

Power cut forces Edinburgh LPO concert cancellation

DAVID KETTLE

The London Philharmonic Orchestra's Edinburgh International Festival concert on 14 August was cancelled following a power cut in the Usher Hall, the city's main concert venue. Nearly 1,500 concertgoers were left standing outside the hall as the event's 8pm start time came and went, before stewards began informing the crowds that the performance would no longer take place. The concert was due to have been an all-Russian programme, with Rachmaninov's *The Bells* as its centrepiece, featuring the massed forces of the LPO, the Edinburgh Festival Chorus and three soloists, conducted by Vladimir Jurowski.

A spokesperson for the Usher Hall said: 'There were intermittent problems with the power from around 6pm, with it going off

completely around 7pm. Electricians tried to fix the problem on site until it was established that it was to do with the power supply coming into the building. Once early efforts to fix the problem failed, the performance had to be cancelled.'

The decision to cancel the concert was taken by the Usher Hall management, with the LPO's agreement. An LPO spokesperson said: 'The players and management were of course disappointed, but we feel that the EIF and the Usher Hall did everything they could to deal with the situation.'

The concert will not be rescheduled for another Edinburgh performance, as a spokesperson for the Edinburgh International Festival explained: 'Every night is already programmed and unfortunately there won't

be an opportunity to reschedule the concert within the festival this year.'

The EIF event in the Usher Hall the following evening – a concert performance of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* from Welsh National Opera – went ahead as planned, and the EIF remains confident that no further performances will be affected. However, Karl Chapman, the Usher Hall's general manager, sounded a note of caution: 'The root cause remains unclear, so we are continuing to work with engineers and doing everything we can to make sure the situation is completely resolved. We remain confident that other performances can go ahead as planned but are working on back-up plans in case we have a repeat of the problem.' It was reported that a back-up generator had been obtained, although this was not confirmed by the Usher Hall or EIF.

The EIF has thanked audience members for their understanding, and full refunds are being offered for all tickets sold. London audiences have the chance to hear the same programme at the Royal Festival Hall on 29 September.