

THE LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS – TRADITION REFRESHED

The traditional elements of the Last Night of the Proms, some of which were not performed in 2001 following the terrorist attacks in the USA on September 11, are restored for 2002. Leonard Slatkin, the BBC Symphony Orchestra's American Chief Conductor takes up the baton to celebrate the strong traditions of British culture in the year that the Proms marks the Queen's Golden Jubilee and the centenary of William Walton. Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1* (which traditionally includes the singing of 'Land of Hope and Glory'), Henry Wood's *Fantasia on British Sea-Songs*, which concludes with *Rule Britannia!*, and Parry's *Jerusalem*, all take a place once more.

To keep the party spirit fresh and vibrant, there will be some variety in the way this is performed. The components of the Last Night have often changed over the years, and at different times have been added or omitted. This year the Proms returns Elgar to its place at the beginning of the second half of the concert and restore Wood's original version of *Rule Britannia!*

Parry's *Jerusalem* was introduced to the Proms by Sir Malcolm Sargent in 1953, and was the only element included in the Last Night of the Proms in 2001. This year it takes its usual place at the end of the concert, before the national anthem, which in the Queen's Golden Jubilee year, is given in a special arrangement by Benjamin Britten. Instead of Sir Malcolm Sargent's arrangement of *Rule Britannia!*, his contribution to the Last Night is the Suite drawn from Walton's film music for *Henry V*, which he devised in 1946.

In recent years, the Last Night programme has brought together the strands that have helped shape the whole season, and has always included new music. This year it celebrates the Queen's Jubilee, the centenaries of Walton and Richard Rodgers, including a sequence of Rodgers's most popular show tunes with Broadway star Audra McDonald, and the 10th birthday of *BBC Music Magazine*, with a set of specially-commissioned variations by eight international composers. It also includes popular works such as Sullivan's Overture to *The Yeomen of the Guard*, which the young Henry Wood worked on, and Grieg's much-loved Piano Concerto, given by the virtuoso Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes.

Once more the world-famous event spills out of the Royal Albert Hall into parks in London, Gateshead and Belfast. The concert, like all Proms, is broadcast live on Radio 3 and is video webcast around the world by the BBC Proms website. The first half is broadcast on BBC TWO television and the second on BBC ONE. BBC Radio 2, BBC Radio Ulster and regional BBC stations broadcast the Hyde Park, Belfast and Gateshead Proms in the Park respectively. BBC World Service send it around the world and many more international television and radio stations enable many millions of people to experience the unique occasion of the Last Night of the Proms in 2002.