

Spring Concert



Saturday 23 March 2019

Deddington Church

Programme Free



Concert Dates for Your Diary

Banbury Chamber Orchestra

Sunday 19th May 2019

Pelléas and Mélisande – Sibelius

Fugal Concerto for Flute and Oboe – Holst

Symphony No 98 – Haydn

3.30 pm – Hook Norton Church

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Autumn Concert

Saturday 23rd November 2019

Overture *Der Freischütz* – Weber

Piano Concerto in A minor – Grieg

Symphony No 6 – Bruckner

7:30 pm – Deddington Church

Tickets from

banburysymphony.org

Welcome to St. Peter & St. Paul Deddington

The Banbury Symphony Orchestra welcomes the spring, with a concert of four characterful pieces of music by English composers.

Gustav Holst wrote his short **Fugal Overture** in 1922, a composition which features spiky syncopations which add to the excitement he generates in the piece.

Nicholas Barton is a local Oxfordshire composer, having taught music to Paul Willett, the Banbury Symphony Orchestra's current conductor. His orchestral piece, **Accord**, was written especially with the orchestra in mind.

Frederick Delius wrote his fantasy overture **Over the Hills and Far Away** in the late 1890s, while the composer was living in Paris. Despite living much of his life abroad, Delius's unique musical style has always evoked strong echoes of English pastoral scenes. The orchestra would like to acknowledge the kind support of the Delius Trust for our Delius performance tonight.

After the interval, the orchestra will perform **Elgar's Enigma Variations**, that quintessential expression of England and English friendships. We would like in this concert to play **Enigma Variations** in honour of the memory of our previous colleague and friend **Geoffrey Kent**, who died early in 2018. Geoff was a stalwart member of the BSO violin section for many years and the orchestra's previous leader.

We'd love to have your feedback! Let us know what you thought of our concert by filling in our very quick survey. See the internet link, or scan the QR code below.

Ian McCubbin
Chair, BSO

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/VX2SNTW



Programme

Fugal Overture – Holst

Over the Hills and Far Away - Delius

Accord – Barton

Interval

Variations on an Original Theme (“Enigma Variations”) – Elgar

Enigma	Andante
C.A.E.	L'istesso tempo
H.D.S.-P.	Allegro
R.B.T.	Allegro
W.M.B.	Allegro di molto
R.P.A.	Moderato
Ysobel	Andantino
Troyte	Presto
W.N.	Allegretto
Nimrod	Adagio
Dorabella	Intermezzo: Allegretto
G.R.S.	Allegro di molto
B.G.N.	Andante—A tempo
***	Romanza: Moderato
E.D.U.	Finale: Allegro

Paul Willett – Conductor

Paul Willett is our Conductor and Musical Director. Paul studied violin, singing and piano as a student but his main instrument was the French horn on which he gained his Performance Diploma from The Royal College of Music at the age of 16. He then went on to read music on scholarship at The Queen's College, Oxford, and studied for his teaching certificate in Music and Physical Education at Reading University.

For several years Paul combined teaching and freelance playing. He has given solo recitals and performed concertos throughout the country. He was a member of The Five Winds, a group that performed both at home and abroad, and also on BBC radio. Paul worked as a brass teacher for Oxfordshire Music Service and was director of a Saturday Music School of 200 students.

Paul is currently the Director of Didcot Sixth Form and he continues his music making conducting various ensembles, both adult and youth.



Anna Fleming - Leader



Anna was born in South Africa where she started playing the violin at the age of ten. While studying music at secondary school, Anna became a member of the South African National Youth Orchestra. After successfully completing her music degree, majoring in orchestral studies, Anna joined the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra in 1992.

Anna moved to England in late 1996. Keen to continue her orchestral playing, Anna joined the Banbury Symphony Orchestra in 1997 and became the leader of the orchestra in 2000, a post that she has held ever since. As a committed Christian, Anna plays an active role in church music. Focusing primarily on private violin tuition, Anna particularly enjoys helping adults to learn to play and she can be contacted on 01295 780017.

