

### **New members**

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

### **Become a Friend of Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra**

Abergavenny Orchestral Society exists to promote and develop orchestral music in all its forms. We do this by providing weekly orchestra rehearsals and putting on concerts, and we try to cover a wide range of musical styles. We hold orchestral workshops where we invite non-members to join us to run through a larger scale work. We also try to encourage children to develop an interest in music, and for the last few years we have put on a free concert for children.

Our Friends scheme enables you to participate in these aims and to become more involved 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

or email us at [info@abergavennysymph.org.uk](mailto:info@abergavennysymph.org.uk)

### **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; **Abergavenny Library** and the Inter-Library Loans Scheme, and 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 18<sup>th</sup> November 2018, 2.30pm

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

# Abergavenny Orchestral Society

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

## Friends:

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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

Helena Todd  
Ruth Brown  
Romilly Cook  
Mary Dixon  
Selina Hamilton  
Jane Leney  
Elizabeth MacFie  
Stephen Shearman  
Julia Palmer \*  
Paul Walster \*

### 2nd Violin

Rachel Stublely  
Jane Anscombe  
Cynthia Bailey-Wood  
Brigid Jones  
Asia Joseph  
Simon Marr-Johnson  
Stephen Shaw  
Diana Turnbull

### Viola

Simon Large  
Clare McGowan  
Gavin Stoddart  
Rachel Tucker  
Angi Turnbull

### Cello

Stephen David  
Clare Fisher  
Laura Kostoris  
Rohan Lewis  
Tessa Lewis  
Hannah Poulson  
Sue Rogers

### Double Bass

James Leney  
Roger Levett \*

### Flute

Bethan Barlow  
Heather Leighton

### Oboe

Malcolm James  
Martin Bailey-Wood

### Clarinet

Rob Watson  
Bob Osborne

### Bassoon

Janet Lloyd  
Chris Poynton  
Becky Rogers

### Horn

Peter Geraghty  
Sarah Jones  
Rod Paton  
Hannah Stonelake

### Trumpet

Mark Perry  
John Roberts \*

### Trombone

Iestyn Harding  
Salvatore Frusteri  
Mike Standley

### Tuba

Chris Baker

### Timpani / Percussion

Judith Pendrous  
David Fraser  
William Fraser  
Odette Hutchison

### Harp

Emily Harris \*

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

Other local concerts coming soon ...

**November 24<sup>th</sup> - Crickhowell Choral Society**

Haydn's *Creation*

7.30pm Brecon Cathedral

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

**December 9<sup>th</sup> - Unicorn Singers**

Advent Concert

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

[unicornsingers.co.uk/](http://unicornsingers.co.uk/)

**December 13<sup>th</sup> - Gwent Bach Choir**

Christmas Carol Concert

7.30pm at the Presbyterian Church, Abergavenny

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

**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](http://amazon.co.uk), you go to [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://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.

# Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra

Leader

**Helena Todd**

Conductor

**Dennis Simons**

Mezzo Soprano

**Lowri Probert**

The Banks of Green Willow

Butterworth

Sea Pictures, Op. 37

Elgar

Sea Slumber Song

In Haven

Sabbath Morning at Sea

Where Corals Lie

The Swimmer

***INTERVAL***

Refreshments will be available in the St Michael's Centre

Symphony No 2 in D, Op. 73

Brahms

Allegro non troppo

Adagio non troppo

Allegretto grazioso quasi andantino

Allegro con spirito

## Programme Notes

### **Idyll: The Banks of Green Willow      George Butterworth (1885-1916)**

George Butterworth died in the early hours of 5<sup>th</sup> August 1916, just as dawn was breaking, caught in the sights of an alert German sniper after a long and dangerous night of fighting. He and his men had been striving to dislodge enemy troops from Munster Alley, a German trench near Pozières, abutting the front line. George, a lieutenant and acting company commander in the 13th Durham Light Infantry, had been fighting for hours and must have been exhausted. His men buried him quickly where he fell and his body still has no marked grave. His name is recorded on the Thiépval Memorial.

