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Symphony
Orchestra

From Miriga with Love
Symphony Hall
Wednesday 6 December, 2023
7:30pm

Concert programme £4

[CBSCO.CO.UK](https://www.cbbsoc.co.uk)



**FROM MIRIGA
WITH LOVE**

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INTRODUCTION

My dad and my brother have said numerous times since Russia invaded Ukraine that they would go to the front and fight. We Lithuanians experienced so much crime from Russia that it feels as if the war is happening to us. "I feel it physically, in my own body, every day", - again my Dad.

Poland was the first country to make the decision to not showcase any Russian art until the former red army leaves Ukraine in peace. Lithuania soon followed suit. I feel torn knowing this since I LOVE Russian music, literature and art - I am quarter Russian after all! Now though, we must focus our view on the "post-soviet" countries. We must explore the great work their people have created and therefore acknowledge the existence, identity and independence of those free countries.

That is why this programme is purely Georgian-Lithuanian-Polish-Jewish-Ukrainian. So many unknown pieces, and quite a few British premieres!

I imagine that by now, many of you will know the name Mieczysław Weinberg. His two concertos we are performing tonight show the wide arc from the early to the late work by Weinberg. He composed the Twelve Pieces for Flute in 1945, and the Concerto for Clarinet in 1970. Between which he suffered under Jewish discrimination, humiliation by the Soviet government, the loss of his stepfather who was murdered by the latter, and imprisonment. The early work for flute is very much influenced by Baroque and Bach as well as by Impressionism. The late clarinet concerto reveals the composer's close relationship to Shostakovich. We hear the depth of Weinberg's big opera "The Passenger" in this piece.

Folk songs are crucially important for the (smaller) countries that have big and aggressive neighbours. If those neighbours undertake violence, singing helps to remember their right to exist and to dream of a better future. "Requiem for Ukraine" by Igor Loboda, based on a Ukrainian folk song, is the heart of this programme.

Unwind with a beautifully simple melody and a jazzy rhythm - Vakhtang Kakhidze's "Bruderschaft" provides the perfect ending to the concert.

The beginning is "Miške" - "In the Forest" by Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. All the Lithuanian musicians take influence from him. His paintings, literature and music - an endless spring of inspiration. "I imagine the world as a big symphony" - Čiurlionis.

I am sad I will not see all of the CBSO musicians this time: the size of the orchestra turned out to be quite small in all the pieces except Čiurlionis. It feels very right for this specific programme though, since we will have an unusually big number of CBSO soloists completely in spotlight: thanks Marie-Christine, Oli, Eugene and Adam for being open to the pieces in tonight's programme!



**Lithuanian Folk Song,
Anksti Rytą Kėliau**
(arranged by Raminta Šerkšnytė)
4mins

Čiurlionis, In the Forest (Miške)*
(edited by Charalampos Efthymiou)
18mins

Weinberg, Clarinet Concerto
25mins
Interval

Loboda, Requiem for Ukraine
8mins

Weinberg, 12 Miniatures for Flute*
20mins

Kakhidze, Brotherhood*
32mins

Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Conductor
Eugene Tzikin, Violin
Oliver Janes, Clarinet
Marie-Christine Zupancic, Flute
Onutė Gražinytė, Piano
Adam Römer, Viola

*UK premiere

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FROM MIRGA WITH LOVE

Tonight, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla takes us on a very personal tour of Eastern Europe, from Georgia to the Baltic. There will be gripping new discoveries from her personal favourite Mieczyslaw Weinberg and Čiurlionis, the “Lithuanian Elgar”, takes us on a walk through the forests. We'll also see a whole host of CBSO musicians step into the spotlight, before Mirga's sister joins the orchestra on stage. The results will be simply gorgeous...

Mikalojus Čiurlionis (1875-1911)

IN THE FOREST

Mikolajus Čiurlionis studied in Warsaw and Leipzig but came to be associated with the nascent Lithuanian school of art after 1905, when sweeping reforms across what was the then Tsarist Empire allowed for expression of explicitly Lithuanian identity. At that time, Čiurlionis had been on tour in the Caucasus but returned to Vilnius with a triumphant art exhibition in 1907. Čiurlionis was arguably the leading artistic personality of the nation, just as successful with his paintings as with his music, and he proved adept at rallying and organiser followers to take up the Lithuanian cause in their own art. His symphonic poem *In The Forest* was written in 1900 and betrays the influence of Sibelius and Grieg, but there is a distinctly Lithuanian character to be heard across the work also. It opens with a quiet and still beginning, reminiscent of pine forests, but quickly expands in energy and is every bit

as demanding and exciting as Strauss's earlier tone poems. Intriguingly, Čiurlionis experienced synaesthesia (a blending of the senses) and he painted a number of images around 1907-1908 also titled 'The Forest'; together they can be understood as a 'total artwork', encompassing sound and image. According to letters from the time, Čiurlionis had completed the piano score of the work within just 12 days, but then spent months expanding it for orchestra. His Lithuanian heritage proved a barrier for the work, though: it won first prize in a Polish competition, but its original premiere was cancelled explicitly because Čiurlionis was not Polish. *In the Forest* was only performed after Čiurlionis's death at the tragic age of 35.

