

## Cellist Raphael Wallfisch performs Finzi's Cello Concerto at opening concert of the 2015 English Music Festival following release of new Hungarian CD



**22 May 2015**  
**Dorchester Abbey**  
**English Music Festival**

**BBC Concert Orchestra**  
**Martin Yates conductor**  
**Raphael Wallfisch cello**

### Programme:

**HUBERT PARRY** *Jerusalem*  
**RICHARD ARNELL** Overture *The New Age* (**UK premiere**)

**FREDERICK DELIUS** *Three Short Tone Poems*  
**RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS** *Bucolic Suite*  
**GEORGE BUTTERWORTH** *Fantasia for Orchestra*  
(completed & orchestrated by Martin Yates)  
**GERALD FINZI** *Cello Concerto*

*"The performances are quite outstandingly eloquent, the sound sumptuous and true"* - Gramophone Magazine

Firmly positioned at the forefront of championing British music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, renowned cellist **Raphael Wallfisch** performs **Gerald Finzi's Cello Concerto in A minor**, a piece with which Wallfisch has a profound personal attachment, at **Dorchester Abbey** with the **BBC Concert Orchestra** on 22 May in the opening concert of the 2015 **English Music Festival**. The concert includes the **UK premiere** of Richard Arnell's Overture *The New Age*.

Wallfisch's recording of the Finzi Cello Concerto with the **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra** on **Chandos** released in 1986 is widely recognised as the seminal recording of the work. BBC Radio 3's CD Review hailed Wallfisch as "*a superb soloist*" who "*gets to the warm heart of this work.*" Wallfisch performed the concerto at the 2001 BBC Proms with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales conducted by Richard Hickox.

As Wallfisch explains:

*"I have had the opportunity during the course of my career, to explore and rediscover real gems of our repertoire by over 40 British composers. The Elgar Cello Concerto has become the most popular British cello concerto thanks to the amazing work of Jacqueline du Pre, but I feel the Finzi concerto outdoes the Elgar both in technical challenges and emotional purpose."*

Although best known as a **choral composer**, Finzi also wrote some large-scale works including his concertos for cello and clarinet. The **Cello Concerto**, written during the composer's terminal illness, is the **last major work** he ever wrote, with its first performance broadcast on live radio the night before he died in 1956. The premiere was given by a close family friend of the Wallfisch family, the cellist **Christopher Bunting** with the **Hallé Orchestra** conducted by **John Barbirolli**. A member of the Finzi Trust, Wallfisch actively championed the Cello Concerto and is the editor of the Boosey & Hawkes edition. In addition, Wallfisch performed at Gerald Finzi's wife Joy's memorial service at Ashmansworth Church in 1991.

Em Marshall-Luck, Founder-Director of The English Music Festival explains:

*“The English Music Festival is delighted to welcome celebrated cellist Raphael Wallfisch to perform Finzi’s Cello Concerto with the BBC Concert Orchestra in our opening night concert. The Cello Concerto is a substantial work, demanding for soloist not just in terms of technical ability but also emotional input - it is a work that fully represents the best of English music in its searing passion, and broad range of emotions from exhilaration, nobility and resolve through to gentle tenderness and heart-breaking sorrow. This is life-enhancing music at its most powerful.”*

## **New CD Release: Hungarian Cello Concertos (Nimbus Records)**

**Release date: 2 March 2015**

**NI 5918**



### **Repertoire:**

**Mátyás Seiber (1905-1960)**

Tre Pezzi for Cello and Orchestra

**(premiere recording)**

**Antal Doráti (1906-1988)**

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra

**(premiere recording)**

**Béla Bartók (1881-1945)**

Viola Concerto

This coincides with the 2 March release of Wallfisch’s latest CD of Hungarian Cello Concertos by composers Mátyás Seiber, Antal Doráti and Béla Bartók on Nimbus Records with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Hungarian conductor Gábor Takács.

