

### **Autumn Concert 2019**

Our autumn concert will be held here in Our Lady and St Michael's RC church on the evening of Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November at 2.30pm. The programme includes Suk *Scherzo Fantastique*, Berlioz *Harold in Italy* and Sibelius Symphony No 7.

### **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](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.

### **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, the Music Parts Service at **Liverpool Libraries**, **Boosey & Hawkes** and **Oxford University Press** for lending us music; **Merthyr Tydfil Music Service** for the loan of percussion instruments.



# Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra

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

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019, 7.30pm

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

Abergavenny Orchestral Society is a Registered Charity no: 1076523

# 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](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  
Roger Evans  
Mary Geldart  
Selina Hamilton  
Jane Loney  
Stephen Shearman  
Julia Palmer \*  
Charlotte Price \*

### 2nd Violin

Rachel Stubbley  
Jane Anscombe  
Cynthia Bailey-Wood  
Brigid Jones  
Simon Marr-Johnson  
Paul Walster \*

### Viola

Simon Large  
Rachel Menna Hamlyn  
Gavin Stoddart  
Rachel Tucker  
Angi Turnbull

### Cello

Stephen David  
Clare Fisher  
Laura Kostoris  
Tessa Lewis  
Hannah Poulson  
Sue Rogers  
Roger Levett \*

### Double Bass

James Loney  
Richard Mynors

### Flute

Bethan Barlow  
Heather Leighton  
Sian Rees

### 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

Paul Kelly  
Mark Perry

### Trombone

Iestyn Harding  
Mike Standley  
David Hopkins \*

### Tuba

Chris Baker

### Timpani

Judith Pendrous

### Percussion

David Fraser  
Sarah Whitehead  
Odette Hutchison

### Harp

Emily Harris \*

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

## 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.

Emily has been a member of several community bands, including Abergavenny Borough and Usk, and recently as Principal Cornet of the Lewis Merthyr Band conducted by Gareth Pritchard. Now with the Tredegar Town Band, a rich variety of playing styles and venues have opened up, from appearances at the Old Vic in London, recording award winning CDs, involvement in projects with the Rambert Dance Company, and the stage production of 'Coal'.

During her time at RWCMD Emily received the Ivor Coles Memorial Award for 'exceptional musical talent', and has been a member of Indigo Brass Quartet which won the Philip Jones and McGrenery Chamber Prizes. In 2017, she obtained a distinction in her examination for the LTCL qualification.

Over the last year Emily has had placements with BBC NOW and Welsh National Opera. She also had the opportunity to play with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Vladimir Ashkenazy at the Royal Festival Hall, London and St David's Hall, Cardiff, performing Prokofiev's *Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution*. Earlier this year she was a finalist in the prestigious Yamaha Music Foundation of Europe Scholarship Awards, held at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

#### Other local concerts coming soon ...

##### June 28<sup>th</sup> - Crickhowell Choral Society

Summer Serenade: Music by Tippett, Gershwin, Simon & Garfunkel, Holst and Grainger.

7.30pm at The Clarence Hall, Crickhowell

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

##### June 29<sup>th</sup> - Gwent Bach Choir

Summer Music: Fun, Love and Kangaroos.

12 noon at The Angel Ballroom, Abergavenny

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

# Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra

Leader

**Helena Todd**

Conductor

**Dennis Simons**

Trumpet

**Emily Humphries**

Carnival Overture

Dvořák

Welsh Dances Suite 1

Hoddinott

Moderato

Presto

Lento

Allegro

Trumpet Concerto

Arutiunian

## **INTERVAL**

Refreshments will be available in the St Michael's Centre

Les Préludes

Liszt

In the Steppes of Central Asia

Borodin

Rákóczy March

Berlioz

## Programme Notes

### **Carnival Overture, Op. 92**

**Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)**

The story of Dvořák's tenure in the United States as first Professor of Composition at the newly founded New York Conservatory of Music is well known. Negotiations to persuade the reluctant composer were begun by Mrs. Jeannette Thurber in the summer of 1891 and when he finally accepted her generous terms, the thought of being parted from his deeply loved Czech homeland for such long periods must have given a strong impetus to Dvořák's composition of a cycle of three concert overtures, which he had begun in March 1891 and completed in January the following year.

