

# Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra in concert

## Music

Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra are joined by Juliet Wolff for Elgar's Cello Concerto for their spring concert on Sunday, May 7 at 7pm at St Saviour's Church.

Juliet was the winner of the ESO Young Soloist Competition 2020 and – with the pandemic intervening – the performance this May is belatedly part of her prize.

Conductor and musical director Graham Jones planned the concert long before the weekend became the Coronation weekend: "But I think that is now a great opportunity for us, and I don't think we could have come up with a better programme."

Completing the pieces on offer are Walton – Crown Imperial and Saint-Saëns – Organ Symphony (soloist David Force).

"It came about because the original suggestion was that we should have an English programme, and we had been wanting to get Juliet back for quite a while," Graham said: "We felt bad that we hadn't been able to have that opportunity but we were pleased to be able to suggest the Elgar cello concerto."

"It was written in 1919 immediately after the First World War when Elgar was living in Sussex near Fittleworth and he was hugely aware of all the suffering that the First World War had brought. He was known to say that living in Sussex he could actually hear the gunfire coming across the Channel at night but then when this was first performed, the piece actually had a very poor first performance with Elgar squeezed out of rehearsal time and it didn't really get a chance among his great works until the 1960s when there were a couple of performances by Jacqueline du Pré. Both were televised and they helped bring this piece back



Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra - soloist Juliet Wolff

to people's attention.

"People often say that Elgar was a broken man after the war but I don't like that. I think he was uncomfortable with the world and I think he was frustrated with the world but I don't think he was necessarily broken. Some people see this as a requiem to the First World War but it is far too personal for me, a very personal work which is actually his response to a changed world. Maybe that makes it sound mildly unappealing but actually a lot of people in these days will equally identify with the notion of looking for a better world and I do think that's why the piece speaks to us now."

"Juliet won the competition in 2020. It is a long time ago to think back to her performance but I do

remember her being hugely professional and polished. She was one of those people that walk onto the stage and immediately create a rapport. She was originally going to do the Dvorak cello concerto with us, but when we switched to the Elgar when we were thinking of doing the English programme she was very happy to do that. I'm very pleased to be able to work with her and I really look forward to it. She's studying in Germany at the moment and the number of musical things she has achieved since Covid has been remarkable."

Tickets: WeGotTickets (£14); Reid & Dean, 43-45 Cornfield Road, BN21 4QG; (£14; £12 for ESO Friends – cash only; opening times may vary); on the door (£15; £13 for ESO Friends).