

Chamber Concert

Sunday 8th May 2016

St Peter's Church, Hook Norton

Programme £1



Concert Dates for Your Diary

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Summer Charity Concert

Saturday 25th June 2016

Overture "*Cockaigne*" – Elgar

Symphony No.5 – Arnold

"A London Symphony" (No.2) – Vaughan Williams

7:30 pm – St Mary's Church, Banbury

Welcome and thank you for joining us for our chamber concert.

We have a wonderful programme of works for you spanning more than two hundred years of musical history. Our fantastic soloist, our own Jane Cerasale, performs Mozart's clarinet concerto. The concerto follows two movements from Faure's theatrical suite *Masques et Bergamasques*. After the interval we hear Ralph Vaughan Williams' masterpiece for strings alone and then to finish, Haydn's symphony of protest – the 'Farewell'.

We hope that you relax and enjoy our performance in this beautiful location.

Our next event, which is coming soon, is our symphony orchestra charity concert – see above for details – with a programme of well known, and not so well known, British music, from the 20th century. It would be wonderful to see you there.

We would also like to draw your attention to our new email address for obtaining tickets – email your requirements to BanburyOrchestraTickets@gmail.com

Peter Button
Chairman, BSO

Programme

Masques et Bergamasques Suite – Fauré

Ouverture – Gavotte

Clarinet Concerto in A Major – Mozart

Allegro – Adagio - Rondo

Interval

Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis – Vaughan Williams

Symphony No. 45 'Farewell' – Haydn

Allegro assai – Adagio – Menuet: Allegretto – Finale: Presto, Adagio

Paul Willett – Conductor

Paul Willett is our Conductor and Musical Director. Paul studied violin, singing and piano as a student but his main instrument was the French horn on which he gained his Performance Diploma from The Royal College of Music at the age of 16. He then went on to read music on scholarship at The Queen's College, Oxford, and studied for his teaching certificate in Music and Physical Education at Reading University.

For several years Paul combined teaching and freelance playing. He has given solo recitals and performed concertos throughout the country. He was a member of The Five Winds, a group that performed both at home and abroad, and also on BBC radio. Paul worked as a brass teacher for Oxfordshire Music Service and was director of a Saturday Music School of 200 students.

Paul is currently the Director of Didcot Sixth Form College and he continues his music making conducting various ensembles, both adult and youth.



Anna Fleming - Leader



Anna was born in South Africa where she started playing the violin at the age of ten. While studying music at secondary school, Anna became a member of the South African National Youth Orchestra. After successfully completing her music degree, majoring in orchestral studies, Anna joined the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra in 1992.

Anna moved to England in late 1996. Keen to continue her orchestral playing, Anna joined the Banbury Symphony Orchestra in 1997 and became the leader of the orchestra in 2000, a post that she has held ever since. As a committed Christian, Anna plays an active role in church music. Focusing primarily on private violin tuition, Anna particularly enjoys helping adults to learn to play and she can be contacted on 01295 780017.

Jane Cerasale - Clarinet



Jane began her musical life playing the recorder and piano. She switched to clarinet and came up through the ranks of the Bedfordshire County Music system to be principal clarinettist with the Beds County Youth Orchestra. She obtained a BSc Hons in Music at City University in London, a less traditional music course than most with a focus on ethnomusicology, psychology and recording studio techniques, amongst others. Throughout her time at City she studied clarinet with Joy Farrall at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Life then took over – but after a gap of 24 years, Jane returned to playing. Having recently moved to the North Oxfordshire area she joined the BSO's clarinet section last year. In addition, she occasionally plays in several other amateur orchestras and chamber groups, and attends various chamber music courses throughout the UK. Whilst the clarinet is her main instrument, she also plays the alto saxophone and piano.

