

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.

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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; Music publishers **Breitkopf & Hartel** and **Universal**; 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 2nd April 2017, 8pm

www.abergavennysymph.org.uk

Abergavenny Orchestral Society

Honorary Life Members: Jean Bradley, 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

Sophie Silverstone
Ruth Brown
Romilly Cook
Ivor Cox
Jane Leney
Caroline Fairchild
Samuel Hau
Lisa Orton
Paul Walster

2nd Violin

Alice Cox
Jane Anscombe
Cynthia Bailey-Wood
Brigid Jones
Trina Lodge
Simon Marr-Johnson
Stephen Shaw
Roger Levett

Viola

Simon Large
Lucy Meredith
Rachel Tucker
Meryl Jones

'Cello

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

Double Bass

James Leney
Kate Stephens

Flute

Bethan Barlow
Heather Leighton
Sian Rees

Oboe

Malcolm James
Martin Bailey-Wood

Clarinet

Robert Watson
Bob Osborne

Bassoon

Janet Lloyd
Chris Poynton
Becky Rogers

Horn

Peter Geraghty
Hannah Stonelake
Sarah Jones
Ian Axtell

Trumpet

Mark Perry
Jonathan Mudd

Trombone

Iestyn Harding
Mike Standley
Jane Godfrey

Tuba

James Davies

Timpani / Percussion

Judith Pendrous
James Joseph
David Fraser
Odette Hutchison

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

a 'professional' performance that moved me so much. Orchestra, chorus and soloists, left me in a state of complete awe!" He donated the proceeds from the sale of books, which amounted to over £200, to the orchestra for which we are very grateful.

We look forward to tackling Mahler's 5th symphony next year.

Other local concerts coming soon ...

April 8th Abergavenny Chamber Music

Rosie Biss Trio: String Trios by Mozart, Penderecki & Schubert.

7.30pm at The Chapel, Brewery Yard

<http://artshopandgallery.co.uk/events/>

April 14th Unicorn Singers

Good Friday service of Tenebrae, including Domenico Scarlatti *Stabat Mater* and music by Gesualdo and Victoria. Admission free.

2pm at Llangattock Church.

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

April 27th – 1st May Crickhowell Music Festival

Thursday 27th Jazz at the Manor: The Miroshnichenko Band, 7.30 pm at the Manor Hotel, Crickhowell.

Saturday 29th Celebrity Recital: Catherine King (soprano) and Jacob Heringman (lute). 3pm at Llangattock Church.

Sunday 30th The Courts of Earth and Heaven: Crickhowell Choral Society, Vivaldi *Gloria* plus Handel *Birthday Ode for Queen Anne*. 7.30pm at St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell.

Monday 1st Worlds Apart: Crickhowell Choral Society, Mozart *Coronation Mass* plus Haydn *Te Deum*.

<http://crickhowellchoralsociety.org/>

Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra

Leader

Sophie Silverstone

Conductor

Dennis Simons

French Horn

Peter Geraghty

En Saga, Op 9

Sibelius

Horn Concerto No 1 in E^b, Op 11

Strauss

Allegro

Andante

Allegro - Rondo: Allegro

INTERVAL

Refreshments will be available in the St Michael's Centre

Symphony No 2 in C minor, Op 17

Tchaikovsky

Andante sostenuto – Allegro Vivo

Andantino marziale, quasi moderato

Scherzo: allegro molto vivace

Finale: moderato assai

Programme Notes

En Saga, Op 9

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

A cold wind from the North – with this, the first of his symphonic poems, Sibelius announced his presence in 1892. It was an astonishing work at the time from the 26 year old composer, but he was not satisfied with the original version and made extensive revisions to it in 1902, at the same time as he was writing his second symphony, producing the version we hear today.

