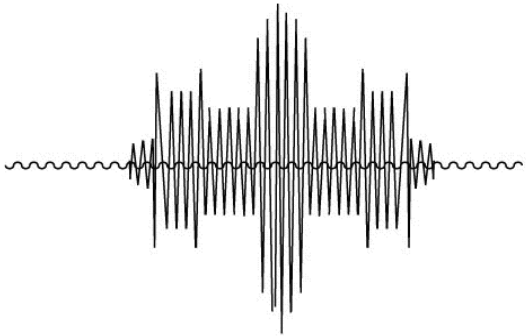


WESTMINSTER PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

WESTMINSTER
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

Elgar: Cockaigne
Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 21
Bartok: The Miraculous Mandarin

Jonathan Butcher: Conductor
Milda Daunoraitė : Piano
Christian Halstead: Leader

7:30 pm – Saturday 17th October 2026

St Johns Waterloo

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Edward Elgar (1857 – 1934)
Cockaigne (In London Town) - Concert Overture op. 40

"No-one who didn't experience it can ever appreciate the charm and character, the sheer personality, of pre-war London", not Elgar's words, but John Barbirolli, a Londoner born and bred who also had a close connection with Elgar's music. Elgar himself, a countryman at heart, had a fairly ambivalent relationship with London. He was a frequent visitor from his early years, but lived there for two relatively short periods: the two years immediately after his marriage in 1889, when he hoped to make an early reputation but was then forced to admit failure, and later for a dozen years from 1911, when he was at the height of his fame and popularity, moving out again after his wife's death left him bereft.

Cockaigne arose from a commission from the (not yet Royal) Philharmonic Society in 1900 for the first performance of a new orchestral work, a welcome gesture of support when Elgar was widely known only for the *Enigma Variations*. Doubly welcome in fact, since the premiere of *The Dream of Gerontius* in October 1900 had been a disaster, which had plunged Elgar into one of his most extreme fits of despair.

It is a measure of the quixotic, highly changeable nature of Elgar's character that he could turn from a mood of deep bitterness and write such an outgoing, thoroughly cheerful work as Cockaigne. Writing to Jaeger at Novello's he observed *"It's cheerful and Londony, 'stout and steaky' "* and to the conductor Hans Richter *"…intended to be honest, healthy, humorous and strong, but not vulgar"* – an apt description.

Some time during 1900, Elgar had visited the Guildhall in London and recalled that he *"seemed to hear far away in the darkness of the roof, a theme, an echo of some noble melody"*, which undoubtedly made its appearance a the *nobilmente* second theme in Cockaigne. Elgar worked quickly and completed the score on 24th March 1901, in plenty of time for the first performance which he conducted on 20th June that same year. The score was published by Boosey and Hawkes, as Elgar was in dispute with Novello and the front cover prominently displays Elgar's dedication, *"To my many friends, the members of the British orchestras"*.

Cockaigne opens quietly with a *scherzando* theme which within a few bars is transformed into fanfare-like flourishes for the brass that suggest the pageantry of London. The second theme, marked *nobilmente* (the first appearance of this direction in a score of Elgar's), is later transformed into the whistling of Cockney urchins. A third main theme, in E flat, depicts a pair of lovers strolling in Regent's Park. After a climax based on the *scherzando* theme, the urchins' irreverence is followed by the appearance of a military band (including cornets) accompanied by a representation of bells pealing. As the military band fades away, the lovers seek some solitude in a church: a passage as haunting as any in the symphonies. In the recapitulation the themes appear in a different order, another band passes by, and in due course the *nobilmente* theme, in full orchestral panoply, ends this evocative portrait of turn-of-the-century London.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)
Piano Concerto no. 21 in C major K 467

Allegro
Andante
Allegro vivace assai

The story of Mozart's years in Vienna, from 1781, until his death ten years later, is utterly characteristic of that paradoxical city's attitudes to artists in every field. Seeking always to be entertained and delighted, Vienna has simultaneously been hostile to any artist who disturbed its customs or caused the Viennese, even briefly, to think too deeply about themselves.