Nicholas Barton (b 1950)

Nicholas Barton was born in North Walsham Norfolk and his early musical career was as a classical guitarist. Holding a BBC contract, he made solo appearances on Look East, the first at the age of 14. He completed his education with a BA degree from Colchester Institute and an MMus from Reading University. In 1976 he took up a teaching post at Matthew Arnold School Oxford becoming Head of Department three years later until taking early retirement in 2006 and moving back to Norfolk.

Whilst in Oxford he divided his time between teaching, composing and conducting. He was the principal conductor of the Isis Chamber Orchestra from 1993-2001 and composed widely for his school and other groups. With County Council funds he fulfilled commissions from the County Youth Orchestra, on three occasions, the Oxford Concerto Orchestra, two pieces and the Youth Chamber Choir.

Since moving back to Norfolk he has formed a close working relationship with the Keswick Hall Choir, one of the best amateur choir in the area. He is now working on his third commission for them.

He has had performances at major London venues and abroad. His music is published by Spartan Press and Bardic Editions.



Banbury Symphony Orchestra would like to acknowledge the kind support provided by the Delius Trust towards the costs of this concert. The Delius Trust was set up in 1935 to promote the works of the composer, Frederick Delius, and other British composers born since 1860.

Fugal Overture

Gustav Holst

It is impossible to discuss A Fugal Overture without a brief note about the woman to whom it is dedicated. The score is inscribed "To J.M.J." This refers to Jane M. Joseph (1894-1929) who was a pupil and protégé of Holst. Holst stated that she was "the best girl pupil I ever had." Holst relied on her in several capacities, from about 1916 onward, whenever he suffered from neuritis. She prepared vocal scores, advised him on translations from Greek, and when he was ill she taught for him. In addition, she helped with the production of Holst's choral ballets and wrote at least one libretto for him. Holst was devastated by her early death from kidney failure.

This exuberant five-minute work is characterized by a consistent tempo written in 4/4 meter with constant and simultaneous displacement of eighth note groups within each measure. The three-measure opening features sleigh bells, which serves as a unifying factor over the various eighth note groups. The fugal theme is presented by the cellos and basses beginning in measure four. This fugal subject continues with the opening rhythm but there is now a staccato tune. The subject, like the opening, continues for three measures and is answered by the violas beginning on the low C string. Rather than having

another entrance of the fugal subject, Holst delays the return of the subject by two beats. Meanwhile, the cellos and then basses, and then bassoons begin a countersubject that will be expanded. It is the cellos that present the subject for a third time, but delay the entrance by two beats. The answer (beginning on C) is heard in the second violins, now on the third beat of the measure. At rehearsal figure 2 the first violins enter with the subject (beginning on F) on the first beat. Holst begins to develop the theme at this time by the use of pizzicato in the other string instruments. Beginning at rehearsal number 3 there is a return and development of the opening eighth-note rhythmic figure. Up to rehearsal 4 we have only parts, fragments, even shards of melodies and tunes, all interrupting one another as if vying for supremacy.

At rehearsal figure 4 a full-fledged theme finally emerges forte in the trombones and this theme dominates the rest of the work. It is played by different instruments and sections but is now a memorable, "catchy" tune and appears in its basically complete form after this. At rehearsal figure 5 there is a sudden cessation followed by a pianissimo transition which begins pizzicato in the lowest strings. This leads to the middle section of the piece that is marked *meno mosso*. It is only six and a half measures long, and is scored for four solo strings. This serves as an interruption of the action, where nothing actually happens but immediately at rehearsal 7 the

process starts over again, beginning with the string basses. This time the full-fledged theme appears in the piccolo only eight measures into this “recapitulation”.

