

Autumn Concert

Saturday 26 November 2016

Deddington Church

Programme Free



Concert Dates for Your Diary

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Spring Concert

Saturday 18th March 2017

Maskarade – Nielsen

Francesca da Rimini – Tchaikovsky

Symphony No.1 – Mahler

7:30 pm – Deddington Church

Banbury Chamber Orchestra

Concert

Sunday 21st May 2017

Classical Symphony – Prokofiev

Overture, The Marriage of Figaro – Mozart

Toy Symphony – Haydn

German Dances – Schubert arr. Webern

Hook Norton Church

banburysymphony.org/tickets

Hello and welcome to Deddington Church for our evening of Scandinavian music.

We start our concert with the deservedly popular Finlandia that most of us know so well. Many in the audience will also be familiar with Nielsen's outstanding second symphony. Few in the audience will have even heard the Stenhammar, much less experienced this wonderful work in a concert. You're in for a treat. It's terrific!

This concert marks another first for Banbury Symphony Orchestra. Our new website now has tickets available to buy immediately and easily. And if you'd like to be among the first to know about future concerts, just visit the website at banburysymphony.org and leave your email address.

Thanks for choosing to be with us this evening and we hope that you enjoy the evening as much as the members of the orchestra!

Peter Button
Chairman, BSO

Programme

Finlandia – Sibelius

Symphony No.2 – Nielsen

Allegro collerico

Allegro comodo e flemmatico

Andante malincolico

Allegro sanguineo

Interval

Symphony No.2 – Stenhammar

Allegro energico

Andante

Scherzo: Allegro, ma non troppo presto

Finale: Sostenuto – Allegro vivace

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 College 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.



Finlandia – Sibelius

The history of Finland has seen the country dominated by Sweden early on and Russia in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries. With the coming of the nationalist movement in the early 20th century, Russia used every means to halt the progress of freedom for the Finnish people. Censorship of the theatre and concerts was heavy, and it was in this atmosphere that Sibelius wrote his tone poem Finlandia.

It was originally written as part of a set of pieces that accompanied a visual presentation of Finnish history. The original version was written in 1899 and Sibelius revised it into its final form in 1900. The piece served as a rallying cry for the Finnish people, much as La Marseillaise was for the French. To prevent the Russian censors from prohibiting the performance of Finlandia, the piece would be renamed before the programs for the concert were printed.

The music opens with heavy brass chords, and music that depicts the human struggle for freedom of the Finns. The great hymn tune that follows the bombast has all the makings of a folk tune, but in fact there are no folk tunes in Finlandia. All of the music is

original with Sibelius. The hymn tune was arranged by Sibelius as a separate piece to be sung as a hymn, and is in many Christian churches hymnals as the hymn titled 'Be Still My Soul'.

Evidently Sibelius came to detest Finlandia as it became his most popular composition at the expense of other more substantial works. But it has everything in it to appeal to a broad audience; brilliant and colourful orchestration, a grand tune that can be sung, and a message of hope and freedom that is universal.



Symphony No.2 – Stenhammar

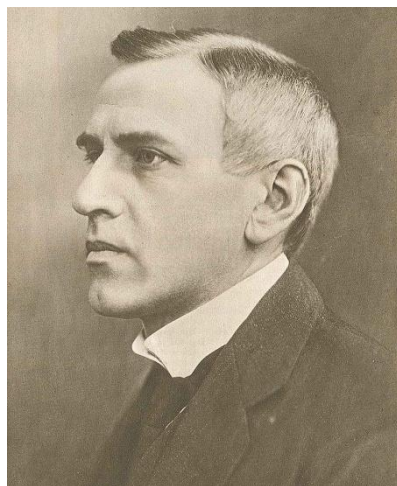
Swedish composer, conductor, and pianist Wilhelm Stenhammar's Symphony No. 2 in G minor, Op. 34, (1911-1915) is his symphonic masterpiece, and one of the great Scandinavian symphonies of its time. A friend of Nielsen and Sibelius, Stenhammar wrote music that was more conservative than theirs: Stenhammar was steeped in the music of Brahms, and not for him were the harmonic or structural innovations of Nielsen, Sibelius, or his fellow Swede Hugo Alfvén.

