

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: **The Tithe Barn** for selling our tickets; **Dance Blast** for provision of our rehearsal venue; **Manchester Beethoven Orchestra** 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 18th March 2018, 8pm

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

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Players in the Orchestra

1st Violin

Heidi Forde
Ruth Brown
Selina Hamilton
Jane Leney
Stephen Shearman
Christine Lenton *
Becky Doe *
Julia Palmer *

2nd Violin

Rachel Stublely
Jane Anscombe
Cynthia Bailey-Wood
Brigid Jones
Asia Joseph
Simon Marr-Johnson
Lynne Pollitt
Stephen Shaw
Diana Turnbull
Roger Levett *

Viola

Simon Large
Clare McGowan
Lucy Meredith
Rachel Tucker
Gavin Stoddart
Angi Turnbull

'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

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

Timpani / Percussion

Judith Pendrous
David Fraser
William Fraser
Sam Proll *

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

Cristian is most grateful for the generous support of the Nicholas Boas and Bedford School Trusts, and Talent Unlimited. He plays a Camillo Camilli, 1740, kindly on loan from the Benslow Music Trust.

Summer Concert 2018

Our summer concert will be held in Our Lady and St Michael's RC church on Sunday 24th June conducted by our Music Director Dennis Simons. We will have a varied programme of lighter music for you to enjoy on a summer evening.

Other local concerts coming soon ...

April 14th - Gwent Bach Choir

Brahms Requiem and Bach Cantata BMV 32
7pm at St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny
gwentbachchoir.org/

May 3rd – 7th - Crickhowell Music Festival

Thursday 3rd - Folk Night – Morfa
7.30pm at The Old Rectory, Llangattock

Saturday 5th - Vivaldi – Domine ad adiuvandum
7.30pm at St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell

Sunday 6th - Bach Cantata BWV 16: Herr Gott, dich loben wir
10am at St Catwg's Church, Llangattock

Sunday 6th - Handel – Alexander's Feast
7.30 pm at St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell

Monday 7th - Singers' Recital – The Divine Monteverdi
3pm at St Catwg's Church, Llangattock

crickhowellchoralsociety.org/

Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra

Leader

Heidi Forde

Conductor

Dennis Simons

Violin

Cristian Grajner de Sa

Overture to *William Tell*

Rossini

Prelude: *Dawn*

Storm

Ranz des vaches

Finale: *March of the Swiss Soldiers*

Symphony No 8 in B minor, D 759 *Unfinished*

Schubert

Allegro moderato

Andante con moto

INTERVAL

Refreshments will be available in the St Michael's Centre

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35

Tchaikovsky

Allegro moderato

Canzonetta: Andante

Finale: Allegro vivacissimo

Programme Notes

Overture to *William Tell* Gioachino Antonio Rossini (1792-1868)

William Tell, written in 1829, was the last of Rossini's operas (though the composer lived for almost another forty years). Based on a drama by Schiller, it celebrates the Swiss struggle for independence from the Austrian Hapsburgs in the thirteenth century. For a work which he was convinced would be his masterpiece Rossini judged that a more serious overture than usual was called for, and preceded the opera with a pictorial tone poem in four continuous movements.

The first section depicts a peaceful Alpine landscape. The opening bars for five solo 'cellos suggested to Berlioz "the calm of profound solitude, the solemn silence of nature, when the elements and the human passions are at rest". Twice, distant thunder is heard, and in the second section the storm bursts in all its fury. This is succeeded by a Ranz des Vaches, the melody played on the alphorn by Swiss herdsmen to summon their cattle, the alphorn represented exquisitely, but scarcely accurately, by the cor anglais. Birds twitter (flute and piccolo) while the triangle suggests the sheep bells of the high meadows. The idyll is rudely interrupted by a call to arms which ushers in the final section. This represents the triumphant uprising of the Swiss cantons against their foreign oppressors.

