City Council. Her legacy in the city still stands proudly today; she opened the KC Stadium in December 2002 and also served on the board of Hull Truck Theatre.

It was a source of regret to us that when her political life took over, she had less and less time for music, although even after leaving the Phil she continued to play in the orchestra for the Hull Bach Choir.

Our condolences to her brother Gregory and to our colleague Garry, as they come to terms with their loss.

Andrew Penny
Conductor Emeritus, Hull Philharmonic Orchestra.

My thanks to the family for permission to use extracts from the eulogy given in December 2025.

Programme Notes

& Simon's Fun Facts



Hector Berlioz (1803–1869)

Berlioz was a revolutionary French Romantic composer and is considered one of the first modern conductors. Unlike most composers, he was not a child prodigy and was not a proficient pianist; he played guitar and flute, which he later argued “saved me from the tyranny of keyboard habits”. Famously, Berlioz dropped out of medical school after a traumatic experience in a dissection room.

Berlioz was an incurable romantic and fell in love with the Anglo-Irish actress Harriet Smithson after seeing her perform Shakespeare, bombarding her with love letters, which she ignored until he became famous. This obsession inspired arguably his most famous piece: the *Symphonie Fantastique* – a brooding and sometimes frighteningly macabre composition. He was obsessed with Shakespeare, often translating, quoting and basing compositions on the playwright’s works and was so passionate about the poet Virgil that he was reportedly moved to tears by his work as a child.

A pioneer in using music to tell a story or represent a sequence of scenes (programme music), Berlioz was the first composer to use the *idée fixe*, a foundational technique in Romantic music for creating musical cohesion and programmatic narrative. This, alongside his prodigious talent and reputation for orchestration, established Berlioz as one of the most influential and groundbreaking composers of the Romantic period.

Oddly, Berlioz was better known in his lifetime as a music critic and reporter than as a composer, using his writing to promote his musical ideas. He is buried in Montmartre Cemetery, Paris, with his two wives.

Overture: *Le Carnaval Romain*

Composed in 1843, Hector Berlioz's *Le Carnaval Romain* (Roman Carnival) Overture, Op. 9, is a celebrated concert piece famous for its vibrant orchestration, including a renowned cor anglais solo, and for being a triumphant, energetic "symphonic firework". The work derives its themes from his earlier unsuccessful opera, *Benvenuto Cellini* (1838), and was intended as a standalone concert piece rather than an opera introduction. The first performance took place on 3 February 1844 at the Salle Herz in Paris conducted by the composer himself. It was an immediate success and was encored.

Scored for large orchestra, the piece is known for its brilliant, colourful sound, including prominent use of cymbals, tambourine and triangle. The overture is constructed from two main themes from the opera: a slow lyrical idea taken from the Act I love duet between Cellini and Teresa; and a lively allegro idea which is a bustling saltarello (Italian folk dance) from the Act II carnival scene. After a fast, swirling introduction and the beautiful cZor anglais melody (love duet), the music culminates in a powerful combination of the love theme and fast-paced festive dance (saltarello). Written in A major, it represents the energetic, "wild" side of Berlioz's style and is considered a masterpiece of romantic orchestration.

Fun Fact:

Berlioz was a huge fan of the octobass, a massive, rare string instrument (resembling the double bass) standing at over 11 feet tall, and wanted it to be a standard in orchestras!



Léo Delibes (1836–1891)

Delibes was a pioneering French composer who revolutionised ballet music with classics like *Coppélia* and *Sylvia*, moving it from background filler to serious symphonic art. He created the famous 'Flower Duet' from *Lakmé*, which was popularised by a series of British Airways adverts.

Before Delibes, ballet music was often generic, but he brought a symphonic quality to the genre, making him a major influence on contemporary composers, notably Tchaikovsky, who praised his work as superior to others: "how charming, how elegant, how rich in melody, rhythm and orchestration!". He spent over 20 years as a church organist at Saint-Pierre-de-Chailloit in

Paris, using this role to contrast with his work in the theatre. Early in his compositional career, Delibes was very much taken with the operetta format, writing fourteen of them in 14 years, a staggering output by any standard in this medium.

