



# New Year Viennese Gala

Johann Strauss Favourites

# Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra 2025/26

One of the UK’s best-loved orchestras, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra is known for championing the role of culture in people’s lives. Based at Lighthouse, Poole, the Orchestra is resident in Bristol, Exeter, Portsmouth, Southampton, and Yeovil, and performs in towns and villages across the region. A leading arts charity, it is the largest cultural provider in the South West of England, serving one of the biggest and most diverse regions in the UK.

The Daily Telegraph described Mark Wigglesworth’s opening performance as Chief Conductor in 2024 as “a fine, fierce debut”. Celebrated globally for his outstanding musicianship, extraordinary interpretations, and breadth of repertoire, Wigglesworth’s first season has magnified the BSO’s reputation for the highest quality music-making. The Orchestra boasts an enviable list of named conductors, including Principal Guest Conductor Chloé Van Soeterstède, Marin Alsop, David Hill MBE, Kirill Karabits, and Andrew Litton.

In 2025/26, the BSO welcomes baritone **Roderick Williams OBE** as Artist-in-Residence: Williams performs five times across the season, including Zemlinsky’s *Lyric Symphony*, Tippett’s *A Child of Our Time*, and a 24-song cycle, *An English Winterreise*. The Orchestra also introduces **Dani Howard** as its Celebrated Composer, a series that shines a spotlight on new British music. It shares seven performances of Howard’s music, including the UK premiere of her *Saxophone Concerto* with **Jess Gillam**. Further highlights of the season include debut performances from organist **Anna Lapwood**, cellist **Hugo Svedberg**, guitarist **Plínio Fernandes**, viola player **Timothy Ridout**, among more. The Orchestra’s celebrated **Digital Concert series** continues into its sixth year, with 19 live performances broadcast globally from Poole.

The Orchestra is celebrated for its pioneering community-based **BSO Participate** work, spanning partnerships with health and care providers to inclusive events in schools and with music education hubs. In the 2025/26 season, highlights include the expansion of its creative health programme with **Dorset County Hospital** and **Arts in Hospital** into further **Dorset HealthCare** sites, and an extension of its support for **Community and Wellbeing Orchestras** supporting a range of needs across the region from Bodmin, Boscombe and Bristol to Chard and Wincanton.



## New Year Viennese Gala Johann Strauss Favourites

<b>Lighthouse, Poole</b> Thursday 1 January	<b>Die Fledermaus: Overture</b> Johann Strauss II9'	<b>The Merry Widow Overture</b> Franz Lehár7'
<b>Brewhouse, Taunton</b> Friday 2 January	<b>Accelerations Waltz</b> Johann Strauss II9'	<b>Viljalied (The Merry Widow)</b> Franz Lehár5'
<b>Bristol Beacon</b> Saturday 3 January	<b>Sounds of my Homeland, Czàrdàs (Die Fledermaus)</b> Johann Strauss II5'	<b>My lips’s fiery Kiss (Giuditta)</b> Franz Lehár3'
<b>Weymouth Pavilion</b> Friday 9 January	<b>Adele’s Laughing Song (Die Fledermaus)</b> Johann Strauss II4'	<b>Dynamiden Waltz</b> Josef Strauss4'
<b>Fareham Live</b> Saturday 10 January	<b>Thunder and Lightning Polka</b> Johann Strauss II3'	<b>Plappermaulchen (Chatterbox) Polka</b> Josef Strauss4'
<b>Mark Wigglesworth</b> Conductor	<b>Artist’s Waltz</b> Johann Strauss II10'	<b>The Blue Danube Waltz</b> Johann Strauss II9'
<b>Elizabeth Watts</b> Soprano	<b>Interval</b>	<b>Radetsky March</b> Johann Strauss I3'

Please turn off all mobile phones, pagers and watch alarms, ensure that hearing aids are switched to the correct setting, and consider fellow audience members in general regarding noise and the glare from mobile phone screens. The use of cameras, video cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited. Please note that if you leave the auditorium during the performance you will only be re-admitted when there is a suitable break in the music.



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## Tonight's music

### Die Fledermaus: Overture

Johann Strauss II  
(1825-1899)

Dubbed 'The Walz King' during his lifetime, Johann Strauss II, was the most successful of the multi-talented family of musicians who dominated Viennese popular music for most of the nineteenth century. He composed over 500 waltzes, polkas and other dances, and from the 1870s onwards concentrated on composing for the stage. *Die Fledermaus* was his third operetta, composed during 1873-4, and first performed at the Theater an der Wien on 5 April 1874. Today, it remains Strauss's most performed operetta and a staple part of operatic repertoire around the world.