This piece is undoubtedly Butterworth's 'calling card' in much the same way that the equally pastoral and elegiac *The Lark Ascending* has become one for his friend Vaughan Williams. Both compositions were written, significantly, on the threshold of the First World War. Butterworth's Idyll grew from the folk song of the same name which he had collected in Sussex as early as 1907, though there are also two other themes at work: first, the melody to the folk song *Green Bushes*, also collected on the same excursion in Sussex, and secondly a melody of Butterworth's own invention.

The Idyll opens with the folk melody of the title played on solo clarinet before the strings take up the theme and develop this in a lush passage as the oboe and flute are introduced. The horns next usher in a more sombre theme echoed by the strings with a mixture of urgency and tension. A brief wistful passage with oboe and strings leads to a rapid climax and a harp glissando, after which the opening theme with its variations is reintroduced with more harp glissandi. After this dramatic section, the pace is slowed as the strings play further variations allargando before the solo oboe introduces *Green Bushes*. After further development on the strings, the melody is taken up by solo flute against a background of strings and harp arpeggios in a quintessential passage of pastoral writing. A violin solo prolongs this reverie before the oboe

### **Christmas Concert for Children**

This year's concert, conducted by Michael Bell, will be held in King Henry VIII school hall on Sunday December 9<sup>th</sup> at 4pm. This time we are playing music from films with a magical theme, including *Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Mary Poppins* and *Frozen*. Entry is free and we will once again be collecting in aid of the Nevill Hall Children's Centre Trust. Bring your children or your grandchildren and join us for a magical afternoon!

### **Orchestral Workshop 2019**

On February 10<sup>th</sup> 2019 we will be holding another of our popular workshops. Dennis Simons will be directing us as we look at Shostakovich's Symphony No 7, the *Leningrad*. This major work was written during the three-year siege of Shostakovich's home city by Nazi Germany starting in 1941 and the London premiere in 1942 was performed using a score that had been microfilmed and smuggled out of Russia.

We welcome enquiries from players in every section. You can find more details and an application form on our website.

### **Spring Concert 2019**

Our spring concert next year will be held in Our Lady and St Michael's RC church on the afternoon of Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April (time to be advised) and conducted by Michael Bell. The programme will include Vaughan Williams' Symphony No 2 (the London) and we are very excited to announce that Dennis Simons will be our soloist for Barber's violin concerto.

**LOWRI PROBERT** is a local mezzo-soprano from Talybont on Usk. She is currently in her third year at the Royal Northern College of Music under the tuition of Jane Irwin.

Before arriving at the RNCM, Lowri was a choral scholar with Crickhowell Choral Society, performing the alto solos in works such as Handel's *Messiah*, and Mozart's Requiem.

Lowri also took part in Welsh National Opera's Youth Opera and was fortunate enough to be given the chance to sing excerpts from operas such as *Le Nozze di Figaro* by Mozart and *Dido and Aeneas* by Purcell.

Lowri has previously sung with Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra back in February 2017 when she sang the mezzo solo in Mahler's 2nd symphony.

Lowri is very much looking forward to performing with the orchestra again and hopes you enjoy the concert!

**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 Alburni 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.

and horns play a figure from the lively middle section, though now resolved in a peaceful conclusion.

The work is characteristic of Butterworth with its emotional light and shade, tension and release. Short, passionate climaxes rise out of wistful, idyllic writing firmly rooted in the folk music of England. It was given its first performance on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1914 at West Kirby on the Wirral peninsula, in what was Adrian Boult's début as a professional conductor (his family home was nearby), with members of the Hallé and Liverpool Philharmonic. Its London première with the Queen's Hall Orchestra under Geoffrey Toye followed in March of that fateful year.

© Anthony Murphy, 2016

### **Sea Pictures, Op. 37**

**Edward Elgar (1857-1934)**

Elgar began to achieve the recognition that he had so long wanted as a composer with two works composed for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Queen Victoria in 1897, the *Imperial March* and the cantata *The Banner of St George*. But it was in 1899 that he achieved national fame when his *Enigma Variations* were conducted by Hans Richter at one of his concerts in St James's Hall, London. Interest was now focused upon Elgar and great things were expected of him.

