

### **New members**

If you would be interested in joining the orchestra, please contact the Membership Secretary, Rohan Lewis on 01873 854662. Please check our website for details of the rehearsal schedule.

### **Easy Fundraising**

This is an easy way to raise money for the orchestra if you shop online for anything from groceries to holidays. Say you want to buy a book from Amazon. Instead of going to amazon.co.uk, you go to easyfundraising.org.uk first. You click from the easyfundraising website through to Amazon to make your purchase. The price of the book is exactly the same as if you'd visited Amazon directly. After you have bought your book, Amazon will make a donation to your cause as a thank you for shopping with them. easyfundraising collect these donations, and it costs nothing! As the saying goes, every little helps!

Go to our website and follow the link at the bottom of the home page.

### **Acknowledgements**

Abergavenny Orchestral Society is grateful to the staff and members of Our Lady and St Michael's RC Church for allowing us to use this beautiful church for our concert. AOS is affiliated to **Making Music**, which represents and supports amateur music societies throughout the UK, and gratefully acknowledges the support of: **Abergavenny Music** for their tireless support of local music and for selling our tickets; **Dance Blast** for provision of our rehearsal venue; The Music Parts Service at **Liverpool Libraries**.

Abergavenny Orchestral Society is a Registered Charity no: 1076523



# Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra

Our Lady and St Michael's RC Church  
Pen-y-Pound, Abergavenny

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 8pm

[www.abergavennysymph.org.uk](http://www.abergavennysymph.org.uk)

# Abergavenny Orchestral Society

**Honorary Life Members:** Jean Bradley, Sally Ellerington,  
Eiry Hanbury, Odette Hutchison, Barbara Price, Sue Rogers

## Friends:

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Our Friends scheme enables us to benefit from your financial support and to involve you with the Society. For a subscription of £20 per annum you will not only be making a valuable contribution but you will receive Newsletters giving details of forthcoming concerts and other orchestra news. For more information please contact the Friends' Secretary: Mr Ian Smith, 37 Cae Pen-y-Dre, Abergavenny, NP7 5UP.

## Mailing List

If you would like to be kept informed of future events, why not join our mailing list? Contact us on [info@abergavennysymph.org.uk](mailto:info@abergavennysymph.org.uk) and we will send you details of forthcoming events and concerts.

## Players in the Orchestra

### 1st Violin

Sophie Silverstone  
Ruth Brown  
Romilly Cook  
Ivor Cox  
Jane Loney  
Elizabeth MacFie  
Stephen Shearman

### 2nd Violin

Alice Cox  
Jane Anscombe  
Cynthia Bailey-Wood  
Brighid Jones  
Trina Lodge  
Simon Marr-Johnson  
Lynne Pollitt  
Diana Turnbull  
Mary Dixon  
Paul Walster

### Viola

Simon Large  
Lucy Meredith  
Rachel Tucker  
Meryl Jones  
Roger Levett  
Jayne Paulson

### Cello

Stephen David  
Clare Fisher  
Laura Kostoris  
Rohan Lewis  
Tessa Lewis  
Alan Lodge  
Sue Rogers

### Double Bass

James Loney  
Kate Stephens

### Flute

Bethan Barlow  
Heather Leighton  
Sian Rees

### Oboe

Malcolm James  
Martin Bailey-Wood  
Charlotte Salter

### Clarinet

Robert Watson  
Bob Osborne  
Trina Lodge (Bass)

### Bassoon

Janet Lloyd  
Chris Poynton  
Georgina Pickworth

### Horn

Peter Geraghty  
Hannah Stonelake  
Martin Davis  
Sarah Jones

### Trumpet

Paul Kelly  
Mark Perry  
Benjamin Day

### Trombone

Mike Standley  
Iestyn Harding  
Jane Godfrey

### Tuba

Chris Baker

### Harp

Alis Huws

### Percussion

James Joseph  
David Fraser  
William Fraser  
Justine Wheatley

### Organ

Judith Pendrous

### Piano

Christopher Lovegrove  
Vaughan Bennett

The orchestra is grateful for the support of non-members who have augmented various sections for this concert.