Undoubtedly its appeal lay partly in its contemporary Viennese setting, its original audiences enjoying watching the comic foibles of characters who must have seemed all too familiar. Translated into English the title means 'The Bat' (or literally 'The Flutter-Mouse') and the light-hearted story describes the revenge taken by a certain Dr Falke on the principal character, Gabriel von Eisenstein, because of a practical joke played on him.

The overture was also an immediate hit and on the first night, conducted by Strauss, was interrupted by applause several times. It weaves a lyrical web of five of the most memorable tunes in the operetta including the joyous waltz that ends Prince Orlovsky's party at the conclusion of Act Two.

Andrew Burn

### Accelerations Waltz

Johann Strauss II

The tradition established at the Viennese Balls of the Carnival season (11 November to Shrove Tuesday the following February) gave composers the chance of 'two bites of the cherry' when a work was premiered. For its first outing, the custom was that it was played as a concert piece in front of a seated audience, then later in the evening it was repeated so those attending the ball could dance to it. Due to this format, the Strauss brothers could rapidly gauge the success of a new work, since ideally it should appeal to both. One which certainly hit the mark was the *Accelerations Waltz*, composed somewhat at the last minute for the Engineering Students' Ball of February 1860. The work is aptly titled due to the rapidly

quickening speed of the main waltz, a characteristic which not only appealed to audiences as listeners, but also particularly to the dancers, whose skills were tested to the full by the fluctuating changes of the music's speed. It also found favour with the Viennese composer of a later generation, Erich Korngold, who included the waltz in his *Tales from Strauss* for piano composed in 1927.

AB

### Sounds of my Homeland, Czàrdàs. (Die Fledermaus)

Johann Strauss II

Act Two of *Die Fledermaus* is set in the summer palace of the Russian Prince Orlovsky where a sumptuous Viennese ball is in full swing. Orlovsky is complicit with Falke's plans for taking his revenge on Eisenstein for the trick played on him. One by one the operettas principal characters arrive, but as they're masked their real identities are unknown. Rosalind, Einstein's wife, convinces everyone she's Hungarian by singing *Songs of my Homeland* (Klänge der Heimat), to the rhythm of a traditional dance of that country, the Czàrdàs. Eisenstein, by now well the worse for wear from champagne, is entranced and starts to flirt with her, although his attempts to persuade her to unmask utterly fail. Rosalind turns the tables on him by slyly fishing out a watch from his pocket, which in Act 3 proves mightily embarrassing for him when she produces it.

AB

### Adele's Laughing Song (Die Fledermaus)

Johann Strauss II

Another guest at Prince Orlovsky's ball is Adele, Rosalind's maid, who arrives in a ball gown 'borrowed', without permission, from her mistress. She's pretending to be an actress, but when Eisenstein is introduced to her, he's flummoxed since she seems to be so like his wife's maid, and besides he recognises the dress as his wife's. In her *Laughing Song* (Mein Herr Marquis), Adele pooh-poohs the suggestions pointing out that a maid couldn't possibly have petite hands, dainty feet or a trim waistline as she does – such an idea is, well, just laughable.

AB

### Thunder and Lightning Polka

Johann Strauss II

Strauss composed his exuberant fast polka, *Thunder and Lightning* (Donner und Blitzen) in 1868 for the Hesperus Ball, 'Hesperus' being the title of the Viennese Artists' Federation. All three Strauss brothers, Johann, Josef and Eduard, were members of this august body. Originally appearing under the title *Sternschnuppe* (Shooting Star), it's fascinating to reflect that the original version didn't have the weather effects created by cymbals and timpani that subsequently ensured the polka's success.

AB

### Artist's Waltz

Johann Strauss II

In the summer of 1866, the Austrian army suffered a crushing defeat by Prussian forces at the Battle of Königgrätz. The population's morale plummeted with the resulting cancellation of many of the balls of Vienna's Carnival season. This malaise continued into the following year, but the Strauss brothers, determined to face the challenge of raising the nation's spirit, between them composed no less than twenty-five new works. Among them was Johann's *Artist's Waltz*, which celebrates the musicians, painters, writers, sculptors, present and past of the Hesperus Vienna Artists' Federation. The waltz was deemed a splendid success at its premiere at the Federation's Ball in February 1867. It's particularly admired for its exquisitely scored introductory section.

AB

### Interval

### The Merry Widow Overture

Franz Lehár  
(1870-1948)

Lehár belongs to the generation following the Strauss brothers. He's remembered primarily as an operetta composer whose outstanding successes were *Die lustige Witwe*, (The Merry Widow), *Der Graf von Luxemburg* (The Count of Luxemburg) and *Das Land des Lächelns*, (The Land of Smiles), indeed at one point Lehár had three operettas being performed simultaneously

in Vienna. *The Merry Widow*, premiered in 1905, is set in Paris in the early 19th century. It's a comedy of romantic intrigue arising from the straightened circumstances of the virtually bankrupt imaginary Balkan country of Pontevedro. The opera's leading characters are Hannah Glawari, aka the Merry Widow herself, whose fortune can save the country so long as she marries another Pontevedrinian, and Count Danilo Danilovitch, First Secretary of the Pontevedrinian Embassy in Paris and, significantly, Hannah's former lover. Needless to say all ends happily with Hannah and Danilo engaged and Pontevedro's future secured.

