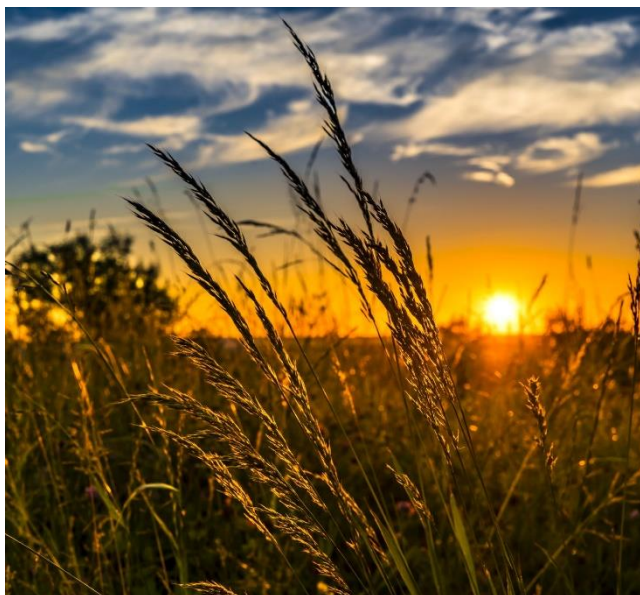


Summer Nights



Saturday 29 June 2019
St Mary's Church, Banbury

Programme Free



Concert Dates for Your Diary

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Sounds of Autumn

Saturday 23rd November 2019

Overture *Der Freischütz* – Weber

Piano Concerto in A minor – Grieg

Symphony No 6 – Bruckner

7:30 pm – Deddington Church

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Christmas Concert

Saturday 14th December 2019

A programme of Christmas favourites and carols



Tickets from

banburysymphony.org

Welcome to St. Mary's Banbury

Thank you for joining the Banbury Symphony Orchestra for its 'Summer Nights' concert. Tonight we're playing a wonderful *pot-pourri* of pieces to celebrate the Summer.

William Walton's comedy overture **Scapino** received its premiere in 1941, performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra who had commissioned the work for its 50th anniversary. The overture depicts a character somewhere in nature between Leporello and Till Eulenspiegel, a meddling fixer of amorous adventures!

Next we welcome back the wonderful **Maria Kouznetsova** as our soloist in the evergreen **Bruch Violin Concerto No 1**. It was a rare privilege to hear Maria play the Sibelius violin concerto with us last Summer – you are in for a special treat!

After the interval we will play **Rimsky-Korsakov's** symphonic suite **Scheherazade**, that wonderful and dazzlingly-written evocation of the Arabian Nights story.

Your feedback to our concert surveys has told us that you appreciate the concerts and the music that we programme for you, with the mix of well-loved favourites and lesser-known works. Please let us know what you think this time as well!

Ian McCubbin
Chair, BSO

Programme

Scapino: A Comedy Overture – Walton

Violin Concerto No. 1 – Bruch

Vorspiel: Allegro moderato

Adagio

Finale: Allegro energico

Interval

Scheherazade – Rimsky-Korsakov

The Sea and Sinbad's Ship

The Kalandar Prince

The Young Prince and The Young Princess

Festival at Baghdad – The Sea –

The Ship Breaks against a Cliff Surmounted by a Bronze Horseman

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 was, until recently, the Director of Didcot Sixth Form. He is now retired to concentrate on his music making and being a 'stay-at-home' dad to his son Alfie.



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.

Maria Kouznetsova

Franco-Russian violinist Maria Kouznetsova is the prizewinner of international competitions that include the China Guang Ya Chengdu (1st prize 2014), Andrea Postacchini (2nd prize 2005), David Oistrakh (2nd prize 2007, 1st not awarded) and Adriatico Music Competition (1st prize 2007) where she was also awarded the EMCY Art for Music prize. She is as well a double laureate of the 2007 Ancona music competition (1st prize in both solo and chamber music categories) and "Luigi Nono" competition 2006 (1st prize and special award for the performance of a modern composition).

A passionate recitalist and chamber musician, she has performed extensively



across Europe, as well as in Russia and Israel. Past engagements include invitations from the William Walton e La Mortella Foundation, the Internazionale Oleg Kagan Music Fest, Estate Fiesolana, Estate Musicale a Portogruaro, Rome Chamber Music Festival, MusicAmuseo Festival, Eilat Festival, Aosta Classica Festival, Aurora Chamber Music Festival, International Kamermuziekfestival Schiermonnikoog.

Born in 1991 in Russia into a musical family, Maria started studying the violin aged four with Vladimir Bobilev, and completed her Master degree in the Amsterdam Conservatory, under the guidance of prof. Ilya Grubert. A former artist in residence at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Belgium under Augustin Dumay, she has previously studied with Pavel Vernikov and Oleksandr Semchuk in Fiesole, Italy, Igor Volochine and Boris Garlitsky, as well as Miroslav Roussine in France. In 2018 she completed the Artist Diploma program with Distinction at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama under the guidance of David Takeno.

Maria is most grateful for the generous support from the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole, the Guildhall School Trust, the Stephen Bell Charitable Trust, the Albert and Eugenie Frost Music Trust and the Hattori Foundation.

Scapino

A Comedy Overture

William Walton

Scapino, the zany servant, entertaining rogue, rascalion, pompous poltroon, and hero of Sir William Walton's *Comedy Overture*, was one of the popular stock characters who lived on and on, through farce after farce, for generations of the incredibly vital Italian *commedia dell' arte*. We cannot explain this enduring vitality, which Sir William's music reflects with such infectious verve. We can only pause to notice that the stock characters of the *commedia dell' arte* like comic-strip characters today, were much more important that any single plot in which they were involved. In fact it was they, the actors of the roles, who improvised the dialogue, the knock-about, slapstick action, songs, dances, and athletic turns as the plot ran its pre-agreed course. These *commedia dell' arte* characters, whose ancestry has been traced back to Roman and even Greek comedy figures, had such vitality, such tough survival powers, that they are with us still – in the Harlequinades of Christmas pantomimes in England; in Punch and Judy puppet shows (in Italy Punch had been Pulcinella) and their equivalents in the French Guignol; in the German Hans Wurst; in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*; and only thinly disguised in characters like Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, Papageno



in *The Magic Flute*, and an almost endless list.

Scapino's heyday under the name Scapino, was the Baroque seventeenth century, when he was immortalised in the engravings of Jacques Callot and (as the *commedia dell' arte* spread to other countries) in Molière's famous comedy, *Les Fourberies de Scapin*. Later Scapino turned into, or was absorbed by, the equally unprincipled Brighella, whom you will meet, still dancing and singing, in performances of Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

Sir William's portrayal of Scapino, was inspired by an etching of Jacques Callot reproduced on the cover of the score. The title page tells us that the etching is from Callot's famous series, *Balli di Sfessania*, published in 1622. It would be amusing to think that Scapino's powers



of deception reached into our century, duping not only Sir William's publishers but possibly the composer himself. For this handsome etching is not from the *Balli di Sfessania* at all, but from a set of three, vastly different, much larger Callot etchings published three or four years earlier in Florence, apparently without any collective title and usually referred to as simply *Three Pantaloons*. The full length figure of Scapino wears his traditional costume of large, baggy trousers, loose fitting blouse, with small cape and large rakish hat with two feathers in it. One hand rests on his large, wooden sword and he wears a half-mask with moustache, under which he sticks out his tongue at the spectator. In the

background as open-air stage with spectators before it shows a *commedia dell' arte* performance. On one side of the stage Scapino, with a low sweeping bow, delivers a letter to a lady while his master watches from the other side. Good copies of this print are rare and highly prized, but there are fine examples in both the 42nd Street Public Library and the Metropolitan Museum. It is easy to see why it delighted Sir William.