Last year, Wallfisch added to a staggering discography of over 80 CDs with the release of an album of **British music for cello and piano** on Naxos with pianist Raphael Terroni which was The Strad Magazine’s recommended CD of the month. Reviewer Joanne Talbot commented **“Raphael Wallfisch is the right cellist to bring this repertoire to a wider audience.”** In 2013 Wallfisch gave a performance of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British composer Sir Granville Bantock’s *Sapphic Poem* at the BBC Proms. The Evening Standard concluded that Wallfisch **“enchanted his audience with the cello’s delightfully mournful tones.”**

In 2014, Wallfisch released a disc of Jewish music including Bloch’s *Schelomo* with his son Benjamin Wallfisch conducting the **BBC National Orchestra of Wales** on the Nimbus label. The CD received excellent reviews with The Arts Desk describing it as a **“marvellous anthology.”**

### **Recent Press Quotes:**

*“Soloist Raphael Wallfisch enchanted his audience with the cello’s delightfully mournful tones.”* - Evening Standard

*“There is some exquisite music-making here; the Welsh players excel in Bloch’s Voice in the Wilderness and Schelomo, underpinning Raphael’s gloriously rich, sonorous solo lines.”* - The Observer

*“Raphael Wallfisch played it as though he really believed in it ...”* - Guardian

*“Wallfisch was gloriously equal to its demands ... his first movement became an unfolding of the most gripping, characterful, spontaneous sort”* - Financial Times

*“Raphael brings impressive colour and characterisation to the cello part - bold, dramatic and magically sensitive”* - The Strad

*“Raphael Wallfisch was a superlative cello soloist. Performances as brilliant as this can “make” a piece.”* - Classical Iconoclast

Upcoming highlights include...

**Sunday 22 March** | Brighton Dome, UK  
**Walton Cello Concerto No. 1**  
Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra  
Raphael Wallfisch *cello*  
Barry Wordsworth *conductor*

**Sunday 12 April** | Royce Hall, Los Angeles  
**Tchaikovsky: Roco Variations**  
West LA Symphony Orchestra  
Raphael Wallfisch *cello*  
Benjamin Wallfisch *conductor*

**Wednesday 13 May** | Birmingham Town Hall, UK  
**Dvorak: Rondon, Silent Woods, Cello Concerto**  
Orchestra of the Swan  
Raphael Wallfisch *cello*  
David Curtis *conductor*

**Friday 22 May** | English Music Festival  
**Finzi Cello Concerto**  
BBC Concert Orchestra  
Raphael Wallfisch *cello*  
Martin Yates *conductor*

**Wednesday 17 June** | Temple Church, London  
**All Bach Solo Suites**  
Raphael Wallfisch *cello*

**Tuesday 04 August** | Concertgebouw, Amsterdam  
**Debussy, Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms**  
Raphael Wallfisch *cello*  
John York *piano*

## Raphael Wallfisch

*“Wallfisch was a superb soloist.”* - Guardian

With a prolific discography and concert appearances with many of the world’s greatest orchestras and conductors, Raphael Wallfisch is at the height of his powers as a performer. With a masterful technique and a soaring, singing sound that evokes a tradition continued from his teacher, Piatigorsky, he can now claim to be the most recorded contemporary cellist and perhaps the most recorded British string player in history.



Wallfisch was born into a family of distinguished musicians, his father the pianist Peter Wallfisch and his mother the cellist Anita Lasker-Wallfisch who, having survived Auschwitz is one of the founding members of the English Chamber Orchestra. Wallfisch’s son, Benjamin, is swiftly making a name for himself as a sought-after composer and conductor, having studied in London with Charles

Mackerras and Vernon Handley. Benjamin composes film music and currently works in Hollywood.

Recently he has performed with the Auckland Philharmonia, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Vancouver Symphony, Västerås Sinfonietta and BBC Philharmonic as well as the London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Warsaw Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic and many others. A popular visitor to major music festivals worldwide, he has played at the BBC Proms, the Edinburgh International, Aldeburgh, Spoleto, Prades, Bergen International, Montpellier, Pablo Casals, Wratistavia Cantans and Schleswig-Holstein Festivals. Wallfisch celebrated his 60th birthday in 2013, marked with a host of prolific recording releases and concert appearances.

As a performer and recording artist, perhaps more than any other cellist Wallfisch has championed British music, releasing critically-acclaimed recordings of works by MacMillan, Finzi, Delius, Bax, Bliss, Britten, Moeran and Leighton. Many of Britain's leading composers have worked closely with Raphael Wallfisch, several having written works especially for him. These include Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Kenneth Leighton, James MacMillan, Paul Patterson, John Joubert, Robert Simpson and Sir John Tavener. Raphael Wallfisch's extensive discography includes recordings of both the mainstream concerto repertoire - many widely considered to be benchmark performances - and countless lesser-known works by Dohnanyi, Respighi, and Martinu, as well as Richard Strauss, Dvorak, Kabalevsky and Khachaturian.

Raphael Wallfisch plays a 1760 Gennaro Gagliano cello and the 1865 Vuillaume "Sheremetev".

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