Delibes died at age 54 and is also buried, like Berlioz, in the famous Montmartre Cemetery.

Ballet Suite from *Sylvia*

I. Prélude – Les Chasseresses

II. Valse Lente

III. Pizzicati

IV. Cortège de Bacchus

Composed in 1876, *Sylvia* is a renowned classical ballet in three acts featuring a mythological tale of the nymph *Sylvia*, her shepherd lover Aminta and the god Eros. The story follows *Sylvia*, a huntress of Diana, who is shot by Eros to fall in love with the shepherd Aminta, leading to conflict with the evil hunter Orion. It explores themes of love, jealousy and divine intervention in a classical Arcadian setting.

The complete ballet was premiered on 14 June 1876 at the Paris Opera (Palais Garnier), choreographed by Louis Mérante. The work was initially unsuccessful (not unlike many other compositions of the time including, unbelievably, Bizet's opera *Carmen* which closed after a meagre three performances), with the first seven productions failing to achieve popularity. This was often blamed on a weak libretto, despite the high quality of the music; however, its rich symphonic score finally secured its reputation with the famed 1952 revival, by Frederick Ashton, being responsible for the ballet's renewed popularity as it featured the iconic British ballerina Dame Margot Fonteyn. Tchaikovsky reportedly adored the score, calling his own *Swan Lake* "poor" in comparison. It is known for its leitmotifs (similar to Berlioz's *idée fixe*), rich orchestration and early use of the saxophone. The opening Prelude leads into *Les Chasseresses* (The Huntresses) featuring horn calls. The ensuing waltz (*Valse Lente*) is delicate and gentle, while the well-known Pizzicato, which uses plucked strings, is highly playful. The Suite ends with an exciting procession, announced by the trumpets.

Fun Fact

Despite becoming a professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire in 1881, Delibes jokingly admitted that he knew nothing of formal fugue or counterpoint – not the best thing for a teacher to admit!



Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Ravel was a meticulous French composer often called a ‘Swiss Watchmaker’ for his precise, detailed orchestration. Despite being short (he was only just over 5ft tall) and a poor piano practitioner, he was a dandy, a cat lover and a pioneer in impressionist music. Ravel’s love life remains a mystery – he famously stated that “the only love affair I have ever had was with music” – and he lived with his mother until her death. He built a hugely eccentric home, “Le Belvédère”, with a narrow, ship-like corridor and filled it with toys, mechanical gadgets and curiosities that inspired his music.

The Paris Conservatoire, where he studied, failed him five times for the prestigious Prix de Rome, the major prize for composition at the time, yet he was to become one of the foremost teachers of his age (George Gershwin and Ralph Vaughan-Williams being two of his most famous students) and by far the greatest orchestrator of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century period. He was heavily influenced by Spanish music by virtue of his mother, who was Basque, and he was a major fan of Russian music alongside that of his fellow countryman and contemporary, Erik Satie.

Boléro

Written in 1928, *Boléro* is a famous one-movement orchestral piece originally composed as a ballet and commissioned by the dancer, Ida Rubinstein. As a genre, the bolero is a slow, romantic Spanish dance and, in this case, the work is set in a Spanish tavern. Renowned for its relentless, hypnotic quality, the piece features a single, repetitive melody played 18 times by different instruments over a constant snare-drum rhythm, which Ravel describes as “15 minutes of orchestration without music”. The music builds as a single, long crescendo, starting very softly and growing to a chaotic, explosive climax. The persistent snare-drum rhythm is repeated 169 times (see if you can count them all this evening!). Ravel initially considered the piece as an “experiment” in orchestral technique: the melody is never harmonically altered, but its colour changes constantly as it is passed between instruments, starting with solo flute, then clarinet, and moving through bassoon, woodwinds and brass with a couple of cheeky appearances for those relatively “new instruments” invented by Mr Adolphe Sax.

