

# KENSINGTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



'The most professional-sounding of non-professional orchestras' – *Sunday Telegraph*

## Kensington Symphony Orchestra returns to St John's Smith Square in November with Mahler's Symphony No.4, plus music by Andrea Tarrodi and Grace Williams.

Kensington Symphony Orchestra returns to St John's Smith Square on Monday 25 November, when soprano Monica McGhee joins the group for a performance of Mahler's Symphony No.4 (1899-1900).

Shorter in length and using smaller orchestral forces than the composer's earlier symphonies, the four-movement work boasts a disarmingly tuneful opening, followed by a scherzo that depicts Death at his violin, contrasted with Ländler-style trios. After an extended *Adagio* that Mahler considered his finest slow movement, the finale incorporates a song for soprano – *Das himmlische Leben*, or 'The Heavenly Life', completed in 1892 – that presents a child's vision of heaven.

Although the work – inspired by the German folk poetry collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and largely written during Mahler's summer holidays in Austria – was initially negatively received, critics have since argued that its accessibility was a driving force behind the post-war rise in Mahler's popularity.

The concert opens with Swedish composer Andrea Tarrodi's *Serenade in Seven Colours* (2013), written for woodwind and percussion. Inspired by Mozart's *Serenade for 13 Winds* No.10, 'Gran Partita' and *Quiet Nights* by jazz musicians Miles Davis and Gil Evans, her kaleidoscopic showpiece progresses from shimmering impressionistic textures to an explosion of colour.

Conductor Russell Keable also leads KSO's string section in Grace Williams's *Sea Sketches* (1944), a five-movement work evoking life on and near the water, and featuring long flowing lines inspired by the sea. One of the Welsh composer's most popular pieces, it was written while she was living in London but anticipating her return after the Second World War to her home town of Barry in South Wales.

Described as "one of the very best amateur groups in the country" by *Classical Music* magazine, KSO has been hailed by *Classical Source* for "putting on bold, adventurous programmes that few of the 'big five' in London would either think of or get away with".

Highlights of 2024/25 (see page 2) include Holst's *The Planets*, Shostakovich's Symphony No.1 and Michael Collins's first London performance of Magnus Lindberg's Clarinet Concerto in January 2025.

**Monday 25 November 2024**

Smith Square Hall, 7.30pm

**£22, £28**

Venue's [concert page](#)

**Andrea Tarrodi** *Serenade in Seven Colours*  
**Grace Williams** *Sea Sketches*  
**Gustav Mahler** *Symphony No.4*

## PRESS ENQUIRIES

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# 2024/25

FIND OUT MORE:  
[kso.org.uk](http://kso.org.uk)

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**MONDAY 14 OCTOBER 2024**

**SMITH SQUARE HALL** 7.30PM  
**Barber** Overture to The School for Scandal  
**Vítězslava Kaprálová** Suita Rustica  
**Strauss** Ein Heldenleben

**MONDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2024**

**SMITH SQUARE HALL** 7.30PM  
**Andrea Tarrodi** Serenade in Seven Colours  
**Grace Williams** Sea Sketches  
**Mahler** Symphony No.4 (soloist: *Monica McGhee*)

**SATURDAY 25 JANUARY 2025**

**QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL** 7.30PM  
**Ravel** Rapsodie espagnole  
**Lindberg** Clarinet Concerto (soloist: *Michael Collins*)  
**Prokofiev** Lieutenant Kijé  
**Ravel** La valse

**SATURDAY 29 MARCH 2025**

**FAIRFIELD HALLS** 6PM  
*Programme to include:*  
**Foulds** April-England  
**Vaughan Williams** Serenade to Music  
**Holst** The Planets

**MONDAY 19 MAY 2025**

**SMITH SQUARE HALL** 7.30PM  
**Bruckner** Symphony No.7  
(Guest conductor: *Leonard Elschenbroich*)

**MONDAY 30 JUNE 2025**

**CADOGAN HALL** 7.30PM  
**Lyadov** Kikimora  
**Rachmaninov** The Sea and the Seagulls **and** Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini (soloist: *Firoze Madon*)  
**Shostakovich** Symphony No.1

## ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA AND MUSIC DIRECTOR

**Kensington Symphony Orchestra** has built a reputation during almost 70 years of music-making as one of the UK's most ambitious non-professional orchestras. Established classics, neglected masterpieces and works by today's leading composers are all hallmarks of KSO's repertoire.

KSO has given British premières of works by Bruckner, Nielsen, Schoenberg, Sibelius and Verdi. Music director Russell Keable has conducted the London première of Dvorak's opera *Dimitrij* and the British première of Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*, described by the *Evening Standard* as a "feast of brilliant playing".

Contemporary music is the lifeblood of KSO, which has performed works by composers such as Thomas Adès, Julian Anderson, Charlotte Bray, Anna Clyne, Brett Dean, Helen Grime, Oliver Knussen, Magnus Lindberg, Joby Talbot, Colin Matthews, David Matthews, Nicholas Maw, Huw Watkins and John Woolrich.

Soloists have included Nikolai Demidenko, Sir John Tomlinson, Nicholas Daniel, Martin James Bartlett, Yvonne Howard, Fenella Humphreys, Matthew Trusler, Richard Watkins and Katherine Watson. Guest conductors have included Nicholas Collon, Andrew Gourlay, Holly Mathieson and Michael Seal.

**Russell Keable**, KSO's music director for 40 years, performs with groups including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Mozart Players and the Manchester Camerata. He has conducted in Prague and Paris, and his performance of Errollyn Wallen's Spirit Symphony, with the BBC Concert Orchestra and KSO at London's Royal Festival Hall, won the BBC Radio 3 Listeners' Award in 2005.

# 2024/25

FIND OUT MORE:  
[kso.org.uk](http://kso.org.uk)