

New members

If you would be interested in joining the orchestra, please contact us at info@abergavennysymph.org.uk. You can check our website for details of the rehearsal schedule.

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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: **Dance Blast** for provision of our rehearsal venue; **David Fraser at Abergavenny Library** for helping secure inter-library loans; The Music Parts Service at **Liverpool Libraries** for lending us music.

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 24th June 2018, 7.30pm

www.abergavennysymph.org.uk

Abergavenny Orchestral Society

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

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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 and we will send you details of forthcoming events and concerts.

Players in the Orchestra

1st Violin

Heidi Forde
Ruth Brown
Mary Dixon
Selina Hamilton
Eleanor Heap
Jane Leney
Stephen Shearman
Julia Palmer *

2nd Violin

Rachel Stublely
Jane Anscombe
Cynthia Bailey-Wood
Kathryn Clarke
Brigid Jones
Simon Marr-Johnson
Lynne Pollitt
Stephen Shaw

Viola

Simon Large
Clare McGowan
Rachel Tucker
Gavin Stoddart
Angi Turnbull
Meryl Jones *

'Cello

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

Double Bass

James Leney
Maddie Casey *

Flute

Bethan Barlow
Heather Leighton
Sian Rees

Oboe

Malcolm James
Martin Bailey-Wood

Clarinet

Bob Osborne
Trina Lodge

Bassoon

Janet Lloyd
Chris Poynton
Becky Rogers

Horn

Peter Geraghty
Sarah Jones
Rod Paton
Hannah Stonelake

Trumpet

Mark Perry
Paul Kelly *

Trombone

Iestyn Harding
Salvatore Frusteri
Mike Standley

Tuba

Chris Baker

Timpani / Percussion

Judith Pendrous
David Fraser
Odette Hutchison
Sam Proll *
Tricia Ransome *

Harp

Ceri Wynne Jones

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

Autumn Concert 2018

Our autumn concert will be held in Our Lady and St Michael's RC church on the afternoon of Sunday 18th November at **2.30pm** and conducted by our Music Director Dennis Simons. The programme includes Elgar's *Sea Pictures* and Brahms' Symphony No 2.

Children's Concert 2018

We will be holding our annual concert for children on December 9th at King Henry VIII School with guest conductor Michael Bell. We'll be putting more details on our website and Facebook page.

Orchestral Workshop

Following the success of previous years we will once again be holding a workshop in the Clarence Hall, on February 10th 2019 with Dennis Simons conducting. We'll be looking at Shostakovich's great Leningrad Symphony.

Other local concerts coming soon ...

June 30th - Gwent Bach Choir

Music for a Summer Lunchtime
12 noon at the Angel Hotel, Abergavenny
gwentbachchoir.org/

June 30th - Crickhowell Choral Society

Summer concert featuring Welsh music for choir, soloists and harp
7.30pm at the Clarence Hall, Crickhowell

July 1st - Crickhowell Choral Society

Dvořák Mass in D
11am at Brecon Cathedral
crickhowellchoralsociety.org/

Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra

Leader

Heidi Forde

Conductor

Dennis Simons

Gwent Carnival Overture

Warren

Leonore Overture No 3

Beethoven

El Cid Ballet Music

Massenet

Castillane

Andalouse

Aragonaise

Aubade

Catalane

Madrilene

Navarraise

INTERVAL

Refreshments will be available in the St Michael's Centre

Zampa Overture

Hérold

Blue Danube

Strauss

Hungarian Rhapsody No 2

Liszt

Programme Notes

Gwent Carnival Overture

Raymond Warren (b. 1928)

This work was commissioned by Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra and received its first performance in 2013. We are delighted to be playing it again this year in honour of Raymond Warren's 90th birthday. The notes which follow are his original programme notes.

The character of the music comes partly from two ideas going through my mind when writing it. One was the wish to pay tribute to Maria Jane Williams, who was a harpist in the early nineteenth century and a pioneer in the collecting of Welsh folk songs. She lived in this district and travelled around listening to the singers and notating their songs, and she presented her collection of fifty of them to the Abergavenny Eisteddfod in 1837, for which she was awarded a special prize, hence the use of some of these melodies and the prominence of the harp in the overture.

