

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Movie Magic Symphony Hall Saturday 13 May, 2023 7:00pm

CBSO.CO.UK

Concert programme £4



PROGRAMME

Newman 20th Century Fox Fanfare Williams Star Wars: Theme Waxman Sunset Boulevard: Suite (arr. Mauceri) Portman Emma: Main Theme Williams Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone: Hedwig's Theme Silvestri Back To The Future: Main Theme Powell The Bourne Ultimatum: Faces Without Names Giacchino Star Trek, Into Darkness and Beyond Bernstein The Great Escape: March

Interval

Korngold The Adventures of Robin Hood: Robin Hood and His Merry Men Zimmer Gladiator: The Battle/Theme Rota The Godfather: The Love Theme Williams Jaws: Shark Theme Barry Dances With Wolves: John Dunbar Theme Silvestri The Avengers Elfman Spiderman Doyle Thor Suite

Paul Bateman Conductor Tommy Pearson Presenter

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MOVIE MAGIC

Lights, Camera, Action - Soundtrack!

Some of the most outstanding orchestral music is written for the big screen. Sit back and enjoy this fabulous selection of movie music from the classics (*Great Escape, The Godfather*) to fantasy (*Harry Potter, Back to the Future*) to modern action-packed superhero films (*Marvel*).

"There was never a silent film. We'd finish a picture, show it in one of our projection rooms, and come out shattered. It would be awful... Then we'd show it in a theatre, with a girl down in the pit pounding away at a piano, and there would be all the difference in the world. Without that music, there wouldn't have been a film industry at all."

These are the words of Irving Thalberg, the producer of countless films in the early days of Hollywood, acknowledging that music was the critical element of a film's success. Part of the reason to use music in the first place was to cover the noise of the film projectors, but a greater part of it was to allow audiences to immerse even more fully into the drama. In smaller theatres, a pianist was employed - a girl, or guy, "pounding away at a piano". In larger theatres, or for more popular films, a small band would be provided, and sometimes given rehearsal time the day before a film's release. When the "talkies" arrived with their integrated soundtracks - beginning with The Jazz

Singer in 1927 – several thousand musicians found themselves unemployed. But this new invention provided employment for a new breed of musician: the film composer.

One of the conventional beliefs of film scores is that they are meant to be ignored. A more commonly held view today is that they have intrinsic value, whether heard with the film or independently. Many of the scores in this concert have won Academy Awards for their ability to complement and enhance the movie-going experience – as well as to transport the audience into a different realm. Claudia Gorbman has written that music in a film "removes barriers to belief... if it's working right, it makes us a little less critical and a little more prone to dream."

ANOTHER UNIVERSE

Before the film even starts, the mood is established by the studio logo and theme. The Twentieth Century Fox intro, with its searchlights and triumphant fanfare, have been in place since 1931, extended by a few further bars in the 1950s. The fanfare suggests, quite deliberately, something epic is about to happen. George Lucas, the director of 1977's **Star Wars**, was keen to take advantage of its momentum, and requested that John Williams began his score in the same key. He not only did that, but continued the fanfare style with his mighty, brass-heavy main theme over the famous rolling text.

Williams was tasked with creating the soundtrack to an imaginary universe, 'a galaxy far, far away', complete with Jedis, androids and intergalactic punch-ups. For the prolific composer Franz Waxman and **Sunset Boulevard** (1950) the 'universe' is Hollywood, past and present. Contemporary Hollywood is represented by Waxman's dramatic, even melodramatic, prelude, infused with the menace of the opening scenes (the main character, Joe, is found



dead in a swimming pool); while the silent movie past, embodied by the increasingly deranged Norma Desmond, is a sumptuous orchestral swoon, heavily influenced by Richard Strauss' opera *Salome*. In **Emma** (1996) Rachal Portman evokes a further universe, an 18th century one of empire-line frocks, picnics, and social misunderstandings. Her score evokes the sunshine and Regency rom-com element to Jane Austen's novel, with a central section conjuring up one of the many dances her characters attend.

Back in fantasy-land is Williams' score to Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (Hedwig's Theme) (2001), written before he'd seen a single shot of film. He had clearly been asked to create a magical atmosphere, and duly does, with celestas and a woozy, minor key waltz, hinting at the dark days to come. Same land, but different time: Back to the Future (1985) takes viewers on a wild ride in a Dolorean back to 1955. Alan Silvestri's energetic theme is perfectly matched to the cheerfully hectic pace of the movie and its central characters, Doc and Marty McFly. It has to wait 25 minutes before appearing in the movie: at the point where Marty time-travels for the first time.

HEROES, BOTH SUPER AND ANTI

The **Bourne** films have similarly propulsive action, yet they have a sorrowful undercurrent, representing their guiltridden and bereaved hero. During the gently melancholy 'Faces without names' Bourne attempts to come to terms with his past as an assassin. It is a brief respite from the shoot-outs in London train stations and fast-paced roof-top chases.

Michael Giacchino has scored numerous action films in recent years, including some of the *Mission: Impossible* franchise and the Jurassic Park reboots. His central theme for the updated **Star Trek** trilogy is suitably bold and pioneering, and increasingly epic in scale. (In its use of brass fanfares it nods to the theme of the original *Star Trek* television series.)

There are further heroics in **The Great Escape**, but there is also desperation while the inmates of a German POW camp plan and execute an audacious escape attempt. Elmer Bernstein's 'March' is jauntily optimistic, reflecting the camaraderie and ingenuity of the 'heist'; but it opens with a harsh fanfare, suggestive of the dangers to come.