Walton composed his "*Scapino*" *Overture* in 1940 while serving in the British armed forces, and inscribed it to Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in commemoration of the orchestra's fiftieth anniversary. It was first performed by the Chicago Symphony under Dr. Stock's direction on April 3 and 4, 1941 and repeated two weeks later. The composer revised the score in 1950 for the following orchestra: 3 flutes (one alternating with piccolo), 2 oboes, cor anglais, 3 clarinets (one alternating with bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, side drum, tambourine, triangle, Chinese temple blocks, castanets, glockenspiel, xylophone, harp and strings. The changes for the present version were the deletion of a contra bassoon and 2 cornets from the old score and the addition of a third trumpet and some percussion for the new. But there were also some substantial changes in the

music itself. It has however retained its over all form of a free sonata-allegro.

The *Overture* opens with a brief tutti flourish leading to the main Scapino theme announced in the brittle tones of muted trumpets reinforced by xylophone, oboes and clarinets. This is answered almost immediately by a pert melody in the violas and later by a second viola melody, which is the basis of the whole middle section of the *Overture*.

The melodious middle section was originally marked to be played "like a serenade" with its solo cello melody given "exaggerated sentiment." The violins were directed to pluck their strings with four fingernails, producing a sharp guitar-like sound; the present version calls for normal pizzicato. The third section of the *Overture* brings a sudden change of mood, *Scherzevole*. From here to the end a lilting triple metre predominates, altering the character of almost all the themes in this free recapitulation. The end is an especially dazzling development of a theme, which may recall a trumpet fanfare from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherezade*.

Violin Concerto No. 1

Max Bruch

At the celebration of his seventy-fifth birthday in June 1906, Joseph Joachim said: "The Germans have four violin concertos. The greatest, the most uncompromising, is Beethoven's. The one by Brahms vies with it in seriousness. The richest, the most seductive was written by Max Bruch. But the most inward, the heart's jewel, is Mendelssohn's." Joachim spoke from a position of singular authority. Not only had he performed Beethoven's Concerto since just before his thirteenth birthday, but it was his advocacy that had turned it from an obscure and problematic work by a famous composer into the summit and cynosure of the concerto repertory.



He had helped Brahms crucially with his concerto (many of the notes in the solo part are actually Joachim's), he had been the first to play it, and he wrote a cadenza for it that has all but become a canonical part of the text. As a boy, he had been Mendelssohn's protégé; his teacher was Ferdinand David, who had been to Mendelssohn what Joachim was to Brahms; and he had played the famous concerto more than two hundred times, going back to 1846 when the composer himself conducted. He had also worked with Bruch on the revisions that gave the G minor Concerto its final form, the one in which it became seductive and popular, and he had given the premiere of that definitive edition in Bremen on January 7, 1868.

Reading these words of Joachim's, we are likely to raise our eyebrows, to be a bit censorious at his yoking together of these four concertos. Mendelssohn with Beethoven and Brahms? But mainly it is the accolade to Bruch that astonishes us, though when you stop to think about it and take "richest" to refer to immediate sensuous impressions, Joachim is exactly on target. It is, however, a question of context. We may be reluctant to speak of Mendelssohn as though he were on a plane with Beethoven and Brahms, let alone describe his beautiful concerto as "the most inward" of these four, but that concerto is for us part of a large, coherent picture of a brilliant, versatile, distinguished, serious musician. With Bruch, we feel no such assurance, for he

comes perilously near to being a one-work composer, the one work being the G minor Concerto. In his day, however, Bruch was a most substantial figure on the musical landscape, and if he failed to develop richly — the works with the greatest vitality and freshness were those he wrote in his thirties and forties — he retained, through his long life, respect for his command of craft and affection for his devotion to euphony.

Max's mother, a soprano, was his first teacher; his father was a civil servant. The first musical training he received outside his home was from Heinrich Carl Breidenstein, a jurist and philosopher (a pupil of Hegel) as well as a musician; later he went to Ferdinand Hiller and Carl Reinecke. This all amounted to indoctrination in the conservative Mendelssohn-Schumann-Brahms faction in German music as against the progressive Liszt-Wagner wing. At twenty he settled down to teach in Cologne, where his first opera, *Scherz, List und Rache* (Jest, Cunning and Revenge), after Goethe, was performed the same year. He had composed prodigiously since boyhood. He took up conducting and held, over the years, a succession of appointments in Koblenz, Sonderhausen, Liverpool (hence the Liverpudlian connection of the *Kol Nidrei*), and Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland). In the 1870s he enjoyed a couple of patches of prosperity and independence that allowed him to devote himself entirely to composition.