This does not mean, however, that his music lacked strength or power. Indeed, Stenhammar's Symphony No. 2 is fully as muscular as Nielsen's Third or Sibelius' Second. But rather than write in the chromatic language of the fin de siècle, Stenhammar composed his Second in a modal language based on the almost medieval themes of the work. Using his modal language and modal themes, Stenhammar constructs huge arches and vaults of contrapuntal architecture and thereby creates a sense of monumental grandeur not unlike that of Bruckner's symphonies.

The opening *Allegro energico* is cast in sonata form, but with the movement's

expansive development balanced by an equally large coda. The following *Andante* sounds like a contrapuntally conceived religious procession of deep solemnity.

The Scherzo switches from the sacred to the secular with a buoyant dance theme and a bucolic trio featuring the winds. The Finale is the largest movement of the four and by far the most original: after a rhapsodic, slow opening, the music unfolds as a series of fugues based on lyrical themes culminating in an impassioned slow fugue marked *Tranquilemente* and concluding with a massive double fugue that sounds almost choral in its lyrical beauty.



Symphony No.2 – Nielsen

While listening to the Banbury Symphony Orchestra this afternoon, take a moment to scan the second violin section. Somewhere in there may be the next great composer.

Carl Nielsen toiled away for years with the second fiddles of the Royal Danish Theatre Orchestra and found his limited time for composition often eaten away by rehearsals. Although Nielsen wrote six wonderful symphonies, as well as operas and concertos, he never became internationally renowned during his lifetime, partly due to the travails of Germanic publishing houses in the years surrounding the Great War. Although his work created a boomlet in America in the 1950s and '60s, he has since returned to the status of a footnote to the history of twentieth-century music.

A confirmed absolutist, Nielsen did construct one programmatic symphony on the subject of the four temperaments. His inspiration was quirky: a piece of kitsch that was mounted on the wall of a tavern in the Zealand district. He and his friends made sport of the painting, but its naïve symbology haunted the composer until he set himself the task of realizing that quartet of humors in music. The key to his success was his judicious use of contrasting sections in each of his character studies.

The first movement, the Choleric, was suggested by the visual image of a swordsman heatedly flailing at the air. Nielsen himself writes about his creation that the “material is worked, now wildly and impetuously, like one who nearly forgets himself, now in a softer mood, like one who regrets his irascibility.”

Filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni has demonstrated a manner of thinking about art that is both useful and instructive and may be labelled the “Antonioni problem.” Simply put, when attempting to create an opus designed to communicate the essential tedium of life, how does an artist prevent becoming boring himself? Of similar complexity is the depiction of the Phlegmatic. Nielsen’s solution is ingenious.

He envisions a young man, the apple of his mother’s eye. The boy is one of nature’s noblemen and needs no stimulation to feel perfectly happy. He lolls all day at the water’s edge. Only once is there a loud noise, but unlike the crash in Haydn’s “Surprise” Symphony, nobody stirs. All is forgotten in a shimmering envelope of languid peace.

The Melancholic begins with a theme that Nielsen describes as “a strong outcry of pain.” Torturous passages

follow, but are somewhat mitigated by a central section in E-flat major that offers some respite. The composer pulls all of the musical material together “like the threads of a net” and ends with a restatement of the horrifying first subject.

Finally, the Sanguine describes a man to whom “fried pigeons will fly into his mouth without work or bother.” There is one episode wherein syncopated rhythms disturb his equilibrium momentarily. He quickly rights himself, however, with a new appreciation of his lucky state. The Symphony ends on a note of triumph with a joyful and noble march. Art imitates art imitating life.



Banbury Symphony Orchestra

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Joining the Orchestra

If you play an instrument to a standard of Grade 7 or above and would like to play with the orchestra, find out more by contacting Anna Fleming on 01295 780017.

All rehearsals take place in Banbury in term time on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30pm.

