

# Spring Concert

## Invitation to The Dance!



**Saturday 17 March 2018**

**Deddington Church**

**Programme Free**



# **Concert Dates for Your Diary**

## **Banbury Chamber Orchestra**

### ***May Masterworks***

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

Overture 'The Hebrides' – Mendelssohn

Suite, Op.49 – Saint-Saëns

Symphony No.8 – Beethoven

**4:30 pm – Hook Norton Church**

## **Banbury Symphony Orchestra**

### ***Summer Showpieces***

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2018**

Overture de Fête – Ibert

Violin Concerto – Sibelius

Symphony No5½ – Gillis

Pictures at an Exhibition - Moussorgsky

**7:30 pm – St Mary's Church, Banbury**

**Tickets from**

**[banburysymphony.org](http://banburysymphony.org)**

## Welcome to St. Peter & St. Paul Deddington

Thank you for being with the Banbury Symphony Orchestra as it invites you to join the dance!

Our programme is a varied and technically challenging set of twentieth century masterpieces, each of which features dance in various forms. We start with **Ravel's La Valse**, in which his spectacular orchestration is to the fore in a tribute to the Viennese waltz. Half-remembered scenes from the Viennese ballroom gradually develop in intensity, leading to a shattering climax. **Bela Bartók** was a leading Hungarian composer who moved to the United States to escape the Second World War. He composed his **Concerto for Orchestra** in 1943 as a commission for Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The five-movement piece treats each section of instruments in a soloistic and virtuosic way, with its second movement being a 'Dance of the Couples'.

After the interval we will play **Rachmaninoff's** three movement **Symphonic Dances**. This is Rachmaninov's last piece, the culmination of his orchestral writing, using curious shifting harmonies as well as the lush tunes for which he is famous.

Please join us again in May, when the Banbury Chamber Orchestra will perform 'May Masterpieces' in the delightful Hook Norton Church. The programme includes favourites 'The Hebrides' overture by Mendelssohn and Beethoven's energetic Eighth Symphony.

Ian McCubbin - Chairman, BSO

# Programme

## La Valse – Ravel

### Concerto for Orchestra – Bartók

I. Introduzione. Andante non troppo – Allegro vivace

II. "Presentando le coppie". Allegro scherzando

III. "Elegia". Andante non troppo

IV. "Intermezzo interrotto". Allegretto

V. Finale. Presto

## *Interval*

### Symphonic Dances – Rachmaninov

Non allegro

Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)

Lento assai – Allegro vivace – Lento assai. Come prima – 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 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.

# La Valse

## Maurice Ravel

"Through rifts in swirling clouds, couples are glimpsed waltzing. As the clouds disperse little by little, one sees an immense hall peopled with a whirling crowd [letter A in the score]. The scene becomes progressively brighter. The light from chandeliers bursts forth at fortissimo [letter B in the score]. An Imperial Court, around 1855."

So reads the note in the score to Ravel's *La Valse*. He had thought of writing an orchestral tribute to Johann Strauss Jr., to be called *Wien* (Vienna), as early as 1906. In 1919 he decided to make the idea a reality when he took a commission from Serge Diaghilev to write a piece for the Ballets Russes. By that time, however, World War I and its aftermath had shattered nostalgic fantasies of Viennese balls. So when Ravel looked back to his former goal of writing "a kind of apotheosis of the Viennese waltz, mingled ... with the idea of destiny's fantastic whirl," the destiny Ravel imagined was not gentle or charming, but apocalyptic. The composer George Benjamin describes the music's effect: "Whether or not it was intended as a metaphor for the predicament of European civilization in the aftermath of the Great War, its one-movement design plots the birth, decay and destruction of a musical genre: the waltz."