### Orchestral Workshop 2017

On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2017 we will be holding another of our popular orchestral workshops. Dennis Simons will be conducting us for the day as we take on Mahler's Symphony No 2. We would be delighted to hear from both orchestral players and singers interested in taking part in this event. Further details are available on our website.

### Spring Concert 2017

Our spring concert will be held in Our Lady and St Michael's RC church on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Next year sees the centenary of Finnish independence, and also the Russian revolution of 1917, so our programming will reflect these momentous events. The spring programme includes Sibelius *En Saga*, Strauss Horn Concerto No 1 with soloist Peter Geraghty, and a Russian symphony to be announced.

### Other local concerts coming soon ...

#### December 4<sup>th</sup> Unicorn Singers

Lux Aurumque, Light and Gold. Glorious carols, old and new, revealing all the joys and mysteries of the season. Stunning renaissance polyphony by Victoria and Byrd will be heard alongside recent works by Whitacre, Pärt, Tavener and Gabriel Jackson.

8pm at Our Lady and St Michael's RC Church, Abergavenny.

<http://unicornsingers.co.uk/>

#### December 10<sup>th</sup> Hereford Choral Society

The annual candlelit performance of Messiah in the spectacular surroundings of Hereford Cathedral is always a highlight of the Advent season.

7.30pm at Hereford Cathedral

<http://herefordchoralsociety.org/>

# Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra

Leader

**Sophie Silverstone**

Conductor

**Dennis Simons**

Fantasy Overture: The Triumph of Aberfan Neville John

Violin Concerto No 2 in E minor, Op 64 Mendelssohn

Allegro molto appassionato

Andante

Allegretto non troppo - Allegro molto vivace

### ***INTERVAL***

Refreshments will be available in the St Michael's Centre

Symphony No 3 in C minor, Op 78 Saint-Saëns

Adagio – Allegro moderato – Poco adagio

Allegro moderato – Presto – Maestoso – Allegro

## Programme Notes

### **Fantasy Overture: The Triumph of Aberfan**      **Neville John (b.1928)**

Neville John was a violin teacher in the Merthyr Tydfil area and had three pupils in Pantglas Junior School at the time of the Aberfan disaster. Shortly before 9.15am on October 21st 1966 the colliery spoil tip high above the village collapsed, engulfing the school and killing 144 people, 116 of them children with Mr John's three pupils among the dead. 'The tragedy affected me deeply', he said, 'and I felt compelled to write a piece of music in memory of the disaster'.

His first piece, *Tragic Overture Aberfan* was completed in 1969, but soon afterwards the director of education asked him to compose a second, celebrating the courage of the people, their rehabilitation and their eventual triumph in the fight for better safety measures.

The sombre elegiac opening is followed by a change of tempo which brings a complete change of mood. The school bell, given out by the triangle, is followed by nursery tunes heralding the re-opening of the school after the disaster. Later, we hear the "jazzy" tune on the bassoon which symbolises the light entertainment that was thrust on the people of Aberfan in an endeavour to make them forget their anguish. From this tune emerges a triumphant march theme which by and large dominates the rest of the work.

### **Violin Concerto No 2 in E Minor, Op 64**      **Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)**

Mendelssohn first mentioned his idea of composing a violin concerto in July 1838 in a letter to his friend Ferdinand David, who was also one of the leading violin virtuosos of the day. Much care was taken in its composition and the first performance was not given until March 1845, with David as soloist. The concerto met with immediate and lasting success and has become one of the best-loved and best known of all concertos. In many ways it broke away from the usual classical mould and had a great influence on succeeding generations.

**DENNIS SIMONS**, PhD FRAM has returned to the UK after 20 years in North America where he was music director and conductor of the orchestras of Saskatoon (1993-1997), Shreveport (1996-2003) and North Dakota's Minot Symphony Orchestra (2002-2012). He has also guest conducted in the USA, Europe and Australia including the Toronto Symphony and the Victoria Symphony.

