

Sounds of Autumn



Saturday 26th November 2022

Deddington Church

Programme Free



Concert Dates for Your Diary

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Christmas Concert

Saturday 10th December 2022

A programme of Christmas favourites and carols including

'A Christmas Carol' for Narrator and Orchestra

Music by Lawrence Killian

Words from Charles Dickens

Adapted by Margaret Killian

4.00 pm – St Mary's Church, Banbury

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Spring Concert

Saturday 25th March 2023

Norwegian Rhapsody No 1 - Halvorsen

A Hero's Song - Dvořák

Gaelic Symphony – Amy Beach

7.30 pm – Deddington Church

Tickets from

www.banburysymphony.com

Welcome to Deddington Church

Thank you for joining us in the opening concert of Banbury Symphony Orchestra's 2022/23 season.

To start, we play one of **Edvard Grieg's** early orchestral works '**In Autumn**'. Norwegian folk tunes are woven together by Grieg in this characterful opener.

Before the interval, we welcome back **Madalina Rusu** our fantastic piano soloist. She will perform **Sergei Rachmaninoff's** exciting **Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini Op 43** for piano and orchestra. The Rhapsody adopts a single-movement form in which Paganini's original theme is forged into a masterful set of 24 variations, broadly grouped into three main sections.

We conclude with the **Symphony No 1 in G minor** by **Vasily Kalinnikov**. Kalinnikov's musical output includes two symphonies and a variety of orchestral pieces, piano works and songs, but it is his Symphony No 1 on which his musical reputation now principally rests. The symphony is full of delightful Russian folk tunes, and the last movement ends triumphantly in G major after re-visiting and adapting themes from earlier movements.

Ian McCubbin

Programme

Overture 'In Autumn' – Grieg

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini – Rachmaninoff

Soloist – Madalina Rusu

Interval

Breath of Life – Kuzina-Rozhdestvenska

Symphony No. 1 – Kalinnikov

I – Allegro moderato (G minor)

II – Andante commodamente (E-flat major)

III – Scherzo: Allegro non troppo (C major)

IV – Finale: Allegro moderato (G major)

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 was the Director of Didcot Sixth Form and whilst he is now mostly retired to concentrate on his music making and being a 'stay-at-home' dad to his son Alfie, he has continued working as part-time Deputy Headteacher at Didcot Girls' School.

Paul wishes to dedicate this performance of *Breath of Life* to his mother Mary who passed away in October and who was his musical rock.



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.

Madalina Rusu

Madalina Rusu has enjoyed performing from a very early age, and is quickly establishing a successful career as a soloist and chamber musician. She has performed to critical acclaim in Romania, and throughout Europe in Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Since her arrival in London, Madalina has appeared as a soloist at Barbican Hall, Cadogan Hall, LSO St Luke's, St Martin's in the Fields, St Margaret's Church, Chappell's of Bond Street, Fairfield Halls, and elsewhere throughout the UK.

Madalina Rusu is a recipient of scholarship awards by the Martin Musical Fund/Philharmonia Orchestra (2005 – 2009), Ratiu Family Foundation (2005 – 2008), winner of the Brancusi Award given by the Prodan Romanian Cultural Centre (2008), winner of a Boise Foundation scholarship (2009), winner of the Ian Flemming MBF award (2009), and winner of the Edith Vogel Bursary (2009). Madalina's list of prizes include 1st prize at the International Piano Competition PRO – PIANO, Bucharest (2002), winner of the Croydon Concerto Competition (2007), and winner of all internal Piano Competitions at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London (2005, 2008). Madalina is also a major prize winner in the International Piano Competition 'Konzerteum' (Athens, 2000), Oxford

Professional Recital Prize (2005, 2007, 2008), Tunbridge Wells International Young Artists Competition (2008), and the Hastings International Piano Concerto Competition (2009).