The Vienna of the 1780s was the capital of an empire largely at peace and generally prosperous. The aristocrats and the burgeoning middle classes had time and money to spend on culture, and business was more than willing to support this. Firms dedicated to music publishing and music copying were established and flourished. What the public craved, as the Viennese public has always craved, was novelty – new performers, new composers, maybe even new music, provided it wasn't too difficult.

The twenty-five year old Mozart filled all of these categories and was for a short period the most celebrated performer in the city, fêted by audiences and able to attract large numbers to his subscription concerts, for which he wrote his final great series of piano concerti, all for himself to play.

The prevailing mood couldn't and didn't last; the advent of the new Russian-Turkish war in 1787, on the Empire's eastern border, dented Viennese self-confidence and generated inflation which cut deeply into the artistic life of the city. Alarmed by political developments in France, the Emperors Joseph II and Leopold II imposed repressive measure which contributed to stifling cultural life. The public for Mozart's subscription concerts dried up and he had to scrape together whatever commissions he could find. The Court employed him as a composer of dances, at a paltry salary. Perhaps too, the underlying quality of human frailty which pervades so much of his music and tempers its surface brilliance became too disturbing for an audience which wanted its self-assurance bolstered.

Seventeen of Mozart's Piano Concerti were written during his Vienna years. The group of six which he composed between February 1785 and December 1786 for his subscription concerts represent the peak of his invention and sublime skill. This group of six, of which K467 is the second, are all planned on the largest scale, richly scored and imaginative. K467 is scored for a single flute, pairs of oboes, horns, trumpets, timpani (which have a prominent role) and strings. The manuscript is dated February 1785 and Mozart entered the work in his own thematic catalogue on 9th March. The first performance took place the following day, the handbill advertising *"On Thursday 10th March 1785, Kapellmeister Mozart will have the honour of giving at the I & R National Court Theatre a Grand Musical at which … a new just finished Forte Piano concerto will be played by him…"* Leopold Mozart, mercenary as ever, noted that his son took 559 Gulden.

The opening tutti of the first movement comes to a rousing close, and the woodwind immediately launch a new thematic idea, which is interrupted by the soloist, with an improvisatory flourish before the main theme returns shared between soloist and orchestra. The sighing motif heard on horns and trumpets near the opening is reappears briefly before the cadenza.

The slow movement uses muted strings and pizzicato basses, interrupted by sudden dissonances to achieve an atmosphere of aching tenderness.

The marvellously inventive finale is a form of rondo, devised to show off Mozart's skill as a pianist, and bubbles with extravert good humour throughout. The concerto achieved a wholly unexpected measure of fame when the Swedish film director Bo Widerberg used it in *"Elvira Madigan"*, a wholly unrelated tale of suppressed love in nineteenth century Sweden.

Interval of Twenty Minutes

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Béla Bartók (1881 - 1945)

The Miraculous Mandarin - complete ballet op. 19 Sz. 73

The *Miraculous Mandarin* was the last of the Bartók's trio of stage works and the one with which he had the least luck, bringing to a head his troubled relations with the Hungarian State Opera and the Budapest musical establishment.

Bartók's only opera, *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, to a libretto by Béla Balazs, was completed in 1911, but was not performed in Budapest until 1918 and then only after the hard-won success of the ballet *The Wooden Prince* (a pantomime to a scenario also by Balazs). Bartók regarded the first performance of *The Wooden Prince* on 12th May 1917 as one of the most important events of his life, though it had been touch and go: seven conductors had refused to look at the score, two producers had resigned and the untrained Balazs eventually directed he production himself.

Bartók seems to have become interested in the scenario of the Mandarin shortly after the production of *The Wooden Prince*. Menyhert Lengyel published his "grotesque pantomime" in the 1st January 1917 issue of *Nyugat ("West")*, a literary review, though it may have had a much earlier origin, in the 1912 visit of Diaghilev's Ballets Russe to Budapest. Some time in early 1918 Bartók got to hear of the scenario and made contact with the author who agreed to Bartók's setting the scenario. Two months later Lengyel attended the first performance of *Bluebeard's Castle* and was swept away by the music, describing Bartók as an absolute genius.

