



Hungarian Revolution

Gergely Madaras launches term as Music Director of Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège with bold programme exploring revolutionary music

Conductor returns to UK for guest dates with BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Scottish Symphony, Philharmonia and Hallé orchestras



Recognised at an early stage by the *Financial Times* as 'a name to watch' and hailed by critics since for the eloquence and artistry of his interpretations, Gergely Madaras is set to win new admirers this season. The Hungarian conductor marked the official launch of his tenure as Music Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège (OPRL) on 27 September with Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and works by Enescu and Tchaikovsky. He will also be a strong presence in the UK in 2019-20, thanks to guest dates with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Hallé, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra and the BBC Singers.

In his inaugural OPRL season, Gergely Madaras has chosen the overarching theme of 'Revolution' beneath which he will explore everything from the music written as a reaction of a turbulent event in history to works which are themselves revolutionary and have influenced the future of music, marking the end of an era and the beginning of another. Apart from *The Rite of Spring*, a revolutionary masterpiece in itself, the season's highlights will be Beethoven's Symphony No.3 'Eroica' (6 October), Debussy's *La mer* (17 November), Berg's Violin Concerto and Prokofiev's gigantic Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution (24 April), Brahms's *A German Requiem* (10 May) and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.6 'Pathétique' (14 May). Madaras will also present major symphonic scores in fresh ways by working in collaboration with practitioners from other art forms as part of the new series he initiated, called OPRL+. He opens the series on 23 November with Stravinsky's complete *Firebird* ballet matched to an unique "Symphonic Cinema" specially created by Dutch filmmaker Lucas van Woerkum, and continues with a performance combining Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* with Shakespeare's original text played by actors in the concert hall, directed by Fabrice Murgia, artistic director of the Belgian National Theatre (31 January).

"It's a beautiful opportunity for me to build a relationship with this great orchestra," Madaras comments. "At the beginning of September we travelled to the Enescu Festival in Bucharest to perform Bartók's Violin Concerto No.2 with Renaud Capuçon, Enescu's Second Suite and Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony. This was a wonderful way to start our work together. The Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, which celebrates its 60th anniversary next year, is the largest symphony orchestra in Belgium and has a vast repertoire embedded in both the traditional orchestral œuvre and in new music. They have played a vital role in developing the contemporary orchestral repertoire which I intend to continue. We recorded three concertos written by Philippe Boesmans for the OPRL, for release in September, and will play pieces by György Kurtág during his term as our composer in residence and record all of his previously unrecorded orchestral works at the end of the season."

Media interest in Gergely Madaras and his new orchestra received a boost when Mezzo TV chose him as its Artist of the Month for September. The French television channel also broadcast *Tempo Madaras*, a documentary about the conductor, his musical roots in Hungary and his artistic outlook. In Liège and beyond he intends to follow a bold vision for the development of the symphony orchestra and its audiences in the 21st century.

"Of course it's the duty of orchestras to play the full repertoire range and work with distinguished soloists," he notes. "But what we're trying to do with our concerts with the OPRL is establish a different link with the audience. Things have changed from the days when a middle-aged male conductor could walk on stage, bow, perform with his back to audience, bow again and walk off. This is a model from the past. We musicians have to come out of our ivory towers. That doesn't mean making art more 'accessible'; on the contrary, we have to treat audiences like intelligent adults and help newcomers to the highest quality classical music listen to and enjoy this artform. We must share our enthusiasm, be able to talk to people and build personal connections between the musicians and their audience."

Gergely Madaras' round of guest engagements in 2019-20 includes a visit to Cardiff's Hoddinott Hall for his debut with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (10 December). Their programme couples Tchaikovsky's First Symphony 'Winter Daydreams' and *Variations on a Rococo Theme* (with Anastasia Kobekina as soloist) with 'A Winter Landscape' from

Glazunov's *The Seasons*. "This is the only BBC orchestra I have never conducted before," he says. "I can't wait to see them and explore the many colours of these winter-inspired works."

Madaras returns to the Hallé for two New Year's concerts with a distinctly Hungarian flavour (4 & 5 January 2020) and again for three 'dramatic explorations' of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, devised for actors, visual projections and orchestra by the composer, writer and broadcaster Gerard McBurney (11, 12 & 15 March). "The Hallé are very important to me and I'm delighted to have become such a regular with them," he notes. "We're focusing on the Hungarian connection in our New Year programme and will be joined by an excellent gypsy violinist and a cimbalom player, who have this music in their blood."

