

Up for Grabs

Start time: 7.30pm

Approximate running time: 120 minutes including a 20-minute interval

Please note all timings are approximate and subject to change

Co-produced by the Barbican and BBC Symphony Orchestra

Programme

Dmitri Shostakovich *Festive Overture*

Igor Stravinsky *Firebird Suite* (1919)

1. Introduction – The Firebird and its dance – The Firebird's variation
2. The Princesses' Khorovod (Rondo, round dance)
3. Infernal dance of King Kashchei
4. Berceuse (Lullaby)
5. Finale

Mark-Anthony Turnage *Up for Grabs* (world premiere)

Celebrating Arsenal's historic win over Liverpool to win the Football League on the final day of the 1988/89 season, *Up for Grabs* combines Mark-Anthony Turnage's twin loves of music and football, says James Drury.

'I've had real fun with this,' says the composer, who used to live so close to Arsenal's stadium he could be from home to his seat in minutes. 'I enjoyed it probably more than anything else I've ever done, which is a bit of a funny admission.'

The 25-minute score accompanies a film of highlights from the match – regarded as one of the most exciting in English football history. And although it's named after a famous quote from commentator Brian Moore when Arsenal's Michael Thomas scored the equaliser ('Thomas, charging through the midfield! Thomas! ... It's up for grabs now!'), you won't hear any commentary in the piece. Turnage felt that would 'change the dynamic of the piece'. However, it does include crowd noises. 'The idea is that the music is not just simply treading water, it's foreground,' says the renowned composer. 'And that's much more possible when you haven't got any dialogue because you're not having to worry about going underneath it.' Instead, *Up for Grabs* replaces the commentary to tell the story of the game through music. With a jazz trio underpinning the symphonic orchestra textures and drama, it's not a literal narrative. Capturing the highs and lows of the game, it also stands alone as a work you can listen to without the footage.

Turnage's starting point was to write refrains by taking letters in players' names and corresponding them to the letter-names given to the notes of the musical scale. That was the 'raw material'. Then, there are moments that follow the action of the ball, such as the rising and falling of the clarinet as the ball loops up and down. But Turnage didn't want to follow that too closely 'because then it just becomes film music'.

'There are times when the match is quite frenetic, and I slow the music down, like a counterpoint. What I was keen to do with this piece was make sure it had some sort of substance. So there are interesting rhythmic things happening, and I had real fun when a free-kick goes wrong.'

As a lifelong Arsenal fan, he was unable to resist the opportunity to tease the then-Liverpool manager. 'When you see Kenny Dalglish on screen, I've written really jokey music, like Laurel and Hardy, which I had so much fun with. If he's got a sense of humour, not that he will ever see it, then I hope he might find it quite funny.'

While this is Turnage's most overt homage to football, it's not the first time he's referenced his passion through music. His award-winning 2000 opera *The Silver Tassie* (based on a play by Sean O'Casey) is

barbican

named after the football trophy won by the lead character before he sustains terrible injuries during the First World War. And the 1991 work *Momentum* quotes the 'Olé, Olé, Olé' chant.

Up for Grabs is dedicated to fan-favourite player David Rocastle, who died of cancer aged 33. The score opens with an orchestral version of his terrace chant, while his theme has a lyrical, jazzy quality that returns numerous times during the score. The music was commissioned by the Barbican, originally to be performed during the UEFA European Championships in the summer of 2020 but now premiered in the year of the 20th anniversary of Rocastle's passing.

Tonight's premiere with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under conductor Ryan Bancroft features a jazz trio of stars: guitarist John Parricelli (Loose Tubes), drummer Peter Erskine (Weather Report) and bass guitarist Laurence Cottle. Turnage and Erskine are long-time collaborators, first working together on the composer's *Blood on the Floor* (1996); the composer even named a concerto for drum kit and orchestra after the drummer. It's this ability to absorb jazz elements into a contemporary classical style that's among the reasons why Turnage has such a broad appeal.

'I always want to do something different,' is how he once described his approach to writing music. And he's certainly made a career of that.

© James Drury

Russian composer Dmitry Shostakovich – a lifelong supporter of his local football club, FC Zenit – wrote his Festive Overture in 1954. It is an energetic curtain-raiser, first performed at the famous Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

The Firebird was the first ballet co-created by visionary composer Igor Stravinsky and the ambitious impresario Sergey Diaghilev. The story is a magical fairy tale which delighted Paris at its premiere in 1910, evoking the then fashionable 'exoticism' of Russia and the East. It was so popular that Stravinsky revised it into the standalone orchestral work we hear tonight.

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Performers

Ryan Bancroft conductor
John Parricelli guitar
Peter Erskine drums
Laurence Cottle bass guitar

BBC Symphony Orchestra
Igor Yuzefovich (leader) violin I
Cellerina Park
Jeremy Martin
Jenny King
Celia Waterhouse
Colin Huber
Shirley Turner
Ni Do
Molly Cockburn
Zanete Uskane
James Wicks
Alexandra Lomeiko
William Hillman
Ingrid Button

Heather Hohmann violin II
Dawn Beazley
Patrick Wastnage
Danny Fajardo
Tammy Se
Caroline Cooper
Victoria Hodgson
Lucica Trita
Raja Halder
Maya Bickel
Non Peters
Eleanor Bartlett

Phil Cobb trumpet
Joseph Atkins
Kaitlin Wild
Stuart Essenhigh
Aaron Akugbo

Helen Vollam trombone
Dan Jenkins

Lee Dixon panellists
George Graham
Alan Smith
Nigel Winterburn

Norbert Blume viola
Philip Hall
Joshua Hayward
Nikos Zarb
Audrey Henning
Natalie Taylor
Michael Leaver
Carolyn Scott
Mary Whittle
Peter Mallinson
Matthias Wiesner

Benjamin Hughes cello
Graham Bradshaw
Mark Sheridan
Clare Hinton
Sarah Hedley-Miller
Michael Atkinson
Augusta Harris
Morwenna Del Mar

Enno Senft double bass
Richard Alsop
Anita Langridge
Michael Clarke
Beverley Jones
Elen Pan

Nicholas Korth horn
Michael Murray
Andrew Antcliff
Nicholas Hougham
Elise Campbell

Robert O'Neill bass trombone

Sam Elliot tuba

Amy Lawrence presenter
Mark-Anthony Turnage panellist

Michael Cox flute
Tomoka Mukai

Kathleen Stevenson piccolo

Alison Teale oboe
Imogen Smith

Ben Marshall cor anglais

Anna Hashimoto clarinet
Emma Burgess

Thomas Lessels bass clarinet
Elliot Gresty

Martin Robinson soprano saxophone
Mark Lockheart

Vahan Kourdoian bassoon
Lorna West

Steven Magee contra bassoon

Christopher Hind timpani

David Hockings percussion
Alex Neal
Fiona Ritchie
Oliver Lowe
Kizzy Brooks
Heledd Gwynant

Louise Martin harp

Elizabeth Burley piano



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