The very first work that Elgar completed after the *Enigma Variations* was the song cycle *Sea Pictures*. One of its songs, using a text by his wife Alice, had already been composed in 1897 under the title *Love Alone*; it was published that same year, but by then its title had been changed to *Lute Song*. Alice slightly altered the words of the Lute Song and retitled it *In Haven* to make it fit in with a scheme of 'sea songs' that was forming in Elgar's mind. Alice's *In Haven* thus became the starting point for the cycle, although, as he gathered material to go with it, he realised that it must be placed second. Elgar was to some extent consciously modelling *Sea Pictures* upon an earlier unified cycle, Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été*. Characteristically, each of the movements contains subtle and colourful touches of orchestration that show his sensitivity to the text for indeed, *Sea Pictures* is not simply a set of songs about the sea. Elgar,

perhaps thinking himself isolated from the mainstream musical world, sought to focus on the isolating aspects of the sea, including the idea of the sea as the abode of death, the "watery grave". Thus in the first song, a setting of the poem *Sea Slumber Song* by Roden Noel, the sea sings a motherly lullaby, as it were to a sailor who will never return from its bosom. Alice Elgar's poem actually started out as a poignant recollection of a visit she made years before to the island of Capri, but behind it lies the idea that love is as permanent as death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem *Sabbath Morning at Sea* finds a sailor far from home, thinking of those he left behind while all around him sings the sea. There is no mistaking the "watery grave" imagery in Richard Garnett's *Where Corals Lie*, for which Elgar supplies a strange, almost supernatural kind of music. The last song is a setting of A.L. Gordon's poem *The Swimmer*, cast in a vigorous Allegro di molto. This is humanity facing the ultimate challenge of the sea. It evokes some of Elgar's finest music and is one of his most difficult, taxing songs: a fitting close to a reflective, thought-provoking cycle.

The first performance of *Sea Pictures* was given on 5 October 1899 at the Norwich festival; the singer was Clara Butt, with Elgar conducting

Making Music, Nov 2010

### **Symphony No 2 in D, Op. 73**

**Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**

Following the twenty-year gestation of his First Symphony, completed at last in 1876, Brahms wrote the second in a bare four months in the summer of 1877. He spent the summer in Portsach, a lakeside resort in southern Austria, described by Brahms as, "replete with Austrian cosiness and kind-heartedness". Later he wrote, "So many melodies fly about here that one must be careful not to tread on them", a conceit which can be applied to the symphony itself. In sharp contrast with the first symphony, with its tragedy, nervous tension and conflict, the second is the most radiant and genial of all Brahms' major works. "All so merry and tender, as though it were especially written for a newly-wedded couple", was the composer's own description.

Prodigal as Brahms seems to be with spontaneous lyrical melodies, apparently plucked from the Portsach air, in fact every theme in the first, third and fourth movements is derived in some way from the symphony's opening statement, shared between cellos and basses, horns and woodwind. The three-note cello/bass motif in particular acts as a kind of motto throughout the symphony. The first movement is not without its darker moments; the first entry of the trombones falls like a momentary shadow on a sunlit landscape. The movement comes to no triumphant conclusion; instead a long and eloquent horn solo leads us into a gentle and nostalgic sunset coda.

The slow movement, led off by an extended, ardent tune for the cellos, is the most serious of the four. Its middle section, a gentle theme in rocking rhythm suddenly gives way to a stormy fugato. The greatly varied recapitulation is disturbed by agitated figurations and a new climax. By contrast the scherzo-substitute movement, with its serene oboe theme, is simplicity itself. Lightly scored (trumpets, trombones and drums are silent), it is virtually mono-thematic – the two Presto interruptions are merely variants, at a different speed and different metres, of the oboe tune.

In the finale Brahms recalls something of the happy mood of the first movement, in music of indefatigable rhythmic vitality and cumulative strength. A soaring second subject, announced by the strings, and taken up by the rest of the orchestra, reappears, transformed, in the final bars of the symphony.

The first performance was given by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under Hans Richter on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1877.

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