



Spectacular Vaughan Williams from the BBC SO and Ryan Wigglesworth

Par [Roy Westbrook](#), 14 mai 2022

Valses nobles et sentimentales, despite its Schubertian title, is quintessential Ravel in its piquant harmony. Although the opening dissonance is even more bracing in the piano original, the BBC Symphony Orchestra under [Ryan Wigglesworth](#) (no mean pianist himself) made the most both of its asperities and of its Viennese allure. Only briefly in the second waltz did Wigglesworth's rubato hint at a sentimentality alien to Ravel's natural *hauteur*, but otherwise his equally natural *tendresse*, and the spirit of the dance whether swift or slow, prevailed.



Ryan Wigglesworth
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Leading French spectralist composer [Tristan Murail's](#) *L'oeil du cyclone – fantaisie-impromptu for piano and orchestra* (effectively his second piano concerto), was a BBC co-commission here given its UK premiere. Playing continuously for nearly thirty minutes, it pays a debt to the Romantic piano concerto, especially in its virtuoso solo part – certainly “in the eye of the hurricane” – superbly despatched by [François-Frédéric Guy](#), who gave the world premiere in Paris last February (still to be heard on YouTube).

Murail has said “For me, music is not made with notes but with sounds” so in a sense timbre becomes structural, and these spectral (sometimes in both senses) textures are fascinating. The music shone especially in the tinkling high register, from the work's opening in the piano to an orchestral texture often lit by metallic sounds from a thunder sheet, triangle and tuned percussion, which combined for the final chord. This was a UK premiere which will, one hopes, not be its local *derrière*, and pianists should queue up to

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Critique faite à Barbican Hall, Londres, le 13 mai 2022

PROGRAMME

[Ravel](#), *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, pour orchestre

Murail, *Piano Concerto* (UK premiere)

Franck, *Rédemption: Morceau symphonique*, FWV 51 (UK premiere)

[Vaughan Williams](#), *Symphonie no. 4 en fa mineur*

ARTISTES

[BBC Symphony Orchestra](#)

Ryan Wigglesworth, *Direction*

François-Frédéric Guy, *Piano*



☆ VOIR PLUS DE CRITIQUES

CONCERT

Le Barbican Hall transfiguré par le BBC Symphony Orchestra

Nicolas Schotter, 22nd October

Le Barbican Hall accueillait le BBC Symphony Orchestra et son chef Sakari Oramo pour un programme d'une remarquable cohérence, à de multiples niveaux, et dont la gradation dramatique a conquis l'assemblée.

★★★★☆

learn and programme it. Both the work and Guy's performance deserved a larger audience, but this was very well received indeed by those present, whether initiates, novitiates, or just curious.



François-Frédéric Guy, Ryan Wigglesworth and the BBC SO
© BBC | Mark Allan

César Franck's music has almost disappeared from orchestral platforms (if not organ lofts) where once his *Symphony in D minor* and *Symphonic Variations* were staples. Here was a 'new' symphony, the original *Symphonie* centrepiece of his 1872 oratorio *Rédemption*, omitted at its first performance and now given its world premiere in the composer's bicentenary year. Thus marooned outside its intended context, it was mostly busy and unpersuasive, but given a committed performance from its proto-Hollywood opening flourish through some heavily scored over-loud episodes. It had though a more interesting quiet coda, with a palpable tension over its repeated drum and bass pulse.

Vaughan Williams' *Fourth Symphony* gave this concert its title of "The Other Vaughan Williams", and its fiercely abrasive opening announced its mood at once. Here the players tore into the searing ninths, urged on by irresistible energy from the podium. Wigglesworth matched the fire of Vaughan Williams' own recording with this orchestra, (which had given the 1935 premiere under Adrian Boult). The second subject too was kept flowing, as was the whole movement, through to its quiet, exhausted close. The second movement's meandering lines were well balanced and the climax compellingly built, with fine solos from horn and flute typifying the playing throughout the evening. The Scherzo's rhythms were incisive and the accents sharp, the Trio unapologetically galumphing – "oompah passages" was the composer's term. The finale's violent *Epilogo fugato* led inexorably to the renewed ferocity of the symphony's opening before its abrupt expiry.



Ryan Wigglesworth conducts the BBC SO
© BBC | Mark Allan

"Dear Wood," wrote Dr Vaughan Williams to Sir Henry, "(the symphony) though not technically difficult will I imagine require a good deal of rehearsal to make it 'come off'". I don't know how much rehearsal the BBCSO had, but here the Fourth certainly 'came off' brilliantly. I doubt this centenary year will yield a finer Vaughan Williams symphony performance, (but you can check for yourself on BBC Radio 3 from 7th July for 30 days).

★★★★☆ ?

Beethoven et Lutoslawski par le BBC SO à Londres

Julie Jozwiak, 26th April

Le BBC Symphony Orchestra donnait un programme Beethoven/Lutoslawski au Barbican Hall. Le chef Michal Nesterowic et le pianiste Steven Osborne ont remplacé les têtes d'affiche initialement annoncées. Un changement de distribution qui n'a pas empêché la soirée d'être réussie.

★★★★☆

Eloquent Elgar and searing Sibelius from Stasevska and Gabetta

Alexander Hall, 22nd October

A concerto and a symphony both in the key of E minor make an interesting pairing in this BBC Symphony Orchestra concert, whereas the phantasmagoria of stage lighting and two new works add very little.

★★★★☆

Icy blast: total immersion into the world of Sibelius, the storyteller

Mark Pullinger, 9th October

Sakari Oramo, Anu Komsa and Ólafur Darri Ólafsson take a deep dive into the world of Sibelius' tone poems in two concerts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

★★★★☆

Gabel, Lozakovich and the BBC SO dazzle in Lalo, Brahms and Franck

Mark Valencia, 26th August

A rare outing for César Franck's sole symphony concludes a striking Proms concert with a strongly Germanic first half.

★★★★☆

English music across the generations from Sakari Oramo and the BBCSO

Chris Garlick, 16th August

A trio of English works, including the UK premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's virtuosic *Time Flies*.

★★★★☆

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