



Hungarian Rhapsody

Gergely Madaras continues to strengthen his UK connections with compelling BBC Symphony Orchestra programme at Barbican Centre (28 April 2018)

Concert includes UK premiere of substantial new multimedia work by Ross Harris to commemorate First World War centenary

'Spirited conducting from Gergely Madaras [ensured] that everything works musically as it should,' *Independent*, November 2013

Britain's musical life has been enriched by many fine Hungarian conductors, from Arthur Nikisch and Hans Richter early last century to Péter Eötvös and Iván Fischer in recent years. Gergely Madaras, described as 'terrific' by the *Telegraph*, is the latest to make his mark with the UK's orchestras and opera companies. The Budapest-born conductor is set to return to the BBC Symphony Orchestra for his debut performance at the Barbican Centre on Saturday 28 April. His programme, built around the UK premiere of *Face* by New Zealand composer Ross Harris, explores the subject of war and its disfiguring consequences.

"Making music in London is extremely fulfilling and always inspiring," comments Gergely Madaras. "I am the Music Director of the Orchestre Dijon Bourgogne in France, Chief Conductor of the Savaria Symphony Orchestra in Hungary and it was recently announced that I will become Music Director of the Liège Royal Philharmonic, the largest Belgian orchestra, starting my tenure from next year. But I have made London my home in the past 6 years and am deeply connected to British culture and the way orchestras in the UK make music. Their concentration, intellectual insight and speed of working are very close to my heart. This will be my fourth project with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and I really enjoy exploring such a wide range of repertoire with them."

The first half of the conductor's Barbican concert comprises John Adams's *The Wound-Dresser* for baritone and orchestra, a setting of Walt Whitman's reflections on life as a hospital volunteer during the American Civil War, and Ravel's *Le tombeau de Couperin* and Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*, reflective scores by composers who served a century ago on the Western Front in the so-called 'war to end all wars'. Soprano Alison Bell, tenor James Way and baritone Marcus Farnsworth will join the BBC Singers, the BBC Symphony Orchestra in the concert's second half for *Face*. Harris's multimedia work is based on the story of Sir Harold Gillies, a pioneer of plastic surgery for Allied combatants severely injured during the First World War.

Besides being a regular and active guest with British orchestras, Madaras is also a strong advocate of British contemporary music. He worked closely with George Benjamin and conducted numerous works by Adès and Birtwistle, just to name but a few, both in the UK and abroad. During his three-year assistantship with Pierre Boulez in Lucerne, he was introduced to Christian Mason, one of the most successful young British composers in recent years, with whom he maintains a close professional relationship ever since. As a next step of their collaboration, works by Mason form the core of Gergely Madaras' next UK performance on Thursday 24 May, part of the Philharmonia Orchestra's Music of Today series at the Royal Festival Hall.

The breadth of his work with British ensembles is also reflected in a forthcoming concert at Suntory Hall in Tokyo on Sunday 1 July with an orchestra comprising players from London's Royal Academy of Music and Tokyo University of the Arts, and his debut with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra at City Hall Glasgow on Thursday 11 October. The latter includes Ernő Dohnányi's First Violin Concerto with Barnabás Kelemen as soloist and Zoltán Kodály's *Dances of Galanta*. "I feel passionate about Hungarian music and bring it to British orchestras whenever I

can,” notes Madaras. “And after living in the UK for the past eight years, I always try to perform British music outside of the UK as often as possible.”

Other forthcoming highlights of the conductor’s schedule include a return to the Lucerne Festival Academy for Stockhausen’s *Inori* at the Philharmonie de Paris on Friday 14 September, Schubert’s ‘Unfinished’ Symphony with the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg at the Luxembourg Philharmonie on Thursday 20 September and the opening concert of the 2018 Milano Musica Festival with the Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala at the iconic La Scala, Milan on Sunday 21 October.

Gergely Madaras was born in 1984 and received his formative training in Budapest and Vienna. Following many years’ deep immersion in music theory, he gained invaluable practical training after moving to Britain. In 2010 he won the coveted Leverhulme Junior Fellowship in Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music from among 135 candidates. Madaras worked for two years with the Manchester-based institution’s many ensembles, received mentorship from Sir Mark Elder among other leading conductors, and as a result, works regularly with both of Manchester’s orchestras, the Hallé and BBC Philharmonic ever since. “I was conducting almost every day in Manchester and learned a huge amount of repertoire,” he recalls. “I had to be on my toes and work fast, while gaining a vast experience and building an invaluable professional network during my two-year tenure in Manchester. It is always a joy to return to this quickly developing metropolis, making music with the players who I meanwhile consider my close friends.”

English National Opera selected Madaras from a pool of 80 applicants for its inaugural Sir Charles Mackerras Fellowship in 2012. During his two years with ENO, he worked closely with the company’s music director, Edward Gardner, and made his professional operatic debut at the Coliseum as conductor of Simon McBurney’s new staging of *The Magic Flute*. The Mackerras Fellowship opportunity proved invaluable to Madaras, who moved to London with his wife, the flautist Noémi Győri, and their baby daughter, and has lived there ever since.

“The Central European idea that you have to be a repetiteur before you can conduct opera stood against me,” observes Gergely Madaras. “As a flautist and violinist, but not a pianist, I thought that opera would not be part of my professional life. But I realised that all my role models were equally at home in the operatic and symphonic repertoire. The Mackerras Fellowship gave me the chance to learn about the operatic world and make my home in London, one of the world’s major centres for music. Now I can safely say that, thanks to my experiences in Britain, opera and symphonic repertoire are well balanced in my career.”

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Saturday 28 April 2018

Barbican Centre, London, 7.30pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | **Allison Bell** soprano | **James Way** tenor | **Marcus Farnsworth** baritone | **BBC Symphony Orchestra** | **BBC Singers**

Ravel *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

Adams *The Wound-Dresser*

Vaughan Williams Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

Ross Harris *Face* (UK premiere)

Thursday 24 May 2018

Royal Festival Hall, London, 6pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | **Anu Komsí** soprano | **Philharmonia Orchestra**

Mason *Layers of Love*

Mason *Man Made* for soprano and chamber orchestra (world premiere)

Sunday 1 July 2018

Suntory Hall, Tokyo, 7.30pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | **Royal Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra** | **University of the Arts Tokyo Orchestra**

Mozart *Le nozze di Figaro* Overture

Mozart Violin Concerto No.5 in A major K. 219

Kabalevsky Cello Concerto No.1

Vivaldi Concerto for 4 violins in B minor Op.3 No.10

Brahms Double Concerto for violin and violoncello in A minor Op. 102

Friday 14 September 2018

Philharmonie de Paris, 8.30pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | **Orchestra of the Lucerne Festival Academy**

Stockhausen *Inori*

Thursday 20 September 2018

Philharmonie Luxembourg, 7pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | **Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg**

Schubert Symphony No.8 'Unfinished'

Thursday 11 October 2018

Glasgow City Halls, 7.30pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | **Barnabás Kelemen** violin | **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra**

Dohnanyi Violin Concerto No.1

Kodaly *Dances of Galánta*

Borodín Symphony No.2

Sunday 21 October 2018
Teatro alla Scala Milan, 8pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | **Filarmonica della Scala**

György Kurtág trans. **Cuendet** *Zwiegespräch*, for synthesiser and orchestra

Pascal Dusapin *Watt*, for trombone and orchestra

Stravinsky *Petroushka* (1947 version)