During her studies, Madalina has played in numerous masterclasses held at the Dartington Summer School and at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where her talent has been recognised by distinguished musicians such as Richard Goode, Paul Lewis, John Lill, Imogen Cooper, Simon Trpčeski, Stephen Kovacevich, Pascal Rogé, Bryce Morrison, Alfredo Perl, Joanna MacGregor, Douglas Finch, Daniel Adni, and Andrew Zolinsky.

Born in 1985 in Constanta, Romania, Madalina Rusu began her musical studies at the Music High School in Constanta with professors Iuliana Carlig, Cristian Dumitrescu and Constantin Ionescu – Vovu. Since September 2004, she has been studying piano with Professor Joan Havill at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London, where she gained a First class BMus Honours degree, and has graduated the MMus course (Guildhall Artist – Performance) with distinction. Madalina has been awarded the prestigious Guildhall Artist Fellowship, and she currently holds a busy piano teaching post at the Orchard House School, London, and she also has her own teaching studio in her home in Biggleswade, Bedfordshire.

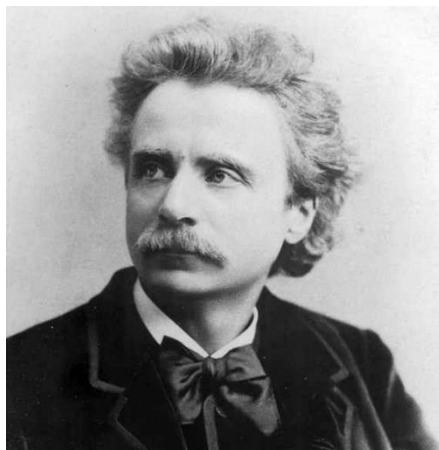
Overture 'In Autumn'

Edvard Grieg

Im Herbst (In Autumn), is a concert overture written by Edvard Grieg in 1865.

Edvard Grieg was born in Bergen, Norway in June 1843 and died in September 1907. His mother was his first piano teacher and taught him to play from the age of 6. In the summer of 1858, Grieg met the eminent Norwegian violinist Ole Bull, who recognized the 15-year-old boy's talent and persuaded his parents to send him to the Leipzig Conservatory. Grieg enrolled in the conservatory, concentrating on the piano, and enjoyed the many concerts and recitals given in Leipzig. In 1861 he made his debut as a concert pianist, in Karlshamn, Sweden. In 1862, he finished his studies in Leipzig and held his first concert in his home town, where the programme included Beethoven's Pathétique sonata.

Grieg composed during the Romantic period. He is best known for his Piano Concerto in A minor, for his incidental music to Henrik Ibsen's play Peer Gynt (which includes Morning Mood and In the Hall of the Mountain King), and for his collection of piano miniatures Lyric Pieces. Grieg is renowned as a nationalist composer: his many short pieces for piano — often based on Norwegian folk tunes and dances — led



some to call him the “Chopin of the North”.

In the spring of 1903, Grieg made nine 78-rpm gramophone recordings of his piano music in Paris. All of these historic discs have been reissued on both LPs and CDs and, despite their sound quality, show his artistry as a pianist.

On a visit to Copenhagen, Grieg showed his overture *In Autumn* to Niels Gade, who told Grieg: “This is trash, Grieg; go home and write something better.” After this, Grieg arranged the overture for piano duet and sent it in to a competition at the Swedish Academy, one of the judges being Gade. The overture took first prize and was published in its duet form in Stockholm.

The opening Andante in D major starts with chords played by the orchestra, contrasting with a sunny woodwind theme. The tension slowly builds to a D minor Allegro section in sonata form. The orchestra takes up the main theme

in D minor (taken from a song entitled “Autumn Storm”). After the main theme, we hear a secondary theme in F major. The development brings the return of previous themes through a series of restless modulations. After a slower section for horn and strings, the recapitulation brings the return of the main themes. The overture concludes with a triumphant reprise of the opening woodwind theme.

