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**Dresden
Philharmonic**

Michael Sanderling conductor

Sarah Chang violin

TUESDAY 23 OCTOBER 7.30pm



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Dresden Philharmonic

Michael Sanderling conductor
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TUESDAY 23 OCTOBER 7.30pm

Brahms Variations on a Theme by Haydn,
Op.56a
Barber Violin Concerto, Op.14

Interval

Dvořák Symphony No.9 in E Minor, Op.95
'From the New World'

What should American classical music sound like? Or is American music just an off-shoot of the European tradition? Tonight you can judge for yourself, as we hear Dvořák's Symphony 'From the New World'; a work by a Czech which inspired a generation to believe that American music could be created from its Black and Native Indian heritage. Samuel Barber was a genuine American, but one who spent much time travelling in the 'Old World'. Yet there is something characteristically American in Barber's style, as his music is refreshingly free in expression, unencumbered by theory or tradition.

Peter Davison
Artistic Director
International Concert Series

Members of the audience are politely requested to try to refrain from coughing during the performance, other than between pieces and movements; the resonant acoustic of The Bridgewater Hall means that the noise of an uncovered cough can be very disturbing for audience and performers alike. Patrons are also requested to turn off all electronic devices for the duration of the performance.



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About the Music



Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op.56a

Thema – 'Chorale St. Antoni' Andante

Variation I Poco più animato

Variation II Più vivace

Variation III Con moto

Variation IV Andante con moto

Variation V Vivace

Variation VI Vivace

Variation VII Grazioso

Variation VIII Presto non troppo

Finale Andante

In 1870, Carl Ferdinand Pohl, an early biographer of Haydn, showed Brahms six recently discovered wind serenades attributed to Haydn. Among them, Brahms noticed a striking theme labelled 'Chorale Saint Antoni' and, sensing its potential, immediately wrote it down. But it was not until May 1873 that the composer began its elaboration into a set of variations for two pianos. During

the following summer, Brahms also created an orchestral version of the work, which was given its premiere performance in the autumn by the Vienna Philharmonic under Brahms's direction, to rapturous applause.

The two versions of the Variations are identical in content, but one is Brahms's last major work for piano, the other his first composition for orchestra without a soloist. The score signalled Brahms's transition from chamber music to the orchestra. It was a critical moment in his career, and the Haydn Variations were the last testing of the waters before Brahms finished his First Symphony, which had preoccupied him for two decades.

Regarding the work's title, scholars now doubt the authenticity of the pieces discovered by Pohl. It is believed that the theme used by Brahms was in fact written by one of Haydn's pupils, Ignaz Pleyel. No one has ever discovered the precise source or meaning of the title – 'Saint Antoni Chorale'. One of Brahms's earliest biographers, Max Kalbeck, suggested that the score depicts the temptations of Saint Anthony. However, the work's generally sunny mood does not support such an assertion.

The Variations begin with the famous theme, gently parodying the original scoring. With its quirky five-bar phrases reverting midway to more conventional groups of four, it is easy to understand why Brahms was attracted to this memorable tune. Eight variations and a finale follow the initial statement; the composer increasingly imposing his own style, as the music unfolds. At times, the theme becomes obscured, although never absent. The Viennese music critic, Eduard Hanslick, quipped that, in certain variations, the theme was as difficult to recognise as the face behind the composer's new beard.

Brahms carefully paces his eight variations. The first three are energetic; the fourth, in the minor mode, slows to *andante*. In Variations five and six, the tempo picks up: five is a nimble scherzo; six, with its galloping rhythms and wild horns, recalls hunting music. Variation seven is a delicate siciliana, a stately dance with a dotted triplet rhythm, and the only variation slower than the theme itself. Variation eight returns to the minor key. It is quick, quiet and suspenseful; the perfect prelude to a grand finale in which Brahms does the unexpected. He creates a five-bar bass line from the original theme, which is repeated seventeen times like a passacaglia. The strictness of this formula inspired Brahms to great heights of contrapuntal invention and, by placing one set of variations within another, the work is able to build inexorably towards its last climactic statement of the main theme.