The title – actually in Sibelius' mother tongue, Swedish – means simply *A Fairy Tale* or *A Saga*, but perhaps surprisingly the composer had no detailed programme in mind. In fact he commented much later in life:

“En Saga is the expression of a state of mind. I had undergone a number of painful experiences at the time and in no other work have I revealed myself so completely. It is for this reason that I find all literary explanations quite alien.”

Nevertheless there is plenty of folklore to be found: one can almost feel the bitter freeze of a Finnish winter in the eerie string writing at the beginning; the lumbering troll-like theme that emerges in the woodwind, the procession of splendid heroic melodies, the rough-hewn orchestral sound, the wild charge to disaster and the final haunting elegy sung by a solo clarinet over two sombre chords. Each of us can create our own 'fairy tale' from the imagery provided by the music.

Certainly this piece made clear that a new and powerful personality was taking his place among the composers of Europe.

David Elliott, March 1990 (adapted)

Horn Concerto No 1 in Eb, Op 11

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

The first of Strauss' two horn concerti dates from 1883, separated by almost sixty years from its 1942 successor. It is not surprising that the work shows a thorough knowledge of the instrument's solo capabilities

Summer Concert 2017

Our summer concert will be held in Our Lady and St Michael's RC church on Sunday 25th June with guest conductor Michael Bell. Continuing our Finnish and Russian theme we will be playing Sibelius *Finlandia* and *Valse Triste*, Shostakovich *Jazz Suite No 2* and Tchaikovsky *Suite No 3*.

Autumn Concert 2017

Our autumn concert, also in Our Lady and St Michael's RC church, will be held on Sunday 19th November with our music director Dennis Simons. The programme will include Shostakovich *Festive Overture*, Rodrigo *Concierto de Aranjuez* for guitar and orchestra, and Sibelius *Symphony No 5*.

Christmas Concert for Children

We will be putting on another children's concert this year, this time conducted by Tianyi Lu. We are delighted to announce that Tianyi has just been appointed as assistant conductor to the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, working with Sir Andrew Davis. We are still working on the theme for our concert this year, so check our website for further details.

Orchestra Workshop Review

Our day spent working on Mahler's 2nd Symphony was an emotional experience. The day was spent in the extremely capable hands of Dennis who steered the huge orchestra and the choir that filled the balcony in a way that left us all feeling that we had experienced something very, very special.

Players have contacted us to say how much the day meant to them, but John Searight's words express how we all felt. He attended the day, selling copies of his Mahler biography and sitting in amongst the orchestra members. He said of the experience: *“What a wonderful occasion! ... I was completely won over by the enthusiasm and utter dedication of the musicians. When it came to the performance itself, I was 'gob-smacked'.* OK, there were imperfections, but I've seldom heard

PETER GERAGHTY began with the Eb tenor horn in the school band at the age of 14, but quickly switched to the French horn when opportunity arose in the thriving youth music scene that existed at the time, and became principal horn in both the Teesside Youth Orchestra and the Yorkshire Youth Orchestra before leaving school. He played in many student ensembles and orchestras while studying science at Cambridge, but, after leaving university, demands of work, and then family, left no time for playing for many years. It was not until the sound of a bassoon playing *Rite of Spring* wafted in through the window one afternoon, and led him to his new neighbour (Ian Smith), and thence on to Abergavenny Symphony, that a second playing career began. Pete would like to thank all connected with ASO for their friendship and camaraderie, and also to give an especial thank you to Ian Fisher of BBC NOW, who has managed to teach an old dog some marvellous new things over the past few years.

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.

as his father, Franz, was principal horn of the Munich Court Orchestra and perhaps the leading player of his day. Wagner is said to have taken his advice about the Siegfried horn call.

The concerto is continuous, its three movements linked and played without break, and was written for Waldhorn, the original valveless horn, soon to be superseded by the modern valved Ventilhorn.