Mieczysław Weinberg (1919-1996)

CLARINET CONCERTO

Weinberg wrote his concerto for Clarinet in June of 1970. It is a more personal and expressive work than either his Cello or Trumpet Concertos that he had previously finished, and the Clarinet writing here is more demanding than that seen in his Clarinet Sonata, his only major work for the instrument before this one. There is also none of the Klezmer-style melodies so often heard in Weinberg's chamber music, and clarinet writing especially. The concerto opens with a sparsely-textured Allegro movement, with the soloist giving a rocking and spiky melody against pizzicato accompaniment which generates energy; the contrasting theme sees the clarinet climb into its high register. In the central section, the parts reverse roles, before the initial themes are repeated in unusual juxtapositions. The middle Andante movement is a slow lyrical rumination on the ideas from the first movement, but the energy continues to remain and spills over into the finale. Here, there is a kind of melancholy dance with more than a fair dose of humour alongside, contrasted with a military march that seems to then brutalise the original idea. The dancing idea continues, along with markers for a false ending and a virtuosic cadenza. Weinberg's Clarinet Concerto seems to have been unperformed during his lifetime, though it is being performed more frequently in the ongoing revival of Weinberg's music, of which the CBSO continue to be major proponents.

"There is a kind of melancholy dance with more than a fair dose of humour alongside, contrasted with a military march that seems to then brutalise the original idea"

Igor Loboda (b. 1956)

REQUIEM FOR UKRAINE

Igor Loboda is a Georgian composer and violinist who combines Russian, Georgian, and Ukrainian elements in his music to produce tuneful and emotive works that encompass multiple traditions. Following the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, Edition Salzberger, together with violinist Lisa Batiashvili, commissioned this short requiem piece for solo violin from Loboda to mark the Ukrainian day of Independence (24th August). The moving melody is itself expanded from a Ukrainian folk melody that sings of the river Dnieper. After a solemn presentation of the melody, there is a more complicated and hurried sequence of variations upon it that demands virtuosic playing and suggests a sense of indignation. While The piece then returns to the more contemplative tone with which it opened, to conclude with a similarly solemn presentation of the melody but now with a tone of defiance, seemingly changed by the events preceding it.

The Requiem for Ukraine has been a moving tribute since its premiere, but it has taken on special significance since the full Ukraine war and Russian invasion in February 2022. The piece is dedicated to all the victims of the Ukraine conflict since 2014.

Mieczysław Weinberg (1919-1996)

TWELVE MINIATURES FOR FLUTE

Weinberg's Twelve Miniatures for Flute and Piano was written straight after finishing his Clarinet Sonata and finished in just a single week in Nov-Dec 1945. While the title would suggest a disparate string of pieces, there is a clear sense of a cyclic design over the work. The first miniature is almost entirely for the flute, with two for the accompaniment alone (nos. 2 and 7), and the final three are linked *attacca* (without interruption) together. There is also a strict organisation of keys and modes across the 12 pieces, starting in D flat major for the opening, then D minor, then E-flat major, and so on. The demands on the Flute soloist vary from piece to piece, but it is the expressive arc of the overall set that unites this as an impressive piece and demonstration of Weinberg's mastery of woodwind instruments. As with the Clarinet Concerto, there is no record of a premiere performance for this piece, but Weinberg did return to it in 1983 to arrange it for Flute and String Orchestra at the request of Aleksandr Korneyev, one of the leading Soviet flautists. The Twelve Miniatures were presumably close to Weinberg's heart, as he reused several of the melodies in later works, including his operas. As a set, they provide an interesting counterweight to his later Flute Concertos, and they have risen in popularity among contemporary flautists in both the piano and chamber orchestra versions.

LISTEN UP

Grammy nominated for Best Orchestral Performance - Weinberg: Symphonies Nos. 2 & 21, conducted by Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla with City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra & Kremerata Baltica is available to purchase and stream on Spotify.

Vakhtang Kakhidze (b. 1959)

BROTHERHOOD

Vakhtang Kakhidze is a Georgian composer and conductor, noted for his passionate communicative works that blend elements of classical with jazz. Kakhidze is part of a tradition of composition that, via Edison Denisov, has links to Shostakovich, but his musical language is very much his own, with strong representation of Georgian roots and ideas. Kakhidze is an extraordinarily prolific composer, with works including popular music, jazz, film music, and concert works, and he is the chief conductor of the Tbilisi Symphony Orchestra. His 1996 *Brotherhood* is scored for solo viola, piano, and string orchestra, and the piece presents a mix of motifs from jazz, classical, and folk roots. It opens with protracted exchanges between the viola soloist with the orchestra calmly accompanying with slow chords that unfurl and spiral in an extraordinary meditation. Energy soon accrues and by the central section the piece has become an energetic dance, with an infectious blend of jazz and folk motifs. The energy increases but eventually gives way to the same stillness and tenderness with which the piece began – but with a new twist, a whispery down-bow from the whole string orchestra to conclude.

© Daniel Elphick is a lecturer in Musicology at Royal Holloway, University of London, specialising in Russian and East-European Music since 1800. His book *Music Behind the Iron Curtain* is available from Cambridge University Press.

Conductor and CBSO Associate Artist

MIRGA GRAŽINYTE-TYLA



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Mirga Gražinyte-Tyla was named Music Director of the CBSO in February 2016 following in the footsteps of Sir Simon Rattle, Sakari Oramo and Andris Nelsons. Under her direction the CBSO has given numerous acclaimed performances at home and on tours worldwide. She stepped down as music director at the end of the 21/22 season, and now continues to be closely connected with the CBSO as Associate Artist. Recent highlights include a highly acclaimed performance of Britten's War Requiem at the Salzburger Festspiele, her celebrated return to opera with a new production of Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, staged by Barrie Kosky, at the Bayerische Staatsoper München in January 2022, and performances with the London Symphony Orchestra, the NDR Elbphilharmonie, the Swedish Radio Orchestra, Filarmonica della Scala, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. An exclusive Deutsche Grammophon Artist since 2018, her first album on the yellow label was released in the spring of 2019. It delighted critics and listeners worldwide and was hailed as an essential contribution to the rediscovery of Mieczysław Weinberg's Œuvre, winning also the Opus Klassik and Grammophon Awards later in 2020. The recording was the result of a cooperation of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Kremerata Baltica and Gidon Kremer.

ONUTĖ GRAŽINYTĖ

Onutė Gražinytė was born to a family of musicians in 1996 in Vilnius, Lithuania. At the age of five she started studying piano under her mother. At the age of six she entered the National M.K. Čiurlionis School of Art and was an active participant of cultural life there. Since 2015, O. Gražinytė has studied piano under the tutelage of Roland Krüger at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media. She is a scholarship student of Yehudi Menuhin Foundation "Live Music Now" Hannover. As a soloist O. Gražinytė has appeared with the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra, the National M.K. Čiurlionis School of Art Orchestra, Klaipėda Chamber Orchestra, Kaunas Symphony Orchestra, Alicante University Philharmonic Orchestra, Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra and National Orchestra of Lyon. She is also an ardent chamber music lover, and enjoys playing duos with violin or cello. In 2015, the President of the Republic of Lithuania acknowledged O. Gražinytė for her musical achievements in national and international competitions. In 2018 Onute became a winner of "Haiou Zhang Piano Award 2018".



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Violin

EUGENE TZIKINDELEAN

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Born into a musical family in Romania and educated in Bucharest and Paris, Tzikindelean won top prizes in international competitions including the Enescu Competition in Romania, the Carl Nielsen International Competition in Denmark and France's Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition. Leader of the CBSO since 2020, Eugene has previously held a position with the Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse, and has been Leader of the Odense Symphony Orchestra in Denmark. He also keeps a busy schedule as a soloist, chamber musician and guest leader with ensembles around the world including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, Oslo Philharmonic, Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Copenhagen Philharmonic and Århus and Norkkoping Symphony Orchestras, and at the Mikhailovsky Theatre in St Petersburg.

Clarinet

OLIVER JANES

Supported by Diana and Peter Wardley
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Oliver, who was born and brought up in Manchester, took up the clarinet at the age of 15 in 2008. For ten years before that he had studied the violin but had decided it wasn't the instrument for him. His grandfather, John Fuest, had played clarinet with the CBSO and convinced Oliver to give the instrument a go. The rest is history! After two years of lessons with his grandfather, Oliver went to Chethams School of Music to study with Rosa Campos-Fernandez. He followed this with four years at the Royal Academy of Music with Mark van de Wiel. After graduation Oliver freelanced with some of the London orchestras before joining the CBSO as Principal Clarinet in December 2014. Over the last 9 years he singles out the Beethoven Cycle in Bonn and Birmingham with Andris Nelsons as a CBSO memory he'll never forget.