Upon its premiere, a woman shouted that Ravel was “mad”, to which the composer reportedly replied that she was the only one who understood the piece. Alongside this came a famed disagreement with conductor Arturo

Toscanini, who played it much faster than Ravel's intended, slower pace. The piece will, perhaps, be forever associated with the 1984 Winter Olympics (for those of us of a certain generation), where ice skaters Torvill and Dean performed their gold-medal winning, perfect scoring routine to it. Some researchers have suggested that the obsessive repetition in *Boléro* may have been an early sign of the neurological disease that eventually took the composer's life – but who knows...

Fun Fact

In 1920, he famously refused the prestigious Legion d'honneur award – France's highest civilian and military decoration – due to his disdain for official state recognition, a desire to maintain independence from the conservative establishment and a personal philosophy that an artist should be recognised through their work, not through accolades.



Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

Saint-Saëns was a French musical prodigy who played and performed on the piano and organ from a young age. He studied organ at the Paris Conservatoire in 1848, winning first prize in 1851, and was appointed organist at St Merry in 1853 then at the renowned La Madeleine in 1857. He was described by his close friend and supporter, Franz Liszt, as one of the “greatest organists” of his time. An artistic polymath, beyond music he wrote plays, poetry and scholarly articles on acoustics, astronomy and butterflies, and was an avid traveller who made 179 trips to 27 countries, often to escape cold winters or to pursue scientific interests. Despite admiring Richard Wagner's work, he famously stated he would never be part of the “Wagnerian religion”, maintaining a commitment to traditional French musical structures – an unusual move during the time as Wagner was considered, by many, to be the peak of all things artistic.

Symphony No.3 in C minor (Organ Symphony)

I. Adagio–Allegro moderato–Poco Adagio

II. Allegro moderato–Presto–Maestoso–Allegro

Composed in 1886 and dedicated to Franz Liszt, the ‘Organ Symphony’ is a monumental masterpiece featuring a massive pipe organ and piano four-hands. Saint-Saëns famously declared: “what I have accomplished here,

I will never achieve again”, marking it as his ultimate symphonic effort. Indeed, Saint-Saëns hadn’t written a symphony in nearly thirty years before this, having previously focused on tone poems and concertos, but the work was so successful that French composer Charles Gounod nicknamed Saint-Saëns “the Beethoven of France”. Curiously, perhaps, in the same year that he wrote this serious masterpiece, Saint-Saëns also composed his light-hearted, satirical and ever popular, *Carnival of the Animals*.

The title ‘Organ Symphony’ is, in fact, a little misleading as the organ only appears in some sections of the piece, rather than throughout the entire symphony. Saint-Saëns himself titled the work *Symphonie No. 3 “avec orgue” (with organ)*, but over time this has become superseded with the ‘organ symphony’ tag. The symphony’s undoubted reputation hinges very much on the finale’s majestic theme, which opens with an almighty, all stops out, C major chord on the organ (listen out for this if it is your ‘maiden voyage’ with the piece – you won’t miss it!). The theme that follows is also famous for appearing in the 1995 film *Babe* (to words by the American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald) at Disney World’s Epcot Centre and as a theme for the micronation of Atlantium.

The Organ Symphony was premiered in 1886 at London’s St. James’s Hall conducted by the composer himself. Although written as two movements, the work is actually structured in four distinct sections, like a typical four-movement symphony: 1. Adagio–Allegro moderato; 2. Poco Adagio; 3. Allegro moderato–Presto; 4. Maestoso–Allegro. The “showier” outer sections frame a truly poignant slow section and an energetic third section.