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Symphony No 8 in B minor, D 759 Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Although composed in 1822, the score of the Unfinished Symphony was not discovered until 1865. Why did Schubert complete only two movements of a symphony for which substantial sketches exist for a Scherzo, clearly indicating that a normal four movement symphony was envisaged? Many theories have been put forward in answer to this question. Perhaps there is something in the explanation that Schubert's illness in 1822 forced him to place the work on one side. But the most widely held view is that Schubert, realising the powerful beauty of the

CRISTIAN GRAJNER DE SA made his concerto debut at the age of 14 performing at St James Piccadilly, London and has since enjoyed performing in many of the most prestigious concert halls in the UK, as well as a recent live broadcast on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* programme. Concerts abroad have taken him to the Mozarteum of Salzburg, Salle de l'Utopia of Lausanne in Switzerland, Ateneo de Madrid in Spain and he has enjoyed performances in France, Germany, Italy and the United States. Cristian has appeared as a concerto soloist at the Corn Exchange in Bedford, Aldeburgh Church, Monmouthshire, the City Hall in Pontereas, Spain and in the Dukes Hall at the Royal Academy of Music.

Cristian received the 1st prize at the Groba International Violin Competition in Spain 2015 and was a strings finalist in the BBC Young Musician 2012 and Royal Overseas League Competition 2014.

Born in December 1994, Cristian was awarded the Leverhulme Scholarship at 13 to study with the French soloist Maurice Hasson at the Royal Academy of Music. He graduated in the summer of 2017 with a First Class Honours degree as the only student of Tasmin Little and under the close supervision of Maxim Vengerov. Upon his graduation, he was awarded the Regency Award and the J & A Beare Bow Prize; the most prestigious award of the strings department at the Royal Academy, awarded only to the most outstanding violinist graduate. Cristian has since been featured on The Violin Channel. He is now enrolled at the Mozarteum of Salzburg in the class of Pierre Amoyal.

Cristian has received tuition and masterclasses from many esteemed artists, most notably Sylvia Rosenberg, James Ehnes, Vadim Repin, Rodney Friend, Virginie Robbiliard, Olivier Charlier, Menahem Pressler, Ralph Kirshbaum and he is most grateful for the inspiration and advice of Carmine Lauri. Cristian has been invited to attend prominent festivals at home and abroad such as Academie de Musique de Lausanne in Switzerland, the Internationale Sommerakademie Mozarteum of Salzburg and Festival Groba in Spain. In February 2017, Cristian performed alongside his mentor, Maxim Vengerov, in a performance of the Brahms Clarinet Quintet at the Royal Academy of Music.

Because it's directly linked, the Finale comes as even more of a surprise, rapidly disrupting the Canzonetta's soulful spell. Here the ethereal soloist becomes an earthy fiddler, playing with blood-rushing abandon. In his notoriously vicious review of the world premiere (given in Vienna, in the composer's absence), critic Eduard Hanslick had written disparagingly of the scene of "vulgar and savage faces," "crude curses," and the smell of cheap booze the finale conjured for him. Most audiences, however, have been more than happy to be guests at this village party.

© Thomas May, for Berkeley Symphony Orchestra 2016

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.

two movements he had already completed, refrained from going any further for fear of falling below the standard of his achievement.

The two completed movements combine perfectly the romantic spirit with classical form. They are characterised throughout by the quality of song that Schubert brought to orchestral music and by a wonderful pathos and passionate contrast. In one sense the two movements are complete on their own; the tensions and conflicts of the first movement are successfully resolved in the second.

The first movement opens with a dark, unaccompanied theme for 'cellos and basses in unison, which gives way to a plaintive woodwind tune over quietly restless strings. The first tune does not reappear at the start of the recapitulation, though it supplies nearly the whole of the development section and acts as a recurring motto. After a dramatically brief transition, the second subject appears in the 'cellos, a long cantabile melody in G major, with gently syncopated accompaniment.

The sublime and lyrical second movement, in E major, is based on two main themes, one in E major, the other in C minor. Both are worked on with subtle modulations. But the whole movement is as lucid as could be, and within its enclosure of emotional feeling and expressive colour everything is said with a leisure that is part of the mood.