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Nicolo Pagnini (1782–1840) was not only a stellar violinist but also a rock star type performer during his concertizing career which ended in 1834. One of his claims to fame was his astonishing violin technique. He dazzled audiences with various displays not only of virtuosity and pioneering violin techniques (pizzicato with the left as well as the right hand, complicated bowings and fingerings, etc.), but also with strange tricks to mesmerize devoted fans.

It was not all talent. He suffered, or perhaps was blessed by, Ehlers Danlos syndrome which gave him extraordinary joint flexibility, allowing him to “twist his wrist in all directions” (Philip Sandblom in *Creativity and Disease*). For extra showmanship, at one of his concerts, he cut three of the four strings



of his violin and continued his concert on a single string, flipping his arm and bow in amazing directions thanks to his special joint flexibility.

Some said that his prowess resulted from contact with the devil; some said he even had a cloven foot (again a devil reference). Goethe noted, "In Paganini the demonic can be seen very clearly, and it is this that enables him to produce his marvelous effect. "The French critic, F. J. Fetis, echoed the sentiment saying, "the extraordinary expression of his face...Together with the sardonic smile appeared to be unmistakable evidences of a Satanic origin." He was from time to time called Mephistopheles, charlatan, witch's son, and wizard. Some said he played on strings made from the intestines of one of his deceased lovers. Compounding his stunning musical performances and gossip was his physical image. He usually dressed in black, was delivered to many concerts in a coach drawn by four black horses, was tall and thin, likened to a cadaver, and had exceptionally long arms and fingers (probably resulting from Marfan syndrome) and jet black hair.

He was dramatic and seductive on many levels. He cultivated these magical perceptions. Sometimes he tuned his violin a semitone higher to create brilliance, increasing the astonishing effect of his playing.

Paganini's Twenty-four Caprices for Solo Violin became an inspirational magnet for important composers such as Brahms (Opus 35), Schumann (Opus 10 and 3), and Liszt (Six Transcendental Etudes) who were lured to try their hand at piano transcriptions. In 1934, Rachmaninoff was drawn to the well, and he selected the twenty-fourth caprice as the basis for a set of variations which many have said is his finest work for piano and orchestra. As a virtuoso pianist, it is more than likely he was acquainted with the precedents. Opus 43 was his last work in this format.

Rachmaninoff was also inclusive of elements within Paganini's life such as his exploitative relationships with women, as well as the scary demonic association. "All the variations which have the Dies Irae theme represent the evil spirit...Paganini himself appears in the theme," he explained. During the nineteenth century, the somber Dies Irae theme had become not only a "death theme" but an idea which represented the supernatural. The pairing of this element with the zippy Paganini theme iterated at the beginning is a bold and significant combination. Both, however, are part of a full Paganini portrait.

Your musical itinerary is as follows:

Contrary to traditional variation format which states a theme and variations follow, Rachmaninoff's introduction begins with an *Allegro vivace* which

starts the variation procedure itself. The theme is broken up into tiny points, punctuated by the pianist. It is a saucy, rhythmically active tune, highly etched with leaps and rests, carving a memorable line.

The presentation of the theme is presented next, sung in unison by violins, accompanied by the piano.

Variations 2–6 continue the variation idea in its original tempo and energy. Like the Brahms, Rachmaninoff adds ever increasing complexity to the main idea as the variations progress.

Variation 7: This interpolates the Dies Irae, Day of Judgment chant which is first stated in the piano as a sustained melody in half notes. The speed is sharply reduced with the introduction of this dark force. Rachmaninoff wrote of this inclusion saying that “all the variations which have this liturgical statement represent the evil spirit to whom Paganini sold his soul for ‘perfection in his art and the love of a woman.’” (Letter to Fokine)

Variations 8, 9, and 10, “are the development of this evil spirit.” (Rachmaninoff). The theme becomes more and more overt and forceful. Variation 10 casts the Dies Irae in bold octaves in the middle register from the soloist, marked *marcato*.