After the opera production, Bartók, suffering under the general social deprivation in Hungary at the end of First World War, returned home and began work on the

Mandarin in September 1918. Within months the war had ended, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy collapsed, there was a revolution and the devastating influenza epidemic had swept across Europe. Bartók succumbed to the flu and his hearing was seriously affected, though not permanently. In the midst of this horror Lengyel's grand guignol must have seemed especially resonant.

In June 1919 Bartók's wife wrote to her mother-in-law that the work was complete, and that Bartók was orchestrating it, though the composer added a line that he did not know when it could ever be staged. In the autumn of that year the Hungarian monarchy was restored and both his earlier stage works were then banned as the librettist, Balazs, was branded a "communist". They did not return to the stage in Hungary until 1935/6.

The composer's situation worsened over the winter and he was barely able to feed his family, never mind complete his score. Although life gradually improved, Bartók made no further progress on the score.

On 13th May 1922 *The Wooden Prince* and *Bluebeard's Castle* were staged at Frankfurt. These were the first staged performances outside Hungary of Bartók's work and a landmark event for him, which prompted the Budapest Opera to consider staging something by Bartók. Since the two earlier works were still banned, the Opera approached Bartók with the possibility of a new work and he offered the still unfinished *Miraculous Mandarin*. By October 1923 the Opera Director, Baron Wlassin, was begging Bartók to complete the score so that it could be staged in the 1924/25 season. In the event the score was not ready until December 1924.

At once other difficulties appeared; the music was thought unplayable and the subject was considered immoral, so much so that the Theatre Ministry refused to sanction it and in fact the Mandarin was not staged in Budapest until 9th December 1945, ten weeks after Bartók had died in New York. Bartók and his publisher Universal then approached other theatres outside Hungary and eventually the conductor Jeno Szenka, who had led the earlier Frankfurt performances, agreed to give the Mandarin in his new post in Cologne where the first night took place on 27th November 1926.

Cologne was then a deeply conservative city: in the words of one writer *"a city of churches, monasteries and chapels, rendered immortal in the poems of Heinrich Heine"* and its first night audience reacted to the pantomime with *"cat-calls, whistling, stamping and booing which went on for several minutes … and which swelled to shouting when the composer and conductor stepped out …"*. The following morning the Mandarin was banned from the repertoire and this remained the sole performance that Bartók ever saw. A production the following year in Prague, which he could not attend, was similarly banned after one night.

It is not surprising that a 1920's audience should find the ballet shocking. Bartók himself described it thus:

Just listen, how beautiful the story is. In an 'Apache' den three thugs force a beautiful young girl to seduce men and to lure them into the den where they will be robbed. The first turns out to be poor, the second likewise, but the third one is a Chinese. The catch is good, the girl entertains him with her dance, the Mandarin's desire is aroused, his love flares up, but the girl recoils from him. The thugs attack the Mandarin, rob him, smother him with pillows, stab him with a sword, all in vain, because the

Mandarin continues watching the girl with eyes full of love and yearning. Relying on her feminine ingenuity, the girl complies with the Mandarin's wish, whereupon he drops dead.

The structure of the Mandarin score is based on repeating patterns of three. The score is in three sections (the first up to the arrival of the Mandarin, the second the chase around the room, and the third the three attempts to murder the Mandarin, which do not succeed until he has kissed the girl. There are likewise three thugs, three seductions and three victims. The Mandarin is the third victim, the dance between the Mandarin and the girl forms the climax of the ballet.

The score for the Mandarin represented the summation of all that Bartók absorbed musically up to that point, including elements of Hungarian folk music, the use of multiple repetitions of rhythmic and melodic figures to create excitement, a highly peculiar tonality and innovatory scoring effects, contrasting woodwind soloists against tutti strings. Bartók prepared a suite because he became convinced that the work would never be staged and wanted to give the music some chance of an independent life.