2011, author unknown

Violin Concerto in D, Op. 35 Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Tchaikovsky wrote his only violin concerto in less than a month in the spring of 1878 while abroad in Switzerland. Though the violinist for whom it was intended originally rejected it, the concerto's irresistible blend of lyricism, epic breadth, and festive energy has made it one of the composer's most beloved scores and a cornerstone of the violin repertory.

In his early years, the composer had an ambivalent relationship with the so-called "Mighty Five" — a group of composers (including Mussorgsky

and Rimsky-Korsakov) intent on creating an authentically Russian national musical style. Tchaikovsky ended up following his own path by blending national Russian elements with techniques and forms he learned from Western tradition. While the Mighty Five prized “do-it-yourselfness” and scorned professional training, Tchaikovsky attended the conservatoire and began to prepare his career methodically. But all his careful planning could not have prepared the composer for the events of 1877 and the turmoil they would cause.

One of the handsome bachelor’s most ill-fated decisions had been his attempt to offset gossip about his sexuality through a smokescreen marriage to a lovesick former student, Antonina Miliukova. Soon after the wedding, Tchaikovsky abandoned his bride and fled to a temporary exile in Western Europe.

There he at last experienced a period of relative emotional calm while sojourning in the Swiss town of Clarens on the north side of Lake Geneva. Tchaikovsky composed the Violin Concerto during the following spring in a whirlwind of inspiration that seemed to underscore his sense of recovery from what the composer described to his brother as his “brief insanity.”

Another catalyst, according to biographer David Brown, was purely musical: Tchaikovsky’s recent discovery of Édouard Lalo’s violin-centric *Symphonie espagnole* (much as his enthusiasm for *Carmen*, which he encountered in 1876, left its mark on the Fourth Symphony). What Tchaikovsky admired in the Lalo piece, he wrote, was the focus on “musical beauty” instead of the routines of “established traditions.”

As it happened, the young violinist who brought Lalo’s score to his attention, a recent student of Tchaikovsky named Iosif Kotek, provided a further impetus. Possibly a former lover, Kotek served as a very practical muse by advising the composer on technical matters about the solo part. To give maximal advantage to its prospects, however, Tchaikovsky dedicated the concerto to celebrity violinist Leopold Auer. Though he later became the concerto’s eloquent advocate, Auer initially

rejected the score as “unviolinistic” and declined to perform the premiere.

Despite Auer’s reservations, the Violin Concerto is carefully attuned to the solo violin’s expressive flexibility, ranging from elevated lyricism to rhythmic vivacity. In a sense, Tchaikovsky may have found relief in wearing the “mask” of the violin in the framework of a genre that could showcase his obvious gift for sustained melody. The music clearly steps back from the emotional turbulence and soul-searching attitude of the contemporaneous Fourth Symphony, though it exhibits an extroverted theatricality of its own.

Tchaikovsky integrates a considerable arsenal of technical challenges for the soloist with a juicy, unhurried lyricism that somehow also manages to touch on the epic. Although darker undercurrents occasionally intrude, the stereotype of the hyper-emotive, crisis-ridden Tchaikovsky takes a holiday; in its stead we encounter an almost Mediterranean gracefulness.

Beneath all the pyrotechnics, meanwhile, lies a wealth of inventive reimagining of the material. The first theme, for example, cleverly emerges from what seems to be a free-flight improvisation, while all three themes in the exposition play up various aspects of the solo instrument’s personality. Like Mendelssohn in his earlier violin concerto, Tchaikovsky positions his cadenza earlier than usual, at the end of the development. Its music represents an intriguing synthesis of thematic splicing and showy technical hurdles.

As a contrast to the opening Mediterranean character, the other two movements, remarks David Brown, seem suddenly to inject the composer’s “Russian voice.” The Canzonetta was actually a replacement (composed in a single day!) for an earlier slow movement Tchaikovsky intuited didn’t feel right for the piece. In this simple, light song, the soloist indeed seems to vocalize a gently muted, melancholy aria of pristine emotion.