



THE COMPOSER IN QUESTION
SIBELIUS AT 150

TUESDAY 5 MAY

One of the most haunting melodies in the entire history of music is that of the cor anglais solo in Sibelius' 'Swan of Tuonela'. But few know the magical story that lies behind the song of the swan, or the stories behind its composer Jean Sibelius, whose 150th anniversary we celebrate in 2015. His music, evocative of the beautiful, bird-filled watery landscapes of Finland, lies at the heart of Finnish identity. Coming to find Wagner pompous and vulgar, Sibelius found inspiration in Bruckner and Tchaikovsky and became the greatest rival to Mahler in symphonic composition. They agreed to differ while having a bath together. Many feel that it was Sibelius rather than Mahler who was the last master in the grand Beethoven symphonic tradition. Finlandia and the Violin Concerto would be enough on their own to ensure Sibelius' place in the pantheon of western composers. He once remarked 'Pay no attention to critics. No statue has ever been put up to a critic.'

MEET 10.30 am coffee for 11 am lecture at Pushkin Society

ENDS 3.30 pm Pushkin Society

COST £85 members, £95 non-members, including coffee, light lunch with wine