MARIE-CHRISTINE ZUPANCIC

Supported by Basil and Patricia Turner



Marie-Christine was born in Oberhausen, Germany and grew up in the Lower Rhine Area. When she was eight years old her Mum took her to a concert in the local music school where they introduced different instruments and Marie fell in love with the sound of the flute – ‘we went to talk to the teacher, but he said I was too young because I didn't have all my permanent teeth yet. I kept begging though and I became his youngest student’. She went on to study in Cologne with Professor Robert Winn and at the Karajan Academy in Berlin, a training scheme of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra which included playing in the orchestra regularly and having lessons with their flute players at the same time – ‘a great learning experience’. As section leader flute Marie-Christine's highlights include the orchestra's European tours, especially playing in famous concert halls like the Musikverein in Vienna or at the Lucerne Festival. Outside of the CBSO Marie-Christine is also a member of the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and teaches at Birmingham Conservatoire.

ADAM RÖMER

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Adam was born and grew up in Hungary in a family of musicians and began his musical studies at the age of five. After graduating from the Kodaly Secondary School with the prestigious Kodaly prize, he studied at the Liszt Academy of Budapest, the Glenn Gould School in Toronto and the University of Arts of Berlin, with Lorand Fenyves, Steven Dann and Irmgard Huntgeburch. Parallel to his studies Adam started working as principal viola at the famed Gewandhaus Orchestra, followed by the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra before joining the CBSO in 2009. Adam regularly teaches at Birmingham Conservatoire, and his diverse interests in music have led him to travel around Europe with the Salomon historical string quartet and his Hungarian Folk Ensemble: Folktone band.



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 General Enquiries: email information@cbsoc.org.uk
 or phone **0121 616 6500**. For ticket enquiries,
 or queries directly relating to Symphony Hall,
 please contact B:Music.

Wednesday 13 December 2023, 7:30pm
Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KAZUKI CONDUCTS BEETHOVEN'S EROICA



© BENJAMIN EALOVEGA

Not all heroes wear capes. With the explosive opening of his Eroica symphony, Beethoven blew classical music wide open, and for Kazuki Yamada, this performance will be another landmark in his relationship with the CBSO. Don Quixote, meanwhile, wore rusty armour and tilted at windmills – but Strauss's warm-hearted portrait of the mad knight makes an irresistible showcase for two of the CBSO's home-grown stars.

Please join us for a FREE pre-concert chat which will take place at 6:30pm-6:55pm in the Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space.

Join us! Book online at [cbsoco.uk](https://www.cbsoco.uk) or call the B:Music Box Office on **0121 780 3333**.

A NEW VISION

On Thursday 30 November, we announced a new vision and period of exploration for the CBSO, centred around reimagining the concert experience and connecting with our amazing city.

The first performance in which we will explore what a different CBSO concert might look like, is this one. Conceived by Tom Morris and Kazuki Yamada, in collaboration with the orchestra, the performance will use projected images and film, creative lighting and enhanced staging to allow you, the audience, to see more of the structure of the music as it unfolds. We can't wait to share this with you and see what you think!

CBSO MEMBERSHIP

From a closer insight into the music and rehearsals, to hearing about life as a musician, CBSO members can get more from their concert-going experience by getting to know the people behind the instruments.

From priority booking to members' events and behind-the-scenes information, there are plenty of reasons to join the CBSO. But it is the people themselves who are at the very heart of our membership. CBSO members can enjoy the chance to share the company of musicians and artists and meet new like-minded friends. In addition, through their annual donation, they help to provide vital support towards our Sound of the Future Campaign, a fundraising campaign launched to help the Orchestra recover from the pandemic and reinvigorate its future, giving musical experiences to even more people.

JOIN THE FAMILY

Simply visit cbsoco.uk/membership to sign up online, or call Rachel Cooper on **0121 616 6510**.

We look forward to welcoming you to the family!



We're bringing you 360 surround sound from our powerful and unmissable live orchestra.

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...



**Kazuki conducts
Beethoven's Eroica**

The power of the human spirit meets the full force of 90 musicians.

Wed 13 Dec, 7:30pm



**Kazuki conducts
Symphonie Fantastique**

An outrageous adventure for the orchestra – and the audience!

Wed 17 Jan, 7:30pm



**Sakari conducts Sibelius
& Strauss**

Love songs and elemental forces, from an old friend of the CBSO.

Wed 28 Feb, 7:30pm



**African Fusion feat.
Abel Selaocoe**

An afternoon of African-fusion with genre-defying cellist Abel Selaocoe.

Sun 28 Apr, 3pm



French Fantasies

Starry nights, exotic voyages and all the colours of the symphony orchestra.

Thu 9 May, 7:30pm



**Vespers of the Blessed
Earth & Sibelius 2**

Music born from nature, speaking straight to the heart.

Thu 6 Jun, 7:30pm

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