Ravel played a four-hand piano reduction of the work for Diaghilev, Igor Stravinsky, Francis Poulenc, and several other guests in 1920. According to Poulenc, Diaghilev pronounced it "a masterpiece," but said that it was not a ballet but "the painting of a ballet." Poulenc was shocked on his mentor Ravel's behalf, writing that Ravel provided "a lesson in modesty" by simply leaving the room. But Ravel never worked with Diaghilev again.

Ravel published the work with the subtitle *un poème choréographique* (a choreographic poem) and premiered it in December, 1920, with the Lamoureux Orchestra in Paris. It was a hit in the concert hall, and in 1928 Bronislava Nijinska proved Diaghilev wrong by choreographing *La Valse* for the dance company of Ida Rubinstein. Unfortunately, Rubinstein also premiered a ballet for Ravel's *Boléro* a few days later, eclipsing *La Valse*. Finally, in 1951, George Balanchine (Diaghilev's former student) premiered a successful dance for the New York City Ballet based on *La Valse* and Ravel's *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, a 1911 keyboard suite based on works by Franz Schubert.

The first evidence that *La Valse* is not a straight parroting of the older waltz form comes in the opening bars, when bassoons, double-basses, and a bass drum play fragments of a waltz, as if heard in snatches from a distance.

String mists obscure Ravel's dancing couples, who are finally revealed by a stroke on the harp that unleashes a lushly scored melody for the full orchestra. A series of alternately sweet, brisk, or grand waltz variations follows. The work seems headed toward a climax when the bassoons and string mists from the opening return. As melodies from the original variations are sounded, the fluttering woodwinds, swirling strings, and swelling brass become ominous, threatening. Our nostalgic memories have taken a dark and unexpected turn, and as the gong crashes and the propulsive waltz melodies become inescapable, the dancers are caught up "in destiny's fantastic whirl." The final bar - the only one not in waltz time - brings the music to an abrupt and emphatic close.

## Concerto for Orchestra

### Béla Bartók

The concerto for orchestra was written in 1943 to a commission from the Koussevitzky Foundation, and first performed in 1944 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. It was the composer's last completed work and is his most popular piece for full orchestra.

In 1943, after a year of precipitously declining health, Bartok was diagnosed

with leukemia. He had been in the United States for nearly three years, a period in which he had to endure financial hardship, artistic isolation and separation from the source of his inspiration, Hungary, and its wealth of folk music. The Concerto was composed as a work of gratitude on recovering sufficiently from serious illness.

Bartok himself supplied the following programme note:

"The general mood of the work represents, apart from the jesting second movement, a gradual transition from the sternness of the first movement and the lugubrious death-song of the third, to the life-assertion of the last one. The title of this symphony-like orchestral work is explained by its tendency to treat the single orchestral instruments in a *concertante* or soloist manner. The 'virtuoso' treatment appears, for instance, in the fugal sections of the development of the first movement (brass instruments), or in the *perpetual mobile*-like passage of the principal theme in the last movement (strings), and especially in the second movement, in which pairs of instruments consecutively appear with brilliant passages."

The concerto in is five movements.

**Introduzione.** A slow introduction, in which the material elaborated in the *Elegia* appears, leads to an *Allegro*

*vivace* movement in sonata form, with clearly defined first and second subjects, and a development section whose principal feature is a rousing *fugato* section for brass, based on a new theme, derived from the opening theme of the *Allegro*.

***Giucco delle copoie.*** A happy, dance-like movement, in which pairs of wind instruments follow each other: bassoons in sixths, oboes in thirds, clarinets in sevenths, flutes in fifths, trumpets in seconds. After a quiet chorale played by the brass instruments, the entire first section is repeated in a varied form: the bassoons are joined by a third bassoon, oboes combine with clarinets, clarinets with flutes, flutes with all the woodwind, and trumpets are accompanied by harp glissandi and trills in the strings.

***Elegia.*** The folk-like themes of this movement are derived from the *Introduzione*. These, in the composer's words, "constitute the core of the movement, which is enflamed by a misty texture of rudimentary motifs". This is a typical piece of Bartokian 'Night-music'.

***Intermezzo interotto.*** Two folk-like melodies constitute the serenade. The interruption comes in the form of a military band, which burlesques a theme from Shostakovich's 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony, itself a quotation from a Viennese cabaret song, possibly Lehar's music. The brass blow raspberries at

the band, which retaliates with a vulgar quickstep version of the theme. The interruption subsides, and the serenade continues to a quiet end.

***Finale.*** A highly complex movement, incorporating Hungarian dance rhythms (gypsy fiddling) and a remarkable fugue which employs all the technical devices associated with this type of composition.

## Symphonic Dances

### Sergei Rachmaninov

Rachmaninoff began work on this piece, his final composition, in the summer of 1940. The premiere, with Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra, took place on January 3, 1941, before the musicians had sufficient time to familiarize themselves with the music. The largely negative reception crushed Rachmaninoff. For decades, the *Symphonic Dances* remained the stepchild of his major works for orchestra. The last 25 years have witnessed a strong growth in appreciation of this moody, many-layered and spectacularly orchestrated work, as testified by numerous recordings and live performances. Rhythm plays a powerful role in it, but in terms of scale, quality of themes and ingenuity of development, it is much more a symphonic work than a balletic one.

It continued Rachmaninoff's obsession with the *Dies irae* (*Day of Wrath*), a somber melody drawn from the medieval plainchant *Mass for the Dead*. He had previously quoted it in several works. Other composers, Hector Berlioz (*Symphonie Fantastique*) and Franz Liszt (*Totentanz*) among them, have shared this fascination.

The *Dies irae* appears several times in veiled form in the first Symphonic Dance. This movement begins quietly, expectantly, before introducing its bold, thrusting main subject. The orchestra includes a piano, here functioning to fascinating effect as a member of the percussion section. The long, floating melody of the central panel, unexpectedly voiced in the plaintive tones of the alto saxophone, is one of Rachmaninoff's loveliest lyrical creations. Sparsely accompanied at first by woodwinds, it blossoms forth eloquently when he transfers it to the strings.

Near the end, a gorgeous melody appears unheralded in the strings, delicately spangled in bell-like fashion with glockenspiel, harp and piano. This is a consoling transfiguration of the "motto" subject that pervades his *First Symphony*. That piece's catastrophic premiere in 1897 had traumatized him to the point where he was unable to compose for three years. The motto's appearance here, in far gentler guise than in the symphony, may represent

an older, wiser composer – who may have sensed that his death was less than two years ahead – reconciling with this troubled child of his creative youth. Until the symphony's second performance – in 1945, two years after his death – few save he would have either recognized it or grasped the significance of its appearance here.

Within the framework of a symphonic waltz, the second dance presents a haunted vision of the ballroom. It lies closer in spirit to Ravel's *La Valse* or the *Valse Triste* of Sibelius than the joyous dance-poems of the Strauss family. Introduced by eerie, muted fanfares on trumpets and horns, whirling woodwind arabesques and a spectral violin solo (death tuning his fiddle, as in Saint-Saëns' *Danse Macabre* and Mahler's *Fourth Symphony*), it turns on a troubled waltz tune first stated by cor anglais. The spirit of the dance never maintains itself for long. The music regularly slows almost to a halt, as if in nervous anticipation of impending catastrophe, or shadowed by memories of past horrors. A mood of nostalgic reverie attempts to assert itself midway through, only to be shattered by the return of the opening fanfares. They summon the ghostly dancers back to fulfill their destiny. The tempo accelerates through a passage of mounting hysteria, only to peak quickly, then end with equal abruptness.



The final movement is a grand witches' sabbath that would do Berlioz or Mussorgsky proud. Pervaded from the opening bars by the *Dies irae*, it seethes with manic, diabolical energy. A lengthy, reflective and lamenting middle section provides contrast. With the return of the opening material, a furious conflict breaks out between the *Dies irae* and a traditional Russian religious chant, *Blessed is the Lord*. The chant finally gains the upper hand, and an *Alleluia* theme drawn from Rachmaninoff's choral work *Vespers* rings out triumphantly.

Thus Rachmaninoff concluded his career as a composer – and made his final musical/ philosophical statement – with a representation of the victory of his deeply held religious faith over the powers of darkness and death. At the end of the manuscript score, he inscribed, "I thank Thee, Lord."



**Banbury's own independent private hospital providing you with clinical excellence, comfort and compassionate care**

- Hip and knee replacements
- Varicose vein surgery
- Hernia repair
- Cataract surgery
- Pain management



The Foscote Hospital, 2 Foscote Rise, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9XP  
T 01295 252281 E [reception@thefoscotehospital.co.uk](mailto:reception@thefoscotehospital.co.uk)  
W [thefoscotehospital.co.uk](http://thefoscotehospital.co.uk)



# Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Management Committee

Ian McCubbin (Chair), Marigold Short (Treasurer), Ros Templeman (Secretary),  
Lyn Gosney, Jane Cerasale, Simon Kingsley.

Conductor - Paul Willett

## **Violin I**

Anna Fleming (Leader)  
Penny Tolmie  
Marianne Robinson  
Lisa Callejo  
Graham Buckner  
Adria Dongo Munoz

## **Violin II**

Eleanor Robson  
Rosemary Wilson  
Andrew Waite  
Trish Evans  
Gill Walker  
Bryony Yelloly  
Sue Christie  
Anzonia Carpenter  
Abigail Roberts  
Jo Butler

## **Viola**

Ros Templeman  
Alex Mann  
Jonathan Rowe  
Conrad Woolley  
Charlotte Rich

## **Cello**

Jennifer Hubble  
Paul Morley  
Peter Button  
Simon Kingsley  
Elizabeth Beckett  
Adam Griffin  
Janet Parsons

## **Double Bass**

Robert Gilchrist  
Jo Willett  
John Cronin

## **Flute**

Rachel McCubbin  
Caroline Humphrys  
Ruth Carroll

## **Piccolo**

Caroline Humphrys

## **Oboe**

Christine Griggs  
Emma Wahlen  
Lyn Gosney

## **Cor Anglais**

Lyn Gosney

## **Clarinet**

Jane Cerasale  
Helen Finch

## **Bass Clarinet**

Celia Bolton King

## **Saxophone**

Helen Finch

## **Bassoon**

Ian McCubbin  
Sheila Wallace  
Ian White

## **Contra-bassoon**

Ian White

## **French Horn**

Bob Powell  
Dave Settle  
Dan Blakey  
Helen Barnby-Porritt

## **Trumpet**

Tony Chittock  
Ron Barnett  
Terry Mayo

## **Trombone**

Paul Macey  
Gary Clifton  
Malcolm Saunders

## **Tuba**

Alison Buck

## **Timpani**

Justin Rhodes

## **Percussion**

Keith Crompton  
Roger Griffin  
Tony Lucas  
Huw Morgan

## **Harp**

Laura Aime

## **Piano**

Stuart Hubble

## Our Patrons

Lady Saye and Sele

## Our Sponsors

**spratt endicott**  
SOLICITORS



## Support Us

We are grateful for the support that the orchestra receives from our patrons and sponsors as well, of course, as the support of those who regularly attend our concerts, which help make the concerts all the more enjoyable for audience, performers, and soloists.

If you would like to support the orchestra through donation, sponsorship or joint enterprises, please contact us via our website

Join our email list and we can keep you up to date with our forthcoming concerts. To find out more, use one of the following contacts:



[banburysymphony.org](http://banburysymphony.org)



[banburysymphony.org](http://banburysymphony.org)



Banbury Symphony Orchestra



@BanburySymphony

## 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.