Masques et Bergamasques Suite – Fauré

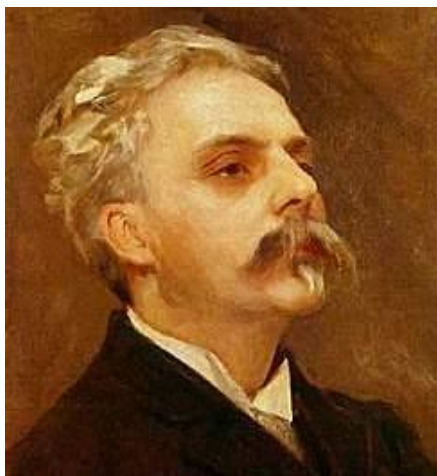
Gabriel Fauré could almost be considered the French Schubert. As Schubert was the greatest German composer of songs, so was Fauré the greatest French; indeed, both would be considered immortals had they written nothing else. Both also left us wonderful piano and chamber music. Both possessed prodigious melodic invention, and both were quite daring in their use of harmony. Both also tended to shy away from orchestral writing. Schubert's purely orchestral output, the symphonies, while masterly, quantitatively represent a tiny fraction of his total life's work. Fauré, likewise, left little for the orchestra and he withdrew much of what he did write (including two symphonies and a violin concerto). Nevertheless, his orchestral writing has substance; his symphonic masterpiece is perhaps the suite he

drew from incidental music for Maeterlinck's "Pelléas et Mélisande."

His last orchestral work, the suite "Masques et Bergamasques," has its origin in a theatre piece with the same title, assembled for performance at Monte Carlo in April 1919 from various earlier compositions, both vocal and instrumental, some already in print. The published suite contains four pieces, all of them otherwise unpublished at the time. Of these, the Overture and Menuet use thematic material from much earlier pieces, while the Gavotte is lifted almost verbatim from the first of the withdrawn symphonies. Only the Pastorale is original, Fauré's final farewell to the orchestra.

The original program for "Masques et Bergamasques" is as follows:

"The characters Harlequin, Gilles and Colombine, whose task is usually to amuse the aristocratic audience, take their turn at being spectators at a 'fête galante' on the island of Cythera. The lords and ladies who as a rule applaud their efforts now unwittingly provide them with entertainment by their coquettish behavior."



Clarinet Concerto in A Major – Mozart

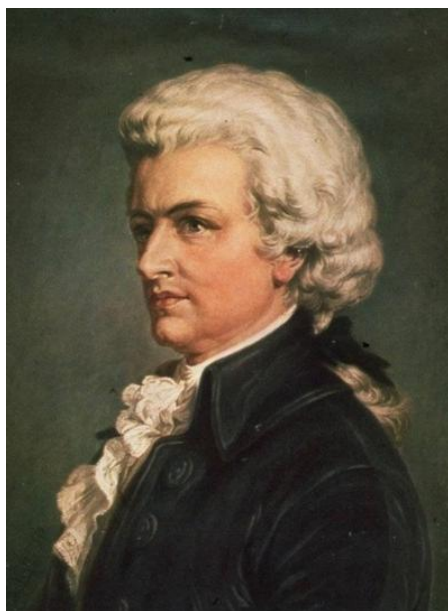
This extraordinary work is Mozart's last completed instrumental piece. It has been without doubt the most popular work ever written for the clarinet and few others have done the instrument more justice. Most of the larger compositions Mozart wrote in the last years of his life were commissions – attempts to raise badly needed cash. The Clarinet Concerto, however, was an exception: Mozart composed it, and the Clarinet Quintet, K. 581, for his friend, the celebrated virtuoso Anton Stadler. What began as a purely musical association between composer and performer became a deep friendship, cemented by their involvement with Vienna's Freemasons. They shared one other trait: neither could hold on to money. Stadler used to borrow relentlessly – often from Mozart, of all people. Fortunately for us, the friendship withstood the strain (Mozart having died before it most likely would have hit the skids).

At the time, the clarinet was a relative latecomer to Western music; while there is some evidence that both Antonio Vivaldi and George Frederick Handel employed the instrument occasionally, the clarinet did not come into regular use until the second half of the eighteenth century and was in continual evolution. While today's young band students learn on an instrument in B-flat, thereby making it

the default instrument, there are more varieties of clarinets – in shape, size and key, than in any other family of instruments.