After a single orchestra chord, the first movement allegro begins with the unaccompanied soloist playing a simple fanfare, perhaps representing the Hallo of its hunting horn prototype. This immediately gives way to the first subject, a robust theme based on this and played by the full orchestra. With the introduction of a trumpet and horn triplet figure the mood subsides for the lyrical entry of the soloist. When the orchestra returns to the opening theme the soloist impatiently interrupts, quickly mellowing into the second subject, another flowing melody, in duet with the 'cellos. This material is developed, with much emphasis given to the triplet motif before passing seamlessly into the second movement.

The andante movement is a serenade with horn melody over a string accompaniment based, again, on the triplet figure. The soloist becomes more passionate, but after a brief interlude of fervent 'cellos, he rounds off the movement with a return to the opening theme.

Preceded by a brief allegro based on the triplet call, the soloist leads off the Rondo finale with a jaunty melody and is answered by the full orchestra. An expressive second theme on the horn has to contend with some playful flutes before the soloist restates the original fanfare. Just before the final statement of the main theme, the horn indulges in a weighty recitative full of tongue-in-cheek rhetoric. If any of this seems to foreshadow *Till Eulenspiegel*, this is only reinforced when, with his final utterance, the soloist virtually cocks a snook!

Finchley Chamber Orchestra, November 1988

Symphony No 2 in C Minor, Op 17 Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Tchaikovsky's compositional style was strongly influenced by the teaching he obtained at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire where his professor was the director, Anton Rubinstein, whose sympathies were with the German masters especially Schumann, Bach and Mendelssohn. Tchaikovsky was the first composer to emerge from Rubinstein's institution founded in 1862. He learned from the German masters and then went his own way. His training left him with a certain veneration of western technique but he never lost sight of Glinka's legacy, and hence the synthesis of these elements together with the emotional explosive force that expressed his own personality produced works that did not win the approval of Anton Rubinstein.

Because of this mixed background Tchaikovsky could not be numbered with the Moguchaya Kuchka (Mighty Handful – Balakirev, Borodin, Cui, Moussorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov) but his relations with them remained broadly cordial and he accepted frank but friendly criticism from Balakirev when composing the *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*, his first masterpiece.

After his St. Petersburg Conservatoire days Tchaikovsky went to Moscow where he taught at the new conservatoire, directed by Nicolai Rubinstein, Anton's brother. He usually spent his summers with his sister Alexandra and her family on her husband's estate at Kamenka, a second home for him where he composed and loved playing with his sister's children. Kamenka is in the Ukraine and Tchaikovsky wrote much of his Second Symphony there in 1872 drawing on local songs for some of the themes. The Ukraine was known then as *Little Russia* and the inclusion of local folk material was the cause of the nickname, though it was not so dubbed by Tchaikovsky but by the critic Kashkin.

In this symphony Tchaikovsky was concerned to extend and improve his symphonic structures but using folk tunes in the process made this no easy task seeing that symphonic development works better using small melodic phrases rather than extended tunes. The Kuchka welcomed the symphony on its first performance, Cui excepted, but Tchaikovsky was

immediately dissatisfied with it and revised it in 1879. The new version was first performed in 1881 and this is what we hear today although some experts consider that Tchaikovsky's first thoughts were the best.

The introduction to the allegro vivo is dominated by a folk tune similar to the song *Down by Mother Volga*. It undergoes limited development before giving way to the allegro vivo, in sonata-form structure of considerable ingenuity which uses the folk tune again in the development section.

The outer sections of the andantino marziale use the *Bridal March* from Tchaikovsky's discarded opera *Undine* and the middle section employs the folk song *Spin, O my Spinner*, introduced by the clarinet. There is an unmistakable flavour of Bizet in the coda.

The verve and scoring of the scherzo are breathtaking and the trio seems to use a folk tune though its name has not been identified.

The exhilarating finale incorporates a song called *The Crane* which develops into a wild dance and is contrasted with a captivating lilting tune, the composer's own, introduced by the violins.

Ben Brickman, August 2010

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