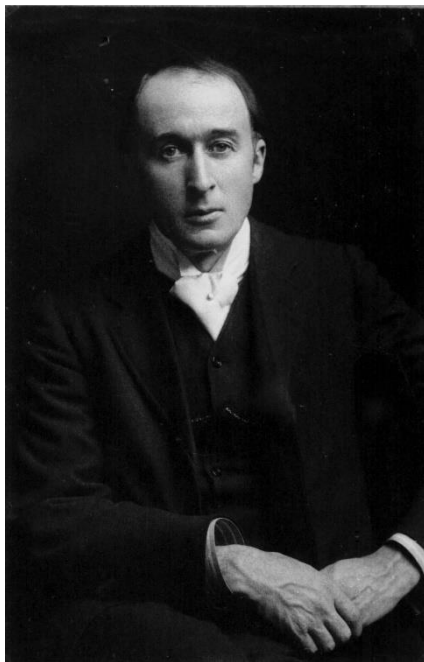
The theme is tossed back and forth around the orchestra in lighthearted fashion and remains in the key of C except for several loud and jarring intrusions of G flat major by the brass. However, C major refuses to be displaced and has the final say. The overture ends with a vigorous C major outburst on an offbeat.

The work is not strictly fugal, but is based upon thematic and rhythmic motifs that are treated in a fugal or quasi-fugal fashion. Its most distinctive characteristic is the constant eighth note feeling, on top of which is superimposed various rhythms comprised of these eighth notes, creating the effect of a finely-wrought rhythmic puzzle, all in the key of C.

Over the Hills and Far Away

Frederick Delius

This “fantasy overture” is a product of English composer Frederick Delius’ rather Bohemian decade spent in Paris, having previously completed his formal music studies in Leipzig after a stint as an orange farmer in Florida(!) Possibly begun as early as 1893, it received its premiere in Germany in 1897 and was



first played in London two years later. It shows the influence of Richard Wagner in some of its more chromatic moments and a section strongly reminiscent of the music linked to the river Rhine in the overture to the first opera Wagner’s Ring Cycle.

This performance has been kindly supported by The Delius Trust.

Accord

Nicholas Barton

This piece, written especially for the Banbury Symphony Orchestra and dedicated to Paul Willett, has been in gestation for over 10 years, the result of a conversation I had with Paul just before retiring from teaching and leaving

Oxfordshire in 2006. I have known Paul for many years from when he was one of my A level students at Matthew Arnold School. He later conducted my youth orchestra music on several occasions.

After three or four abortive attempts to start the piece, one day doodling on the piano I played a chord that suggested harmonic possibilities for development. As I worked on the piece, notwithstanding the awful pun, the concept of 'accord' came to mind, diverse elements searching for harmony and resolution. The diverse elements are, high harmonies of bare 5ths and lower ones based on 3rds, rising scale figures and descending ones, triplet rhythms against duple and conflicting tonal centres.

The piece lasts about 16 minutes and is in two halves, with all sections linked metrically. After the opening chord and rising figures in clarinets and trumpets the music leads to a climax of jagged chords. Then a rhythmic motto motive of three notes, hinted at earlier, played by horns and timpani becomes a unifying cell both melodically and harmonically. After further developments the music eventually reaches the central climax where triads of C major and B are pitted against each other and the violins wind their way up to the highest register.

At this point the second half starts and the music becomes more lyrical. A theme, developed from earlier flute music, starts in the piccolo. It is treated

fugally and winds its way down to be combined with elements previously heard. After further developments the music reaches another rhythmic climax and eventually resolves on a soft C major chord: the tonality searched for throughout the piece.

The closing elegy is a personal tribute to the conductor and his love of 19th century music, as the fugal theme is presented in music, unashamedly showing the influence of Mahler.

I had just started the second half of the piece when my mother died and my father passed away four months after the piece was finished so this performance is dedicated to them as well.

Variations on an Original Theme

("Enigma Variations")

Edward Elgar

Elgar was born in Broadheath, near Worcester, England on June 2, 1857; he died in Worcester on February 23, 1934. Sketches for the Enigma Variations date from the fall of 1898. The work was completed on February 19, 1899. Hans Richter conducted the first performance on June 19, 1898 in London. Elgar subsequently revised the work, extending the finale. Revisions were completed by July 12, 1899.

Elgar's *Enigma Variations* was his first major work. It was, in fact, the first important large orchestral piece by a British composer ever. The piece served to bring English orchestral music into international prominence, just in time for the 20th century.