Prior to this he was founder leader of the Alberni String Quartet, co-leader of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and leader of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. He has performed as solo violinist on three continents and has given over 20 solo broadcasts for the BBC.

In addition to his position as Music Director of the Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra, he is conductor of the Bristol Chamber Orchestra. Future guest conducting engagements include the North Wiltshire Orchestra.

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### **Christmas Concert for Children**

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2016, 4pm at King Henry VIII School, Abergavenny.

Following the huge success of last year's children's concert, we are proud to announce this year's event: Jungle Bells. We will be playing music from the film *Jungle Book* along with other animal (and Christmas) themed music. We are encouraging children to dress up as an animal and/or bring a toy animal for the event, and there will be audience participation again. We hope to decorate the hall with a jungle theme, including artwork by local pupils. The event is free to all but refreshments will be on sale, and we are inviting The Children's Centre Trust at Nevill Hall Hospital to bring their collecting tins.

**MATHILDE MILWIDSKY** is 21 years old and was born in London. She was described as 'an exceptional talent' by the legendary Maxim Vengerov and a 'superb violinist and captivating musician' by the conductor John Lubbock OBE.

From the age of nine Mathilde attended the Royal College of Music Junior Department where she was a Tsukanov Scholar and was taught by Viktoria Grigoreva and Prof David Takeno. During her time there she won numerous awards including the Esther Coleman Prize for outstanding contributions to the RCM. At the age of 18 Mathilde was awarded full scholarships to the Royal Academy of Music, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and a place to read Music at Trinity College, Cambridge. She currently studies with Prof György Pauk at the RAM where she holds the Albert and Eugenie Frost Music Trust Scholarship.

In 2015 Mathilde was a finalist in the Royal Academy's prestigious Gold Medal competition, the 'Patron's Award', and performed a recital at the Wigmore Hall in the final. That year she also became a laureate of Orchid Classics' Young British Soloist Competition, held at the Wigmore Hall. Mathilde has won numerous awards and prizes for her performance including first Prize at the 2011 Madeira International Violin Competition. In 2016 she was selected for the Menuhin Competition and the International Leopold Mozart Competition.

Mathilde made her Royal Festival Hall solo recital debut in 2014 as winner of the Philharmonia Orchestra's Martin Musical Scholarship. She has performed as a soloist and chamber musician at venues such as the Royal Albert Hall's Elgar Room and St John's Smith Square. Mathilde featured live on BBC Radio 3 as part of the 2015 BBC Proms Composer Portrait Series and has also broadcast solo on BBC Radio 4, BBC World Service and on the BBC One Show.

Mathilde has appeared at festivals across Europe and has collaborated with many eminent musicians and chamber music ensembles including the Vienna, Gould and Florestan Trios and the Orion, Chiaroscuro and London Haydn Quartets, as well as with several woodwind ensembles.

We hear something of this unconventionality immediately, as the usual orchestral opening is dispensed with and the soloist proclaims the passionate and intense theme upon which the movement is built. After an orchestral repeat of this theme, the soloist enters again with arching arpeggios and repeated notes. These lead to low sustained notes above which the poignant second theme is heard, first in the woodwind and then taken up by the pleading tones of the solo violin. It is interesting to note the unusual position of the cadenza in this opening movement, just before the recapitulation of the main theme. Indeed, as the opening theme is heard again in the orchestra, the soloist is still weaving an intricate web of arpeggios around it.

A sustained note in the bassoon links the slow movement with the opening allegro, and the soloist introduces the beautifully lyrical melody. There is a more agitated middle section before the poignant opening theme returns. The Finale, which is also designed to follow without a break, has a short introductory section before the playfulness of its main theme bursts upon the listener. The mood is transformed, the movement dominated by the sparkle and brilliance of the solo violin.

