

Autumn Concert

Saturday 21st November 2015

Church of St Peter and St Paul,
Deddington

Programme £1



Concert Dates for Your Diary

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Saturday 12th December 2015

Christmas Family Concert

BHF Celebration of Life

Supporting our charity partners

British Heart Foundation

Programme of Festive Favourites – www.banburysymphony.org

4:00 pm – St Mary's Church, Banbury



Banbury Symphony Orchestra

Saturday 19th March 2016

Spring Concert

Violin Concerto – Brahms

Symphony No.2 – Borodin

7:30 pm – Church of St Peter and St Paul, Deddington

Welcome and thanks for joining us for our Autumn concert.

We have a splendid programme this evening. Many in the audience will be familiar with Brahms' Academic Festival Overture and the glorious 4th Symphony of Schumann. If you don't know the Dohnányi, you're in for a treat. You will hear the melody of *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* developed through a range of variations that is positively astounding!

If you are free to join us, it will be lovely to have your company at 4:00 pm on Saturday 12 December for our Christmas Celebration of Life. All of the profits from our concert will go to our charity partners British Heart Foundation in Banbury.

We are grateful to our friends here at St Peter and St Paul for the use of their lovely piano and for their warm hospitality.

Peter Button
Chairman, BSO

Programme

Overture 'Academic Festival' – Brahms

Variations on a Nursery Tune – Dohnányi

Introduction (Maestoso) ~ Theme (Allegro) ~ Variations:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| I - Poco più mosso | VI – Ancora più mosso - Allegro |
| II - Risoluto | VII – Walzer – Tempo Giusto |
| III - L'istesso tempo | VIII – Alla Marcia – Allegro moderato |
| IV - Molto meno mosso –
Allegretto moderato | IX - Presto |
| V - Più mosso | X – Passacaglia – Adagio non troppo |
| | XI – Choral - Maestoso |
- Finale fugato - Allegro vivace

Interval

Symphonic Poem 'Mazeppa' – Liszt

Symphony No.4 in D Minor – Schumann

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 – Ziemlich langsam - Lebhaft | 3 - Scherzo: Lebhaft |
| 2 - Romanze: Ziemlich langsam | 4 - Langsam; Lebhaft |

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.

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. 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/Philarmonia 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 masterclasses held at Dartington Summer School and at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where her talent has been

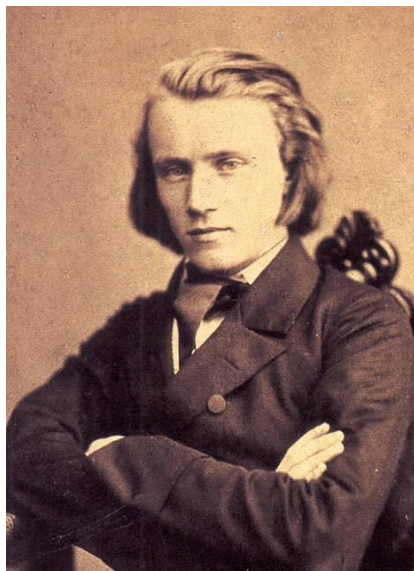
recognised by distinguished musicians such as Richard Goode, Paul Lewis, John Lill, Imogen Cooper, Simon Trpčeski, Stephen Kovacevich, Pascal Rogé, Bryce Morrison, Alfredo Perl, Joanna MacGregor, Douglas Finch, Daniel Adni, and Andrew Zolinsky.

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, has graduated the MMus course (Guildhall Artist – Performance) with Distinction, and has also been awarded the prestigious Guildhall Artist Fellowship.

Madalina is also a passionate young piano teacher and encourages students of all abilities to perform from as early an age as possible. She has been teaching piano at the Mount School, in Mill Hill, London, and currently she holds a piano teaching position at the Gems Hampshire School in Chelsea, London.