It is fitting that the *Variations* should be known as *Enigma*, since several mysteries surrounded it at its first performance. In the program note for the premiere, Elgar excited his listeners' curiosity with one puzzle.

The enigma I will not explain—its 'dark



saying' must be left unguessed, and I warn you that the apparent connection between the *Variations* and the Theme is often of the slightest texture; further, through and over the whole set another and larger theme 'goes,' but is not played.... So the principal Theme never appears, even as in some late dramas—e.g., Maeterlinck's *L'Intruse* and *Les sept*

princesses—the chief character is never on the stage.

People have been wondering about the identity of the enigma theme past the point where it matters. Some scholars suggested that Elgar meant by "theme" not a melody but rather a programmatic or philosophic idea. His friends, however, insisted that there was a real tune involved. The composer told the secret to only three people, all of whom carried it to their graves. Late in his life Elgar admitted that the theme "was so well known that it was strange no one had discovered it." This statement prompted several musicians to try to fit popular melodies contrapuntally to the variation theme. Tunes from Wagner, Mozart, Chopin and Leoncavallo were found to work, as were "God Save the Queen," "Pop Goes the Weasel" and "Auld Lang Syne." One friend of the composer, who knew well Elgar's penchant for puzzles and practical jokes, suggested that he was merely playing a joke on posterity by claiming that there was a hidden melody when, in fact, there was none. If this suggestion is true, then Elgar may be congratulated on having successfully led generations of musicologists on a wild-goose chase.

There is a second enigma. Since the composer did disclose the programmatic reference of each variation, just what is the meaning of the theme? Elgar did eventually concede, although not publicly, that he was himself the subject

of the theme. Actually, as Elgar's biographer Michael Kennedy points out, the opening four notes of the theme seem a natural setting of the syllables "Ed-ward El-gar." Furthermore, in his later work *The Music Makers*, Elgar quotes this theme to illustrate the loneliness of the creative artist.

A third enigma concerns the identities of the friends depicted in the Variations. The score is dedicated to "my friends pictured within." As he was finishing the work, Elgar wrote:

I just completed a set of Symphonic Variations (theme original) for orchestra—thirteen in number (but I call the finale the fourteenth, because of the ill fate attaching to the number). I have in the Variations sketched portraits of my friends—a new idea, I think—that is, in each Variation I have looked at the theme through the personality (as it were) of another Johnny.

Each variation is prefaced by the initials or nickname of the friend whom it depicts. When the work was new, Elgar refused to disclose who the individual friends were, thereby compounding the mysteries. He subsequently did publish an extensive explanation, however:

Theme. Enigma (Andante). Since the theme is an "enigma," Elgar offers no explanation.

Variation 1. C.A.E. (Andante).

The composer's wife, C. Alice Elgar, is portrayed in "a prolongation of the theme with what I wished to be romantic and delicate additions."

Variation 2. H.D.S.-P. (Allegro).

The friend is Hew David Steuart-Powell, a pianist with whom Elgar used to play chamber music. "His characteristic diatonic run over the keys before beginning to play is here humorously travestied in the semiquaver passages; these should suggest a Toccata, but chromatic beyond H.D.S.-P.'s liking."

Variation 3. R.B.T. (Allegretto).

This variation is a caricature of Richard Baxter Townshend, whose deeply resonant bass voice is portrayed by the bassoon. The variation refers to "R.B.T.'s presentation of an old man in some amateur theatricals—the low voice flying off occasionally into 'soprano' timbre."

Variation 4. W.M.B. (Allegro di molto).

The subject is William Neath Baker, "a country squire, gentleman, and scholar. In the days of horses and carriages, it was more difficult than in these days of petrol to arrange the carriages for the day to suit a large number of guests. The Variation was written after the host had, with a slip of paper in his hand, forcibly read out the arrangements for the day and hurriedly left the music-room with an inadvertent bang of the door...."

[There] are some suggestions of the teasing attitude of the guests.”

Variation 5. R.P.A. (Moderato).