Programme note © David Patmore

Samuel Barber (1910–81)

Violin Concerto, Op.14

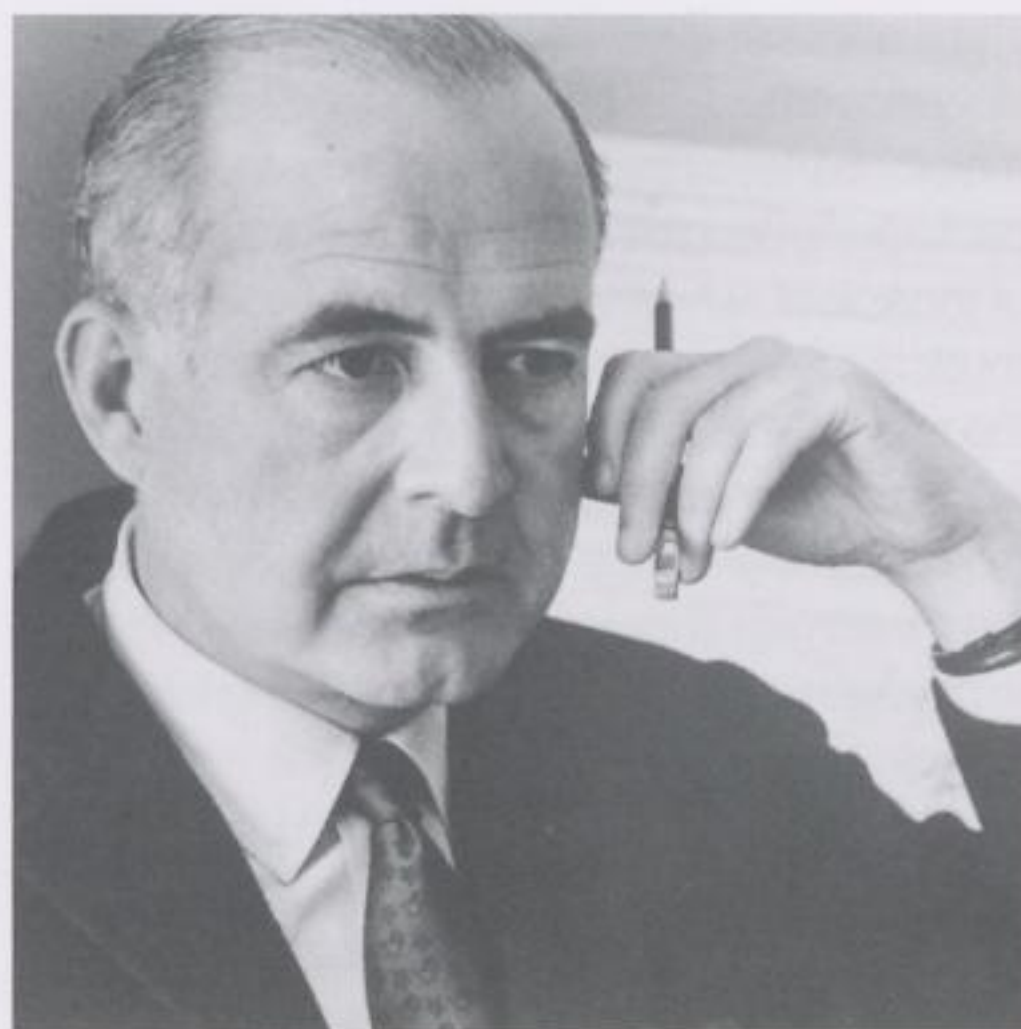
Allegro

Andante

Presto in moto perpetuo

The American composer Samuel Barber entered the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia at the age of fourteen to study piano, singing and composition. His compositions started to be played publicly from 1933 onwards, winning a Pulitzer scholarship in 1935 and the American Academy's Prix de Rome, a year later. It was the great Italian conductor Toscanini who gave the first performances of Barber's famous *Adagio for Strings*, which sealed his reputation as a leading musical figure in American musical life.

Barber's Violin Concerto was commissioned by a wealthy American businessman for a young protégé, and the composer began work on it



in the summer of 1939, having used the down-payment to travel to the Swiss village of Sils Maria. After submitting the first two movements, Barber discovered that his benefactor was displeased with the Concerto, because the young violinist felt it lacked the necessary bravura elements. Barber promised to write a showpiece finale but, on its completion, the violinist was advised that the work remained seriously flawed. He declined to perform it. Barber was compelled to forfeit half his fee, before the work was eventually premiered by another soloist, Albert Spalding, on 7th February 1941, accompanied by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy.

