

LANGTREE SINFONIA
ORCHESTRAL WORKSHOP

Jean Sibelius

(Johan Julius Christian Sibelius)

Symphony No. 1 in E minor op 39



**EYE AND DUNSDEN VILLAGE HALL, DUNSDEN GREEN,
OXON, RG4 9QG**

SATURDAY 8th MARCH 2025

9.30am - 4.30pm

£ 15.00 Tea / coffee / included

**For further details contact :-
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or www.langtreesinfonia.co.uk**



When the great Finnish composer Jean Sibelius met his Austrian contemporary Gustav Mahler in 1907, the two discussed symphonic form. Sibelius stated that what he admired most was the ‘profound logic’ by which the symphony connected musical ideas. Mahler disagreed. The symphony, he insisted, must be like the world: ‘It must embrace everything’.

Sibelius was born to a cultivated, middle-class, Swedish-speaking family in a provincial town. He began to learn Finnish when his mother enrolled him at a Finnish-speaking grammar school – the country’s first – at the age of 11. He was soon enthralled by the Nordic poets Johan Runeberg and Viktor Rydberg’s stories from the national folk epic, the Kalevala. He also fell in love with the spacious Finnish landscape, with its seemingly endless forests and lakes and much of this love of nature can be felt in much of his music.

While the first movement’s haunting introductory clarinet solo sets a mood more important is the drum roll which follows. This is the first of many long held notes within the symphony.

While the slow movement, and in particular the wistful ending, reveals fingerprints of the mature Sibelius the third movement seems to combine the power of Beethoven with the harmonic style of Bruckner.

After a reprise of the clarinet opening the finale blazes forth culminating in an anthem-like peroration suggesting fervent Finnish nationalism. Finally, though, there are terse chords from the brass and wind then two pizzicato chords from the strings. Perhaps a question mark rather than a full stop ?



Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland

