

Sunday Afternoon Classical Concert

Sunday 21 May 2017

St Peter's Church, Hook Norton



Programme Free



Concert Dates for Your Diary

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Last Night of the Proms

Saturday 1st July 2017

Programme including Elgar's Cello Concerto

7:30 pm – St Mary's Church, Banbury

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Russian Spectacular Concert

Saturday 25th November 2017

Piano Concerto No2 – Rachmaninov

Overture, Russlan and Ludmilla – Glinka

Manfred Symphony – Tchaikovsky

7:30 pm - Deddington Church

Tickets from

banburysymphony.org

Hello and welcome to Deddington Church,

Hello and thanks for joining us for our Spring Chamber Orchestra Concert here in Hook Norton.

We hope that you'll welcome the range of our programme this afternoon. From Mozart's glorious Marriage of Figaro Overture and Haydn's memorable Toy Symphony, all the way to Prokofiev's Classical Symphony via Schubert's German Dances, we'll experience the unique dynamics of the Chamber Orchestra repertoire.

Our programme this afternoon does not have an interval and we look forward to meeting you as we serve refreshments both before and after the concert.

Thanks again for your support.

Peter Button
Chairman, BSO

Programme

Overture, The Marriage of Figaro– Mozart

German Dances – Schubert, arr Webern

Toy Symphony – Haydn

Classical Symphony – Prokofiev

Allegro

Larghetto

Gavotta: non troppo allegro

Finale: Molto 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.

Overture, The Marriage of Figaro– Mozart

The overture¹ to the opera *Le nozze di Figaro*, the first of Mozart's three collaborations with librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte (the other two are *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*), begins with a busy whispering and buzzing that develops quickly into a short-breathed little theme that might just slip by the less than alert listener. Then, bang!, comes a tutti with trumpets and drums, the music subsequently driven by scampering violins, flutes, and oboes in a succession of hectically upbeat figurations, the whole accomplished in four minutes.

The piece is self-contained, which is to say that it does not quote themes from the opera proper nor does its ending fade into the opening measures of the opera, both also characteristic of the overtures to Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*, *Così fan tutte*, and *The Magic Flute*. The Figaro overture does, however, give us a delectable foretaste of the mood of its opera: fleet, witty, often acerbic in its humor.

The overture, it might be noted, originally contained a slow middle section with a melancholy oboe solo. But contrast be damned, Mozart wisely decided, and maintained the swirling, manically jolly mood throughout.

Figaro was first presented on the stage of Vienna's Burgtheater in May of 1786. The composer conducted from the keyboard.



¹ Programme note – Herbert Glass

Classical Symphony – Prokofiev

In 1916, Prokofiev² had begun to experiment with what Haydn might have written had he lived in the 20th century. He decided to try to meld his own voice with that of the great classicist as he started work on a symphony—then called No. 1 in D major (Op. 25). He wrote most of it in 1917, finishing the work on September 10. It premiered on April 21, 1918 in Petrograd, conducted by Prokofiev himself.

Called the Classical Symphony, it is now one of his most beloved works. When he was invited to do a Russian tour in 1935, he insisted on programming his Classical Symphony.

The Classical Symphony altered his life in unexpected ways. He wrote in his journal, “Until then, I had always composed at the piano, but I noticed that the thematic material composed away from the piano was often better... I had been playing with the idea of writing a whole symphony without the piano, thinking that such a piece would have more natural and transparent colors.”

“So that is how the project for a symphony in the style of Haydn came about. I had come to understand a

great deal about Haydn’s technique and thought it would be less scary to embark on this piano-less journey if I were on familiar stylistic ground. It seemed to me that if Haydn had lived to our day, he would have retained his own style. This is the kind of symphony I wanted to write: a symphony in classical style.”



Prokofiev’s achievement in composing a symphony that sounds of its time and yet is largely in the classical idiom is remarkable. The symphony’s first movement, Allegro, opens with a familiar classical formula: the Manheim Rocket, an innovation of the Manheim School. It is a swiftly ascending passage having a rising melodic line.

The following Larghetto is lively, witty and free of the kind of sentimentality so dear to the heart of Tchaikovsky and

² Programme note – Walker Meade

Rachmaninoff. Prokofiev composed the third movement, a countrified gavotte, as early as 1913. It is very slight, yet Prokofiev loved this little dance and expanded it for the long version of his ballet music for *Romeo and Juliet*.

The breezy Finale is the result of freeing himself from composing at the piano. The demanding scoring for the first violins is the reason the work is believed to be the ultimate test for any violin section. The work is full of musical jokes that Haydn—the ultimate jester – likely would have approved.

Toy Symphony – Haydn

The Toy Symphony is a musical work with parts for toy instruments and is popularly played at Christmas. It was long reputed to be the work of Joseph Haydn, but later scholarship suggested that it was actually written by Leopold Mozart. Its authorship is still disputed, however, and other composers have been proposed as the symphony's true author.



The symphony did not appear in published form until 1820. In the first edition the composer was given as Haydn with no further identification. From that time it was assumed that Haydn was the composer of this seven-minute, three movement homotonal symphony which calls for toys, a trumpet, ratchet, nightingale, cuckoo and drum. A fanciful story was concocted in which Haydn composed this work after purchasing several toys

at a fair, and then performed the result at Eszterháza for delighted children at a Christmas party.

By the 1930s scholars began to doubt that this tale was truthful, as no such work appears in the exhaustive Entwurf-Katalog Haydn himself compiled of his own compositions.

The identity of the true composer of the Toy Symphony seemed clinched with the discovery of the work in its three-movement form in a manuscript copied by Leopold Mozart in 1759. This was supported by the existence of a similar work (also once believed to be Leopold Mozart's) The Musical Sleigh-Ride, which calls for a cracking whip, sleigh bells and other sound effects that resemble those in the Toy Symphony.

However, the accuracy of the Leopold Mozart attribution was called into question as it became clear that even The Musical Sleigh-Ride was probably not Leopold's work; he was an avid copyist who made exemplars of dozens of pieces by hand. The best research indicates that the Toy Symphony is not even a symphony as such; its three movements are most probably compiled from one or even several toy cassations (i.e. divertimenti) long, multi-movement works that were written in the 1750s and 1760s in and around the city of Berchtesgaden, a major manufacturer of toy musical instruments.

Both professional and amateur composers wrote these pieces, and existing sources are not clear if much of this literature can be safely ascribed to any composers of note, let alone such "magic" Classical-era names as those of the Mozarts or the Haydns.

Recent research on a newly found manuscript suggests the Austrian Benedictine monk Edmund Angerer (1740–1794) to be the author. If Angerer's manuscript is the original, the Toy Symphony was originally written not in G but rather in C. These findings, however, are disputed among scholars.

There is reason to believe that the true composer will likely never be known, in whole or in part, given its confused origins and the paucity of related manuscript sources.

German Dances – Schubert, arr Webern

In 1824, Franz Schubert composed a series of six German Dances for solo piano. The work remained unpublished during Schubert's tragically brief life. In 1931, Universal Edition offered the first publication of Schubert's Six German Dances, D.820. Universal was also Anton Webern's publisher, and it commissioned him to create an orchestral version of Schubert's original piano composition.



Webern long admired the music of Franz Schubert, and had previously completed several arrangements of his works. Webern's approach to composition produced works remarkable for their synthesis of brevity, variety, and depth of expression. Webern recognized a

similar esthetic in Schubert's series of piano miniatures. As he wrote to fellow composer Alban Berg: "Now one sees most clearly how these six dances (seemingly written so hurriedly) were produced in a single cast. Lovely, tender, beautiful ideas! And so much became clear to me during this work."



Webern completed the orchestration between May 19 and June 17, 1931. As Webern confided to his mentor, Arnold Schoenberg: "But I have to confess that I had to give it much thought until I believed I had found the right way." Webern scored the work for an ensemble typical of Schubert's time, and in a manner that complements the lyrical charm of his great predecessor.

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.