The other idea was suggested by a poster I saw here last year advertising Abergavenny as a town with mountains and markets. Well, there are, of course, three mountains, and so the overture was cast in three sections, each one starting with a short improvisation on the harp, leading into one of Maria Jane's lovely slow melodies, representing, perhaps, the beauty and peace of the mountain. After each of these a traditional fiddle tune is heard (though only the first time is it played by a solo violin) leading into the hustle and bustle of the markets with a medley of other songs and dance tunes - there are eleven in all. The harp doesn't take part in the dancing until right at the end when I thought Maria Jane might perhaps let her hair down a little!

Raymond Warren

Leonore Overture No 3, Op. 72b **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

Beethoven's difficulties in completing his only opera, *Fidelio*, have been well documented and explain why there are no less than four overtures

To achieve its folk flavour, the Rhapsody is set in the form of a *czárdás*, a Hungarian dance that is traditionally laid out in two sections, one slow and one fast. The opening, called *Lassan* (Hungarian for 'slow'), sets a proudly ponderous tone filled with theatrically melancholy emotion. Adding to the exotic flavour is the use of the so-called Phrygian mode, an ancient scale much used in Spanish music. This section is punctuated by several spectacularly virtuosic clarinet solos, meant to sound as though improvised.

The fast section known as the *Friska* (literally 'fresh' in Hungarian), begins with the tinkling imitation of the cimbalom, a folk instrument used in Gypsy bands. Adding to the frantically exuberant tone are several invigorating accelerandi and a final concluding spectacular prestissimo.

© Daniel Maki, Jan 2018

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

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 also conductor of the Bristol Chamber Orchestra with guest conducting appearances including the Mid-Somerset Orchestra.

Hungarian Rhapsody No 2, S.244/2

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Although Franz Liszt grew up speaking German rather than Hungarian and actually lived relatively little of his life in his native land, he always remained intensely proud of his Hungarian heritage. Not surprisingly, Liszt had a strong interest in Hungarian folk music and absorbed its influences in some of his own music. The best known of his folk inspired works are the 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies for solo piano, pieces that are still very much a part of the virtuoso piano repertoire. Popular as they have been with audiences, the Rhapsodies have been the source of some contention in certain musical circles. The controversy stems from the fact that the nature of Hungarian folk music itself has been a matter of considerable scholarly dispute. To many people, the idea of Hungarian music first brings to mind the so-called gypsy style of the Roma people, a style called *alla zingarese* in Italian or *Zigeuner* in German. (These days, this German word is considered politically incorrect by some, as is the word *gypsy* in English.) This is music which Liszt studied by visiting a gypsy encampment and listening carefully to the best gypsy musicians. Distinctive as the style is, with its wildly passionate and exotic character (heightened by use of the so-called 'gypsy scale' which contains 2 striking intervals known to music theory students as 'augmented 2nds'), it frequently employed material that was not genuine folk music. Some of it was popular music of the time and some was actually written by upper class musicians, causing considerable consternation among some members of the Hungarian intelligentsia who accused Liszt of debasing the national heritage. Although Liszt may have been deceived by some of the material, modern scholarship has for the most part redeemed him, showing that he did use actual Magyar melodies albeit in a form that was transformed by gypsy musicians.

The Rhapsody No 2 in C# minor is the best known of the set, and like many of the others, has been arranged for orchestra. The version heard today was transposed down a semitone to C minor and arranged by Karl Müller-Berghaus, a distinguished German violinist, conductor, and composer.

to the opera. The opera was composed between 1804 and 1814, and was originally entitled *Leonore*, after its heroine, whose love and faithfulness towards her imprisoned husband Florestan provide the basis for the story. The first Leonore overture was discarded before the first performance in 1805, at which Leonore No 2 was played. For a revival of Leonore in 1806 Beethoven, still dissatisfied, wrote the present overture, Leonore No. 3. Unfortunately both of these productions were unsuccessful and Beethoven had to revise the opera completely, making major changes to the libretto, for the definitive production in Vienna in 1814. For this version, now entitled *Fidelio*, he wrote a completely new overture known as Fidelio and now always used as the overture to the opera.