Until his friendship with Stadler, Mozart had used the instrument sparingly, except in his *Harmoniemusik*, serenades and partitas for wind ensembles used for outdoor entertainment. But by the late 1780s, he was including the instrument in his last three piano concerti, his final symphonies and all his major operas composed in Vienna.

Mozart wrote the concerto in its original form for an instrument of Stadler's invention, an extended range clarinet (sometimes called a "basset clarinet"). The range of this instrument extended one fourth (four notes) lower than the standard instrument. The autograph



manuscript, however, was lost and only an adaptation for the regular clarinet, made in 1802 by the original publishers, survived. Since the late 1940s clarinetists have made numerous attempts to reconstruct the original score for the "basset" clarinet, and instrument makers have attempted to recreate the instrument. An increasing number of performers are currently playing the concerto on these extended-range instruments.

After the traditional orchestral exposition, the voice of the clarinet is seldom still. There is a masterful interplay between soloist and accompanying orchestra, as well as an astounding number of themes, most of them introduced by the soloist. The mood is changeable, at times cheerful, as in the opening theme, at others resigned or even sad; the tone rich and languid, by turns – all created by Mozart's unusual choice of secondary themes in the minor mode, rather than the customary major. The orchestra begins with the principal theme, which consists of three distinct motives that occur both together and separately throughout the movement. Mozart also develops this theme and its component parts by writing free variations on the theme for the soloist. After the repetition of the main theme in the second exposition, Mozart gives the clarinet the first of a series of secondary themes, this one also a complex series of motivic elements as well as an

unusual foray into the minor. New themes crowd in, combining a display of technical mastery with sudden shifts of mood, even within the same theme.

The slow second movement is one of Mozart's most poignant, gentle and introspective utterances. Yet, it is a simple ABA song, but the phrases are long and irregular, giving a sense of emotional tension. The clarinet begins with the first part of the main theme, which is repeated by the orchestra before the soloist completes it. The clarinet also introduces the B theme, in the relative major key. A repeat of the A section plus a coda completes the movement.

The Rondo finale is in a very different mood, harking back to the simplicity and charm of music from Mozart's earlier days and reflecting the happy mood of the opera *The Magic Flute* which he was composing at the time. The clarinet opens the movement with the rondo theme. In one of his inimitably elegant touches, Mozart elongates the concluding phrase of the rondo. Mozart binds together the material between the repetitions of the rondo with three additional musical ideas, one in the major and two in the minor. Of course, there are also ample opportunities for the clarinet to show off, but in no way approaching the level of technical fireworks found a generation later in the concerti for clarinet by Carl Maria von Weber, which

really put the instrument through its paces.

Stadler premiered the Concerto in Prague on October 16, 1791, less than

two months before the composer's death.

Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis – Vaughan Williams

The third Tune. *Tenor.*



Why fumeth in syght: the Gentils spyght: in fury ragyng stout,
why taketh in hand: the people fond: vayne thinges to byng about:
The kynges aryle: the Lozdes deuyse: in counsayles met therro,
Agaynst the Lord: wyth false accord: agaynst hys Christ they go.

As the title would suggest, the inspiration for the Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis was the work of composer Thomas Tallis (1505-1585). Tallis was not only a great composer, he was an astute politician. He remained a Roman Catholic throughout the social and religious changes of 16th century England, but managed to endear himself to every monarch that took the throne. He was even a favourite of the protestant Queen Elizabeth, who granted him the exclusive privilege of printing music and music paper for all of England.

The theme for the Fantasia comes from a hymn by Tallis published in 1567 in

the Metrical English Psalter; see above. The melody is in Phrygian mode (the scale you hear if you play the white keys on the piano starting on the note “E”), and sets the text, “Why fumeth in sight: the Gentiles spite, in fury raging stout?” Three and one-half centuries later, when the English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams was serving as editor for the English Hymnal for the Anglican Church, he included Tallis’ hymn. (It is still found in many Christian hymnals, albeit with a different text.) In 1908, Vaughan Williams used Tallis’ tune in a production of his opera *Pilgrim’s Progress* and again in 1910 when he was asked to write a new piece *Fantasia on a*

Theme of Thomas Tallis for the Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester Cathedral.