Variation 11 marks a sharply changed mood: aggressiveness is gone as the music enters into “the domain of love.”

(Rachmaninoff) String tremolos create a shimmering curtain of sound which is completed by a mysterious passage in the harp. The meter changes to $\frac{3}{4}$. The piano has improvisatory freedom with light accompaniment.

Variation 12: Tempo di Minuetto. The dance “introduces the presence of a woman.”

Variation 13: “the conversation between a man and a woman” (Rachmaninoff). The dance-like character of the preceding variation is augmented, but now with a more demonic character. The waltz is marked *molto marcato*. Sometimes the piano emphasizes the second beat, which now along with the orchestral emphasis on the first beat creates a strong and violent sensation.

Variation 14: The waltz meter continues, but the music is heavier and more martial, “like a parade of three-footed soldiers” (Jonathan Kramer) Horns and strings start off the transformation; the texture is thick and chordal.

Variation 15: a piano solo of twenty-seven measures, similar to a cadenza.

Variations 16, 17, and 18 feature new viewpoints of the main idea, and the tempo slows down for all three. The sixteenth features solo violin with piano decorations. The 17th starts off with low sounds from the piano which grow directly from the orchestral tremolo at

the end of 16. The 18th is a romantic nocturne, based on an inversion of the main theme, which is sung first by the soloist and then by the orchestra. Rachmaninoff called this the “ultimate love episode.” The transformation of the bouncing main theme into a lyrical statement is magical and stunning. For information on how this happens see, Chien Chou “Variation Procedure in Rachmaninoff’s Piano Works” (Ph. D. dissertation, Boston University).

Variations 19–20 pay more homage to the violin inspiration with copious pizzicati and elaborate string figuration. In variation 20, the pianist’s hands play in parallel motion and the tempo accelerates in a perpetual motion style.

Variation 19: This marks a big change into the highly technical drama of the whole piece. This variation, Rachmaninoff explained “is Paganini’s triumph with his diabolic pizzicato.” String pizzicati are imitated by the piano, often in a high register with snappy articulations.

Variations 21–22 are rapidly moving scherzi. “It seems to me that the other personages representing the evil spirit should be drawn as caricatures in their fight for the woman and Paganini’s art. They should also be with violins but even more fantastic and grotesque.” Variation 22 is the longest variation of the entire set: it is divided into three sections, concluding with a cadenza

which is introduced by an orchestral crescendo.

Variation 23: moves back in 2/4 meter, the original marking for the Paganini theme. Rhythmic contrasts between orchestra and pianist offer not only complexity but growing intensity.

Variation 24: provides a massive capstone to the entire work. The Dies Irae theme emerges heavily in brass and strings while piano and winds recall prominent features of the subject. A brilliant coda reiterates fragments of the theme, compressing earlier ideas within a massive acceleration. Suddenly and surprisingly there is a drop to an unexpected soft dynamic and two cadential chords from the piano mark the ending.

Breath of Life

Anna Kuzina- Rozhdestvenska

Ukrainian composer. She was born on August 14, 1984 in Simferopol. Anna is the eldest of five children. The first musical works belong to the age of five. In 1998, she graduated with honors from a music school in the piano class. In 1998, she entered the theoretical department of the Simferopol Music School named after P. I. Tchaikovsky, which she graduated externally with honors in 2002, already being a student of the first year of the composition faculty of the National Music Academy of Ukraine named after P. I. Tchaikovsky (class of professor Yevhen Stankovych). In 2006, she received a master's degree and in the same year entered the assistantship-internship of the P. I. Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine, which she graduated in 2009. In 2009–2010 studied at the postgraduate school of the National Music Academy of Ukraine named after P. I. Tchaikovsky. At the end of the same year, she joined the Kyiv Union of Composers of Ukraine. Since March 2011, she has been a member of the National Union of Composers of Ukraine.

