HENLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Borodin
Polovtsian Dances

Mussorgsky
Songs and Dances of Death

Mahler
Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen

Rachmaninov
Symphonic Dances

Alexander Walker *Conductor*

Efim Zavalny *Baritone*

Tickets: Contact **boxoffice@henleysymphonyorchestra.co.uk** or **07726 459261**

£22 reserved *(central aisle)*
£18 unreserved *(side aisles)*
£20 unreserved *(side central aisle)*
£10 reserved / £8 unreserved *(U16s/students)*

Saturday 15th November 2025, 5pm

St Mary's Church, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2AU

www.henleysymphonyorchestra.co.uk

Henley Symphony Orchestra is a Registered Charity No. 271849

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HSO is delighted to present its autumn concert in the beautiful surroundings of St Mary's Church, Henley-on-Thames, conducted by **Alex Walker**, our recently appointed Music Director. In the past, Alex has worked extensively in Eastern Europe and Russia, giving him a great understanding of our thrilling programme - *A Time to Dance*.



Alexander Walker

HSO warmly welcomes **Efim Zavalny** as soloist. Efim is a distinguished Russian baritone originally from Syktyvkar. He gained wide recognition as a soloist at the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, where he became known for his powerful stage presence, rich timbre, and nuanced musicality. Now based in London, Efim is continuing his career in the UK and is reaffirming his reputation as an accomplished and compelling artist.

Mussorgsky and **Borodin** were members of 'The Five' who collaborated in St Petersburg in the 1860s to create a distinctly Russian national style of classical music. Borodin's *Polovtsian Dances* form an exotic scene in his unfinished opera featuring the 10th century Viking ruler of Kiev, Prince Igor. He was captured by a tribe of nomadic Turks, the Polovtsians, who chose to entertain him with a dance troupe of oriental female slaves.

Mussorgsky set his cousin Kutuzov's poems to music, resulting in these vivid *Songs and Dances of Death.* Though sometimes unsettling, the four songs depict death in various scenarios, culminating in Death as a triumphant general on a battlefield.

In contrast, *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* is a tranquil and deeply moving song by **Mahler**. Based on a poem by Friedrich Rückert, the song evokes the peace which can be found in love and music. The song was most famously sung by Kathleen Ferrier.

Our concert concludes with **Rachmaninov's** electrifying but enigmatic final masterpiece, written for a huge orchestra in 1940. His *Symphonic Dances* blend Russian soul with bold colours from the composer's adopted homeland in the United States. We hope you will enjoy this rare opportunity to hear such a powerful programme in the heart of Henley.

Come and join us!

St Mary's Church, Hart Street, Henley-on-Thames RG9 2AU is situated by the bridge over the River Thames in central Henley, in a continuation of the Market Place. Parking at the church itself is extremely limited so we reserve this space for disabled visitors. Public car parks are available within a few minutes' walk, off the Market Place (RG9 2AA) or Kings Road (RG9 2DQ).

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