The Introduction sets the scene, the buzzing monotony of the alien city, the embodiment of sin and inhumanity. The 6/8 pulse will also be the musical image of the three thugs, who are the inhuman city, personified. The curtain rises, three thugs search for money, finding none (short descending unison figures of semiquavers and quavers) the first orders the girl to stand at the window and lure in men whom they will rob. A solo clarinet beginning on a rising two note figures sings the song of seduction. Hushed trombone glissandi mark the arrival of the first victim, a shabby old Beau, the image of superficial adornment, heard in the oboe. The clarinet and oboe represent the initial dance of girl and victim, and as the cellos take over the thugs emerge, grab him, find he has no money and throw him down the stairs. The clarinet once again sings the song of seduction, with greater agitation, leading into bass and celli pizzicati in 5/4. This time the victim is a poor student, the girl is attracted to him, but he too has no money and is thrown out. The first thug now threatens the girl that the next victim must have something or she will suffer. This time the clarinet is very agitated, suddenly the girl steps back from the window, a low menacing tremolo is heard as the third victim slowly mounts the stairs and as the door opens to reveal the Mandarin, a silent, inscrutable figure richly dressed, the trombones erupt with tremendous glissandi in a pentatonic scale, emphasising the Mandarin’s remote alien quality.

The eruption subsides and the girl, very frightened, begins to dance in order to beguile and distract the mandarin. Other woodwind instruments join in gradually, over a nervous string accompaniment. The Mandarin is at first unresponsive, but his eyes remain fixed on the girl, gradually he becomes involved, and the music becomes a waltz as he begins to chase the girl round the room. Muted trumpets over string trills emphasise his increasing ardour, and the girl’s increasing fear. The Mandarin becomes more and more excited, and the dance becomes more powerful and frightening, over a stamping cell/bass line with the violins screaming in their highest register as he gives chase around the small room. The trombones burst in again, followed by the whole brass, as the thugs emerge from hiding and seize the Mandarin just has he is about to catch the girl.

The thugs strip the Mandarin of his possessions and attempt to suffocate him under pillows. The 6/8 music surges back, but the Mandarin resists, his face appears from under the pillow staring obsessively at the girl who recoils in fear. The thugs are terrified, seize a rusty sword and repeatedly stab the Mandarin. He almost falls, but breaks free and rushes at the girl, who flees round the room. The thugs grab the Mandarin, and attempt to hang him from a light fitting; the light falls, plunging the room into darkness, but his body begins to glow with eerie greenish-blue light. As the tramps hang the Mandarin from the lamp, the texture is blurred with glissandi on trombones, timpani, piano and cellos. The glowing body of the Mandarin is represented by the entry of a chorus singing wordlessly, once again in the interval of a minor third. The girl, still repulsed, finally realises what must happen, she tells the tramps to release the Mandarin, as they cut him down he leaps at the girl again, and this time she does not resist and they embrace. With the Mandarin's longing fulfilled, his wounds begin to bleed and he dies. The climax, as the girl embraces the Mandarin, is a theme given out fortissimo by the low brass against minor-second tremolos in the woodwinds, followed by soft chord. As the Mandarin begins to bleed, a final downward glissando, echoing his entry, is hear from double basses, the music collapses as the Mandarin crumples and dies.

Programme Notes by Dominic Nudd

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Lithuanian pianist **Milda Daunoraitė** has performed throughout Europe, with appearances at Wigmore Hall, the Spoleto Festival, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva. Her performances have been broadcast in more than 40 countries through Mezzo TV, Radio Classique and TV5 Monde. A prizewinner at numerous international competitions, including the V. Krainev Piano Competition and the Royal Academy of Music's 2023 Sterndale Bennett Piano Prize, she has given acclaimed solo and concerto performances worldwide.

Recent highlights include solo recitals at the Laeiszhalle and Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, the Biarritz Piano Festival, Deal Music & Arts Festival and the Petworth Festival. She recently performed Stravinsky's *Concerto for Piano and Winds* under the baton of Edward Gardner and will reprise the work in October with Joanna MacGregor and the Brighton Philharmonic. Following her success in The Purcell School Concerto Competition, she performed Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G major* at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. After being featured by EMCY, she also performed V. Bacevičius's *Piano Concerto No. 4* with the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra at the Lithuanian National Philharmonic, with the performance broadcast across Europe by Euroradio.

Milda is currently studying with Tessa Nicholson at the Royal Academy of Music, where she was recently awarded the Academy's prestigious Bicentenary Scholarship to support her postgraduate studies. Her musical development has been generously supported by The Munster Trust, Help Musicians, Keyboard Charitable Trust, Hattori Foundation, SOS Talents Foundation – MS, and the M. Rostropovich Foundation. She is also a participant in the Tillett Trust Debut Scheme, through which she will give concerts over the next two seasons.