The overtures, which are in fact thinly, disguised miniature symphonic poems, he originally intended to call Nature, Life and Love. The overtures present three manifestations of the divine life-giving force which Dvořák thought of as Nature and he unified them musically with a common Nature theme, which appears in all three. The overtures eventually emerged as *In Nature's Realm*, *Carnival* and *Othello*.

Although none of the overtures has a particularly definite programme, Dvořák's idea of the Carnival Overture was roughly that Man finds himself caught up in the whirl of life and is captivated by its changing colours and endless transformations. A past love is recalled (slower central section) and he briefly hears the carnival revelry in distorted form before being swept up in the high spirits.

© Dominic Nudd, May 2009

### **Welsh Dance Suite No 1, Op. 15**

**Alun Hoddinott (1929-2008)**

The Welsh composer Alun Hoddinott was born in Glamorgan in August 1929, and began his early studies there. His musical ability quickly became apparent, and he went on to study music at University College Cardiff, graduating in 1949. Ten years later, he returned to the college as a lecturer in Music and continued working there, becoming Professor

of peasant merry-making is then interrupted by the strains of the Rákóczy March as the Hungarian troops approach from the distance.

Berlioz's work is no mere simple exercise in orchestral arrangement for he developed and expanded the theme, and in the Faust version there is an additional coda of great brilliance. A rousing fanfare is followed by the march tune, firstly pianissimo, as if heard from a distance. There is then a gradual build up, with outbursts from the brass and, in the composer's own words, "the thunder of the cannon from the big drum", until "the final explosion in all the full fury of the orchestra".

© John Dalton, March 2010

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.

**EMILY HUMPHRIES**, from Penperlleni, is currently a Post Graduate Trumpet student at RWCMD, having completed her four year BMus (Hons) degree course in 2018 through the 'Brass Band Route' on her principal instrument, the B flat Cornet.

She has previously held the positions of Principal Cornet and Flugel with the National Youth Brass Band of Wales, and she took part in a brass Master Class with Crispian Steele-Perkins while at Croesyceiliog School.

Borodin wrote the symphonic sketch *In the Steppes of Central Asia* for an event to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reign of Tsar Alexander II. The music gives a convincing picture of the approach and disappearance of a camel train in the empty desert wastes of central Asia, and emerged entirely from Borodin's imagination, since he never visited the region.

The composer himself provided the following programme:

*In the silence of the monotonous steppes of Central Asia is heard the unfamiliar sound of a peaceful Russian song. From the distance we hear the approach of horses and camels and the bizarre and melancholy notes of an oriental melody. A caravan approaches, escorted by Russian soldiers, and continues safely on its way through the immense desert. It disappears slowly. The notes of the Russian and Asiatic melodies join in a common harmony, which dies away as the caravan disappears in the distance.*

© Dominic Nudd, October 2018

### **Rácóczy March**

**Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)**

Although the Hungarian March is usually attributed to Hector Berlioz as if it were an original work, it is actually an arrangement by him of the traditional Hungarian tune *Rácóczy-Indulo*. It was in 1846, while travelling in Austria-Hungary, that Berlioz took up the suggestion of a friend and made his version of the march. The first performance was given by the composer in Pesth where, with nationalist feelings at their height, it made a great impression amongst wild scenes of enthusiasm.

At this same time, Berlioz was crystallizing his ideas and ambitions to make a setting of Goethe's *Faust*. The première of *La Damnation de Faust* eventually took place in Paris in December 1846, only to fail dismally. However, there were parts of the work which proved popular then and have retained their place in the repertoire ever since. One of these is the Hungarian March which had been interpolated into the opening scene. In a rather arbitrary fashion Berlioz placed Faust in the plains of Hungary where he was to be found alone at sunrise. The sound

of Music in 1967. In the same year he was appointed artistic director of the Cardiff Festival of 20th Century Music. He continued to divide his time between his activities as a composer and his teaching duties until his formal retirement and he remained an active figure in Welsh music, widely consulted, admired and respected.

Hoddinott was an unusually prolific composer working mostly to commission, and completing five symphonies and three piano concerti. He also presented works in a lighter style such as these Welsh Dances, which were commissioned for the BBC Light Programme Music Festival of 1958. They are in many ways similar in style to Malcolm Arnold's famous *English Dances*, a modern take on a traditional style.