Erich Korngold moved to Hollywood from Austria in 1934, partly by request of director Max Reinhardt, partly to escape the encroaching Nazi regime. **The Adventures of Robin Hood** (1938) is the earliest soundtrack in this programme, composed for a rollicking, thigh-slapping, swashbuckler of a film, featuring a heartily guffawing Erroll Flynn, and a Hollywood version of a medieval Sherwood Forest in glorious technicolour.

Going further back in time to the Roman Empire is Hans Zimmer's score for Ridley Scott's **Gladiator** (2000), a tale of loss, revenge, and extreme family dysfunction against a backdrop of spectacular bloody battles – both gladiatorial and military. The battle scene is, by turn, tense, fierce – and, despite victory, tragic.

Family – with a capital 'F' – is at the heart of 1972's **The Godfather**, with its evocative score by Nino Rota. The opening title is a waltz, sounding a little like an Italian folktune (though it is based on the opening if Sibelius' First Symphony!). It is wistful and nostalgic – but becomes deeply unsettling as the drama turns ever darker.

RED IN TOOTH AND CLAW

Williams' most famous soundtrack is basically two notes: the instantly recognisable double-bass growl of **Jaws** (1976). As Williams later said, the theme is 'grinding away at you, just as a shark would do, instinctual, relentless, unstoppable.' There is a more cuddly presentation of nature in the 1990 Kevin Costner film in which his character Dunbar forms a bond with a wolf cub, and later earns the name **Dances with Wolves**. John Barry's theme for Dunbar is noble and grounded, evoking the western-like dimension of the movie and the big country it inhabits.

JUST PLAIN MARVEL-LOUS

More Marvel-lous heroes inhabit the **Marvel Suite**. Alan Silvestri scored *The Avengers* with compelling rhythms, and a glorious earworm of a main theme; Danny Elfman brought his particular composing genius to the restless, whirling dexterity of *Spiderman*; while Patrick Doyle's *Thor* is suitably thunderous and huge in scale, yet touched with tenderness.

Programme notes © Lucy Walker

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City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

PAUL BATEMAN

Paul Bateman studied the piano with Rosalie Helliwell, Cimbro Martin (at the Guildhall School of Music) and Paul Hamburger. He also studied singing with William Parsons. organ with Joseph Vickers and cello with Anthony Pleeth. He started his conducting career with the West End shows Singin' In The Rain, Barnum, Charlie Girl, Ziegfeld, The Phantom of the Opera and Carmen Jones. He has since recorded and given concerts with Bryn Terfel, José Carreras, Sumi Jo, Jessye Norman, Barbara Hendricks, Lesley Garrett, Tito Beltran, Jason Howard, Sarah Brightman and Paul McCartney. For Silva Screen Records he has conducted over 30 albums with the City of Prague Philharmonic. He has also worked regularly on radio and in concert with the BBC Concert Orchestra and in the UK has also conducted the Philharmonia. Royal Philharmonic, London Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National and Ulster Orchestras. Abroad. he has worked with the Malmö Symphony, Seville Symphony, Munich Symphony, Vienna Symphony, Dallas Symphony and Pacific Symphony (Los Angeles), Russian National and Tokyo Symphony Orchestras.



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Presenter

TOMMY PEARSON



Tommy Pearson has been a familiar figure in the UK music world for nearly 25 years. After an early career as a percussionist and composer, Tommy became one of the busiest voices on BBC Radio, presenting most of Radio 3's main strands and regularly appearing on Radio 4 and as a host of the BBC4 TV Proms coverage. Film music has dominated much of his career, as concert producer, host and broadcaster. Tommy has produced and hosted major concerts around the world including the World Soundtrack Awards in Ghent, concerts with actor Sir Anthony Hopkins which resulted in a No.1 album, and A Night Out With Sir Michael Caine, a gala charity event at the Royal Albert Hall in 2014 featuring the iconic actor interviewed by Jonathan Ross, with the LSO and special guests including Quincy Jones, Joss Stone, Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon. In 2015, Tommy produced Interstellar Live, a sold-out screening of the sci-fi epic at the Royal Albert Hall with composer Hans Zimmer and orchestra playing the score live, plus a pre-concert talk with Prof Stephen Hawking, Kip Thorne, Brian Cox and director Christopher Nolan.



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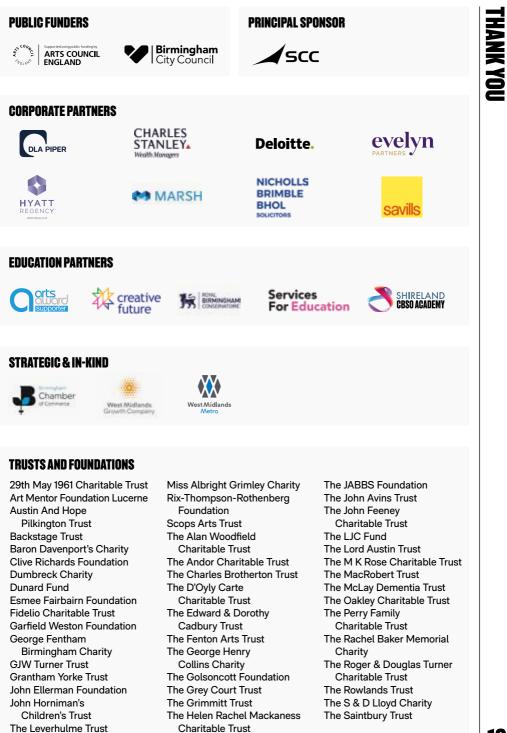
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