Overture 'Academic Festival' – Brahms

A famous¹ riposte to the young Mahler apart, Brahms was not well-known for his sense of humour. However, his discovery that a mere thank-you note was (back in 1879) considered insufficient gratitude for an honorary doctorate, conferred in absentia by Breslau University, provoked a little jest. The citation described him as a “composer of serious music”, so Brahms notified Barnard Scholz (the conductor at Breslau) of his proposed work's title. Scholz, taking it at face value, thought it “devilish academic and boring”. It is hard to imagine (yet imagine we must!) “stuffy old” Brahms chortling with glee as he penned his now-famous medley of student songs.



However, a “medley” it wasn't: like everything Brahms wrote it is built like a tank, and, once set in motion, twice as impressive. The joke is not over. Having a low opinion of Bruckner's symphonies (“symphonic boa-constrictors”!), he took the opportunity to lay out his undergraduate booze-up exactly like a Bruckner first movement. There are three subject groups, the first having four themes with a predominantly marching character, the second a contrasting lyrical flow, and the third (introduced on bassoons) bouncing along on an off-beat rhythm. The development section is telescoped into the recapitulation - we only become aware of the latter with the re-emergence of the second subject. The unexpected, and unexpectedly unbuttoned, appearance of *Gaudeamus Igitur* as a coda must have brought the house down at the premiere!



Gau - de - a - mus i - gi - tur, ju - ve - nes dum su - mus; Post ju - cun - dam ju - ven - tu - tem,



Post mo - les - tam se - nec - tu - tem, Nos ha - be - bit hu - mus. Nos ha - be - bit hu - mus.

¹ Programme note – musicweb-international.

Variations on a Nursery Tune – Dohnányi



Dukas² had his *L'Apprenti Sorcier*, Jarnefelt his *Praeludium*, and Pachelbel his *Canon*, but topping the league of “One-Work Composers” must surely be Erno Dohnányi. Born in what is now Pozsony, in his twenties he became a pianist of international repute before settling down as Piano Professor at the Berlin Hochschule. Progressing through Directorships at the Budapest Conservatory (1919) and Hungarian Radio (1931), he became Director of

said Hochschule in 1934. The war failed to dislodge him, but in 1949 he moved to the USA to become Professor of Piano at Florida State College. He composed three operas and sundry piano, chamber and orchestral music, but remains virtually unknown apart from this supremely brilliant masterpiece of 1913.

If you're destined to be a “One-Work Composer”, then this is the way to do it: take a simple nursery ditty - “Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman”, used by Mozart in his *Variations* of 1778, will do very nicely - and completely go to town on it. Otherwise known hereabouts as “Twinkle, twinkle, little star”, the tune perhaps nods politely in the general direction of “Baa, baa, black sheep”, not just because of its very similar outline, but also because certain of Dohnányi's elaborations allude to the “have you any wool?” phrase. As it happens, allusions flock like sheep, prompting suggestions that Dohnányi's music is satirical, poking fun at the fashions and figures of his youth. If so then, in music of this quality, to be thus lampooned must be counted a signal honour.

The piano's role is virtuosic - no surprises there, the real surprise being the equal virtuosity of the orchestral writing and, capping all, the extraordinary degree of empathy, rather than enmity, between soloist and orchestra. Crammed into twenty-odd minutes are an introduction, theme, thirteen variations and coda. These encompass an astonishing diversity of contrasts and complements, courtesy of Dohnányi's aural imagination and his particularly inventive treatment of the theme: spurning mere “decoration” he shuffles the deck, remoulding the line, contorting the theme as far as he can without destroying its identity altogether.

² Programme note – musicweb-international.

Introduction and Theme: Let's start as we mean to continue: a long, doom-sodden orchestral introduction prepares us for the worst (if you're psychic, or already familiar, you'll spot the theme's outline pacing in the horns). A double crunch, a pregnant pause. The soloist enters, playing the tune plain and simple: I believe that here Dohnányi expected the pianist to use only the index fingers, in the manner of a child picking out the tune . . .

Variation 1: . . . though such a technique quickly becomes impracticable as, apparently at last finding its way, the theme blurs into racing, rippling figurations (don't you just love jokes with telescopic punch-lines?).

Variation 2: Already beginning to shuffle the deck, horns inject a bit of “military discipline”, answered by the piano. Before long, the trumpets join the fray (it is, after all, their forte).