Fun Fact

*A Secret Masterpiece: famously writing the ever popular *The Carnival of the Animals* (1886) as a musical joke for his friends, he prohibited public performances of the piece except for *The Swan*, believing it was too “unserious” for his image!*



J.S. Bach

St John Passion



Albrecht Dürer: Detail from The Lamentation of Christ c.1548 for the Church of St John, Nuremberg

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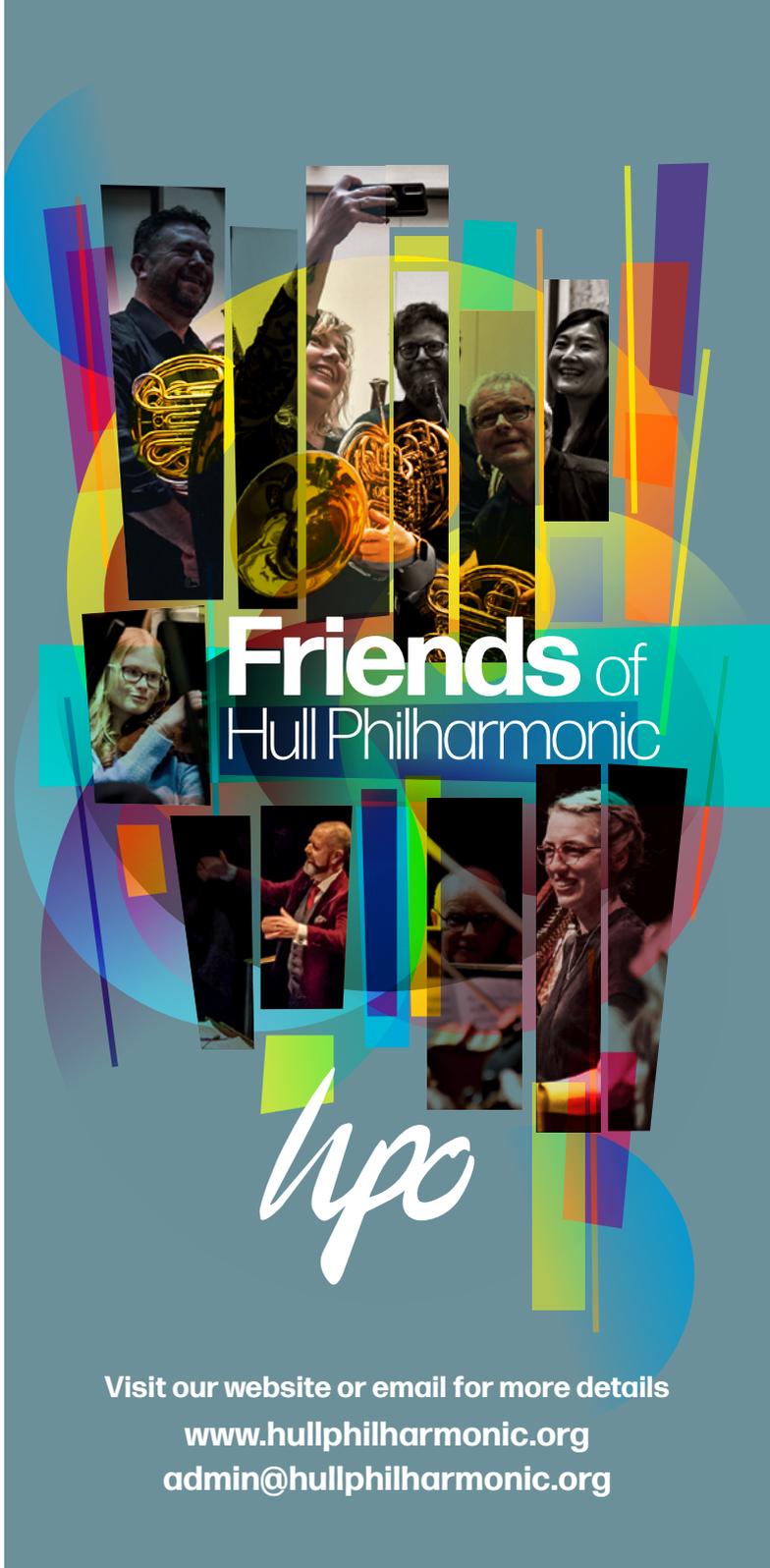
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