The three Leonore overtures are nonetheless still available as concert pieces, particularly Leonore No. 3 which is much the grandest of the four, being a virtual symphonic poem playing out the drama of the opera in itself. It opens with a dramatic slow introduction which contains musical references to Florestan's aria at the beginning of Act 2, Florestan being Leonore's husband and a political prisoner incarcerated in the castle dungeon. This gives way to a hushed allegro theme, not from the opera, which is developed at great length until halted twice by a trumpet call, the signal from the battlements that the Minister has arrived at the castle to set Florestan free. The build-up continues, broken by an exciting passage of rushing string scales, and the overture ends in a blaze of glory typifying, as only Beethoven can, the triumph of good over evil.

Euan Fairbairn, September 2010

El Cid Ballet Music

Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

Le Cid was premiered at the Paris Opéra on 30 November 1885. Whether or not one regards this attempt as successful, heroics play no part in the music for the self-contained ballet – without which no work at the Paris Opéra was deemed complete – which takes place at the end of Act Two.

Perhaps sensibly, composers did not spend much effort trying to make their ballets relevant to the plot of the wider opera. In *Le Cid*, it is necessary for the populace of Burgos to remain unaware of recent events – the murder of Count Gormas by the hero Don Rodrigue – and simply to celebrate the arrival of spring. This they do in ‘Hallelujahs’ before enjoying a succession of seven dances that may be summed up briefly: *Castillane*, a reworking of the *Sevillana*, from *Don César*; *Andalouse*, the lazy Spain; *Aragonaise*, what Massenet could have done in the field of operetta; *Aubade*, again, not a wasted note; *Catalane*, marked ‘sombre et très accentuée’; *Madrilène*, languorous wind solos; *Navarraise*, a finale that returns to the *Aragonaise*.

Massenet wrote these dances specially for the famous ballerina Rosita Mauri, who was painted by Manet, Renoir and Degas among others. He also incorporated what he called ‘quelques rythmes très intéressants’ (a few very interesting rhythms), which she suggested to him.

© Roger Nichols, for London Symphony Orchestra 2018

Zampa Overture

Ferdinand Hérold (1791-1833)

Ferdinand Hérold was born in Paris in 1791 and studied at the Conservatoire under Méhul, winning the coveted Prix de Rome in 1811. After working in Naples and Vienna he returned to Paris where he made his career in opera, which was at that time dominated by the imported music of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and Meyerbeer, and by the home-spun operas of Auber, Boïeldieu, Halévy and Adam. Hérold's operas demonstrate familiarity with both the German and Italian styles of writing, aspects of which can be seen in *Zampa*.

Zampa was produced in 1831, two years before Hérold's death, and is a reworking of the Don Giovanni legend (the alternative title is *La Fiancée de Marbre*). The overture falls into several sections, opening with a rousing march, in fact a pirates' chorus from the finale to Act 1. This is pulled up by a succession of chords which suggest that Hérold knew *Der Freischütz*, written in 1821. A naïve little melody, sung by the heroine Camille in the first act, follows, and then Hérold develops the opening

theme in the German style. After a delicate clarinet solo, the last section begins with the bright melody that accompanies Zampa's carefree aria from Act 2. While one could hardly claim that this overture is great music, it is happy and tuneful, and surely deserves an occasional airing.

Euan Fairbairn, January 2011

The Blue Danube, Op. 314

Johan Strauss II (1825-1899)

Johann Strauss the younger was undoubtedly the greatest of a remarkable nineteenth century dynasty of Viennese musicians whose popularity has never diminished over the ensuing years. Following in the footsteps of his father, the older Johann, his sons, especially the younger Johann, carried on the family tradition. With his own orchestra, Johann turned out a remarkable sequence of waltzes, polkas, quadrilles, gallops and other dances and, latterly, very successful operettas. He was idolized, not only in Vienna, but throughout the world, appearing in such far-flung places as St. Petersburg, London and the United States. His genius and a remarkable gift for melody raised his popular music to the level of a great art, so that his dances have a welcome place in the concert hall and his operettas in the world's great opera houses.

Those who have visited Vienna will know that the River Danube is far from blue, and probably never was, but Strauss used a little poetic licence in naming the piece which was to become the most famous waltz ever written. No lesser person than Brahms recorded his regret that he himself was not the composer. Written in 1867, at the request of John Herbeck, conductor of the Vienna Men's Singing Society, the original version, rarely heard today, was for chorus and orchestra. It rapidly became the signature tune of the Viennese and was looked upon as a second Austrian national anthem. Within a short time over one million copies of *The Blue Danube* had been printed.

John Dalton, November 2010