The conductor travels to Glasgow and Perth the following month to perform Ernő Dohnányi's First Symphony with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (13 & 14 February). His countryman's grand late-Romantic score, completed in 1901 and shot through with echoes of Bruckner, Tchaikovsky and Richard Strauss, unfolds over five intense movements. "I look forward to presenting this work with a British orchestra," he notes. "Dohnányi is spiritually connected to composers such as Elgar and Vaughan Williams, so I believe his humungous First Symphony will speak directly to British musicians and audiences."

Other highlights of Gergely Madaras' season include his debuts at the start of the season at the Gstaad Menuhin Festival and Orchestre National de Lyon as well as with the full Philharmonia Orchestra in Leicester and Bedford, with a programme crowned by Dvořák's Eighth Symphony (1 & 3 May), and a return to work with the BBC Singers at the end of March. There are also significant debut dates with the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra (15 January), Norwegian Radio Orchestra (6 February), the Geneva Chamber Orchestra (3 March) and Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, the latter at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw (23-25 May).

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UK DATES

Tuesday 10 December 2019
BBC Hoddinott Hall, Cardiff, 2pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | Anastasia Kobekina cello | BBC National Orchestra of Wales

Glazunov *The Seasons: Winter*
Tchaikovsky Variations on a Rococo Theme for Cello and Orchestra, Op.33
Tchaikovsky Symphony No.1 in G minor, 'Winter Daydreams'

Saturday 4 January 2020, The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, 3pm
Sunday 5 January 2020, St. George's Concert Hall, Bradford, 3pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | Jeno Lisztes cimbalom | Lajos Sárközy jr. violin | Hallé

J. Strauss II Overture: *Die Fledermaus*
Lehár *Gold and Silver Waltz*
J. Strauss II *On the Beautiful Blue Danube: Waltz*
J. Strauss I *Radetzky March*
Brahms Hungarian Dance Nos.1, 4 and 5
J. Strauss II *Cuckoo Polka*
Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody Nos.1 and 2
J. Strauss II *Annen-Polka*
J. Strauss II *Pizzicato Polka*
J. Strauss II *Thunder and Lightning Polka*

Thursday 13 February 2020, Glasgow City Halls, 7.30pm

Friday 14 February 2020, Perth Concert Hall, 7.30pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | Karen Gomyo violin | BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra

Smetana Overture: *The Bartered Bride*

Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto

Dohnányi Symphony No.1

Wednesday 11 March 2020, 2.15pm

Thursday 12 March 2020, 7.30pm

Sunday 15 March 2020, 4pm

The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

Gergely Madaras conductor | Gerard McBurney creative director | Hallé

Beethoven Symphony No.5 (Beyond the Score)

Friday 13 March 2020

King George's Hall, Blackburn, 7.30pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | Daniel Lebhardt piano | Hallé

Beethoven

Piano Concerto No.5 'Emperor'

Overture: *Prometheus*

Symphony No.5

Friday 1 May 2020, De Montfort Hall, Leicester, 7pm

Sunday 3 May 2020, Bedford Corn Exchange, 7.30pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | Andrei Ioniță cello | Philharmonia Orchestra

Mendelssohn Overture in C Major

Dvořák Cello Concerto

Dvořák Symphony No.8 in G (Op.88)

INTERNATIONAL DATES

Wednesday 15 January 2020

Salle Métropole, Lausanne, 5pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | Orchestre Chambre de Lausanne

Programme TBA

Thursday 6 February 2020

NRK Store studio, Oslo, 8pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | Valery Sokolov violin | Norwegian Radio Orchestra

Glazunov *The Seasons: Winter*

Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4

Tuesday 3 March 2020

Bâtiment des Forces Motrices, Geneva, 8pm

Gergely Madaras conductor | Geneva Chamber Orchestra

R.Strauss *Les Métamorphoses*

Beethoven Symphony No.3

Saturday 23 May 2020, 8.15pm
Sunday 24 May 2020, 2.15pm
Monday 25 May 2020, 8pm
Het Concertgebouw, Amsterdam

Gergely Madaras conductor | **Alexander Gavrylyuk** piano | **Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra**

Brahms *Variations on a Theme of Haydn*

Kodály *Dances of Galánta*

Brahms Piano Concerto No.1