The author's orchestral music is marked by the predominance of *large-scale opuses*:



"Slavic Overture" for brass band (2005), concerto for piano and orchestra (2006), symphony-concerto for viola and orchestra (2nd edition of the chamber symphony-concerto for viola and orchestra, 2011; 3rd edition - for violin and orchestra, 2014), miniature **"Breath of Life"** (2015), in editions for chamber and symphony orchestras (2022). On October 2 in the city of Didcot, this piece in the version for chamber orchestra was performed by the Didcot Concert Orchestra under the direction of Geoff Bushell.

Symphony No. 1

Vasily Kalinnikov

Vasily Kalinnikov is one of the great might-have-beens of Russian music. That was certainly the verdict of the best-known of all Russian musicologists, Boris Asafyev, and his verdict was based not only on the composer's ill-health and early demise but also on the extraordinary promise of Kalinnikov's First Symphony. Not able to pay his fees at Moscow Conservatory, Kalinnikov studied at the less prestigious Moscow Philharmonic Society Music School, on a scholarship as a bassoonist, and thereafter scratched a living as theatre musician, copyist and theory teacher. In 1892 he came to the attention of Tchaikovsky, who recommended him for a conductorship at the Maly Theatre (sister company to the larger Bolshoi). Soon afterwards, however, his health gave way, and he spent the remainder of his life in the Crimea, succumbing to tuberculosis three days before his 35th birthday.

Composed in 1895–96, shortly after his move south, Kalinnikov's First Symphony is filled to bursting with the health and energy he did not enjoy in real life. The first movement conforms outwardly to the textbook model of sonata form, but within those bounds it is surprised by joy at every turn. A folksy modal theme on the strings is



immediately questioned by a chromatic riposte in the horns, setting up a contrast symbolic of Nature and Art – of life outdoors and indoors – that will animate the entire Symphony. And if the opening tune is fairly routine by Russian symphonic standards, Kalinnikov has one up his sleeve that is worthy of Borodin, or even of Tchaikovsky himself. Horn, violas and cellos introduce it, before the violins sing their hearts out with it. These ideas are stitched together with impressive displays of counterpoint and modulation, neither dulled by duty nor driven towards dramatic hysteria, but instead constantly touched by the delight of discovery. Then just when it seems that the first movement's sense of proportion may have deserted it, Kalinnikov wraps things up with a stern coda.

Close your eyes and you could imagine that an ensemble of balalaikas had crept onstage to introduce the slow movement. That magical evocation in fact comes simply from muted violins

and harp in unison, setting the scene for a heaven-sent melody on the cor anglais (how quickly César Franck's Symphony in D minor of 1888 – or perhaps news of it – seems to have reached impressionable Russian ears). According to a biographer friend, the movement came to Kalinnikov on a sleepless night when 'the silence itself seems to vibrate'. The harp continues beneath the contrasting tune on the oboe, which initiates a central section in which 'one hears the throbbing of one's heart and experiences a feeling of loneliness'.

The Scherzo is once again built from folksong-like fragments, reconciled to a Beethovenian momentum (a possibility Beethoven himself had explored in his 'Razumovsky' string quartets), while the Trio section is another oboe melody, in moderate dance tempo.

The finale winds the clock back to the opening of the first movement, and for a moment it seems as though the wells

of inspiration may have run dry. But Kalinnikov is a subtle strategist, as becomes clear when the horn/viola/cello tune returns, at first like a welcome guest to the festivities, but then whisked off in a fast dance, so that it does not know quite whether to be shocked or thrilled.

Kalinnikov dedicated the Symphony to his friend and support Semyon Kruglikov, who submitted it for inspection to Rimsky-Korsakov, who in turn was put off by numerous errors in the score (possibly the fault of an inexperienced copyist). Nevertheless in 1897 the work was successfully premiered in Kiev, and performances soon followed in Moscow, Vienna, Berlin and Paris. Kalinnikov could not repeat its freshness in his Second (and last) Symphony, but the First has never lost its place on the fringes of the repertory or in the hearts of those lucky enough to encounter it.

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