An accomplished chamber musician, Milda has worked closely with distinguished artists including Barbara Hannigan and Levon Chilingirian, experiences that have enriched both her interpretative insight and collaborative artistry.

"Always surprising… dazzling" – David Nice, The Arts Desk

Jonathan Butcher has appeared at all the major London concert venues, including the Royal Albert Hall, Barbican, South Bank and St. John's Smith Square and has conducted orchestras including the London Mozart Players, Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra, English Symphony Orchestra, New London Orchestra, Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Bach Orchestra, working with international soloists including Dame Moira Lympany, Steven Isserlis, Marisa Robles, Julian Lloyd Webber and Peter Katin.

Abroad he has worked with the Promenade Orchestra of Radio Hilversum, Holland, the National Orchestra of Malta and the Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz. He has conducted two Hoffnung Concerts in Munich, as well as six New Year Concerts in and around Ludvigshaven, Germany, where he has also conducted a concert of film music with the renowned jazz singer Jocelyn B. Smith.

Equally at home with the symphonic, operatic, choral and music theatre repertoire, Jonathan has conducted and presented the Family Concerts at Polesden Lacey since their inception and regularly conducts their open-air Promenade Concerts. He was for many years Conductor and Musical Director of both the National Symphony and National Chamber Orchestras of the IAPS – the former giving their concerts in the celebrated Snape Maltings in Suffolk.

Jonathan is Musical Director of the Isle of Wight Symphony Orchestra and the Westminster Philharmonic Orchestra. He has been Artistic Director of Surrey Opera for some thirty-five years, is co-founder and Artistic Director of The North Downs Music Group, and directs two choirs at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Jonathan is an established Director in his own right, a role he has fulfilled numerous times for Surrey Opera.

The journalist and music critic Simon Heffer recently described the **Westminster Philharmonic Orchestra** as *"a first-class amateur orchestra"* and responding to our performance of George Lloyd's fourth symphony and Korngold's violin concerto, praised the WPO for *"a superb orchestral concert"*, highlighting that orchestras such as the WPO can be, and frequently are, adventurous in repertoire. In the more than fifty years since we were founded the WPO has built an impressive reputation as one of London's leading community orchestras, bringing together players of the highest standard from a wide geographical area for top quality music-making.

The WPO's bold repertoire has pushed the boundaries in all directions. In May 1998 we celebrated our Silver Anniversary with Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle,* with soloists Sue Bickley and Peter Sidhom, for which we also commissioned Howard Jones' *Thamesside Variations*, and for our Thirtieth Anniversary in November 2002 we performed Leonard Bernstein's extravagant *SongFest*, for six soloists and large orchestra. Our fiftieth anniversary season 2022-2023 included Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, the London premiere of Philip White's Cello Concerto and, astonishingly, only the third performance (the second in London) of the 5th Symphony by Ruth Gipps, neglected since 1983.

The WPO has maintained a strong thread of promoting less well known British music; we've played Granville Bantock's *Fifine at the Fair*, Arthur Bliss's *Checkmate* and *Things to Come*, George Lloyd's Cello Concerto, Bax's Sixth Symphony, both of Gerald Finzi's concertos (for Clarinet and Cello), the London premiere of David Hackbridge Johnson's acclaimed Ninth Symphony and at the instigation of our conductor Jonathan Butcher, much music of Samuel Coleridge Taylor. Our current season (2025-2026) includes Edward Gregson's Tuba Concerto and Ruth Gipps' Oboe Concerto.

We don't neglect the central repertoire and have covered Shostakovich's Symphonies nos. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Tippett's *Ritual Dances*, all three of Elgar's Symphonies, Mahler's Symphonies nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 and Vaughan Williams' *Job – a masque for dancing*.

With the Islington Choral Society we presented a rare performance of Elgar's *The Kingdom*, and with the Combined Hertfordshire Choirs, we have appeared four times at the Royal Albert Hall in aid of the British Council for the Prevention of Blindness, performing Britten's *War Requiem* in 1994, Mahler's *Symphony of a Thousand* in 1999, the Verdi *Requiem* in 2003, and Berlioz' *Grande Messe des Morts* in 2007.