Variation 3: Now everyone sways and swoons, mimicking the graceful finale of Brahms' Second Piano Concerto. As this fades . . .

Variation 4: . . . things turn slightly tipsy, bassoons rolling in the depths. Echoing V2, the rejoinder this time comes from the sharper end of the woodwind spectrum.

Variation 5: Thus far, colours have been fairly muted. Now a veritable music box is opened, filling the air with effervescent tinklings, piano and orchestra in perfect harmony. Dee-licious.

Variation 6: Suddenly, chittering woodwind scamper, tumbling over one another - and the soloist - occasionally guided by a slow, threading line.

Variation 7: Equally suddenly, the unmistakable rhythm of a Viennese waltz breaks in, the theme again reshuffled to introduce the requisite bounce.

Variation 8: Over a pulsing bass-line, bassoons and clarinets pick out a perky march, taken up by piano and oboes.

Variation 9: Complementing the cosily colourful V5, this is more like Pandora's Box, releasing all kinds of wierd and wonderful daemons. Although the clattering xylophone tempts us to think “Danse Macabre”, this variation's fleetness of foot urges circumspection.

Variation 10: Pandora's Box is firmly closed to admit a noble passacaglia. This, the longest variation and the heart of the work, counterbalances the Introduction. Progressing through the solemnity of a reference to Brahms' Fourth Symphony and prayerful string textures redolent of Strauss' Also Sprach Zarathustra, it culminates in a bruising crescendo . . .

Variation 11: . . . at the top of which bursts forth a resplendent - and utterly direct - statement of the skeleton of the theme, starting a short chorale during which the piano indulges in some distinctly (indistinctly?) Debussian whole-tonality.

Variation 12: There's a clear feeling of “the home straight” about this odd little fugato - “odd” because while the orchestra fugues, the piano keeps up a constant rippling, as if it's chasing around trying to help absolutely everybody out, but never quite catching up with anybody. In and amongst, is there a reference to Reznicek's Donna Diana Overture? (Ha! Another “one-work composer”!).

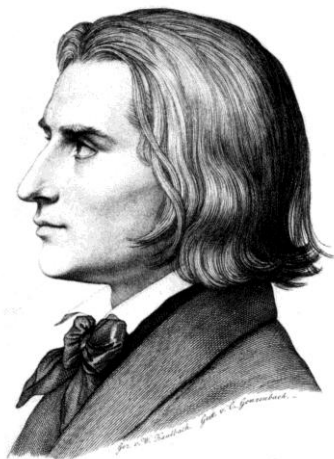
Reprise: With a bang, we're back at the beginning, a lightly varied recapitulation that brings home the sheer audacity and ingenuity of the variations.

Coda: Well, “codetta” might be nearer the mark: blink once and you'll miss this twenty-five yard dash for the tape, almost as if Dohnányi were slamming shut the book at the end of his captivating tale!

Symphonic Poem ‘Mazeppa’ – Liszt

Franz Liszt (1811 - 1886) was the originator of the Symphonic Poem, a piece of music inspired by literature, art or other non-musical source. He wrote thirteen of these pieces using various subjects as inspiration.

Liszt's Symphonic Poem No. 6 was inspired by the legend of Ivan Mazeppa, who was born in Lithuania in 1639. He was of noble birth, and as the legend goes he had a love affair with a Polish princess who was married to a much older man. When the husband found out about the affair as punishment he had Mazeppa stripped of his clothes and tied to a horse and set free to run in the wilderness. The horse ended up in Ukraine, Mazeppa survived the ordeal, and was found by Cossacks, who eventually made him their Hetman, the person of highest military rank in the country.



Although just a legend, it inspired many Romantic era writers, painters and musicians. Lord Byron, Alexander Pushkin and Victor Hugo wrote poems about it, Liszt and Tchaikovsky wrote music based on it, and there are many paintings inspired by it.



Mazeppa and the Wolves, Horace Vernet - 1826

Liszt first wrote a piano piece based on the legend, part of his set of Transcendental Etudes , first published in 1837 then revised with the revisions printed in 1852. Mazeppa is the 4th Etude in the set and remains one of the most technically difficult pieces in the repertoire for piano. Liszt's orchestral version differs from the piano version as it is longer and expands on some of the musical ideas of the original.

