

Program Britten Youth String Orchestra

N.Skalkottas
(1904 – 1949)

from **5 Greek Dances**
I. Epikotas, V. Kleptikos

G.F.Händel
(1685 – 1759)

Arrival of the Queen of Sheba
from 'Oratorium Salomon'

A.Piazzolla
(1921 - 1992)

Winter
from Quatro Estaciones Porteñas
Pieter Streefkerk violin

H.Wieniavski
(1835 – 1880)

Scherzo-Tarantella
Pieter Streefkerk violin

R.Schtschedrin/Bizet
(1932)

Carmen-Suite
I. Introduction
II. Dance
III. First Intermezzo
IV. Changing of the Guard
V. Carmen entrance and Habanera
VI. Scene
VII. Second Intermezzo
VIII. Bolero
IX, Torero
X. Torero and Carmen
XI. Adagio
XII, Fortune telling
XIII. Finale

INTERMISSION

R.Schtschedrin/Bizet

Hungarian conductor and composer **Ferenc Farkas (1905-2000)** composed his *Piccola Musica di Concerto* in 1961. Drawing on folk melodies, he crafted the music to be performed in intimate settings, akin to the style of Haydn's time. Farkas aimed for compositions that were not overly complex yet remained challenging enough to sound impressive. Farkas studied in Budapest and spent significant time in Rome under the tutelage of Ottorino Respighi. His musical output extends beyond concert pieces to include numerous film scores, reflecting his versatility and broad appeal.

Nikos Skalkottas (1904-1949) was a pioneering Greek composer known for his innovative approach to blending classical forms with Greek folk music. His composition "Five Greek Dances" exemplifies his deep connection to Greek musical traditions while showcasing his modernist style. Written in 1931, "Five Greek Dances" reflects Skalkottas's exploration of rhythm, melody, and harmonic structure rooted in Greek folk dances. Each dance captures a distinct regional flavor, from the lively and rhythmic Kalamatianos to the lyrical and melancholic Epirotikos.

Despite Skalkottas's early death and his works initially receiving limited recognition, his compositions have since gained acclaim for their originality and depth. "Five Greek Dances" remains a testament to Skalkottas's commitment to revitalizing Greek musical heritage through a contemporary lens, making it a cherished part of both Greek and international classical repertoire.

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) was an Argentine composer, bandoneon player, and arranger. He transformed the traditional tango into a new style, the *nuevo tango*, incorporating elements from jazz and classical music. In "Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas" (The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires), he musically depicted the four seasons in his beloved Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina. He based his work on the life of a Buenos Aires resident, a dockworker, experiencing the city's outdoor life in all its facets during the 1960s. The piece conveys both drama and melancholy.

In "The Four Seasons," Piazzolla combines elements from various traditions, including jazz, classical music, and Afro-Spanish culture (tango). In 2009, Leonid Desyatnikov created a new arrangement for violin and string orchestra with more references to Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons." Tonight, you will hear "Winter," or "Invierno Porteño."

Henryk Wieniawski (1835-1880) was a prominent Polish violinist and composer of the Romantic era. His virtuosic skills on the violin are legendary, influencing generations of violinists. Among his notable compositions, the "Scherzo-Tarantella" stands out as a brilliant showcase of his technical prowess and musical ingenuity.

Composed in 1855, the "Scherzo-Tarantella" is a dazzling work that captures the lively spirit of both the scherzo and the tarantella, traditional Italian dance forms known for their rapid tempo and playful character. Wieniawski's composition blends these elements seamlessly, featuring rapid scales, intricate passages, and spirited rhythms that demand exceptional agility and precision from the performer. The piece unfolds with a sparkling scherzo section, full of light-hearted charm and nimble violin figurations. This transitions seamlessly into the tarantella, characterized by its infectious energy and fiery temperament. Throughout, Wieniawski's mastery of violin technique is evident, making "Scherzo-Tarantella" a favorite among violinists and audiences alike for its exhilarating virtuosity and vibrant musicality.

The Carmen Suite by **Rodion Shchedrin (1932)** is ballet music. In 1967, the Cuban choreographer Alberto Alonso created a ballet for his wife, prima ballerina assoluta

Maya Plisetskaya, using music by the Russian composer Rodion Shchedrin. The music, derived from Bizet's opera *Carmen* and arranged for strings and percussion, is not a 19th-century pastiche but rather "a creative meeting of minds," as Shchedrin described it. Bizet's melodies are reimagined with a variety of fresh instrumental colors, including sometimes humorous percussion additions. Initially, the ballet was banned by the Soviet authorities because, due to these qualities, it was considered "disrespectful" to the opera. Since then, it has become Shchedrin's most renowned work.

Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759) was a German Baroque composer renowned for his prolific output, totaling over 600 works. Alongside Johann Sebastian Bach, who was born in the same year (1685), Händel is regarded as one of the greatest composers of his era.

One of his celebrated compositions is "The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba," originally part of the oratorio "Solomon," completed in 1748. This oratorio narrates the biblical tale of King Solomon's golden reign and the construction of a magnificent temple. In the story, the Queen of Sheba visits Solomon and is awed by his wealth and wisdom.

Händel's music, including "The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba," exemplifies his mastery of orchestration and his ability to evoke grandeur and splendor through music. The piece is known for its lively rhythms, intricate melodies, and vibrant orchestral colors, capturing the regal and ceremonial atmosphere of the royal visit described in the biblical narrative.

Pieter Streefkerk - violin

Since 2017, Pieter has been studying with Chris Duindam at the Academy of Musical Talent in Utrecht. He is a remarkable violinist who became inseparable from his violin at a young age. At the end of 2019, Pieter received the Johan van den Boogert Prize from Herman van Veen at the Singer Theater in Laren. In the summer of 2020, he won the Britten Violin Competition in the youngest age category. He performed as a soloist with the Britten Youth String Orchestra and attended a masterclass with Liza Ferschtman. In September 2021, he was one of the winners of the Spotlight Competition at "Klassiek op het Amstelveld" and performed with the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra. In the 2022 edition of the National Violin Competition (Iordens B), Pieter won the 2nd prize and later that year, the 1st prize in the Britten Violin Competition (Category II) and the 2nd prize in the national final of the Princess Christina Competition (Category I). Pieter was invited to participate in the Arthur Grumiaux Competition in Brussels in the spring of 2023. In 2021, Pieter also appeared on the Classical Music television show *Podium Witterman* as one of Paul's young heroes. The National Musical Instrument Fund (NMF) provided him with a 1953 violin by Gaetano Pollastri.

The **Britten Youth String Orchestra**, founded in 2007 by conductor Loes Visser, is a platform for talent development. The orchestra offers young talented string players from the East Netherlands the opportunity to develop their musical talents to a high standard and gain extensive performance experience. The motto is: quality, warmth, passion, and enjoyment. There is close collaboration with the ArtEZ Conservatory in Zwolle. Annually, the orchestra gives numerous concerts, records a CD, and goes on tour. The Britten Youth String Orchestra has secured a prominent place in the cultural musical landscape of the Netherlands. In 2014, the orchestra won the first prize cum laude at the prestigious Summa Cum Laude Festival in Vienna, and on several occasions, 'The Britteners' performed for the Dutch Royal Family (including the official opening act on

King's Day 2016 in Zwolle). The orchestra has released several CDs that received rave reviews on the radio and in the press.

Renowned artists such as Liza Ferschtman, Daniel Wayenberg, Gavriel Lipkind, Charlie Siem, Carla Leurs, Maria Milstein, Rosanne Philippens, Bernadeta Astari, Dominik Wagner, Daniel Rowland, Maja Bogdanović, and Anastasia Kobekina have been guest performers with the orchestra. At the invitation of various festivals, the orchestra has toured Spain, France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, England, Denmark, and Sweden. The Britten Youth String Orchestra has also undertaken three successful tours within the Netherlands. Auditions for the Britten Youth String Orchestra will take place on June 21, 2024. For more information, visit www.hetbritten.nl.

Loes Visser studied orchestral conducting at the Conservatory of Amsterdam and the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, where she graduated conducting Mahler's Symphony No. 5. She has conducted symphony orchestras both in the Netherlands and abroad, including the State Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, the Kiev Soloists, the Slovak Sinfonietta, the Amsterdam Theatre Orchestra, and the Nieuw Ensemble. She has collaborated with many renowned musicians such as Daniel Rowland, Anastasia Kobekina, Maria Milstein, Daniel Wayenberg, and Dominik Wagner.

Loes Visser is the founder and artistic director of the Britten Youth String Orchestra and Britten for Young Musical Talent. Her passion is to inspire people through music, and many young musicians have seen their own passion for classical music and ensemble playing flourish under her guidance. She also coaches young conductors, preparing them for conservatory study.

Loes Visser is an ambassador for Bosman's Legacy, an organization dedicated to promoting the music of the 20th-century Dutch composer Henriëtte Bosmans.