Rather than having an overture, Lehár began the operetta with a short orchestral introduction and it wasn't until the 400th performance, some two years after the premiere that he provided one for this special occasion. Stagewise, it remains a novelty since it's rarely used in productions, but as a concert piece it provides a superb, cleverly crafted medley of highlights from the operetta including the sparkling *Merry Widow Waltz*.

AB

### Viljalied (The Merry Widow)

Franz Lehár

Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe* (The Merry Widow), opened at the Theater an der Wein on 30 December 1905, making its composer a celebrity, since it gained four hundred performances within two years, and became internationally successful too. A major reason



for its popularity is that it contains one of the most potent of all operetta arias, the famous *Vilja*, in which the rich Hanna Glawari sings affectionately of her native land to the admiring guests at her garden party.

Terry Barfoot

### My lips's fiery Kiss (Giuditta)

Franz Lehár

*Giuditta*, with a libretto by Paul Knepler and Fritz Löhner, was premiered at the Vienna Staatsoper on 20 January 1934, with a cast including Richard Tauber. This turned out to be Lehár's last work for the stage, and more than a hundred radio stations broadcast the event live. Its most famous number, and a regular feature of Viennese concerts, is the aria 'My lip's fiery Kiss (Meine Lippen sie küssen so heiss). Here, in Scene Four, Giuditta tries to describe the chemistry she experiences when in the presence of men. Although the waltz style is familiar, the context is unexpected, since she needs money desperately and is working in a North African North African nightclub called The Alcazar.

TB

### Dynamiden Waltz

Josef Strauss  
(1827-1870)

Josef Strauss, known as 'Pepi' to family and friends, was the middle of the three sons of Johann Strauss I. Although naturally musical, and in defiance of his father who wanted him to pursue a career in the military, he became a successful mechanical engineer who invented a street cleaning machine which the Viennese

municipal authority adopted for the city. He was drawn into the family music business when his elder brother fell ill. Thereafter, until his untimely death, aged 43, he became an integral and indispensable member of the Strauss dynasty as a conductor, composer and violinist. His compositions were highly admired to the extent that his elder brother remarked that 'Pepi is the more gifted of us two; I am merely the more popular'.

Usually known under its alternative title of *Dynamiden* (Dynamite), this waltz sequence was originally called *Mysterious Powers of Magnetism*. Given Josef's own work as an engineer, he must have been delighted when the Vienna Industrial Society invited him to contribute a waltz for their Carnival ball of January 1860. Its rather mysterious introduction belies the parade of winning, subtle waltz tunes that follow, and which bear witness to composer's melodic gifts referred to by his brother.

AB

### Plappermaulchen (Chatterbox) Polka

Josef Strauss

One of Josef Strauss' wittiest 'Musikalischer Scherz' (Musical Jokes), *Plappermaulchen* is a fast polka composed in 1868. It brilliantly evokes someone who just can't stop chattering away and doesn't do so, the oboe tells us, even after the music has stopped. It's said that Josef had a particular chatterbox in mind – his own daughter, Karoline.

AB

### The Blue Danube Waltz

Johann Strauss II

Without doubt Strauss's most famous waltz, *The Blue Danube*, or to give its full title, *An der schönen blauen Donau* (By the beautiful blue Danube), began life as a choral work composed in 1867 for the Vienna Men's Choral Association. At first there was a sequence of four waltzes, plus an introduction and coda. Strauss then composed an additional waltz and it was only shortly before the scheduled premiere that it was decided to add an orchestra.

The first performance was scheduled for 5 February 1867, however, as Strauss and his orchestra were performing at the Imperial Court that evening, it was conducted instead by Rudolf Weinwurm, the association's choir master. The work's appeal was immediate, one critic commenting, 'The lovely waltz, with its catchy rhythms, ought soon to belong among the most popular of the prolific dance-composer.' In its purely orchestral version, for which Strauss extended the atmospheric coda, it was first heard on 10 March 1867.

Brahms greatly admired Strauss's genius, and a close friendship developed between them. He enjoyed the relaxed, informal atmosphere of the Strauss's homes in Vienna or in their summer residence in the spa town of Bad Ischl and was a frequent visitor to both in later life. Strauss's wife Adele, once asked Brahms to autograph her fan. On it he wrote out the first four bars of *The Blue Danube*, then signed 'Unfortunately not by – Johannes Brahms'.