Finchley Chamber Orchestra, May 1990

### **Symphony No 3 in C Minor, Op 78      Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)**

In 1886, the Royal Philharmonic Society of London commissioned Saint-Saëns to write a symphony for its seventy third season and the result was his most celebrated work in that form. He dedicated it to the memory of Liszt from whom Saint-Saëns borrowed the idea of theme-transformation, whereby a theme is used throughout the entire work, changing its character to suit the surroundings. The important part given to the organ has resulted in the nickname, the Organ Symphony.

Saint-Saëns said 'I gave everything to it I was able to give. What I have here accomplished, I will never achieve again'. He seemed to know it would be his last attempt at the symphonic form, perhaps writing the work almost as a history of his own career: virtuoso piano passages,

brilliant orchestral writing characteristic of the Romantic period, and the sound of a cathedral-sized pipe organ.

Although this symphony appears to follow the normal four-movement structure, it was actually written in two movements, each containing two connected parts which flow together.

After the opening Adagio, the strings introduce the initial theme which is sombre and agitated. The first transformation of this theme leads to a second motif which is distinguished by greater tranquillity, and after a short development in which the two themes are presented simultaneously, the motif appears in characteristic form for full orchestra.

In the Poco Adagio the peaceful and contemplative theme is given to violins, violas and cellos, which are supported by organ chords. After a variation in arabesques performed by the violins the initial theme of the Allegro appears again with somewhat dissonant harmonies giving way to the theme of the Adagio. The first movement ends in a coda of mystical character in which are heard the chords of D flat major and E minor.

The second movement begins with an energetic phrase which is followed immediately by a third transformation of the initial theme in the first movement. Swift arpeggios and scales on the piano are accompanied by a syncopated rhythm in the orchestra in different tonalities. The second Presto finishes with a new grave, austere theme from the heavy brass and basses.

Finally, following a resounding C major chord on the organ, the initial theme of the first movement resumes in chorale. This is followed by an extended counterpoint section, skilfully interwoven with a string melody, until in the final pages Saint-Saëns cranks up the tempo for the coda.

Southend Philharmonic Orchestra, July 1989

Programme notes include those supplied through Making Music's programme note service.

**NEVILLE JOHN**, the son of a coal miner, was born in Tumble, a mining village in Carmarthenshire in 1928. Following many years as a wages clerk in a colliery office, his success in Matriculation examinations at Cardiff University enabled him to pursue a course leading to the BMus degree. On graduation day Neville was informed by the Professor of Music, Dr Joseph Morgan, that he had won the coveted David Evans Memorial Prize, awarded to meritorious students in the Music Department. After a year of teacher training, he was appointed Head of Music in a Grammar School near Sheffield. For over 30 years until retirement, he was employed as Teacher of Orchestral Instruments for Merthyr Tydfil Education Authority. Whilst in Merthyr, his *March for School Orchestra* won first prize at the National Eisteddfod in Ammanford in 1970 with William Mathias as adjudicator, and his work with chamber ensembles and the Merthyr Youth Orchestra produced several first prizes in Youth National Competitions. His son Steven and daughter Delyth were both first prize winners in the finals of the under-19 Urdd National Eisteddfod Violin Competitions in 1975 and 1982 respectively.

Neville John became known as a composer mainly through his two overtures commemorating the Aberfan disaster in which three of his violin pupils met their early deaths. Songs and poetry have been written in memory of this terrible disaster, but until Karl Jenkins *Cantata Memoria* in 2016, this is the only known orchestral music to commemorate a Welsh mining disaster. He wrote *Tragic Overture Aberfan* in 1969, three years after the disaster, and *The Triumph of Aberfan* in 1970. Numerous public performances of these overtures have taken place in Wales, including one in Aberystwyth Arts Centre in 2009 by the London-based Southbank Sinfonia, conducted by James Slater. Many of John's other orchestral compositions have been performed in Newport, Nelson, Merthyr Tydfil and St Mary's Church Swansea.