The Concerto's awkwardness stems from its two distinct styles. The first two movements reflect Barbers 'youthful' period, with singing melodies, familiar harmonies and relatively simple rhythmic patterns. But, in the final movement, a 'new' Barber appears, with freer use of dissonance and more unpredictable rhythms. Barber's biographer, Nathan Broder, commented that '*...it is as if the composer had suddenly lost patience with certain self-imposed stylistic restrictions*'. Indeed, the work's first movement opens with lyrical sweep and tender musing from the soloist. A gently syncopated dance-like theme follows, but which never gains much prominence. There are some darker moments, but the overriding impression is one of dreamy serenity.

The work's subdued character continues in the slow movement, as an extended melancholy melody is played by the oboe. Orchestral passages of elegiac intensity prepare the entry of the soloist, who floats transcendently into this musical landscape. Yet torment intrudes during the movement's rhapsodic middle-section, led by the violin, relieved only when the soloist readopts the movement's lyrical main theme. Thereafter, the music grows increasingly passionate in expression, before once again receding into stillness at the movement's close.

It is the finale's brevity which caused the controversy surrounding the Concerto. It lasts less than four minutes and is really a volatile scherzo, lacking a big tune or any virtuoso fireworks. Instead, we hear a loosely episodic movement, filled by helter-skelter triplet figurations in *moto perpetuo* and coloured by unusual harmonies. The soloist plays almost throughout and races like a madman to the work's end. Despite its cursory nature, it would be absurd to claim that the music is not difficult to play. In fact, the Presto provides a highly original and breathless conclusion to one of the finest violin concertos of the 20th century.

Interval

Antonin Dvořák (1841–1904)

Symphony No.9 in E Minor, Op.95
'From the New World'

Adagio – Allegro molto

Largo

Scherzo: Molto vivace – Poco sostenuto

Allegro con fuoco

'I am convinced that the future music of this country must be founded on what are called Negro melodies. These can be the foundation of a serious and original school of composition,

to be developed in the United States. These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil. They are the folk songs of America and your composers must turn to them.'
Antonin Dvořák on the future of American music in 1893



Dvořák's last three symphonies are rightly hailed as masterpieces, for he found in them a distinctive voice combining the Austro-German symphonic tradition of Beethoven and Brahms with the Czech folk tradition with which he grew up. His Ninth and final symphony, composed while he was briefly Director of the recently founded New York Conservatory of Music, was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and premiered at Carnegie Hall in 1893. The work's reception was ecstatic, and the symphony has remained deservedly popular ever since. Among many notable features, its slow movement stands out, containing one of the most famous tunes in all of Western music. For many musicians in the United States the Symphony established the possibility of a genuinely American classical music. But to understand this work, it is necessary to strip away the mythology that surrounds it, including its frequent appropriation by popular culture. Only then do we discover a Symphony which contains many sinister undercurrents and which expresses the pain of exile and separation.

Dvořák, as a Czech living inside the Hapsburg Empire, was familiar with oppression. He was naturally sympathetic to the musical culture of ethnic minorities living in the United States. Negro spirituals and the tribal songs of the native Indians affected him deeply through their simplicity and naturalness. In an article for the *New York Herald*, Dvořák explained how indigenous American music had influenced his Ninth Symphony: *'I have not actually used any of the melodies. I have simply written original themes embodying the peculiarities of the Indian music, and, using these themes as subjects, have developed them with all the resources of modern rhythms, counterpoint, and orchestral colour.'*

He also regarded the Symphony's second movement as a 'sketch or study for a later work, either a cantata or opera' depicting Longfellow's poem, *The Song of Hiawatha*; a text which concerns the dispossession of the Indians by the white man. The *Scherzo*, he claimed was 'suggested by the scene at the feast in Hiawatha where the Indians dance'. Whether Dvořák was merely trying to please his American hosts with these comments, or had been genuinely inspired, we may never know. But the music of the Ninth Symphony is as distinctively Bohemian, as it is American. Many prefer to hear in it evidence of Dvořák's homesickness, rather than his empathy for Black and Native Americans.

The work's slow introduction suggests introspection under the threat of fate, leading to a nervous *allegro* theme. It is followed by a folksy, pentatonic idea, creating a mood of joyous innocence which agitation tries to steal away. The development section unfolds like a chase across the fields; terrifying and exhilarating, if tempered by more reflective passages. The movement ends with a darkening of the light and a gesture of defiance.

