

## Norway Plus

### Edward Gardner brings Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra to BBC Proms (21 August 2018) for showcase concert complete with world premiere of Rolf Wallin's Violin Concerto and orchestral masterworks by Wagner and Sibelius

'Since Edward Gardner took the helm at the Bergen Phil he has transformed the orchestral sound,' *The Scotsman*, August 2017



Critical plaudits and keen international interest have followed the work of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and its Music Director, Edward Gardner. Their acclaimed partnership, now in its third season, can be heard in a compelling concert at the BBC Proms on Tuesday 21 August.

The Norwegian orchestra's BBC Proms programme has been woven from repertoire strands deeply rooted in Gardner's distinctive artistic vision for the Bergen Philharmonic. The concert opens with Wagner's Overture to *The Flying Dutchman*, continues with the world premiere of Rolf Wallin's Violin Concerto, with Alina Ibragimova as soloist, and closes with Sibelius's Symphony No.2. The mix embraces a landmark of mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century Romanticism, a specially commissioned concerto by one of Norway's leading composers and a work by one of the last century's greatest symphonists.

"You might think that Sibelius would be at the programming heart of every Scandinavian orchestra," observes Edward Gardner. "But we found that the Bergen Philharmonic had not played Sibelius so often. This season we placed the focus on his music, performed his second and fifth symphonies in Bergen and Oslo earlier this year and took both pieces on tour to Italy in April. We want Sibelius to be a regular part of our work. I must say that the orchestra understands his music so well. It feels like it's in their DNA – there's no need, for example, to explain that a pizzicato chord in Sibelius must have this incredible emotional connection and that it's not like playing pizzicato in Rossini. That means you're working at a higher level of artistry from the start."

The concert marks Edward Gardner's first appearance at the BBC Proms with his Bergen orchestra, following their UK tour in January 2017 and acclaimed appearances at last year's Edinburgh International Festival. "Performing at the BBC Proms is always a highlight for me and it will be doubly special this year to be there for the first time with the Bergen Philharmonic," the conductor comments. "I look forward to returning to my home town with the orchestra after the success of our Cadogan Hall concert last year. I love this programme. Wagner and Sibelius work so well together. When you hear the *Dutchman* overture in company with Sibelius Symphony No.2, you can hear what Sibelius took from listening to Wagner and what he chose to leave out. We're very proud that we will premiere a major new work by a Norwegian composer at the BBC Proms and delighted that it fits so well into this programme."

Rolf Wallin's musical versatility hallmarks a professional career that spans everything from performing early music to experimental jazz and rock. His deep catalogue of compositions is equally broad. The Bergen Philharmonic's world premiere recording of Wallin's Trumpet Concerto 'Fisher King', coupled with his first orchestral piece and the monumental *Manyworlds*, was praised by *Gramophone* for its 'subtle, delectable and individual writing'.

"I got to know Rolf's music through the Trumpet Concerto, which is a very special piece," recalls Edward Gardner. "I love his combination of lyricism and musical energy. He can span every emotion and presents his music so

well. I've worked many times with Alina, who was soloist the last time the orchestra performed at the Proms in 2015. She's a member of our family here. This piece by a Norwegian composer, performed by a soloist who is so close to the orchestra, brings together many elements of our work. I think it will be a major addition to the repertoire and a great calling card for contemporary Norwegian music."

In addition to their BBC Proms performance, the orchestra will also perform at Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and at the Chopin Festival in Warsaw as part of their summer tour.

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**Tuesday 21 August 2018**

**Royal Albert Hall, 7pm**

**BBC PROMS**

**Edward Gardner** conductor | **Alina Ibragimova** violin | **Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Wagner** Overture to *The Flying Dutchman*

**Rolf Wallin** Violin Concerto (World Premiere)

**Sibelius** Symphony No.2