The first dance in duple rhythm is vigorous and robust, with a fine swirling coda. The Presto following has the character of a scherzo based on triplet rhythms, with a central Trio section in lighter vein. The Lento is grave and dignified, leading without a break into the final dance. This is marked Allegro, and has off-beat rhythms and tremendous energy.

© Dominic Nudd, January 2011

### **Trumpet Concerto**

**Alexander Arutiunian (1920-2012)**

The Armenian composer Alexander Arutiunian was born in Yerevan on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1920. Studying as a pianist and composer, he graduated in 1941 from the Conservatoire in Yerevan, where his composition tutors were Talyan and Barkhudaryan. Further studies at the House of Armenian Culture in Moscow between 1946 and 1948 culminated in his graduation piece *Cantata on the Homeland*, which made his name. In 1954 he became artistic director of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra and began teaching composition at Yerevan Conservatoire. In 1970 he was made People's Artist of the USSR.

Arutiunian's compositions are noted for their lyrical character drawn from peasant music, with much of his vocal music coming from Armenian folk-songs. His instrumental music owes much to the improvisations of folk minstrels, which had a fundamental influence on his composing style. His opera *Sayat Nova* owes much to such sources.

The colour of his music in the 1940s shows his kinship with another Armenian composer, Khachaturian, but in the early 1960s he began writing in a purer style, tending towards classical forms.

The Trumpet Concerto is through-composed in one movement. It contains a slow introduction to a fast section, followed by a slow central passage and a fast finale, in which much of the earlier material returns, but treated in a more elaborate manner. The writing for the soloist is very free, giving the improvisatory feeling that is so typical of the composer's style. The orchestral writing shows the influence of a grand Russian style and of jazz, with some allusions to Shostakovich. Rich harmony in the slow sections contrasts with a degree of violence in the faster passages.

© Andrej Lipkin, September 2010

### **Les Préludes, S.97**

**Franz Liszt (1811-1886)**

This is the third and most popular of Franz Liszt's 13 symphonic poems, and was conducted by Liszt himself at the premier in 1854 in Weimar. The evolution of the piece was long and complicated. Various versions were composed between 1844 and 1854, and it was first published in its current form in 1856. It was inspired by a long Ode from *Nouvelles Méditations Poétiques* (1820) by French politician and poet Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869), who was a pioneer of the French Romantic movement. This collection of poems was critically and popularly acclaimed, and emphasises religion, love and nature. This preface from the 1854–5 version was added after the composition was finished:

*Love is the glowing dawn of all existence; but what fate is there where the first delights of happiness are not interrupted by some storm...when the trumpet sounds the alarm, [man] hastens to the dangerous post, whatever the war may be...in order at last to recover in combat full consciousness of himself and entire possession of his energy.*

In a letter to his uncle, Liszt said that *Les Préludes* was the "prelude to his own path of composition". The manuscripts are preserved in the

Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv in Weimar. The concert was announced in the Weimarerische Zeitung: "Les Preludes - Symphonische Dichtung".

This term, symphonic poem, is believed to have been invented at that time. The invention of the symphonic (tone) poem is credited entirely to Liszt. Whereas previous forms of composition (concerto, symphony, sonata) had all consisted of separate movements each with different tempos, keys, and themes, Liszt united all these properties into one long movement. To unify the work further he transformed themes throughout the progress of the piece, each new development signifying a literary or artistic development of the subject. It became an important form of programme music. Such a process of composition proved daunting, requiring a continual process of creative experimentation that included many stages of composition, rehearsal and revision to reach a version where different parts of the musical form seemed balanced. The form of the work is: Introduction, andante maestoso, main part 1, storm, main part 2, march, andante maestoso, coda.

Liszt became the figurehead of the "New German School" of composers, using an extraordinary new harmonic language.

© Joanna Lavender, September 2011

### **In the Steppes of Central Asia**

**Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)**

Much of the music of Alexander Borodin was rescued, revised and (re)orchestrated after his death by Rimsky-Korsakov. The illegitimate son of a Russian nobleman, Borodin studied music from an early age, but his formal academic training was in the sciences. He built a career as a research chemist holding a professorship at the St. Petersburg Academy of Medicine for most of his working life. Borodin did important work in his chosen field and counted among his colleagues Dmitri Mendeleev, who formulated the periodic table.

Throughout his life Borodin composed in his spare time, and frequently referred to himself as "essentially a Sunday composer". Despite this Borodin was still able to compose a considerable body of music.