The *Largo* is full of pathos, from its sombre opening chorale to the plangent sentimentality of its famous cor anglais solo. The middle section arrives like a prophetic bird descending from the sky; a pastoral elegy for lost harmony with nature,

much in keeping with Longfellow's poetry. A rustic episode provides another oasis of purity, but it too is soon threatened by dark shadows from the first movement. The *Scherzo* is lively, yet discomfiting, with its manic rhythms and 'piled-up' harmonies. This could well be the primitive war-dance of an Indian tribe. The *Trio* has two themes. The first would not sound out of place in a cowboy film, but the second episode evokes Bohemian 'forest murmurs'. At the *Scherzo*'s return, a fateful reminiscence of the first movement occurs, drawing the music to an abrupt close.

The symphony's finale begins with a resolute march, before wild dancing ensues. The energy drains away, and a more contrapuntal episode combines themes from earlier movements, as the composer attempts to close the symphonic circle. Building to a grand climax, the tragic elements of the work's opening appear destined to prevail, until a beautiful cello melody of great longing suspends the gloom. But, before long, we are once again peering into the abyss, as the harmonies of the slow movement are heard, transformed into a diabolical chorale. The music thereafter fragments, although there is one last summoning of will in an attempt to conquer the mood of despair, until the work scurries anxiously to its close. In this Symphony, there is no easy heroic victory; rather we are left with a sense of foreboding. Perhaps the music prophesies the unhappy fate of the Czech people in the following century or shows solidarity with vanishing indigenous cultures across the whole world. It is surely the universal humanity of Dvořák's music which gives it the power to move us so deeply.

Programme note © Peter Davison

About the Performers

Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra

Michael Sanderling has been the Principal Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic since the beginning of the 2011/12 season.

In 2010 the Dresden Philharmonic marked its 140th anniversary. Throughout its history, the Dresden Philharmonic has worked with the most eminent conductors in each period.

The orchestra gained worldwide fame in the 1930s, with much credit going to the leadership of Paul van Kempen. This in turn attracted the great conductors of the time to appear in concert with Philharmonic, including Arthur Nikisch, Hermann Abendroth, Hans Knappertsbusch, Fritz Busch, Erich Kleiber and Joseph Keilberth. The work of Heinz Bongartz as Principal Conductor was essential in rebuilding the orchestra in the years following World War II. Among other conductors, Kurt Masur served as Principal Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic. From the 1994/95 concert season the internationally acclaimed Principal Conductor Michel Plasson led the Philharmonic, a collaboration which resulted in a strong focus on key French composers on the orchestra's concert programmes. In 1999 Michel Plasson's tenure came to an end.

In 2001 an equally renowned conductor, Marek Janowski, became Plasson's successor. Deeply rooted in German tradition and familiar with the performance practice of leading orchestras in all the world's major music centres, his arrival was a particularly welcome turn of events. For the 2003/04 season Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos was named Principal Guest Conductor and a year later became Principal Conductor. His experience conducting the best orchestras in the world and his personal charisma led to a highly successful partnership with the orchestra, with concerts performed in Dresden, on tour and in the international music recording industry.

First Violin

Prof. Ralf-Carsten Brömsel *Principal*
 Heike Janicke *Principal*
 Prof. Wolfgang Hentrich *Principal*
 Dalia Stulgys-Schmalenberg
 Eva Dollfuß
 Julia Suslov-Wegelin
 Anna Fritzsich
 Prof. Roland Eitrich
 Heide Schwarzbach
 Christoph Lindemann
 Marcus Gottwald
 Ute Kelemen
 Antje Bräuning
 Johannes Groth
 Alexander Teichmann
 Annegret Teichmann
 Juliane Ketschau
 Thomas Otto
 Eunyong Lee
 Theresia Hänzsche
 Maria Stabrawa
 Maria Brunner
 Serge Verheylewegen

Second Violin

Heiko Seifert *Principal*
 Cordula Fest *Principal*
 Günther Naumann
 Erik Kornek
 Reinhard Lohmann
 Viola Marzin
 Steffen Gaitzsch
 Dr. phil. Matthias Bettin
 Andreas Hoene
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 Katrin Mielke