The poem has musical representations of the ride through the wilderness, the beating of the horses hoofs, the terror of the rider and after Mazeppa is found by the Cossacks a triumphant military march.

Symphony No.4 in D Minor – Schumann



Schumann's fourth symphony³ is now widely regarded as one of his most original and inventive works. In departing radically from the classical forms of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, it paved the way for the great late romantic symphonies of Brahms and Dvorak. Much of its innovation lies in the unity and cohesiveness of the work. Schumann called it a "symphony in one movement".

Virtually all the thematic material can be traced to the mysterious slow introduction, where a "generative" motif is played by the second violins and bassoons. The lively questing allegro that follows is built from a semiquaver figure derived by inverting the generative motif and breaking it with an octave leap. The second

movement is a romance in which the symphony's slow introduction reappears as the middle section. The scherzo theme is the inversion of the generative motif, but given a completely different character by the rhythm, dynamics and orchestration. Unusually the trio is played a second time, and is joined seamlessly to the final movement by a short passage of great solemnity and nobility, dominated by four horns and three trombones, with the first violins interjecting the semiquaver theme of the first movement. The final movement mirrors the first, using the same musical ideas but now in the major key, replacing the troubled uncertain mood with one of joy and triumph. Just to confound the musical analysts, Schumann introduces a closing theme which is the only one not related in any way to the generative motif.

The symphony did not immediately meet with a favourable reception. The first version was completed in 1841 and given to Clara Schumann as a birthday present. Schumann called it his "Clara Symphony", a name that is now rarely used. The first performance took place in Leipzig, with Schumann himself conducting, and was a disaster. Several factors seemed to contribute to this. Firstly, there was insufficient rehearsal time devoted to the work, and the orchestral players were unfamiliar and uncomfortable playing Schuman's new symphonic idioms. Secondly, Schumann himself was a notoriously poor conductor. His introverted nature, and lack of confidence in his own work,

³ Programme note by kind permission from The Brandon Hill Chamber Orchestra.

prevented him from interacting well with the musicians and providing the necessary guidance. Thirdly some of the orchestral parts were very difficult. In particular the horn parts were not well written for the valve-less "waldhorn" which were normally used at that time. Disappointed by its failure, Schumann withdrew the work and only returned to it ten years later, after the completion of his less radical C major symphony and highly successful Rhenish symphony.

The premiere of the second version took place in Dusseldorf in 1853, shortly before Schumann attempted suicide and was confined to an asylum. The majority of the revision was to the orchestration. The orchestral textures were thickened, with more instruments playing each part. It was suggested by Brahms that this was to cover up the inadequacy of some of the players in the Dusseldorf orchestra. The more instruments that played a particular passage the more likely it was that at least some of them would get it right. The second version was a success, with the eminent musicologist George Grove describing it as "a landmark in the history of the symphony".

The failure of the first version of the symphony has been the source of heated critical debate. It became very common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to criticise Schumann's orchestration. Particularly vituperative in his criticism was Adam Carse (music master at Winchester college and writer of instructive violin pieces for young students) who said "... (Schumann) lacked the instinct to distribute his musical materials in places where they would best contribute to the overall impression, his tone is monotonous and consistently dull, he fails to balance melodic and harmonic elements...". On the other hand Johannes Brahms, who obtained the manuscript of the first version after Schumann's death and published in 1890 against the wishes of Clara Schumann, believed the original version to be better than the revision. He wrote "It is a real pleasure to see anything so bright and spontaneous expressed with corresponding ease and grace. Everything is so absolutely natural that you cannot imagine it in any other way - there are no harsh colours, no forced effects."

Despite Brahms' championship the later version of the symphony is the one that is most commonly performed. However, the first version is now no longer considered difficult by the modern professional orchestra, and a recent recording, conducted by John Eliot Gardiner, does seem to vindicate Brahms' judgment of the work.

Banbury Symphony Orchestra

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Interested in 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.