Looking to the future we have plans for *Saint-Saens Organ Symphony* and Richard Strauss's *An Alpine Symphony* – but not on the same evening!

Please see the following page for the remainder of this season's programme.

The Westminster Philharmonic Orchestra 2026-27 Season

Saturday 12th December 2026, 7.30 pm, St. John's Waterloo

Britten	Five Courtly Dances from *"Gloriana"*
R. Strauss	Alpine Symphony

Saturday 27th February 2027, 7.30 pm, St. John's Waterloo

Korngold	Suite *"The Sea Hawk"*
Dvořák	Violin Concerto
Rimsky-Korsakov	Scheherazade

Saturday 17th April 2027, 7.30 pm, St. Mildred's, Addiscombe, Croydon
New Organ Celebration Concert

Handel/Elgar	Overture in D minor
Parry	Blest Pair of Sirens
Hackbridge Johnson	Organ Concerto (World premiere)
Saint-Saëns	Symphony No. 3 ("Organ")

Saturday 22nd May 2027, 7.30 pm, St. John's Waterloo

Glinka	Overture *"Russlan & Ludmilla"*
Saint-Saëns	Cello Concerto
Shostakovich	Symphony No.11

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Jess Prew
Margaret Ellerby
Kim Horwood
Katie Kinnear
Tim Cattermole
Anna Saprykina
Janet Davies
Li-Hsin Chang
Mike Malone
Rowan Staden-Coats

Violin 2
Siobhan Gee *
Deborah Elliott
Maggie Johnson
Margaret Williams
Amanda Frost
Amy Clamp
Grace Chen
Ange Levesque
Teresa Oscar
Riya Wadhwa

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Jonathan Welch *
Christopher Burr
Janet Davies
Alex Hewett
Belinda Kembery
Nicola Nathan
Kate Ryle
Dugan Warn

Cello
Fran Freer *
Richard Hogwood
Daniel Kellett
Francesca Carver
Jemma Clamp
Alan Garriock
Gabby Tewson
Mydie Herz
Rebecca Sackmann-Smith

Double Bass
Mafalda Ribeiro #
Dominic Nudd
Karter Williams
Alex Shaper
Susannah Rance

Flute
Kieran Boon-Hughes *
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Piccolo
Geraldine Marshall *
Meg Storer

Oboe
Charlie Brennan #
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Cor Anglais
Anna Westrop *

Clarinet
Alison Downie *
Hannah Stephens

Bass Clarinet
Rita Porzi

Bassoon
Stephen Greengrass *
Lou Emmel
Philip Le Bas

Horn
Adrian Wheeler *
Derek Holland
Dwight Pile-Gray
Simon Ashdown

Trumpet
Barry Yardley *
Nick Hingley
Dan Greenlagh
Matthew Gibbs

Trombone
Mark Horton #
Mark Walters
Matt Harvey

Bass Tuba
Roland Marshall

Harp
Heather Brooks

Celeste
Carolyn Jaya Ratnam

Piano
Jack Stone

Organ
John Halsey

Timpani
Richard Souper *

Percussion
Milligan Coles Power
Christian Aldridge
Lewis Blackwood
Eric Zhang
Ellis Hollows

* Principal
# Guest Principal

Miraculous Mandarin Chorus

Soprano
Annie Griffiths
Gillian Robbins
Ros Bell
Siobhan Gee
Tse Wun Michelle Wong

Alto
Rosamund Tomlins
Tanya Forward
Catherine Minns
Diana Leadbetter
Sheena Jibowu

Tenor
András Bércesi-Hales,
Frank Norman
Joshua Carpenter

Bass
James Robbins
Rowan Marshall

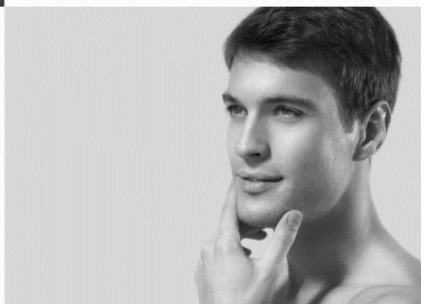


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