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 Hanno Felthaus *Principal*
 Beate Müller
 Steffen Seifert
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 Heiko Mürbe
 Hans-Burkart Henschke
 Andreas Kuhlmann
 Joanna Szumiel
 Tilman Baubkus
 Irena Krause
 Sonsoles Jouve del Castillo
 Harald Hufnagel

Cello

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 Ulf Prella *Principal*
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Double Bass

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Flute

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 Mareike Thrun *Principal*
 Christian Tobias Sprenger *Principal*
 Birgit Bromberger
 Claudia Rose

Piccolo

Götz Bammes

Oboe

Johannes Pfeifer *Principal*
 Undine Röhner-Stolle *Principal*
 Guido Titze
 Jens Prasse
 Isabel Kern *Solo English Horn*

Clarinet

Prof. Hans-Detlef Löchner *Principal*
 Fabian Dirr *Principal*
 Henry Philipp
 Dittmar Trebeljahr *Solo Eb Clarinet*
 Klaus Jopp *Solo Bass Clarinet*

Bassoon

Daniel Bätz *Principal*
 Philipp Johannes Zeller *Principal*
 Robert-Christian Schuster
 Michael Lang
 Prof. Mario Hendel
Solo Contrabassoon

Horn

Michael Schneider *Principal*
 Hanno Westphal *Principal*
 Friedrich Ketschau
 Torsten Gottschalk
 Johannes Max
 Dietrich Schlät
 Peter-Paul Graf
 Carsten Gießmann

Trumpet

Andreas Jainz *Principal*
 Christian Höcherl *Principal*
 Csaba Kelemen
 Nikolaus von Tippelskirch
 Björn Kadenbach

Trombone

Matthias Franz *Principal*
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Michael Sanderling

Throughout the past decade, Michael Sanderling has become known as one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation. He has appeared with reputable orchestras, among them the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Bern Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg and the Netherlands Philharmonic. Sanderling has been chief conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic since the 2011/12 season.

As artistic director and chief conductor of the Kammerakademie Potsdam between 2006 and 2010, Sanderling has made international guest appearances and recorded several CDs with the ensemble, including a recording of the chamber symphonies of Dmitri Shostakovich for SONY Classical.

Sanderling began his musical education studying the cello. Following success at numerous competitions (ARD Musikwettbewerb München, Bach Wettbewerb Leipzig, Maria Canals Wettbewerb Barcelona), Kurt Masur brought the 19 year old solo cellist to the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig. Sanderling later served in the same position with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. He has given guest appearances as a soloist with top-tier orchestras across Europe and the US, from the Sinfonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks and the Orchestre de Paris to the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Sanderling is the youngest son of conductor Kurt Sanderling and bassist Barbara Sanderling. His two older brothers, Thomas and Stefan, are also conductors. As cello professor at the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts and artistic director of the Deutsche Streicherphilharmonie, Michael Sanderling is also highly active in nurturing young talent.

Sarah Chang

Sarah Chang is recognised as one of the world's great violinists. Since her debut with the New York Philharmonic at the age of 8 she has performed with the greatest orchestras, conductors and accompanists internationally in a career spanning more than two decades.

In 2012/13, Sarah returns to Dresden Philharmonic with concerts in Dresden and on tour in the UK, and also with Orchestre National de France, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Philadelphia Orchestra. Ms. Chang appears regularly in the Far East and returns to Seoul for concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and to Guangzhou to perform with the Symphony Orchestra as part of the Asian Games Opening Festival.

In recital, Ms. Chang regularly travels internationally and as a chamber musician, she has collaborated with such artists as Pinchas Zukerman, Yo Yo Ma, the late Isaac Stern and members of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

Ms. Chang's most recent recording for EMI Classics, performances of Brahms and Bruch violin concertos with Kurt Masur and the Dresden Philharmonic was her 20th album for the label. She has also recorded Prokofiev *Violin Concerto No.1* and Shostakovich *Violin Concerto No.1* live with the Berliner Philharmoniker under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle.

In March 2008, Ms. Chang was honored as a Young Global Leader for 2008 by the World Economic Forum (WEF) for her professional achievements, commitment to society and potential in shaping the future of the world. She is a past recipient of the *Avèry Fisher Prize*, Gramophone's *Young Artist of the Year* award, *Newcomer of the Year* honors at the International Classical Music Awards in London, and Korea's *Nan Pa* award. Ms. Chang has been named the US Embassy's Artistic Ambassador from 2011.

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