

HENLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Brahms

Academic Festival Overture

Elgar

Sea Pictures

Brahms

Symphony No. 2

ALEXANDER WALKER

Conductor

REBECCA AFONWY-JONES

Mezzo-Soprano

Sunday 17th March 2024, 7.00pm
The Hexagon, Reading

Tickets: email hsoboxoffice@gmail.com or **07726 459261**

£22, £18, £14; U16s/students half price; 1 child free with paying adult (£18 and £14 tickets); Groups: 1 in 8 free.

Or via Reading Arts: 0118 960 6060 or www.whatsonreading.com/book/408202 (booking fee applies)



www.henleysymphonyorchestra.co.uk

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HENLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

HSO, in its 54th season, returns to the Hexagon for its annual spring concert. From the first concert held in a borrowed marquee in Shiplake, HSO has gone from strength to strength, attracting some 50 players from across the Thames Valley and promoting an annual series of four concerts. HSO is delighted to welcome **Alexander Walker** as Guest Conductor and **Rebecca Afonwy-Jones**, mezzo-soprano, as soloist.

Rebecca Afonwy-Jones mezzo-soprano

Rebecca Afonwy-Jones began her career as a Scottish Opera Emerging Artist, subsequently joining Welsh National Opera as an Associate Artist. Regular concert engagements have included her BBC Proms debut singing Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* with BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

This season, she joins If Opera Company to sing roles including **Marthe** *Iolanta*; joins Mid Wales Opera as **Dama** *Macbeth* and Longborough Festival Opera as **Wellgunde** *Das Rheingold / Götterdämmerung* and **Waltraute** *Die Walküre*; and sings Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* at London's Barbican Hall.



Alexander
Walker

The sparkling mood of the opening *Academic Festival Overture*, with its potpourri of boisterous student drinking songs, was written by **Brahms** as a thank you to Breslau University after he was awarded an honorary doctorate.

Schumann predicted that **Brahms** would be the musical successor to Beethoven, and his *Second Symphony* surely fulfils this promise, with its rich depth of orchestral splendour. Written whilst on holiday in Austria in 1877, it is often described as the most melodious and sunny of **Brahms's** four symphonies, but he himself wrote 'Black wings are constantly beating above us'.

Sea Pictures, written by **Elgar** in 1899 immediately after the *Enigma Variations*, share *Enigma's* mastery of orchestral tone-painting in five contrasting songs. The composition was encouraged by his wife, Alice, who wrote the second song. Janet Baker's 1965 recording of *Sea Pictures* with John Barbirolli remains a benchmark account.

Come and join us!

The Hexagon is in the centre of Reading, ten minutes' walk from the station and well signed for those coming by car (postcode for Sat Nav is RG1 7TQ). Car parking is in the Broad Street Mall, Oracle shopping centre or Q-Park Chatham Street car parks (<http://www.readingarts.com/hexagon/your-visit/how-find-us>). There is parking for disabled attendees outside the Hexagon stage door and wheelchair spaces are available in the stalls. To book one of these please contact the Hexagon on **0118 960 6060**. The spacious theatre meets all current requirements for the safety of its patrons.