Richard Penrose Arnold was the son of poet Matthew Arnold. The younger Arnold “was a great lover of music, which he played (on the pianoforte) in a self-taught manner, evading difficulties but suggesting in a mysterious way the real feeling. His serious conversation was continually broken up by whimsical and witty remarks.

Variation 6. Ysobel (Andantino).

This was Elgar’s nickname for Isabel Fitton, who studied violin with Elgar. She switched to viola—hence the prominence of that instrument in this variation. The opening “is an ‘exercise’ for crossing the strings—a difficulty for beginners.” The composer was fully aware of Ysobel’s charms and quite taken with her beauty, so that the variation is “pensive and, for a moment, romantic.”

Variation 7. Troyte (Presto).

Arthur Troyte Griffith was an architect who had a gift for saying the unexpected—hence the cross-rhythms in his variation. This section is not so much a portrait as a remembrance of Troyte’s “maladroit essays to play the pianoforte; later the strong rhythm suggests the attempts of the instructor (E.E.) to make something like order out of chaos, and the final despairing ‘slam’

records that the effort proved to be in vain.”

Variation 8. W.N. (Allegretto).

Winifred Norbury and her sister Florence were music lovers. Winifred was employed as a secretary to the Worcester Philharmonic Society. “The gracious personalities of the ladies are sedately shown. W.N. was more connected with music than others of the family, and her initials head the movement; to justify this position a little suggestion of a characteristic laugh is given.”

Variation 9. Nimrod (Adagio).

Nimrod was a hunter, and the German word for “hunter” is Jäger. Elgar is depicting his friend, the critic August J. Jaeger. “Something ardent and mercurial, in addition to the slow movement, would have been needed to portray the character and temperament of A.J. Jaeger. The Variation...is the record of a long summer evening talk, when my friend discoursed eloquently on the slow movements of Beethoven and said that no one could approach Beethoven at his best in this field, a view with which I cordially concurred. It will be noticed that the opening bars are made to suggest the slow movement of the Eighth Sonata (Pathétique).”

Variation 10. Dorabella (Intermezzo: Allegretto).

Dora Penny was a close friend whom Elgar nicknamed Dorabella, from the Mozart opera *Così fan tutte*. “The movement suggests a dance-like lightness.” Dorabella wrote an entire book on the Enigma Variations and the people portrayed therein.

Variation 11. G.R.S. (Allegro di molto).

The subject is George Robert Sinclair, a cathedral organist. Some injustice is done, Elgar notes, since the variation has “nothing to do with organs or cathedrals or, except remotely, with G.R.S. The first few bars were suggested by his great bulldog Dan (a well-known character) falling down the steep bank into the River Wye...his paddling up stream to find a landing place...and his rejoicing bark on landing.... G.R.S. said, ‘Set that to music.’ I did; here it is.”

Variation 12. B.G.N. (Andante).

Basil G. Nevinson was an amateur cellist and a member of a trio with Elgar and H.D.S.-P. “The Variation is a tribute to a very dear friend whose scientific and artistic attainments, and the wholehearted way they were put at the disposal of his friends, particularly endeared him to the writer.” Predictably, the variation includes a wonderful cello solo.

Variation 13. * * * (Romanza: Moderato).

“The asterisks take the place of the name of a lady who was, at the time of

composition, on a sea voyage. The drums suggest the distant throb of the engines of a liner over which the clarinet quotes a phrase from Mendelssohn’s *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*.” The timpani were supposed to be played with snare drum sticks, but at the first rehearsal the timpanist tried using coins instead, and Elgar liked the sound. The mysterious woman was Lady Mary Lygon, who was on her way to Australia when Elgar wanted to ask her permission to use her initials.

Variation 14. E.D.U. (Finale: Allegro).

E.D.U. stands for “Edoo,” Alice Elgar’s pet name for the composer. He paints himself “bold and vigorous in general style.” Just before the first overt restatement of the original theme, the woodwinds play a phrase which is also hidden in Alice’s variation. Elgar used to whistle this tune as his special signal to Alice. The Nimrod variation is also recalled.

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

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