In 1891 he was granted the title of Professor, and from then until his retirement in 1910 he taught in Berlin. In 1893, in the distinguished company of Grieg, Saint-Saëns, and Tchaikovsky, he received an honorary doctorate at Cambridge. That same year, his travels brought him to America, where he conducted his oratorio Arminius with the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston.

Bruch had originally called the first movement of this concerto *Introduzione-Fantasia* but changed the title to *Vorspiel* (Prelude). Orchestral chord sequences and solo flourishes alternate: It is a dreamy variant of the opening of Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto*. Bruch finds — or makes — room for two expansive and memorable melodies. It might be a “real” first movement up to the moment when a development seems due. There Bruch brings back his opening chords and flourishes, using them this time to prepare the soft sinking into the *Adagio*. All this caused him considerable concern, and he asked Joachim whether he ought not to call the whole work a fantasy rather than a concerto. “The designation concerto is completely apt,” Joachim wrote in reply. “Indeed, the second and third movements are too fully developed for a fantasy. The separate sections of the work cohere in a lovely relationship, and yet — and this is the most important thing — there is adequate contrast.”

In the *Adagio* resides the soul of this perennially fresh and touching concerto, lyric rapture being heightened by Bruch's artfully cultivated way with form, proportion, and sequence. As for the crackling, Gypsy-tinged finale, never having paid attention to the date of composition, I had always assumed that Bruch had borrowed a notion or two from his slightly older friend Johannes Brahms. It turns out that Bruch got there first.

Scheherazade

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Rimsky-Korsakov first conceived the idea of Scheherazade in the winter of 1887-1888, whilst orchestrating Borodin's Prince Igor. The new work slowly evolved in the ensuing few months until July 1888, when Rimsky-Korsakov, finding himself with a few free weeks, dashed off the completed score in less than a month. Scheherazade received its premiere on December 15th of the same year in St. Petersburg, under the composer's baton. An instant triumph, Scheherazade has rightly become the standard by which much Russian music has been judged.

In his autobiography, Rimsky-Korsakov wrote, "I had in mind the creation of an orchestral suite in four movements, closely knit by the community of its theme, and motives, yet presenting, as it were, a kaleidoscope of fairy tale images and designs of oriental character... Originally, I had even intended to label the respective movements Prelude, Ballade, Adagio and Finale, but on the advice of Liadov and others I refrained. However, my aversion to a too definite programme led me subsequently, in the new edition, to dispense even with those hints of it that had existed in the headings of each movement. "The Sea and Sinbad's Ship", etc. In composing Scheherazade I meant these hints to

direct, but slightly, the listeners fancy on the path my own fancy had travelled..."

The four movements have long since reverted to their original titles, which really sum up the properties of the music without doing great harm. Certain melodies that reappear throughout the work can be ascribed to specific characters; the lovely violin solo obviously represents the beguiling charms of Scheherazade herself, as the menacing brass theme clearly depicts the sultan.

The first movement, *The Sea and the Vessel of Sinbad*, starts in a once upon a time manner, then comes a powerful impression of the sea, which is extended into a narrative of deceptive simplicity.



The second movement, *The Tale of the Prince Kalender*, is immediately narrative in nature, giving full play to Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral powers... the bassoon being the chief protagonist.

The third movement, *The Young Prince and the Young Princess*, achieves true tenderness and simplicity throughout its length. Less a narrative than a dialogue, the music is exquisite yet vital.

The last movement, *Festival at Bagdad, the Sea, The Vessel is wrecked...* is, as Rimsky-Korsakov said, kaleidoscopic. Adventures and sudden glimpses of beauty succeed each other in a glittering progression to bring the work to its final wistful peroration.



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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.