Vaughan Williams' score calls for a large string orchestra, a smaller and separate string orchestra and a solo string quartet. Those three groups often perform all together and sometimes separately as they respond to and echo each other. The antiphonal writing and the resonant, open sound so characteristic of English music is ideally suited to expansive spaces – in this case Gloucester Cathedral.

The Fantasia is a series of free variations of the hymn, sometimes quoting Tallis' hymn in full and often developing fragments of the melody between the three groups of strings. At its premiere, the piece was an immediate success. The London Times review of the premiere said, "Throughout its course one is never quite sure whether one is



listening to something very old or very new. The work is wonderful because it seems to lift one into some unknown regions of musical thought and feeling."

Vaughan Williams wrote the Fantasia in the same year he wrote his First Symphony. They are his first major orchestral works and represent a time of renewal of the great heritage of English music. With Edward Elgar, William Walton and Benjamin Britten, Vaughan Williams began to reclaim England's musical soul. Critic Hubert Foss wrote that the pages of the Fantasia "hold the faith of England, in its soil and its tradition, firmly believed yet expressed in no articulated details. There is quiet ecstasy, and then alongside it comes a kind of blind persistence, a faithful pilgrimage towards the unseen light."



Symphony No. 45 'Farewell' – Haydn

The 'Farewell' symphony¹ has a story (a true one) attached to it of which few can be unaware. Haydn's employer at the time, Prince Nikolaus, was accustomed to spending each summer at Esterhaza, but the regular home base of the court, and hence the living quarters for the musicians' wives and families, was at Eisenstadt. When the court stayed longer than expected at



Esterhaza in the summer of 1772, the musicians became restless. Haydn agreed to argue their case, and did so musically by writing a final movement for this symphony in which the musicians cease playing one by one and leave, blowing out their candles as they depart, with only the two principal violinists remaining at the close.

The strategy obviously worked, for Nikolaus is reported to have said "Well, if they all leave, I suppose that I had better leave too!", and accordingly the whole court departed for home the next day.

The remarkable thing is how Haydn managed to integrate this touching finale into a work of the greatest seriousness and originality. So original, in fact, that in a number of ways the Farewell symphony is quite unique.

For a start, it is the only symphony from the whole of the eighteenth century to be written in F sharp minor; so rare was this key at the time that special crooks had to be constructed for the horns. The form of the first movement is also quite unprecedented in that it seems to consist of one enormous development. The second subject, which is the only real 'melody', does not appear until well after the double bar in what would be a normal development section, and thereafter it never returns.

The recapitulation, too, is quite irregular in that Haydn continues developing the principal subject. For the rest, turbulent "Sturm und Drang" insistence, jagged syncopations, and some highly complex modulations mark the music's progress throughout this extraordinary movement.

¹ Programme notes – by kind permission
The Brandon Hill Chamber Orchestra.

There are further harmonic surprises in the yearning beauty of the highly romantic adagio, played with mutes, which Haydn takes into the distant realms of the unheard of key of B sharp minor, writing the passage partly enharmonically in C major to avoid confusion.

Syncopation is again a feature of the bright minuet in F sharp major, with its

relaxed trio, supposedly based on a Gregorian Chant. The presto runs its tempestuous course before abruptly giving way to the gravely beautiful 'Farewell' adagio, in which the slow and stately modulations gradually lead from A major to F sharp major for the final forty bars as the musicians one by one take their leave.

Banbury Chamber Orchestra

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Joining the Orchestra

If you play an instrument to a standard of Grade 7 or above and would like to play with the orchestra, find out more by contacting Anna Fleming on 01295 780017.

All rehearsals take place in Banbury in term time on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30pm.