AB

### Radetsky March

Johann Strauss I  
(1804-1849)

1848 was the year of uprisings across Europe against autocratic rulers; the Austro-Hungarian empire was no exception with protests in Hungary, Prague, Italy and Vienna itself. In July however the tide turned against the rebels when the Hapsburg troops commanded by the 82-year-old Field Marshall Johann Wenzel, Count Radetsky von Radetz, routed the Italian army at the battle of Custoza. The next month, Johann Strauss I, the founder of the Strauss family dynasty, composed the work that ensured his immortality, the *Radetsky-Marsch* premiered on 31 August on the Vienna Wasserglaci.

Supposedly composed in a mere two hours, and cleverly weaving in two folksongs, it was encored four times at its premiere and became a second anthem for the Austrian soldiers. With its toe-tapping rhythm and military bearing it makes a perfect ending to a Viennese concert and is always the second and final encore of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra's New Year's Day concert.

AB



## Mark Wigglesworth

Chief Conductor

In September 2024, Mark Wigglesworth became Chief Conductor of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

Mark is recognised internationally for his masterly interpretations, both in the opera house and in the concert hall, and highly detailed performances that combine a finely considered architectural structure with great sophistication and rare beauty. As a highly respected conductor he has forged many enduring relationships with orchestras and opera companies across the world, conducting repertoire ranging from Mozart to Boulez.

Highlights have included performances with the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, London Symphony, Boston Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, and

Tokyo Symphony. Recordings include a critically acclaimed cycle of the Shostakovich symphonies with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Mahler's Sixth and Tenth symphonies with the Melbourne Symphony, a disc of English music with the Sydney Symphony, Britten's *Peter Grimes* with Glyndebourne, and the Brahms piano concertos with Sir Stephen Hough.

In opera, Wigglesworth has enjoyed long relationships with The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, *From the House of the Dead*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *Hansel and Gretel*) and English National Opera (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Così fan tutte*, *Falstaff*, *Katya Kabanova*, *Parsifal*, *Force of Destiny*, *Magic Flute*, *Jenufa*, *Don Giovanni*, *Lulu*) and operatic engagements elsewhere include The Metropolitan Opera, New York

(*The Marriage of Figaro*, *Orfeo*) as well as at The Bavarian State Opera, Opéra National de Paris, and the Teatro Real, Madrid. In 2017 he received the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera.

He has written articles for *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, and made a six-part TV series for the BBC entitled *Everything to Play For*. His book *The Silent Musician: Why Conducting Matters* is published by Faber & Faber and has been translated into Spanish and Chinese.

He has held positions as Associate Conductor of the BBC Symphony, Principal Guest Conductor of the Swedish Radio Symphony and the Adelaide Symphony, Music Director of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and English National Opera and he was appointed Chief Conductor of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in January this year.



## Elizabeth Watts

Soprano

Elizabeth Watts was a chorister at Norwich Cathedral and studied archaeology at Sheffield University before studying singing at the Royal College of Music in London. She was awarded an Hon DMus from Sheffield in 2013 and became a Fellow of the RCM in 2017. A prolific recording artist, her recordings include critically acclaimed discs of lieder by Schubert and Strauss, and Mozart arias with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Handel's *Brookes Passion* with the Academy of Ancient Music.

In the 2022/23 season, Elizabeth was engaged by the Britten Sinfonia to sing Britten's *Les Illuminations*. As part of an ongoing relationship during the following season she made her London singing-directing debut with them with *Songs of Nadia Anjuman* by Richard Blackford. The current season sees her debut with the Bristol Ensemble, singing/directing Britten's *Les Illuminations*. Other season highlights, range from Telemann cantatas at the Wigmore Hall, Strauss *Vier*

*Letzte Lieder* at Newbury, to performances of a new James McMillan commission in Italy and London.

Last season saw her sing Mahler's Symphony No. 2 with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and Andrès Orozco Estrada and Symphony No. 4 with Jun Märkl in the Hague; and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at the 2024 Edinburgh International Festival with Ryan Wigglesworth. Opera is also an important part of her career, appearing at Welsh National Opera as the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Donna Elvira, *Don Giovanni* and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* and, most recently, Aspasia in *Mitridate* at Garsington Opera.

Elizabeth regularly appears at the BBC Proms, most recently with Sakari Oromo and the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the 2025 Proms singing in Bliss's *The Beatitudes*, with past appearances including Mahler's Symphony No. 2, also with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sakari Oromo; Ravel *L'enfant et*

*les sortilèges* with the LSO and Simon Rattle; Schubert songs with the BBC Philharmonic and John Storgårds and Beethoven arias with the NDR Radio Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Andrew Manze.

Elizabeth won the 2007 Rosenblatt Recital Song Prize at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition as well as the 2006 Kathleen Ferrier Award. She is a former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist and was awarded a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award in 2011.

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