



Press Release

For release: Final draft

Brahms as Brahms wished it to be heard...

Sir Mark Elder conducts Britten Sinfonia in Brahms's *Second Symphony* alongside music by Mahler and Britten

Thursday 17 January 2019 at 7.30pm, Barbican Hall, London

Friday 18 January 2019 at 7.30pm, Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden

Saturday 19 January 2019 at 7.30pm, Theatre Royal, Norwich

Sir Mark Elder conducts **Britten Sinfonia** in Brahms's radiant and bucolic 2nd symphony, in the second year of a four-year symphony cycle which borrows from the spirit of early performances of the works by performing them with the musical forces that Brahms intended, to '*exhilarating*'* effect. This second instalment traces a poetic line from Brahms's symphonic Romanticism to more intimate evocations of poetry, love and nature in Mahler's emotionally charged *Songs for a Wayfarer* (with soloist, mezzo-soprano **Anna Stéphany**), and Britten's final complete work, *Suite on English Folk Tunes*.

Speaking of this, his first complete Brahms Symphony Cycle, Elder says: "*People expect Brahms to have a weight of sound, a monumentality, which isn't in proportion to what I read in his scores...I'm hoping to reveal the secret side of Brahms's music; moments of incredible intimacy and delicacy, alongside the Romantic bravura.*" Elder and the orchestra's interpretation of Brahms's *First Symphony*, in the opening concerts of the cycle in November 2017, was praised for its "*tremendous clarity... uncompromisingly vivid...[with a finale] electric in its excitement and elan.*"**

David Butcher, CEO and Artistic Director of Britten Sinfonia comments:

'Everything we do at Britten Sinfonia is centred around exploring music to the fullest. Returning to the spirit of the original performances of Brahms' Symphonies and pairing these masterworks with music by two other great musical pioneers, Mahler and Britten, has been truly enlightening. Sir Mark has a passion for these works; matched by his scholarly research and rigorous rehearsal process, this Brahms Symphony Cycle is a true labour of love.'

Performances take place in Barbican Hall, London - where the orchestra is an Associate Ensemble - Saffron Hall, where Britten Sinfonia is Resident Orchestra and at Theatre Royal, Norwich. Sir Mark Elder discusses the works featured in the concert in pre-concert talks at 6.30pm at Saffron Hall and at Theatre Royal Norwich.

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* Anna Picard, The Times ** Tim Ashley, The Guardian

Listings

Sir Mark Elder conductor
Anna Stéphany mezzo-soprano
Britten Sinfonia

Britten Suite on English Folk Tunes
Mahler Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen
Brahms Symphony No. 2

Thursday 17 January at 7.30pm, Barbican

Tickets: £15-£40

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2019/event/britten-sinfoniaelder-mahler-and-brahms>

Friday 18 January at 7.30pm, Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden

Tickets: £10-£50

<https://saffronhall.com/calendar/britten-sinfonia-elder-conducts-mahler-brahms/>

Pre-concert event at 6.30pm: Sir Mark Elder in discussion

Saturday 19 January, Theatre Royal, Norwich

Tickets: £6-£36

<https://secure.theatroyalnorwich.co.uk>

Pre-concert event at 6.30pm: Sir Mark Elder in discussion